

Docket Item:

Legislative Task Force on Underrepresented Students (HB 2590, 2021)

Summary:

The 2021 Legislature adopted HB 2590 with the support of 71 of 90 legislative members, and Governor Brown signed the bill on July 30. The bill represents the potential for the most significant examination of the experience of underrepresented students in recent Oregon history. This legislation is the result of significant work and planning by Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, and her commendable effort and focus on improving the experience and outcomes of underrepresented students.

Modeled after the process used for the Student Success Act, proponents of the legislation envision a bipartisan, bicameral slate of legislators, statutorily titled the Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (sometimes called the Student Voice Task Force), who will tour higher education institutions in the state, viewing programs and services, and holding hearings designed to lift student voices in the process of designing policies to improve the experiences of underrepresented students.

Specifically, the process is designed to highlight the experiences of communities of color, rural communities, low-income students, students with physical or learning disabilities, student-parents, students with high school equivalency, LGBTQ+ students, adults, and foster students. The process will examine issues of access, affordability, retention, graduation, and work and career readiness. It is likely the Task Force will eventually develop subcommittees or working groups to examine issues in greater detail.

HECC staff view engagement with the Task Force as a primary area of focus over the course of the next year-and-a-half, and into the 2023 legislative session, when it is most likely the Task Force's policy and budgetary recommendations will be considered. The Executive Director's office will take the lead on engaging with and monitoring the work of the Task Force.

HECC has already been deeply engaged, participating in some planning sessions with the offices of legislative proponents, and providing input on the design and scope of the Task Force. It's expected that this close engagement will continue, and that HECC will assist the Task Force in translating the comments and concerns raised by Oregonians throughout the information-gathering phase into actionable policy and budgetary options for Task Force members to consider.

This scope of work is expected to consume significant time from HECC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) staff, the legislative director, and the executive director. When the Task Force is meeting, HECC anticipates that additional staff support will be called upon to support those meetings and respond to requests for data and information.

The Task Force represents a truly exciting opportunity for students and HECC. Our DEI efforts internally and externally continue to move forward, and the passage of this legislation represents a unique opportunity to build off the Commission's equity goals and to strengthen its engagement with students transitioning into postsecondary pathways. This work also represents a chance to highlight the voices of those individuals and organizations with whom HECC has cultivated relationships through the Lumina-funded Talent, Innovation, and Equity (TIE) grant work, as well as to create and improve relationships with a larger group of legislators interested in higher education policy, ideally leading to a greater number of legislative champions in the halls of the Capitol in future sessions.

Through this work, legislators will sharpen the focus on the need to have a culturally responsive environment that supports both staff and the students they serve and ideally build a greater



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understanding of a robust and modern equity framework. This effort will also align to the expectations that the Student Success Act previously established in the effort to support our P-12 system, and with luck and effort, could bring the same outcomes for new policy recommendations and resources for the next biennium. HECC's intentional involvement in this work will also lead to broader and deeper collaboration not just with institutions, but the students and families the Commission and those institution serve.

Staff Recommendation:

For discussion and informational purposes only.

Enrolled House Bill 2590

Sponsored by Representative ALONSO LEON, Senators DEMBROW, WAGNER; Representatives BYNUM, CAMPOS, DEXTER, GRAYBER, HERNANDEZ, HUDSON, KROPF, MARSH, MEEK, NERON, PHAM, REARDON, RUIZ, SCHOUTEN, SOLLMAN, VALDERRAMA, WILDE, WILLIAMS, Senators FREDERICK, GOLDEN (Presession filed.)

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to underrepresented students at public post-secondary institutions of education; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) The Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education is established.

(2) The task force consists of eight members appointed as follows:

(a) The President of the Senate shall appoint four members from among members of the Senate.

(b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint four members from among members of the House of Representatives.

(3) The task force shall visit public post-secondary institutions of education in this state for the purpose of meeting with prospective, current and former students from populations that are underrepresented in the student bodies of these institutions, including students who:

- (a) Qualify as an underrepresented person as defined in ORS 342.120;**
- (b) Qualify as diverse as defined in ORS 342.433;**
- (c) Are from rural communities in this state;**
- (d) Are from low-income families;**
- (e) Experience disability, including intellectual developmental disabilities;**
- (f) Identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, intersex, asexual, nonbinary or another minority gender identity or sexual orientation;**
- (g) Are undocumented; and**
- (h) Have been a foster child.**

(4) The task force shall meet with faculty, staff and community partners who support underrepresented students through academic and student service programming.

(5) Based on conversations with the students and parties described in subsections (3) and (4) of this section, and in consultation with subcommittees with subject matter expertise created under subsection (12) of this section, the task force shall develop student success policy and funding proposals for the 2023 regular session of the Legislative Assembly. Policy proposals developed under this section shall focus on increasing the likelihood of student

success in higher education for students described in subsection (3) of this section by addressing:

(a) Access, including recruitment, admissions, placement, cost of attendance, financial aid and funding;

(b) Retention, including student support, student services, transfer programs, increased diversity of faculty, housing needs, food insecurity, child care costs, health care costs, mental health care access and counseling;

(c) Graduation, including time to degree, career readiness and student debt; and

(d) Entry into the workforce, including internships, advanced and continuing education, job and career placement, assessment on the return on investment for attaining a post-secondary degree, the correlation between degrees awarded and job placement and the correlation between student costs for higher education and earnings after graduation.

(6) A majority of the members of the task force constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

(7) Official action by the task force requires the approval of a majority of the members of the task force.

(8) The task force shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson.

(9) If there is a vacancy for any cause, the appointing authority shall make an appointment to become immediately effective.

(10) The task force shall meet at times and places specified by the call of the chairperson or of a majority of the members of the task force.

(11) The task force may adopt rules necessary for the operation of the task force.

(12) In addition to the tasks described in subsections (3) to (5) of this section, the task force may:

(a) Create one or more subcommittees of subject matter expertise for the purpose of advising the task force on how to best fulfill its duties. The task force may appoint any individual as a member of a subcommittee under this section. A subcommittee member is not entitled to vote as a member of the task force.

(b) Pre-session file legislation in the manner provided in ORS 171.130 for interim committees. All legislation recommended by official action of the task force must indicate that it is introduced at the request of the task force.

(13) The task force shall report its findings and any student success policy proposals developed under this section to the Legislative Assembly in the manner provided in ORS 192.245 no later than December 15, 2022.

(14) The Legislative Policy and Research Director may employ persons necessary for the performance of the functions of the task force. The Legislative Policy and Research Director shall fix the duties and amounts of compensation of the employees. The task force shall use the services of continuing legislative staff, without employing additional persons, to the greatest extent practicable.

(15) All public bodies, as defined in ORS 174.109, are directed to assist the task force in the performance of the duties of the task force and, to the extent permitted by laws relating to confidentiality, to furnish information and advice the members of the task force consider necessary to perform their duties.

SECTION 2. Section 1 of this 2021 Act is repealed on December 31, 2023.

SECTION 3. This 2021 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2021 Act takes effect on its passage.

Passed by House June 21, 2021

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Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Passed by Senate June 23, 2021

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate

Received by Governor:

.....M,....., 2021

Approved:

.....M,....., 2021

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Kate Brown, Governor

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M,....., 2021

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Shemia Fagan, Secretary of State