



Testimony on House Bill 4055
House Education Committee
February 5, 2020

Chair Doherty, Vice-Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, 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 the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 4055.

HB 4055 charges the HECC with conducting a study on the prevalence of food and housing insecurity for students attending a community college or public university in Oregon. A comprehensive overview of the scope and magnitude of food and housing security among postsecondary students in Oregon has not previously been compiled.

A tool that is nationally accepted is the College and Basic Needs Insecurity survey, also known as the #RealCollege survey, conducted by the Hope Center at Temple University.¹ This survey is the nation's largest annual assessment of basic needs security among college students. In 2019 nearly 86,000 students participated in the survey and roughly 1.5 million students nationwide were invited. The national results pertaining to food and housing insecurity are alarming:

- 45% of respondents were food insecure in the prior 30 days of completing the survey;
- 56% of respondents were housing insecure in the previous year; and
- 17% of respondents were homeless in the previous year.

Currently, 14 out of the 17 community colleges and 4 out of the 7 public universities in Oregon have or will have data available on food/housing insecurity on their campuses this coming year. This means that new data collection and management would need to occur in some form at 6 separate institutions; in addition to collecting, compiling, and aggregating the existing data at the other 18 community colleges and universities to create a complete understanding.

The HECC will coordinate a mixed methods approach to estimating the level of food/housing insecurity on our public institution campuses, utilizing existing data sources as well as collecting new measures as necessary; however, the exact study methodology has not been decided because it will depend on methodological gaps and institutional capacity. Given the tight timeline, HECC may hire a consultant to conduct the analyses and write the report, dependent upon staffing and hiring abilities.

Thank you for your time today.

¹ https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf