



Testimony Against 4061 "Task Force on Higher Education Governance"

Co-chair Johnson and Co-chair Dembrow thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Tiffany Dollar and I am here today to share my concerns with the amendments you are discussing on HB 4061 "The Higher Education Governance Task Force Bill."

During the January Legislative Work Days the both Ben Eckstein and I representing the Oregon Student Association testified in support of Legislative Concept 288. That LC was intended to research how we might streamline the existing governance structures including the HECC and OEIB, as well as research the possibility of local boards. These new amendments change this task force into a 'special committee' to implement local boards. We are extremely disappointed in these changes.

The intent, purpose, and charge of this task force would be erased with these amendments. Our organization voted to support the legislative task force because it was focused on finding real solutions, searching for indepth and diverse opinions and research, and taking the necessary time to consider major changes. The amendments proposed to day erase this thoughtful approach.

The Oregon Legislature needs to first take the time to research what can be achieved through new performance compacts and coordinating boards. We need to spend the next year addressing possible duplication and researching the possible benefit of local boards. States like Florida made too many changes to their higher education governance too quickly and now competing bodies of post-secondary education governance are suing each other for authority. Why would we rush changes like Florida did and risk the time and resources it may take to reverse decisions?

As students we are most interested in what forms of governance keep tuition prices accountable, we want to know what governance forms experts think are best for Oregon, we want to know what governance structures keep Oregonians in mind in the admissions process, we want quality education, and we want increased graduation rates of all students. We want institutions that recruit and retain under-represented communities. We want to know what

governance structure limits negative competition between schools. We want, as the Governor's office says, form to follow function. These amendments are backwards.

Students are paying more than 50% of what it costs to run a public university and we want a task force that will hear from stakeholders and take the time to look at all governance options for Oregon's post-secondary education system. You wouldn't see me in a research methodology class creating a conclusion before I had done the research and that is exactly what this bill allows; these amendments draw a conclusion before we examine the evidence and debate the proposals.

Please pass the original draft of this legislation without the amendments or if no agreement can be drawn don't create a task force. Simply allow the intuitions to write their own legislation and make their own case in 2013. Or create a task force that addresses the true problem at hand; the state's investment and funding levels of post-secondary education in Oregon. Do not direct the state's time and money toward developing legislation before stakeholders and experts can be heard. Don't create a conclusion before you do the research. Please do not adopt these amendments and let's stay focused on researching and planning for what's best for all Oregonians and all our institutions.