

# TALKING POINTS

## CCSF Budget Talking Points – STUDENTS

### Summary:

Our objective is to persuade legislators to support HB 5025 to fully fund community colleges at \$855 million, plus an additional \$50 million in one-time transition funding. Key themes include:

### Tell YOUR Story:

- Why did you choose to attend a community college? (*i.e., local, affordable, had the right programs, etc.*)
- How has your community college supported you in attaining your educational goals?
- Why are community colleges important to students like you?
- What would it mean for you if your college had to cut programs or services?

### Key Points:

#### 1. AFFORDABILITY

**Community colleges are the affordable option for access to higher education in Oregon, and serve students at all education and skill levels, including educating students with the greatest barriers to attaining post-secondary education and training – students like me.**

- In the 2021-2023 biennium, the Community College Support Fund was allocated \$700 million. However, thanks to inflation, supply shortages and remaining impacts of the pandemic, colleges now need \$855 million to maintain current levels of services, programs and staffing.
- Every dollar cut from the Community College Support Fund must be made up by raising tuition or cutting programs and services, moving educational opportunities out of the reach of the Oregonians with the most need. This impacts students significantly, as we rely more on these critical wraparound college services to support us as we pursue our education.
- If tuition increased at my college, it would mean \_\_\_\_\_ for me. (*Give examples of what would happen to you personally if tuition were to increase.*)
- Students need a minimum of \$400 million allocated by the Legislature for the Oregon Opportunity Grant to allow students to continue to access affordable education. With increasing tuition, financial aid options like the Oregon Opportunity Grant *enable me* to keep debt to a minimum. (*If applicable, talk about how college may not be an option for you financially if grants like the Oregon Opportunity Grant were unavailable.*)

#### 2. FOOD/HOUSING INSECURE STUDENTS

**Wraparound services are becoming an essential safety net for vulnerable students.**

- Community colleges serve more systemically marginalized students than any other sector of higher education.
- Even as enrollment declined at colleges during and immediately following the pandemic, demand for mental health and wraparound services increased significantly.
- Oregon colleges have played a leading role in helping students *like me* navigate the complicated



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process of applying for federal benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other forms of federal assistance that support basic needs.

- Before the pandemic began, community college students already faced unacceptably high rates of food and housing insecurity. A recent study by the HOPE Laboratory of Temple University showed that 41 percent of community college respondents faced food insecurity over a 30-day period in the fall of 2019. 52 percent reported they had faced housing insecurity and 20 percent had experienced homelessness over the previous year.
- *(Give examples of how your college is helping you gain access to resources, i.e., food pantry)*

### 3. EMPLOYMENT

**Oregonians rely on community colleges to provide the skills and training necessary to attain jobs in local industries.**

- As baby boomers retire, employers are having trouble finding trained workers. Adults *like me* with some college but no certificate or degree are the largest group when looking at Oregonians by education levels. Community colleges are best positioned to serve these learners. *(Give examples of how your college is supporting your efforts to gain the necessary skills/training for a job in your community.)*
- Community colleges are nimble and can react quickly to local needs of both employers and job-seekers. Thanks to the (insert CTE program) program at \_\_\_\_\_ Community College, I am working towards getting back into the workforce in a living wage job.

