



September 28, 2018

Governor Brown
State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

In your upcoming budget, **Oregon Community Colleges need to be funded at \$787 million as recommended by the Higher Education Coordination Commission. By funding at this level, you are funding JOBS in Oregon, not just education.** These jobs will create the necessary “revenue engine” for the state. This is how you can fund all of the programs you want to carry out. This funding will make it all happen.

As CEO of OFD (Oregon Freeze Dry) with 500 employees, and Board Chair of Linn-Benton Community College, I know the importance of LBCC in our community. And how the other sixteen community colleges positively affect their communities, large and small, throughout our state. Community colleges serve as a critical bridge between K-12 and universities and provide services for students across the continuum. Investing in community colleges helps build student success across the education spectrum and gives them the skills to succeed in life.

I see firsthand in our own business how the college contributes to the economic vitality of our area by providing needed skills training to support business and industry of all sizes. Each year we hire a number of the graduates of LBCC’s various programs. A trained workforce is essential both in a global marketplace, and to continue Oregon’s economic growth.

I also see community colleges as an affordable education option for transfer bound students, to allow them their educational dreams in a shorter and lower cost way. Students seeking to move towards their education and career goals can get a faster start by attending a community college.

Oregon’s long-term path to economic success requires this investment. We can’t put an ever-growing share of the financial burden onto students.

I urge you to make community colleges and the Oregonians they serve, a priority in your budget by supporting the HECC’s recommendation of \$787 million.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Merryman", written over a circular scribble.

Jim Merryman, OFD CEO/President
Chair, LBCC Board of Education