



To: Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

From: The Associated Students of Western Oregon University

Date: March 18, 2013

Re: The Oregon Student Access Commission Budget

Good morning Co-chair Komp, Co-chair Monroe, and members of the committee. My name is Jessica Hand and I am a student at Western Oregon University. I also sit on the Oregon Student Association Board of Directors. I am here today to speak in support of an increase in the Oregon Opportunity Grant and the Oregon Student Access Commission Budget. I would also like to share with you why we believe a strong OSAC budget is vital to bridging the gap between high school and post-secondary education.

The last report that came out stated that WOU receives around 1500 awards annually, specially 1,157 awards in 2011-12. The Oregon Opportunity Grant is a significant access tool for getting students from rural Oregon and low income families into our classrooms. I am so proud that WOU has the Undergraduate Exchange Program that keeps tuition stable for 4 years. We know how much tuition is going to cost at Western and we need the OOG to support our education. I know many of my peers wouldn't be able to finish their degrees without the grant. Unfortunately, we know that statewide only 20% of students to apply and qualify receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant; this is why we need at least the Co-chair's recommended increase in the OOG to even begin to support more qualified Oregonians.

OSA always supports the entire OSAC budget, not just the Oregon Opportunity Grant, because we know the value the entire commission brings to students across Oregon. OSAC also supports \$13 million plus in private scholarships that incentivize academic excellence and access to our community colleges and universities. Without the administrative positions associated with the OSAC budget we couldn't bring in that additional scholarship funding that goes directly to students.

I could talk about each of OSAC's programs, but I want to add just one more piece on the importance of the Student Parent Childcare Fund. This fund is so important to student parents

that we know around the state. Childcare can be as high as 10,000 a year, which is like paying tuition twice. And if we can't people to go to school for one tuition payment there is no way we are encouraging student parents to go without an award like the student parent childcare grant. Furthermore we are asking each of you to consider an increase of 277,000 dollars to the grant this biennium. If we want to fund the approximate 400 maximum need families that apply for the grant each year by 2025; the year we want to get to 40-40-20. Then we need to increase the Student Parent Childcare Grant by 277,000 dollars each biennium. Please help Oregon families, Oregon students, and our workforce by supporting a strong OSAC budget this biennium.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to take any questions.