

HECC PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

HB 3026 – Higher Education Omnibus

Topic: Transfer Council Administration

Need: Allow certain subcommittees to meet without holding public meetings

Background: Because the Transfer Council makes recommendations directly to the Commission for, all of its meetings and the meetings of its subcommittees are public, even though that was not the intent at the time of passage of the bill. If HECC were not a Commission-led agency, there would not be a public meeting requirement.

Most subcommittees are bodies of faculty, negotiating and debating course outcomes and sequences necessary to build transfer pathways. In 2024, 17 separate subcommittees met on the issues of common course numbering and major transfer maps, and the requirements of public meeting law are burdensome to the faculty untrained in the particulars, as well as HECC staff, who estimate two hours of public meeting related prep and wrap-up work for each public meeting. These requirements prohibit faculty from discussing course and program issues that relate to transfer topics over email, or in any other non-public venue.

SB 1552 (2024) exempted *some* academic groups from the requirement to hold public meetings, but left out some subcommittees that also do strictly academic work. This alteration would fix that oversight, while keeping the Transfer Council and its policymaking committees public meetings.

Amendment: ORS 192.690 is amended to read:

192.690. (1) ORS 192.610 to 192.705 do not apply to any of the following:

- (a) Deliberations of the Psychiatric Security Review Board or the State Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision.
- (b) Deliberations of state agencies conducting hearings on contested cases in accordance with the provisions of ORS chapter 183.
- (c) Deliberations of the Workers' Compensation Board or the Employment Appeals Board of similar hearings on contested cases.
- (d) Meetings of the state lawyers assistance committee operating under the provisions of ORS 9.568.
- (e) Meetings of the personal and practice management assistance committees operating under the provisions of ORS 9.568.
- (f) Meetings of county child abuse multidisciplinary teams required to review child abuse cases in accordance with the provisions of ORS 418.747.

- (g) Meetings of child fatality review teams required to review child fatalities in accordance with the provisions of ORS 418.785.
- (h) Meetings of peer review committees in accordance with the provisions of ORS 441.055.
- (i) Mediation conducted under ORS 36.252 to 36.268.
- (j) Any judicial proceeding.
- (k) Meetings of the Oregon Health and Science University Board of Directors or its designated committee regarding candidates for the position of president of the university or regarding sensitive business, financial or commercial matters of the university not customarily provided to competitors related to financings, mergers, acquisitions or joint ventures or related to the sale or other disposition of, or substantial change in use of, significant real or personal property, or related to health system strategies.
- (l) Oregon Health and Science University faculty or staff committee meetings.
- (m) Meetings of Transfer Council subcommittees that are established under ORS 350.426 and that relate to the common course numbering system and the coordination, establishment, alignment, effectiveness and maintenance of foundational curricula **or unified statewide transfer agreements.**
- (n) Communications between or among members of a governing body that are:
 - (A) Purely factual or educational in nature and that convey no deliberation or decision on any matter that might reasonably come before the governing body;
 - (B) Not related to any matter that, at any time, could reasonably be foreseen to come before the governing body for deliberation and decision; or
 - (C) Nonsubstantive in nature, such as communication relating to scheduling, leaves of absence and other similar matters.
- (2) Because of the grave risk to public health and safety that would be posed by misappropriation or misapplication of information considered during such review and approval, ORS 192.610 to 192.705 shall not apply to review and approval of security programs by the Energy Facility Siting Council pursuant to ORS 469.530.

Topic: Transfer Council Administration

Need: Allow for flexibility in subcommittee composition

Background: In order to ensure that Transfer Council academic subcommittees were not dominated by colleges or universities, law requires subcommittees to be equally balanced between colleges and universities. Most of the time, this requirement does not present a significant challenge in constituting subcommittees.

However, some programs are heavily weighted toward one sector and another, and the balanced subcommittee requirement can lead to excluding a significant number of

institutions, which creates a different and arguably worse issue related to denying voice to a number of interested parties.

The proposed amendment allows for subcommittees to be exempt from equal balance requirements if the programing available at various institutions makes it impractical to meet the requirement. Because ultimately, the Transfer Council, and in some cases HECC, must approve subcommittee work for it to become operative, the balance of subcommittees can be considered by these bodies in reviewing the work product, and any parties with concerns about the product will have avenues to discuss those concerns with the Council or Commission before finalization.

Amendment: Amend ORS 350.426(5)

(5)(a) The council:

(A) Shall select one or more of its members as chairperson or as cochairpersons;
and

(B) May establish, in the manner set forth in this subsection, one or more subcommittees for the purpose of advising the council on how to best fulfill its duties.

(b) For a subcommittee established under this subsection that will make recommendations to the council on issues that primarily relate to curriculum, the subject matter of courses or disciplines or methods of instruction, the council may appoint any faculty member who is employed by a public university listed in ORS 352.002 or a community college operated under ORS chapter 341, provided that the subcommittee consists of equal numbers of faculty from public universities and community colleges.

(c) For a subcommittee described in paragraph (b) of this subsection, the Council may determine that appointing a subcommittee with equal numbers of faculty from public universities and community colleges is not practical due to the uneven distribution of responsive curriculum, courses, or disciplines between public universities and community colleges, and appoint a subcommittee that does not comply with such paragraph.

(c) For a subcommittee other than a subcommittee described in paragraph (b) of this subsection, the council may appoint any individual employed by a public university listed in ORS 352.002 or a community college operated under ORS chapter 341, including faculty, registrars, academic advisors and academic administrators. A subcommittee established under this paragraph may not make recommendations to the council on issues that primarily relate to curriculum, the subject matter of courses or disciplines or methods of instruction.

(d) Appointment to a subcommittee established under this subsection does not entitle an individual to vote as a member of the council.

Topic: Oregon Teachers Scholars Program

Need: Ensure a legally-compliant, cultural competency and diverse-experience-focused scholarship program for teach candidates.

Background: Recent legal action has called into question the constitutionality of ORS 348.295, wherein HECC operates a financial aid program for culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidates in pursuit of diversifying the teacher workforce to meet the educator diversity goal established in ORS 342.437. Proposed language is intended to ensure the program operates in a legally compliant manner. This language also aligns this program with program language in HB 3030 regarding a related program for educator administrator candidates.

Amendment: Amend ORS 348.295

SECTION (1) In addition to any other form of student financial aid authorized by law, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission may award scholarships to *[culturally and linguistically diverse]* teacher candidates **who have experience with diverse populations** to use at approved educator preparation providers, as defined in ORS 342.120. *[, for the purpose of advancing the goal described in ORS 342.437 (1)(a).]*

(2) Scholarships awarded under this section shall be in amounts of \$12,000 each academic year, for a maximum of **the equivalent of two full-time** academic years.

(3) The commission shall adopt rules necessary for the implementation and administration of this section in consultation with the Educator Advancement Council and the Department of Education. **Rules adopted under this subsection shall include how candidates may demonstrate experience with diverse populations and parameters for awarding grants.**

(4) As used in this section:

(a) “Diverse” has the meaning given that term in ORS 342.433.

[(a)] (b) “Teacher candidate” means an individual who is preparing to be a teacher or other school professional licensed, registered or certified by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission.

[(b)] (c) “Teacher candidate” does not mean an individual who is preparing to be an administrator.

(NEW) SECTION A student receiving a grant who is eligible for renewal of such grant shall continue to be eligible for renewal notwithstanding amendments made in Section 1(a) of this 2025 Act, provided the student continues to comply with any other eligibility parameters established by the Commission.

(NEW) SECTION The provisions of this 2025 Act first apply to grants issued for the 2025-2026 academic year.

(NEW) SECTION EMERGENCY CLAUSE

Topic: Procurement Authority

Need: Place HECC procurement authority on par with other large state agencies

Background: When HECC was established, it was too small to have its own sophisticated fiscal and procurement offices. This has changed from the time of HECC's founding, when it was primarily a Commission with a few policy support staff, to the full-fledged, 185 FTE staff state agency it is today. This language aligns HECC procurement authority with that of other standard state agencies, including the Department of Education and the Department of Early Learning and Care, but 11 other departments as well.

Amendment: Amend ORS 279A.050(6):

(n) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission to procure or supervise the procurement of goods, services, personal services and information technology related to the authority of the Commission.

Topic: Reporting

Need: Examine and make recommendations for improvements in reporting across higher education system.

Background: There are numerous reporting requirements for institutions of higher education and HECC, which have accumulated over time. These requirements require significant capacity to meet, but may not be delivering the best in terms of quality, timely, and unduplicated information for policy makers to act on. This language requires HECC to work with institutions to improve reporting, and builds on the concept introduced by Rep. Evans as HB 2458 this session.

Amendment:

NEW SECTION: (1) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission, in consultation with community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002, shall conduct a study regarding reporting requirements affecting public institutions of higher education and the Commission. The study must:

(a) Inventory all requirements placed on public institutions of higher education to report information to the Commission;

(b) Inventory all requirements placed on public institutions of higher education and the Commission to report information to the Legislative Assembly or Governor;

(c) Include recommendations for improving the efficiency, relevance, and quality of reporting in higher education. Such recommendations may:

(A) Propose the elimination, consolidation, alteration of the frequency, modifying the due date, or adjusting the requirements related to the content of existing reporting; and

(B) Propose new reporting that improves the understanding of higher education activity and outcomes in the state.

(2) Recommendations submitted by the Commission pursuant to Section 1(c)(B) of this Act shall primarily rely on existing human resource and technology capacity, including capacity that is generated through recommendations submitted pursuant to Section 1(c)(A) of this Act. The Commission shall indicate if any recommendation requires an increase in capacity, and the potential fiscal impact of such recommendation.

(3) The commission shall submit a report in the manner provided by ORS 192.245 to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to higher education for review and approval by November 15, 2026.

NEW SECTION: Section __ of this 2025 Act is repealed on January 2, 2027.

Topic: Forestry Workforce Study

Need: Provide additional time to complete the study.

Background: SB 1552 (2024) requires HECC to study forestry workforce issues and develop recommendations to improve recruitment and retention of the forestry workforce. In consultation with proponents of the study, HECC has determined a need to extend the study timeline to provide for the best possible information and most comprehensive recommendations.

Amendment: Amend SB 1552, Section 40 (2024)

(1) As used in this section:

(a) “Forestry sector” means private businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational and workforce providers and public entities that are engaged in logging, forestation, wildland fire prevention and suppression, construction and maintenance of roads required for forestry, aggregate production of forestry products, trucking related to forestry, tree services, technical and professional services required for forestry, forest surveying, fuel mitigation efforts related to forestry, forestry habitat restoration, watershed improvement, crop tree release and stand improvement, forest tract management, tree nurseries, mechanical services for forestry, provision of forestry products, training resources for the forestry workforce, educational resources for the forestry workforce, human resources for the forestry workforce and other in-forest or forest-affiliated services.

(b) “Forestry workforce” means the owners, proprietors, partners and employees of companies and organizations composing the forestry sector.

(2) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall conduct a forestry workforce study to assist the commission in understanding and addressing challenges in Oregon's forestry workforce.

(3) The study conducted under this section shall:

(a) Identify existing secondary and post-secondary education, training, apprenticeship and workforce development programs that prepare Oregonians for careers in the forestry workforce;

(b) Collect data on participation in, completion of and employment outcomes for programs identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection;

(c) Identify the number, type and location of businesses, nonprofit organizations, education and workforce providers and public entities composing the forestry sector in this state;

(d) Collect data on the number, occupations, industries, wages and demographics of the forestry workforce in this state;

(e) Assess current and projected forestry workforce needs;

(f) Identify challenges faced by the forestry sector in retaining and recruiting the forestry workforce; and

(g) Develop recommendations to enhance the recruitment and retention of the forestry workforce.

(4) When conducting the study under this section, the commission shall:

(a) Assess the current forestry workforce, the workforce's demographics and needs and the community benefits of forestry. The assessment required under this paragraph shall take into consideration state plans and initiatives related to forest health, climate and economic development that may influence the demands on the forestry workforce.

(b) Collaborate with Oregon business associations that represent private forest employers and forest management enterprises to assess the future forestry workforce capacity requirements, as well as the potential impacts, benefits and opportunities for the forestry workforce.

(c) Consult with state and federal economic development, labor, employment and licensing agencies to account for current tracking and monitoring techniques for the forestry workforce and to ensure that the study is not duplicative of other studies.

(d) Consult with state and federal natural resource agencies to align priorities and understand future forestry workforce needs.

(e) Consult with state training and education agencies to fully understand career pathways and training opportunities for the forestry workforce.

(5) The commission may enter into a contract with a public or private entity for the purpose of conducting the study described in this section.

(6) The commission shall submit a report in the manner provided by ORS 192.245 to the

interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to natural resources, education and higher education no later than *[June 30, 2025]* **December, 31, 2025.**