

February 5, 2024

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly:

Subject: Vote Yes on HB 4162; but please ensure that we are being prudent when allocating money for administrative costs.

Thank you for your consideration of my opinion on this bill. As a reminder, the digest of this bill is, “*The Act provides funds for programs to make college more affordable.*”

I appreciate the ongoing concern of the legislature to make higher education more accessible. I hope this bill makes it through Ways and Means, assuming that’s the next stop should it pass out of the House Higher Education Committee.

I did have a concern: \$1,000,000 for administration costs seems a bit high to me; if \$5,000,000 is the total amount allocated for administrative costs, this represents a 20% overhead above the total grant amounts (or 17% when considering the entirety of the proposed six million dollar expenditure). This strikes me as too high, especially considering, as I understand it, this money is essentially “pass through” from HECC to the universities’ own programs, which also have overhead they’ll take from the five million dollar disbursement.

While I am no fan of unfunded mandates, in light of the additional personnel authorized to be hired by the HECC in the 2023 session’s budget I am wondering if administration costs to the tune of a million+ dollars are really necessary in this particular case. I would be interested in learning more during the public hearing on this bill as to the rationale for the \$1,000,000 in administration costs, and hope that we can keep these expenses lower. I am eager to learn more about how exactly these administration dollars would be used.

On the topic of basic needs: I also want to highlight a time of year when I often see the most need: the transition from the school year to summer. Many students have part-time jobs on campus during the school year, and when the school year ends so does the money from working. While folks are often able to secure summer jobs or internships, the transition from school year to summer, and then again from summer to school year, represent some of the largest cracks related to securing basic needs that I see students falling through.

These cracks are made wider because when folks are not taking classes during the summer they may not be considered students (or the students themselves assume they don’t qualify and thus don’t bother looking). While the individual institutions know the needs of their own students much better than anyone else, I do think keeping the summer months in mind is important during discussions about ensuring the basic needs for students are being met.

Once again, thank you for making students’ basic needs a priority. I urge a Yes vote on this bill.

Sincerely,



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