



## OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

### For Immediate Release

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### **Governor Brown on Tuition Costs: Rhetoric and Record vs. Reality**

**GOVERNOR'S RHETORIC:** "I am deeply concerned that Oregon's public universities may impose tuition and fee increases significantly greater than 5%..." [[Letter from Gov. Brown to Higher Education Coordinating Commission, April 11, 2017](#)]

**GOVERNOR'S RECORD:** Governor Brown's recommended budget set higher education funding levels \$100 million below what university leaders said was needed to hold down tuition costs.

"Oregon higher education leaders stepped up the rhetoric Wednesday, saying Gov. Kate Brown's recommended budget plan for public universities would 'ensure tuition increases that will make a college degree out of reach for many Oregonians.'" [[The Oregonian, Jan 18, 2017](#)]

"To keep tuition increases below five percent at most universities, and also preserve most financial aid and student support services, state investment in the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) will need to increase by at least \$100 million above the Governor's Budget - in the 2017-19 biennium. [[Letter from higher education leaders to Governor Brown, Jan 18, 2017](#)]

**REALITY:** Oregon's public universities are struggling underneath the weight of rapidly increasing labor costs, including employee health plans and Oregon's Public Employee's Retirement Program (PERS). Oregon's higher education system desperately needs leadership from this Legislature to address the cost drivers contributing to tuition increases.

**WATCH:** Dialogue between Rep. Gene Whisnant (R-Sunriver) and Oregon State University President Ed Ray on the factors behind the rising cost of higher education. President Ray outlined several cost drivers that are exacerbating college affordability problems, including: increasing employee health care costs under PEBB, increasing pension costs under PERS and collective bargaining challenges.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxnbftZNbm0>

**STATEMENT FROM REP. WHISNANT:** “I have dedicated a significant amount of my legislative career working to help bring down the cost of higher education in Oregon. While I appreciated Governor Brown’s comments earlier this week, I think it is long past time for lawmakers to take a hard look at some of the cost drivers that have led to tuition increases and find a way to provide some relief. We have to get serious about bringing down these costs if we want to hold down tuition increases for our students.”

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