



Oregon’s Public Universities Urge Support for Students, Emphasize Economic Development in Response to Revenue Forecast

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SALEM, OR - In response to today’s revenue forecast, Oregon’s public universities are calling on state lawmakers to protect students and prioritize educational access in upcoming budget decisions.

“Oregon’s economy needs stable and long-term drivers, and public higher education is the engine that can get us there. We produce the workforce, innovation, and economic activity that powers this state forward,” said University of Oregon President Karl Scholz, who currently serves as the Chair of the Coalition of Oregon Public Universities. “Now is not the time to make cuts to the very institutions that form the engine of our economic resilience.”

At a time with rising income inequality and tightening household budgets, access to affordable education and career development opportunities is crucial. Public university leaders urge the legislature to protect need-based financial aid and preserve critical operating funds that directly benefit Oregon’s students.

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The Coalition of Oregon Public Universities (OPU) represents all of Oregon's public universities and works to coordinate strategy, advocacy, and alignment on issues of shared concern. OPU is led by a council composed of the president of each public university, with a rotating chair position. OPU replaced the former Oregon Council of Presidents (OCOP) in 2025.

John Karl Scholz is the 19th president of the University of Oregon, beginning his tenure on July 1, 2023.

Scholz is an internationally respected economist who writes on diverse topics including household saving, the earned income tax credit, low-wage labor markets, financial barriers to higher education, and bankruptcy laws. His research has appeared in leading general interest economics journals.

Scholz served in two presidential administrations. From 1990 to 1991 he was a senior staff economist at the Council of Economic Advisors, and from 1997 to 1998 he served as deputy assistant secretary for tax analysis at the US Department of the Treasury.

Prior to joining the UO, Scholz was the provost at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a position he had held since August of 2019. He joined the university's department of economics in 1988 and was later named the Nellie June Gray Professor of Economic Policy. He directed the Institute for Research on Poverty at UW-Madison from 2000-2004.

He earned his economics undergraduate degree from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and his PhD from Stanford University.