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June 08, 2023

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OREGON PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES APPLAUD PROPOSED INVESTMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Salem, Ore. – Oregon’s public university presidents today expressed their appreciation for increased funding for students and Oregon’s public universities in the proposed 2023-25 state budget. The \$1 billion investment in the Public University Support Fund—a 2.9% increase to the fund above the state-calculated current service level—represents an important and necessary step toward making higher education more accessible for Oregon students, and in helping restore funding declines suffered in previous recessions.

“We are very appreciative of the proposed funding levels for public universities in this year’s higher education budget bill. This is a step in the right direction for students and an investment in the future of our state, and we applaud the concerted efforts of all involved,” said Nagi Naganathan, president of the Oregon Institute of Technology and chair of the Oregon Council of Presidents.

Students and university leaders also expressed gratitude to legislators for proposing a \$100 million increase in funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, Oregon’s largest need-based financial aid program.

“The Oregon Opportunity Grant has made it possible for me to receive a university education, and it is helping me pave a path for my younger siblings to achieve their dreams and also my mother's,” said Diana Escamilla, a student at Oregon Institute of Technology and Oregon Opportunity Grant recipient. “It was the first grant I ever received and hope with my advocacy many others will be able to say the same. Thank you to legislative leaders for supporting transformational investments in student financial aid.”

“The landmark \$100 million increase to the Oregon Opportunity Grant is the most significant state investment in financial aid for students attending Oregon’s colleges and universities since the grant program was created,” said Naganathan. “This, in turn, will make higher education even more accessible for lower-income and traditionally underserved students.”

Oregon currently ranks 45th in the nation for per-student state funding of public universities and invests less than half the national average in financial aid per public university student.

“This year’s investment gives Oregonians hope that they can count on our elected officials to ensure adequate long-term funding so our students can pursue their higher education aspirations. As we applaud our elected officials’ investments, we also recognize that our work is far from over,” said Naganathan. “We will continue to work closely with students, communities across the state, and policymakers in the coming years to ensure students receive the support they need to attend and complete their college education without increasing their financial burden.”

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