

Dear members of the education committee,

My name is Kayley Arpaia and I am a student at Western Oregon University as well as a member of our schools Incidental Fee Committee and a leader on our campus.

Today I am asking you to vote yes on HB 3012 which will strengthen the existing legislation allowing student control over the student incidental fee.

Our campus student fee is so vital to students, and meets the needs of students in a unique way because it is the only source of revenue that students have democratic control over. Some of the amazing services and groups that the fee funds on my campus are the food pantry, student leadership opportunities, jobs for students, salaries for staff, free transportation services, creative arts, campus events, providing funding for accessibility, childcare, student government, student clubs, and so much more.

That's why this bill is so important to me. On my campus, I have been involved in a multitude of areas. One in particular is the Student Activities Board. This opportunity has helped me meet so many people, form strong relationships with staff who have become a huge part of my support system, and get to have experiences I could have never thought possible. As an out of state student, on campus engagement has been vital to feeling safe and at home in a place where I originally knew no one. In summer of 2020, I was informed that I would be losing all of my IFC funded jobs without any additional support or guidance from higher administration. Not only would I be losing my job, but I had to find extra money to afford an online tech fee. Luckily, the previous years IFC committee was able to come together and fight to have administrators fund the IFC funded areas and I got my job back, but it showed me how quickly we can lose control as students. We pay thousands of dollars and to take away our jobs while adding a mysterious fee that they could not explain (and to this day have not been transparent about) is devastating. I was lucky enough to get my job back but I was worried I was going to have to decide between dropping out and paying rent. Being on the IFC committee this year has afforded me the opportunity to hear student testimony and understand how this affects others. One student, due to the loss of employment, lost her apartment due to not being able to make rent and was living in her car for all of Fall term in order to keep attending school. Another student whose tuition is subsidized by Oregon had to scramble to produce hundreds of dollars to pay the online course fee. Western Oregon University did not include the online course/online tech fee as a part of tuition so it was seen as an additional fee and not covered. She had to scramble to produce money she did not have while already struggling to help her family pay bills. The administration tried to take away our democratic control of our fees and screwed students over in the process.

I love my school and I love the people who I have met and the experiences I have been extremely fortunate to have. However, it is extremely difficult to go to school knowing of some of the issues that I believe HB 3012 could help solve.

Please vote yes on HB 3012, and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kayley Arpaia