



**Testimony of Ricardo Lujan Valerio, Director of Government Relations<sup>1</sup>  
In Support of SB 424 - University Student Transcripts  
House Committee on Higher Education  
April 18th, 2023**

Chair Lively and Members of the Committee,

Western Oregon University strongly supports SB 424, which would prohibit post-secondary institutions of education that are based in Oregon from refusing to provide a transcript to a current or former student solely because the student owes a debt to the institution. We do ask that the committee consider amendments to the bill on its reporting requirements.

As a university that values access and equity, Western Oregon University has recognized the detrimental impact of denying transcripts to students who are in debt to the institution. After a discussion with the leadership team about the policy to deny access to transcripts for students with outstanding balances, **Western Oregon University will end this practice effective immediately.**

Jesse Peters, President of Western Oregon University, made the following statement:

*"After a discussion with the leadership team about the policy to deny access to transcripts for students with outstanding balances, Western Oregon University will end this practice effective immediately. Though we do expect students to pay the costs they incur when taking classes and seeking a degree, we do not believe denying access to a transcript has a meaningful effect on the repayment of this debt. In fact, it may be an impediment to such repayment, especially if transcripts enable successful employment. At Western, we are focused on student support and actively seek ways to reduce barriers to their success. This policy is not good for our students. Therefore, it is not good for Oregon."*

**We understand that access to transcripts is critical for students who are seeking to apply for graduate programs or pursue employment opportunities.** Denying transcripts to students who owe a debt creates unnecessary barriers to their academic and professional success, particularly for those who may have already faced financial challenges in pursuing higher education.

**We would also like to ask the committee to consider more flexibility in reporting requirements as these changes will require time and capacity to actualize.** It is probable that we will not be able to collect more data on transcript holds for this matter, given that we will no longer be withholding transcripts. We would appreciate the

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opportunity to work collaboratively with the committee and other institutions to develop a reporting system that is both accurate and feasible.

**For these reasons, Western Oregon University urges you to support SB 424.** By passing this legislation, Oregon has the opportunity to ensure that all students have access to their transcripts and do not continue to experience barriers due to financial difficulties. We urge you to support this important legislation and join us in promoting access and equity in higher education. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns.