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October 8, 2019

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)
c/o Ben Cannon, Executive Director
255 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-0203

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to ask you to consider changing the Public University Capital Rubric used to evaluate institutional projects. While not an expert in this area, I have reviewed the proposed changes. They largely make sense to me and will make the evaluation process more equitable on the whole for smaller institutions. These proposed changes are important to me personally. My husband sits on the Foundation Board for Clackamas Community College and we are strong advocates for community colleges, technical and regional universities. We know first-hand the value these institutions offer students all over the State. Our grandson and many of our employees have benefited directly from attending these institutions. Thank you for recognizing their worth and the financial challenges they have.

However, I strongly urge the Commission to reconsider the proposed revisions for Section F, Leveraging Institutional Resources. Portland State University (PSU) should not be included with Oregon State University (OSU) and the University of Oregon (UO) match rates. I respectfully request you consider including a third table, specific to PSU, that sets match rates between Oregon's flagship universities (OSU and UO) and technical and regional universities.

My husband and I are both Alumni of PSU. We are examples of the type of students PSU historically serves so well. Both of us worked full-time and were fortunate enough to receive financial assistance of various types while we completed graduate studies and earned our PhD's. We are first generation college graduates. As the daughter of a coal miner, the opportunity for higher education was a dream come true for me. Our educations were vital in helping us become successful owners of businesses employing hundreds of people throughout Oregon, mostly in smaller rural communities.

Now, nearly 40 years later, I have the honor to serve as Chair-elect of the PSU Foundation Board of Trustees and I know that the dreams I had are still coming true for many other first-generation college students at PSU. Let me share some facts about why that is true and why making a revision in the Public University Capital Rubric will help make that dream possible for more people like myself and my husband.

PSU, as alluded to in my personal story above, serves a different student population than OSU and UO. PSU serves more PELL eligible students and more students of color. Importantly, a higher percentage of PSU's students are native Oregonians resulting in fewer tuition dollars. Yet these students stay, work and flourish in Oregon. Indeed, our undergraduate sciences class graduates are the largest source of students for OHSU's medical school. Local firms are eager to hire our engineering, business, public health, education and social work graduates among others.

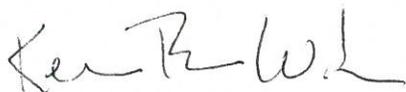
PSU is a new university in relative terms, compared to OSU and UO. Consequently, we have a smaller alumni base, and importantly, a much smaller endowment fund. PSU's endowment is under \$100 million, as compared to \$600 million for OSU and nearly \$1 billion for UO. This matters because these funds are an important source of student support. This makes fundraising for student success a top priority. Further, within its endowment PSU has almost no unrestricted funds, making it very challenging to generate philanthropic matches from endowment earnings.

Philanthropic support for new buildings or renovation projects often comes from donors of high wealth. Given our relative institutional youth and alumni base, PSU has few of these types of donors. Yet our need to upgrade campus facilities such our Science Building 1, which is 50 years old, is critical.

The matching portion of the rubric was based, I believe, on our recent project fundraising success. While I do not wish to diminish the skill and commitment of PSUF's fundraising staff, PSUF Trustees and our donors, our ability to repeat that success for other projects is hampered by our small high wealth donor base. The new proposed formula feels like we must choose between raising desperately needed funds for student financial aid and support or critically needed infrastructure projects with our small PSUF staff and donor pool.

I ask that you consider a different approach to determine match level based on a concrete measurable metric that takes into account PSU's unique position as an institution of higher learning in Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Keren Brown Wilson PhD
Founder & CEO Jessie F Richardson Foundation
Chair-elect PSUF Board of Trustees
PSU Alumni 1983