

My name is Chris Brown, and I'm a Board member for Blue Mountain Community College. My address is 72717 Bunker Hill Lane, Heppner, OR 97836. I have been on the BMCC Board since 2015.

Thank you for listening to constituents as you guide a complex budgeting process for all of Oregon.

Blue Mountain Community College has strong partners, and supportive communities, and we focus on serving students to reach educational and career goals. We have seen our enrollment decrease, and we now have a need to right-size the college to better serve our students and communities. Our goal is not only right-size the college – which we are in the process of approving -- but also to have the right growth to meet the community's needs. This ranges from better high school onramps to career and college, as well as reskilling Oregon's workforce that was displaced due to the impacts of COVID-19. We also believe we are addressing the gaps for marginalized students, affordability, and innovation funds.

BMCC will be using the short-term federal stimulus funds to support innovative programs stemming from the impacts the pandemic has had on our students and region, but community colleges will still need long-term support from the State to continue to support students as well as Oregon's economic recovery in the coming years. We do need your help.

Community colleges are the best affordable option for access to higher education in Oregon, particularly after the pandemic caused financial hardship for many Oregonians. In the 2019-2021 biennium, the Community College Support Fund received \$641 million. To fully fund current services, colleges would need a state appropriation of \$702 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. At that funding level colleges could keep tuition increases to an average of 3.5 percent per year statewide.

Finally, we understand local business and industry need a diversified workforce as we recover from the pandemic's economic impacts, and community colleges can provide that necessary training to Oregonians who are ready to get back to work in jobs critical to our recovering industries.

Thank you for taking the time to listen, and I again urge your support of \$702 million for the Community College Support Fund, and also to help get Oregon back to work.