



KATE BROWN  
Governor

April 10, 2017

Neil Bryant, Chair  
Higher Education Coordinating Commission  
255 Capitol Street NE, Third Floor  
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Chair Bryant and Commissioners,

I know that you share my concern for preserving access and affordability for Oregon resident students, and I am deeply concerned that Oregon's public universities may impose tuition and fee increases significantly greater than 5% upon resident undergraduate students.

As you know, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is authorized by law to review any proposed increase greater than 5%. Recognizing the revenue constraint that the 5% limit may impose, in conjunction with the challenges facing the state budget, I am nonetheless communicating my expectation to members of the HECC that any tuition proposals brought forward beyond a 5% increase not be approved, if and unless, the Commission is provided with:

1. Clear and significant evidence that the university gave serious consideration to alternatives that involved tuition and fee increases below the 5% threshold;
2. Clear and significant evidence of how Oregonians who are underrepresented in higher education, including low-income students and students of color, would benefit more under the university's proposal than one that stays within the 5% threshold;
3. A plan for how the university's board and central administration are managing costs on an ongoing basis;
4. A summary of how students, faculty and staff were consulted on the proposed tuition increases; and,
5. A summary of how tuition will be affected should additional state funds beyond the number in Governor's Recommended Budget be appropriated.

If the HECC should receive such a tuition increase proposal, it is my expectation that the Commission and agency rigorously apply the above criteria, in addition to any others they may establish. It is my expectation that the chair of each institutional board shall certify and present these findings in person to the Commission, in addition to administrative representatives of the institution.

Finally, I am acutely aware of the relationship between the state budget and tuition levels. Over both the short and long-term, I remain committed to doing everything I can to maximize the State's ability to invest in public higher education. I hope we will be joined together in this effort, just as I hope we will be joined in the equally important effort to implement every possible cost savings, reduction, and efficiency in the public services we provide to Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Governor Kate Brown

cc: University Board Chairs and Presidents

