

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**Measure: HB 3274 <REVISED>**

82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2023 Regular Session

Legislative Fiscal Office

Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed Versions are Considered Official

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Measure Description:

Requires Southern Oregon University, subject to appropriation of sufficient moneys, to address state's behavioral and mental health needs by materially increasing number of mental health practitioners who graduate in southern Oregon and teaching behavioral and mental health competencies through alternative academic pathways.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Costs related to the measure may require budgetary action - See analysis.

Analysis:

HB 3274 appropriates \$2,500,000 to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to distribute to Southern Oregon University (SOU) to increase the number of mental health practitioners graduating in southern Oregon. SOU is directed to teach basic mental and behavioral health competencies to workforce sectors not traditionally associated with behavioral and mental health by providing alternative academic pathways, including microcredentials.

<Revised to include additional information>

SOU's Master's program for Clinical Mental Health Counseling receives 60-100 applications each year and admits an average of 35 students annually. With the four current faculty members, accreditation standards restrict SOU to 24 students, this measure would allow SOU to double their faculty staff. SOU is projecting a 15-student cohort in the first year of implementation and 20 students per cohort each year thereafter. Additionally, SOU anticipates 20 students per year will earn their Behavioral Health microcredentials.

SOU estimates the cost to expand its programs to materially increase the number of graduates in the behavioral and mental health program to be \$3,934,945 for the 2023-25 biennium and \$4,829,988 for the 2025-27 biennium. Once established, a portion of these expenses could be covered by increased incoming student tuition. To accommodate the increased number of students, SOU would need to hire:

- Four faculty instructors to teach in the Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CMHC) and Master of Social Work (MSW) degree programs as well as to develop and support microcredentials and alternative pathways for behavioral health workforce.
- One Clinical Director to oversee Graduate Fellows.
- One Internship Coordinator to work with external behavioral health providers and develop internship agreements as well as to oversee and manage the internship program.
- One Graduate Assistant to support academic completion and advise students.

Also, included in the program expansion cost estimate is funding to offer 10 graduated fellowships each year at \$52,400 per fellowship to incentivize enrollment.

The measure has a minimal fiscal impact to HECC, the commission will absorb costs associated with expending the funds to SOU.