

My name is Megan Van Pelt, I am student at university of oregon and enrolled tribal member CTUIR and I am here today to speak in support of the Oregon Tribal Student Grant

I am one of the 450 Native American Students who received grant funds this last academic year

The Oregon Tribal Student Grant has been instrumental in alleviating the financial burden of attending a four-year institution for me. This grant has not only enabled me to pursue my academic goals but this grant has allowed me to be a normal student. The funding helps students like me pay for the portion of my tuition, housing and books that are not covered by other grants.

This grant has allowed me to be a co-director of the Native American Student Union and be part of the native community at the UO.

Continuing this grant will ensure that members of my community will have the ability to achieve a four-year degree, increasing equity and improving generational opportunities

If this grant continues, it will not only enable me to graduate next year as one of the first cohort of Native American & Indigenous Studies (NAIS) majors at the University of Oregon (UO), but also provide me with the opportunity to pursue a master's degree. This grant would make my dream of becoming a graduate student a reality, rather than just a distant possibility.

What do you want the State of Oregon to know about this grant? What does it mean to you?

It is imperative that the State of Oregon recognize the significance of this grant as an obligation to the tribal students and nations of Oregon. The contributions made by the nine tribes towards education, wildlife programs, non-profits, local businesses, sponsoring athletic teams, and the overall economic stability of the state through tribal revenue are substantial. This grant is an investment in the future of the tribes and the state as a whole, and should be viewed as such.

What would you tell Governor Kotek about the need for this grant for future students?

I strongly urge Governor Kotek to continue funding the Oregon Tribal Student Grant, as it is crucial for ensuring financial stability and offsetting the exorbitant fees of attending a four-year institution. This grant is an absolute obligation for tribal students, who have historically faced systemic barriers to accessing higher education. In the short span of a year, I have witnessed an unprecedented influx of students and non-traditional learners returning to education, and this grant has played a significant role in encouraging tribal members to pursue their educational aspirations. It is imperative that the state continues to invest in the futures of its tribal students by supporting this grant.