

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

CARRIER:

Senate Committee on Education

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:

Vote:

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

Prepared By: Gretchen Engbring, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 5/12, 5/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Establishes Affordable Baccalaureate Degree Act. Directs public universities and community colleges to work toward providing four-year affordable, fixed-cost baccalaureate degrees, or pathways to baccalaureate degrees. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to analyze available options for affordable degrees and report findings to 2016 Legislative Assembly. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of offering accessible, affordable baccalaureate degree pathways and programs to reach Oregon’s education goals
- Examples of \$10,000 or low-cost degree programs offered or proposed in other states, such as Texas, Florida, and California
- Relationship to other legislation related to education affordability, such as SB 84 (2015), which proposes free community college tuition

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND: Several states are investigating the possibility of offering fixed-cost degree programs at their public universities in the belief that increasing attendance costs are keeping many potential students from considering college. House Bill 2973-A directs public universities, community colleges and HECC to investigate the possibility of creating such programs in Oregon.