

# House Bill 4076

Sponsored by Representative JOHNSON; Representatives HUFFMAN, WHISNANT, Senators GIROD, HASS (Pre-session filed.)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

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.

Establishes criteria for pilot programs.

Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to issue reports to Legislative Assembly detailing status of, and commission's recommendations for, pilot programs.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

1  
2 Relating to degree programs at public universities; and declaring an emergency.

3       Whereas student loans were the second highest contributor to consumer debt in 2012; and

4       Whereas many national efforts have focused on implementing fixed cost pathways to achieve a  
5 bachelor's degree in a variety of fields; and

6       Whereas utilization of competency-based credits, online and distance learning tools and dual  
7 accreditation can reduce the amount of tuition students pay by reducing the timeline for completing  
8 a degree program; and

9       Whereas Oregon has taken steps toward developing a collaborative preschool through post-  
10 secondary education continuum; and

11       Whereas Oregon has adopted education initiatives in order to improve student outcomes and to  
12 achieve the 40-40-20 mission of educational attainment set forth in ORS 351.009; and

13       Whereas the achievement of 40-40-20 requires the employment of innovative methodologies and  
14 creative strategies to develop multiple pathways for higher education attainment; and

15       Whereas Oregon has adopted initiatives designed to develop a workforce prepared not only to  
16 meet current economic challenges but also to thrive in the workplace; and

17       Whereas tuition costs require significant state investment, federal investment and student in-  
18 vestment; and

19       Whereas the Higher Education Coordinating Commission can lead the collaboration between  
20 regional and technical universities, community colleges and high schools to develop a pathway for  
21 achieving fixed cost bachelor's degrees; and

22       Whereas there are examples of high schools, community colleges and universities operating in  
23 professional learning communities to provide new pathways to successful outcomes for students;  
24 now, therefore,

25 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

26       **SECTION 1. (1) Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Southern**  
27 **Oregon University and Western Oregon University shall each develop a pilot program for**  
28 **fixed cost bachelor's degrees. The pilot programs must be designed to create a long-term and**

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 sustainable benefit to the local economy and to enable students enrolled in a pilot program  
2 to graduate with less student debt than would otherwise be required to obtain a bachelor's  
3 degree from that university.

4 (2) Each pilot program developed under this section must:

5 (a) Offer at least two bachelor's degrees that meet the following criteria:

6 (A) At least one of the bachelor's degrees must be directly tied to the mission statement  
7 of the university and the local workforce needs of the region in which the university is lo-  
8 cated.

9 (B) All bachelor's degrees offered under the pilot program must be offered to students  
10 at a fixed cost that includes all tuition costs required to obtain the degree. This fixed cost  
11 must be significantly less than the standard tuition cost required to obtain a bachelor's de-  
12 gree at that university.

13 (C) All bachelor's degrees offered under the pilot program must meet the same educa-  
14 tional and accreditation standards as other bachelor's degrees offered by the university and  
15 be capable of being approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission under ORS  
16 351.047.

17 (b) Include a method for tracking the success of the pilot program over a five-year pe-  
18 riod. This tracking must accurately catalog the number of students participating in the pilot  
19 program, the percentage of participating students who complete the pilot program and the  
20 employment rate for students who complete the pilot program.

21 (3) In establishing a pilot program, each university listed in subsection (1) of this section  
22 may decide whether to limit the pilot program to courses taught at the university or to  
23 collaborate with other institutions in order to include courses taught on the Internet, at lo-  
24 cal high schools or at community colleges. If courses offered on the Internet, at local high  
25 schools or at community colleges are incorporated into a pilot program, the fixed cost of the  
26 pilot program must include all tuition costs students will incur in taking these courses.

27 (4) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall:

28 (a) Work with each university listed in subsection (1) of this section to:

29 (A) Develop long-term and financially sustainable pilot programs; and

30 (B) Track the success of the pilot programs;

31 (b) Submit a report before December 10, 2014, to the interim committees of the Legisla-  
32 tive Assembly related to higher education that details the progress each university listed in  
33 subsection (1) of this section has made toward establishing a pilot program; and

34 (c) Present a final version of each of the proposed pilot programs to the committees re-  
35 lated to higher education during the 2015 regular session of the Seventy-eighth Legislative  
36 Assembly.

37 (5) All of the pilot programs shall start operating at the beginning of the 2015-2016 aca-  
38 demic year.

39 (6) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall analyze the five-year tracking  
40 results of each pilot program and submit a report to the committees related to higher edu-  
41 cation during the 2021 regular session of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly. This report  
42 must:

43 (a) Include the commission's detailed recommendations for improving the pilot programs,  
44 or for continuing the pilot programs as permanent programs;

45 (b) Contain an analysis of how higher education funding models relate to the pilot pro-

1 **grams; and**

2 **(c) Provide recommendations for state incentives or appropriations that may be neces-**  
3 **sary to ensure the long-term success of the pilot programs.**

4 **SECTION 2. This 2014 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public**  
5 **peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2014 Act takes effect**  
6 **on its passage.**

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