

SPENDING

Continued from Page A1

state and local funds toward maintaining or increasing levels of funding,” Kelsey Kunkle, co-author of the report said during the Hunt Institute talk.

“But it’s also really important to give this finding within the context that most states still haven’t fully recovered from the 2001 and 2008 recessions.”

Less than a decade ago, Oregon ranked among the bottom of states for per-student spending in higher education, after some of the steepest budget cuts in the country following the Great Recession.

The state has since made a 57% increase in higher education spending per student, eclipsing pre-2008 recession funding levels, Cannon said. The latest report ranks Oregon 36th for per-student funding. State legislators have been upping the funding to higher education over the past several budget cycles.

Cannon says lawmakers are paying attention to workforce needs and the state’s dependence on college programs to provide the degrees and certificates to equip students for the job market.

He’s also seen increased concern about equity, and the fact that low income students, rural students and students of color don’t see the same college completion rates as their more advantaged peers.

Despite increases in state funding, Oregon students still pay an outsized share of college revenue.

Across the country, student tuition makes up about 42% of higher education revenue, roughly double the contribution that tuition provided in 1980.



The Observer, File

Despite a 57% increase in per-student funding over the past decade, Oregon still lags behind the national average in public dollars spent on higher education. Pictured here is Inlow Hall on the campus of Eastern Oregon University.

But Oregon is among 20 states where tuition dollars actually make up the majority of revenue. In 2021, tuition dollars made up 54% of revenue at Oregon’s public colleges and universities. This is down from the nearly 64% that Oregon students shouldered in 2015, but far higher than the percentage of revenue that students contribute in neighboring states. Only 35%

of Washington’s higher education revenue and 20% of California’s revenue come from tuition. Students studying at Oregon’s public universities contribute to a greater share of school revenue than those at community college, which lean more heavily on state appropriations. Tuition revenue makes up about 23% of revenue at community colleges, and 69% at four-year schools.

Oregon also comes up short when it comes to providing state financial aid for students. Financial aid allocations in 2021 amounted to \$574 per full-time student, compared to the national average of \$921, according to the report. Washington allocated more than three times as much as Oregon in financial aid per full-time student, at over \$1,900 in 2021.

“Students in Oregon continue to pay higher than average price tags to access college and university, incurring greater than average debt loads,” Cannon said. “We have a lot of work to do to expand the benefits of postsecondary education more broadly and equitably, and I think that should be a real call to action for Oregonians and Oregon policy makers.”



Photos by Dick Mason/The Observer

Retired Major Gen. Dennis Klein speaks at a National Guard Seven Seals Award ceremony on Saturday, Aug. 6, 2022.



The Seven Seals Award Ceremony was coordinated by Jack Johnson, chair of Area Six of the Oregon Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an agency within the Department of Defense. Johnson is shown speaking at the ceremony on Saturday, Aug. 6, 2022.

HONOR

Continued from Page A1

“We want them to see what their employees do on weekends.”

He said it is important to never forget the vital role employers play in the success of National Guard missions, along with families and the National Guard itself.

“A citizen soldier’s employer is one of three pillars that mutually support their service to their state and nation, and without the sacrifices and support of those employers the missions’ successes would not be possible,” Musgrove said.

The Seven Seals award also recognizes the steps the 3-116th takes to communicate with employers with regard to upcoming missions so that they can have time to plan for extended absences of their employees serving in the National Guard.

“We work hard at opening lines of communication,” Musgrove said.

Musgrove said 400 soldiers have been called out on assignments over the past two years to assist with fighting wildfires, protest violence in Portland, COVID-19 vaccination programs and health care providers treating COVID-19 patients in hospitals.

“These statewide missions required soldiers to mobilize at a moment’s notice, before leaving their families and employers,” he said.

The Seven Seals Award derives its name from the fact there are seven reserve components in the U.S. Armed Forces and each has its own seal.

The Aug. 6 award ceremony was coordinated by Jack Johnson, chair of Area Six of the Oregon Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, which is an agency within the Department of Defense.

MAP

Continued from Page A1

dled well. This not only put the cart before the horse, he said, it raised the worries of lots of people.

“My phone was ringing off the hook, and the emails,” Hansell said, after the state put the map online. Lawmakers were aware the state was working on the map, he said, but the process did not include public input that he was aware of.

Union County Commissioner Paul Anderes is glad the decision to revise the map was made.

“I’m glad that they are going to revisit it,” he said.

The commissioner said Union County has received assurances from the state that local input will be taken the second-time around.

Anderes said that little if any local input was taken when the first risk map was being created.

Anderes said he hopes that Union County Planner Scott Hartell and Emergency Service Manager Nick Vora will be given an opportunity to be involved in the process of creating the Union County portion of the map. Anderes said their firsthand under-

standing of the fire risk in Union County and land-use planning would be a big help in the map creation process.

The map was part of a \$220 million bill — Senate Bill 762 — passed last year to prepare Oregon for worsening, climate change-fueled wildfires.

“The bill was supposed to be helpful but it has not been so far,” said Union County Commissioner Matt Scarfo, who added the intent of SB 762 was to reduce fire risk but it has not so far had that impact.

“Raising insurance rates and lowering property values does not reduce fire risk,” he said.

Vora said the intent of the bill was good, but the problems it has caused were not expected.

“There have been unintended consequences,” he said.

Oregon State Forester Cal Mukumoto said in a statement his agency got specific feedback from 2,000 residents about problems with the risk designations that were assigned by the Oregon Explorer project and said climate

scientists would refine the map and reissue a new version at a later date.

“While we met the bill’s initial deadline for delivering on the map, there wasn’t enough time to allow for the type of local outreach and engagement that people wanted, needed and deserved,” Oregon State Forester Cal Mukumoto said in a statement.

“We know how important it is to get this right.”

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