

Legislators should fully fund basic Need Grants

• Student testimony before the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee.

Students at community colleges, who compose 14,000 of the students not receiving a Need Grant because of a lack of funds, have a greater need for funding than some of you might imagine. We are not all young people living with our parents who, therefore, have few expenses. The average community college student is in his or her thirties and has many expenses. Take me for example: I am a 36-year-old returning student and single mother of three children, ages 3, 6, and 10. I receive a financial aid package that includes three scholarships, two grants, work study, and a Perkins loan. I need this entire package in order to get by. In addition to tuition, books, and fees, I have the same expenses as any ordinary adult and parent. I have rent, utilities, groceries, clothing, insurance, automobile, and child care expenses. The Need Grant helps make ends meet in my frugal budget. My award of \$842 a year, for example, nearly pays for my child care expenses for one college term. Without child care, I could not attend college. Without the Need Grant to help pay for a portion of it, I would need to take out a loan and go deeper into debt than I am already. The Need Grant is imperative for me and for other students like me.

The funding of basic Need Grants is important to me. I am a Clackamas Community College student who has applied for admission to Lewis & Clark College. My goal is to earn a M.A.T. in Elementary Education. I receive the Need Grant to help defray the cost of my college education, but some 15,500 students in the state of Oregon do not. The funding runs out before they receive a financial aid package. However, students at private colleges such as Lewis & Clark have the opportunity to receive a supplemental grant in addition to the basic Need Grant. This is an unfair distribution of \$3 million: some needy students do not receive a grant while others receive two grants. Funding should provide all eligible students with grants.

Perhaps you may believe students at private colleges, with their higher tuition costs, deserve a larger portion of the grants. This makes sense. In fact, they do receive a larger portion. The basic Need Grant for students at private colleges is \$1,500 per year in comparison with \$1,200 for students at four-year colleges and \$842 for students, like myself, at community colleges. But do they also merit a supplemental grant when this means some students must do without any grant? I think not. All students deserve to receive basic Need Grants before students at private schools receive two grants.

Community college students do depend on Need Grants to meet expenses. Therefore, if you cannot fully fund basic Need Grants, end the distribution of supplemental grants and give this money to the Need Grant program. All college students deserve an equitable distribution of funds.

Cindy Hines Kurfman for Community Colleges of Oregon Student Association and Commissions

Send letters asking for full funding of basic Need Grants to the following legislators:

- Senator Brady Adams, Senate President
S-203 State Capital, Salem, Oregon 97310
986-1600; 986-1004 FAX
• Brady Adams @state.or.us
- Senator Eugene "Gene" Timms, W&M Co-Chair
S-219 State Capital, Salem, Oregon 97310
986-1730; 986-1977 FAX
- Representative Lynn Lundquist, Speaker of the House
H-269 State Capital, Salem, Oregon 97310
986-1459; 986-1201 FAX
• Lynn.Lundquist @state.or.us
- Representative Bob Repine, W&M Co-Chair
H-496 State Capital, Salem, Oregon 97310
986-1449
- More address information is located at www.leg.state.or.us.

Students ask legislators for grant, health funding

CINDY HINES KURFMAN
Copy Editor

During spring break some college students from around the state and I did something unusual: we testified before the Oregon Legislature about Need Grants and the Oregon Health Plan.

Nine students spent Tuesday, March 25, the warmest day of the break, in the state capitol on behalf of the 15,500 needy students in Oregon who are eligible for basic Need Grants but do not receive them. We were there to ask for more funding for these students, perhaps for you.

Upon hearing reports back about the testimony, ASG President Mike Caudle said, "The students were effective. They're looking for the extra \$5 million funding."

Kathy Campbell, director of Financial Aid at Clackamas, also testified. She believes the testimony will result in a positive outcome.

"If these committee members could add more money, they would do it. But they don't have the power. ... They did go ahead and decide to pass the budget out, shelf it. A decision will be made in May about redistribution or additional dollars," she said.

This means the current budget will not be used for basic Need Grants next year. The money

could be redistributed more evenly or additional funding could be added in order to finance more students.

Additionally, other students testified about the Oregon Health Plan. Last year full-time students were dropped from the plan. Students went to Salem to talk about the inequity of this situation. I was unable to testify in person but did contribute written testimony. Student testimony was successful.

"It's breezing through the committee," said Caudle. "Who knows what will happen when it gets to the [Senate] floor, but it looks like there'll be health insurance for full-time students."

The work on these issues is not over, however. Now is the time for all students to get involved in these issues. If you want a Need Grant or health insurance, write to the members of the committees involved in the decision-making process and to your own representative and tell them so. Your letter can make a difference.

Additional Ways & Means Members

Full Committee (OHP/Need)

Senate Members: Timms, Hamby, Hannon, Lim, Miller, Qutub, Stull, Yih

House Members: Repine, Carpenter, Carter, Johnston, Jones, Oakley, Ross, Sowa, Watt, Westlund

Education Committee (Need)

Hannon, Burdick, Hartung, Ron Adams, Beck, Carpenter, B. Johnston, Oakley

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Monday, April 7, 1997 — CC126, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Communications, Jeff Sweeney, Chair; Social Sciences, Robert Ridel, Chair

Monday, April 14, 1997 — CC 126, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Science & Mathematics, Larry Hanson, Chair
Interior Design & Art, Kay Slusarenko, Chair

For more information: Marie Feddern, CCC Counseling Office, 657-6958 or, Student Services, Marylhurst College, 699-6268

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