



March 19, 2019

Representative Doherty  
Chair, House Committee on Education  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Doherty,

On behalf of Southern Oregon University I would like to convey our support for HB 2941, which addresses mental health provider preparation programs.

Southern Oregon University is successfully using the approach described in this bill to diversify our educator preparation program. We have been engaging in pre-college outreach to underrepresented students since 2000, when we launched an annual residential camp for Latino youth in 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades. That first program – Academia Latina – has grown into a suite of programs which support college aspiration for both Latinx and Native American students, and encourage young women to aspire to STEM careers. Three years ago we embarked in a partnership with Medford School District to show underrepresented K-12 students that a career in teaching is squarely within their grasp. We are now seeing such students diversify our educator preparation program.

We are excited about bringing the same approach to our mental health provider preparation program. House Bill 2941 aligns very well with the existing mission, values, and current practices of the Clinical Mental Health Program at SOU. It will provide legislative support for our existing efforts to recruit, retain and graduate underrepresented students and faculty.

Increasing the diversity of the student population is an ongoing priority for Southern Oregon University. This bill dovetails well with the standards and requirements of the accrediting body (CACREP). We urge the House Education Committee to support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan F. Walsh'.

Susan F. Walsh, Ph.D.  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs