



David Rives, Chair
Higher Education Coordinating Commission
255 Capitol Street NE, Third Floor
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Chair Rives,

I am the President of the Associated Students of Cascades Campus, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide a student view regarding HECC's Strategic Capital Development Plan. The students at OSU-Cascades are particularly interested in how the plan will affect our opportunities for accessing higher education in Central Oregon, now and in the future.

Many students at OSU-Cascades would not have the opportunity to complete a bachelor's degree without the presence of a local university. Over sixty percent of us come from Central Oregon, and a third of us are first generation college students. Nearly a fifth of us are U.S. minorities, and nearly half of us are Pell Grant eligible. I believe OSU-Cascades has previously provided you with a lot of data and studies that show how important it is for rural, first generation and minority students to have access to locally accessible post-secondary educational facilities in order to succeed.

We were excited to see that the report acknowledges the need for additional capacity at OSU-Cascades in the future. It also recognizes that student support space is particularly lacking at OSU-Cascades. We hope these findings will be significant in how HECC considers the Student Success Center on the OSU-Cascades campus, which we have been seeking, and voluntarily paying for since 2017. The Student Success Center would provide the necessary services to support students in a single location, which the plan also acknowledges as important. On page 13, the plan states:

As the composition and demographics of the student body has changed (along with advances in psychiatry and neuroscience), an array of student services has been developed ranging from tutoring to disability services, financial assistance to counseling. These programs, many of which did not exist in their current state 20 years ago, have often been located opportunistically as space became available and therefore do not benefit from adjacencies that are client or student-centered. Modern university buildings are student centric in both the arrangement of programs and services as well as in the type of spaces which welcome and invite students to engage in university life.

We are hopeful that the HECC will weigh these findings heavily when in reconsiders the OSU-Cascades Student Success Center in the coming months.

While the report doesn't address matching funds, we believe it is important to reiterate that the students of OSU-Cascades voted to increase their student fees in order to contribute \$5 million towards the Student Success Center. This is a significant match to the \$12 million being requested from the state, and a powerful statement of the importance of this building to us. We are continuing to pay these fees because this project is important to us. We have already contributed over \$1.2 million in student fees toward the Center. We are anxiously waiting for the state to help us succeed.

As a first-generation student coming from immigrant parents, I would like to say I would not be here today if I could not attend a 4-year university close to home. OSU-Cascades has opened great doors of opportunity to continue education for many students including myself. Having come from certain circumstances that have made me stay local and not be able to travel for higher education, OSU-Cascades has been imperative in my ability to obtain a bachelor's in biology. As a student who aspires for OSU-Cascades to continue to grow and be accessible for all students from diverse backgrounds, we urge you to help fund the Student Success Center for future students in Central Oregon.

Please remember the Strategic Capital Development Plan as you consider capital projects in the coming months. Thank you for your consideration and Go Bend Beavs!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bl Chavez", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian Chavez
President, Associated Students of Cascades Campus