

2025 SESSION**Southern Oregon University Legislative Priorities****BUDGET-RELATED PROPOSALS****Public University Support Fund (PUSF) Increase**

Despite retooling and undertaking strategic budget reductions—which continues today—universities are asking for \$1.275 billion to continue to offer a transformative experience for every student and to stabilize universities after years of underfunding by Oregon in comparison to neighboring states' investments in higher education. The Governor's Recommended Budget falls around \$195 million short of this figure.

**An Increase in the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)**

As a result of the Oregon Legislature not providing universities the true cost of delivering a public university education, universities have continued to increase tuition. The increases (all below 5% annually), coupled with overall inflation and economic instability for many students, makes a four-year university further out of reach without additional support for students. We support a \$100 million increase in the OOG to preserve equitable access for all students to obtain a higher education.

**Capital Construction Request for SOU's Creative Industries and Student Success and Leadership Center**

The capital construction project request SOU submitted for the 2025-27 biennium was ranked 2nd among 11 individual university ranked requests by the HECC staff. This project is both seen as highly supportive of the HECC Strategic Plan and an opportunity for SOU to build on its award-winning film program and offer more compelling and community-friendly cultural offerings to the greater Rogue Valley community.

**Funding of Higher Education's Behavioral Health Workforce Package**

Universities, in partnership with community colleges, are seeking additional resources to support Oregon's commitment to expand the behavioral health workforce, through expanding current programs, creating new programs, offering student stipends to move into the field, hiring faculty and staff to help students find internships and practicums, and facilitate immediate connections into the workforce upon degree completion.

ADDITIONAL POLICY PROPOSALS THAT DO NOT COST ADDITIONAL MONEY**Streamlined Reporting Requirements for Universities and Eliminating Unneeded Duplication**

Oregon's public universities are subject to numerous reporting requirements, many—but not all—of which are mandated. Universities often find that they are asked for the same information through multiple reports. We support HECC conducting an inventory of reporting requirements and identifying a means by which redundant reports can be reduced if not eliminated.

**Legislative Package to Streamline and Facilitate Transfers**

University leaders, admissions counselors and faculty have heard from students that the process for transferring often is cumbersome. SOU supports an anticipated package designed to ensure that any student who wishes to transfer to a public university in Oregon can do so with ease.

**Ensuring Universities are Connected to Regional Workforce Efforts**

Federal law mandates membership of local workforce boards to include "higher education"; but often there is not room at the table for public universities, who are key contributors of workforce and talent development. This bill would mandate that each workforce board include a representative of a public, four-year university to ensure that our public post-secondary institutions are maximizing their responsiveness to local business needs.