

Talking Points for the Senate Education Committee: February 24, 2015 SB 84

Marla Edge

Good afternoon, Chair Roblan, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the Committee.

For the record, my name is Marla Edge. I am the Director of Academic Agreements for Oregon Tech.

I am responsible for approving, monitoring and tracking accelerated credit relationships and articulation agreements for Oregon Tech with over 50 high school and community college partners.

I have actively participated in discussions with the Accelerated Credit Task Force as they worked to develop SB84. In addition to monitoring the Committee and testifying, I have met with the HECC and OEIB staff. I did this in my position as chair of the Dual Credit Oversight Committee, which I have served on since its inception and also as a member of the Oregon Dual Credit Coordinators group. I also serve on the Board of the Oregon Association for Career and Technical Education (OACTE), am a member and past President of the Oregon Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (OrACRAO), two groups closely involved with multiple types of Accelerated Credit.

Personally, Dual Credit and smooth student transitions are my passion and what my work life is centered on.

I am speaking today on behalf of all seven of Oregon's public universities.

Oregon's Public Universities support SB84, and will work together with our high school and community college partners to ensure that all Oregon students have access to accelerated college credit before they leave high school.

The Universities collaborated on a letter that we submitted to the committee that describes our shared commitment to accelerated credit. There is an abundance of research on accelerated credit that demonstrates its effectiveness at increasing the number of students who are well-prepared for college and encouraging a college-going culture among high school students. We applaud this work as an effective student success strategy.

The letter from the seven universities also lists some specific recommendations for changes to the bill that would address concerns expressed by the university provosts. You have received this detailed input in the letter, so I will just stress a couple points in my comments today.

First, we respectfully suggest that the process for teacher-faculty collaboration, and the approving of qualified teachers remain in the domain of our faculty, under the leadership of our provosts.

Each university has a unique set of programs, accrediting agencies, and faculty-led curriculum, guided by the principles of shared governance and academic freedom.

Each public universities has a process for aligning course outcomes and approving teachers, in alignment with its program accreditation and institutional accreditation standards. In fact, the post-secondary institutions have more flexibility to approve qualified teachers than community colleges, because the standards are not in statute and are based on an analysis of teacher experience, educational background, course content, and other factors.

Each institution must work with its faculty and its accrediting agencies, and establish a culture of collaboration and support for accelerated credit.

National Dual Credit Standards developed and monitored by the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment (NACEP), which the Oregon Dual Credit Standards are modeled on, require that the high school faculty qualifications to teach Dual Credit be the same as the post-secondary institution issuing the college credit. Additionally, the standards address alignment, outcomes and on-going professional development. In order to offer dual credit in Oregon, Colleges and Universities must be certified as meeting these and other rigorous standards.

We respectfully request that the two subsections in Section 5 that are cited in our letter be deleted from the bill.

The letter expressed concern about the limitations for online course delivery, especially because that may limit access for rural students. We understand, as Dr. Rosselli indicated, that an amendment to this section is in the works and that is appreciated. .

I just came from a Dual Credit Oversight Committee meeting. A concern that all of us who do this work share involves timing. I was glad to hear Dr. Rosselli address this today. This bill sets forth an extremely complex undertaking with many parts. We urge a slow rollout that allows for piloting and thoughtful partner negotiations. To do otherwise would be chaotic and perhaps sabotage the efforts.

Oregon Tech has a rich history of providing accelerated college credit. Among our current efforts, we are the leader of the South Metro-Salem STEM Partnership, a collaboration of 15 school districts, Clackamas, Chemeketa and Portland Community Colleges, four universities, and many industry and community partners, all working to catalyze student preparation for and engagement in STEM career paths. One of our key strategies is the expansion of STEM Dual Credit.

Oregon Tech and our three college partners in the Hub have formed learning communities with the 15 districts to align course outcomes and expand dual credit, as a collective. It is working well, but we fear the work could be hindered by some of the provisions of this bill. We are working to help create a college going culture and having High School students take credits with a purpose.

The public universities offer our support for the intent of SB 84 and wish to work with the committee on amendments that may enhance the effectiveness of this policy.

Thank you.