

Hello, My name is Jamie Tyler Baker, I use she/her pronouns and I stand before you today to ask for you to increase funding for higher education, specifically for EOU.

Picture, if you will, a young mom of two small children sitting in a doctor's office and being told that you will be a widow in 5-6 years. The questions that start running through your head are

How will I make ends meet?

How will I care for my children?

How can I do this on my own?

Jump ahead a few days, there is a promotion available at work, if only you had your degree you would qualify to apply and then those questions would be answered.

I was that young mother. I was working full time. I was caring for my sick husband as he went through medical treatment and in the Fall of 2011 I enrolled at EOU to finish my degree.

I am a visual learner and knowing this, I knew a fully online options would not work for me. So I would spend my lunch hour on campus, in addition to taking in person classes in the evening and on the weekends.

Not only did EOU help me obtain my bachelor degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing and Business Management, EOU gave me hope for my future and a way to provide for my family when my husband died. Thankfully he didn't die, medical treatment improved and a cure was found.

I am sharing this with you today because a small rural university in Eastern Oregon made it possible for me, a first generation, non-traditional student to get the degree, while working full time Monday through Friday. In addition to caring for my children and a sick husband.

So I am here to ask and beg if needed for you to continue to fund our Universities, especially EOU. The flexibility the EOU offers for rural students is unmatched.

Without appropriate funding EOU would not be here and instead of being able to complete my degree, I more than likely would have ended up on state assistance. But because I was able to attend EOU and get my degree, I was able to provide for my family until my husband was well enough to do so.

Please make it possible for others that are in similar circumstances as I was to change their futures. Give them the tools to build a future they can be proud of.

You funding higher education, specifically Eastern Oregon University, is the first step.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

And please support the Union County FairGrounds.

And Mental Health