



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Nick Fish, Commissioner
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
Steve Novick, Commissioner

February 10, 2014

Representative Chris Harker, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
900 Court St. NE, Hearing Room D
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for House Bill 4116

Dear Chair Harker and Members of the Committee:

We write to offer our support for HB 4116, which funds Aspirations to College pilot programs. Affordable and accessible higher education is a major driver and sustainer of a diversified and healthy economy and citizenry.

HB 4116 supports competitive grant pilot projects for community colleges throughout the state. These projects provide access and support to students from low-income families and first-generation college students. By starting in high school with early support and training, these programs have a proven track record as evidenced by Portland Community College's (PCC) Future Connect.

The City of Portland provides financial support to Future Connect that is matched by private foundation resources and has been tremendously popular. Every year, PCC's Future Connect provides a path to higher education for 200 low-income and first-generation college students in Multnomah County. Future Connect invests in students' success by providing scholarship money, college success coaches, career guidance classes, college orientations, and access to internships and workshops. Over 70 percent of participating students continue to their second year of college.

Programs like Future Connect and the Aspirations to College pilot programs set students up for success and make higher paid skilled employment attainable for a new generation of Oregonians. We respectfully urge your support for HB 4116.

Sincerely,

Charlie Hales
Mayor

Dan Saltzman
Commissioner

Amanda Fritz
Commissioner

Steve Novick
Commissioner

Nick Fish
Commissioner