

# Oregon Council of Presidents



Oregon State  
University



Western Oregon  
UNIVERSITY

March 18, 2019

Oregon State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Education  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the committee,

As directors of admission at Oregon's public universities, we have collective concerns about the impact of SB 624 on our campuses. We are all immersed in year-round in efforts to ensure that applying to an Oregon public university is a smooth process, and more fundamentally, to make the idea of college a possibility for every student in this state.

Our concerns with this bill are about the mechanism that is being proposed. A variety of efforts over the years have shown us three key things:

- Increasing the likelihood that a student will apply to college has everything to do with preparation, encouragement, and access to information;
- Cross-campus applications typically do little or nothing to accomplish any of these changes for students; and
- Building such application portals is stunningly costly and time-consuming, requiring both money and staffing that are in short supply throughout the state of Oregon at a time where additional cuts are being proposed.

Other states have tried shared application models. For a time, the state of Colorado required all colleges to accept a centralized application among their options offered to students. And though the state thoroughly promoted this option, as did staff at the colleges and high schools, students rarely gravitated toward it at all.

Additionally, we have concerns regarding the standardization of questions asked by each institution on an admissions application. Each Oregon public university has different approaches to the content of our applications based on our access initiatives and campus-specific objectives. We meet regularly to look for opportunities to coordinate our questions and minimize the differences where possible, but always balance that by understanding that we each need some latitude and variation within that goal to attend to everything from a special scholarship or major to a highly competitive Honors program.

We in the admissions community — at colleges, and in the high schools and community organizations we call colleagues — join you in wanting to improve access to higher education. In fact, the University of Oregon joined the nationwide Common Application organization two years ago, and now Oregon State University's two campuses have joined this year. However, across our community, admissions professionals agree that options like the Common Application have little to do with whether students apply to college, versus simply where they might choose to apply. It is the right fit for some of our campuses, and we value the ability to reach the decisions that best fit our institutional missions and audiences.

Thank you for considering our input on SB 624. We would welcome further conversation about initiatives outside of a new Oregon common application to improve access to college.

Sincerely,



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Eastern Oregon University



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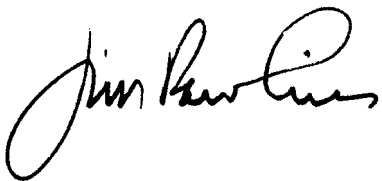
Brittany Preston  
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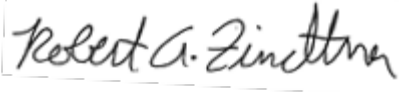
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Southern Oregon University



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Director of Admissions  
Assistant Vice President for Student Services & Enrollment Management  
University of Oregon  
Former President, NACAC

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. The signature reads "Robert A. Findtner" in a cursive script.

Rob Findtner  
Director of Admissions  
Western Oregon University