



Date: April 3, 2015

To: House Committee on Education

From: Carleen Drago Starr, Academic Partnership Coordinator for Oregon Tech

Subject: Testimony on HB3126

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Good afternoon, Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Sprenger and Frederick, and members of the Committee.

For the record, my name is Carleen Drago Starr. I am the Academic Partnership Coordinator for Oregon Tech, and a co-leader of the accelerated credit work group for the South Metro-Salem STEM Partnership, one of Oregon's six funded STEM Hubs.

I am responsible for developing accelerated credit relationships and articulation agreements for Oregon Tech through the Office of Academic Agreements. Our office is responsible for over 80 academic agreements with both high school and community college partners. I work directly with high school teachers and university faculty, as well as students and parents, to expand the use of dual credit in Oregon.

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

We are all in agreement with the legislature's current policy direction to increase the number of students who have an opportunity to earn accelerated college credits before they leave high school. There are numerous research studies that demonstrate that students who receive college credit while in high school are more likely to "use their credits" by enrolling in college, and are more likely to succeed than students without advanced credits.

Our South Metro-Salem STEM Hub is actively engaged in promoting STEM accelerated credit to 15 school districts in our region, and we are focused on reaching underrepresented students and their families through collaborative outreach events, testimonial videos, and posters at schools. [take posters and video]

The seven public universities concur that awarding accelerated credit is a proven student success strategy and we applaud the expansion of this practice.

Oregon's Public Universities understand that the intent of HB3126 is to ensure that we are "making good" on our promise to students that they are receiving a high-quality, college-level education from highly qualified teachers when they receive dual credit from one of the universities or community colleges while in high school. The intent of the bill is to ensure that teachers who are approved to teach college-level courses at the high school are similarly qualified to those who teach at the college.

However, HB3126, as written, may actually decrease the ability of colleges and universities to award dual credit. HB 3126 would make it more difficult and more restrictive for us to approve high school teachers to teach college-level courses. Many of the dual credit programs in Oregon are certified through a State standards process that mirrors standards developed by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (NACEP). These Oregon Dual Credit Standards have been adopted by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission in June 2014. Furthermore, the Dual Credit Oversight Committee has recently been asked by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to develop standards for programs that don't fit under the traditional dual credit umbrella.

The Oregon standards and Oversight Committee provide colleges and universities with clear guidelines on how to align curriculum and course outcomes so they are identical to the college-level course, how to register and support students, how to assess comparable standards of achievement and how to conduct course evaluations. These standards allow colleges and universities the flexibility to conduct a rigorous assessment of the teacher qualifications and to enter into a partnership and mentorship relationship with high school teachers. These relationships, over time, could build the critical bridges so that students are better prepared for college-level work, avoid remedial coursework at the college, and better able to make the transitions into college. We are also saving money for students and their families, especially low-income students, by providing them with the lowest-cost, yet equally-challenging, college courses possible.

The public universities urge the committee to focus on ensuring quality through use of State standards and processes that encourage growth and access in accelerated credit opportunities. We recommend that you offer us more flexibility for faculty to mentor and qualify teachers, rather than making it more difficult. We urge you not to support HB3126.

Thank you.