



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

**Testimony by Sam Dotters-Katz to the
State Board of Higher Education 6 March 2009**

Chair Kelly, Members of the State Board of Higher Education,

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today, it is an honor and a privilege to be here representing the University of Oregon.

Before I begin, I want to state that I am here as both a representative of the university, and as a representative of the student body. In my role as ASUO President, I do not take advocating for a tuition increase lightly, however, I am in full support of this surcharge, both as a student representative and as a university representative, for reasons which I will elaborate on shortly.

The University of Oregon has undergone a series of cuts this school year, due to the economic situation facing our state and nation.

The Legislatures most recent cuts have placed the University in danger of ending the year below required fund balance levels. We have proposed rectifying this situation through both cost saving budget reductions, and revenue generating measures.

The revenue generating strategy that I am referring to is the tuition surcharge which the University of Oregon humbly requests you approve today.

To raise 2.1 million dollars, we propose assessing a charge of 150 dollars to instate students, and 350 dollars to out of state students.

I want to immediately note that there will be parameters assigned to this surcharge which we are confident will make this increase "family income neutral".

The University has committed to take 30% of any increase off the top, and to use those funds for need-based financial aid. Further, students who receive the Oregon Opportunity grant, Pathway Oregon, and/or Oregon Challenge grants will not be included.

The University has fought long and hard to give more Oregonians access, while at the same time improving the quality of the educational experience.

I do not believe it to be a false hope that, even in these dark times, we can continue our progress on both fronts.

Yet if we do not implement this tuition surcharge, in my opinion, that will be impossible.

Over the last few weeks, I have thrown open forums, spoken at student group meetings, and released a statement to our school newspaper.

I can report to you that students, while initially skeptical, are for the most part supportive of this measure. To be frank, while increasing tuition is not an attractive sell, decreased course offerings, reduction in the quality and availability of student services, and faculty/staff layoffs aren't either. While we do not want to receive an unfair portion of the burden, the current plan is fair, it is balanced, and it is well reasoned.

On the whole, I have been extremely proud of the student body's response to this issue.

Said simply, we understand that when it comes to the University of Oregon successfully mitigating these darkest of days, we must choose either to stand together, or fall apart.

Thank you, I would be more than happy to answer your questions at this time,