



# Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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## Agency Update:

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) work is focused on four key functions described in the 2014 [HECC Strategic Plan](#): 1) broaden the pathways to our 40/40/20 goals, 2) make the pathways accessible, affordable and supportive for students, 3) steer the higher education enterprise, and 4) cheer the promotion of college completion and career readiness. Recent work includes a focus on the reporting and analysis for the 2015 Legislative Session, preparation of the consolidated Ways and Means budget presentation for postsecondary education, and numerous policy and program initiatives described here.

At its recent two-day meeting in Corvallis, the Commission approved redesign recommendations for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and initiated further modeling of an innovative incentive option within the OOG by which students who meet certain academic requirements would receive supplemental awards designed to offset tuition increases. It also considered innovative recommendations for outcomes-based funding models for the community colleges and universities—and will continue to address policy and implementation considerations this spring. Lastly, the Commission on February 13 launched initial strategic planning discussions, reviewing their actions to date and identifying the most critical opportunity areas for their coming work to serve Oregon and Oregon students.

## Our Commission

The HECC is dedicated to fostering and sustaining pathways to opportunity and success for all Oregonians through an accessible, affordable and coordinated network for educational achievement beyond a high school diploma. HECC's statutory authorities include development of biennial budget recommendations, funding allocations to community colleges and public universities, approval of new academic programs in the public system, the Oregon Opportunity Grant (state need-based student aid), authorization of degrees proposed by private and out-of-state distance providers, licensing private career and trade schools, and oversight of programs for veterans. *The HECC update includes information from OSAC and from CCWD.*

## Future Funding Opportunities

If they have not already done so, students should submit the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as soon as possible to maximize consideration of all available aid.

**OSAC's Scholarship Application** deadline is March 2, 2015. To search the scholarship catalog or to apply, students should go to: [www.OregonStudentAid.gov](http://www.OregonStudentAid.gov)

## Upcoming Events

**March 6, 2015**, Funding and Achievement Subcommittee, Portland

**March 11, 2015**, Student and Institutional Success Subcommittee, Salem

**March 12, 2015**, Full Higher Education Coordinating Commission Meeting, Salem

***The HECC has started a monthly newsletter and welcomes you to join our mailing list. Sign up at [www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd).***

*The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is a 14-member, volunteer board, and all meetings are public. For email notices of upcoming public HECC meetings, sign up at [www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)*

## 2015-17 Legislative Session Priorities

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission will report to the Ways and Means Committee of the Oregon Legislature in March and April on a proposed consolidated postsecondary budget including state investment in Oregon's 17 community colleges, 7 public universities, and Oregon Health & Science University, state need-based aid and student access programs administered by the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC), workforce programs, and funding for Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) and HECC agency operations. The recommended budget includes significant investments in programs to make postsecondary education more affordable, as well as investments in student outcomes, defined by student success and graduation. To learn more about the HECC's priorities, please see our issue briefs on [affordable access and completion](#) and [improving student outcomes](#), and [equity: postsecondary success for Oregon's increasingly diverse population](#).

**Affordability:** The HECC's priority on college affordability this session includes an expansion and redesign of the Oregon Opportunity Grant, the state's need-based financial aid program. Recommended funds for Opportunity Grants total \$143.3 M, a 25.8 percent increase. Additionally, the continuation of the tuition buy-down approved in the 2013 Special Legislative Session eliminates the need for the institutions to "catch-up" with tuition increases that were not imposed in 2013-15.

**Outcomes:** The HECC also has prioritized a focus on improving student outcomes defined by student success and postsecondary completion. The HECC recommends a sustained, increased investment in Oregon campuses starting in 2015-17. Specifically, the HECC supports a \$589M investment in Oregon's public universities and a \$500M in Oregon's community colleges to increase per-student funding from \$4,483 to \$4,918 at public universities, and from \$2,297 to \$2,684 at community colleges. The HECC is in the culminating stages of developing restructured budgeting models for its public institutions—shifting the basis for this significant increase in state funding distributions from enrollment to access *and* completion, and providing resources to support campus-level innovations to increase student success.

**Other Budget Items:** The proposed budget includes 14 new capital construction projects spanning across all seven public universities totaling \$322.5 M in general obligation bond proceeds. It also includes debt service on previously approved institution capital projects totaling \$216.8 M in 2015-17. HECC's budget also includes a \$31.9 M investment intended to help workers and job seekers increase their skills and abilities, to provide employers with a highly qualified workforce, and improve public workforce programs. For more information on additional budget items, see the [fact sheet here](#).

## Supporting Accessible, Affordable Pathways

**Reminder: OSAC Scholarship Deadline, March 2:** Please remind students to turn in their Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) Scholarship Applications by March 2. Nearly \$18 million dollars in scholarships are available to Oregon students using the online scholarship application at [OregonStudentAid.gov](http://OregonStudentAid.gov). Transcripts are required, so students should allow enough time to gather these prior to the deadline.

**Oregon Opportunity Grants:** In mid-March 2015, OSAC plans to provide participating colleges and universities with the first list of authorized Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) awards for the 2015-16 academic year. OSAC will notify students of their potential OOG award by email within a week after schools receive initial award information. For 2015-16, the maximum award will be \$2100 for a student enrolled full time for the full academic year. As is always the case during legislative years, actual OOG award amounts are tentative until the Oregon Legislative Assembly finalizes agency budgets for the 2015-17 biennium. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the application for Federal Pell Grants, student loans, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Students are encouraged to file FAFSAs right away. OSAC will make awards until funds run out but prioritizes OOG awards for current and former foster youth, who can apply throughout the year and qualify. OSAC's website at [www.GetCollegeFunds.org](http://www.GetCollegeFunds.org) has information about OOG eligibility and other criteria and a link to the FAFSA website.

**ASPIRE (Access to Student assistance Programs in Reach of Everyone):** ASPIRE is celebrating its first middle school to high school to college continuum: Hamlin Middle School, Springfield High School, Lane Community College, and University of Oregon.

**Chafee and Childcare:** The [Federal Chafee Education and Training Grant](#) assists foster youth with the transition to self-sufficiency by providing funding for education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment. Awards are up to \$3000 per academic year. For 2013-14, 227 student-applicants received a total of \$539,421. For 2014-15, \$542,940 awarded to 190 students to-date. May 1, 2015, is the application deadline for students who plan to begin enrollment summer quarter.

The [Oregon Student Childcare Grant](#) assists parents enrolled in postsecondary education with safe, dependable care that supports their children's development while allowing completion of the parents' academic programs. Amounts vary, depending on ages and number of children needing care. For 2013-14, 87 students received a total of \$439,287. For 2014-15, expect 82 students to receive \$478,671. May 30, 2015, is the application deadline for the 2015-16 academic year.

## Supporting Pathways toward 40/40/20

The HECC is developing accessible, affordable, and supportive student pathways, and implementation strategies for the state's 40/40/20 goals. Recent activities:

The Commission recently approved a proposed new tuition option called the [Eastern Advantage Program](#) at Eastern Oregon University. This is an optional program available to first-time freshmen, in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho who qualify for in-state rates. Under this program, students who meet certain requirements would pay a fixed tuition rate for four years, among other benefits.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA): Oregon degree-granting colleges and universities now have the opportunity to be part of SARA through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) with the acceptance of Oregon into this interstate agreement for distance education authorization. Since Oregon entered SARA in fall 2014, eight colleges and universities have become members. For more information, see the SARA web page [here](#).

Credit for Prior Learning Pilot Project: The Commission submitted a report to the Oregon Legislature on Credit for Prior Learning in December, 2014, available [here](#). Credit for prior learning is currently being piloted at eleven public and private institutions across the state.

### Other Updates:

Learn more about Oregon Youth Conservation Corps: We are pleased to share new videos from the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) that illustrate the significant impact of programs across the state, building skills and futures for Oregon youth: [Short version - 3 minutes](#) | [Full version - 10 minutes](#)

The OYCC partners with youth serving agencies across the state to hire and train youth that are at risk of not meeting the expectations of their community. These young people learn job skills including work ethics, working as a team, proper tool usage, setting and completing goals and money management. They also gain knowledge of the environment, learn about a wide variety of career paths, earn credits towards a diploma and learn how to be a part of their community. The program has a focus on natural resource projects and community stewardship.

Back to Work Oregon, National Career Readiness Certificate Update (CCWD): The Back to Work Oregon program recognized while many Oregonians possessed many of the skills companies were seeking, they needed additional training to be effective in new companies. The program consists of two components: on-the-job training (a "hire-first" program that reimburses a company for the cost of new employee training) and Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate, a nationally-recognized certification that demonstrates an individual possesses the foundational workplace skills necessary to succeed in the training plan developed by the company and on the job. For more information On NCRC, click [here](#). For more on Back to Work Oregon, click [here](#).

### CCWD/HECC Welcome Dr. Patrick Crane as Director of Data and Research

The HECC is pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Patrick Crane to be Community College and Workforce Development's (CCWD) and HECC's next Director for Data and Research. In this capacity, Dr. Crane will lead the data team at CCWD and, following the merger of Oregon University System research positions with the HECC, will direct a consolidated HECC office for postsecondary research and data. The creation of a postsecondary research unit that maintains a unified archive of community college and public university data will represent a significant step in the HECC's ability to provide policy leadership and operational support in the service of a more aligned higher education system.

For more on current work of the HECC, please see recent meeting materials, or go to [oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://oregon.gov/HigherEd).