

Ted Kulongoski

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graduates from high school in Oregon and meets a certain academic level and shows need, the state should provide those people with tuition paid for four-year institutions, and for scholarships. Ultimately the only way we'll be able to build a state system of higher education with what we all want, excellence, we've got to address the access issue and provide a way for citizens of this state to go to institutions and not be bankrupt when they come out the other end.

Q: Oregon universities are facing record enrollment rates, and at the same time their funding is being cut. How do you propose that Oregon universities keep a high quality of education?

A: You can't do it the way we're doing it. What we have to look at is an endowment fund. The bulk of the money we're giving is subsidizing the tuition rates. The trouble is there just isn't enough money to do all these pieces, given the current structure of how we fund higher education.

Q: How do you plan on making yourself accessible to students if you're elected?

A: Every position I've ever held, I've never heard anyone say that I'm not accessible. I travel, I go places and I like people. You'll either be sitting in my office in the conference room or I'll be down on your campus with you. Anything I can do to get you on my side and move you in that direction, I'll do. I'm more than happy to partner with students on a lot of these issues. It's not just staying in Salem, it's coming down into campuses and finding what these concerns are.

For a full transcript of this interview, including extra questions, go to www.dailymerald.com.

And students should care about this election if they plan to stay in state. One of the things we've all learned about the recession is Oregon's efforts to diversify have been successful by relying on the high tech industry. The future of Oregon's graduates is the more technical jobs. It's research and development. Oregon graduates want to live here. It's just whether they can find the job that gives them some meaning and purpose in their lives.

Q: Do you think Oregon's education system is adequately preparing students for college?

A: I'm not one who believes that Oregon has chronically funded K-12. (If schools were chronically poorly funded) you couldn't have SAT and ACT scores we have with some of the highest scores in the country. The truth of it is the glass is half full, not half empty. Does that mean we can do better? Yes. Ultimately we need to recognize two things. When we ask for increased student performance standards, it's going to cost more money. Secondly, there's a diverse student population. Bilingual education is going to become a big factor in Oregon.

Q: What should this state do to keep Oregon's top students at in-state colleges and universities?

A: There are a number of things. State universities have to become institutions of excellence. If a student believes that and believes we're striving ahead, I believe they'll stay and go to school here.

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