

Submitter: Alexandra Staben

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce  
Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3109

Chair Hudson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my most profound support for the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) at the University of Oregon. As a former student participant, my experience with SCYP is what helped me find my passion for my future and was crucial in learning how to apply classroom knowledge to real-world settings. It gave me practical experience working while having the forgiveness of the classroom. It lit my passion for active transportation and my aspiration to work for Safe Routes to School.

During my time in the program, I had the valuable opportunity to work on real-world projects that addressed pressing challenges faced by Hermiston, Eugene, and Salem. Over the course of three years and four SCYP courses I helped identify and design green spaces for the City of Hermiston, designed a Safe Routes to School bike infrastructure map for three Salem K-12 schools, and analyzed important data for the City of Eugene and their community engagement process to improve walkability, bikeability, and public transit.

SCYP provided meaningful hands-on experience and gave me practical insights into how fresh thinking, new perspectives, and evidence-based ideas can be customized to the unique contexts of local Oregon communities to improve the quality of life for residents. Collaborating with city officials, faculty, and fellow students further enhanced my technical and analytical skills, as well as allowed me to hone my 'soft' skills like collaborative team work, time and project management, presenting ideas to the public, and of course writing effectively – all which are extremely important in the professional workplace. I am so deeply grateful to have had this type of training in college so that I could enter the workforce ready to contribute on day one.

In talking with friends that attended universities in other states, it is clear that SCYP really is a unique and effective program that serves as a bridge between academic learning and practical application, fostering a new generation of leaders who are prepared to address the multifaceted challenges of our time. I feel that SCYP really helped equip me and the hundreds of other students SCYP serves each year with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to contribute meaningfully to society.

I wholeheartedly support sustainable and on-going support of the Sustainable City Year Program and the profound benefits it offers to students, communities, and to

Oregon as a whole. SCYP truly is a model of integrating the 'public' into public higher education and the state's investment in SCYP will help create a new generation workforce and leaders who are ready to tackle the economic, environmental, and social challenges Oregon faces.

Sincerely,

Alex Staben, The Dalles (UO Class of 2024)