

FULFILLING THE PROMISE?

Early Findings on Oregon's New College Grant Program

This handout presents student perspectives on the impact of Oregon Promise, based on data from a student survey. Survey responses are presented for first-generation students—defined as students who indicated no one in their immediate family (parents, guardians, brothers, sisters) had a college degree or certificate—and non-first-generation students.

SURVEY DETAILS

In collaboration with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Education Northwest designed a survey to gather student perspectives on Oregon Promise and its impact on their lives. To reach Oregon students who were most likely seniors in the 2015–2016 school year and thus may have been eligible for Oregon Promise, Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) staff members administered the survey to 18- and 19-year-old students who had filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid. To reach the GED population, OSAC staff members also administered the survey to Oregon Promise applicants who were GED recipients. OSAC administered the survey twice, in September and October 2016. A total of 1,442 individuals completed the survey. While the response rate is low, the sample is relatively large and provides a broad range of perspectives on Oregon Promise.

“My dad was unemployed for four years, and we were forced to spend all of my parent’s retirement and my college savings to survive. With Oregon Promise, I’m able to attend college without putting excessive pressure on my family, and they can rebuild their retirement!”

“When I looked at the amount I was given, I [went] to my mom and said, ‘I can pay for college. I will get to complete my degree, completely paid for.’ This will help me literally for years. I am going to become a pediatric dietitian.”

Figure 1. The majority of respondents reported that Oregon Promise improved their views on college access and affordability

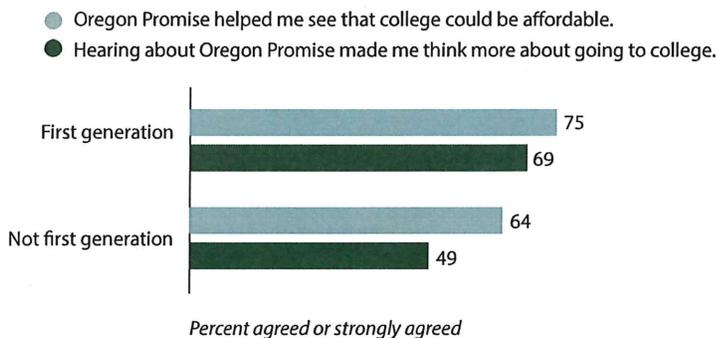
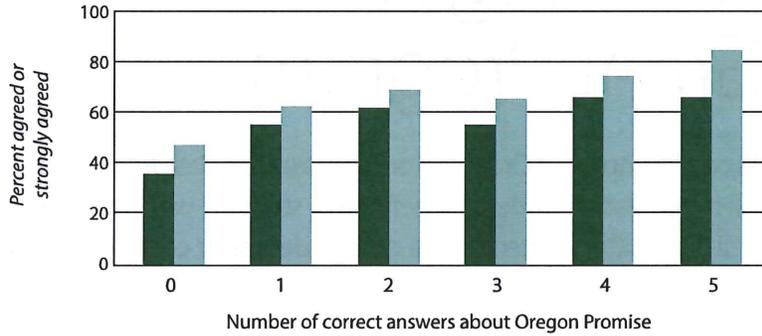


Figure 2. The impact of Oregon Promise was greater for students who understood the requirements of the program

- Hearing about Oregon Promise made me think more about going to college.
- Oregon Promise helped me see that college could be affordable.



I originally planned on going to the University of Oregon, and taking out loans, but at the last second my mom backed out of cosigning and my dad's credit was too bad, so I wasn't able to get the funding I needed. It seemed like I applied for every possible scholarship, but I was only awarded \$600, which I was very frustrated with because of how hard I worked in school. But thanks to Oregon Promise, I'm able to attend [community college] this year instead of working and then going to school later on."

Figure 3. Nearly a third of first-generation students reported that without Oregon Promise they would not have gone to college

- I originally planned to attend a four-year university, but because of Oregon Promise I am attending community college first and then transferring.
- Without Oregon Promise, I would not go to college.
- Without Oregon Promise, I would have gone to college out of state.

