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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor's Budget Holds Community College Funding at \$550 Million

The budget released today by Governor Kate Brown holds funding of community colleges to the same funding level as the 2015-2017 biennium – \$550 million.

“The Governor’s budget shows the challenges Oregon faces in providing adequate funding for vital services while confronting a \$1.7 billion structural deficit,” said Andrea Henderson, Executive Director of the Oregon Community College Association. “However, with flat-funding, colleges will have to make significant tuition increase while cutting programs and services.”

Henderson said she appreciated the Governor’s efforts to keep cuts from going deeper and welcomed a proposed \$11 million increase to the Oregon Opportunity Grant – Oregon’s largest need-based financial aid program. The Governor’s budget also makes a substantial investment in capital construction projects for community colleges, and continues the Oregon Promise Program that provides tuition subsidies to eligible Oregon students.

“The Governor called this budget the beginning of the conversation and made very clear she would support efforts from the legislature to identify more funding for colleges and universities, and that’s encouraging,” Henderson said. “But our students simply can’t afford another round of steep tuition hikes. We are pricing them out of an education.”

Resulting from budget cuts during the last recession, tuition rose about 40 percent on average between 2007-2015. At the same time, Oregon’s financial aid program has not kept pace with tuition increases.

Earlier this year, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission projected that community colleges would need \$634 million from the state to maintain services at their current level. The Commission identified increases in costs as the Public Employee Retirement System, new state mandates, and compliance with federal programs.

Community colleges will be working throughout the upcoming session with a coalition of advocates to press for a no-cuts budget of \$634 million.

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