

Hello to the Education Committee,

My name is Marichelle Gurski_ and I am studying Liberal Studies_ as a Dual Enrolled student at OSU- Cascades and Central Oregon Community College.

I am here to ask you to join our students in supporting HB 2590, the Student Voice Bill.

This bill is all about making sure our colleges and universities work for all students and can help us graduate and get good-paying jobs. Right now, our campuses aren't equipped to help everyone succeed. In my experience_ as a student Leader and Director of Student Advocacy on my campus at OSU-Cascades, there are gaps in the funding to support students from minority backgrounds such as low-income first-generation, veterans LGBTQ+ and the BIPOC community due to limited space and underfunding for important initiatives on my campus like DEI Diversity and Inclusion and Student Success. We still do not have the student success center on campus that provides the space to house these crucial programs for affinity groups and provide additional support for students on my campus. This Student Success center would also support our student parents by having onsite childcare. And students with disabilities with a more bonafide DAS center with support structures. Sadly, Faculty in various departments stretch themselves for their students by doing tasks outside their job description. This lack of space personally impacts me as a Queer Bisexual woman who often feels isolated. The lack of room for affinity groups compounds the lack of feeling community with my peers on campus, especially during covid. In addition to other identities, I have as a low income, the first woman in my family to go to college, and a person with a learning disability dyslexia. As far as I am concerned, there is too little support for these groups. I experienced this first hand with the lack of a testing center and a full DAS on my campus as I found Remote learning with my learning disability to be very challenging. When I tried to seek out support, it was not affordable, or I was directed to Corvallis main campus, which was not helpful. What would help me is if we had the funding to complete the Student Success center on my campus as in times of co-vid it gives us more space to have identity groups come together and build a community which I think any thriving educational institution needs for their students to be successful and feel like they belong.

Please remember my story when you vote on this bill, and please join me in supporting HB 2590.

Thank you for your time,

(Marichelle Gurski)