

Did you know...?

The overall percentage of households with outstanding student loan debt grew from 9 percent in 1989 to 19 percent in 2010.

(Source: The Brookings Institute, 2014)

Workforce training bill heads to Obama

The House on Wednesday overwhelmingly passed legislation that would reauthorize and streamline federal job training programs, cutting 15 regarded as redundant. The measure, passed 415-6, is a rare, bipartisan, election-year deal negotiated by members of the House and Senate over the past several months. It now heads to the White House for President Obama's signature. Two weeks ago, the Senate passed the six-year bill on a 95-3 vote. Congress last authorized the workforce law in 1998, and it has been due for renewal since 2003.

Read the complete article here: <http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/211778-house-clears-workforce-training-bill>

House panel takes first step to renew Higher Education Act

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives' education committee took the first step on Thursday toward renewing the nation's chief higher-education law, approving a trio of bipartisan bills that would promote competency-based education, expand financial counseling for student-loan borrowers, and streamline the information the government provides to prospective students.

Read the complete *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, attached.

Historic changes in Oregon postsecondary education

(From the desk of Nancy Golden, Chief Education Officer)

As a result of key legislation passed in 2013, the state entered a new structure for postsecondary education effective July 1, 2014, granting local authority for institutional boards at Oregon's three largest public universities, and expanded roles for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to create a seamless postsecondary education system.

The HECC is now responsible for strategic goals and postsecondary education investments, consolidated public postsecondary budget development including Oregon's seven universities and 17 community colleges, oversight of the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development and the Office of Student Access and Completion (formerly Oregon Student Access Commission). HECC is also responsible for funding allocations to community colleges and public universities, approval of academic programs, private postsecondary institution degree authorization, and career school licensure, with a focus on achievement of the 40-40-20 goals (by 2025, 40% of adult Oregonians will hold a bachelor's or advanced degree, 40% will have an associate's degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, and all adult Oregonians will hold a high school diploma).

HECC Executive Director Ben Cannon recently said, "We congratulate and welcome the Boards of Trustees for OSU, PSU, and the UofO, and look forward to their leadership and collaboration in the achievement of Oregon's 40-40-20 vision. We are grateful to the State Board of Higher Education and the Chancellor's Office for their decades of stewardship of Oregon's public universities, and their partnership in ensuring a smooth handoff of responsibilities to institutional boards and the HECC."

The transition will be finalized on July 1, 2015, when institutional boards will be authorized at the remaining (4) public universities: Eastern Oregon University, Western Oregon University, Southern Oregon University, and Oregon Institute for Technology.

State strategies for global trade and investment

The economic success of states and the companies inside their borders increasingly is affected by how closely a state is tied to the global economy, according to a new paper released this week by NGA. *State Strategies for Global Trade and Investment* outlines how governors are finding the best ways to strengthen their state's connections to the international economy through trade and investment.

Oregon is allowing trade associations and cluster organizations in the state to apply for up to \$5,000 in STEP grant funding to help them organize and lead an international business mission for their member small businesses. For additional information about the Oregon STEP Program, visit the Business Oregon Web site, <http://www.oregon4biz.com/Grow-Your-Business/Export-assistance/STEP-Program>.

Read the complete NGA article here:

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2014/1406StateStrategiesforGlobalTradeandInvestment.pdf>

Data show no evidence of "over-borrowing" at community colleges

Some community colleges have expressed concerns that their students borrow more than they need in federal loans. However, the data do not support claims of "over-borrowing" at community colleges. The vast majority of community college students do not borrow federal loans at all, and the few who do borrow do not take out large loan amounts.

Read more here: http://www.ticas.org/files/pub/Over-borrowing_at_community_colleges.pdf

Persistence and retention snapshots posted

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center has posted college student persistence and retention rates for 2009 through 2012.

The overall persistence rate for students who start college in the two-year public sector has fallen 2.3 percentage points since 2009, while the retention rate has dropped 1.1 percentage points. The persistence rate is the percentage of students who return to college at any institution for their second year, while the retention rate is the percentage of students who return to the same institution for their second year.

Read more here: <http://nscresearchcenter.org/snapshotreport-persistenceretention14/>

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and Subcommittee Meetings

<http://education.oregon.gov/Pages/HECC-Meeting-Materials.aspx>

Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) and Subcommittee Meetings

<http://education.oregon.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB) Meeting Dates

http://www.oregon.gov/gov/skilled_workforce/Pages/Vision%20and%20Strategic%20Plan.aspx

HECC-OWIB Joint Task Force Meetings

http://www.oregon.gov/gov/skilled_workforce/Pages/HECC-OWIB-Joint-Task-Force.aspx

The Mission of the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development is to contribute leadership and resources to increase the skills, knowledge and career opportunities of Oregonians.

<http://www.oregon.gov/CCWD/> 503-947-2401

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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In Passing 3 Bills, House Panel Takes First Step to Renew Higher Education Act

By Kelly Field
Washington

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives' education committee took the first step on Thursday toward renewing the nation's chief higher-education law, approving a trio of bipartisan bills that would promote competency-based education, expand financial counseling for student-loan borrowers, and streamline the information the government provides to prospective students.

The bills, which were approved by voice votes, are part of a piecemeal reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that conflicts with the Senate's comprehensive approach to the bill. At the start of the committee's session, its chairman, Rep. John P. Kline Jr., Republican of Minnesota, acknowledged "some skepticism" about the House's strategy but reminded members that "these are complicated issues."

"A step-by-step approach will better-inform members and the public about the policies we are pursuing," he said. "And just as important, this approach will also allow us to move the ball forward starting now."

During debate on the bills, Democrats offered amendments that would have allowed borrowers to refinance their student-loan debt at current interest rates and would have counted military-based tuition assistance and veterans benefits toward the 90-percent limit on the amount of revenue for-profit colleges may receive from the federal government.

In arguing for the refinancing provision, Rep. George Miller of California, the panel's top Democrat, said it was "common sense" to give student-loan borrowers the same rights as people with mortgages and car loans. Rep. Susan Davis, also a California Democrat, argued that adding veterans and military benefits to the federal side of the 90/10 formula would protect taxpayers and "prevent for-profits from preying on veterans and their families."

Mr. Kline expressed sympathy for struggling borrowers and said the committee was willing to discuss other ways to make student debt more manageable, but he argued that "the best way to help is to get the economy moving again." He added that the proposed change in the 90/10 rule would restrict veterans' access to "a host of educational institutions."

"They earned this benefit," he said, "and should be able to use it at the institution that best meets their needs."

Rejected Amendments

Republicans moved to dismiss both amendments as not germane to the underlying bills, and Mr. Kline agreed.

Republican lawmakers also rejected an amendment by Mr. Miller that would have added a loan-repayment rate to the list of disclosures provided to students under one of the bills, the Strengthening Transparency in Higher Education Act (HR 4983).

During debate on the amendment, Mr. Miller argued that applicants "should know whether students are able to pay back their loans," and said that repayment rates can be a proxy for program quality. But Mr. Kline said the addition would undermine the bill's effort to streamline the information prospective students receive from the federal government, and would be unfair to institutions that serve students who are at greater risk of defaulting.

In addition to simplifying the information provided to students, the bills approved on Thursday would create a demonstration project for competency-based programs (HR 3136) and require borrowers of federal loans to receive annual counseling and to consent to obtaining the loans each year (HR 4984).

The noncontroversial measures now head to the full House, where they are likely to be approved.

In a letter sent to the committee on Wednesday, the American Council on Education praised the bills but expressed concerns about how graduation rates would be calculated under the simplification bill, saying they should be "modified to accurately reflect the diversity of American colleges and universities." The letter also warned that some of the counseling provisions in the financial-literacy bill "might add to complexity rather than reduce it."

Notably missing from the slate of bills approved on Thursday was a measure that would allow applicants to submit family-income data from two years prior to the date they submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the Fafsa. The bill, which was introduced in June at the same time as the financial-literacy and disclosure measures, was reportedly pulled because of its estimated high cost.