

Re: OSU-Cascades Student Health and Recreation Center and Associated Land Remediation

Dear Ben and Sandy:

I hope you fondly remember me. It has been six years since I chaired the HECC. I do enjoy retirement.

When I moved to Bend 51 years ago, the population was 13,000. Now there are 109,000 residents and another 150,000 in the tri-county. Bend is planning for a city of 140,000 by 2040.

In 2001 Governor John Kitzhaber, the legislature and State Board of Higher Education decided to fund a branch campus on the Central Oregon Community College campus. This was quite a commitment, but the educational needs of the Central Oregon students were not being met. Subsequently, OSU-Cascades became a stand-alone branch campus. It is no surprise that the campus continues to thrive and grow with the Central Oregon community.

The Health and Recreation Center is the next essential step in building the campus. All other university campuses in the state have centers like this because it is shown to have significant positive effects on student success, both in retention and increasing graduation rates. The current approach, referring students to health providers and recreation in the community, creates inequities for students with limited means and transportation challenges. The positive health impacts of clinical services and fair and equal access to healthy recreation are necessities, not amenities.

In the past, the commission has recognized that OSU-Cascades is in a unique position. The HECC rubric did not contemplate a new campus. I remember two instances when the commission made exceptions. First, HECC allowed OSU-Cascades to submit projects separate from OSU. Second, we moved OSU-Cascades up the capital project lists to allow funding for infrastructure. This did not fit the rubric, but it was essential to build the campus. The HECC recognized the need and the state's commitment to the new campus's success, and it has worked.

I have not reviewed that rubric in six years, but Central Oregon needs your help. Please make this request a priority.

Sincerely,

Neil Bryant