



BMCC PENDLETON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community colleges to ask Legislature for \$32 million to mitigate tuition increases

SALEM, Ore. – The 17 Oregon community colleges will ask the state legislature to allocate to them an additional \$32 million in the short Legislative Session to help keep tuition costs down and restore funding for student success programs in the second year of the 2017-2019 biennium.

At the end of the 2017 Legislative Session, the Joint Ways and Means Committee restored more than \$70 million to public universities to help keep the cost of tuition down, but only put about an additional \$6 million to do the same at the community colleges. This means the universities received double the percent increase as community colleges in the last two biennia.

In the last two biennia, the Legislature's investment to the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) has grown at twice the rate of property tax and general fund going toward the Community College Support Fund (CCSF). For example, in the 2017 Session, general fund dollars into the PUSF increased nearly 27 percent compared to just 13 percent for the CCSF.

Lack of funding at the state level forces community colleges to place an unfair burden on the backs of students in the form of tuition increases. Community colleges already serve students with the greatest academic, financial and social challenges, but receive less per student in public funding than their university counterparts. The Legislature must work to ensure students in both community colleges and public universities have the support needed to succeed.

Due to this lack of funding for community colleges, Blue Mountain Community College increased tuition by \$7 per credit for the 2017-18 academic year, which raised tuition to \$104 per credit. This doesn't include the fees and other expenses college students also must expend to fund their educations.

Community colleges serve as a critical bridge between K-12 and the universities, and provide services to students across the continuum. Investing in community colleges helps build student success across the education spectrum.

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Community colleges aren't just asking for a handout from the state; they are already working to make transformational changes on their campuses through models like Guided Pathways, designed to streamline students' paths to completion, helping them take only the courses necessary for their degree or certificates.

BMCC's Early College Credit Connections Coordinator works with high school students to efficiently select courses that earn them college credits so that they don't pay for unnecessary courses. Success coaches and faculty advisors also work with current students to help them do the same.

Investing in community colleges now will help colleges continue this path of profound change in how we serve students.

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