

TESTIMONY to the SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
February 28, 2017

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Honorable Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

I am Debra Thatcher, president of Umpqua Community in Roseburg. Thank you for your time today to speak to you about UCC's request for funding to continue in our recovery from the tragic events of October 1, 2015. With me today is Susan Taylor, executive director of the UCC Foundation and author of many of the grants and requests that have been developed over the past year and a half. Susan was here the last time UCC testified and has been a constant advocate throughout our recovery process. I will speak briefly, and we will both be available to answer your questions.

First, I would sincerely like to thank you and the entire Oregon Legislature for everything that has been done to help UCC during this difficult period. We are fortunate to have a legislature with compassionate members who recognized our need and came to our aid. Legislative funds so critically needed were used to pay for staff to help with threat management, IT security and network upgrades, security guards, installation of security equipment, and safety training. We would not be in the place we are today without the financial and non-financial assistance provided to us from all across the state. The Oregon Legislature's leadership in this area was critical to our success and to ensuring our continued mission to educate the residents of Douglas County. We would also like to thank Senator Jeff Kruse for being the chief sponsor of this request.

Our college serves a community that is chiefly rural. Our students are primarily non-traditional – single parents, displaced workers, veterans and individuals underprepared for college. These students and the Douglas County community rely on UCC as the sole postsecondary institution in the county to meet all of their diverse needs.

On October 1, 2015, the unthinkable happened on our campus. At the end of that tragic day, our campus was forever changed by the horrible actions of a troubled individual. Lives were changed. Futures were altered. Families were torn apart. Our campus has worked hard since that terrible day to get back to our mission of educating students, but it has been a struggle. The devastation to our campus goes

well beyond those directly impacted by this event. Even today, our campus community is struggling to get to a place we poignantly call our “new normal.”

Right now, a year and a half after this pivotal event, there are still times that the campus community doesn't feel safe. Loud noises receive extra attention. Regular fire drills cause students, staff and faculty to flinch in remembering that fateful day. And unfortunately, for a modest rural community college, there isn't enough money in our general fund to pay for all of the things that we couldn't have predicted we would need in order to restore community confidence and the feeling for all who come to UCC that our campus is a safe place. Today, I am here to serve as the voice for students who have expressed some of their fears with me personally—and have shared what we can do to help make them feel safer at UCC.

Before Oct 1, 2015, we didn't think about designing the school for the unexpected and unthinkable. UCC is a very open campus that was planned and built more than 50 years ago, before these types of tragedies were – dare I say it – common. It is situated in a safe, rural location. We didn't think about having our locks work from the inside, with and without keys. We, and many of our sister campuses, didn't think about having an up-to-date public address system to be used in time of crisis. We didn't think about having visible security officers on campus that would both handle unusual issues and create a sense of safety and security for our students. We didn't know we would need a network security specialist to ensure our network and information systems could withstand surges in activity. Our campus has been lucky to have your support in setting many of these safety and security measures in place.

When Susan and UCC's Interim President, Dr. Walter Nolte, were here last year, they talked about the process of creating a resilient campus and how UCC is moving toward recovery. They also provided the committee a preview of services that may need to be extended into the 2017-2019 biennium, identifying five positions for extended funding. Since their testimony, in an effort to be good stewards of public funds, our team has re-examined our progress and needs and, as a result, we have removed one position from the forecast of needs for the next biennium.

Our request today is for two items that are crucial for our campus and items for which we cannot get funding from any other source. We are asking you today to move forward a request for three full-time campus security patrols and an IT

Network Systems Security Specialist. We have received funding from several sources since 2015 and have explored multiple possibilities of funding for these two items. In fact, before we developed this request, we exhausted every other avenue we could. To date, we have received funding from the U.S. Department of Education, U.S Department of Justice, grants, donations, insurance reimbursement, and sub-awards in partnership with other agencies. Some of the things that were funded by these other sources are recovery-related positions, contractual services, and equipment and supplies such as property damage repair, surveillance equipment, and a 15-month lease on three temporary modular buildings for displaced staff and students from the affected building. But, even with all of this assistance, our campus still has a few needs to reach a place where we feel fully functional.

The security personnel are agents who are needed to patrol our campus and off-site locations. The three full-time equivalent positions provide protection of our property and college community. They are a visible, uniformed presence on campus, providing a real feeling of safety and security for the entire campus community. They supervise our surveillance cameras and dispatch services, oversee our security systems, and coordinate with the Douglas County Sheriff's office and other law enforcement services on behalf of UCC. These positions bring great peace of mind to our students and staff. In preparation for this testimony, I reached out to Jantyne Bunce, peer mentor and president of the UCC chapter of the honor society, Phi Theta Kappa, to ask her about our student body's perspective on having security personnel on campus. Here are her words:

*Statistically, the shooting should have never happened here. Statistically, a shooting will never happen here again. However, our new reality is that a tragic shooting did occur, and that has caused a lingering anxiety for many students. The presence of security personnel on campus lessens that anxiety. Because we know help is just around the corner, we come to class and get involved on campus at a much higher level than we would have if we didn't have the constant presence of the guards.*

The request for an IT Network Systems Security specialist is critical for our campus. Our systems were both overburdened and taxed heavily by the impact of this event. During the day of and day after the event, our website had over 59,000 hits

and was actually taken offline for some time. This event exposed a need for both shoring up our network and including IT as an integral part of our security measures and planning. Currently, every position in the College's Information Technology Department that focuses on network infrastructure and systems support is a single point of failure. Due to our limited budget and minimal staffing, Umpqua needs an additional person to assist with network infrastructure and security systems planning, implementation, updates, and upgrades. This position is vital in providing support to achieve College security goals. Specifically, this position would implement a fiber system upgrade as a part of the campus safety and security plan, ensure that our system is secure, and serve as a resource for our security measures.

In preparation for this testimony, I reached out to our head of IT, Dan Yoder, to explain why this position is so critical to the safety and security of our entire campus system. He said,

*This position is a key component of our ability to accomplish the network infrastructure work currently in progress, thanks to legislative funding. It will help us successfully complete the implementation of network security protocols and monitoring of added security and messaging systems so that our permanent staff will be able to take over as we move into the future. These are complex systems with complex integrations and requirements, so this position will be needed for an additional two years to ensure the full training and cross-training of permanent staff.*

To summarize, we are here to make a limited request for funding of four crucial positions to transition UCC to a stable position by the end of this biennium. After the 2017-2019 biennium, we anticipate greater stability and are confident that the services provided by these positions will either no longer be needed or will be able to be paid out of our general fund. We sincerely appreciate your time and attention to our presentation and ask that you consider moving this request forward. Thank you.