



February 10, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As president of **Umpqua Community College (UCC)**, I am writing to express my **strong support** for the \$15 million state legislative grant request to help fund the **Douglas County Youth Sports Park**. This project is critical to the **economic vitality and livability** of our region, providing **jobs, opportunities for businesses, and a stronger foundation for students to succeed and thrive**.

A Thriving Community Starts with Economic Opportunity

At UCC, we see firsthand the challenges our students and their families face in a rural economy that has struggled for decades. Many of our students come from working-class and low-income backgrounds. Breaking the cycle of generational poverty requires not just education, but access to stable jobs and a strong local economy. The Douglas County Youth Sports Park will boost the local economy by \$7 million annually, supporting businesses, creating local job opportunities, and attracting investment. This vital project is essential for long-term economic development and makes our community a more attractive place to live and work.

Livability is Key to Attracting and Retaining Professionals

A thriving education system depends on a thriving community. The Youth Sports Park will be a game-changer in enhancing Douglas County's appeal as a destination for professionals and families. As our community evolves, attracting and retaining our younger workforce in professions like healthcare, teaching, engineering, and business is vital for Douglas County's sustainability.

Education at the Heart of a Thriving Community

At UCC, we are committed to student success, and success isn't just about what happens in the classroom—it's about ensuring students have pathways to opportunity, community engagement, and a vibrant local economy where they can build a future. This project strengthens our ability to support students, expand partnerships, and enhance the overall well-being of the region aligning with our mission to transform lives and enrich our community.

The Douglas County Youth Sports Park is an investment in our people, our economy, and our future. I strongly urge full support for this essential funding request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rachel Pokrandt
President & CEO, Umpqua Community College