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THE CHAMBER
OF MEDFORD/JACKSON COUNTY

January 8, 2018

Neil Bryant, Chair
Higher Education Coordinating Commission
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Chair Bryant and Commissioners,

Southern Oregon University has long been an important partner to the businesses and citizens of Medford. Its new mission and vision will make that partnership even stronger and enhance the economic growth and civic well-being of our community. On behalf of The Chamber of Medford/Jackson County, I am most pleased to express our strong support for SOU's new mission and vision.

Medford, just like the rest of Oregon, is changing in many ways. Our population is becoming more diverse, as are the types of businesses and industries that are growing here. SOU's new mission - to be even more engaged with our region than in the past and to be the educational provider of choice for learners throughout their lives - is just right. Medford and the Rogue Valley will continue to benefit from the engagement of SOU's faculty and students, conducting applied research and learning through community action and internships. And our employers will now have a regional partner to deliver the ongoing professional education that will be needed in a rapidly changing future economy. Instead of having to develop in-house training programs or send employees out of the region for additional education, southern Oregon employers will be able to work directly with SOU to provide the education and advanced training needed for their employees.

As an alum, I am equally excited by the vision for SOU's future. Graduates who have the "knowledge, capacities and audacity to innovate boldly and create lives of purpose" will greatly enhance the Rogue Valley. They will help our region flourish with new ideas; they will build and attract new companies; and they will be responsible, engaged citizens.

Best regards,

Brad S. Hicks

Brad S. Hicks, CCE
President & CEO

101 E. 8th Medford, OR 97501 Phone 541.779.4847 Fax 541.776.4808
| business@medfordchamber.com | info@medfordchamber.com | www.medfordchamber.com |