



Date April 30, 2015
To Senate Education Committee
From Ben Cannon, HECC Executive Director
Subject House Bill 2408A

Good afternoon Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Ben Cannon, Executive Director for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC).

As you are aware, postsecondary education has undergone and is still undergoing pretty dramatic reorganization. An important part of that work is combining the HECC with Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD).

In 2014, the Legislature passed House Bill 4018 establishing a Task Force to operationalize integrating the two agencies. Task Force members included myself, Senator Mark Hass, Representative Paul Holvey, and community college presidents Debra Derr and Connie Green. Ed Dodson, a member of Chemeketa Community College Board, chaired the committee. HECC Commissioner Betty Duval participated as well.

Unfortunately, the Oregon Community College Association is engaged in meetings this week and representatives who participated in the Task Force were unable to attend the hearing today. However, Connie Green, President of Tillamook Bay Community College, has submitted testimony in support of HB 2408A.

The bill before you effectively combines the two agencies by replacing existing statutory references to CCWD with the "Office of CCWD" and references to the CCWD Commissioner with Director of that Office. It retains CCWD's workforce programs as an integral part of the agency by specifying that the Office of CCWD will continue to adopt rules for an integrated workforce system and consult with the HECC around implementation of the National Career Readiness program.

While these changes may seem simple and straightforward, engaging each other to agree upon these changes is the real benefit that came out of the Task Force. We learned a lot about each other and how we will work together. As an outgrowth of those efforts, we are working with community college leaders to adopt principles that will govern how the HECC and its offices will work with community colleges. So, while this may seem like a technical bill, in fact there is much more underlying it that will guide our collaboration in the future.

In short, this bill is designed to clearly delineate the functions within both agencies and was achieved through a strong collaborative process. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today; I'm happy to answer any questions.