

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 15, 2021

Senate Committee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 712

Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this letter of support for SB 712. Like HB 3280, which I Chief Sponsored in 2019 with Senator Dembrow, SB 712 seeks to re-designate five (5) non-voting memberships into voting memberships and adds a voting position for a graduate student attending a public university to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). This measure is about fairness: all too often, it is assumed (perhaps wrongly) that the perspectives of all university administration, faculty, staff, and students are “the same.” In truth, the dynamic realities associated with the recent de facto dissolution of the university “system” and its governance mechanisms have yet to realize the promise so loudly advanced by past advocates.

Throughout the state, many of us are concerned about the seeming lack of systemic thinking regarding our near-term, medium-term, and far-term strategies. Our current decentralized amalgamation favors division rather than unity. Our existing seven (7) or perhaps soon to be eight (8) distinct campus-specific perspectives lack a statewide “unifying” perspective. We are witnessing a balkanization of our campuses with a rise in competition rather than collaboration or coordination among our public institutions at a time when resources are growing scarcer.

SB 712 is not the solution to the many challenges facing our public universities, but it is a step forward. It is a method for ensuring a statewide lens for navigating the challenges of economic, structural, and systemic sustainability. This bill will ensure a more inclusive, comprehensive process and improve the HECC. SB 712 will yield us a better toolkit; it warrants our support.

In conclusion, if you have questions or require additional information, please let me know. I appreciate your attention on this matter.

Respectfully,

Rep. Paul Evans
HD 20