



**Testimony on HB 3026 A**  
Senate Education Committee  
May 7, 2025

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Committee. My name is Kyle Thomas and I am the Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Thank you for hearing this HECC-sponsored bill today.

HB 3026 is an omnibus bill covering multiple higher education topics and issues. I will review these changes section by section.

**Section 1:** 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 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. The bill would fix that oversight, while keeping the Transfer Council and its policymaking committees public meetings.

**Section 2:** 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 bill 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.

**Section 3:** This section is technical and alters a statutory reference unrelated to higher education or HECC to conform with Section 1.

**Section 4:** 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 full-sized state agencies, including the Department of Education and the Department of Early Learning and Care, but 11 other larger state departments as well.

**Sections 5-7:** These sections alter a grant program currently operated by HECC for culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidates by amending its eligibility requirements. The bill requires HECC to instead serve students who have experience with diverse populations.

The [Oregon Teacher Scholars Program](#) is a partnership with the Educator Advancement Council and Oregon Department of Education, and currently serves approximately 200 students with grant awards up to \$12,000 for the purpose of assisting them in completing their education as necessary to pursue a teaching license. In the history of the program, 452 students from 2019 to 2023 have become licensed after receiving the grant.

This bill allows HECC to operate the program in a manner that is aligned with federal law and respects concerns that have been raised relative to equal protection and the use of eligibility requirements that can be based on race. These amendments alter the intent of the program, but also result in a program that the Commission believes, in consultation with the Department of Justice (DOJ), is free of constitutional concerns. This analysis is dependent on program implementation and how HECC determines the eligibility of participants under this new statutory standard.

We will determine how to screen eligibility through the public rulemaking process and in close discussion with DOJ to ensure that the eligibility process established by HECC cannot be construed as a pretext for awarding grants on the same basis as the original program, or on some basis that creates related concerns.

**Sections 8-9:** 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 policymakers to act on. This language requires HECC to work with institutions to improve reporting, by drafting recommendations to eliminate duplicative reporting, consolidate reporting, modify reporting, and create new reporting that allows policy makers to receive better information about the performance of the higher education system.

Recommendations for new reporting must primarily rely on existing staff and technology resources.

This builds on a concept introduced by Rep. Evans as HB 2458 this session, which was not passed out of the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee because this more comprehensive language was developed.

**Section 10:** 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.

Thank you for your time today.