

May 3, 2021

Senator Dembrow and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to offer our support for three bills related to student fees and cost transparency, HB 2542 A, HB 3012 A, and HB 2919 A.

Oregon's public universities highly value financial transparency, especially when it comes to costs borne by students. These three pieces of legislation will advance our shared goal of providing an affordable and accessible higher education to Oregon students, and we encourage the Senate Education committee to adopt the measures. We would like to provide specific comments on each bill:

HB 2542 A

House Bill 2542 A requires that colleges and universities prominently display information on mandatory fees. For many years Oregon public universities have provided public information on mandatory fees. These include:

- Comprehensive web pages that list all tuition and fees.
- Tuition and Fee Advisory Committees that actively involve students. These committees meet in public, have web supporting web pages, and produce public agendas, support materials and minutes. This work is supported by HB 4141 (2018).
- Interactive Tuition and Fee Calculators that are accessible from admissions and financial aid web pages.

This legislation will strengthen reporting and transparency around these fees so students have information on how and where the fees will be used.

HB 3012 A

Student Incidental Fees are unique in many critical ways. They are the only mandatory fee assessed to all students that is managed from start to finish *by* the students. Under current Oregon statute, students lead and control the process that sets these fees and work directly with the university president and Board of Trustees to finalize these rates for students.

The changes proposed in HB 3012 A clarify the process to ensure that the students and university have a common understanding of the final approval process and the limited reasons that a Board of Trustees may elect not to approve the student recommended fee rate. The refinements were developed in a good-faith collaborative process between the students and the universities and the proposed legislation bolsters student voices and creates clarity in the student fee-setting process.

HB 2919 A

Textbook affordability is a significant issue for our students, particularly as it pertains to overall affordability and access to higher education. Oregon's public universities are committed to achieving student affordability and accessibility through a multitude of lenses, including textbook affordability. HB 2919 A builds off HB 2213 (2019), which required each public institution of higher education to create a textbook affordability plan in collaboration with faculty and students. Many of our universities are beginning to implement the goals and provisions of our textbook affordability plans.

HB 2919 A will require that 75 percent of course materials be posted and visible to students by the beginning of registration for the subsequent academic term. This policy will enable students to make the right financial decision when selecting their course load for the term.

We are grateful for the collaboration of the Oregon Student Association, as well as the bill sponsors of these measures and other stakeholders, for including public university feedback in the first chamber amendment process. We feel that the changes adopted by the House Education Committee and passed on the House Floor warrant our full support of these bills in the Oregon Senate.

We are happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dana Richardson', with a long, sweeping underline.

Dana Richardson
Executive Director
Oregon Council of Presidents