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**Education That Works**

March 18, 2021

Oregon House Education Committee  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2412, -2 Amendments

Chair Alonso Leon and Members of the House Education Committee,

We write to urge your support and adoption of the -2 amendments to HB 2412. This amendment includes funding for five different college access programs that were funded in the Governor's Recommended Budget. These five programs provide valuable access and supports for low-income and historically underserved students to help them to achieve their post-secondary goals.

Clackamas Community College has proudly been a partner institution to the BUILD EXITO program for more than seven years. During that time, the faculty, advisors, and administrators at Clackamas have had the pleasure of recruiting and working with many EXITO scholars on our campus, as well as expanding our networks with individuals from other EXITO institutions. Our students have been able to access a path that they never thought possible. Especially for community college students, opportunities like this are especially crucial for success; many of our students are only beginning to recognize their full potential as outside circumstances have prevented access to the skills and training necessary to envision themselves as STEM and research professionals.

Programs like EXITO do so much more in addition to helping support current students—they position Oregon to be a healthier and better place to live for a broader spectrum of our residents as a result of the types of preparation and skills provided through EXITO. And our mentoring activities lead to strong, supportive ties between our faculty and the EXITO scholars, ties that help a student persevere despite everything the world throws at them – COVID, fire, ice, an organic chemistry exam – it all adds up. Our students often become so connected and invested in the relationships they have built that they stay connected and engaged with our college, participating in alumni panels and sharing their experiences, insights, and news about what they are doing, which encourages other students to consider their options, persevere toward their educational goals, and eventually succeed.

The extra supports and access to biomedical fields and research careers provided by EXITO are only possible with continued funding. Many Clackamas students face multiple barriers to accessing STEM education, and our EXITO partnership with Portland State University enables us to reduce these barriers and provide clearer paths to a strong future and career. This funding for the EXITO program will allow us to continue to increase educational access for Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,




Ernest "Tory" Blackwell, Biology Instructor and Lead Faculty/Mentor for CCC EXITO Program



Eric Lee, Engineering Instructor, STEM Club Advisor, and CCC EXITO Faculty/Mentor

Yvonne Smith, Human Services Instructor and CCC EXITO Faculty/Mentor



Mark Yannotta, Department Chair for Mathematics and CCC EXITO Faculty/Mentor

Carrie Sandberg, STEM Advisor



Lisa Reynolds, Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences, Principal Investigator for CCC EXITO Program



Sue Goff, Dean of Arts & Sciences

David Plotkin, Vice President for Instruction and Student Services



Tim Cook, President