

TO: House Education Committee
FROM: Brent Wilder, President
DATE: April 1, 2021
RE: Support for HB 2093

Thank you for taking the time to read the opinion of the Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities. The Alliance is the voice of Oregon's independent, non-profit higher education sector, actively supporting the success of our member colleges and universities, their students, and alumni.

Our 15 colleges and universities work to foster collaboration and find the intersection between the needs and expertise of member institutions, industry leaders, and government. In doing so, the Alliance is a contributing partner to Oregon's 40-40-20 education attainment goal, strengthening the state's intellectual, creative, and economic resources.

We are active participants in the Higher Education advocacy realm, with the HECC and with financial aid programs through OSAC. For this reason, we wanted to provide input and support for HB 2093.

Traditionally, the Oregon Promise has been dedicated to students at community colleges. When the Oregon Promise was first being designed, many looked to the program in Tennessee as a model. That program from the start has included 4-year schools both public and private that had two-year programs, providing students with more options for furthering their education. **This is the key – we should not limit the options for Oregon students – we should provide them with resources to develop their own path at the right institutions for them.**

Oregon's private non-profit colleges join the legislature in efforts to make higher education more accessible and more diverse.

- 85% of undergraduates receive institutional aid
- Nearly 1 in 3 private non-profit college students in Oregon are eligible for Pell Grants.
- Oregon's private non-profit colleges have the highest graduation rate among students of color and first-generation students.
- 32% of Oregon private non-profit college undergraduates identify as a student of color.
- And 1 in 3 of Oregon's bachelor's and higher degrees earned by students of color is conferred by Alliance member colleges and universities.

We will be able to increase all of these numbers with the passage of HB 2093, which will allow more Oregon students to choose our member institutions.

We ask you to support HB 2093 and also urge you to assure dollars go to the neediest first and that the legislature provide more funding to state financial aid programs to help more students and attain the state's 40-40-20 goals.