

HB 2919 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 5/3, 5/10

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires each public university and community college to prominently display, or link to a website that displays, the total costs of all required course materials and fees for at least 75 percent of courses offered. Specifies requirements for display of affected courses and criteria for institutions to withhold course information. Aligns provisions with federal law. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to consult with stakeholders and interested parties and adopt by rule a list of materials exempt from requirement. Requires HECC to report to interim legislative committees on implementation by December 31, 2023. Requires HECC to establish by rule metrics to measure compliance. Requires institutions to comply with requests for information from commission. Sunsets January 2, 2025. Applies requirements to 2022-2023 academic year.

House Vote: Passed. Ayes, 58; Excused, 2--Drazan, Levy.

FISCAL: Fiscal impact issued

REVENUE: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of legislative action on textbook affordability
- Transparency of course materials fees charged to students
- Results of recent work group
- Affordability challenges for first-generation students
- Frequency of reporting requirement

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Many college and university courses require enrolled students to pay additional fees or purchase instructional materials at their own expense. These required instructional materials include textbooks, study guides, software, and lab equipment. The cost of required materials may significantly increase the overall cost of attendance. Currently each public university and community college publishes an estimate on the annual total cost of attendance, which includes course materials.

In 2015, the Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 2871, which required public universities and community colleges to designate courses whose required materials are exclusively low-cost or no-cost, along with other provisions related to open educational resources. With the passage of HB 2729 (2017), this became part of Oregon's Open Educational Resources (OER) Program, which sets guidelines and requirements for course materials that are free, low-cost, or exist in the public domain. House Bill 2213 (2019) required that each public university and community college establish a textbook affordability plan.

House Bill 2919 A requires each public university and community college to prominently display the total costs of all required course materials and fees for at least 75 percent of courses offered, specifies requirements for applicable and exempt courses, and requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to issue rules and report to interim legislative committees on implementation and compliance.