

Submitter: Zach Jones

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education

Measure: HB3120

Good afternoon, Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Ruiz and Vice-Chair McIntire and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Zach Jones, and I am the TRIO Student Support Services Director at Klamath Community College. I am also an alumnus of TRIO originally from Coos Bay, OR. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today.

I am here to provide testimony supporting HB3120-2, The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall establish a grant program for the purpose of supporting organizations that expand the scope and community reach of college access and success programs for the purpose of increasing college enrollment and post-secondary completion rates for Oregon's historically underrepresented. This bill also aligns with the recommendations of the Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (JTUSHE).

In the last biennium budget, HB 2412-2 invested \$5 Million to five College Access and Success organizations in the state. The intended purpose of those funds was to increase support services for Oregon's historically underrepresented students and expand the number of students served across the state.

TRIO programs are designed to serve low-income and first-generation students looking to improve their lives through education. Currently, Oregon has 54 Grants serving over 11,000 students from middle school through adult and college-aged students. The programs are federally funded through the department of education. The previous state investment in the Oregon TRIO Association expanded these services to new communities and worked with institutions and community organizations to increase the number of grants statewide and serve additional students. As a result, we have added nine (9) new TRIO grants to the state. This outcome generated over \$2 million in additional annual funding from the federal budget, over 1,000 new students served annually, and over 20 new jobs across the state. Additionally, funds were utilized to support current program operations, create state-wide student events, provide scholarships to those no longer eligible for pell grant funding, and support study abroad educational opportunities.

A continued investment in community-based organizations through HB3120-2 will uniquely address the needs of underrepresented students in higher education throughout Oregon. I acknowledge that TRIO programs are limited in the impact we can have statewide, despite running effective programming in our service areas. I believe that an investment in the Oregon TRIO Association is a remarkable return on

investment that can help maintain the effective management and constant expansion of TRIO programs throughout the state. TRIO is impactful at serving underrepresented students in Oregon; let's work together to increase the number of students who benefit from these services.

I invite you to approve HB 3120-2.

With appreciation,  
Zach Jones  
Director - Student Support Services  
Klamath Community College  
TRIO Alumnus