

IFS TESTIMONY, SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HB 2525, 4/30/2015

CHAIR ROBLAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

FOR THE RECORD MY NAME IS JEFF DENSE, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERINSTITUTIONAL FACULTY SENATE (IFS). WE REPRESENT THE FACULTY OF OREGON'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES.

IFS GREATLY APPRECIATES THE FOCUS THE SPONSORS OF HB2525 HAVE PLACED ON THE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS BETWEEN COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. IN ORDER FOR THE STATE TO ACHIEVE ITS AMBITIOUS 40/40/20 GOAL, STUDENTS AND PARENTS NEED TO BE PROVIDED A CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT PICTURE BY WHICH THEY CAN NAVIGATE THE 'PATHWAY' OF HIGHER EDUCATION. HB 2525 IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. HOWEVER, CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT LANGUAGE THE BILL MAY PROVE PROBLEMATIC IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

SPECIFYING THE PARAMETERS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A "SUFFICIENTLY SIMILAR" COURSE OFFERING CAN BE READILY ACHIEVED BY DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM FOR LOWER DIVISION COURSES WHERE STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED CLEAR INFORMATION ON WHAT IS RECOGNIZED AS A COURSE EQUIVALENCY. THIS GOAL CAN BE ACHIEVED BY THE -2 AMENDMENTS TO HB 2525, WITH THE HIGHER EDUCATION

COORDINATING COMMISSION UTILIZING ITS CONVENING AUTHORITY TO BRING TOGETHER FACULTY, GROUPED BY ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE, TO ALIGN COURSE NUMBERING, AND MOREOVER, LEARNING OUTCOMES OF ‘SUFFICIENTLY SIMILARY’ COURSES OFFERED BY OREGON’S COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS OF A SIMILAR INITIATIVE BY MATHEMATICS FACULTY, DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON COURSE NUMBERING GENERATED BY A DIALOGUE BETWEEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FACULTY, WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP, HOLDS SIGNIFICANT PROMISE IN ADDRESSING THE “SUFFICIENTLY SIMILAR” PROVISIONS OF HB2525.

FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, THE REAL KEY TO CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF HB 2525 LEGISLATIVE INTENT IS ROOTED IN SECTION 2-C, RE THE HECC CONVENED WORK GROUP SHOULD DETERMINE “HOW TO IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES FOR PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH INFORMATION...AND MAKING STUDENTS AWARE OF THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE.” FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE MANY EXISTING ‘BEST PRACTICES’ THE STATE CAN EMULATE TO PROVIDE THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION, AND MOREOVER, TRANSPARENCY TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS INTENT ON TRANSFERRING FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO OREGON’S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES. THE

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CREATION OF A WEB PORTAL, WHERE STUDENTS CAN FIND WHICH COURSES TRANSFER FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO UNIVERSITIES, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IN ENABLING THE SEAMLESS AND EFFICIENT COMPLETION OF DEGREES. IFS SUGGEST THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY'S NJ TRANSFER WEB PORTAL (NJTRANSFER.ORG) IS A BEST PRACTICE OREGON SHOULD EMULATE IN ORDER TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF HB 2525. NJ TRANSFER PROVIDE A RANGE OF ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR EDUCATIONAL 'CONSUMERS', HOLDS SIGNIFICANT PROMISE IN HELPING THE STATE ATTAIN ITS 40/40/20 GOALS, AND MOREOVER, PROTECTS THE BEST INTERESTS OF OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE: OUR STUDENTS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, AND I WOULD BE GLAD TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.