



July 26, 2017

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
911 NE 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite 630  
Portland, OR 97232

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
121 SW Salmon, Suite 1400  
Portland, OR 97204

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici  
12725 SW Millikan Way, Suite 220  
Beaverton, OR 97005

The Honorable Greg Walden  
14 N. Central Ave., Suite 112  
Medford, OR 97501

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer  
911 NE 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97232

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
405 East 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 2030  
Eugene, OR 97401

The Honorable Kurt Schrader  
621 High Street  
Oregon City, OR 97045

Dear Senators Wyden and Merkley, Representatives Bonamici, Walden, Blumenauer, DeFazio and Schrader:

We write on behalf of the Oregon Council of Presidents (OCOP) to thank you again for your work and support for the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (P.L 115-31) which provides critical funding for public universities, our students, and research. Moving forward, as you work to advance federal funding priorities in fiscal year 2018 appropriations legislation, **we urge you to continue to protect and advance investments that support Oregonians' access to quality, affordable higher education and research programs** that serve the state, the nation, and the world.

The Oregon Council of Presidents, which is made up of Oregon's seven public universities and Oregon Health and Sciences University, convened in 2016 to share best practices, address common statewide concerns, and advocate on behalf of our institutions. Together, we share strong concerns that the Trump Administration's federal fiscal year 2018 budget proposes a drastic \$9 billion reduction to the US Department of Education that will have wide-ranging impacts on student access, financial aid, and success programs. In addition to cuts to education, the budget disrupts the historic partnership between the federal government and research universities. It proposes broad divestment in the federal research enterprise that will curtail scientific discovery and innovation so critical to the well-being of society and our economy.

The **Administration's proposed budget cuts to higher education funding include** \$3.9 billion from the Pell Grant surplus, which threatens the future solvency of this essential higher education program. In total, **more than 30,000 students at our institutions rely on Pell Grants** to help fund their higher education. Further, the proposed budget also proposes cuts to the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant program, important to nearly 10,000 students across our institutions, and Federal Work Study, which is a critical source

for financial support for nearly 3,000 students. In total, Pell Grants, SEOG, and Work Study provide \$126 million in federal financial aid to more than 30,000 of our students.

In addition to the financial aid programs, we are also concerned for the continuation of funds for the federal student support programs funded under TRIO and GEAR UP. The President's Budget Request proposed deep cuts to these programs that would have immediate and devastating consequences for thousands of our current and prospective students who have the most to gain from accessing and succeeding toward degrees in higher education. Several of our institutions have programs that have for decades helped students be more successful and earn their degrees.

In total, these proposed cuts to federal financial aid and campus-based programs would have **disproportionate impact on lower-income students, first generation students, adult learners, and students of color** who have been historically underrepresented in higher education. Our institutions have made a priority of promoting successful pathways to post-secondary opportunities and supporting timely degree completion. The partnership with these federal support programs is essential to helping prepare our students to make important contributions to our communities after graduation.

**We are gratified that so many members of Congress on a bipartisan basis have expressed concern about the President's Budget Request as it relates to research**, especially the proposed cuts to the National Institutes of Health, the US Department of Energy and other critical research agencies. **Your work to maintain support for robust investment in our federal research agencies is as important as it's ever been.** While you have frequent contact with our research programs, spin-outs and those alumni trained by our professional and doctoral programs, please let us know if there is additional information we can provide at any point to help inform your efforts. We are proud of what our institutions have accomplished with you.

It's no secret that at all levels, federal, state and institutional, we face significant budgetary constraints in the year ahead. Despite our challenges, we remain committed to investing in our diverse student community and their success, as well as driving new impacts from our respective research and educational missions.

We thank you again for your demonstrated support for higher education and research in FY 2017, and we are pleased to work with you to continue to advance federal investments essential to Oregon's public universities and our students in FY 2018 funding legislation.

Sincerely,



Thomas Insko  
President, Eastern Oregon  
University



Michael Schill  
President, University of Oregon



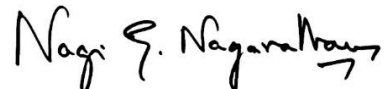
Rex Fuller  
President, Western Oregon  
University



Edward Ray  
President, Oregon State  
University



Linda Schott  
President, Southern Oregon  
University



Nagi Naganathan  
President, Oregon Institute of  
Technology



Wim Wiewel  
President, Portland State  
University



Dr. Joe Robertson  
President, Oregon Health &  
Sciences University

Cc: Via email to state staff:  
Lisa Rockower (Wyden)  
Jessica Stevens (Merkley)  
Sarah Baessler (Bonamici)  
Katelyn Pae (Walden)  
Willie Smith (Blumenauer)  
Dan Whelan (DeFazio)  
Suzanne Kunse (Schrader)