

# Community College Support Fund Legislative submission to Ways and Means April 17, 2021

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To the Committee,

There are lots of ways to persuade an audience. At RCC, I teach public speaking and I also teach slam poetry and spoken word. My students have asked me send along these messages:

Community Colleges are the backbone of our communities.

We are the bridge between a starting point and someone's finishing line to their future.

But that can not/will not be possible without the full support of the Community College Support Fund at \$702 million.

We must NOT balance the budget on the backs of the students. Our students have suffered enough having dealt with the pandemic, lost jobs and homes, deadly fires sweeping through their cities, and that is just the beginning.

And if you think I'm simply paying lip service to these issues that you've heard of before....

Let me be clear, I'm talking about these issues because my students have spoke about them first hand in my public speaking classes.

In speeches so eloquently written and researched they shed tears while describing

Losing loved ones to covid 19 while we offer them no health services, no safe place to shelter after a sexual assault, no band-aids to heal a wound

Living and taking classes in their cars, drive to work in the drivers seat, class in the passenger seat, sleep and eat in the back seat.

Seeking wifi hot spots wherever they can

Attending NA and AA, maybe because they are dealing with PTSD from being in the military and coming to RCC was the only thing to keep them from, ya...we won't go there

Because sometimes it's not just about an education, it's about building community at community college

We try to feed them through donations at Ossie's Cupboard, but 1 box of food every other term isn't enough

Reaching out and finding people that won't make you feel so alone

When Zoom is all you've got, it's a blessing after a year of stay-at-home.

Clubs and counseling and instructors that care

That see you for who you are and the talents you can share

We are more than a dot on the map of Oregon.

We are a living, breathing, thriving institution that supports one another and seeks to do better each and every day from the day before.

We are OSPREYS... students who soar.

We are Rogue Community College.

Okay...it's longer than 2 minutes, but after I didn't get to speak I went back and added a little bit to it. Thank you so much for the opportunity to add this written testimony today.

And as I end each class, Namaste.

~Marina Whitchurch