

SB 8 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Action Date: 04/11/17

Action: Without recommendation as to passage, but with amendments and return to President for further referral. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Gelser, Hass, Kruse, Linthicum, Roblan

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Lisa Gezelter, LPRO Analyst

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows a community college and a public university to merge if the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) approves. Requires merging institutions to submit a joint proposal to HECC that meets certain requirements. Requires HECC to submit a report to the legislature at least 90 days prior to the effective date of the merger. Removes certain provisions of state law, including the requirement that community colleges be located within commuting time of a majority of students; the prohibition on community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees; and the prohibition on spending state funds for dormitories or athletic facilities for spectator sports on community college campuses. Clarifies that ORS 341.009 does not apply to merged institutions. Removes provisions lifting the prohibition on community colleges offering four-year degrees.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Potential benefit to students
- Role of community colleges
- Equity
- Student debt
- Transferability of credits
- Respect for trades
- Economics of higher education

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Clarifies that ORS 341.009 does not apply to merged institutions. Removes provisions lifting the prohibition on community colleges offering four-year degrees.

BACKGROUND:

Mergers between higher education institutions have taken place in several other states, usually as a result of a desire to improve efficiency. In 2016, Georgia Perimeter College (a community college) and Georgia State University merged. Their merger was the subject of articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*. Each institution retained its unique mission, and no faculty positions were eliminated. The merger eased credit transferability for students and consolidated administration, financial aid, admission and enrollment offices.