



Oregon State
University

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Extension Service**

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Representative Zach Hudson
Chair, House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 2997

Dear Chair Hudson, Co-chair Fragala and Co-chair Harbick,

I am writing to express support for House Bill 2997, which aims to establish a grant program through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to expand the scope and community reach of college access and success programs in Oregon.

As the Associate Vice Provost of Partnerships for Oregon State University's Division of Extension and Engagement, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact that access to higher education can have on individuals and communities. OSU Extension's mission is to engage with Oregon's diverse communities to provide research-based knowledge and community-based education that strengthens the social, economic, and environmental well-being of our state. HB 2997 aligns perfectly with this mission.

OSU Extension's youth-serving programs are a vital and growing part of pathways that make college access a reality for more Oregonians. For example, programs such as Open Campus and Juntos are specifically designed to support college access in rural and underserved communities. These programs have been instrumental in providing educational resources, mentorship, and support to students and their families, helping to bridge the gap between high school and higher education. OSU Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program provides myriad opportunities for all kids to gain the skills and confidence to succeed. Research shows that youth engaged in 4-H have long-term outcomes marked by vocational or academic success, civic engagement, employability and economic stability and happiness and well-being. The grant program proposed in HB 2997 will enable us and other organizations to enhance and expand these efforts, reaching even more students in need.

Furthermore, this grant program will foster collaboration among educational institutions, community organizations, and other stakeholders, creating a more cohesive and supportive network for students. This collaborative approach is essential for addressing the multifaceted challenges that students face in accessing and succeeding in higher education.

In conclusion, I hope you will support HB 2997 and urge the committee to pass this important legislation. By investing in the expansion of college access and success programs, we can create a more prosperous future for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Associate Vice Provost of Partnerships for Extension and Engagement

Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, Family and Community Health, 4-H Youth, Forestry & Natural Resources, Extension Sea Grant, Open Campus, and Outdoor School programs. Oregon State University, United States Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties cooperating. The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.