

April 7, 2011

Dear Lumina Foundation,

We are delighted to serve as representatives for Oregon's higher education institutions in this letter of inquiry regarding Oregon's intention to partner with Lumina in a pilot study of the development and of an Oregon Degree Qualification Profile (*Oregon DQP*).

### **Intended Outcomes**

The overarching outcome from the *Oregon DQP* is to develop a degree qualifications profile of *meta* outcomes, for the state, that clearly illustrates the types of things students should be *expected to know* and *expected to be able to do* once they earn this degree. These meta outcomes *describe* graduation requirements for *types* of degrees, providing a framework that transcends the specific fields and disciplines outcomes. This work will include both the Associate's and Bachelor's degree with the initial focus on the Associate's degree, but will not include the Master's degree since the creation of statewide descriptive *meta* outcomes is not yet well understood for the discipline specificity that is emblematic of a Master's degree.

*Oregon DQP* will build on the partnerships and successes in establishing of statewide General Education Course Criteria and Outcomes and obtaining approval for the Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree to develop a descriptive meta outcomes for two-year degrees while simultaneously engaging with the Oregon University System as partners in developing descriptive meta outcomes for the Baccalaureate's degree.

Oregon has strong, recent experience working together on statewide curricular issues, including the experience of the Oregon University System as a LEAP state system, and the partnerships involved in developing the AAOT. By its nature the Oregon DQP invites all institutions to the table, with each institution able to self-select and define their participation level and scope of work within their institution.

A number of benefits are anticipated, including:

- a) Improved statewide alignment of learning outcomes;
- b) Helping ensure the "operational" and assessable nature of outcomes
- c) Stronger articulations between and among postsecondary institutions regarding achievement levels in specific knowledge, skill and application areas;
- d) Greater clarity in guiding and setting expectations for students as to what to expect at the next degree level, how to plan to transfer from one institution to another, and :

### ***Annual Outcomes***

These annual outcomes indicate the anticipated sequence of steps in this pilot study – one result of this study will be to determine the feasibility of meeting these targets.

### ***Year One Outcomes***

One of more of the DQP author(s), Cliff Adelman, Peter Ewell, Paul Gaston, and Carol Geary Schneider, will lead a statewide representative *Oregon DQP Team* in symposiums and workshops, ensuring the team has a clear understanding of the purpose, use and implementation methods of the DQP as its been written.

- a) Oregon DQP Team created: members from all higher educational institutions and departments in the state, including Chief Academic Officers, faculty members from selected academic fields, and student representatives.
- b) Oregon DQP Team trained: all team members fully familiar with the background, methodology and purpose of the *DQP*, which describes five learning areas:
  - 1. broad, integrative knowledge;
  - 2. specialized knowledge;
  - 3. intellectual skills;
  - 4. applied learning, and;
  - 5. civic learning.
- c) The Oregon DQP presented by the Team to the relevant academic administrations and the committees at their individual institutions (e.g.: faculty senates, curriculum committees) creating understanding of and institutional investment in the *Oregon DQP*.
- d) Oregon DQP framework: the *Oregon DQP Team* critiques and modifies the general DQP model for the purposes of applying it to the pilot study to fit the character of Oregon higher education, creating a flexible and non-prescriptive *Oregon DQP* framework of meta outcomes. (This process is built into the character of the *DQP* which is meant to be tested and developed in partnership with Oregon educators, students and other stakeholders.)

### ***Year Two Outcomes***

- a) Institution-and Degree-Specific DQP teams: each participating will establish its own, home-team composed of faculty, students, academic officers, registrars, institutional researchers, and/or other essential parties.
- b) Institution-specific DQP assessment: each institution's teams will use the *Oregon DQP* model developed by the Team in year one to identify and validate assessments – this process is open to all at the institution, and leads to:
  - 1. descriptively mapping the learning outcomes for a subset of degrees offered in

- this pilot study to the *Oregon DQP* framework meta outcomes
2. ensuring that the outcomes are operational (i.e., lead directly to assessments)
  3. validating the competencies (some of which may need modifications)
  4. designing new assessments to validate the competencies.
- c) Institution-specific beta frameworks: the institutional teams will use the language of the five essential competencies of the *Oregon DQP* to describe the institutional categories of competencies, learning outcome statements, and potential assessments, with the intention of creating a beta localized version of the *DQP* framework that serves to *describe the* institution's and degree's unique emphasis or focus.

### ***Year Three Outcomes***

- a) Institution-specific beta frameworks review: all preliminary templates go online across the state, and an external panel reviews them for compatibility (i.e., created in a way that they are able to work with templates from other Oregon institutions, *not* a carbon-copy of other institutions).
- b) Institution-specific pro-tem frameworks: Evaluators will present findings to the State CEO's, CAO's, etc. who will provide guidance for:
1. reaching pro-tem final versions (knowledge and skills are always in motion, and everyone recognizes that the learning outcomes of 2020 or 2025 may not look exactly like those posted today), and
  2. designing the mechanisms by which student attainment is recorded, aggregated, and (if necessary) passed from one institution to another if and when students transfer.

An additional and simultaneous accompaniment of the above work will be for a statewide team of, e.g. Chief Academic Officers, Registrars, Institutional Research officers, faculty and student representatives from all participating institutions to design the mechanisms for recording, aggregating, and transferring student attainment of the outcomes in the *Oregon DQP*. Inevitably, but not included in the scope of this project, the mechanisms will include electronic reporting, by faculty of student performance (pass/fail) on qualifying assessments for a specific learning outcome. This will require a record distinct from the student's transcript. There may be, let us say, 42 learning outcomes on an institution's pro-tem DQP, each of which is checked off when one of the assessments is positively reported. There are potential quirks in such a system that will have to be addressed by the team, e.g. transfers-in from out-of-state institutions, prior learning of returning adult students, equivalencies, etc.

### ***Next steps after this project:***

Implementing the Oregon DQP means that the whole system, including the student learning

contract, launches its next venture: a 3-year trial, beginning with, let us say, the entering class of 2014 or 2015. The trial would have built-in monitoring processes, ongoing adjustments, and evaluation. In addition, the lessons learned from this pilot will be carefully and constructively applied to selected additional degrees. Keep in mind that the time other countries establishing national “qualifications frameworks” have taken has run anywhere from 5-8 years, and none of them has engaged in the type of iterative process outlined here. One could elaborate and illustrate, but we are doing this in harmony with the tones of a very distinct U.S. higher education system, and, quite frankly, we are doing it better.

### **Timeliness**

Oregon, like most states, needs to improve student success in higher education. A recent report by the National Center for Higher Education Management found that the education attainment level of Oregon’s young adult population (age 25-34) is below the average of most U.S. states. The trends are even more worrisome – the education attainment level has dropped in each of the past three decades. Given that Oregon is projected to grow more rapidly than most states in the next 20 years, this poses a major educational problem for the people of Oregon.

Fortunately, Oregon’s governor Kitzhaber recognizes the need to reform the state’s education system saying, “Our current education funding and governance process is broken and requires a new approach to deliver better results for students, more resources for teachers and better value for taxpayers.” (Feb. 11, 2010) . To address the need for change, the governor created the Oregon Education Investment Team charging it with creating a plan of policy and budget recommendations to comprehensively transform Oregon's approach to education.

### **Qualifications**

Oregon will make an excellent testing ground due to its unique higher education set-up—Oregon University System (OUS) is a true system, and while the 17 community colleges are locally governed, they have significant experience working together as a coalition to achieve major shared academic goals. For the last several years they have worked with the department of Community College and Workforce Development (CCWD) to establish policy and set an agenda for gathering longitudinal data showing which community colleges students are struggling most, and at what point in their education (milestones and momentum points). Furthermore, the state recognizes the importance of having a shared understanding of learning outcomes and of documenting them clearly. OUS and community colleges have already participated in several significant initiatives that provide a solid foundation to implement DQP:

- AAOT (Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer), awarded by any Oregon community college, is 90 general education credits of the Baccalaureate degree which transfers as completed to any of the 7 OUS institutions .
- The 17 community colleges and 7 OUS institutions in a 3 year collaborative initiative, jointly determined the course criteria and outcomes of the courses that comprise the AAOT

- The OTM (Oregon Transfer Module) is a 45 credit version of the AAOT, developed in the same collaborative manner as the AAOT by Oregon's community colleges and OUS institutions, which also transfers intact to any of the 7 OUS institutions.
- the Oregon University System is a LEAP system; AACU's initiative Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) that was launched in 2005.

Lane Community College is well qualified to serve as applicant representing the state higher education team and as fiscal agent for the project. Lane is the second largest community college in terms of student FTE, is centrally located in the state and has extensive experience managing grant projects (e.g., Title III, Wal-mart Brighter Futures, ARRA Dept. of Labor and National Science Foundation grants). Dr. Sonya Christian, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs is extremely involved at the state level with student success activities and is the team lead for the AAC&U Roadmap project. Dr. Mary Spilde, President, is currently serving on Gov. John Kitzhaber's State Education Investment Team and on the AACU Board. Finally, Lane with the Oregon Community Colleges and Workforce Development (OCCWD) hosted a one day conference with Dr. Cliff Adelman, who presented the DQP. Following the conference there have been numerous conversations on the DQP and its value to higher education.

### **Organizations Involved**

Oregon's involvement with the Degree Qualifications Profile work will involve institutions in the state university system, OUS, (an organized central system) and the independent community colleges (all seventeen) and the state department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) which is a supportive structure to the independent colleges. As discussed above, representatives from each area will be involved in the creation, development and implementation of the DQP framework in Oregon.

### **Organizations' missions**

The Oregon DQP project relates directly to the missions of the coalition colleges to support their students' success—both during college, and upon graduation. As an example, Lane's mission is as follows "Lane is the community's college; we provide comprehensive, accessible, quality, learning-centered educational opportunities that promote student success". The Oregon DQP supports that learning-centered focus, and promotes student success even beyond the doors of Lane Community College. Oregon's other two- and four-year colleges in the coalition include, along with Lane, as part of their institution specific mission, the goal of providing a quality education to the broadest possible range of Oregon students and to help them succeed in their educational goals.

### **Geographic scope**

The *Oregon DQP* will cover the entire state of Oregon, with universities and community colleges across the state that are found in both in rural and urban settings, from the coast to the border with Idaho, to the north in Portland, to the south along the border of California.

### **Costs**

Office of Academic and Student Affairs

The cost of the project is \$1,166,100 over three years. Oregon is asking that Lumina contribute \$789,000 of the cost. The state's schools and systems will support the remaining amount to ensure proper development and implementation of the project. The details of the program costs are below:

| <i><b>Years</b></i>  | <i><b>2011-2012</b></i> | <i><b>2012-2013</b></i> | <i><b>2013-2014</b></i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| ODQP Coordinator CC  | \$30,000                | \$30,000                | \$30,000                |
| ODQP Coordinator OUS   | \$30,000                | \$30,000                | \$30,000                |
| Technology systems specialist  | \$80,000                | \$80,000                | \$80,000                |
| Faculty and staff stipends   | 40,000                  | 40,000                  | 40,000                  |
| Student stipends -   | \$10,000                | \$10,000                | \$10,000                |
| Travel   | \$10,000                | \$10,000                | \$10,000                |
| Gatherings   | \$25,000                | \$25,000                | \$25,000                |
| Indirect Costs   | \$38,000                | \$38,000                | \$38,000                |
| <b>Total requested from Lumina</b>   |                         |                         | <b>\$789,000</b>        |
| College Leverage: personnel at individual colleges for development/ implementation | \$110,000               | \$110,000               | \$110,000               |
| <b>Total project budget</b>  |                         |                         | <b>\$1,119,000</b>      |

Thank you again for considering our Letter. We look forward to working with Lumina Foundation to improve Oregon's higher education and the lives of our citizens.

Sincerely,



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