

For the House Higher Education Committee on May 9, 2017

Good Afternoon, Chair Reardon, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon and Whisnant, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Susan Walsh, Provost at SOU, and my name is Mike Bailey, Faculty at OSU. We are testifying today to inform the committee about the concerns we have with SB 207, and ask you not to support it.

Oregon's Public Universities have submitted written testimony on SB 207 from the public university Provosts Council (the university chief academic officers) and from the AP/IB work group that works with the HECC to determine the applicability of AP credits.

Rather than reading this written testimony, we want to stress three points for you today.

1. We fully support the intent of the bill to award more advanced college credit and provide a predictable environment for students who seek the AP credits. These are our students with the most academic promise and motivation, and we want to support them in every way we can.

However, we have the following concerns with the bill, and we ask the committee to seriously consider these concerns as you determine how you will vote on the bill.

1. We may be creating false expectations for students. We want students to succeed and have realistic expectations of success in college. The accepted AP scores are posted on the university and HECC websites and show the test scores, credits awarded for the scores, and course equivalencies in the major. If universities and colleges are required to accept scores that may not represent college-level work, there are two possible outcomes:
 - a. Students will be unprepared for the next college-level course in the sequence, and could fail or even drop out of school. This could be discouraging instead of encouraging for their persistence.
 - b. Colleges and universities will award these credits as electives instead of courses in the major. That's great. The student has college credits, but it may not accomplish their goals of saving money or

reducing time to degree.

2. We have a system that is working. We have a Statewide Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Work Group and policies, overseen by the HECC. For over a decade, the universities and community colleges have collaborated, through the AP/IB work group, to evaluate the equivalency of advanced high school courses, and award credit by exam for proficiencies that map to college level courses. Our faculty work with AP/IB to assist in calibrating the exams and also participate in workshops to train high school faculty.

The system works and it honors the role of faculty to oversee academic quality and it complies with our accreditation standards. The community colleges, public universities and private universities, all agree: Let's not fix what is not broken.

3. We do not want a score in statute. Current statutes place the authority for determining the applicability of credit squarely with the institutions and their faculty. This basic tenet of university academics undergirds our commitment to shared governance and our faculty's central role in curricular matters. University faculty are responsible for establishing and maintaining curriculum, programmatic requirements, and academic quality. Faculty determination of the applicability of credits is intended to maximize the likelihood that students succeed after matriculating to a public university.

SB 207 inappropriately removes faculty oversight—a key facet of university academic freedom—and statutorily requires universities to accept AP credits with test scores over 3. Requiring universities to accept AP credits, regardless of how AP curriculum changes over time or how longitudinal data supports student success, usurps academic freedom long reserved for universities and their shared governance with their faculty.

Tests change. Standards change. Let's not put test scores in statute.

4. SB253 could jeopardize accreditation. The accreditation standards established by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) state that credit be awarded “only for documented student

achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings" and "only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty." Again, it is counterproductive to put test scores in statute.

We believe our efforts achieve a solid agreement between universities and community colleges regarding the transferability of AP credits in Oregon's public postsecondary institutions.

The Oregon Statewide Provosts Council does not support SB 207 and believes that academic quality decisions belong to the faculty, in compliance with NWCCU accreditation standards, and in support of Oregon students.