

Submitter: Chelsee Blatner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

As you just heard, investing in higher education transforms lives and strengthens communities. To ensure all Oregonians have the opportunity to succeed, the Legislature must make bold investments in our colleges and universities.

I'd like to thank you for restoring \$5 million to fund the benefits navigator positions at all 17 community colleges and 7 public universities. I'm urging you to invest \$450 million for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, which will expand financial aid for low- and moderate-income students, while funding \$1.275 billion for the Public University Support Fund will keep tuition manageable and maintain academic quality. Finally, we need \$22 million for the Basic Needs Package - House Bills 3182 and 3183 - which will provide essential support like housing and food assistance to help students stay enrolled and complete their degrees.

As Western Oregon University embarks on being a Hispanic Serving Institute in Oregon, this funding will be critical in serving students that are often from Oregon, first generation and low to moderate income.

We urge the Legislature to fully fund these critical programs to ensure all Oregonians can access and succeed in higher education.