

Chris Maples: Testimony on HB 2154

Good Morning, Chair Dembrow, Vice Chairs Harker and Huffman, and members of the committee.

My name is Chris Maples. I am President of Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon Tech, Oregon's public, polytechnic university.

I am here today to thank you for your focus on how colleges and universities will accomplish their achievement compacts, and the involvement of their campus communities – full-time faculty, part-time faculty, staff and students – in that effort. I cannot speak on behalf of the community colleges, nor the other university presidents, but I think my testimony will be reflective of the serious work that all of our institutions are doing to reach our state's educational goals.

I agree wholeheartedly that everyone on each of our campuses needs to be rowing in the same direction if we are going to achieve our 40-40-20 goals. This bill is clearly designed to give voice to all the constituencies who care about fulfilling our compacts, and to encourage colleges and universities to be inclusiveness in the process. I truly appreciate the intention to increase involvement and buy-in, and to be accountable for measuring progress toward our goals.

We may differ in our opinions, however, about whether legislation to establish special achievement compact advisory committees for universities is necessary.

I say this because Oregon Tech is actively engaged right now in a multitude of committees on our campuses, and in partnerships in our communities to achieve our compacts. These committees and partnerships are working together effectively, and are consistent with our campus cultures and committee structures. I fear that another advisory committee may result in distracting, rather than enhancing, our action plans.

Let me give you some examples of what Oregon Tech has done since the Governor, Legislature and State Board of Higher Education directed a more concerted effort to reach 40-40-20.

- At a system level, the Provosts at each university have been asked by the State Board of Higher Education to present a 40-40-20 Plan.
- At a campus level, Oregon Tech started tracking campus-wide efforts to achieve 40-40-20 and our achievement compact over the past two years, and we review progress regularly at my Executive Committee meetings.
- We established an office of Academic Agreements to oversee and consistently update articulation agreements with community colleges, and to expand our ability to offer dual

credit, credit by exam, and high school transition courses. We hope to double the number of dual HS-College credits we can offer to students in the next four years.

- We established the Oregon Tech OWLS program – which stands for Opportunity for Work and Learning in STEM. The OWLS program offers a scholarship incentive to high school students who apply to Oregon Tech with 9 or more advanced college credits in STEM subjects.
- We appointed four subcommittees of our Strategic Enrollment Management Committee to develop recommendations and action plans for wider Recruitment, Retention, Wilsonville Campus enrollment, and STEM and Pre-college Programs.
- I appointed an Equity Committee of faculty, staff, students and community advisors to establish aspirational goals for recruiting, retaining and developing a campus culture that is supportive of underrepresented students and women in science and technology programs. The Equity Committee conducted student focus groups on campus to get student input, and has already made recommendations to me and the Executive Team that resulted in adding a student services position and an academic advising position to better support the success of students.
- And at a more tactical level, Oregon Tech is leading the South Metro-Salem STEM Partnership, with the goal of catalyzing Oregon students to achieve degrees and certificates in STEM fields.
- I signed a partnership agreement in December with 13 school districts (from West Linn-Wilsonville to Woodburn to Salem-Keizer to McMinnville), three community colleges (Chemeketa, Clackamas, PCC Newberg), WOU and Pacific University, six community organizations including FIRST Robotics, Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum, and Business Education Compact, and over 10 business partners, including Intel, Mentor Graphics, FLIR, and Garmin.
- Together we are focused on doubling the number of STEM college graduates that matriculate from partner schools.
- Together we are focused on decreasing disparities in STEM participation, persistence and achievement.
- Together we are focused on preparing our students for high-quality jobs, because they are highly skilled and valued by Oregon's employers.

I must say that I am very proud of the work we are doing, and I could go on and on...

And I know other universities have gathered input, appointed committees, and committed resources to fulfilling their achievement compacts as well.

But mostly I am here to ask you to consider whether establishing Achievement Compact Advisory Committees is redundant or unnecessary, and may distract from the very important work that Oregon Tech and its many partners are already doing.

Thank you for considering my thoughts in your deliberations.