

Submitter: Chelsee Blatner  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB604

I have seen first hand the power of Strong Start for students at WOU. The opportunities to increase skills, confidence and sense of belonging have been nothing short of magical. The students involved in the Destination Western program have had demonstrable positive impacts on the WOU community. Not only being allies for fellow students, but many taking on leadership roles and being ambassadors for WOU. Their academic achievements and retention numbers are wonderful, with retention numbers being higher than average.

The Strong Start program is a remarkable and powerful way to help and support first-year and underrepresented students, which is key for the State of Oregon. Please highly consider this funding.

Thank you.