

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**CARRIER:**

House Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development

REVENUE: No revenue impact**FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued****SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: Joint Ways and Means****Action:****Vote:****Yeas:****Nays:****Exc.:****Prepared By:** Victoria Cox, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 2/5, 2/10

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Directs Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Southern Oregon University and Western Oregon University to develop pilot programs for fixed cost bachelor's degrees and establishes criteria for pilot programs. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to report status of and recommendations for pilot programs to Legislative Assembly. Declares emergency; effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Student debt crisis
- Approaches taken by other states
- Need to offer certainty to enrolling college students

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Proposed -1 amendments provide for reporting of universities' projected costs for pilot programs to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and for the Commission to work with universities on long-term sustainability of programs.

BACKGROUND: Institutions of higher education in Texas, Wisconsin and Florida have recently developed degree programs with fixed costs. House Bill 4076 directs Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Southern Oregon University and Western Oregon University to develop pilot program for fixed cost bachelor's degrees that are designed to meet the following criteria:

- Create a long-term and sustainable benefit to the local economy
- Allow students to graduate with less debt
- Offer at least two programs, one of which must be tied to the university's mission and local workforce needs
- Cost significantly less than traditional bachelor's degree including all tuition costs at a fixed price
- Meet the same educational and accreditation standards as other degrees offered by the institution

The measure also requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to report on the development status of the pilot programs to the Legislative Assembly no later than December 10, 2014. Additionally, the measure establishes five-year tracking requirements for the programs to begin with the 2015-2016 academic year and requires the HECC to analyze the data produced and report its findings and recommendations during the 2021 legislative session.

2/10/2014 3:37:00 PM *

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.