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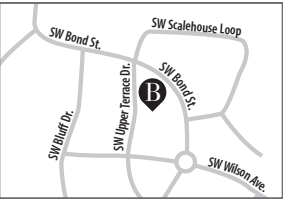
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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

HIGHER EDUCATION

Commission to ask for huge increase in student financial aid

BY SAMI EDGE
The Oregonian

Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission unanimously approved a budget request Thursday that includes a fourfold increase in funding for financial aid grants for Oregon students.

The request for higher education funding in 2023-25 includes a nearly \$780 million increase to the Oregon Opportunity Grant and Oregon Promise, the state's premier financial aid awards. The budget also recommends continued funding for the Oregon Tribal Student Grant, which covers not only tuition but also housing and other college costs for enrolled members of Oregon tribes.

"It is a big investment, but it's an investment we need. It's an investment students have been advocating for for years," said Maggie Gates, legislative director for the Oregon Student Association. "It's just really exciting to see this sort of bold vision finally coming about."

In total, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission is asking for an almost \$2 billion increase in funding,



Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

College graduates are seen in this 2017 photo from the state Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The panel has asked for a four-fold increase in financial aid grants.

up to \$5.3 billion. The request also includes a proposed 10% increase in funds for public universities and a nearly 30% increase for community colleges, though part of that increase is one-time money.

The proposed budget is preliminary. The request goes next to the governor's office, and after that is subject to votes by the 2023 Legislature. Commission staffers don't assume ultimate funding levels will match their requests.

"We do not expect to get everything we're asking for," Ramona Rodamaker, the commission's deputy executive director, said. "In many ways what we're laying out here is a menu of things we would like (state legislators) to invest in and support."

The Oregon Tribal Student Grant was funded for the first time this year, as an effort to help address longstanding inequities that indigenous students face in higher educa-

tion. The Legislature funded it for only one year, but the commission's proposed budget would make that funding ongoing. The commission expected up to 700 tribal members to take advantage of the grant in its first year, but commission staffers said Thursday that only around 400 people have submitted complete applications so far.

The commission is asking for a more than eightfold increase in funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, the state's largest need-based aid award for low-income students. Commissioners want to see an increase from \$200 million in 2021-23 to \$945 million in 2023-25.

Commissioners also voted to ask for \$41 million more for the Oregon Promise grant, which pays community college tuition for Oregon high school graduates and GED earners who meet GPA requirements and enroll in a community college shortly after high school.

Oregon currently lags behind the national average state student aid award of \$921 per full-time student. The state

only gave \$574 in financial aid per full-time student in 2021, according to a new national report. Cannon said that fully funding the budget would help Oregon become one of the top financial aid states in the country, approaching the funding levels of neighboring Washington which spent \$1,900 per-student in 2021.

Oregon's community colleges asked the higher education commission for a 44% spending bump this year to help cover the cost of inflation, loss of federal pandemic aid and budget shortages caused by a steep downturn in enrollment during the pandemic.

The commission gave them a compromise. The proposed budget includes a 20% increase in ongoing funding to \$855 million and a one-time increase of \$50 million to help colleges transition away from those federal funds, instead of having to make steep cuts at once.

Public universities are proposed to get a more modest bump. The budget request includes a 10.3% increase in public university spending to \$992 million.

EUGENE | SUSPICION OF DUII

Electric vehiclemaker removes CEO

BY MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

Eugene electric vehicle manufacturer Arcimoto announced the removal Friday of its CEO, Mark Frohnmayer, naming him the company's chief vision officer.

Arcimoto has named executive Jesse Fittipaldi as interim CEO. Fittipaldi, who joined Arcimoto in 2015, has most recently served as chief strategy officer, according to a news release.

On July 15, Eugene police arrested Frohnmayer on suspicion of driving under the influence of intoxicants.



Officers cited Frohnmayer in downtown Eugene, according to Melinda McLaughlin, a spokesperson for the Eugene Police Department. She said Frohnmayer was driving a three-wheeled motorcycle, similar to the vehicles made by

Arcimoto, but she couldn't say for sure if it was one of the company's models. Police observed that Frohnmayer "appeared intoxicated" when stepping off the motorcycle, McLaughlin said. She said he complied with officers' instructions.

Arcimoto didn't disclose the reason for the leadership change, but in a regulatory fil-

ing the company said it had actually removed Frohnmayer from the CEO role a week earlier. Frohnmayer is the company's largest shareholder, with about 20% of its stock. Frohnmayer would not say either. "The company as a blanket policy makes no comment on personal matters of employees," he said.

Catalytic converter crime ring busted

BY SAVANNAH EADENS
The Oregonian

A months-long investigation by the Beaverton Police Department may have completely dismantled a local organized crime ring responsible for a large portion of catalytic converter thefts up and down the West Coast, police said Thursday.

Two alleged ringleaders and at least 12 of their suspected accomplices were indicted July 29 by a Washington County grand jury on dozens of aggravated theft, racketeering and money laundering charges.

The investigation began in late 2021 when detectives said Tanner Lee Hellbusch,

32, of Beaverton, was running an illegal fencing operation by posing as a legitimate business buying and selling catalytic converters. In March, police said they pulled over Hellbusch with more than 100 stolen catalytic converters, worth about \$80,000 on the black market.

Hellbusch's arrest led detectives to the person they believe is the top of the crime enterprise: Brennan Patrick Doyle, 32, of Lake Oswego.

The investigation came to a head in late July when police searched eight locations, including a rented lakefront house in Lake Oswego, where they arrested Doyle and said they found 3,000 catalytic

converters, hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, a high-end car and jewelry.

Doyle, Hellbusch and the 12 other not-yet-publicly-named defendants are accused of trafficking more than 44,000 stolen catalytic converters with an estimated street value of more than \$22 million since January.

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