

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2023

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OREGON PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES RESPOND TO GOVERNOR KOTEK'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Salem, Ore. – Oregon's public university presidents today stressed that the proposed public university funding and financial aid levels in Governor Tina Kotek's recommended 2023-2025 state budget will result in lost opportunities for Oregon's students and workforce.

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. University leaders encourage legislative support for current and future students by passing a stabilizing Public University Support Fund budget of \$1.05 billion and increasing the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Without sustainable funding for Oregon's public university system, Oregon's students, particularly those from underserved and BIPOC communities, will be deprived of opportunities to access essential student services, including financial aid, academic support, career development, and support for other basic needs pushing us further behind other states.

"We thank the Governor for supporting record investments in the Oregon Opportunity Grant and other student-aid programs," said Nagi Naganathan, president of the Oregon Institute of Technology and chair of the Oregon Council of Presidents. "Oregon trails far behind the rest of the nation in public university funding. It is important that our legislative leaders deliver investments that will make higher education attainable for every aspiring student. Oregon's public universities require greater state support today than ever before to maintain essential programs and wraparound services for an increasingly diverse student body and soften the impact of inflation on students and their families and assuring them a higher standard of living immediately after graduation."

As a state, Oregon continues to face workforce shortages in key sectors, including semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, health care, behavioral health, and education. As the recent [Oregon Higher Education Landscape Study](#) from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) reported, Oregon's colleges and universities are well-positioned to grow Oregon's economy and expand and modernize the state's workforce, but require bold investments from the state to do so.

“We recognize that, amid high inflation and a potential recession, state leaders face tough choices as they craft the state budget for the next two years and we are grateful to Governor Kotek for her continued investment in Future Ready Oregon,” said Naganathan. “However, bolstering Oregon’s economy and its working families against economic downturns will require greater investment in higher education. Investments in higher education are investments in vital infrastructure, that lead to greater social mobility and help to produce the diverse workforce that will move Oregon forward.”

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