

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

July 26, 2018

Dear Chair Bryant and members of the Commission:

We are writing to ask for the Commission to review and reconsider the staff ranking of university capital projects, especially as it relates to the Student Success Center at OSU-Cascades. This building will be a central location for student services and programs that promote student success in the following ways: 1) graduating with a degree, 2) limiting student debt, 3) being prepared to join the workforce and, 4) finding gainful employment by graduation. The programs available through the Student Success Center that aid in attaining these outcomes include: advising, career counseling and internships, disability access services, veterans' services, financial aid counseling, personal counseling, and tutoring. These services are critical for increasing graduation rates, reducing time to graduation, and reducing the cost of education for students.

The Student Success Center will also provide space for student engagement, including clubs, sports, student government, and a multicultural center. Increasing access to these activities will help students stay in school and improve their likelihood of graduating.

Especially important to Central Oregon are the career advising and internship services that will be available in the Student Success Center. The Central Oregon region is projected to have the fastest job growth in the state over the next 5 years. Employers are challenged to find skilled workers and recognize the importance of "growing our own." OSU-Cascades is already well connected to the regional employer community. Campus leadership has developed academic programs in response to local industry and business needs. With the Bend Chamber and the broader business community, OSU-Cascades has built a robust internship program by partnering with local companies, schools, and non-profit organizations. During the most recent academic year alone, nearly 500 internships were completed by degree seeking students (the OSU-Cascades student body was 1300.) Through internships, career advising and connections with employers the Center will increase the number of graduates ready to contribute to the Central Oregon economy.

OSU-Cascades provides greater education access to the residents of Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook counties. The Central Oregon region is the fastest growing in the state. By 2025 the population is expected to surpass 275,000. Currently nearly 70% of OSU-Cascades students come from the region, almost half are Pell grant recipients and one-third are first generation college goers. The Student Success Center will provide commuter students with a place to study and it will connect all students with the services they need to graduate with a degree.

We believe that the relatively low ranking of the OSU-Cascades Student Success Center by the HECC staff is a result of a rubric that does not yet account for the differences between a new campus and long-standing campuses. There were substantial points awarded to similar projects that reduced deferred maintenance or addressed life, safety, and code issues. A new campus does not have those types of issues and, under the current rubric, the project is in effect penalized without them. Importantly, OSU-Cascades is setting aside a percentage of its annual operating costs each year into a building reserve fund to avoid any future deferred maintenance issues. It seems that a set aside plan for a new campus/building would be equally desirable to reducing current deferred maintenance for older buildings in project scoring.

In addition to the tremendous support for the Student Success Center by the business community, the NOW4 OSU-Cascades committee, the Advocacy and Advisory Board for OSU-Cascades--the OSU-Cascades student body is so convinced of the importance of the Center to their educational outcomes that they have pledged \$5 million in support of the Student Success Center.

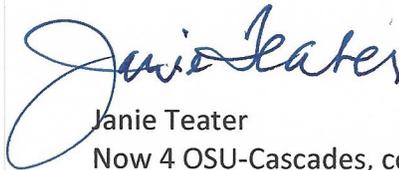
We urge HECC to prioritize the OSU-Cascades Student Success Center for funding in the 2019 legislative session.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Amy Tykeson
Now 4 OSU-Cascades, co – founder
OSU-Cascades Advocacy and Advisory Board



Janie Teater
Now 4 OSU-Cascades, co-founder



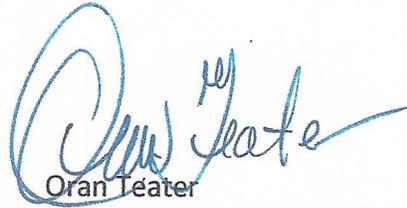
David Ford
West Bend Properties, Brooks Resources
OSU-Cascaades Advocacy and Advisory Board



Bruce Cummings
OSU-Cascades Advocacy and Advisory Board



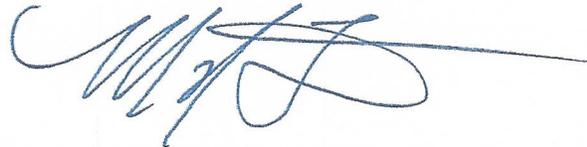
John Rexford
Bend LaPine School District
OSU-Cascades Advocacy and Advisory Board



Oran Teater
Raymond James Financial
OSU-Cascades Advocacy and Advisory Board



Kathy Persing
OSU-Cascades Advocacy and Advisory Board



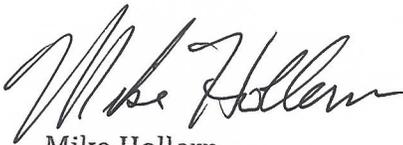
Mark Kralj
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Ciella Thomas
OSU-Cascades' Supporter



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