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# LOCAL NEWS

## PSU Aims for Diversity

Science, technology students recruited

Portland State University is participating in a 5 year, \$2.6 million project funded by the National Science Foundation to double the number of underrepresented minority students who graduate with bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

PSU currently graduates about 40 underrepresented minority students a year in these fields. The goal is to double this number during the course of the project.

Student support will include a summer bridge program, academic services for courses in the sciences, a seminar to broaden experience and enhance knowledge of the curriculum's options, and the opportunity to work with peer and faculty mentors.

The framework of the program at PSU involves recruitment, readiness, retention, and research. Partnerships with K-12 schools in Port-

land, Beaverton, Hillsboro and Gresham will provide access to eligible students.

In addition, research and internship opportunities will help prepare students for graduate school and positions in industry. PSU professors will support the program by serving as research mentors and on a faculty advisory committee.

One-on-one interactions between students and faculty are known to be important contributors to student success.



## Tax Debate Comes to Vote

continued from Front

prop up services that are more needed than ever.

Opponents insist that raising taxes during a recession will just destroy more jobs, and set a precedent that will ruin the business climate in the state.

It can be difficult to get a handle on such dire claims that have been asserted so forcefully. However, the state's Legislative Fiscal Office released a couple of reports that both sides have cited in making their case.

A report by the office paints a dour picture for nearly ever state agency and the people who rely on it, if the measures don't pass.

If the measures fail to pass, community colleges could see their tuition rise by 9 percent and will have to start limiting access to some programs. Students studying English as a second language would get less support. Nearly two thousand inmates would be put on the street, and prison staff would be slashed. The Oregon Commission for the Blind would be put in the red and have to establish a wait list, as it wouldn't be able to meet federal matching obligations. And these are just a few examples.

According to another study from the Legislative Fiscal Office 5 percent of corporations will have higher taxes and only about 2.5 percent of individual filers will pay more, which will move the state from having the 36th highest tax burden to 34th.

The report explains that the state doesn't have a lot good options. Cutting services will reduce economic demand, according to the report. But it also asserts that raising taxes could cause Oregon's employment rate to drop by less than one percent.

The report does note that this all depends on how the state directs the revenue.

"Over the longer term, the net effect of the measures on employ-

ment and income depends critically on how the revenue is used by the public sector," the report states.

He said that labor is often the biggest expense and is usually the first to be cut. Wiggins also argues that the tax increase makes Oregon a less attractive place for investment, which will hurt it in the long run.

"I'm not an anti-tax zealot," said Wiggins, who explains he's fine with an increase on the corporate minimum, which hasn't been upped since 1931, he just feels that state relies too heavily on income tax.

"If something happened to Phil

*Legislative Fiscal Office paints a dour picture for nearly ever state agency and the people who rely on it, if the measures don't pass.*

Knights, we'd be in big trouble," he continued.

But the issue is even bigger for critics of the tax like Wiggins, who contend that the state is growing too fast and will continue to tax businesses.

According to data from the Oregon Employment Department every single industry in Oregon lost jobs between November 2008 and 2009 except for education, health, and state government.

The growth in the last sector is part of the problem, according to critics of the tax hikes. They contend that the Legislature is taking money from businesses that could be creating jobs and then using it to expand government.

However, Bob Wiggins, a general Partner with Mt. Hood Equity Partners, remains uncomfortable with the tax.

His firm invests in companies in their early stages in hopes of making money later. He said that some startups might have an impressive amount of sales on their balance sheet, but still might not be making much, if any, money.

Measure 67 taxes corporations making more than \$500,000 by 0.1 percent of their revenue, which is worrisome to Wiggins.

"That's a hardship because the tax has to come from expenses or we would have to invest more," he said.

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