

SB 230 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 2/22, 3/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows Western Oregon University, Southern Oregon University, and Eastern Oregon University to offer professional doctoral degrees. Defines professional doctoral degree as doctoral degree that meets certain requirements and excludes Doctor of Philosophy degree. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to ensure that changes to academic programs at Western Oregon University, Southern Oregon University, and Eastern Oregon University comply with requirements.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Limitation on degrees specified in statute
- Demand for professional doctorate programs such as Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)
- Approval process for new programs and degrees
- Potential impact of adding new programs during budget shortfalls and staff reductions
- Accreditation and rigor of professional doctorate programs
- Differences between professional and research doctorates

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Western Oregon University, Southern Oregon University, and Eastern Oregon University are collectively known as Oregon's regional public universities. Currently, Oregon law provides that these universities may grant bachelor's and master's degrees, while the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and Portland State University offer doctoral degree programs.

Professional doctoral degrees such as the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), and Doctor of Social Work (DSW) differ from the traditional research-oriented Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in that they aim to provide graduates with knowledge and skills that prepare them to work in a professional field, in conjunction with a professional credential or licensure.

Senate Bill 230 allows Western Oregon University, Southern Oregon University, and Eastern Oregon University to offer professional doctoral degrees and outlines requirements for these degree programs.