

# The Importance of Advocacy

How your voice can impact the future

Advocacy is a critical part of our political process. It empowers individuals while pushing for systematic, positive change. Student voices and stories are a very powerful part of this. Taking part in opportunities to travel to the Capitol and speak with legislators, or even writing to them or calling them from your home helps them understand their constituents; and it puts faces to the issues that come across their desks.

Lobbying and advocacy, at their core, are ways to influence and persuade policymakers. They are an opportunity for students to have their voices heard, to tell their stories and share their experiences to persuade legislators to prioritize specific issues.



SOU has been very involved with different lobbying efforts. This has brought critical successes to the university. Two examples come from the 2024 “short” session. Efforts by advocacy on behalf of the University eventually led to a \$4 million investment by the state for behavioral health education (of which SOU received \$667,000) as well as \$6.1 million in funding for the renovation of Central Hall.

State legislation has profound impacts on students. Southern Oregon University relies on state funds for about a third of its annual funding—and we need to move this percentage higher! Underinvestment by the state can result in significant tuition increases and/or downsizing. Advocacy and lobbying are some of the most important ways to prevent this.