

June 4, 2009

Letter to the Editor

The Legislative budget proposed by the Joint Ways and Means co-chairs on May 18<sup>th</sup> is a slap in the face to out of work Oregonians who have returned to community colleges to get their careers and futures back on track. We continue to hear heartbreaking student stories of family sacrifice so they could return to college and learn new skills. With recent Oregonian headlines touting the effectiveness of community colleges to help turn our economy around and put heads of families back to work, why does it make any sense to break the legs of Oregon's community colleges?

At Linn-Benton Community College we have been in budget reduction mode since the State reduced our current year funding by \$444,714 last fall. We have aimed low – balancing our budget at an allocation of \$440M state-wide for community colleges. We have eliminated jobs; cut programs, services and hours; increased tuition and fees and asked our employees to take significant salary reductions. Now, we are looking at an additional estimated \$708,400 reduction.

Continuing to erode support for Oregon's community colleges sends the message to our local families – you are on your own. At a time when we should be embracing "recession families", we are marginalizing them. The students who come to us for retraining are proud, energetic, focused on their studies and hard working – all the values we want in our workforce.

If the May 18th Legislative proposal is adopted this month and LBCC responds with additional reductions, we will lose significant Federal student financial aid funds that would have flowed to our two counties, we will keep more families in poverty, and we will make it more difficult to Go Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita Cavin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rita Cavin, Ph.D.  
President