

June 10, 2020

Chair David Rives
Higher Education Coordinating Commission
3225 25th Street SE
Salem, Oregon 97302

Dear Chair Rives:

As Chief Executive Officer of Lithia Motors and a resident of Ashland, Oregon I want to express my concern about appropriate base funding for Southern Oregon University.

Lithia is one of only two Fortune 500 companies based in Oregon, currently ranked number 252. We employ over 13,000 individuals and currently service 92% of the US automobile retail sector.

I am a proud alumnus of Southern Oregon University (1989), and other members of the Lithia executive team are SOU alumni or parents of SOU alumni. Two Lithia Board members serve as adjunct faculty for Southern Oregon University. Our Corporate Office based in Medford includes nearly 100 alumni of SOU; numerous employees in the Corporate Office benefit from ongoing professional development services offered by SOU.

Without hesitation, Southern Oregon University serves as a critical economic development and educational partner to for the growth of Oregon. It has unique geographic positioning, only 12 miles from the 5th largest economy in world and only an hour flight to the global center for innovation. This special positioning offers tremendous benefits to the State of Oregon, and yes, to the further growth of Lithia and business communities associated with Southern Oregon University.

More importantly, Oregon benefits from the many leaders that Southern Oregon University prepares. These leaders demonstrate a special formula of success, creating organizations that stress belonging to their communities while being resilient, creative and culturally engaged and competent. I am proud to share that some of my fellow alumnus have been key in establishing entities like: Zappos, SPDR Fund, I-Shares, Lexus Racing Team or hold/held leadership positions with global powers like Microsoft, Apple, Nike and many more. Each of the entities, like Lithia, contribute to Oregon's educational and economic success.

In closing, I strongly encourage each HECC Commissioner to embrace Southern Oregon University's rich history of success and its many contribution to Oregon's economic vitality by enhancing Mission Differential funding for SOU, representing its true value.

Sincerely,



Bryan DeBoer
CEO Lithia Motors
Medford, OR 97504