

Submitter: Emily Plec

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education

Measure: HB4125

Thank you to the sponsors of HB 4125 which provides a long-overdue and much-needed examination of the costs and consequences of having individual Boards of Trustees governing Oregon's public universities. I have been a faculty member at Western Oregon University for over 20 years and am alarmed at how the dissolution of the Chancellor's office, and creation of an independent governing board, vastly increased administrative costs for my university while providing no tangible benefits to students, faculty, staff or the communities our institution serves. I genuinely like our Trustees and feel they have the best interests of WOU at heart. So it is not a matter of their intention but rather the structural realities of these changes that must be better understood.

The technical and regional universities have been especially burdened due to their relatively small and less affluent student bodies, as well as narrow range of revenue sources, whereas the bigs (PSU, UO and OSU) are significantly less dependent upon state support to educate their students and run their programs. They are also able to capitalize on high out of state tuition rates, thus educating fewer Oregonians yet receiving a far greater share of the higher education allocation "pie" funded by taxpayers in our state. I firmly believe that HB 4125 and the study it seeks to undertake, the questions it will help us to answer, is a critical first step to ensuring the sustainability of higher education in our state. As a faculty member committed to educating working class and underserved Oregonians, I believe the bill will help us to identify and address inequities that are harmful to our shared goal of an educated Oregon citizenship and encourage all house members to support the bill.

Thank you for your consideration,
Emily Plec