

WOU wants to be the most affordable university in Oregon.

Representative Chair McLean and subcommittee members, thank you for the chance to speak today. My name is Scott Beaver and I am a mathematics professor at Western Oregon University (WOU). WOU is a small regional university. We are an access institution and admit a very high proportion of applicants. We strive to serve underrepresented groups, including lower-income folks. One way that WOU can do that is through remissions – WOU funds set aside by WOU to assist students in the payments of their tuition and fees.

This is about access to a better life for students. An additional \$120 million in funding for higher education will help ensure that WOU and other public Oregon four-year colleges can both keep tuition hikes under 5% and also provide sufficient remissions to students in need to maintain or improve access.

Those who benefit from remissions can graduate and become successful and help keep the Oregon talent pool deep. They may be first-generation college students with dreams of a better life. They may be returning students with families and obligations who – again - dream of a better life as part of a community of professionals.

Many WOU students avail themselves of student success, support, or enrichment programs. WOU's Multicultural Student Services and Programs, The Safe Zone Program, The Child Development Center, services for non-traditional students, and Abby's House – Center for Equity and Gender Justice are examples of great programs running on lean budgets but who nevertheless may feel downward budget pressure and for whom cuts would send the very wrong message to the students who need those services.

As a faculty member, I see every day the positive impact that being able to attend and afford and accessible and supportive college has on students' well-being and future earning power. I encourage you to make a strong statement in support of our students and their futures, and support better funding for universities.