

Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission
255 Capitol Street NE, Third Floor
Salem, OR 97310
January 7, 2018

Dear Members of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission,

I characterize a portion of society that works professionally, holds earned college credit, and desires to obtain a formal academic degree. I am in my fifties with management responsibilities at a Grants Pass company that offers equipment and party rentals. I maintain the computer systems, websites, and direct the creative division that offers decorative solutions to our customers. Each week I volunteer time to help elderly people who require assistance to maintain their independence. I help with yard-work, technical equipment issues, and odd jobs. Oregon offers excellent outdoor activities and I spend time regularly photographing many of the beautiful landscapes in our state.

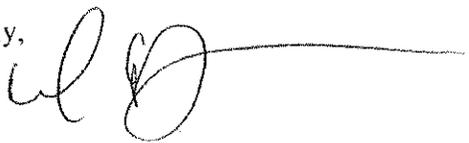
I have desired a college degree for some time. My past work experience led me to many industries including retail, manufacturing, and service trades. I enjoyed moderate success that always capped out quickly because of my lack of a formal college education. My attempts to obtain higher positions often resulted in disappointment when people with college degrees were awarded the positions instead, despite my superior experience. This often led to frustration because of the commitment in time and money needed to gain a degree. I earned just enough money to take care of financial responsibilities with little left over for education. My daytime job duties made it difficult to commit to the traditional classroom model.

I also found it problematic to choose a single-discipline degree because of my wide variety of work experience. The thought of attending class with young and inexperienced students did not appeal to me as I grew older. I found the idea of online classes intriguing and did research on using that option. I determined that I learn best in a classroom setting that provides me access to the knowledge and experience of the instructor. It also offers a structured framework that helps me stick to the program. These challenges all contributed to my dilemma of how I could earn my own formal academic degree.

A college degree became possible for me when I discovered the Innovation and Leadership (INL) program at Southern Oregon University. It provides a path for people like myself who have previously gained abilities and skills from work experience. The program offers a flexible and fast-paced curriculum that builds on those abilities and skills brought into the classroom by all the participants. The administrators of the program take a personal interest in my success and have provided support and guidance throughout the process. I have found the experience highly rewarding and instrumental in my college education. It has provided me with the necessary tools to effectively compete in today's knowledge-based workforce.

My experience as a member of the 3rd Cohort in the INL program illustrates a great example of Southern Oregon University's commitment to being Oregon's "University for the Future". I urge you to strongly support SOU's new mission, vision, and strategic direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Daley Jr.", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Douglas G. Daley Jr

PO Box 131

Rogue River, Oregon 97537