



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Work Group to Review Options for Student Loan Program

EUGENE, Ore. (7/9/04) The Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC), in cooperation with Governor Ted Kulongoski, has announced the formation of a new Loan Program Work Group to explore opportunities associated with the student loan program in Oregon. The Work Group, chaired by former State Senator and Co-Chair of the Joint Ways and Means Committee Cliff W. Trow of Corvallis, will consider a new business model for guaranteeing student loans in order to achieve the best value for Oregon's students and schools.

"A new structure for Oregon's loan program could potentially create millions of dollars in revenue for Oregon students," said Brian Clem, chair of OSAC and chief architect of the Work Group and its mission. "In order to fully maximize the potential benefits of the loan program in Oregon, we would need increased school participation as well as an oversight committee that will specifically guide the loan program. With that, the opportunities for Oregonians could be limitless."

To facilitate the Work Group's short time-frame discussions, Jeff Svejcar, executive director of OSAC, announced Thursday that he is stepping down. Today, the Commission named Shelley Turner, a 30-year veteran of the student loan program and recent retiree from OSAC, as interim director. The formation of the Work Group and change in leadership will not impact current OSAC services to schools and students.

"The Commission supports Jeff in his move, and we're pleased to bring Shelley back with her in-depth experience in the loan program to help the Work Group in its task," said Clem. The Work Group will present its recommendations to the Legislative E-Board in mid-September.

"Time is of the essence, and I want the group to have a full range of options in designing what is best for Oregonians," said Svejcar. "The student loan business has become increasingly competitive and at the same time, the revenues associated with guaranteeing and servicing student loans has declined. By stepping down as executive director, I believe I can best help the Work Group examine what is in the state's best interest to financially help students achieve an education beyond high school and the future of the loan program."

Clem added, "Jeff's decades of service to Oregon, its students and their families, cannot be repaid with words. He cares deeply about ensuring Oregon and its students are the primary focus of the State's post-secondary student loan efforts and we both agreed that the workgroup must have all the flexibility it can to achieve this shared goal."

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JoAnn Trow, who retired from Oregon State University as the Vice President for Student Affairs, will serve as the Vice Chair of the Work Group. Other Work Group members include Oregonians from student associations, public and private universities, community colleges, SEIU Local 503, the Department of Justice, the Treasurer's Office, the Department of Administrative Services, and the Legislative Fiscal Office.

"The Governor has once again shown his commitment to thinking outside the box about ensuring access to Higher Education," said Clem. "It is my pleasure to work with him to investigate all the options available and recommending courses the schools may pursue to ensure maximum benefits to both the institutions and the students."

Work Group updates will be available on OSAC's website at www.osac.state.or.us.

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The Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC), created by the Oregon Legislature in 1959, coordinates a variety of state, federal, and privately funded student financial aid programs for the benefit of students attending institutions of postsecondary education. The agency can be reached at (800) 452-8807 or www.osac.state.or.us.

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