

May 24, 2013

Ways and Means Education Subcommittee  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs,

I write today to record officially what I had planned to say to you and the Subcommittee on May 23, 2013 during your public hearing on House Bill 3120 and Senate Bill 270; regrettably there was not sufficient time for everyone to present in person. I thought the testimony from others was well presented and I trust it was helpful to your consideration of the legislation.

In preparing these comments I want to be clear that I offer these thoughts as the representative of Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities and do so on behalf of nineteen, regionally accredited, not-for-profit-independent institutions in Oregon. I have enclosed a fact sheet that will provide you with an informative summary of what our contributions are to Oregon's efforts to achieve the Oregon Business Council's and the State of Oregon's 40-40-20 goals by 2025. Presently we provide 30% of the degrees (total enrollment of 32,350) related to the first goal for Oregon to have 40% of our citizens achieve a bachelors degree or higher. We make this contribution with no state dollars except the limited financial support to our Oregon students who receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Those who receive the grants must compete on the same need basis for funding as do those who attend an OUS campus or an Oregon Community College. As you know very well, only 20% of the students who apply and are eligible actually receive the grant owing to the limited funding relative to the true financial need of Oregon families.

Now to the legislation before you: in the broadest terms, The Alliance is supportive of both bills. As many of you have heard me say on the record, and informally, our institutional and aggregate interests are aligned with those of the state of Oregon. In other words, without a healthy and robust system of public education and public postsecondary education, the Oregon economy will not do well. Our campuses depend on and contribute to Oregon's economic health and without a strong economy and a strong system of public education our campuses will find it difficult to thrive. We need a robust economy and healthy education partners for reasons too numerous to list. Moreover, our campuses function using Oregon citizens to teach and manage at each of our institutions—a total of 7,700 jobs within our nineteen colleges and universities creating a \$2.2 billion impact to the Oregon economy.

I do want to express one important preference for HB 3120 with regard to the composition of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. I believe that Oregon is best served if the members of the Commission are selected as contributing citizens without reserving positions for specific stakeholders. It is an unfair burden to ask faculty, students and staff to continually reconcile their specific interests on policy and funding issues with what is broadly in the best interests of Oregonians. However, I do believe that it is important for the Commissioners to have their deliberations and decisions informed by the insight, experience and knowledge of those constituencies. The use of a strong advisory council to the commission that invites their views is a tested and effective way of communicating their special perspective.

One additional thought on the composition: most of the work of the HECC is likely to be focused on the public sector of postsecondary education. However there are two responsibilities of the HECC in the current draft where the independent institutions are centrally affected. The first of those is the oversight of the Oregon Student Access and Completion agency. Oregon students at independent colleges participate in that program as mentioned above. The second responsibility under HECC's jurisdiction is the Office of Degree Authorization wherein more of the focus is on the independent campuses than on the public universities and colleges. I believe these functions should be carried out by a citizen board made up of strong strategic thinkers who will be able to focus on the best interests of higher education and the state generally.

In summary, the Alliance supports these two pieces of legislation before you and hopes they will be enacted. We are—and will continue to be—contributing partners to the state's agenda for postsecondary education. I am happy to respond to any questions you or members of your subcommittee may have. Thank you for taking the time to learn our view on these issues.



Larry D. Large  
President