

Testimony to Ways and Means Committee

April 17, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Velda, and I consider Pendleton to be my chosen home town. I was born and raised in rural Coos County. In my youth, I was constantly reminded that I was stupid and would never become anything, even though I had good grades and was in the honor society. I share this with you because community college is where I eventually found myself. It was at Southwestern Oregon Community College where I learned that I was not stupid. That inspired me to go the UofO. (Go Ducks, Senator Hansell!)

At community colleges, we meet students where they are. That means students may have:

- Low skills
- Low self-esteem
- No support systems
- And with the younger students, high social anxiety

Most of our students have no role models to explain higher education systems or expectations. These students are simply hoping to have a better life by getting an education. They have dreams and goals that they doubt they can reach, yet, somehow, they are willing to try.

I am a community college instructor, and I have often said that we should video new students and ask them about their goals. Then we should video them at the end of their community college journey and ask the same question. Students are always transformed in a positive manner.

Advising is my favorite role because I get to see when that light goes on, so to speak, when students realize they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve their dreams. I could provide numerous examples of students from all demographics, but I'll spare you those. My students make me extremely proud.

I implore you to fund the Community College Support Fund for a minimum of \$702 million. That funding will allow us to continue mentoring and educating our local workforce. That \$702 million will have a direct impact on our communities.

My name is Dr. Velda Arnaud, and I love what I do for our students and our communities. This week I learned that I am being retrenched and BMCC's business program will be destroyed.

Thank you for your support (for Oregon's CCs)!