



SUPPORT HB 3308

CULTURAL COMPETENCY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Promote Degree Completion By Supporting Students of Diverse Backgrounds

Our college campuses are more diverse than ever before. Students who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are faring much worse than their peers in higher education. We need to address this disparity by convening a work group to analyze and make recommendations on how to address disparities in higher education among traditionally marginalized, under-served and underrepresented communities. Disparities for any community impact the entire population. Cultural competency helps address the student achievement gap and can increase degree completion by undeserved and underrepresented students.

Cultural Competency Plays a Critical Role in Learning and Teaching

Culture is central to the learning environment, and every student, faculty, and staff brings a unique culture to campus. Students are not solely the products of their cultures, but instructors must become knowledgeable about the distinctive cultural backgrounds on campus so they can translate that knowledge into effective instruction and curriculum. While our state's public post-secondary education systems are becoming more diverse in population our faculty and staff are given fewer opportunities for continuing education in the realm of cultural competence.

Cultural Competency Strengthens American Ideals

Appreciation of diverse cultures on our campuses is a core value built on the democratic ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity. College campuses play a critical role in supporting the diversity of their students by challenging discrimination and intolerance; and in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. Instructors who are culturally competent know that students who have the academic and cultural means to succeed in college without losing their identities are better prepared to be of service to others; in a democracy, this commitment to the public good is vital.

Be Proactive and Close the Achievement Gap

Throughout our colleges we have student veterans, student parents, first generation students, and students from minority backgrounds who we are not supporting to the best of our ability. We need to create a foundation for these students to excel in school. HB 3308 isn't a silver bullet - this is a simple workgroup bill brought to the committee on Higher Education, Innovation, and Workforce Development by advocates and students on the front lines who witness these disparities in our education system every single day.

The goal of HB 3308 is to provide additional recommendations to our legislative body in order to give teeth to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's equity lens, and guide policy makers to formidable Higher Education policy that works best for all of Oregon's students.