

Submitter: Hailey Cook  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB604

Dear Oregon Legislative,

I am writing today to provide my statement on why Destination Western deserves money.

I was involved with the program for two years, first as a first year student who was introverted, then as a peer advisor for those same students who are now in the same position I was. I have very bad anxiety, Especially in new situations where I don't know anyone. Destination Western made me feel like I had a family and community in my new home. After those two weeks my dad told me that I was a completely different person. I was more sure of myself, I started conversations, and was not afraid to try new things.

Then when I heard I could become a part of the very program that helped me, I jumped at the opportunity. I spent about two weeks watching a hundred students become friends, and bond over this experience. I know that a lot of the freshmen Who were in my cohort this year are still friends. I see them walk around and go on adventures together. Without even knowing it they created a community of safety, comfort, and Family.

I believe that Destination Western if a huge opportunity and can bring people together.

Thank you.