

**Comments on SB 473**  
**Before the Senate Education Committee**  
**February 26, 2015**

I am Rebecca Mathern, Registrar for Oregon State University. I provide this testimony on behalf of all seven Oregon public four-year universities in support of Senate Bill 473 which would establish procedures for collecting information about student gender identity and sexual orientation. The bill also seeks to facilitate the use of preferred first names of students, faculty, and staff. SB 473 fosters the goal of equity on campus for all students and staff while also creating flexibility for students who desire to list a preferred first name other than their legally specified name.

The collection of gender identification beyond the binary options of female and male will allow people to identify as something other than their birth-assigned gender which respects their authentic self, rather than a medical selection made long before people are able to express their identity.

By enabling students, faculty, and staff to declare sexual orientation -- if they so choose -- on demographic forms, universities can then begin to collect data that can be used to improve services to students. The bill also creates an environment that enables staff and faculty to reach out to select students about services, resources, and events on campus.

We have worked with Senator Gelser to develop the dash-one amendments that provide clarity about how preferred first name will be used on specific forms. The amendments ensure that preferred first names can be used on forms and information systems that involve the highest level of interaction with students, such as class rosters, directories, learning management systems, and ID cards. The amendments also keep a number of formal records intact. The intent of the amendments is to protect the interest of students when dealing with federal laws and for official transcripts and enrollment verifications where typically a legal name that matches a government issued ID is required.

This legislation furthers a number of social values that institutions should and do embrace, while still allowing flexibility to do so in such a way that protects the interests of students over the long term as academic records are maintained and transmitted among institutions, employers, and others.



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