

3/11/2025

Dear Chair Hudson and members of the House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development:

I am writing on behalf of Willamette University, the oldest university in the West, and the first university in Oregon, in support of HB 2421 with the -3 amendments that would permit Oregon's Direct Admissions program to include, upon the consent of the institution, any private post-secondary institution that meets the criteria set forth in ORS 348.597 (2)(a). Allowing private, post-secondary institutions to participate in Oregon's Direct Admission program will help expand opportunities for more Oregonians to access higher education and benefit from the high-quality programs that private universities provide.

Including private, nonprofit institutions in this bill addresses Oregon's talent and workforce demands. Many private universities offer specialized programs and degrees that are aligned with state industries and talent development needs. Additionally, due to our smaller campus environments and the specialized support students receive, we graduate a greater proportion of students with degrees, on time, who are well-prepared to enter the workforce. We have an established track record of producing many of Oregon's influential and impactful leaders in business, government and non-profit sectors. Inclusion in the Oregon's Direct Admissions program will help us continue this success.

The evidence is clear from states that have already implemented direct admissions that it improves access and removes barriers for students seeking a college education, and I applaud the House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development for pursuing this initiative. Adding private, non-profit universities to the Oregon's Direct Admission program will improve its results, as it empowers students by giving them greater choice, access, and opportunity in higher education. This fosters a sense of ownership over their decisions, enabling them to shape their futures. Additionally, the bill promotes a more inclusive, diverse, and dynamic higher education system that aligns with the needs of Oregon's students, economy, and workforce.

Thank you for your work and consideration in this important initiative.

Sincerely,

William Mullen
Vice President of Enrollment Management
Willamette University