



Testimony on House Bill 2998

House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee

February 28, 2017

Chair Reardon, Vice-Chairs Whisnant and Alonso León, and members of the Committee. My name is Ben Cannon and I am the Executive Director of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. I am pleased to be able to provide comment on House Bill 2998, relating to student transfer between a community college and public university.

As you have heard in our presentation during the informational portion of the hearing earlier, there is a significant difference in the completion rates of students that begin their experience as a student at a public university, and those who begin their post-secondary career at a community college, prior to transferring accumulated credits to a public university.

Oregon has a Transfer Student Bill of Rights in state statute today (ORS 341.430). This law requires the HECC to develop standards related to the ability of students to apply credits earned at a community college toward a bachelor's degree at a state university. However, the mere existence of this law, which creates processes to arrive at a resolution of transfer issue, does not in itself induce colleges, universities, and the HECC to perform the work necessary to actually develop clear, uniform, and universal pathways from attendance at a community college through matriculation as a transfer student at a public university.

The actual development of a statewide, seamless college to university transfer system will require more than just processes through which colleges and universities must collaborate. It will require a sustained effort, utilizing sufficient and sustained financial support from the legislature, to work through the difficult task of aligning not necessarily individual courses, but a set of common educational outcomes a student must master in order for students and institutions to have reasonable assurance that the student is in the right position to succeed in upper-level coursework. If the desire is for a student to transfer with junior status within an individual major, this work should occur with the leadership of institutional faculty within each individual discipline.

If I can reference the HECC Strategic Plan again, our commission exists in large part to help engineer simpler, more effective and efficient learning pathways for students in every postsecondary sector. We believe this work is critical to improve individual student outcomes and to promote smarter progress toward the state's 40-40-20 goals.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss this legislation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.