

IFS TESTIMONY TO SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE JUNE 9, 2015

Senator 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 wants to personally thank Senator Roblan for the opportunity to participate in the SB 215 Legislative Work Group which addressed the sunset of the Oregon Education Investment Group (OEIB). The work group was a truly inclusive endeavor, as evidenced by the learned participation of representatives of over two dozen stakeholder groups. The participation of university faculty is an important component as the state grapples with identifying and implementing the optimal regulatory and advisory structure for the P-20 education community.

Senator Roblan has asked work group members to identify issues of concern that should be addressed as the group continues its task in the future. From the perspective of IFS, two issues are in need of further attention: Equity concerns throughout the educational community, and a focus on transition 'pressure points' throughout the educational continuum.

One of the primary substantive foci of OEIB is to ensure "the state education system is focused on meeting the diverse needs of every Oregon learner and supports a vision of education equity and excellence for all". The future of Oregon is closely aligned with providing educational opportunities for all Oregonians, especially those articulated within the OEIB's Equity Lens. Given the implementation of Outcomes Based Funding for higher education in Oregon, along with a commensurate focus on ethnicity, race, rural and low-income students as part of the new funding model, IFS urges a continued focus on preparing K-12 students from the above groups to be successful in higher education. While SB 215 will disband OEIB's subcommittees as part of the agency's sunset, IFS recommends an advisory body similar to the Equity and Partnerships Subcommittee be formed to provide a platform for engagement of relevant stakeholders and generate relevant policy recommendations aimed at disengaged youth. The state's ambitious 40-40-20 goals cannot be met without addressing disparities in educational opportunity and attainment for those groups represented within the OEIB's Equity Lens.

In order for Oregon's residents to garner the level of educational attainment necessary for future success, there also needs to be sufficient attention paid to 'pressure points' such as the transition from high school to post-secondary institution. Given the proliferation of accelerated learning programs currently attempting to address college readiness, along with issues related to transfer articulation and equivalencies, IFS recommends an advisory group similar to OEIB's Best Practices and Student Transition Committee be created. College success, and moreover the future of the state, is predicated on a smooth transition for our most valuable resource - our students.

Thank you for your time, and please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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