

IFS STATEMENT TO HECC AUGUST 2016

11 August, 2016

To: Higher Education Coordinating Commission

From: Jeff Dense, IFS President

Chair Bryant, Executive Director Cannon and Members of the Commission,

For the record my name is Jeff Dense, President of the Interinstitutional Faculty Senate (IFS). We are the duly elected representatives of the faculty of Oregon's public universities.

Earlier this week I attended the Oregon Coastal Economic Summit at the Mill Casino in North Bend, OR where I moderated a panel on The Business of Craft Breweries: The Economic Impact of Craft Beer on Oregon's Coast. The panel provided an opportunity to demonstrate the collaborative spirit necessary for higher education in Oregon to flourish, as I was joined by Dr. Thomas Shellhamer, the Nor' Wester Professor of Fermentation Science at Oregon State University. Dr. Shellhamer is one of the world's leading authorities on the science of making beer, and in partnership we were able to highlight the educational component underlying one of Oregon's fastest growing industries. There are a plethora of wide ranging opportunities, including craft beer, to foster strong working relationships between Oregon's public universities that will invariably benefit a number of Oregon communities, and moreover, our most important asset-our students.

Given IFS inviolable focus on students, IFS wishes to publicly support several of the Policy Packages the Commission will consider later today. In particular, Policy Package #001, centered on increased funding of the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and Policy Package #110, aimed at improving transparency and consistency in credit transfer between Oregon's colleges and universities. Oregon cannot, and will not, be able to reach its full potential if college remains an unaffordable dream for our most needy citizens. Moreover, the ability of students to seamlessly transfer between and among community colleges and universities will be buttressed by a clearly understood and easily navigable system of credit transfer. These two issues have been long highlighted by IFS leadership and representatives on HECC-led workgroups as holding significant promise to benefit students statewide as they seek to contribute to the future of our great state.

While a number of the other Policy Packages being considered by the Commission today, in tandem with the above isolated packages, hold significant promise in benefitting the state's long term goals, as articulated in HECC's Strategic Plan, we are realistic as to the political, economic and legal barriers HECC's Agency Budget Request will confront during the 2017 legislative session. In particular, the results of the upcoming November elections, along with the specter of the Oregon Supreme Court's PERS decision, may limit the size of the budgetary 'pie'. Irrespective of the winds of political and legal change, IFS remains, and will remain committed to serving the best interests of our most valuable resource-our students.

Thank you for your time, and I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.