2013-14 Academic Year Fee Book

Report of Comments Received During Public Comment Period
April 29, 2013 through May 10, 2013

Public Hearings

1. May 2, 2013 10:00 -11:00 am  OSU Memorial Union Board Room  Corvallis, OR
   • In attendance: 6 students, 2 administrators, 1 member of the press (KEZI reporter)
2. May 3, 2013 10:00 -11:00 am  UO EMU Board Room  Eugene, OR
   • In attendance: 16 students, 2 administrators, 1 member of OSA, 2 members of the press

Electronic Submissions (FeeBookPublicComments@ous.edu)
This was the third year OUS encouraged online public comment. The Draft AY 2013-14 Fee Book was posted online and a dedicated email established. Notification of the availability of the online review and posting was published in all communications regarding distribution of the Draft Academic Year 2013-14 Fee Book. A total of 53 responses were received via this dedicated email.

Comments Summary

• In total, 62 comments were received and only one indicated explicit support for proposed increases.

• Number of submissions by university affiliation, if noted:

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• The vast majority were current students but submissions also came from 5 alumni, 1 citizen, 1 faculty union, 1 incoming transfer student, 2 parents of current students, and 23 associated with student government or OSA.

• In addition to general opposition of increases, there was one specific opposition to the proposed UO International Undergraduate Student fee and several recurring themes:
  o 24 supportive of freezing tuition for at least one year and another 15 asked that the proposed increases be reconsidered or “rolled back”
  o 29 indications of support for increased state funding (several submissions seemed more directed to the legislature than to the SBHE)
  o 51 referenced student debt load – either their own debt status or a broader concern for all student debt levels
  o 19 expressed concern or opposition to institutional boards, equating them with increased costs and therefore rising tuition rates

Comments immediately follow in their entirety as received.
For the record my Name is Eric Noll, I’m a student at Linn Benton Community College and I will be transferring to PSU next fall. The reason I am here is to testify regarding the proposed increases in tuition to Oregon University System schools and specifically to PSU - all the universities in general because they are seeing about the same increases in tuition. I come here as a concerned student, because of the debt I am looking to potentially incur. I have gone to a community college for 3 years now, my parents built up a substantial savings prior to that, a college savings plan. In just 3 years of community college that is all gone. So when I transfer to a university, I am afraid that I am unfortunately going to have to take out debt which is something that is really scary. I can’t imagine how scary it is for people who are thirty, forty, fifty thousand dollars in debt. I was looking over some statistics related to student debt earlier in the day and I noticed back ( I believe ) in the ‘90’s about 45% of students could get a bachelor’s degree without not incurring any student debt but now that number is about 94%. That, aside from the coffee I had this morning really woke me up and it concerns me because I have never been in a situation where I have had to take out debt. This will probably be the first time. With the career path I am choosing (I am planning to go into a career in non-profit work) I don’t expect to get paid a lot- maybe minimum wage, if that. If I leave college with debt, I am afraid it is going to take me a long time to pay it off. I’d rather have a job where I could pay it off quickly, but unfortunately that is not the career I have chosen. What I’d like to do is to urge you all to strongly consider a 0% tuition increase this year. Unfortunately, that is not what it looks like, but each year that tuition continues to go up it means that less students have access to education. So if you can, please do your best to open the doors to education to students in Oregon. Thank you for your time and have a great day.
Public Hearing
May 3, 2013, 10:00 -11:00 am, OSU Memorial Union Board Room, Eugene, OR
Marcia Stuart – Hearing Officer

Oral Testimony Received

Sam Brickwedde, 2012 UO graduate
I was absolutely fortunate enough to graduate with no student debt. My situation is not unique, especially here at the University of Oregon. With the increasing costs of tuition, there have also been steady increases in the number of students attending university but also the number of students who have parents who have the financial capability and financial security to pay for at least four years of college. Much of the sentiment that I wish to express in this testimony has already been spoken, in particular, it is disgraceful to your institution, to the legislature, to the state of Oregon that this public forum does not include any members of the Oregon University System Board. Yes, there will be more opportunity to submit testimony. Yes, there will be more opportunity for input. But we’ve heard that before. Everyone’s heard that before. As a student of governance and political science, it is not lost on me in the slightest the procedural difficulties and the appropriation difficulties that exist. Blame cannot be placed solely upon one institution, it cannot be placed solely one individual or even a small handful of individuals. Nevertheless, someone needs to stand up and build a roadblock. Students here at the UofO, as well as across the state have been standing up and speaking out again, and again, and again but for what? Tuition keeps going up, student debt continues to skyrocket and student debt continues to be impossible to discharge through bankruptcy. It’s infuriating. Some days I’m ashamed to be a Duck because our university continues to become more and more expensive and more and more students, friends, brothers, and sisters have to decide “am I going to go to school or am I going to go into debt, or am I going to eat?” Someone has to step up and, if not you, then someone else needs to be in your position because things can’t keep going on the way that they have been because, if they do, there won’t be such a thing as public education anymore.
Jeremy Hedlund

Hi there. I’m Jeremy Hedlund; I’m a member of our student government, I’m a student senator, have been for the past two years. I’m also a member of the University of Oregon’s Student Labor Action Project. And I haven’t thought this through very well. I just got out of class about 40 minutes ago, doing some homework, and I have class again in 20 minutes. But I think my biggest problem with this right now is that I’m talking to a computer and that you’re not here. And that, specifically, your job is theoretically, I assume, you’re public servants and I think you’re serving students—or you’re supposed to be—but the fact that you can’t find the time to show up at our institution when we’re facing a 6 percent increase is despicable and ludicrous. I at least, even if I have no opportunity to change the result of this tuition increase or how this is going to go down, I at least want to be able to look you in the face and I at least want you to have to look me in the face when you say, “yeah, I’m going to increase statewide tuition by 6 percent.” You know, when I think of my niece, who is eight right now, you know, I come from a lower middle class family and I’m really scared that in 10 years she’s not going to be able to come to this school—this school that she, theoretically, is entitled to come to being a resident of Oregon. But I don’t think she’s going to make it and I think that part of that blame lies on your shoulders. I think that the reason why your body exists is to provide for quality and affordable higher education in Oregon for people who live in Oregon. And you’re not doing your job. And if I saw more efforts on your part to be very actively engaged or actively calling out politicians or organizing things—I don’t know. I don’t see you as an ally, even though you’re supposed to be our greatest ally. I see you as getting a nice job and rolling over. I honestly don’t think that anybody’s pay should go up in this entire System, including yours, including our presidents, including our entire administration. Your pay should not go up if our tuition goes up. I just don’t understand how you got your jobs, I don’t understand how you can sleep at night knowing that you had a great opportunity and that it’s not being passed on to future generations and that’s partially your fault. And I don’t know why you’re not here right now. I mean, this is just ridiculous. Again, I’m talking to a computer screen. I don’t know. I hope something changes soon but, if we keep seeing tuition increases at rates higher than inflation—hell, can we get a tuition freeze? Can we at least have that conversation? Can we work together to pressure politicians and—I don’t know—maybe your concerned about how that would reflect on yourselves or on your future prospects—I have no idea, but what I seem to see mostly in news stories that I read about you all, about tuition increases, is you just being like “yup, we regret it, that’s too bad” and then it happens, no matter what we do. That’s crap, I’m sorry. So, it’s 10:44, I got class pretty far away on campus. Also, why was this an hour? I’m sorry, this is weird. If students have class from 10 to 11, they cannot make it here. Their voices will not be heard. I don’t know if that was your fault or the administrators on our campus, but, really, poor planning on that as well. Anyway, I hope you pay us a visit soon. I’ll be in the audience, if I can—hopefully it will be for longer than an hour. And, I don’t know, I’d say, I urge you to reconsider this tuition increase, but I don’t think it will do anything. So, I guess this is more for me to vent a little bit. Thanks for your time.
Written Testimony Received

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Liz Avalos and I am a student at the University of Oregon. During this recession tuition has gone up every year on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

Tuition keeps rising every year and with it raises the debt students take on. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least a year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

When my parents and I made the decision that I would be attending the UO, we made that decision based on the current tuition costs. We did not expect tuition to go up every year. As a student from an immigrant working class family these increases add to the burden of surviving in higher education. I budget down to every cent, and yet there have been times when I have less than $10 dollars in my bank account. When I think of tuition increases I have to think how am I going to come up with the extra costs? Do I have to cut back in groceries, books, credit hours? Both years that I have been at the UO I have had to take out loans to pay for my education. For the next school year I am looking at taking out more loans. I do not want to take out loans but there is no other way for me to continue my education.

Freezing tuition for a year would provide me with a sense of security knowing that I do not have to work more hours or consider taking larger loans to continue my education. Already I am working 15 hours a week on top of taking a full course load. Working longer hours would take time away from studying. I am a dedicated student and wish I could focus more time on my studies instead of trying to figure out how to stretch every dollar I make so I can pay for the expenses of being a college student.

I have a younger brother that will be high school senior next year. For my parents the struggle of financing a college education will continue for another four years after I receive my bachelor's degree next year. My parent cannot keep up with the rising tuition cost. I want my brother to have the same opportunity that I have had of attending college. I do not want his chances of going to college to be jeopardized by the rising tuition costs.

Now is the time to change the pattern of rising tuition costs. You have a chance to change the cycle. Please consider Oregon's future and stop these proposed tuition increases.

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Hi OUS Board of Higher Education,

My name is Elizabeth Luh and I am currently a third year at the University of Oregon, pursing a Bachelors of Science degree in Economics and Math and I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide.

I am one of the extremely lucky students who don’t need to take out loans and don’t need to take on a job to pay for school. From the day I started high school I knew I would go to college. My parents have always made it clear to me that in choosing my college, tuition would not be a factor. My father is an assistant research professor at Oregon State University and so I am given a tuition discount. But my parents came from a background of poverty. When I was born in Tennessee, my mother worked a full time job at a restaurant while raising my older sister and I and my father pursued a PhD in zoology at the University of Tennessee. During those days, we ate a lot of fast food and I rarely saw my parents until my father was able to secure a graduate teaching assistant position. The level of economic and social security my family and I have now is because my father was able to find a higher paying job with his college degree. After my father got that graduate teaching position, we bought our first house in Tennessee and my mother was able to quit her job. We moved to Oregon, were able to survive in the more expensive environment because my father found a job immediately with his PhD.

College degrees are amazing. They should be accessible to everyone, because to me, they provide the pathway to a better life. For students, college does not only represent a future, but it also represents what will shape our lives and our decisions. I know a friend who has to work full time, has taken on loans, and is a part time student so that she can afford school. She works til 2am some nights and risks being attacked walking home alone at night. Why does she have to run this risk? She takes on these risks because she wants an education. Unlike me, she does not have the luxury of having instate tuition, a faculty discount, and economic security. I carry the responsibility of voicing these concerns of students like her. Unlike her, I only need to focus on school, which makes sense. I am after all in college. Increasing tuition and fees by 5.8% means a .058 change in the amount I pay, but we’re looking at tens of thousands of dollars, which translate to hundreds of dollars a year. Unlike me, most other students will have to take on more jobs, more loans, or face the harsh reality of dropping out. This shouldn’t have to happen. My parents story should be the story of all students in Oregon and the U.S. My parents were able to push through and attain success, but in the present, that success is becoming harder and harder to achieve with the growing costs of attaining that degree.

As a student, I am asking the board to please, freeze tuition this year. I understand that you must cut spending. I study economics and I know that funding doesn’t overflow. But these students need the opportunity and it is unfair to force some students to forget their dreams or lose their potential because of lack of money. Money should be the last thing on these students minds, just like how it is the last thing on my mind. I will fight for these students because I care and I hope the Board can see that too.
Hi, I’m John Olson and I’m a student at the University of Oregon. As an instate student, I depend on the lower costs of instate tuition combined with substantial federal aid (like grants and loans) to be able to afford college. I am a first generation college student and I chose to go to the University of Oregon because going out of state or attending a private school was simply not a viable and affordable option. I come from a low-income earning family (in the state of Oregon) and my dependence on forms of financial aid such as the Pell Grant make college a reality. When my parents graduated high school, things such as the Pell Grant, Oregon Opportunity Grant, Trio, subsidized and unsubsidized federal loans, and Pathway (which my little sister Priscilla was recently awarded) were not available to them.

So instead, they have had to work their entire lives and raise three kids and have never been afforded the opportunity of job security. So the hope was that with me and my sisters going to college, we would receive an education and the skills necessary to earn a living and be able to have things like job security, an option.

The University of Oregon has the reputation of being the flagship school in the state of Oregon. In my mind, this was the best and most affordable institution in the state of Oregon to receive an education. While this may be true, and I believe that my school is amazing and my teachers and educational experience are of high quality, the affordability factor in the jumbled equation that is college is slowly being eroded away. For 2013-14 school year, the cost of instate tuition at the University will be $9,852, almost ten grand! We are the most expensive state school in Oregon. Slap another $9-$11,000 on top of that, which consists of housing and living expenses, and you have the total cost that in-state students at the University of Oregon, like myself have to deal with. The proposed increase of 5.8% in tuition and mandatory fees is simply unreasonable and you are essentially demanding that every instate student pay another $542 more compared to 2012-13. Where am I going to get the
money for that? Should I pray that these dollars will magically fall from the sky? Or patiently wait for some miracle to happen? Will I expect my financial aid to match the rising costs in tuition? Why is this raise fair? Why is it necessary?

Student debt sits at over $1 trillion dollars in the country. That is the highest form of debt in the country, far surpassing credit card debt and is tied to home mortgage loan debt. Do you really wish to add to this issue? Your budget proposal does just that, it merely adds to our ever-increasing debt and simply places an unnecessary burden and penalty on students wishing to better themselves and their future career prospects. I chose to go to the University of Oregon so that I wouldn't have to go into debt to get an education, but I have been mistaken, and I will graduate college with over $10,000 dollars in debt. As for job security, how can I be secure in a career where I cannot even be given the opportunity to save money and instead have to piss it all away on paying back insurmountable student loans? I chose to stay instate because I thought that would be the more affordable solution, turns out that maybe I should have not gone at all, when the best I can hope to do is be enslaved to my loans coupled with bleak economic prospects for the future. So it is with the greatest sincerity, and hypothetical on my hands and knees pleading and begging that the people of the Oregon Legislature stop this tuition raise and keep universities like the University of Oregon an affordable place to learn. Thank you for your time.
To Members of the Oregon University System:

My name is Helena Schlegel. I am an undergraduate student at the Clark Honors College at the University of Oregon. I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my college campus and throughout the state. In the last 7 years tuition has increased 85% here at the University of Oregon, which is why students like me are struggling to continue our dreams of obtaining a college education.

If tuition goes up at the 5.8% rate, on average students would be paying an additional $542 each year, an equivalent amount of money of half a year of groceries. Are we supposed to choose between eating and paying for college?

Forcing college students, the future generation, to take on more student debt is not the solution. But, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases that few students here in Oregon can't afford. Students are now taking an average of five years to graduate, and the average debt after graduation is $25,000. These statistics are unbelievable and requiring students to take on even more debt is definitely not the answer.

While at college, students should be focused on attending class, learning the subject matter, and excelling in their studies. Instead, students are concerned with whether or not to buy textbooks for classes because they cannot afford the books, whether to take an extra work shift instead of study for a midterm, and to lose their social life to a second or even third job because of all the increasing bills.

Our education as students is being compromised by this tuition increase and lack of funding. Class sizes are growing, making it increasingly difficult to enroll in necessary classes, and decreasing the opportunity to learn through class participation. I was unable to enroll in necessary classes for fall, winter, and spring terms this academic year, putting me behind track to graduate in four years.

These tuition increases are making my generation fall behind, in both education and in financial stability. The proposed tuition increases have a direct, negative affect on all our lives. I urge you to please oppose the proposed tuition increases.
To the Oregon University System,

My name is Lamar Wise, I am the Executive Committee Chair of the Oregon Student Association, a Student Senator at the University of Oregon and a concerned voter.

Last year during student election debates, one question that was asked of me was "What is the biggest problem facing students today?" I shot my hand up as quick as I could and said "the cost of our education". The problem is simple; tuition is going up more than the aid is. We have students here that can barely afford their books for class and sometimes have to decide between there next meal and their education. This is in no way fair. I believe students should be given a fair choice to attend college and get a degree so that they may adequately contribute to our community.

Personally speaking, last year was rough for me. For the better part of the year I had to sleep on a couch to afford college. It was difficult to keep up with rent and I often saw my bank account balance with less than $5 in it. This was because I was putting all my hard earned money towards my education, through buying books and paying for tuition. And even though I prioritized my education, it was at hard to focus on grades when I had to figure out how to pay for all of my expense just to continue living in Eugene and go to school. I want to do well in school and excel in all of my subjects. I want to do good work that my parents would be proud of and you all would be proud of. I'm here to say I want a fair opportunity to do that work, the students of this university and all students in Oregon need a fair opportunity to do that work.

By having a 5.6% increase to the University of Oregon's tuition, Oregon University System is further restricting students from being successful here. Students simply can not continue to handle the high increases to tuition. There are students that have similar stories to mine or worse that can hardly afford schooling, rent, books or food. For me, the increases equate to about $550. That is a terms worth of books, or a month and a halves worth of rent. This is enough to effect a student's education greatly if not prohibit students from continuing their education at all.

As decision makers on our tuition increases, I urge you to change your mind set on funding higher education. We need to the state to reinvest in our education system, not continue to tear it apart with high price tags. Student leaders from around the state, through the Oregon Student Association, have requested a zero percent increase in tuition or funding Higher Education at 850 million dollars. This is what we need to start getting students back on track financially and to combat high tuition prices.

I can't and won't stand by and let this happen [and we shouldn't]. And I know that you may not identify with my struggle and the struggle of the students today, but I know you can do something about. So this is me, as concerned student, Saying please, fight with me to re-prioritize education in this state. In the end I promise it will be worth it. Thank you.
To the members of the OUS Board:

My name is Rudy Zarosinski, I'm a freshman at the University of Oregon, and I am strongly opposed to your proposed increases to tuition in the next two years.

I worked extremely hard in high school to earn good grades and game scholarships. My efforts bore fruit, and I received $19,800 in scholarships and financial aid, including the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Yet I still had to take out $2,000 in loans to pay for the growing cost of a public education.

Now you are proposing another increase of 5.8% when tuition has already gone up 85% at the UO in the past decade and has tripled in my lifetime. I'm not even 20 years old yet.

It would be easy to blame the current situation on a lack of state funding, but forcing me to take on more debt is not the solution. Furthermore, do not tell me that it is because of a lack of resources when the legislature is so seriously considering proposals like Institutional Boards that will not only raise costs at universities in excesses of 5 million dollars, but also disenfranchise students from the decision-making process.

I am opposed to the constant increases in tuition because I am running out of options. My tuition and living expenses for my first year at school were $7,000 more than my parents made in the whole of 2012. I can't take on another job because I have to maintain status as a full-time student, or risk losing $7,500 in scholarship money that I could not make up.

You are pricing me out of an education, along with thousands upon thousands of other young Oregonians. You are limiting our future, and stunting all possible growth in our State. All we wish for is a 0% increase for one year. Is that so much to ask?

Rudy Zarosinski
University of Oregon
29 April 2013

Oregon State Board of Higher Education
P. O. Box 751, Mail Code: CHAN
Portland, OR, 97207-0751

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Budget and Planning Committee member, tuition committee member, and the Associated Students of Eastern Oregon University (ASEOU) Vice President for Financial Affairs at Eastern Oregon University (EOU), I am aware of the challenging budget situation EOU, and the entire Oregon University System, is facing. It is my understanding that the Oregon Student Association wants to place a tuition increase limit of “zero percent” upon all Oregon University System institutions. I feel this would be inefficient and ineffective for our particular university.

We are aiming for approximately a five percent increase in tuition and fees here at EOU; students are in support of this increase. I chair and sit on many committees that have approved increasing fees and raising tuition, including the Associated Students of Eastern Oregon University and the Student Fee Committee. I feel EOU is unique in that we have a substantial level of student input on all committees across campus. In fact, many students have voted in support of raising tuition and fees. It is for these reasons that I support, and feel the student body supports, a tuition increase of up to five percent.

Sincerely,

Brooke Stout
2012-2013 ASEOU Vice President for Financial Affairs
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on Oregon University System campuses. In the last six years tuition has gone up its highest at UO with 73.2% (without fees) and its lowest at EOU with 27.2%. These increases are forcing students to make life decisions based on debt and not on the careers they want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing students to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students across the state have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases students can’t afford? This year students have asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

Personally I am one of the many that have graduated with $21,000 + in student loan debt. I am 25 years old and am currently living with my parents in Gresham because I am unable to afford living on my own. My aspirations to obtain the american dream (house, car, being financially independent) have been halted because of the financial debt I obtained trying to better myself through education.

My generation is being priced out of education or is risking financial hardship once they leave. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Sincerely,

Brittany Duffy-Goche
Hello, my name is Alexandra Flores-Quilty and I am a student at the University of Oregon, and also sit on the Oregon Students of Color Coalition Board.

In Oregon, students are paying more and getting less for our education. The average cost of a 4-year degree is $29,248.75. This is much higher than the average cost of an Oregon 4 year degree back in 1989 which was $8,000.

At the University of Oregon we are significantly over the state average at $33,716.25 for a 4-year degree. In 6 years we have seen a 73.2% increase in tuition at the University of Oregon, let me emphasize that that is a 73.2% increase as UO has been getting ready to “prove institutional board readiness.” I won’t digress into why we are concerned about costs incurred if we move to an institutional board model.

While we are leading the state for the most unaffordable tuition, the quality of my education does not seem to be increasing. Classes of 400+ students are a norm, departments are understaffed, and more and more students are having to stay 5 -6 years in school versus the traditional 4.

They are having to stay longer because they are working part/full time and can’t take a full class load at the same time; or having to stay longer because our faculty are understaffed they have to wait multiple terms before taking classes needed to graduate; or their financial aid does not cover the entire cost of their tuition and they are taking light class loads because that’s all their financial aid covers.

Oregon unemployment is around 8.4%. We are 39th in the nation. This is the time to reinvest in education if we want to get Oregon back on track. We need people to go back to school and to pursue higher education. Investing in higher education is investing in Oregon and Oregon’s economy.

I am tired of seeing friends struggle with their grades because they are working two jobs. I am tired of seeing friends choose paying for textbooks or paying for food. I am tired of worrying and wondering every term if I, myself, will be back the next term because I am barely making my rent and tuition bills.

Amongst all the financial barriers facing Oregon students, we are now being told that there is a proposed 5.8% increase for next year. That will be $542 more that I have to come up with, which for me is about 6 months of groceries. This is unacceptable. OUS can not ask students yet again to take out more debt or to work another job or to choose between groceries and textbooks.

An Oregon college degree right now is not affordable and it is not accessible. And it is disproportionately unaffordable and inaccessible to marginalized communities: Communities of color, working class communities, immigrants, and the LGBTQ community. An Oregon college degree is not affordable and it is not accessible, but it can be.

We need $850 million for OUS, which will just keep tuition at CSL increases. 26 public universities and colleges nation-wide have already committed to tuition freezes, and it is shameful that we aren't offering that to Oregon students. Let's change that.

Thank you.

Alexandra Flores-Quilty
University of Oregon
Oregon Students of Color Coalition Board
To members of the Oregon University System,

My name is Monserrat Alegria and I am a first year transfer student at the University of Oregon. I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. Since this recession tuition has gone up 72.3% on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

I decided to transfer to the University of Oregon to pursue a journalism career, which was not offered at the previous school I attended. I have taken out loans every year to pay for my education, but because I transferred I started paying off one of the student loans I took out my freshman year. Even though I knew I was going to start paying back the loan this year, I had no option but to take out more loans to pay for this year. To be able to make monthly payments to pay off the loan, I had to sacrifice every day things that I used to do such as visiting my family.

I should be starting to plan what I want to do after graduation but the idea of graduating with at least 15,000 in student debt scares me too much that I have been avoiding the topic. Since the beginning of this school year I have been taking 12-13 credits per term to be able to work, which means it will take me longer to graduate. Along with the journalism major I planned to do a minor in Ethnic Studies but I will have to wait until I receive my award letter for the next school year to make a final decision. Based on that letter I will decide if I can afford to stay longer to complete a minor or if it is better for my credit record to just complete the journalism major. This decision will affect future job opportunities and will limit my ability to compete in a world where the idea that the more education the better is strongly inculcated.

Furthermore, tuition increases means I can’t spend as much time in the library as I would like, I can’t finish on time because I need to work more, and I know I am just one of many people who are considering whether or not I can continue my education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be educated than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.
Hello OUS Board,

My name is Nick Hughes. I am a Junior, and am currently serving as the Environmental Advocate for the Associated Students of the University of Oregon. I am in debt, and will continue to be through my graduation. For this and many other reasons, I oppose a hike in tuition for Oregon's Universities.
I've been told all my life to work hard in school, get a good education, and go to college. And these pieces of advice have always been followed by another, that is to get a job that can make you some money. Over and over again I heard this advice, and it wasn't until recently that I realized what it really all came down to. The greatest motivation forgoing to college was to put myself in a position that allowed for greater financial security, among other things. And yet, right now, college is one of the most financially destabilizing things an average high school graduate could do.

I googled my dream job today. As it turns out, there are people hiring. When I looked at the required qualifications, it was 5 years of experience in the field with a similar company. I've realized that more and more firms are looking for employees with real world experience, dedication, and the willingness to intern or volunteer. For my dream job, there was no degree requirement.

I want to be a consultant in Sustainable Estate Management, and now I’m realizing that I could have graduated from high school, volunteered or interned with this firm or a similar one for four years, and then only had one more year to go to be fully qualified for this dream job of mine. Instead, I'll graduate from college with five figures worth of debt, and most likely be waiting tables for the next four or five years to pay it off.

I am both appalled and infuriated that after a $100,000 education, I am still not moving into the field of my choice. Instead, growing tuition and mounting debt have forced me to postpone my life for 4 years. My debt has stolen 4 years from my life. And you want to raise tuition. Just how badly do you want high school graduates to question whether college is a good decision. I caution you, eventually we will all catch on. I’m sure the nation’s wealthiest will continue to send their children off to 4 years of partying and sub-par education...but there’s a reason why they call them the 1%. You will lose the majority.

I find it unnerving, and actually quite telling that you aren't sitting here in front of me today. I'm sitting here at a public forum, talking into a laptop. Have you really become this disconnected from the very people your institution is meant to serve? I implore you to ask yourself: Why did you choose to work for higher educational system in Oregon. I want you to seriously ask yourself, are you working for the sake of education itself, and the education of the next generation of Oregonians, or are you working to preserve the purely economic prosperity of the system which provides the education?

Based on what I have seen, I feel as though your main goal is to pass on a profitable system of education, rather than insure the passage of knowledge and the fostering of an innovative society. I beg of you, prove me wrong.

I'm not going to throw more facts at you because I know that you are all aware of the ever growing, massive student debt problem. I'm not asking you to listen to more statistics. Im asking you to stop ignoring them. Don't inhibit the most innovative country in the world by making higher education so unattractive that we condemn it. The world changes quickly, and without care, we may be creating the first generation who can no longer pragmatically advocate for higher education.

Thank you.
To the Members of the Oregon University System,

My name is Conor Gagner and I am an first year undergraduate student at the University of Oregon, and I feel very fortunate to be able to say that.

I am able to go to school thanks to the help of a few scholarships, the portion of money my parents are able to support me with, and by unfortunately taking out large student loans. I continue to take out these loans because I believe education is one of the most valuable things a person can possess, and in hopes that with a degree I will be able to enter a career that will support me for the rest of my life. Yet, when I look at the 5.8% increase in tuition that I will have to face next year, my faith in the power of education wavers. When I take notice that in the last seven years the UofO’s tuition has risen 85%, I wonder how many people have given up on their aspirations of a degree. And when I take notice of Oregon’s 8.4% and rising unemployment level, it makes me fear if I’ll even have a job to pay off the loans I take out to begin with. And the only emotion I can seem to express is outrage. Outrage that even though from grades K through 12 my peers and I were told again and again that college was our future, that getting a degree was the road to go down, that higher education is continued to be made more and more inaccessible.

I wonder how many students will look at the 5.8% increase in tuition at the University of Oregon this year, and will see almost 6 months of groceries gone, or 12 tanks of gas spent, or the earns of almost 3 and a half weeks at a minimum wage job blown. I wonder how these students will cut back on spending in other places of their lives, and I wonder how many more loans they and I will have to add to our crushing burden.

I can name at least 5 students who I know personally that have either opted out of even entering college or have dropped out of a university education because of the hardship of paying tuition. With national student debt at over $1 trillion, you would think our request for 0% increase in tuition to be reasonable. And yet, here we are talking about another increase. Asking students to pay an extra $542 on top of an already over-priced education is not only unreasonable but it is disturbing.

Please consider the lives of students that will be affected by this, please consider the choices students will be forced to make whether or not to stay in school or pursue higher education, and please consider the future of Oregon.

Conor Gagner
To: Oregon University System Board of Higher Education

From: Raul Tovar Jr.  Student from SOU
Medford, OR
Campus: Southern Oregon University
Position: Oregon Student of Color Coalition Board
Oregon Student Association
Date: May 3, 2013
Regarding: Tuition Prices for Oregon Residents

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Raul Tovar and I am a student at Southern Oregon University. Since 2007 tuition has gone up by 56.1 percent on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities.

These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford. This is how tuition increases have impacted me and many of my peers.

I am first generation Latino college student and I am currently $3,000 in debt. I receive both need based aid funding, the Oregon Opportunity Grant and the Federal Pell Grant. Without these two grants I would be over $20,000 in debt which is close to the national average student debt of $25,497. Without these grants I would not go to school because I could not afford it. Graduating with over $20,000 in debt would not be worth it for me. My parents are currently helping me pay for my books and housing, but I will not be receiving their help next year as my brother and sister will be attending universities this following academic year. There is a likelihood that I will not be eligible for the Oregon Opportunity Grant. I will now have to not only worry about paying for my expenses, but I will now have to worry about paying for my tuition. Therefore, I urge the committee to support the Oregon Student Association's stance of a zero percent increase.

Furthermore, tuition increases mean I can’t spend as much time in the library as I would like, I can’t finish on time because I need to work more, and I know I am just one of many people who are considering whether or not I can continue my education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be education than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Thank you for reading my testimony.
Raul Tovar
Dear Oregon University System,

The main point of a System of Higher Education in Oregon is to first and foremost support local Oregonians. The Tuition increases of the past few years have increasingly made it questionable whether the Oregon University System is truly trying to retain local students, or if there is just a general concern for the bottom line. Out of State students should not be excluded, but should bear most of the financial burden if increases in Tuition are necessary. Oregonians that are rewarded for staying in state for their Higher Education are more likely to be loyal to the State and attempt to seek jobs and start businesses here.

Please do not raise tuition yet again on In-State students.

Regards,

Martyn

Martyn Lindley
Eugene, OR
Father of Two Students at the UofO – Claryn Lindley, Junior, and Tyler Lindley, 5th year senior.
Hello co-chairs, members of the committee. My name is Jessica Hand; I sit on the Board of Directors for the Oregon Student Association, and am a second year student at Western Oregon University. I am sending you this letter on behalf of students at Western and across Oregon who continue to suffer from rising tuition. I fully support, and was a part of, OSA’s asks for $850 million for OUS, $510 million of Community College Workforce Development, $15 million additional to the Oregon Opportunity Grant and $277,000 for our student parents.

Think for a minute about your biggest fear, whether that is heights, clowns, whatever frighten you the most. Well for thousands of students across Oregon, and even more throughout the country, that biggest fear is the over $25,000 in student debt that they have to bare in order to make a better life for themselves. My biggest fear is for the students who have to climb the over $100,000 Mt. Everest of debt, dooming them to a lifetime of paying it off.

I myself have worked since I was twelve years old in order to avoid student debt. Unfortunately, I am two years in and already have a $5,500 cancer that continues to earn interest. In addition to working all through junior high and high school, I have spent both my year in college working, sometimes more than thirty hours a week, while being a full-time student. My middle class, working background has taught me that I have to work hard for the things I want in life. I do not believe education should be free, or a handout in any way, but I do believe it should be affordable, and not put such a burden on the next generation of legislators, CEOs, engineers, etc.

If we want to reach the Governor’s goal of 40-40-20, we have to prioritize students and reinvest in the higher education system. I urge you to support OSA’s budget asks and fund OUS at $850 million, CCWD at $510 million, the OOG at $15 million, and finally $277,000 for our student parents.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jessica

--

Jessica L. Hand
ASWOU Director of State and Federal Affairs
Monmouth, OR
aswoustate@wou.edu
Hello,
My name is Erin Walmer, and I am a senior at Western Oregon University. I have been at WOU for all four years and I am leaving with 40,000 in debt this June. I am planning on going graduate school this fall or next, but that decision has been extremely hard because of the amount of debt I have. The field I want to go into requires a masters degree, but when looking at the amount of debt I already have, it is a though decision. I have done everything right in the last four years, filled out my FAFSA on time, applied for many scholarships and I have been working about 30 hours a week all four years to pay my bills. Unfortunately that has not been enough, as I have massive amounts of debt.
To prevent this from happening to other students just like me, the Ways and Means sub-committee needs to increase funding for higher education. I believe the Oregon Student Association’s stance of increasing funding for universities to 850 million and the community colleges increased to 510 million, is the right step to take to prevent tuition from increasing even more. Oregon is pricing students out of education and students are going to different states to find education at more affordable prices. I love Oregon and would love to stay here for graduate school, but I have found similar programs for less cost. The next step is to increase funding for education.
Please support students and increase funding for higher education because it is necessary for Oregon's future.

Thank you!,
Erin Walmer
Western Oregon University Student
To: Oregon University System Board of Higher Education  
From: Jazmin Roque  
Ashland, OR  
Campus: Southern Oregon University  
Date: 8 May 2013  
Regarding: Tuition Prices for Oregon Residents

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

My name is Jazmin Roque, I’m a student at Southern Oregon University and I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide.

It would be too easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs but the reality is that students have been paying more and getting less for years and these tuition increases will only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat cost with the addition of institutional boards.

Students have been up at the capitol this entire session advocating for more funding for higher education and need based financial aid and legislators are looking for solutions. However, what I would like to know is why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford?

If tuition goes up at the 5% rate at SOU next year, or the way I think of it as 4 1/2 months of groceries, I will have seen a 20% increase in my tuition since I started attending Southern Oregon University in the fall of 2010 as a full time student. That’s 20% in 3 years. I now have to choose between food and paying for school. I receive every form of need-based aid you can think of on top of merit scholarships and I’ve held at least two jobs since I started school to help make ends meet. Yet, I still find myself having to take out an increasing amount of student loans every year just to pay for school. I work hard, I study hard but sometimes I wonder if it’s even worth it because I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to pay off my student loan debt and have the career I want. Continuing to raise tuition is placing a huge burden on students and it’s not a sustainable system.

I am a first generation college student but your proposed tuition increases will soon price me, as well as many other students, out of higher education. You are helping to perpetuate a cycle that is ensuring my generation is less likely to be educated than our parents. Please roll back these proposed tuition increases, please help insure that all Oregonians will have access to post-secondary education, regardless of socioeconomic status.
To: Oregon University System Board of Higher Education  
From: Dave Coburn  
Campus: Portland State University  
Date: 5/8/2013  

Regarding: Tuition Prices for Oregon Residents  
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,  

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Dave Coburn and I am a student at Portland State University. During the last 5 years tuition has gone up 24.4% on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want. The cost of higher education has risen more than 1,500 dollars from the time I began my degree.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

On June 15th I am going to graduate from Portland State University with about $35,000 in student loan debt. Right now I am searching for a job after I graduate. It is currently my plan to give back to the state of Oregon by being an advocate for marginalized communities but due to my debt I may be forced to take on another job which will pay more but produce less for the State of Oregon, for my community, and for marginalized communities in Oregon. Small increases make big impacts for students an increase of just 3.8% is literally months of groceries for PSU students. Furthermore, tuition increases mean I can’t spend as much time in the library as I would like, I can’t finish on time because I need to work more, and I know I am just one of many people who are considering whether or not I can continue my education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be education than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

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Dave Coburn  
ASPSU Legislative Affairs Director

"Leaders aren't born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work."
"We enjoy life by the help and society of others".
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My I am a student at Southern Oregon University. I first looked at attending in early 2011 as I prepared to graduate from Rogue Community College, and started attending in the summer of 2011. Between the time that I started and the time that I will graduate with my masters in teaching in summer of 2014, my tuition will have increased by about 25%. This is approximately triple the rate of inflation. My AGI last year was $12,208.00 for a family of five. Without financial aid, I would not be able to make it through school, yet tuition increases continue to devour more of that financial aid. My children are all teenagers and I have serious concerns as to whether or not they will be able to attend any higher education. I fear for my peers at SOU that by the time these young people have children of their own, they will not be able to see them even attend a community college. Since the 40/40/20 plan is supposed to be implemented by 2025, I would say that the time has come to reevaluate the budgetary priorities of our state. There is absolutely no way that poor, middle class or even students from somewhat affluent families will continue to be able to receive a post-secondary education if things do not change drastically in higher education. I am already $58,000 in debt and I still have my masters program to attend, all so I can become a teacher. This means that I will be about three years of wages in debt based on the local starting teacher pay. Keep in mind that I will be completing my course of study in five years. Many are not as fortunate as I am. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities and $510 million for our community colleges. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards. It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me, and nearly every student I know, to take on more debt is not the only or best solution.

Regards,
Alan Day
Grants Pass, OR
To Whom It May Concern:

The Oregon Opportunity Grant does in fact create an "opportunity" for a vast amount of students throughout our great state. I personally know a number of students that receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant and if it wasn't for this grant, they simply wouldn't be able to attend school full time or in some cases attend school at all. For many of my friends, instead of attending school full time they would have to work additional jobs to what they are already working, which would simply mean they would have to cut back on school, and thus cut back on their graduation date. A lot of my friends come from low-income families and for some of them, if it wasn't for the grant, they wouldn't have the opportunity to obtain a higher education. I believe that it is of the most importance to keep/increase funding to the Oregon Opportunity Grant because it does in fact create "opportunity" for our students to have the ability to obtain a higher education and therefore serve our community, our state, and our country. Please increase the funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant; this grant has already helped thousands of students achieve their goals and if funding continues it will help thousands of current and future students obtain a higher education.

Thank You

Russ Petrusha
Portland State University Student
Portland OR
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and campuses statewide. My name is Galen Russell and I attend Portland State University. Since 2007, PSU tuition has gone up by 48.1%—causing my fellow students and I to make life decisions based on debt management rather than career goals.

There are other solutions than forcing me further into debt. This legislative session students such as myself have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. Elected officials have been looking into OUS to curb costs and student loan debt. Also, I don’t need to remind you that the Secretary of State’s office is attempting to gain answers via audits.

After two terms and a half at PSU, I am already over $6,000 in debt. And it is nauseating to say that I’m one of the luckier students. I’m lucky enough that I can live with my parents, and be able to count on them to help with books and for food. I’m fortunate that I’ve been awarded the Oregon Opportunity Grant next year, which only every 2 in 10 students who qualify actually receive.

Students at PSU and statewide are already stretched thin for resources as is. A 4.5% tuition increase at PSU will only further the current trend of pricing hard working Oregonians out of higher education.

Galen Russell
Milwaukie, Or
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

As a graduate from a post-secondary institution, I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campuses statewide. My name is Cristal Sandoval and I am a graduate from Western Oregon University. During this recession tuition has continued to increase year after year and debt has hit over $1 trillion dollars.

The students that I work with are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers that they want. It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing students to take on more debt is not the only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. On April 25th students from all across the state to voice their concerns. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases that many of these students can’t afford? This year students asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

If tuition continues to increase many students begin to be priced out of an education. When we’ve seen funding not adequately provide for those that need it the most with the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

When I was a student it was this grant that allowed me to continue and graduate from Western. It is need based aid funding as such that will allow students to succeed academically understanding the impacts of less financial stress results in more successful students. Again and again I hear in my line of work of decisions have to make critical decisions such as choose to buy groceries or pay for school and of course students are choosing to pay for their tuition because they see the value and need of an education. Many of the students I work with are students of color that are first generation and low income, so making decisions like this are life critical to pursuing their education. Therefore, I urge the committee to support the Oregon Student Association's stance of a zero percent increase.

Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Thank you for reading through my testimony,

Cristal Sandoval
Concerned citizen
Woodburn, OR

Gracias,
Cristal Sandoval

___________________________________________________________
Cristal Sandoval | Oregon Students of Color Coalition Field Organizer | Oregon Student Association
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

Higher education is a right, not a privilege. The reality that students have to pay to continue with an education is absurd. Furthermore, the fact that every year, students are faced with more financial barriers, shows the stance and irresponsibility Oregon is taking for all Oregonians post secondary higher education opportunity. Within the past years, there has been increases in tuition. For example, if an 8% increase is put upon students, that can be estimated to around $700 or so more dollars in tuition each year. $700 dollars that add up depending on how long a student wants to study. $700 dollars that can be used for textbooks, housing, food, study aboard, etc.

I am a student at Western Oregon University. I will be graduating this upcoming June with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Social Science, Spanish Minor. I will be graduating with more than $22,000 in loans; becoming another statistic in the number of students graduating with thousands and thousands of dollars in loans (up to an average of $25,497 just in Oregon). Though I did receive scholarship help, that was not enough financial support for the things I wanted to accomplish within my collegiate career such as having the opportunity to intern in Argentina this year. Interning aboard cost me around a total of $8000 dollars; $5000 coming in loans just this term not counting the number of loans I had to take prior terms. I cannot imagine the amount of loans and cost of tuition other Oregonians are having to face in other OUS institutions. I am not sure how I will pay for these loans. I am not sure why I am having to pay for my rights. I am not sure why students are continuing to be told by legislators, government officials, etc. to pursue higher ed, study, get involved, when we continue to be shut down financial by the same individuals who "encourage" and "push" us. Indeed, their have been allocated funds towards grants and other scholarships such as the Oregon Opportunity Grant, however, not everyone has the opportunity to receive that help.

I ask you all to reconsider increases in tuition and consider a 0% increase. I further ask you to put yourself in our shoes, now in 2013. Little job opportunities, high tuition rates, cuts in funding, fewer and fewer resources, upset yet motivated students, what would you do to in this situation?

My name is Emmanuel Macias. Student at Western Oregon University. Class of 2013. Hometown is Hermiston, OR. I am a first generation, gay, Latino.

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In solidarity,

Emmanuel Macias
Student
Hello co-chairs, members of the committee. My name is Keri Knight; I am a junior at Western Oregon University. I am concerned for students across Oregon who continues to suffer from rising tuition. I fully support OSA’s request for $850 million for OUS, $510 million of Community College Workforce Development, $15 million additional to the Oregon Opportunity Grant and $277,000 for our student parents.

I myself have been working very hard to avoid student debt. As a married couple my husband and I have over $50,000 in student loans. We would like to finish school in Oregon but the cost of school is getting too expensive. As a state we need to have a well educated work force to provide economic success; to insure this, we need to help educate the future generations.

Growing up in a middle class family I have learned “there is no such thing as a free lunch” but we should not make it so unaffordable that we have to mortgage our education. If we want to reach the Governor’s goal of 40-40-20, we have to prioritize students and reinvest in the higher education system. I urge you to support OSA’s budget asks and fund OUS at $850 million, CCWD at $510 million, the OOG at $15 million, and finally $277,000 for our student parents.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this very important matter.

Sincerely,
Keri Knight

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Keri Knight
No trees were harmed in the sending of this message. However a large number of electrons were terribly inconvenienced.
To the Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

My name is Devon Backstrom and I’m a 23 year old pre-med student at Portland State University. I have always had a dream of becoming a doctor and recently, with the birth of my nephew Zander, hopefully a Pediatrician. However, I could have never dreamed how hard this journey would be.

The thing that is hardest for me is trying to come up with the money to pay for it. I’m already stretched thin as it is. My first term I had to forgo my text books for more than half of the quarter to pay for food. My room-mate volunteered to pay for the entire month’s rent more than one time before I was finally able to make ends meet. This is further complicated by the fact that our only need based aid is the Oregon Opportunity Grant which is more of a lottery than state aide; only 20% of those students who apply and qualify for the grant receive it.

Oregon is finally proposing increased funding for its school systems and I love that. Yet we’re still seeing proposals for increases in tuition. According to David Cooke of the Oregon Unemployment Office we’re seeing an average increase of wages of 2.1% from 2011-2012, yet somehow even though the Oregon University System is seeing increased funding we’re anticipating a gain in tuition costs that is double that figure. When times are good, school tuition increases, when times are rough school tuition increases more. These increases are above and beyond what Oregonians bring home. This trend has continued for over thirty years already. It is time to break the cycle.

I’ve already budgeted literally every penny in my education. That leaves me with an impossible choice, I can’t skimp on bills, I can’t go homeless. I need my books to perform well and my food budget is already less than $100 a month. Oregon simply cannot continue to balance the budget on the backs of students.

Raises will have to be forgone, cutting administrative bloat needs to be a priority and will not be accomplished with the creation of institutional boards. Students like myself have worked tirelessly to make our case to legislators and have worked tirelessly to find monies to help pay for our education. Please don’t raise tuition. Students don’t just want a tuition freeze, students like me need one.

So please, think of the burden already facing students, think of our food, think of our empty wallets, think of our families, and think of the future of Oregon. We need a chance. We need a tuition freeze for the Oregon University System.

Respectfully,
Devon Backstrom
Portland State University Student
Portland, Oregon
Andrew Deatherage  
Beaverton, Or  
Student and Staff at Oregon State University

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Andrew Deatherage and I am a student at Oregon State University and I also work as the Executive Director of Government Relation for the student government, ASOSU. During the last few years tuition has gone up far too much on my campus (an average of $347 dollars per year over the last 10 years) which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting and lobbying for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

I am a nontraditional student at Oregon State University. I started going to Oregon State in 2007 but due to financial circumstances I was forced to leave after one term. I have been able to continue attending due to loans and grants I received from the federal government. These grants are my lifeline and if I am forced to pay higher tuition I may be forced to take on expensive private loans (very high interest rates).

Today, I feel fortunate to attend such a great University, but many students are not afforded the same opportunity because high tuition prices them out of furthering their own education. If tuition continues to rise for all students we are not going to achieve the 40-40-20 legislation that has recently passed. This is important to not only Oregon’s economic future but the lives of those who are forced to take on additional debt. Having to choose between textbooks and food or rent is something I don’t wish upon anybody. Please ensure that higher education receives the funding it deserves.

Thank you

Drew Deatherage  
Executive Director of Government Relations  
The Associated Students of Oregon State University  
149 Snell Hall, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-1616  
Office: 541.737.9147  
asosu.gov@oregonstate.edu
Co chairs and members of committee,

My name is Laura Walmer, I am a sophomore at Western Oregon University and I am extremely concerned for the continuously rising costs of tuition. I fully support OSA's request for $850 million of Community College Workforce Development, $15 million additional to the Oregon Opportunity Grant and $277,000 for student parents.

Personally, I already have almost $20,000 of debt and I am just finishing up my second year in higher education at Western Oregon University. I do not recieve any assistance from the federal government to pay for schooling, and the my school does not provide me enough in loans to cover my tuition alone, let alone books, room and board or food. I either have to pay between $2,000 and $4,000 out of pocket each term, or take out a bank loan with intrest rates that only increase my debt even more. At the end of each term I have to gather all my change and eat as little as possible so I can make that last $20 last me two or three weeks sometimes. I have considered dropping out because I cannot afford to get an education at this rate, and the costs are only getting higer. Education should not be so unaffordable.

If we want to reach the Governor's goal of 40-40-20, we have to make student right's a priority and reinvest in our higher education system I urge you to support OSA's budget requests and fund OUS at $850 million, CCWD at $510 million, the OOG at $15 million and finally, $277,000 for student parents.

Thank you for your time and considerations on the pressing issue.

Sincerely,

Laura Walmer
Testimony of Lexie Widmer regarding Tuition
Student, Western Oregon University

My name is Lexie, and I am currently a Junior at Western Oregon University. I realize how important tuition costs are regarding my past, present, and future.

You see, I graduated from high school only last year, spring 2012. Through the Expanded Options Program at my high school, I was able to complete 84 transferable college credits. I was fortunate enough to have my school pay for most of the tuition during this time. After I graduated high school, I had the option to continue with my community college for two years, tuition free again. I had enough credits that I considered it more worth it to attend a 4 year university.

My academic record could have gotten me into more competitive schools, but, economically, I had to be realistic. I had watched my elder siblings attend more expensive private schools, and suffer with the increased debt afterwards. It is my goal to minimize loans as much as possible. So, I picked Western Oregon, the best of both worlds. Here, I have continued to be very blessed. For my first year at Western Oregon, I received about $10,000 in scholarships, from the school and supportive groups from home. The rest of bill I have covered with loans and a part time job. I’m proud to say that my parents have paid very little out of pocket for my college education. They have enough to worry about with ten children at home.

Despite my success, I know many students who struggle with tuition costs. Some students don’t get the aid they need because their parents “make too much” but mismanage the money so in reality, they have even less for college expenses. Others are international students who pay exponentially more than I do. Still others settle for schools or circumstances that make them unhappy, because of costs. This is the time of our lives that we should have the opportunities to explore and find our place.

I might not be so lucky for the next years of college. Life is fickle. The economy is fickle. There are so many kids like me who want to learn and have successful careers and not worry so much about how much it’s going to cost. Any decrease in tuition supports Oregon’s generations.
To the co-chairs, and members of the committee,

Hello, my name is Amanda Hatch. I am a member of the Oregon Student Association. I am a junior in college, and this is my first year attending Western Oregon University. I am sending you this letter to show that I, and other students at Western and throughout the state am affected by tuition increases that happen each year. This year, OSA asked for $850 million for the Oregon University System, $510 million for Community College Workforce Development, $15 million to support the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and $277,000 to support our student parents. I want to say that I support these asks because they will benefit students across the state and give them access to higher education.

School is an investment, and I have had my education as a top priority for years. When I started my educational journey at Portland Community College at the early age of 16, all I could think about was, "how am I going to pay for it?" My parents helped me pay for school in my first year, and I got a part time job that helped me pay a portion of my tuition because I realized that my education was a privilege that I wanted to keep, I later got a better job that would help me pay for it on my own. I wanted to take responsibility for my schooling so it would mean more to me as life went on. That job, while financially nice, wasn't a cake walk either. I had to sleep in my father's car so that I could go to school, and then get sleep before starting a 12 hour night shift that I worked 4 days a week. This was because I lived far enough away that I wouldn't get home in time to get enough sleep for the work shift. I did this at the same time as being a full time student This was all in the name of my education. I made many sacrifices that are similar to the sacrifices that other students have to make in order to make their lives better. While I initially had help from my parents, I know that there are students out there that might not be as fortunate as I am to receive that help. I am already $20,000 in debt, but that pales in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of dollars that students are trying to pay off every year.

While I do believe that everyone should work for what they want, I do not believe that students should be paying such high tuition rates that we are now. Tuition should be made affordable so that we can live up to the potential that we were made for without the pit of debt that we can't seem to dig ourselves out of fast enough. The Governor made a goal of 40-40-20 for our higher education system, and the only way that we can reach that is through reinvesting in students, because after all, we are our country's future workforce. This is why I am asking you to support OSA's budget asks this year of $850 million for OUS, $510 million for the CCWD, the OOG at $15 million, and $277,000 to support our student parents.

Thank you for your time,

Amanda Hatch

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Amanda Hatch
OSA Campus Advocate
Shane O’Brien
Portland, OR
Student at Portland State

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Shane O’Brien and I am a student at Portland State University. During this recession tuition has gone up 32.8% on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

The tuition increases at Portland State have created many hardships for my wife and me. Every year we are seeing the cost of our educations rising but not seeing any return from that increase. There was a clerical error that listed me as an out of state student. Before the term started I was told that all I had to do was fill out a form and it would be taken care of. It was not until ten weeks later that the error was fixed. Meanwhile I had to pay out of state tuition for the term. This added nearly $10,000 to my bill to Portland State. This was something that should have been taken care of in a few days. Unfortunately our tuition increases are not going to the services that we as students need. This increase will only make attending college more difficult for me.

Furthermore, tuition increases means I can’t spend as much time in the library as I would like, I can’t finish on time because I need to work more, and I know I am just one of many people who are considering whether or not I can continue my education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be education than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.
To the Members of the State Board of Higher Education and Oregon University System,

I strongly oppose any increase in higher education tuition statewide and nationally. My name is Rodrigo Pedraza and I am a student at Portland State University. Tuition is projected to rise up to 8% at my university which would be an average of $2300 per term per student for the 2013-2014 school year. This would be an increase of $170 per term per student. It is completely unacceptable for tuition increases to happen, especially during this economic recession.

A tuition increase accomplishes only one thing, it prices out many lower and middle income Oregonians from realizing their academic and career aspirations. This is a poor way to fix Oregon's economy because we are sacrificing our future to save the present which is a bad idea if we hope to improve the general welfare of the state. We all agree that one of the main goals of a college education is to improve a person's prospects of getting a high paying job to support themselves and their family. But by raising tuition we are actually hurting those job prospects and any innovation that might be gained by pricing out many people from getting a college education.

Instead of raising tuition, I feel that it would be a much better idea to increase public funding of the public universities and community colleges. It is incredibly unsustainable to keep placing an ever increasing burden to fund public higher education on the backs of students. Students such as myself have been demonstrating and lobbying for an increase in public higher education funding and a cap on tuition increases. We would like to see and increase public funding for universities by $850 million and $510 million for community colleges.

I am among the lucky few who has been able to take advantage of a few state and federal programs to help fund my college education. But many of my friends have not been so lucky and have had to take out several loans, work long hours or have multiple jobs, and even go to school as part-time students because the cost is so great. I see my friends and their families dealing with so much anxiety and uncertainty if they can graduate on time, or even continue their college education. I would like to help them out but I do not have the money to help, this is why I go to demonstrations, lobby, and write so that my voice can be added to the thousands of other voices who are worried about the state of public higher education in Oregon.

It is a vicious cycle that has become our public higher education system. Students can't afford to go to school so they take on more hours at work, but as they take on more hours they can't take on as many credit hours as they would like which means they stay in school longer and pay more as a result because they simply couldn't afford their tuition in the first place. This is an unsustainable vicious cycle that must end, and that end begins with a cap on tuition increases and an increase in public higher education funding.
My name is Austin Saunders and I am a 35-year-old, non-traditional, full-time student attending Eastern Oregon University in La Grande Oregon. One of the reasons that I chose EOU was its affordability, especially when compared with the quality of education that the institution provides. Thanks to a partial scholarship, government grants, student loans, and money earned by working part time, I have thus far been able to make my dream of attaining a college degree a reality. But unfortunately, I will still be graduating next year after four years of college over $42,000 in debt. Anxiety over being able to find a good-paying job after college and pay off my student loans weighs heavily on my mind.

I am thankful that there was money to help students go to school when I entered as a freshman, but I worry that, with increased tuition at institutions across the state, working-class and middle-class families are beginning to be priced out of the college picture. This is particularly difficult for non-traditional students who are bearing the burden of their college education costs all on their own. It becomes increasingly difficult when student fees continue to rise as well. Due to changes in the health care provider that had traditionally covered students at EOU, health care costs for students paying for their own health insurance increased 800% this past year. I know other students who have children who were unable to continue their family’s insurance this year, considering the increase was greater for them because of the cost of covering their dependents.

The school I am attending has tuition lower than many other institutions, but because of this, many people who would otherwise be unable to finance an education at a more expensive school have a place to go for a quality education. Increased tuition and fees at institutions across the state only make it more difficult for many to pursue a college degree.

The true cost of tuition hikes is a limiting of accessibility to higher education for those of lower income levels. This hurts society by limiting diversity in the workplace. Society is also hurt by the fact that college graduates carrying huge levels of debt are unable to participate in growing a healthy economy. Not only do they have less buying power for consumption of goods and services, but they also are less able to take out loans to start their own businesses--businesses that would generate jobs and help promote economic health.

Realistically, the days of students being able to work to pay for college are over. Accepting the debt necessary to attain a college degree and then working hard to achieve college success is the only way to get the piece of paper that our society demands as an entry requirement for most higher paying jobs. You cannot blame students for going into debt to get a college degree because it is necessary to do so to succeed fully in our economic system. Yet by playing this game, we are entering the workforce with ever-increasing debt in the form of student loans.

Please consider the greater effects of raising tuition and fees.

Thanks,
Austin Saunders
La Grande, OR
Eastern Oregon University Student
My name is Angelica Martinez. I am a second year student at Western Oregon University. Tuition affordability is important to me. I come from a single parent household where I have helped out the family financially since I was 16 (and still occasionally do). I do not have the finances to attend college without help. Attending a university is important to me. I do not have a family history of attending college. I want to do better in life than my family members before me. I want to improve my quality of living. I want to learn and to be successful. I want to go to school. I cannot do this with the rising cost of attending university. I would love to say that I do not need help and can afford college costs on my own, but in reality I cannot. Tuition is rising at an alarming rate. If this rate continues I have strong doubts my younger siblings will be able to afford and attend college, much less my children. I am asking that OSA’s reasonable asks are granted. I would love to see more money go into education. I know budgets are always tight, but I believe that education is an important investment. Students need this money and I would ask that OUS is funded at $850 million and the OOG at $15 million.

Thank you for your time,

Angelica

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today to inform you of the impact tuition increases has had on my life. I am a non-traditional student. Not because I need a break after high school, but because I could not afford the cost of a college education. I was forced to work several jobs over the course of 5 years to save an amount of money which would sustain me for just a few terms. I now am working my way through school and facing decisions that students shouldn't have to face. I have, on several occasions, been forced to choose between buying a textbook or buying food. I have ended the school year in debt because of the cost of tuition and been forced to work the entire summer just to pay that debt off, and then be faced with more tuition charges in September that I was unable to save for. Students have enough on their plate without having to worry where their next meal is coming from or if they will be able to return to school the following term because tuition costs are too high. But you can help. You can help us fight tuition increases. Students like me need you help and your voice. We can't fight this fight on our own, we need your voice to join ours in the fight against tuition hikes.

Sincerely,

Jenesa Honda
Student of Western Oregon University

To Whom it may Concern

I am a sophomore at Western Oregon University trying to pay for school. With tuition hikes I'm forced to work over the Summer, during the school year and will still graduate with significant amount of student loans. I understand money in the state budget is tight but it needs to go where it is needed most and that is our schools. Having a more educated society solves a lot of issues in itself and is what the priority needs to be in the our state. Let's make Oregon be known, for the best education system in the country!

Please keep this in mind

Tyler Potter
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am strongly opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition hikes being proposed on our college campuses. My name is Daniel McCall and I am an alumnus of The University of Oregon. I graduated in 2010. During this recession tuition has gone up and up and up at our public universities which is why students are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers they want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing students to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases students can’t afford? I am asking for a tuition freeze. Students have tighten their belts, now it is time for you to tighten yours. Reign in excessive administrative bloat and make getting a college education affordable and accessible again.

Do you know what an 8% tuition hike looks like to a student? It is a lot of money and it hurts, especially when so many students are already hurting and fighting tooth and nail every day to be able to continue their education. An 8% tuition hike looks like an average of $706 more in tuition each year. $706 is 7 months of groceries, 15 tanks of gas, 6 months of utilities, and 5 weeks of pay for the average student. This is too much money. Students can’t continue to pay more and get less. It is time to lower tuition and reinvest in higher education in Oregon, and it is your responsibility to lead the charge.

Furthermore, tuition increases means students can’t spend as much time in the library as they would like, they can’t finish the education on time because they need to work more jobs, and they daily consider whether or not they can continue their education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be educated than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Thank you for your time.

--

Daniel P. McCall
Portland, OR
University of Oregon alumnus & concerned citizen
Dear Ways and Means,

Hello, my name is Bryan Kelley and I am a first year student at Western Oregon University. I am contacting you all to ask for your help.

Being a first year student in College is both exciting and nerve wracking. I am excited because I have had the chance to learn and grow so much as person and I know there is still so much more for me to do. But it is also nerve wracking because when I stop and think about the loans I have had to take in order to attend University I wonder how long I will be paying those off. It's sad for me to think about the fact that you basically need a college degree in order to get a decent paying job now. I know many students that are in the University system piling on debt in order to come and learn. I don't want to graduate with debt and I know my friends don't want to graduate with debt either.

For that reason I am asking that you provide the Oregon University System with $850 million for the next year, the Community College Workforce Development with $510 million, and $15 million for the Oregon Opportunity Grant. You have the chance to open the door to Oregon’s future. Please fund our community college and university budgets. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Bryan Kelley

Hello committee members,

My name is Roberto Gil-Cortes and I am the Gender and Sexual Diversity Advocate for the Associated Students of Western Oregon University. I am sending you this on behalf of the students at Western and all across Oregon who continue to suffer from rising tuition.

I am a senior in his last term before graduation and while I am extremely excited I am more scared. I'm scared about how quickly I'll get a job to begin my payment of my large amount of school loans. Growing up in a middle class family I have been working since I was 15 all the way up until my junior year in college. I decided to focus all my attention on my academic life and with that came the conscious decision that I would need to increase my loans. I do not believe that higher education should be free but it should be reasonable. I shouldn't have to make life changing decisions like I can either eat or go to school and while this is an extreme example it sometimes feels exactly like that.

I urge you to support OSA’s budget asks and fund OUS at $850 million, CCWD at $510 million, the OOG at $15 million, and finally $277,000 for our student parents.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Roberto Gil-Cortes
ASWOU Gender and Sexual Diversity Advocate
Hello. My name is Brandon Sherrard, and I’m a part of the Associated Students of Western Oregon University. The 850 million dollars for the Oregon University system, 510 million to the community colleges, and the 15 million to the Oregon opportunity grant, would help keep tuition costs reasonable for students like me who will struggle with student loan debt in the future. I happen to be under the tuition promise, where my tuition won’t change for the duration of my stay at Western, but some students aren’t under this plan. For them, tuition increases every year, meaning that they have to work even harder to compete for limited scholarships. They might have to take out loans which can and will be a hassle for them for years down the line. Therefore, I urge the committees to support these additional funds to Oregon universities and community colleges so that students like me can pursue higher education without crippling costs. Thank you.

Hello my name is Tashiko I am a Portland State University student and on behalf of Oregon Student Association I want to say I AM DISAPPOINTED WITH IDEA OF TUITION INCREASE AND I AM STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF UNIVERSITIES BECOME MORE EXPENSIVE! I am one of many students here in Oregon, and we are paying attention to tuition increase skyrocketing. When I was 12 years old I was diagnosed with hearing loss and since I entered college I have been playing catch up. With my hearing loss, ADHD which I was diagnose with at the age of 22, and other disabilities, I have to work twice as hard as other students just to get by. I have to sit in the front of the class to hear, group discussions are often difficult for me, and teachers don’t always have the tools necessary to help me succeed the technology that I depend on in order to succeed in class is not very good yet I am here at PSU studying to help the American economy grow.

I am lucky enough to be part of the only 20 percent of students who both qualify and receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant. I come from a low income family and the grant is the main reason why I am still in college. Due to my disabilities, after three years I am sophomore and I still have 3 to 4 years left before I graduate. I can only receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant for another 2 years and I am worried that I will need to take out more loans. I am already making sacrifices for my education. I commuted by taking the Amtrak Train from Eugene to Portland three to twice a week until I finally moved to a dorm room on campus by taking out a student load, I have been doing that since the beginning of the school year and my body was stressed from commuting now I am once again playing catch up in class because of the commuting.

If tuition keeps on sky-rocking then I won’t be able to graduate because I refuse to drown myself in debt with no way of paying it back in the future. My disability makes it hard to find and stay in work, I need affordable school in order to get my education! I ask that you don’t raise the already high cost of higher education to where it only become a dream for working class citizens like myself.

Sincerely,
Tashiko Weintsein
Portland, OR
PSU Student
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Torii Uyehara and I am a student at Southern Oregon University. During this recession tuition has gone up 80% since 2001 on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

Tuition increases cause me to worry about what I will do in after graduation to pay off all the debt I will have acquired. By the time I graduate I will be between 20,000 and 25,000 dollars in debt, and that is assuming I only take four years to graduate and that tuition does not increase in the next three years. When I graduate I will have to pay off my loans with little opportunity for me to have a chance to find a good sustainable job first. As tuition costs increase I see my friends and constituents, as an Oregon Students of Color Coalition board member, having to drop out of school or choose between buying the required books for classes and a months worth of groceries, The struggle needs to stop, Oregon needs to reinvest in higher education in order to create a better workforce for the years to come.

Furthermore, tuition increases means I can’t spend as much time in the library as I would like, I can’t finish on time because I need to work more, and I know I am just one of many people who are considering whether or not I can continue my education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be education than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Sincerely,

Torii Uyehara
Ashland, Oregon
Student of Southern Oregon University
Oregon Student of Color Coalition Board Member
To whom it may concern,

My name is Amanda Moos, i am a student at Western Oregon University currently in my 2nd academic year. I have spent much time this year actively working to create awareness about the lack of funding for our students. I am an intern with ASWOU the student government at WOU, and also a volunteer with OSA. This year i worked with passion on the core team for the Wear the Square Campaign. The rally held at the capitol in salem displayed that student debt needs to be a priority issue in our state.

As a 2nd year at WOU i am 33,000 dollars in debt with Sallie Mae. The reason for this is that during the year before college, my parents were forced to file for bankruptcy. I thought that i would not be able to attend college and was devastated. I filed my FAFSA in hopes that my government would contribute to my higher education. I was even more lost when i noticed that there was no place for me to indicate my family's condition of bankruptcy. Because i am so passionate about higher education, i made the choice to do whatever it takes to attend college. I applied to WOU the next day because it is the cheapest university in Oregon. My plans so go out of state to the school of my dreams was out of the question at this point. I had to start thinking practically. I visited WOU and fell in love. My next step was to find funding. I applied for a Sallie Mae loan and was denied because i did not have a cosigner. Under the conditions of my parents bankruptcy they are by law not allowed to assist me in any way. shape, or form, including cosigning. I contacted my grandfather who lives in Minnesota and asked if he could make my dreams come true. Soon we were filling out the application on the phone together. My grandfather is 92 and he suffers from Parkinson's disease. Everyday tasks are extremely hard for him, and he cannot use a computer and has trouble holding a phone. From here every term became an uphill battle. The loan process is so extensive and it literally takes near 10 hours to complete an application. Not to mention the daunting interest rates that are nearing 12%. I feel constantly overwhelmed by my piling debt and the fact that it keeps growing.

Over the course of my 2 years at WOU i have had a wonderful, uplifting, and humbling experience. I value my education greatly but cannot shake the fear that comes along with my debt. My post college plans include graduate school which will put me somewhere around 200,000 dollars in total debt. I am being forced into a corner. My mind should be blossoming, exploring, and freely only concerning my school and my bright future. However, The swelling cost of my debt is dragging me into a place of constant worry and stress. I am paying for my education in order to spend my life re paying for my degree.

I urge you to support OSA's budget asks and fund OUS at 850 Million, CCWD at 510 Million, and 277,000 for our student parents. Students are the future of our nation and are highly underrepresented. It feels as though we are forgotten, and that the current leaders of this country forget that one day we will run this country. The amount of debt is appalling among the student population, and without change the development of our nation will struggle.

Thank you for your concern.

Amanda Moos
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am a concerned citizen opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed. My name is Courtney Helstein and I am an alumni of the University of Oregon. I work in advising students in higher education at Portland State University and I am concerned that too many students are making decisions based on the cost of education and not the careers they want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing students to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases that students can’t afford?

Like many of the students that I work with, I am also deeply affected by debt. I graduated with my degree two years ago and each month it is a struggle to pay my student loan bills on time. I had to work full-time while in school to pay for basic needs and for my schools books and tuition. Each year as the cost of higher education continued to rise, I was forced to take on more and more debt. It took me six years to graduate with my bachelors and I am $38,000 in debt. I pay over $300 a month on my student loans. My husband and I want to buy a home, we want to be able to reinvest in the state that we love, but that all seems impossible when we are burdened by so much debt.

Furthermore, many of the students I work with are considering whether or not they can continue their education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. Your tuition proposals will lead to a less educated Oregon. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Respectfully,

Courtney Helstein
Portland OR
Concerned Citizen
From: Diana Salazar

Campus: University of Oregon

Date: May 9th 2013

Regarding: Tuition Prices for Oregon Residents

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

Studies have shown that more education leads to a higher average income. Research also shows that higher education is correlated with an overall “better” society. With the increase in tuition/fees, we are only funneling students out of higher education—especially the ones, like myself, that come from a lower working class background! My name is Diana Salazar and I am a third year student at University of Oregon. Choosing to increase tuition/fees for a total of 5.8% is not the right decision.

From a policy perspective, I realize that public funds are already so tight and that you all must analyze the different budgeted demands and make the “best” choice that will “benefit” overall society (at least, in theory). It would be “easy” to explain the various studies that demonstrate how higher education is correlated with lower crime-rates, a more skilled workforce, less likely to use public benefits—an overall better off society. All of which will save the government money.

However, what I want to do instead is to demand a change of culture! A change in the way we conceptualize education (not just higher-education). Since capitalism became an overall global economic force, human rights have turned into a commodities. We now live in a system where education has become a business. Perhaps here at U of O this is most evident than any other place in Oregon. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards. I am sure you all have heard this many times—education must be a right, not a privilege! We cannot afford to disinvest on our communities and dig ourselves into a deeper hole.

We need a system that puts human standards over profit, one that is about quality education and not incarceration, a system that takes a holistic approach to improving access to higher education in a just and equitable way (among other things). A shift in priorities and values must occur. Students around the world are and have been rising up to demand such shifts.

Even though my scholarships cover tuition/fees, not everyone is NOT in my position. Social progress may be slow, but not impossible.

Soon to be another student graduating with debt,

Diana Salazar
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

My name is Leanna Parsons, and I am a student at Southern Oregon University. I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. Since 2001 alone, tuition on my campus has gone up nearly 80%, which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

I am very lucky to have a supportive family and the Western Undergraduate Exchange program to help me keep my costs of education low, however I still find myself taking out loans and applying for one scholarship after another. Elected officials are looking to Oregon University System to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session, students like me have been at the Capitol advocating for $850 million dollars for universities.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s offices is asking for answers with audits. I would like to know why tuition increases are still being proposed. If students like my peers and I are unable to pay for our education due to these tuition increases, we will not be able to adequately give to the Oregon workforce and the economy of this fine state. Please show me and so many other students on my campus that we made the right choice in coming to an Oregon university. Put Oregon on the map as the state that supports students and education by cutting back these proposed tuition increases. Thank you.

Leanna Parsons
Talent, OR
Student
As a representative of students from Portland State and an OSA board member, I am disappointed to see the proposed tuition increases across the state. This year, PSU Administration conducted a tuition elasticity study that concluded students cannot afford more tuition increases. This year Portland State saw a decline in student credit hours, especially out of our graduate students (mostly from the graduate school of education). We have priced students out of our programs at PSU and across the state.

Students are facing tremendous debt loads, and a bleak job market after graduation. I will be graduating this summer, and I have more than $30,000 in student debt. Students cannot continue to afford paying more for fewer services on our campuses. Please keep college accessible and affordable for future students with a 0% increase!

Tiffany Dollar
Student Body President
Portland State University
Office: 503-725-5673 Cell: [redacted]

"When the people lead, the leaders will follow."
-Gandhi
To: State Board of Higher Education  
From: Dan Cushing, Vice President, Associated Students of Oregon State University  
Campus: Oregon State University  
Date: 10 May 2013  
Regarding: Opposing Tuition Increases

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases proposed for my university and statewide. My name is Dan Cushing and I am the student body vice president at OSU. During this recession tuition has gone up 49% on my campus, which is why many of my constituents are increasingly relying on student-fee financed human services such as MealBux, emergency housing, and the OSU Food Pantry. It is also why many students are taking on more and more debt, which will remain with them for decades after they graduate.

My constituents want to know why the Oregon University System has not reexamined its own spending and excesses, especially since students themselves have been cutting back: in some cases, this means not even buying textbooks. Many students at Oregon State have shared personal stories with us, and they share a common theme: folks are increasingly unable to pay for school and the squeeze is negatively affecting their academic performance. Some of these students are parents; others must send money home to support their families. The inability for these students to pay for essential costs such as childcare and food has led many students to extreme measures, some even dropping out of school.

One student shared with us a poignant story that illustrates well the challenges many students face. This student lost his part-time job, which meant that he was unable to afford daycare for his young daughter. He tried to secure additional financial aid, but he could not. He told us that since he could no longer afford daycare, he would be dropping out of school at the end of the academic quarter to move back in with his parents and take care of his daughter while looking for work.

The story above shows that the education system in Oregon is broken. A young single father should be able to attend a university and earn a degree to build a better life for himself and for his daughter. This year, students made the reasonable request for at least one year of 0% tuition increases. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Best regards, Dan Cushing  
Vice President, Associated Students of Oregon State University
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed at Oregon State University and statewide. My name is Amelia Harris and I am student body president at OSU. During this recession tuition has gone up 49 percent on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

ASOSU is very concerned about the dramatic increase in tuition in these past couple of years. Since 2007, tuition has increased 49 percent, and that’s a difference of $2200 a year. My constituents are already struggling to put food on their table, let alone handle another proposed tuition increase of 5.9 percent. It would be easy to blame the proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing my constituents to take on more debt is not the only solution but it is the most detrimental for students already struggling. The number of students utilizing the OSU Food Pantry on campus has skyrocketed in the past couple of years, as it is getting harder and harder for students to pay for necessities while the cost of tuition is constantly rising.

Students around Oregon has continually sent students to the Oregon legislature to testify and rally against proposed tuition increases at each of our universities and fight for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases are only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

ASOSU and the Oregon Student Association are asking for at least one year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

My generation is less likely to be educated than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle and will continue to burden those seeking an education by forcing us to take out loans to pay for school. Please help my fellow students stay in school until graduation and not raise tuition this year.

Regards,

Amelia Harris
OSU Student Body President
Asosu.pres@oregonstate.edu
Dear Co-chairs and members of the committee,

My name is Joseph Foat, and I am a first-year student at Western Oregon University. I'm writing today representing the many college students that struggle every term to pay for their college tuition. Although, I do not receive financial aid other than loans, I still consider myself lucky. My family is part of the middle class. When I think of my family as part of the middle class I often think of how underrepresented we are as the middle class. Last year, as I prepared for college I remember filling out my fasfa and finding my parents made too much for me to receive financial aid. While this is the case, we still struggle to pay for my education out of pocket, so I have taken loans out in my name. My father, an accountant, has calculated that after my first year of college I will be $5,000 to $6,000 in debt. He will pay 14,000 this year, in addition to his bills from his own higher education from when I was young, and my recent college graduate brother's tuition. If I finish college in four years I will owe between $20,000 and $24,000 dollars while my dad will have an additional $60,000 added to his bills from my tuition.

Because I am not eligible for financial aid, I do not qualify for work study at my school either, leaving the job search up to me in a small town. This has proven to be a prominent problem in my life because I do not have enough money to pay for any extra spending, and neither does my dad. As part of the middle class, I seem to slip the radar because my dad makes just enough money, but I struggle to pay for every day needs because all of my money (and my parents money) is going towards my tuition. I hope that my little cousins and future children live in a time where paying for higher education is reasonable and realistic for us all. I hope their potential is never forgotten as a result of not being able to pay for college.

Thank you,
Joseph Foat
Portland, Oregon

To the Co-chairs and Members of the committee-

My name is Krystonia Katoa and I am a fourth year transfer student to Western Oregon University. As the current Student Body President I write to you on behalf of myself and the students of Western Oregon University.

Higher Education was always something that was expected for me. I knew that it was in the plans that I would pursue higher education. I knew that this was my way of paving my future as well as the future of our world. With every year I approached going into higher education our economy was declining while tuition was rising. When I started college I knew that I had to take out loans to help me fund my higher education. Though I am a recipient of the Oregon opportunity grant it was not enough for me to be able to pay my tuition and fees. I will be finishing college with over $30,000 in debt. This means that before I can even start to think about starting my future I am already in the hole $30,000 and will have to find every way to pay it back. Higher Education is very near and dear to my heart and I don't know what I would do without it, the experiences that I had in college are ones that I will never forget and have molded me into the leader I am today. Unfortunately if you don't fund the $850 million for Universities and the $510 million for Community Colleges you are not making Higher Education Accessible. I know a lot of students that had to leave school because they were not able to fund their tuition, I feel that this should be seen as a disappointment that Higher Education was essentially denied, and not accessible for students who have that drive to better themselves but also their community. We are the future and I ask you today to fund the $850 million for Universities, $510 million for Community Colleges and $115 million for financial aid, if you want to meet the 40-40-20 goal. We have to set precedence on funding for higher education because by doing you are funding in your future and the future leaders of our state.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Krystonia Katoa
From: Beatriz Gutierrez  
Campus: University of Oregon  
Date: 5/10/2013  
Regarding: Tuition Prices for Oregon Residents  

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Beatriz Gutierrez and I am a student at the University of Oregon. During the last year tuition has gone up 13.1% on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

Tuition will be increased an estimated 6% at the University of Oregon if investment in higher education is not made by the state. To me that translates as exceeding the 20,000 dollar loan mark that I didn’t not want to exceed. It also means that I might not be able to graduate in the next two years because as state funding decreasing class sizes increase making it more and more difficult for me to get access to pre-requisites to graduation by 2015.

Furthermore, tuition increases means I can’t spend as much time in the library as I would like, I can’t finish on time because I need to work more, and I know I am just one of many people who are considering whether or not I can continue my education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be education than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.
To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Adam Hobbs and I am Junior studying Political Science at Southern Oregon University. Since 1982, the cost of tuition has gone up over 400 percent, influencing students like me towards paramount life decisions that are based on debt and not on our desired careers.

Lack of funding and severe deficits are easily identified as culprits for the incessant rise in tuition, but allocating the burden of education onto the student’s shoulders is not the only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. Students like me have rallied together and brought the fight to the state capitol to plea for $850 million for our universities. Although the proposed 5.8 percent increase is relatively minimal, if the line is not drawn somewhere and increases accumulate, then more and more prospective and current students will be priced out an education or face insurmountable debt upon the culmination of their college careers.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year, as students, we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

Tuition increases have a broad spectrum of negative effects. Effectively students are paying less for more. The cancellation of programs, larger class size, less staff and teachers, and shorter facility hours (i.e. libraries, student support offices) creates a system where students are ill-prepared to enter the job market. Every time tuition increases that means I am spending more time at a menial job to pay for my increasing expenses and less time studying the appropriate material needed to augment my abilities.

Thank you,

Adam Hobbs

Southern Oregon University

Ashland, OR
To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Associated Students of the University of Oregon and many international student groups,

Please accept these comments in an official capacity.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please let me know.

Best,

Lindy Mabuya
ASUO Senate Seat 3
Program Finance Committee Chair
Diversity Plan Committee Chair
University of Oregon

May 10, 2013

Lindy Mabuya, ASUO Finance Senator
Associated Students of the University of Oregon
EMU Suite 4
1228 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1228
(541) 346-3724

Oregon State Board of Higher Education
via email: FeeBookPublicComments@ous.edu

Re: Comments about OUS 2013-14 Academic Year and 2014 Summer Session Draft Fee Book

Dear Oregon State Board of Higher Education Members:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed fee book. I have been a student senator at the University of Oregon for two years, President of African Student Association, Chair of the ASUO Diversity Plan committee, correspondent for University Affairs for the ASUO Executive, and I am an international student from South Africa.

I have reviewed the proposed changes that will impact University of Oregon students carefully, and on behalf of the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, International Student Association, Japanese Student Organization, Korean Student Association, Chinese Students and Scholars Association, Muslim Student Association, Saudi Student Association, and African Student Association, object to the proposed new fee to be assessed to international undergraduate students in the amount of $200 per term during the academic year and $150 during the summer term.

The justification for the fee states that it is “intended to support services related to academic support; enrollment services; increased immigration compliance as required by the federal government (such as SEVIS II); personal and cultural counseling and advising; and accelerated planning and delivery of new programs.” DRAFT 2013-14 Academic Year & Summer Session Fee Book, Oregon University System, Page 4.

International students pay the same fees as other students at the University of Oregon and are entitled to the same benefits including academic support, advising, and counseling services. The student government through the incidental fee funds a broad and diverse range of international student programs that provide cultural and
personal support to international students. A robust international student community benefits the entire university, and any costs associated with new programs that directly or indirectly benefit the university community should be supported by the entire university community and not solely international students. International students come to the University of Oregon from very different situations and backgrounds. The proposed fee assumes all international students are similarly situated. The need and/or interest in any and all of the proposed uses of the fee, with the sole exception of immigration compliance, will be particular to each individual student. It is our belief that individual students should have the ability to determine their need and interest in any services above and beyond those provided to the entire student body.

We do not object to the concept of imposing a fee to support immigration compliance as long as the fee is narrowly tailored to that purpose and a reasonable amount. However, because the university administration has not engaged the student government, international students, and other stakeholders in a meaningful discussion about this fee, we are requesting that at this time the fee be rejected in its entirety.

Sincerely,

Lindy Mabuya
Attached you will find AFT-Oregon’s comments on the Tuition and Fees for Academic Year 2013-14 and Summer Session 2014.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Shannon Brett
AFT-Oregon
Director of Political and Legislative Affairs

Testimony of AFT-Oregon on Proposed Tuition Rulemaking by
OUS May 10, 2013

The American Federation of Teachers-Oregon represents 15,000 members across the state. AFT members work as classified employees, faculty, instructors, graduate employees, early educators and in health care professions. AFT-Oregon represents members at the University of Oregon, Portland State University, Oregon State University, Western Oregon University, and Eastern Oregon University. Nationally, of AFT’s 1.5 million members, nearly 200,000 are higher education faculty, professional staff and graduate employees—more than any other national organization.

Once again, Oregon is looking to balance our public university budget on the backs of students by further burdening students with another tuition increase. We are creating an unsustainable system of student debt for the next generation. The numbers are clear, the proposed OUS tuition and fee increases for 2013-14 range from 3.6% - 6.5%. This is simply unacceptable. It means that Oregonians are graduating from our universities with an average of $25,000 in student debt.

Tuition is not the way to fund public higher education. Education should be for the common good. Unfortunately, the trend among many decision makers is to consider education a personal investment in an individual’s future, as if the only value of a college degree was in the amount of income that a person earned. Instead we must understand that investing in our students is a part of investing in Oregon’s entire economic future.

We know that state funding for public higher education is lower than it was four years ago. Oregon now stands as the 45th lowest among states for the support it offers per higher education student and we must change this pattern.

AFT-Oregon calls upon the state to start investing in our economic future by fully investing in our university system, not by increasing tuition.
From: Oneta Cantlon  
Campus: Southern Oregon University  
Date: Friday, May 10th, 2013  
Regarding: Tuition Prices for Oregon Residents

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,
I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed on my campus and statewide. My name is Oneta Cantlon and I am a student at Southern Oregon University. During this recession tuition has gone up 5.2% on my campus which is why students like me are making life decisions based on debt and not on the careers we want.

It would be easy to blame your proposed tuition increases solely on a lack of state funding or increased costs, but forcing me to take on more debt is not your only solution. Elected officials are looking to OUS to curb your costs and limit student loan debt. This legislative session students like me have been in the state capitol fighting for $850 million for our universities. These tuition increases might only be the beginning if we allow further administrative bloat with the addition of institutional boards.

Elected officials are offering solutions through policy and the Secretary of State’s office is prodding for answers with audits. I want to know why, yet again, you are proposing tuition increases I can’t afford? This year as students we asked for at least 1 year of 0% tuition increases. At the very least a year when the legislature increases funding and tuition increases mirror what Oregonians can afford.

This is pricing students out of higher education. In 1993, the number of students who went into debt to earn a bachelors degree was 45%. That number has risen to 94% today, when the jobs are most needed. Students who are from low income brackets are highly affected by these increases.

I am a low income student and this year I took out $6,234 in federal loans. I am currently a freshman and next year I will take out $9,403 in federal loans. Calculating my debt for this year and next year is depressing; by the end of next year I will have $15,637 in federal loans. I do not have the capacity to pay off these loans. I am a self sufficient student and I have no financial support from my parents. I work for everything that I have. I work 70 plus hours a week during the summer and I still have difficulty affording tuition.

Furthermore, tuition increases means I can’t spend as much time in the library as I would like, I can’t finish on time because I need to work more, and I know I am just one of many people who are considering whether or not I can continue my education as costs rise higher than almost any other cost in the state. My generation is less likely to be education than our parents’. Your tuition proposals perpetuates that cycle. Please open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

Oneta Cantlon  
Ashland, OR  
Student at Southern Oregon University
Dear members of the OSA,

We at the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP) respectfully demand that no tuition increase is implemented at the University of Oregon this year. SLAP is a group of students dedicated to furthering the interests of both students and workers. Students at the University of Oregon have been asked repeatedly to shoulder the burden for increasingly high tuition. This year, it is time for this to end.

This tuition increase only exacerbates the student debt crisis. Students at the University of Oregon and across the country are being forced to assume tens of thousands of dollars of debt if they hope to pursue higher education. This is poor policy, unfair to young people, and unnecessary. Only in the United States do public universities demand such high tuitions. Efforts should be being made to bring tuitions in line with the rest of the world and affordable for middle and lower class young people. Instead, year after year, tuitions are raised.

It is time for the OUS to look elsewhere to make its budget work. Students are tired of being targeted. We are tired of being treated like customers who can be forced to pay a higher price. We demand respect, and six consecutive years of significant increases in tuition and fees displays no respect, no interest in our future. This year, please do not raise our tuition again.

Signed,
The UO Student Labor Action Project

Written by Charles Gibson, UO student

Eugene, OR
To: Oregon University System Board of Higher Education

From: Sarah Westover

Talent, Oregon

2010 Graduate of Southern Oregon University

Date: 5/10/2013

Regarding: Tuition Prices for Oregon Residents

To Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the undergraduate and graduate tuition increases being proposed at Southern Oregon University and statewide. I am writing to ask the Board of Higher Education to seek out alternatives to increasing tuition again and place the financial burden of higher education squarely on the backs of students.

I am a low-income, first generation college graduate currently struggling to make minimum payments on my student loan debt. I worked hard during my undergraduate years in two part-time jobs so that I could afford to pay my bills and buy groceries each month. Although I excelled academically and received several grants and scholarships, I still struggled to make ends meet, graduating with $25,000 in student debt. School costs too much and there is already too little aid to go around. The tuition increases need to stop.

It had been a long time ambition of mine to attend law school in Oregon and contribute to public interest work in the state. Although I was accepted for admission at Lewis and Clark Law School, I cannot afford graduate level loan debt on top of my existing debt. I currently enjoy my work in the non-profit field but am struggling to pay down my loans on a low income. These kinds of tuition increases force students to make financial decisions that don't align with professional and personal aspirations.

I graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2010 and was the recipient of SOU’s Dankook award, the university’s highest achievement award for undergraduate students. Going to college was a life-changing event for me. One that I never thought I would be able to take advantage of coming from a low income family. Tuition increases, like those you are considering now, disproportionately impact low-income and underrepresented communities and strip them of the great equalizing effect that an education can offer. Please don’t price Oregon’s best students out of higher education.

There are other ways to cover costs. Please consider curbing organizational and administrative costs and consider administrative bloat before asking students to shoulder the burden.

Thank You,

Sarah Westover
To the Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

I am opposed to the tuition hikes being proposed not only on my campus but statewide. My name is Phoenix Singer and I’m a student at Portland State University. Students at Portland State are expecting a 3.8% increase in tuition this year, not so long after our nation has headed out of the Great Recession.

The fact of the matter is, we’re seeing students on average accumulate over $25,000 in debt by the time they receive their undergraduate degree and many students leave college for several months without a job. Tuition costs have increased over 24% at PSU in the last ten years and our students graduate with over $28,000 in debt. Last year student loan debt outpaced the growth of credit card debt in this nation – over $1,000,000,000,000 (one trillion dollars). This means students have been accumulating more and more debt and are unlikely to receive a job after graduation while tuition costs are increasing on all of our campuses. This adds to the already stressful burden students have.

As a Student Senator and an Oregon Student Association member on my campus, many of my constituents have expressed their concerns about whether or not they will be able to graduate on time or at all because of the high costs of postsecondary education. If I had not received the Diversity Enrichment Scholarship at Portland State I would never have gone to school and would have instead went into minimum wage work. This is a bubble that will eventually pop unless we act now to curb the costs of education and unless we do, our economy will suffer. The entire state of Oregon suffers when all our students are in this much debt and can no longer afford to go to our high quality institutions. Students this year have asked for a 0% increase in Tuition. Please help us open the door to Oregon’s future and roll back these proposed tuition increases.

--

Phoenix Alexander/Alexandria Singer
Portland State University Student

Oregon Students of Color Coalition (Oregon Student Association) Member

Associated Students of Portland State University Student Senator

United Indian Students in Higher Education Member

Diversity Enrichment Scholar

National Society of Collegiate Scholars Member

I am a parent of a UO 2006 graduate. Then I paid $10,000 per year. My other child will be a 2015 graduate at UO and now I pay $20,000 per year.
What is going on??? It's not just PERS. Give middle class parents, who get no federal or state aid a BREAK!

Debra Gelzer
parent and 4J educator
Springfield, OR