

It's been over a week since I made the excursion up to the State Capitol for Student Lobby Day, sponsored by the Oregon Students Association. Only a lucky few, four to be exact, made it out of Ashland before the snow came last week. We definitely missed the students, seventy of them, who had been recruited and were ready to go, but I am glad that we were there to represent Southern Oregon University. Along with two other members of the Associated Students of Southern Oregon University (ASSOU) and one student-at-large I can say we were definitely getting things done the Raider Way!

While in Salem, we students were able to voice our opinions and educate our legislators about the problems facing higher education in our state. Problems like access to education, rising tuition costs, and dwindling quality. This was a new experience for me, but with all of the preparation I received from ASSOU Director of Governmental Affairs Monique Teal, I didn't feel outside my comfort zone in the least.

We are feeling the budget crisis at SOU more than anywhere else in the state, because of this we were able to articulate concerns for education in our state with examples from our school and experiences. Some legislators were in support of the Governor's Recommended Budget (which is a big help to students) which was great; a few I met with personally, such as Representative Monnes Anderson and Representative Jerry Krummel wanted even more funding for Higher Education. This is extremely important because the Governor's Recommended Budget is just one small step towards a strong investment in postsecondary education in Oregon. Here at Southern Oregon University (like other regional schools) we need an even stronger commitment.

Still there were those who need convincing. It's strange when you feel that a change is obviously right and someone who has the power to effect that change doesn't see eye to eye with you. As it stands, there is growing support for the priority issues we presented as college students including: Funding and Tuition, ASPIRE, the Shared Responsibility Model, and Tuition Equity.

Though this rally was a huge success, student action can't stop now. We are still in the decision making frame of this legislative session and there are still emails and letters that need to be sent by people who have a high stake in this, students! Anybody associated with the Oregon University System should take note that this is a time to get yourself heard and let our state government know what's important to you.

You can find out more about the issues and/or e-mail your legislators through the Oregon Students Association website or call 552-6655.

Jackson McCormack
ASSOU Multicultural Senator