

instructors, more classrooms, more laboratories and more financial aid for students. Oregon has made a good start with its 2007-09 budget, which reversed a trend and allowed resumption of investments in community colleges.

Chemeketa Community College will work to enroll its share of the 106,000 students needed to meet the goals. Already in place is an expanded recruitment effort, which has resources to demonstrate to middle and high school students the value of finishing high school and going on to

college for professional-technical training or a bachelor's degree.

The costs associated with college enrollment are barriers to many potential students. To address that issue, Chemeketa will provide more financial aid and keep tuition affordable.

Our efforts to attract more students are working; enrollment for fall term is up 4.5 percent. To meet the goal, the college must maintain that level of growth.

In some cases, additional public investment will be needed to meet the enrollment goal. As readers of the Statesman Journal have

learned, Chemeketa is exploring what building replacements and new facilities may be needed to provide adequately for students and the future needs of our work force. In most cases, this will require new revenue, but this does not always mean property taxpayers will foot the bill. Chemeketa has taken the lead in developing ways for users and partner/tenants to pay for facility improvements.

Recently, the college announced plans for businesses and business organizations to share the cost of a new Center for Business and Industry.

Even in its current crowded quarters in downtown Salem, the center provides direct support for small businesses where most of the growth will come in the next decade. Through the center, Chemeketa provides contracted training for businesses and their workers, most recently in the food-processing and metals and manufacturing industries.

The challenges facing us are significant, but so are the talents we employ to deal with them.

*Cheryl Roberts is the president of Chemeketa Community College.*

# Legislature works to meet benchmark goals

Oregon Benchmarks are nationally and internationally renowned. But what has been their relationship to how the state decides to spend the taxpayers' money?

Until 2001-03, there was no relationship. Since that time, the Legislature has made a concerted effort to relate budgeted expenditures to quantifiable outcomes. Your money goes toward programs that actually produce measurable results, a more businesslike model of conducting the state's work.

Oregon's resident-based benchmarks are straightforward goals that make sense to Oregonians.



**KURT SCHRADER**

Oregon  
Legislature

How do we get there? There should be a relationship between long-term goals for our residents and business community and the spending of taxpayer dollars. At the very least, there should be intermediate key performance measures that relate budget priorities to our long-term benchmark goals.

Oregon's Legislature started this process in 2001 with our Legislative Fiscal Office, the Executive Budget and Management Office and the Oregon Progress Board. As Oregon suffered through the worst recession in state history, it was apparent to the Legislature's Ways and Means budget folks that we could not afford to be all

things to all people.

Programs had to be prioritized and measurable outcomes met with taxpayer dollars if we were to enhance our opportunity to meet our Oregon Benchmarks. Agencies and educational partners were asked to develop actual outcomes, not outputs, for the money invested.

Oregon's agencies and educational partners presented the measures, and your elected policymakers refined them to decide their initial framework. It has taken several biennia to develop these outcomes to make sure they are relevant, meaningful measures.

Today, instead of budgeting by testimonial, we are asking agencies, "How did you do in meeting your 15 or 25 performance measures?" Then we decide whether further investments in particular programs are warranted.

For the Economic Development Department, this often means questions like, "How many jobs were created or retained by your spending? Was it your work or the private sector that really made that difference?"

For the Oregon Department of Transportation, the adopted measurable outcomes for investments should reduce congestion and speed the travel of business freight in our state.

In the 21st century, is it acceptable to have only 75 percent to 80 percent of our children graduate from high school or 55 percent to 60 percent of university students graduate, or 27 percent and 13 percent of community college students

finish their associate's degree or transfer to a four-year university, respectively?

Your Ways and Means budget committee members now can be more objective in their analysis of how your money is being spent. We also can ask, "Are there mitigating factors that give us these results? Would more money give us better results? Would a different program give us better results?"

Last session, our goal was to require a measurable improvement in the agencies' performance numbers for any increase in agency budgets above inflation or any new programs.

While we realize it is very difficult to measure results quantitatively for all our benchmarks, your Legislature is beginning to understand "that which gets measured gets done." This is nothing short of an organizational culture change, and culture change does not come easily.

If you are interested in what performance outcomes are currently thought to represent the main responsibilities of the agencies and our educational partners, visit the Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office's Web site. They were voted on as part of every agency's budget. This is an iterative process, only a few years old. Help us get it right so your tax dollars really help us reach Oregon's benchmark goals in the coming decades.

*Sen. Kurt Schrader, D-Canby, is a co-chairman of the Oregon Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee.*

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