

Honorable co-chairs and esteemed members of the committee, my name is Kathryn Long, and I teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at Clackamas Community College. Students in our program transition into numerous other programs at the college, such as Dental Assistant, CNC Operator, Automotive, Welding, and Horticulture.

One of my students plans to enter our Nursing program. Another student wants to earn a transfer degree. While some students earned degrees in their home country and are interested in improving their English skills to find a better job here, others aim to communicate more effectively with their children's teachers or others in the community.

Enrollment in our ESOL program is back to pre-pandemic levels. We need to maintain equitable, innovative, and responsive learning environments for our students who are returning to in-person instruction. They seek to increase their English language proficiency while building digital literacy skills so that they can thrive in new hybrid working conditions.

The Community College Support Fund needs to be \$855 million, and we need an increase in Oregon Opportunity Grants to \$300 million so that our students can improve their lives and contribute to a more diverse, productive society. Without that level of funding, community colleges will see cuts to critical programs – like ESOL – and increases of tuition over 3.5%. Communities can't afford either of these at a time when colleges will be needed more than ever to serve those who face the greatest barriers to economic stability.

If ever there was a time to invest rather than save, it is now. Please make community college funding a priority this legislative session. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Kathryn Long  
ESOL Instructor  
Clackamas Community College