



March 5, 2025

Chair Hudson and Members of the House Higher Education and Workforce Committee:

Oregon's seven public universities, through the Oregon Council of Presidents (OCOP), share the following information as it relates to **HB 2389**.

As drafted, the bill caps enrollment increases at five percent for any public university. The goal of the bill, to facilitate increased enrollment across all institutions, is laudable. However, as drafted, the bill would be difficult or impossible to enforce. It states, "For any public university that receives a number of applications for enrollment in excess of the limit provided under this subsection, that public university shall refer each application received in excess of the limit on enrollment to the nearest community college to that applicant, if that applicant resides in this state..." (Emphasis added.) There is no reliable correlation between number of applicants and increased enrollment. Further, actual enrollment increases are only known after the beginning of the quarter. As a result, redirecting applications based on enrollment limits is not feasible.

Beyond this technical challenge, placing provisions in statute limiting enrollment may have unintended consequences. For example, while enrollment trends are currently declining at some institutions, should that change, or should an isolated enrollment gain occur at an institution facing financial challenges, the law may require an institution to reject students despite prior negative enrollment trends and sustained financial shortfalls.

Despite the challenges of incorporating these provisions in statute, there are examples of institutions across Oregon collaborating to support one another through voluntary programs that provide for referrals between campus and/or co-enrollment. Additional exploration of such voluntary collaboration merits the universities' collective attention.

The single most important step the legislature can take to mitigate fluctuations in enrollment is to increase investment across all post-secondary institutions.