

01/28/2025

Oregon House Higher Education Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for the Sustainable City Year Program at the University of Oregon

Dear Members of the Oregon House Higher Education Committee,

As a professor of practice at the School of Journalism and Communications of the University of Oregon I am writing to express our strong support for the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) at the University of Oregon. As someone who has collaborated with and contributed to this outstanding initiative, I have seen firsthand the impact SCYP has on both my students and communities across the state.

SCYP helps make it easier for me to integrate project-based learning into the classroom, which not only helps them learn material and a range of 'soft' professional skills, but their work genuinely helps the communities we partner with. My classes focus on building communication campaigns that inform, engage and educate Oregon residents about critical issues. When students know their efforts may help an actual Oregon community, they work harder – and as a result they learn more and the community benefits more! SCYP is a significant win-win for both our client cities and our students who put everything they learned for four years into practice in this capstone class. My students graduate with hands on experience ready to take on an internship or first job. The SCYP experience is a significant milestone in their professional development.

A key strength of SCYP is its collaborative, statewide approach. Our partnership with the program has demonstrated the power of universities working together to serve Oregon communities, bringing diverse perspectives and expertise to the table. SCYP's success hinges on its ability to unite institutions of higher education, local governments, and civic organizations in pursuit of common goals. This cross-institutional effort not only enriches the student experience but also ensures that cities and towns throughout Oregon, regardless of size or resources, can benefit from forward-thinking solutions tailored to their unique needs.

I urge you to support sustainable and on-going funding for the Sustainable City Year Program and recognize it as an invaluable asset to Oregon's public universities and the communities we serve. Investment in SCYP will help ensure that students across the state gain practical experience, cities receive actionable solutions, and Oregon remains a leader in innovative university-community partnerships.

Thank you for your attention and for your ongoing commitment to higher education and community development in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Attila Schillinger
Professor of Practice

School of Journalism and Communication
University of Oregon