

A-Engrossed House Bill 2973

Ordered by the House April 6
Including House Amendments dated April 6

Sponsored by Representatives WHISNANT, JOHNSON, WILLIAMSON, REARDON; Representatives HAYDEN, NEARMAN

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

Establishes Affordable Baccalaureate Degree Act.

Requires public universities to *[offer two or more bachelor's degrees at cost of \$10,000 or less]* **work toward offering baccalaureate degrees at fixed cost significantly less than cost of traditional baccalaureate degree at university.**

[Establishes degree requirements.]

[Requires public universities to first offer low-cost degree programs for 2019-2020 academic year.]

Requires community colleges to develop streamlined transfer and dual enrollment programs.

Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to analyze options and feasibility of offering affordable baccalaureate degrees at public universities. Lists factors commission must consider as part of analysis.

Sunsets July 1, 2016.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to degree programs at public universities; and declaring an emergency.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 **Act.**

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

4 (a) The potential use of college credits earned by students while in high school;

5 (b) The transfer of community college credits;

6 (c) The potential use of courses offered through the Internet, including massive open
7 online courses (MOOCs);

8 (d) The potential use of state funds or other incentives that may ensure that affordable
9 baccalaureate degrees are available; and

10 (e) The ways in which Oregon's post-secondary education institutions use accelerated
11 college credits, community college transfer credits and courses offered through the Internet,
12 including MOOCs, to reduce tuition costs, and the effectiveness of these practices.

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

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

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

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