

TO: Senate Education Committee

FROM: Brent Wilder, President  
Oregon Alliance of Independent College and Universities

DATE: February 8, 2022

RE: **Concerns with SB 1572**

Thank you for taking the time to read the opinion of the Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities. The Alliance is the voice of Oregon's independent, non-profit higher education sector, actively supporting the success of our member colleges and universities, their students, and alumni.

While we understand and appreciate the intent of the bill, we are concerned that SB 1572 is redundant of obligations under the Clery Act and may in fact have definitions that conflict with existing federal Title IX law which place institutions in the impossible position of having to choose one to follow. Adding another layer of complexity to an area already in constant change seems to be a disservice to the intent of the bill.

Additionally, SB1572 adds substantial requirements around prevention education and programming requirements that may be difficult to meet on a practical level as well as being costly.

For some of our schools, all the work would depend on limited staff resources. The FAQ sheet on this bill from the Sexual Assault Task Force notes that higher education institutions wouldn't be required to hire new staff to fulfill the requirements of the bill and work could merely be added to the duties of the federally mandated Title IX Coordinator. That may work in theory, but the Title IX work requires many schools to hire lawyers or consultants to keep up with all the changing requirements so, in general, these are not people equipped to plan and coordinate prevention programming. Those people would need to be hired.

Another example of the difficulty of implementation is with timelines. While climate surveys make sense and institutions should commit to doing regular climate surveys to help identify structural issues that impact climate and to work toward creating a safer community, allowing institutions just 60 days to analyze, interpret and post results of a climate survey is an unrealistic timeline. In addition, this takes for granted the many areas by which institutions gain feedback and puts a new survey mechanism above other forms of data collection already in place.

Ultimately, our concern is that these proposed requirements become more burdensome than helpful to those who are trying to do sexual assault prevention and support work. It would also be more feasible to put the prevention programming requirements into practice if funding or funding opportunities could be connected to this requirement.

**We urge you not to advance SB 1572 at this time** and we urge a work group to be formed with all institutions of higher education in Oregon involved to help better craft a solution.