

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

A higher degree. A higher purpose.

Statement by Dr. Tracy Marsh, Walden University College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Program Director, Counseling Psychology Program
Before the 77th Oregon Legislative Assembly
HB 2389 – Educational and training qualifications necessary to be licensed to practice psychology
March 27, 2013

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. My name is Dr. Tracy Marsh and I am the Program Director for the Counseling Psychology Doctoral Degree Program at Walden University.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my support for House Bill 2389. For more than 40 years, Walden has been a university with curricula that emphasizes a scholar-practitioner philosophy: applying theoretical and empirical knowledge to professional practice with the goal of improving organizations, educational institutions, and whole communities. Walden is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The university provides students with an engaging educational experience that connects them with expert faculty and peers around the world. Walden is the flagship online university in the Laureate International Universities network—a global network of more than 65 campus-based and online universities in 29 countries enrolling more than 750,000 students.

The majority of Walden students—close to 91%—work full time, part-time, or are self-employed. Additionally, Walden’s student body is diverse. Women comprise more than 77% of Walden’s student body and more than 46% are ethnic minority. Walden is dedicated to providing access to higher education for adult learners, and more than 77% of Walden’s students are 30 years of age or older.

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The data is similar for Walden's 67 Oregon students earning degrees through the School of Psychology. The average age of the student body residing in the state of Oregon is 40 and 68% are female.

Walden University responds and will continue to respond to the educational needs of a diversified population. The university has 668 Oregon residents currently enrolled and 625 alumni in the State of Oregon whose academic accomplishments are helping the state achieve the goals expressed in ORS 351.009 which are as follows:

- 40% of Oregonians will hold a Bachelor's degree or some type of postgraduate degree.
- 40% of Oregonians will hold an Associate degree or some postsecondary training.
- 20% of Oregonians will hold at least a high school diploma or equivalent.

Walden has consistently contributed to the aspirational goals outlined in ORS 351.009 and has done so by charging tuition rates comparable to the in-state tuition rates of Oregon State University.¹ HB 2389 offers an opportunity for highly trained and credentialed psychologists to obtain licensure in the state of Oregon while serving communities and constituents around the state. In fact, our students are completing research in real applied areas. For example, one of our students is completing her dissertation by exploring empirical evidence for use of mindfulness-based relaxation techniques among local Laotian immigrants suffering from PTSD as a result of the genocide in Laos in the 1970's.

¹ Walden's M.S. in Psychology program per credit tuition = \$445/credit and Walden's PhD in Psychology = \$485/credit. Oregon State University's Ecampus graduate per credit tuition = \$496/credit.

Walden University is in favor of House Bill (HB) 2389 – a bill that will, if passed, assure equality of opportunity for students who either choose or are required, for a variety of personal or financial reasons, to pursue a significant portion of their higher education on-line. The bill will also ensure that such students will acquire the educational and training qualifications necessary to be licensed to practice psychology. Walden University supports an equal and fair opportunity for students who have completed a doctoral psychology program from an institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission to obtain licensure in the state of Oregon.

In addition to regional accreditation, Walden University has sought and obtained programmatic accreditation for many of its degree programs. These accreditations are as follows:

Program	Accredited by
Counseling	Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
Nursing	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
Teacher Education	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) <i>Now known as CAEP – Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation</i>
Business	Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)
Project Management	Global Accreditation Center (GAC) of the Project Management Institute (PMI)

However, Walden University is unable to seek programmatic accreditation for its doctoral psychology programs from the American Psychological Association (APA) because APA’s Commission on Accreditation (CoA) adopted a regulation in 2010 that prohibits programs that are fully or substantially online from applying.² Walden University has ensured compliance with professional expectations for socialization

² APA. (2010). *Implementing Regulation C-27: Distance and electronically mediated education in doctoral programs*. Commission on Accreditation. www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/policies/implementing-regulations.aspx.

and face-to-face instruction through its residency requirements. Through a blended or hybrid model that meets the DOE definition of in-residence courses, academic and professional activities are monitored by Walden faculty for quality and effectiveness of learning.

Conclusion

Everything Walden University develops and implements is designed with the student at the center of the educational activity. Walden is committed to providing access to education, especially for students who are nontraditional, and to representing underserved populations and those who are located in rural areas. Our adherence to the highest levels of quality and integrity drive our commitment to offer the best educational and professional opportunities to our students, faculty, and staff. We look forward to the continued leadership of the members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly to ensure that all students in the state of Oregon have access to higher education programs in the psychology discipline.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.