

House Bill 3066

Sponsored by Representative JOHNSON

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 **as introduced**.

Directs Eastern Oregon University to develop pilot program for fixed cost bachelor's degrees.

Establishes criteria for pilot program.

Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to assist university in developing and tracking success of pilot program and to issue reports to Legislative Assembly detailing status of, and commission's recommendations for, pilot program.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1 Relating to degree programs at Eastern Oregon University; and declaring an emergency.

2 Whereas student loans were the second highest contributor to consumer debt in 2012; and

3 Whereas many national efforts have focused on implementing fixed cost pathways to achieve a
4 bachelor's degree in a variety of fields; and

5 Whereas utilization of competency-based credits, online and distance learning tools and dual
6 accreditation can reduce the amount of tuition students pay by reducing the timeline for completing
7 a degree program; and

8 Whereas Oregon has taken steps toward developing a collaborative preschool through post-
9 secondary education continuum; and

10 Whereas Oregon has adopted education initiatives in order to improve student outcomes and to
11 achieve the 40-40-20 mission of educational attainment set forth in ORS 351.009; and

12 Whereas the achievement of 40-40-20 requires the employment of innovative methodologies and
13 creative strategies to develop multiple pathways for higher education attainment; and

14 Whereas Oregon has adopted initiatives designed to develop a workforce prepared not only to
15 meet current economic challenges but also to thrive in the workplace; and

16 Whereas tuition costs require significant state investment, federal investment and student in-
17 vestment; and

18 Whereas the Higher Education Coordinating Commission can lead the collaboration between
19 regional and technical universities, community colleges and high schools to develop a pathway for
20 achieving fixed cost bachelor's degrees; and

21 Whereas there are examples of high schools, community colleges and universities operating in
22 professional learning communities to provide new pathways to successful outcomes for students;
23 now, therefore,

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

25 **SECTION 1.** (1) **Eastern Oregon University shall develop a pilot program for fixed cost**
26 **bachelor's degrees. The pilot program must be designed to create a long-term and**
27 **sustainable benefit to the local economy and to enable students enrolled in the pilot program**
28 **to graduate with less student debt than would otherwise be required to obtain a bachelor's**
29

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 degree from the university.

2 (2) The pilot program developed under this section must:

3 (a) Offer at least two bachelor's degrees that meet the following criteria:

4 (A) At least one of the bachelor's degrees must be directly tied to the mission statement
5 of Eastern Oregon University and the local workforce needs of the region in which the uni-
6 versity is located.

7 (B) All bachelor's degrees offered under the pilot program must be offered to students
8 at a fixed cost that includes all tuition costs required to obtain the degree. This fixed cost
9 must be significantly less than the standard tuition cost required to obtain a bachelor's de-
10 gree at the university.

11 (C) All bachelor's degrees offered under the pilot program must meet the same educa-
12 tional and accreditation standards as other bachelor's degrees offered by the university and
13 be capable of being approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission under ORS
14 351.047.

15 (b) Include a method for tracking the success of the pilot program over a five-year pe-
16 riod. This tracking must accurately catalog the number of students participating in the pilot
17 program, the percentage of participating students who complete the pilot program and the
18 employment rate for students who complete the pilot program.

19 (c) Include a financial fact sheet that sets forth the university's projected costs in es-
20 tablishing, operating and maintaining the pilot program.

21 (3) In establishing the pilot program, Eastern Oregon University may decide whether to
22 limit the pilot program to courses taught at the university or to collaborate with other in-
23 stitutions in order to include courses taught on the Internet, at local high schools or at
24 community colleges. If courses offered on the Internet, at local high schools or at commu-
25 nity colleges are incorporated into the pilot program, the fixed cost of the pilot program
26 must include all tuition costs students will incur in taking these courses.

27 (4) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall:

28 (a) Work with Eastern Oregon University to:

29 (A) Develop a long-term and financially sustainable pilot program. When developing the
30 pilot program, the commission must consider the financial fact sheet created under sub-
31 section (2)(c) of this section and any funding formula modifications that would improve the
32 long-term financial viability of the pilot program.

33 (B) Track the success of the pilot program.

34 (b) Submit a report before December 10, 2015, to the interim committees of the Legisla-
35 tive Assembly related to higher education that details the progress the university has made
36 toward establishing the pilot program.

37 (c) Present a final version of the proposed pilot program to the committees related to
38 higher education during the 2016 regular session of the Seventy-eighth Legislative Assembly.

39 (5) The pilot program shall start operating at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic
40 year.

41 (6) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall analyze the five-year tracking
42 results of the pilot program and submit a report to the committees related to higher edu-
43 cation during the 2022 regular session of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly. This report
44 must:

45 (a) Include the commission's detailed recommendations for improving the pilot program,

1 or for continuing the pilot program as a permanent program;

2 (b) Contain an analysis of how higher education funding models relate to the pilot pro-
3 gram; and

4 (c) Provide recommendations for state incentives or appropriations that may be neces-
5 sary to ensure the long-term success of the pilot program.

6 SECTION 2. This 2015 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public
7 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2015 Act takes effect
8 on its passage.

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