

**Graduate School of Education**  
Office of the Dean

Post Office Box 751  
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751

503-725-4697 tel.  
www.pdx.edu/education

Suite 210 Graduate School of Education  
1900 SW Fourth Avenue  
Portland, OR 97201



Graduate School  
of Education  
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Date: March 30, 2017  
To: Senate Education Committee  
From: Randy Hitz, Dean *RH*  
Subject: Testimony on SB 221

Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Linthicum and members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Randy Hitz, Dean of the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University. My purpose in testifying is to comment on the requirement that all educator preparation programs in Oregon be accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and to support the effort to extend time for universities to become accredited.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I need to tell you that I served on the Board of Directors of CAEP from its beginning in 2013 to last December and I continue to serve on the CAEP Council, the entity that makes final decisions about accreditation. Also, Portland State was among the first 12 institutions in America to become CAEP accredited as we chose to be an “early adopter” in 2015 and received our full accreditation last spring.

The requirement to become CAEP accredited does not apply to PSU since we are already accredited. Therefore, I can speak to the requirement and the request to extend the time to meeting it without conflict and with experience into how much time it takes to meet the CAEP standards.

Let me first say thank you for taking the step to require national accreditation for all educator preparation programs (EPPs) in Oregon. This will help to ensure the highest quality preparation for all educators and improve the education for our PK12 students.

The CAEP standards were developed when two competing accrediting agencies united to form a single accrediting body for the teaching profession. The CAEP standards are significantly more rigorous than those of either of the preceding accrediting agencies. The CAEP standards require EPPs to assess teacher candidates and programs in a variety of ways using tools that are reliable and valid. We assess candidates when they enter our programs, at key points throughout the program, and at the end of their student teaching. We also conduct exit surveys of program completers, surveys of alumni, and surveys and/or focus groups of employers. All of the data

needs to be aggregated and disaggregated so we can find areas for improvement and address them with our PK12 partners.

CAEP standards also require that we determine how effective our graduates are in the classroom after they have completed our program. This requirement is particularly difficult since Oregon does not have a good system to enable us to track where our graduates take employment. At PSU we were finally, after several years of work, able to track where all of our teacher education candidates have taken employment over the last five years in Oregon public schools. It was an expensive effort for us to create and maintain. Even with that, we cannot connect these data to student achievement. In this regard, at PSU we are working with three key school district partners to get data on teacher performance and compare our graduates to teachers in general in the district. The state could be very helpful and save EPPs time and money if a better state-level data system could be created for EPPs to tap into.

Also key to the CAEP standards is the requirement to develop “mutually beneficial partnerships” with school districts. This means that we must not only find good placements for student teachers, but we must also work with districts to improve PK12 student achievement.

I mention the partnership and assessment requirements not to complain - CAEP does not ask us to do anything we should not do - but to point out how demanding the standards are. When an EPP is visited for accreditation, they must have at least three years of data and show that they are using the data in discussions with PK12 partners to improve programs.

All this is to say that it takes several years to gather the necessary data and the mutually beneficial partnerships required to meet CAEP standards. You are absolutely right to insist that all educator preparation programs in Oregon be CAEP accredited and I urge you to hold firm to that. However, it is reasonable that you extend the time for Oregon EPPs to attain CAEP accreditation.