photo by Andrew Koczian

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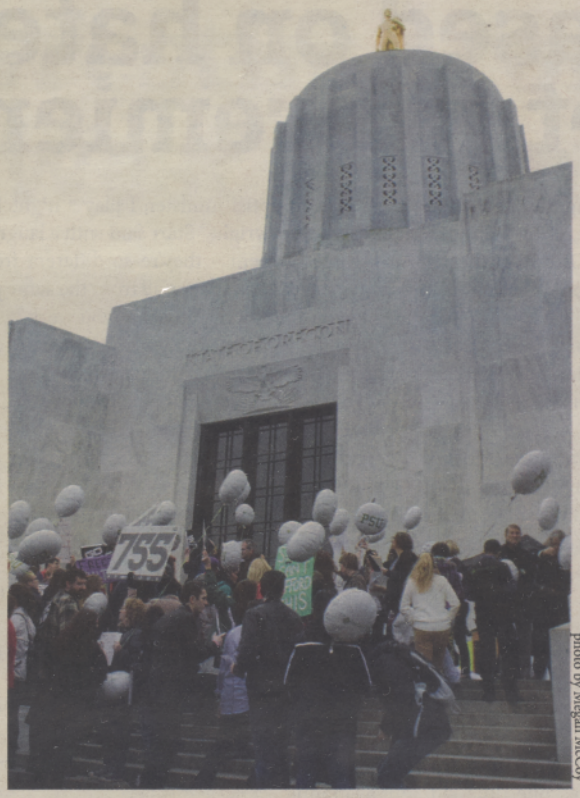

photo by Megan McCoy

Top left: Students hold signs and chant at the rally.
Bottom left: State Rep. Peter Buckley interacts with the crowd at the tuition freeze rally on Feb. 12 at the state Capitol.
Right: Students stand on the stairs of the state Capitol before the speeches begin.

"Ain't no power like the power of students because the power of students don't stop." Chanted many students from all over Oregon on Feb. 12 at the state Capitol for the freeze tuition rally. Paying for school is a constant battle that never seems to end for many students. The thought of tuition costs going up once again is frustrating. Unfortunately, that might be the reality for Clackamas Community College as well as all other Oregon community colleges and universities.

Outgoing Governor John Kitzhaber's current request for funding is not enough to restore cuts or prevent tuition increases. Community colleges need $550 million dollars and universities need $755 million in order to cover those costs and freeze tuition for two years.

At the freeze tuition rally, students had the chance to make sure their voices were heard by the Oregon legislators. People chanted, held signs, and listened to speakers from various local colleges. Jayne Miller, a student from Oregon State University who is currently working towards her master's degree, was very passionate about the issue.

"I'm cleaning houses to pay for that degree. I shouldn't have to pay those exorbitant prices and work to try to make ends meet to go to school," Miller said.

One of the speakers, State Representative Peter Buckley, spoke to the crowd about the influence this generation has on the future of the state and the decision of whether education receives funding.

"You're going to drive that decision," Buckley said. "Because our state has to decide, but it's your generation that's going to force that decision."

Buckley also said that is has been 25 years of disinvestment in education on all levels, from K-12 through universities. He said that it's up to the people to make a difference; people have to speak up before any changes can be made.

"If education and labor stay together in partnership, if working families and students stay together, we can change the dynamic of our state and finally invest in education at a level that our students and our state deserve," Buckley said, "And I promise you this, if you drive it, I will work like hell inside [the state Capitol]."

CCC Associated Student Government President Erick Breton, ASG Grants Department Officer Aleque Mack, ASG member Maddy Scott and ASG Clubs Senator Brent Finkbeiner had the opportunity to meet with numerous legislators and give their testimonies as to why they believe they should restore the funds.

Mack and Finkbeiner said they emphasized the importance of funding the resources and programs offered at CCC during their meetings. Mack added that without the funding, CCC may have to make cuts to faculty, math and writing labs, programs such as ASG, and Future Leaders and the chances up getting updated equipment for classes would decrease.

"And I promise you this, if you drive it, I will work like hell ..."
– Peter Buckley

"We need this money so we can keep our resources." Finkbeiner said. He also mentioned that they had the opportunity to speak with Senator Alan Olson and got quite a bit of support from him.

"I got a sneak peek at the bill that is going to be getting its first reading on Tuesday [Feb. 17] and it's more than what we're asking for. So hopefully we get that much money into the system. That would be great." Finkbeiner said.