



635 NE Dekum St, Portland, OR, 97211 | (503) 286-0477 | www.orstudents.org | @OregonStudents

April 6th, 2015

To: Ways and Means Joint Subcommittee on Education
From: Justin Warren
RE: Funding for Community Colleges

Co-Chair Komp, Co-Chair Monroe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Justin Warren and I am a first generation college student at Central Oregon Community College and a member of the Oregon Student Association. I am testifying to you about the barriers placed on me due to the cost of higher education and loan services.

I chose to attend Central Oregon Community College because as a low income college student I am able to afford college through grants and working two jobs without having to take out loans. I am close to completing my Associates of Art Oregon Transfer Degree. If I plan to continue on my path towards my career, I know I am going to have to transfer to a University, obtain my Bachelor's degree, and be forced to take out tens of thousands of dollars in student loans. This is not something that makes me feel confident in continuing my education.

With the rising price of tuition I have witnessed firsthand friends and loved ones graduate on average with \$27,000 in debt. I see them struggle monthly to try and make ends meet with their loan payments, and I refuse to take out loans and put myself in the same situation. With the current proposed \$4 a credit increase on my campus I know that next year I would be forced to stop attending school or force myself in to insurmountable debt. I do not believe that I should have to choose between the life I aspire to have and the life of debt we are forced towards in this free nation. The idea of stopping my education and my aspirations due to financial insecurity worries me incredibly with the current economy and the need to have post-secondary education.

I know my story is the story of hundreds of other students across the state that are being priced out of an education because of the rising costs. Our state needs to prioritize education and invest in students. Please take necessary steps in order to fund our community colleges in the least at \$560 million and our public universities at \$755 million

Thank you,

Justin Warren
Central Oregon Community College