

Kaitlin Rodriguez
Oregon State University
Bend, Oregon

February 15, 2025

Senate President Rob Wagner
Speaker Julie Fahey
Senator Kayse Jama, Senate Majority Leader
Representative Ben Bowman, House Majority Leader
Senator Daniel Bonham, Senate Republican Leader
Representative Christine Drazan, House Republican Leader
Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair Ways & Means Committee
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair Ways & Means Committee
Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senate President Wagner; Speaker Fahey; Leaders Bonham, Bowman, Drazan and Jama; Ways & Means & Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez; and Capital Construction Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse:

I am a current student at OSU-Cascades, studying Natural Resources. I write to urge your support for Oregon State

University-Cascades' request for \$42 million in state funding for land reclamation and the completion of the Student Health and Recreation Center. That \$42M will match \$22M from the university and \$20M paid by student fees. Students feel so passionately about the need for the facility that they voted to approve those fees (and have been paying into the fund) since 2017. This project is pivotal not only for the success of OSU-Cascades but for the continued growth of our region's economy and workforce.

I'm originally from Illinois. I completed my first year of college in Minnesota during COVID-19. After that experience, I decided to take a break from college. It wasn't until I found Oregon State University-Cascades (OSU-Cascades), through the Oregon.gov page, that I knew it was time to go back to college. I was drawn to OSU-Cascades because of its mission and values. I appreciate their genuine connections with the students and faculty. I've been an OSU-Cascades student for about three years now, and I intend to continue my education, attaining an MBA, after getting my bachelor's degree. I am currently pursuing a full-time career at OSU-Cascades because of how much I have enjoyed my experience. OSU-Cascades provides me with a sense of belonging and support that I have not been able to find anywhere else. From their faculty and professors to other students, the connections and support shown are what make OSU-Cascades stand out to me.

OSU-Cascades is already providing an invaluable education, but without a proper health and recreation facility, many of us are left without access to the wellness resources that are essential for our academic progress. Studies show that having access to physical and mental health services significantly improves retention, graduation rates, and GPAs, particularly for first-generation students [like myself]. The new center will make a huge difference in ensuring that we have the support we need

to succeed.

Additionally, the university's goal of increasing enrollment to 2,200 students by 2030 will require more space, housing, and resources. The land reclamation work will provide the necessary infrastructure to meet that demand, including housing for students who are facing rising costs in Central Oregon.

I urge you to support this funding request and ensure that future students like myself have the resources and opportunities we need to succeed.

Sincerely,
Kaitlin Rodriguez
Natural Resources

Cc:

Senator Anthony Broadman
Senator Diane Linthicum
Senator Mike McLane
Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson
Representative Jason Kropf
Representative Emerson Levy
Representative Mark Owens
Representative Werner Reschke