



Hello Chair Monroe and Chair Komp, for the Record my name is Dave Coburn I am the Legislative Director at the Associated Students of Portland State University and an Oregon Student Association Board of Directors Member. I am testifying on the impact of tuition increases. Access and Affordability is an essential component to realizing our 40-40-20 goals.

What is becoming increasingly clear is that a college education is already not affordable or accessible, many students are unable to have their basic needs fulfilled and attend college. A recent piece on NBC showcased student poverty and demonstrated the dire need of students specifically at Portland State University and the difficulty involved with accessing these resources.

It is unrealistic to expect homeless and hungry students to take on an even bigger burden in order to complete their higher education. Student debt currently exceeds credit card debt averaging more than 25,000 dollars at PSU and Nationwide. This debt cannot be discharged in bankruptcy; raising tuition will result in students left with debt they cannot discharge and no degree or possibility of completing their degree, saddling them with debt that they cannot realize any benefit from.

The hyperinflationary nature of higher education both in Oregon and nationally makes financial planning for degree completion difficult, tuition at Portland State University has risen 24.5% over the past five years. Portland State Administration has openly acknowledged that large tuition increases produces adverse effects on enrollment. An OUS study shows that tuition increases of 6-8% negatively impact freshman participation rates, the governors recommended budget would result in these 6-8% increases. In order to achieve 40-40-20 it is essential to increase participation in higher education, it is difficult to conceive how significant movement towards the 40-40-20 can be achieved with a pattern of continuous disinvestment in higher education.

Further any tuition increase is likely to push some students out of higher education in addition to the already negatively impacted freshman participation rates. Tuition increases represent a signal to traditionally marginalized communities that higher education will remain out of reach. It is not enough to increase need-based financial aid the hyper-inflationary nature of tuition and steady state disinvestment must be addressed. Currently four out of five students that qualify for the Oregon Opportunity Grant don't receive it. The situation may be worse than this statistic suggests since our assessment of who is qualified is determined by who turns in an application, and repeated rejection may cause some qualified individuals to simply not apply believing that the application only represents consumption of time and not a possibility of receiving additional funds to access higher education.

Additionally some students are discouraged from seeking higher educational opportunities by an economic phenomenon known as sticker shock. Some potential students are so shocked by the price of higher education that they do not pursue it believing that it is not worth the cost or that it is beyond their means, higher education is out of reach for a growing portion of the populace.

As a student government officer I hear stories of student hunger, student debt, and anxiety about tuition daily. Surrounded by these stories my conscience compels me to ask for a budget and policies that reflect the needs and stories of those whom I am tasked with representing today, with that in mind I implore the legislature to utilize its resources and policy making power to make a zero percent tuition increase possible. Today I ask you to support an OUS budget that is \$850 million and help us flat line tuition increases and give Oregonians an education they can afford.