

TO: Senate Committee on Health Care
FROM: Brent Wilder
President, Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges & Universities
DATE: February 2, 2021
RE: SB 610 support

In SB 610, three realities collide – struggles with mental health exasperated by the pandemic, a need for broader understanding and acceptance of each other, and financial difficulties for students to pursue advanced degrees. Senator Fredrick’s legislation creating a psychology provider incentive program addresses the ideal outcomes for shifting each reality.

While we support the innovation, we do have three changes we suggest:

1. Doctor of psychology programs include both PsyD and PhD so the definition might be improved:
“Approved doctoral program in psychology” means an approved ~~doctoral~~ program **for a doctoral degree** in psychology (PhD and PsyD), as defined in ORS 675.010, at an educational institution located in this state.
2. The bill refers to a need for “at least four courses” in cultural competency – we suggest that a change to credits/hours will make clearer the expected rigor.
3. Here or in rules, there should be clarity on cultural competence topics expected to be covered, e.g. specific diversity groups (ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability), culturally competent psychological interventions, assessment protocols, health disparities, etc. and whether the title ‘cultural competence’ needs to be the specific term used in the course title or would they allow for other terms to be in the title. As an example, one could argue that a course titled ‘Sociocultural Determinants of Latinx Health’ would meet the criteria. Would this be approved by just checking titles on transcripts or would they do a thorough review of course syllabi?

This final suggestion makes us all wonder who will be the final arbiter of content. Who will determine the relevant content to meet the standard for eligibility for stipend and how? But with all excellent ideas, time must be spent on perfecting details and the Alliance is committed to helping in any way we can.

Thank you for your public service.