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President – Elect for OTA
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Dear Honorable Legislators:

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

Out of the 3100 TRIO projects nationally, Oregon has 47 TRIO project serving 10,009 students. This only represents about 10% of the population that are eligible for our Oregon TRIO projects. All of our Oregon TRIO projects provide that one on one mentorship/advising experience that most of our students desperately need when it comes to understanding how to navigate college systems and resources. Many research studies continue to show strong support on how student retention, graduation rates, and strong GPA's correlate with our TRIO projects. There is a reason that our retention model continues to be a student success story for over 50 years. Here are just a few examples in our recent Oregon Factbook that includes student stories for each district in Oregon; oregontrio.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2022/03/Factbook-2022.pdf Though most of our funding goes towards salaries, there is little funding remaining that goes directly to our students through these federal grants.



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.

In conclusion, 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. I would be honored to spend a few minutes to talk more about you and your constituents on how we can continue to support or underrepresented students and grow our TRIO projects throughout our great state.

Respectfully,

Christopher Mahan



About TRIO

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.