



February 12, 2026

Co-Chair, Senator Janeen Sollman  
Co-Chair, Representative Ricki Ruiz  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

Dear Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz,

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions that arose during the **February 10, 2026**, work session on the report presented related to Spending and Efficiency in Oregon Public Universities.

**On slide 15**, Rep. McLain inquired about assumptions made when defining the recommendations. There are many including:

- K-12 enrollment generally, and the number of high school graduates specifically, will decline in the years ahead.
- Adult learners (i.e., Oregonians over age 25) will not enroll at significantly higher rates.
- State funding support will grow at a slower pace than in the recent past.
- The public universities can take advantage of scale in a cost-effective way to better align with workforce/economic development needs and to focus on student affordability.
- A systematic response is required which can be achieved without restoring a state governing board.

Also on **slide 15**, Co-chair Sollman inquired about the types of degrees earned over time and how that may have changed. The [public university data dashboard](#), available on the HECC's website, provides detailed information about the number of degree earners over time. Table A summarizes the top five bachelor's degree earners by academic area during both academic years 2023-24 and 2014-15.

Although not among the top five in 2014-15, the number of engineering bachelor's degree earners was 958. Meaning, the number of bachelor's degree earners in engineering specifically has increased 36% in the past decade.

	<b>2023-24</b>		<b>2014-15</b>
Business, management, marketing	2,370	Business, management, marketing	2,391
Social Sciences	1,555	Social Sciences	2,104

<b>Table A: Top Five Bachelor's Degree Earners</b>			
	<b>2023-24</b>		<b>2014-15</b>
Psychology	1,437	Psychology	1,086
Computer and Information Sciences	1,365	Health Professions and related programs	994
Engineering	1,299	Biological/Biomedical Sciences	968
<b>Source:</b> Public University Data Dashboard, page 8. Bachelor's degrees only.			

**Co-chair Ruiz** referred to a WICHE report called Knocking at the College Door. The newly [released 11<sup>th</sup> edition](#) provides projections of high school graduates in all fifty states. A key finding of the report is that the total number of high school graduates nationally is expected to peak in 2025 and then decline by 13% through 2041. For Oregon, the number of high school graduates is projected to peak at 42,839 in 2026 and then decline 22% by 2041.

**Rep. Wright** expressed concern about the declining number of men enrolled in Oregon's public universities. Data from the [public university data dashboard](#) shows the number of resident, undergraduate men enrolled has declined 24.5% from 2011 through 2023.

**Sen. Weber** referred to the number of dual credit students enrolled. Dashboard data for both the [community colleges](#) and [public universities](#) shows the number of high school students enrolled has increased 35% from 2011 through 2023.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kyle Thomas, Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs, at [kyle.thomas@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:kyle.thomas@hecc.oregon.gov) or at 503-480-9596.

Sincerely,



Ben Cannon  
Executive Director