

My name is Vicky Fang, a student at the University of Oregon, and a participant in the Summer Bridge Program that was funded by Strong Start. I am writing in support of SB 604: The Strong Start Program at Oregon's Public Universities, which will continue funding for programs that help ease the transition to higher education by providing an early start and giving them access to additional resources.

I initially wanted to participate in the Summer Bridge Catalyst program to learn more about my passion in science as well as the resources provided at the school. During my time in the program, I got to learn so much more about the school than I initially imagined; it made me appreciate and aware of all the resources available on campus thanks to the hands-on learning techniques that were applied. If I wasn't in the program, I might have learned about the resources available, but I would not know where it was provided, nor would I know how easy it was to engage in them. If I found a program through electronic or paper advertisements, I wouldn't truly understand that they offered. How would I know that the TAEC had scheduled templates for people to use? Or how would I have known that Oregon Hall had academic calendar booklets that contained all the important dates such as when registration starts?

As a first-generation student, my transition to UO would have been a lot more stressful if I did not have access to this program. The program gave me daily tours around the school campus along with the areas outside of campus using the local bus system or. If I didn't have the program beforehand, I would have been lost and overwhelmed by my change in environment, which would have negatively affected my grades, which is really important to me. They have taught me how to manage my time and how to set realistic expectations when it comes to studying practices.

When I was put on the waitlist for a parking permit, I had to park my car in random places within Eugene; knowing how the bus systems worked saved me from walking about an hour back to campus every other day.

The activities that were provided with the schedule gave me opportunities to bond with my fellow students that were a part of the program. As someone who was the only student in their grade that applied to UO, it gave me a sense of belonging.

My first term would have been overwhelming if I wasn't a part of this program. This program helped me transition into the college campus and life. It has provided me with resources and relationships that I otherwise would not have sought out myself. I did not have to learn about how to do things on my own, and I had help with understanding how to navigate my new surroundings.

Please continue funding and expanding the Strong Start Program so that more students can benefit from its impactful services. Your leadership and commitment to education will help

ensure that Oregon's public universities remain places of opportunity, inclusion, and achievement.

Thank you for your time, and I hope I can count on your support of SB 604, the Strong Start Program!

Sincerely,

Vicky Fang

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Madras, Oregon