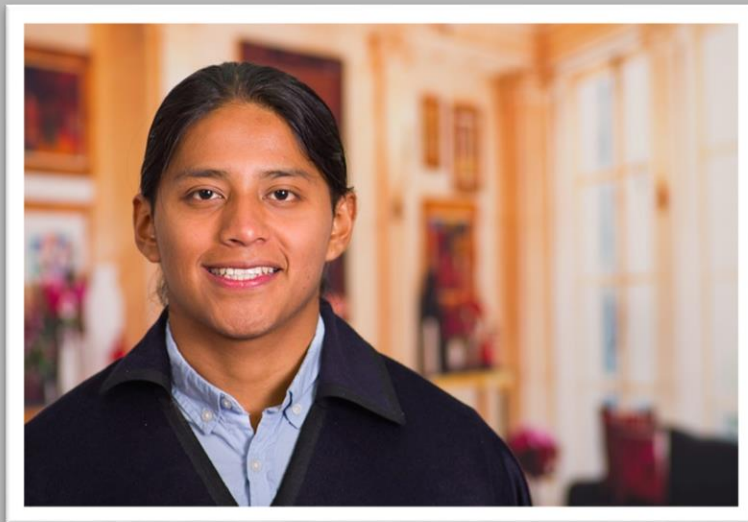


HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON INDIAN SERVICES
2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Published January, 2021.

Office of Executive Director

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

www.oregon.gov/highered



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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Salem, OR 97302

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Patrick Flanagan, Executive Director

Legislative Commission on Indian Services

900 Court Street NE, Room 167

Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Flanagan,

I am pleased to present the 2021 Government to Government Annual Report of the Higher Education Coordination Commission (HECC).

We honor the sovereignty of the nine federally-recognized Tribes in Oregon, and deeply value the opportunities we have had to work cooperatively with the educational representatives of the Tribes over the last year. This report summarizes the actions and initiatives the HECC has undertaken in 2021 to foster postsecondary education and training opportunities and pathways for tribal students and learners in Oregon.

The HECC is actively serving and partnering with Tribes in Oregon in numerous ways to best address specific needs and promote opportunities for Oregon's tribal students. We are dedicated to building strong relationships with our tribal partners through consultation, communication, concrete actions, and the fulfillment of our commitments, and look forward to continuing and expanding our work together in the coming year.

We are at an exciting juncture for postsecondary education and workforce training in Oregon. This year, the HECC approved the Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training after an extensive public outreach process, and we are defining actions to achieve this vision. The Roadmap is anchored in an urgent need for transformation across our higher education and workforce landscape in order to more equitably serve all Oregon communities now and in the future. The health and economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic continue to cause an extraordinary set of challenges, and we are pleased to share with you our strategies and actions we are undertaking to foster an accessible, affordable, equitable, and coordinated network of college and career training programs.

Should you have questions or comments regarding this report, please direct them to Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, at (503) 689-4309.

Respectfully,

Ben Cannon

Executive Director, Higher Education Coordinating Commission

ABOUT THE HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION

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Major Areas The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) works to improve success in higher education and training for Oregonians by ensuring an accessible, affordable, equitable, and coordinated network of college and career training programs.

The mission of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, derived from our chartering statutes, is to: 1) dramatically and equitably improve postsecondary educational attainment levels; 2) improve Oregon’s economic competitiveness and quality of life; and 3) ensure that Oregon students have affordable access to colleges and universities.

Agency Statement The HECC envisions a future in which all Oregonians—and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized—benefit from the transformational power of high-quality postsecondary education and training (from HECC Vision Statement, [Strategic Framework, 2017](#)).

Established in 2011 and vested with its current authorities in 2013, the HECC is a 14-member volunteer commission appointed by the Oregon Governor and confirmed by the Oregon State Senate, with funding and policy responsibilities for higher education and the workforce statewide. The HECC supports postsecondary education by administering the statewide higher education and workforce budget of about \$1.8 billion per year; authorizing programs and degrees; administering statewide financial aid, workforce, and educational programs; and providing strategic guidance to state leaders. We also directly serve Oregonians by awarding grant and scholarship aid to students, and connecting Oregonians with workforce and training resources. Our work is driven by the State of Oregon’s educational attainment goals for youth and adults, and by our Commission’s goals for equity, student success, affordability, and economic and community impact. To guide that work, we use the [Equity Lens](#) to help close system and opportunity gaps to achieve equitable outcomes for all.

Oregon’s first statewide [Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training](#) was finalized in August, 2021. The Roadmap sets an ambitious path forward by describing how postsecondary systems, policies, and practices need to change in order to achieve Oregon’s goals for educational attainment and equity. The Roadmap also reaffirms the four key areas of strategic activity for the HECC agency in the [Commission’s Strategic Framework \(2017-2021\)](#): 1) REPORTING to Steer Progress 2) FUNDING for Success, 3) Streamlining Learner PATHWAYS, and 4) Expanding Opportunity through OUTREACH. These four Action Areas are aimed to achieve the

Commission's Strategic Goals for STUDENT SUCCESS, EQUITY,
AFFORDABILITY, and ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACT.

The Commission is supported by the state agency by the same name, comprised of eight
distinct offices led by Executive Director Ben Cannon.

INITIATIVES AND PARTICIPATION

The HECC coordinates activities with tribal partners, the Governor's Office, the Oregon Department of Education, and numerous other education partners to foster postsecondary pathways and student success. The following are significant activities HECC has undertaken in 2021 that support postsecondary education pathways for, and honor our relationships with, the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon:

Pandemic impact and HECC role: Students, families, and the institutions that support them faced extensive new financial hardships and uncertainties as a result of the pandemic. The HECC is engaged in multiple complimentary strategies, many of which are summarized in this report, to improve and protect equity, affordability, and student success in postsecondary education and training, abate the most harmful impacts of the pandemic, and build real opportunity for all. The workforce environment is changing, and adjusting to it will require many employed and unemployed workers to reskill and upskill to emerge strong from this crisis. HECC offices continue to lead important work to serve dislocated workers, employers, and industries during the economic disruptions of the pandemic, as well as continuing our partnership with Tribes for youth employment.

The need for postsecondary education continues to be high; however, our reports show that the fall, 2021 enrollment, while relatively stable in comparison to last fall, is still significantly below pre-pandemic levels. Compared to pre-pandemic levels, the number of students, or headcount, is 23.7 percent lower at the community colleges, and 4.3% lower at the public universities than in 2019. FTE is 4.9% lower than in 2019. Through the pandemic, the teaching and learning environments across Oregon colleges and universities transformed to promote safety across our campus communities, with increased use of remote and distance learning. While the HECC has had a substantial role in public health guidelines for the colleges and universities for much of the pandemic, HECC does not currently manage these guidelines, as the executive order on that was rescinded in June, 2021. Oregon colleges and universities are subject to statewide requirements issued by the Governor's Office and OHA. They have also been advised to consult Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and their local health authorities as they develop and implement their operating plans.

Strategic Roadmap: Oregon's [Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training](#) was finalized in August, 2021 after an extensive public engagement and development process that commenced in 2019. The Roadmap sets an ambitious path forward by describing how postsecondary systems, policies, and practices need to change in order to achieve Oregon's goals for educational attainment and equity. The Roadmap sets the following five categories for strategic action as major areas of focus, with specific examples described in the document: 1) transform and innovate to serve students and learners best; 2) center higher education and workforce training capacity on current and future state needs; 3) ensure that postsecondary learners can afford to meet their basic needs; 4) create and support a continuum of pathways from education and training to career; and 5) increase public investment to meet postsecondary goals.

The HECC is now in the process of developing and seeking input from partners on potential actions and initiatives for realizing the Strategic Roadmap, and invites input from Tribes and other partners. In fall 2021, the Commission began discussion on a non-comprehensive set of options for potential HECC-led or HECC supported initiatives that could help advance the Strategic Roadmap. The Roadmap is intended to guide not only HECC initiatives, but also those of Oregon's postsecondary education and training partners statewide.

Equity, diversity and inclusion continue to be guiding priorities for the HECC, and we are committed to fostering our connections and collaborations between HECC and the nine federally-recognized Tribes in Oregon. Our partners and the public can find former quarterly Government to Government updates as

well as other information on work and initiatives in Coordination with Tribes located in the [Equity and Student Success section](#) of the HECC website at: www.oregon.gov/HigherEd.

- ✓ **Participation in Government to Government Education Cluster and convenings:**
The Executive Director has prioritized **participation in the Government to Government Education Cluster** and has committed that either he or his appointee will attend each quarterly gathering. Over the past year Executive Director Ben Cannon, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom have attended Education Cluster meetings, to which the agency provides thorough written updates on recent activity in our quarterly reports. The HECC also continues serving on the Oregon Department of Education’s American Indian/Alaskan Native State Plan Advisory Committee providing supports and post-secondary perspective as needed. We have had the pleasure recently of discussing the recently approved Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training with the G2G education cluster representatives, and look forward to future conversations on specific actions and proposals to achieve this vision.

- ✓ **Equity leadership:** The Oregon Legislature in 2020 funded two positions to support the HECC’s diversity, equity, and inclusion work. In addition to having the HECC’s first Director of DEI, the new Inclusion and Equity Specialists will support current efforts in addition to enhancing our engagement efforts with community partners and students. Since she joined HECC in 2019, Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the HECC, has been working with and collaborating with our partners and staff on the HECC’s internal and external goals and initiatives related to racial justice and equity. In 2021, the HECC continued its intentional examination its equity processes, levels of understanding of how to authentically engage in the work, and identifying what was needed to strengthen the agency’s long-standing commitment to equity and partnership with higher education institutions and other state agencies. Internally, agency leadership has adopted four overarching equity goals that continue in the consistency and accountability to the HECC’s work and operationalizing of our [Equity Lens](#). Externally, collaboration and network building took on a new normal with consistent participation in virtual events and the creation of spaces that allowed for new relationships to be formed and for our work to continue. The HECC not only collaborates with our postsecondary partners, but also supports and takes part in the equity and racial justice work along with other state agencies.

- ✓ **Reporting data and analysis on postsecondary trends, disaggregated by race/ethnicity.**
Fourth annual "[Statewide Higher Education Snapshots](#)" highlight key metrics on Oregon institutions and students: Over 397,000 students were enrolled at public community colleges and universities in 2019-20, and completion rates for students at the state's public institutions continued to rise. However, large percentages of Oregon learners face affordability challenges and serious inequities in education and training, including in graduation. These and other insights are evident in the HECC’s fourth annual [Statewide Higher Education Snapshots](#), a set of 27 one-page reader-friendly summaries on Oregon’s postsecondary learners in 2019-20. The Snapshots answer frequently asked data questions on enrollment, affordability, and outcomes regarding Oregon public postsecondary students—with break-outs by race/ethnicity and first-generation status, among others. By clicking on the locations of interest on the Oregon map here, readers can explore all Snapshots, including statewide data summaries (the statewide summary, community college summary, and public university summary), as well as 24 individual Snapshots for each of Oregon’s public postsecondary education institutions.

The Key Performance Metrics for the HECC include numerous measures disaggregated by race/ethnicity. See the [most recent KPM report summary here](#). Fourteen of the HECC KPMs provide a dashboard to track progress toward the state's educational attainment goal (40-40-20) and toward closing the gaps in achieving that goal equitably.

Funding for equity and student success: The HECC continues to apply our [Equity Lens](#) to funding decisions, policies, and proposals, and the Commission adopted an update version of the Lens in 2021.

✓ **A focus on equitable outcomes helped guide the postsecondary education and training budget development Process for 2021-2023.**

State Budget: The Legislature made significant investments to reinvest in Oregon's public colleges and universities, and to address the college affordability crisis too many Oregonians face. For a high-level overview of the postsecondary education budget, see [Fact Sheet: Legislatively Adopted Budget for Higher Education 2021-23](#). For a longer comprehensive overview of key legislative investments and bills approved during Oregon's 2021 Legislative Session, including bill descriptions, details on the biennial budget, and capital investment information, see [HECC Legislative Summary, 2021-23 Postsecondary Budget and Key Policy Bills](#)

The 2021-23 state investment in community colleges increased 10.5 percent from 2019-21, and state support for public university operations increased 8.1 percent. These investments support operational expenses for the institutions, and are expected to be sufficient to mitigate tuition increases during the biennium. The Legislature also was able to increase investment in Oregon's deeply underfunded need-based financial aid program, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, by 21.8 percent. In addition, legislation passed to: support benefits navigators on public college campuses (HB 2835); add requirements for transparency of costs for course materials (HB 2919); modernize the information technology system used for state financial aid awards (FAMIS); and more. The Legislature also added \$5 million in new funding to expand the work of five college access and outreach programs that serve underserved populations, including the Commission's own ASPIRE program. The Legislature also supported the HECC agency's work to foster learner pathways in several key areas. It approved funding and legislation to sustain and bolster the HECC's work to improve transfer pathways from public community colleges to universities, including launching the development of a common course numbering system through SB 233 and the establishment of a central authority to resolve transfer policy issues. For the first time in HECC history, state general fund investments are made in youth employment initiatives. The Legislature adopted HB 2092, HECC-sponsored legislation bolstering the equity policies of the Oregon Youth Employment Program, and providing \$9 million in state investment to operate the program for the first time since it was established in statute. Funding is also provided through SB 553 for the creation of the Oregon Conservation Corps program to aid in forest management and wildfire mitigation. And we are excited that among other funding needs, the agency received funding for two new positions in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to expand our community engagement and equity leadership.

Federal Relief Funds: In addition to state funding, higher education institutions and students have received support through federal pandemic relief over the last two years. In March 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law which established the Education Stabilization Fund (ESF) through the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act), was signed into law in December 2020 with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Act) signed in March 2021. Both added additional funding to the ESF. The ESF is composed of three primary emergency relief funds: (1) a

Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, (2) an Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, and (3) a Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) Fund.

Focusing on the HEER fund specifically, the total available for the HEER fund across all three acts is \$74.9 billion. Of that amount, the share for Oregon institutions totals \$780.6 million across 66 public and private institutions of higher education. This funding is distributed directly to the institutions with the State of Oregon having no input on the amounts allocated, the uses of funding, or the distribution of funding. Appendix B includes guidance provided to the institutions on the use of funds. The institutions are required to provide quarterly reporting to the US Department of Education on how they use the funds. A dedicated website for tracking, collecting, and disseminating data related to the ESF is managed by the US DOE and can be found on their website at: <https://covid-relief-data.ed.gov/>.

The HECC has had a more direct role in administering the federal relief funding for higher education through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER). These funds support: grant awards to colleges and universities for the purpose of helping students successfully continue their college career; a re-engagement and retention initiative to bring students back to college/university to resume work toward their postsecondary degree or certificate; support of Open Education Resources; youth employment programs; partnerships with community based organizations to promote success for underserved learners of color; supplementing Summer Bridge or Strong Start programs, and more.

- ✓ **Implementing and improving the formula for the distribution of state resources to public universities.** Since 2015, HECC has implemented the Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM), which shifted the formula for distribution of the majority of state funding for Oregon's seven public universities to promote progress toward Oregon's educational attainment goals, adding incentives for improved graduation for underrepresented student groups. From 2019-20, the HECC engaged in a formal review of this funding model. In 2021, the HECC endorsed a series of staff recommendations the Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM), after an extensive review process and public input. The recommendations were adopted by the Commission. It updated the way \$837 million in state funding is distributed among the seven public universities to incentivize investments leading to student success. The potential impact on equitable outcomes is significant, building on a track record of solid progress since the model was first adopted in 2015.

Recent Equity and Student Success Initiatives and Activities: The HECC's commitment to equity informs policy decision making, funding recommendations, ongoing programs as well as special initiatives. The HECC Equity and Student Success initiatives web page describes recent agency efforts to support institutions and partners in equitably serving historically underrepresented populations. The Commission at its December public meeting adopted updates to the Equity Lens, focusing it as a HECC Equity Lens specific to higher education and workforce training.

- ✓ **Implementation of postsecondary Student Voice Task Force legislation:** HECC Encourages Participation in the Legislature's Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education: The HECC encourages postsecondary students and community members to participate in public meetings of the Oregon Legislature's Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (HB 2590, 2021), which has just commenced a historic statewide public engagement process. In recognition of the deep disparities in access to and success in Oregon postsecondary education, Oregon established this task force, charged with visiting postsecondary institutions and meeting with students and other stakeholders to examine issues of access, retention, graduation, and entry into the workforce. The HECC looks forward to supporting legislators as they tour sites around Oregon and develop student success policy proposals for the 2023 session.

- ✓ **Talent, Innovation, and Equity (“TIE”) partnership grant:** With support from the Oregon HECC [Talent, Innovation, and Equity Partnership grant from Lumina Foundation](#), HECC has been in close conversation and consultation with diverse community leaders in 2020 and 2021. Building on a statewide equity roundtable listening tour in 2019-2020, HECC convened a Leadership Council for Equity, comprised of leaders from various postsecondary institutions and cultural community organizations, who are developing culturally relevant and responsive tangible tools aimed to disrupt systemic practices in Oregon’s postsecondary landscape that have created disproportionate educational achievement gaps amongst Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders learners.

The HECC TIE strategy was to develop a Leadership Council for Equity (LCE). Once established, it was comprised of culturally specific community organizations and educational leaders from 2-year and 4-year, public and private institutions, aimed to aid in the accomplishment of the TIE Partnership goals. The LCE was established in January 2020, with the goals to provide insight, advice, and guidance to the HECC agency and staff in efforts to close achievement gaps.

LCE members provided insight to various HECC-supported postsecondary education policy developments for the 2021 Oregon Legislation session around financial aid, transferability, youth employment and workforce training programs aimed to improve support and outcomes for equity populations, rural, and low-income learners. HECC recognizes the contributions and advocacy the LCE provided to the successful legislation and budget outcomes supporting Oregon’s postsecondary education and workforce training programs. Our intention is to build upon TIE efforts with the American Indian/Alaska Native Plan supported by the Oregon Department of Education. We provide support and perspective in the implementation of the postsecondary education goals for this plan. This partnership leverages the messaging, supports, and connection to our students before they choose their postsecondary pathway and allows us to amplify the importance of higher education for our underserved student groups. HECC continues to support this advisory group with their mission and vision as collaborators and thought partners on transition points for postsecondary education or workforce training programs. HECC is proud to support the rollout of the implementation of the Tribal History/Shared History Native American Curriculum put forth by Oregon Department of Education’s (ODE) American Indian/Alaska Native Plan Advisory Committee for inclusion in Oregon public schools, which also provides professional development to educators.

- ✓ **Featured resource, Real Opportunity video:** We continue to encourage viewing and sharing video on the need to improve racial equity in higher education and workforce training. [Real Opportunity: Supporting College Success for Underserved Students of Color will Move Oregon Forward](#).
- ✓ **Oregon's Adult Outreach Marketing Toolkit now available in nine languages:** In early 2021, HECC released a toolkit of marketing resources to help Oregon postsecondary education institutions and partners to engage adult learners of color in their postsecondary education and workforce training goals: [Oregon Adult Learner Outreach toolkit](#). We are pleased to report that this toolkit is now translated into eight languages in addition to English.

Educator equity, and cultural competency: The HECC collaborates with state and institution partners on implementing cultural competency standards and diversifying the educator workforce.

- ✓ **Oregon Educator Equity Report:** The HECC continues to contribute to the 2021 Oregon Educator Equity Report, documenting Oregon's progress in diversifying the educator workforce. This annual report was published by the former Chief Education Office, with contributions from the HECC,

the Oregon Department of Education, and the Teacher's Standards and Practices Commission, pursuant to Senate Bill 755 (2013) and HB 3375 (2015). We encourage sharing this report to support continued improvements at each step of the education career pathway in order to achieve an educator workforce that is more reflective of the demographics of the culturally or linguistically diverse students in Oregon's public schools.

- ✓ **Cultural Competency Standards:** Through sharing of information and best practices, HECC continues to support implementation of House Bill 2864 (2017), which defined cultural competency and directed public universities and community colleges to establish a process for recommendation and oversight of cultural competency standards implementation for institutions and employees.

College affordability and access: HECC continues working to expand and protect college affordability through our ongoing administration of financial aid and access programs as well as new initiatives.

- ✓ **Continued administration of Oregon's state-funded financial aid and college affordability programs including:** the Oregon Opportunity Grant, a need-based financial aid program that serves 30,000-40,000 students per year, the Oregon Promise, Oregon Chafee Education and Training Grant, Oregon National Guard State Tuition Assistance, and over 600 privately funded scholarships.

OSAC scholarship and grant applications Open for 2022-23 School Year: OSAC has officially opened its OSAC Scholarship Application for the 2022-2023 academic year. As of November 1, students can now apply for OSAC Scholarships, the Oregon Promise Grant, the Oregon Child Care Grant, and even more state grant programs. OSAC administers more than \$130 million in state-funded grants and privately-funded scholarships to help Oregon students meet their college expenses.

With increased funding, state plans to award Oregon Opportunity Grants to thousands more students, encourages applications: The 2021 Legislative Session approval of an additional \$28.8 million to the state's need-based college financial aid program, the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG), will allow the HECC to award more financial aid to current and future Oregon students to support college affordability statewide. HECC invited partners to spread the word about the increased funding and to encourage Oregonians who may enroll in an Oregon college this year to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA) as soon as possible if they have not already done so.

- ✓ **OSAC leads grant-funded outreach campaign:** OSAC has seen an increase in financial aid applications since it ramped up its typical outreach efforts in 2021. With the support of a grant from the National College Attainment Network (NCAN), OSAC was able to allocate more resources to financial aid outreach this year – reaching out to teachers, families, and administrators to ensure that their students had the help they needed.
- ✓ **Tribal partners continue to be invited to join the FAFSA Plus+ program.** FAFSA Plus+ is a year-round program that includes FAFSA completion activities, events, and support, financial literacy information, scholarship resources, award letter help, and other college access information. OSAC continues to share student-level FAFSA data and best practices with sites, allowing site staff to provide targeted assistance to their students who need to complete and submit a FAFSA, make corrections, and notify students who have been selected for verification. Since the expansion, HECC has

entered into data-sharing agreements with the NAYA Early College Academy, the Southern Oregon Indian Education Program (SOIEP), and The Klamath Tribes.

- ✓ **Tribe access to Oregon Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver:** HECC-OSAC continues to be available to ensure tribal foster youth have access to the Oregon Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver program, which waives tuition and fees for the equivalent of 4 years of undergraduate studies after other public grants and any school aid are applied. Learn more about eligibility at www.oregonstudentaid.gov. OSAC in 2019 developed a solution to ensure that information on eligible tribal foster youth are provided to college financial aid offices to be considered for the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver. Tribes who administer their own Foster Youth programs can now upload lists of eligible students into the OSAC Partner Portal. OSAC representatives would be pleased to help any tribal staff who utilize this option.
- ✓ **Equity-based scholarship program for educators:** HECC was able to continue support for educators supported through the Oregon Teacher Scholars Program in 2020. The Oregon Teacher Scholars Program (OTSP) is a HECC-operated scholarship for students pursuing an education degree who are ethnically diverse or a Heritage Speaker of a non-English language. The program provides students with career coaching, and awards scholarships to help students complete their degree with less debt. In 2021, the scholarship awards have been increased from up to \$5,000 per year to \$10,000 per year for individual recipients. Recipients can receive the OTSP for up to two years. In addition to a significant increase in award amounts per the 2021 law change, we are also expecting to make more awards to ethnically and linguistically diverse teacher candidates.
- ✓ **Partnering with high schools and partners statewide on pre-college mentoring and outreach programs** to prepare students of all backgrounds for success in college and career, through Oregon ASPIRE, community outreach presentations and more.

Expanding diverse learner and worker pathways: We continue our work to expand and streamline learner pathways to better serve the needs of diverse students today, including collaborative campus efforts to streamline the community college to university transfer pathway, working to improve affordability and time to degree for students, including low-income, first-generation, and underserved learner groups, and to support employment and workforce success.

- ✓ **Newly appointed Transfer Council focused on streamlining transfer pathways:** The HECC announced in a press release the formation and appointment of the Transfer Council, established by Senate Bill 233 (2021) and the Council started meeting public in October, 2021. The Transfer Council—comprised of representatives from Oregon public universities, community colleges, and high schools— will develop and advance work to streamline student transfer pathways between institutions. This work is intended to simplify transfer and reduce the time and cost of earning a degree.
- ✓ **SB 234 Adults in Custody Workgroup:** Pursuant to SB 234 (2021) HECC has been convening a group of stakeholders to conduct a study and develop recommendations on how to establish a coordinated, statewide approach to best serve Oregon adults currently in custody who will soon become eligible for federal Pell grants due to 2020 changes in federal law.
- ✓ **Continued administration of First Generation Student Success grants:** Thanks to continued funding approved by the Oregon Legislature, HECC is currently administering \$3.4M in competitive First Generation Student Success grants funds supporting nine Oregon public community

colleges and projects, programs and strategies that will increase the number of students who are underrepresented by race/ethnicity as defined in ORS 342.120, including low income, college-bound, and/or first-generation and who enroll in community colleges statewide and make progress toward a certificate or degree. Grant projects are serving Latinx, Native American, and African American students.

- ✓ **Continued administration of workforce programs as well as administration of adult basic skills** statewide to train returning students, adults, dislocated workers, and all Oregonians with the skills they need for gainful employment. The HECC is the administrative entity for several federally-funded workforce and education programs, including those authorized by Title I and Title II of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Supporting dislocated workers, including those impacted by the pandemic: The HECC Office of Workforce Investments (OWI) continues its extensive work to mitigate challenges for workers and employers impacted by COVID-19 and the 2020 wildfires. The OWI works with the Oregon Employment Department, partner agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate Rapid Response services supporting affected workers and businesses during reported layoffs. The OWI continues to support businesses and Oregon's nine Local Workforce Development Boards in their service.

- ✓ **Youth employment partnerships serving Tribes:** The HECC Office of Workforce Investments, with the support of funding and legislation passed in 2021, administers five youth workforce programs under the umbrella of Oregon Youth Works. These include: the Oregon Youth Corps, Oregon Conservation Corps, Oregon Youth Employment program, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) youth program, and TANF Youth Employment Program.

The new Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC): Senate Bill 762 (2021) established The Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC) Program for the purposes of reducing the risk wildfire poses to communities and critical infrastructure, create fire-adapted communities, and engaging youth and young adults in workforce training. The OCC grants funding to organizations across the state to aid in reducing wildfire risk to communities while providing workforce training to the next generation of land managers.

Oregon Youth Corps (OYC): Oregon Youth Corps (OYC) provides grant funding, training and resources to youth-serving organizations/agencies across the state to create training and employment opportunities for Oregon youth. OYC is driven by four main program imperatives: 1. Improving Access for Opportunity 2. Strengthening Communities 3. Preparing a Future Ready Workforce 4. Advancing Pathways. Driven by program imperatives and with the recently funded Oregon Youth Employment Program, OYC is able to provide a Community Stewardship Corps (CSC) grant program series. With the CSC grant program series, youth serving organizations/agencies will have two separate grants opportunities available; Service Learning Education and On-the-Job Training. On-the-Job Training grants provide funds that emphasize workforce skills development (both technical and essential employability/soft skills) as the primary benefit for youth participants and are modeled through paid stewardship work. Service Learning Education grants also are modeled through stewardship focused work-based learning experiences, but provide funds that focus participants towards making gains with their educational attainment. OYC continues its goal of providing a local program in all nine federally-recognized Tribes for traditional youth programming, as well as having local program's in each of Oregon's 36 counties. OYC in partnership with various stakeholders also provides other pilot funding opportunities for youth work crews to complete stewardship projects throughout the state, which align with OYC's four main program imperatives. OYC is grateful to continue and improve upon previous partnerships with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs,

Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians and looks forward to the opportunity to co-develop partnerships with all nine federally-recognized Tribes.

Oregon Youth Employment Program: The HECC received \$9 million in 2021 to support the Oregon Youth Corps and implement the Oregon Youth Employment Program (OYEP). HB 2092 (2021) complemented the funding and modernized the program requirements. The purpose of the OYEP is to provide meaningful paid work experiences – such as internships, apprenticeships, summer jobs, etc. – and workforce preparation to youth and young adults between the ages of 14 and 24.

Department of Human Services (DHS) Youth Employment Program: The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Youth Employment Program (YEP) is run year-round in order to create employment experiences for youth in the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program.

Oregon WIOA Youth Programs: The Oregon WIOA Youth Programs continues to provide workforce development training opportunities to young people ages 14-24 through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Through WIOA, youth can gain valuable work skills through a variety of job opportunities such as job shadows, internships, and summer jobs.

✓ **Policy efforts to improve and expand pathways to earn college credit,** including college credit while in high school and Credit for Prior Learning.

- **Dual Credit Partnership in Nez Perce Language Learning:** The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) expressed an interest in developing a dual credit partnership program in Nez Perce language learning with the Lewis & Clark State College in Idaho for high school students in the Pendleton area. As a result, the HECC modified the admission requirements in OAR 583-030-0035 (see 9b) to allow authorized postsecondary institutions to offer academic credit to high school students by allowing an exemption to the high school diploma or equivalent requirement for admission. In addition, the HECC adopted a new rule pertaining to these activities, OAR 583-030-0048, that specifically allows Commission authorized postsecondary institutions to offer and award academic credits in partnership with a high school in Oregon. Education partners should be aware that there is an application process with requirements for higher education partners to support student success, including the requirement that each Commission authorized institution have current National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) accreditation.

✓ **Strategies to advance Oregon’s Adult Educational Attainment Goal:** State and institution leaders continue to work to transform policies and remove barriers to better serve adults who need retraining and other non-traditional learners in support of the Adult Attainment Goal. In 2019, the HECC and the WTDB convened an Adult Learner Advisory Committee (ALAC) to advise staff in these efforts. In 2021, the HECC and WTDB released the Adult Learner Advisory Committee (ALAC) Report, a comprehensive new report designed to inform state strategies to increase credential completion among Oregon working-age adults, including an in-depth overview of adult learners in Oregon today, and identification of “Credentials that Work” for high wage-high demand fields.

✓ **Statewide administration of Oregon's High School Equivalency Program,** including GED® test preparation, instruction, testing processing in Oregon, and hosting a national conference for educators. In 2021, HECC continued to administer state funding invested by the Legislature to defray the cost of GED® testing and/or provide support in the form of wraparound services to minimize barriers to earning a GED® test credential that many GED® test candidates face. Wraparound services

include trained staff, professional development, testing fees, transportation costs, food, child care, curriculum, and technology. HECC has committed \$1.7 million in funds for this effort.

- ✓ **Americorps Program Recruitment:** Oregon Volunteers' AmeriCorps programs are actively recruiting for the next cohort of members eager to meet community's pressing needs and earn an education award for college – now state-tax free in Oregon! Positions are still open in education, conservation, health programs and more. Partners are invited to raise awareness about AmeriCorps opportunities with the new What's at your core? marketing campaign.

- ✓ **Continued approval of new academic programs** at the public colleges and universities.

