



Governor's Prosperity Council Recommends Investment in Public Universities

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SALEM, OR – For decades, Oregon's public university students, leaders, and advocates have been sounding the alarm bells about a chronic lack of state investment in public higher education in Oregon. Today, they got a powerful supporter: the Governor's Prosperity Council. Included in the Council's final report was an emphasis on the critical role that public universities play in Oregon's future economic prosperity – and the urgent need for the state to step up in supporting these institutions.

Notably, the Council recommended funding Oregon's public universities in alignment with neighboring western states. Right now, Oregon provides only a fraction of the per-student funding that Washington, California, Idaho, and Nevada provide. The average for neighboring states is approximately \$11,901 in state appropriations per full-time student, while Oregon sits at only \$6,531 – meaning Oregon funds only 55% of what other Western states provide per student. While the Council's report cited Oregon as ranking 37th nationally in sector-wide higher education appropriations per full time student, Oregon falls to 46th in the nation when looking specifically at public universities.

"This chronic underinvestment places the burden squarely on the shoulders of students through higher tuition costs," said **Portland State University President Ann Cudd**, who also serves as Chair of the Coalition of Oregon Public Universities. "Funding Oregon public universities at parity with our neighboring western states is common-sense, and allows us to be more competitive, attract, retain, and graduate more students, and contribute even more to Oregon's economy. It's the right thing to do for the state."

The recommendations released Thursday would be a historic investment in Oregon's students, and would reduce upward tuition pressure and alleviate ongoing budget and programmatic cuts at Oregon's public universities.

Additionally, the Prosperity Council recommended investing in key funds for research and economic development the University Innovation and Research Fund and the Research & Development tax credit. These funds incentivize research and economic development at public universities through tax credits and direct matching funds to leverage federal grants.

"We are grateful that the Council recognizes the importance of funding public universities and our vital role in Oregon's future economic success," said **Mary Moller, Executive Director of the Coalition of Oregon Public Universities**. "We agree with the Council's leadership that these recommendations for higher education funding are critical and achievable. We look forward to working with state leaders as we turn these ideas into a reality for students and families."