



Oregon State University

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President
624 Kerr Administration Building
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon 97331
oregonstate.edu

Re: HB 4124

4 February 2026

Chair Hudson, Co-Chair Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee: for the record, my name is Roy Haggerty, and I serve as Provost and Executive Vice President at Oregon State University. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 4124.

I want to begin by acknowledging the very real and urgent financial challenges facing Southern Oregon University and other institutions across the state. Those challenges deserve serious attention, and I appreciate the Legislature's interest in ensuring Oregon's postsecondary system remains viable, responsive, and student-centered.

As the Committee considers HB 4124, I would offer several observations intended to strengthen the bill and reduce unintended consequences.

First, in the 2025 session the Legislature directed the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to conduct a comprehensive spending and efficiency study of Oregon's public universities. That study found that Oregon's public universities are efficiently managed, but that Oregon's level of investment lags that of peer states. Any new system-level study should be explicitly grounded in those findings; otherwise, we risk duplicating recent work rather than advancing solutions.

Second, the bill calls for recommendations on a "viable and superior institutional framework." Any such recommendation must include a transparent analysis of implementation costs, including administrative staffing, IT systems, compliance requirements, and the workload impacts on institutions. Experience shows that system redesign often shifts costs rather than reduces them, increasing agency expense and institutional administrative burden while diverting resources from students and instruction. A clear fiscal and operational analysis should be a core requirement of this work.

Third, while the bill appropriately asks HECC to examine issues such as program duplication, that analysis must be nuanced and student-focused. Programs that appear similar on paper often serve very different student populations through different delivery models — including working adults, place-bound learners, online students, and those seeking career-connected credentials. Evaluating duplication without considering access, modality, and local or regional need risks reducing opportunity rather than improving efficiency.

Fourth, Oregon's higher education system is intentionally pluralistic in its governance. Community colleges are locally controlled taxing districts with elected boards, while public universities are governed by institution-specific boards. Any system-level analysis should

explicitly respect these different governance models and the accountability structures the Legislature itself has created.

Fifth, I want to address Section 3 of the bill related to academic program review. Academic program review is essential, but it must remain institution-led under the authority of governing boards. Shared governance protects academic freedom, ensures disciplinary expertise, supports accreditation, and aligns with collective bargaining responsibilities. Shifting academic review to HECC would require new expertise at the agency, increase costs, create accreditation risk, and blur accountability. A constructive alternative would be the development of mutually agreed-upon review criteria, used by institutions within their existing governance structures.

Finally, I would like to suggest the committee consider the following amendment.
“Development of academic program review criteria to be used by the universities that has been mutually agreed upon by the public universities and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.”

My comments are offered in the spirit of partnership and problem-solving. Oregon’s public universities and community colleges share a commitment to access, student success, workforce alignment, and the long-term prosperity of our state. With clear guardrails, fiscal transparency, and respect for institutional missions and governance, this work can move us forward together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Roy Haggerty, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President
Oregon State University