



Hello Chair Monroe and Chair Komp, my name is Alexandra Flores-Quilty. I am a student at the University of Oregon, and also sit on the Oregon Students of Color Coalition Board.

In Oregon, students are paying more and getting less for our education.

In our community colleges we have seen a significant increase in enrollment, however there has also been a significant increase in costs. In just the last 5 years we have seen tuition rise over 15% for community colleges.

This is not exclusive thought to our community colleges, but is also happening in our universities. The average cost of a 4-year degree in Oregon is \$29,248.75. This is much higher than the average cost of an Oregon 4 year degree back in 1989 which was \$8,000.

At the university of Oregon, where I attend school, we are significantly over the state average at \$33,716.25. In 6 years we have seen a 73.2% increase in tuition at the University of Oregon, let me repeat that a 73.2% increase as UO has been getting ready to "prove institutional board readiness." I won't digress into why we are concerned about costs incurred if we move to an institutional board model, but students will be back to talk with you about our concerns.

While we are leading the state for the most unaffordable tuition, the quality of my education does not seem to be increasing. Classes of 400+ students are a norm, departments are understaffed, and more and more students are having staying 5 -6 years in school versus the traditional 4. They are having to stay longer because they are working part/full time and can't take a full class load at the same time; or having to stay longer because our faculty are understaffed they have to wait multiple terms before taking classes needed to graduate; or their financial aid does not cover the entire cost of their tuition and they are taking light class loads because that's all their financial aid covers.

The Oregon Opportunity Grant, Oregon's only need based aid, only rewards 20% of qualifying Oregon students. What does that mean? That means that every year 80% of the Oregon students who apply and qualify for the Oregon Opportunity Grant DO NOT RECEIVE IT. This is unacceptable. Not only that, but after the 2011 legislative session, the awards given are flatlined at \$1,950 a year. Just to remind you the average cost of an Oregon 4-year degree is

just over \$29,000. If you do the math I think you will quickly see that that does not add up to cover the cost of even half of a student's degree.

Oregon unemployment is around 8.4%. We are 39th in the nation. This is the time to reinvest in education if we want to get Oregon back on track. We need people to go back to school and to pursue higher education. Investing in higher education is investing in Oregon and Oregon's economy.

I am tired of seeing friends struggle with their grades because they are working two jobs at the same time of being a student just so that they can stay in school. I am tired of seeing friends choose paying for textbooks or paying for food. I am tired of worrying and wondering every term if I, myself, will be back the next term because I am barely making my rent and tuition bills.

An Oregon college degree right now is not affordable and it is not accessible. And it is disproportionately unaffordable and inaccessible to marginalized communities. Communities of color, low-income communities, immigrants, and the LGBTQ community. An Oregon college degree is not affordable and it is not accessible, but it can be.

We NEED \$850 million for OUS, which will just keep tuition at CSL increases.

Right now in Oregon, students and young people and non-traditional students are wanting to see more support for higher education and more funding. We shouldn't be an afterthought in your budget. I think that was evident this last year when the Oregon Student Association broke records when we registered 50,750 students and young people to vote. Students are interested in who makes our funding decisions and we want quality education we can afford. We want to see an Oregon government who is prioritizing our futures and the future of Oregon. And we want to see a budget this legislative session that reflects that.

Thank you.