

# Enrolled House Bill 2973

Sponsored by Representatives WHISNANT, JOHNSON, WILLIAMSON, REARDON, Senator  
KNOPP; Representatives HAYDEN, MCLANE, NEARMAN, Senator MONNES ANDERSON

CHAPTER .....

AN ACT

Relating to degree programs at public universities; and declaring an emergency.

**Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

**SECTION 1.** Sections 2 and 3 of this 2015 Act shall be known as the Affordable Baccalaureate Degree Act.

**SECTION 2. (1)** Public universities listed in ORS 352.002 shall work toward developing and providing four-year baccalaureate degrees, or pathways to baccalaureate degrees, that are affordable and offered at a fixed cost that is significantly less than the cost of a traditional baccalaureate degree at the universities.

**(2)** Community colleges shall assist public universities listed in ORS 352.002 in developing the fixed-cost baccalaureate degrees described in subsection (1) of this section by developing streamlined transfer and dual enrollment programs that have the potential to reduce the cost of higher education in this state.

**(3)** Affordable four-year baccalaureate degree programs developed under this section must meet the same educational and accreditation standards as other baccalaureate degree programs offered by the universities and must be capable of being approved by the governing boards of the public universities and by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission under ORS 351.047.

**SECTION 3. (1)** The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall conduct a detailed analysis of the options available to provide, and the feasibility of public universities listed in ORS 352.002 offering, affordable baccalaureate degrees as described in section 2 of this 2015 Act.

**(2)** In addition to any other factors considered relevant by the commission, the analysis required under subsection (1) of this section must include an examination of:

- (a)** The potential use of college credits earned by students while in high school;
- (b)** The transfer of community college credits;
- (c)** The potential use of courses offered through the Internet, including massive open online courses (MOOCs);
- (d)** The potential use of state funds or other incentives that may ensure that affordable baccalaureate degrees are available; and
- (e)** The ways in which Oregon’s post-secondary education institutions use accelerated college credits, community college transfer credits and courses offered through the Internet, including MOOCs, to reduce tuition costs, and the effectiveness of these practices.

(3) The commission shall submit a report in the manner provided by ORS 192.245 describing the analysis conducted as required under this section, and the commission's findings, to the legislative committees on higher education during the 2016 regular session of the Legislative Assembly.

**SECTION 4.** Sections 1, 2 and 3 of this 2015 Act are repealed on July 1, 2016.

**SECTION 5.** This 2015 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2015 Act takes effect on its passage.

**Passed by House April 8, 2015**

.....  
Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

.....  
Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

**Passed by Senate May 20, 2015**

.....  
Peter Courtney, President of Senate

**Received by Governor:**

.....M.,....., 2015

**Approved:**

.....M.,....., 2015

.....  
Kate Brown, Governor

**Filed in Office of Secretary of State:**

.....M.,....., 2015

.....  
Jeanne P. Atkins, Secretary of State