



House Bill 2407
House Higher Education, Innovation and
Workforce Development Committee
March 20, 2015

Good morning Chair Read, Vice Chairs Whisnant and Gallegos, and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Ben Cannon, Executive Director of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

I am very pleased to be here today to talk about House Bill 2407. This bill puts forward the HECC's best thinking around improving affordability for Oregon's students. I would humbly suggest to the committee that this bill presents an opportunity for you to demonstrate a commitment to Oregon students and their ability to access higher education.

You may remember that Bob Brew and Commissioner Larry Roper and I introduced this bill to you last month. We provided you information then about the process that we used to recommend a "redesigned" Oregon Opportunity Grant.

I am here today to describe the -3 amendments that would put in place the HECC's recommendations to award the Opportunity Grant to the highest need students if State funds are not available to award grants to all eligible students. The amendments would also permit the HECC, through the Office of Student Access and Completion, to develop a financial reward that incentivizes students to take and complete 15 credits per term, which would put students on a path to complete a bachelor's degree in four years and save them the expense of paying for additional time in school and allow them to join the workforce and start earning a paycheck.

The -3 amendments also retain language in the bill that would assure students that their Opportunity Grants will be renewed if they are in good academic standing and reapply for the Grant in a timely manner.

I would also note that the -3 amendments incorporate a portion of another bill that this committee has heard; that is House Bill 2747 regarding college savings network account contributions. That addition can be seen in Sec. 1(7)(c) of the amendment.

Representative Johnson has also shared -2 amendments with us. We support providing students increased academic advising and supports and would be happy to consider ways to work with Representative Johnson and the universities and colleges to ensure that students are taking the courses they need to fulfill their academic goals.

I would like now to give Bob Brew a chance to describe the “redesign” in more detail and, of course, either of us would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.