

## JTUSHE Exhibits

---

**From:** Chris Mahan <mahanc1@sou.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 8, 2022 8:56 AM  
**To:** JTUSHE Exhibits  
**Subject:** Public Comment

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside the Legislature. Use caution clicking any links or attachments.**

Dear Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education,

My name is Chris Mahan, the President-Elect of the Oregon TRIO Association (OTA). OTA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase the number, and success rates, of low-income, first-generation, underrepresented, and disabled student populations in higher education.

TRIO programs were the first national college access and retention programs to address the dire state of social and cultural barriers to education in the U.S. In 1964, TRIO began as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty after the Educational Opportunity Act of 1964 established an experimental program called Upward Bound. In 1965, the Higher Education Act created the Talent Search program. In 1968, another program, Special Services for Disadvantaged Students (later known as Student Support Services), was launched, and the term "TRIO" was coined to describe these federally funded programs. The trio of programs gained notoriety for encouraging access to higher education for low-income students. By 1998, the TRIO programs had become a vital pipeline to opportunity, serving traditional and nontraditional students, displaced workers, and veterans.

Today, OTA TRIO programs continue to serve over 10,000 students annually in forty-seven projects throughout Oregon. We have nearly 50 years of experience and data that support we can be an effective solution to promoting success for underrepresented students in higher education. In the last biennium, OTA was funded for a two-year \$1,000,000 grant in HB 5006 & HB 2412 to support the explicit goal of this task force. OTA is working to build sustainable organizational capacity as we can now provide advanced support to our programs and create new opportunities for TRIO students. Our primary goal is to increase the number of students served in Oregon by applying for new TRIO grants throughout the state, which brings in additional federal funding (Currently, TRIO grants are funded for nearly \$15 million annually from the US Department of Education). Support from this task force and continued investment from the State of Oregon will ensure that we continue to impact change at scale that can transform our students' opportunities from all backgrounds.

We seek legislative champions who want to continue to invest in OTA and provide underrepresented students with the opportunities to pursue and succeed in higher education.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

***Christopher Mahan (he, his, him)***

Academic Advisor  
Success at Southern TRIO Student Support Services  
Southern Oregon University  
(541) 552-7085

[Schedule a meeting with me](#)

**Tutoring:** [Tutoring Link](#)

**Add/Drop Form:** [Add/Drop Form Doc.](#)

**Rate your advising experience here:** [TRIO SSS Advisor Evaluation](#)