



# Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Phone: 503-378-5690 | Email: Cheryl.L.Myers@state.or.us  
775 Court Street NE | Salem, OR 97301  
[oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://oregon.gov/HigherEd)

Ben Cannon, Executive Director; Cheryl Myers, Chief of Staff, [cheryl.L.myers@state.or.us](mailto:cheryl.L.myers@state.or.us)

## Agency Update:

September, 2015 | The work of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) 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. The HECC is currently developing an updated (2015-20) Strategic Plan, a statutory responsibility of the Commission, and a truly exciting opportunity to forge a deliberate path toward our collective postsecondary education goals. See our website for [recent strategic planning materials, timelines, and the planning process.](#)

Recent HECC activities include a vast array of work stemming from the 2015 Legislative Session. With the conclusion of the 2015 Legislative session, we are delighted to celebrate the passage of a higher education budget which represents a significant reinvestment in Oregon's community colleges, universities, and students. The budget adopted by the Legislature and signed by Governor Kate Brown on July 6, 2015 represents the largest single-biennium increase in state funding for Oregon's public colleges and universities in at least two decades. This reinvestment after years of underfunding supports the HECC's strategic priorities to advance the state's 40-40-20 goal, improve affordability, and reinvest in our campuses and programs with an intentional focus on student success ([click here for budget details](#)). This session represented many firsts: the first major legislative test of Oregon's new governance structure for higher education; a single state agency (the HECC) presented

## Our Commission

The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is dedicated to fostering and sustaining the best, most rewarding pathways to opportunity and success for all Oregonians through an accessible, affordable and coordinated network for educational achievement beyond a high school diploma. Oregon's higher education and workforce system serves hundreds of thousands of learners through seven public universities, 17 public community colleges, private and independent colleges and universities, workforce programs, and private career and trade schools., who oversees the work of the HECC agency.

Established in 2011, HECC is a 14-member volunteer commission responsible for advising the Oregon Legislature, the Governor, and the Chief Education Office on higher education policy. The Commission is supported by an executive director who oversees the HECC agency. For more information, see About Us on the HECC website.

### Future Funding Opportunities

Students and families should go to the Office of Student Access & Completion site at [www.getcollegefunds.org](http://www.getcollegefunds.org) for details on financial aid and scholarship resources.

## Upcoming Events

**October 1, 2015**, Funding and Achievement Subcommittee, TBD

**October 2, 2015**: Annual ASPIRE conference, Salem

**October 8, 2015**, Full Higher Education Coordinating Commission Meeting, LaGrande

**November 13, 2015**, Credit for Prior Learning-American Council on Education Summit, Portland

**November 19-20, 2015**, Annual GED Summit, Portland.

*For email notices of upcoming public HECC meetings, or sign up for our newsletter, go to [www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)*

an integrated, comprehensive view of postsecondary education and the entire postsecondary budget; and Oregon's public universities advocated under the leadership of separate boards, like their community college counterparts. We are grateful to HECC Commissioners and staff, campus leaders, and student advocates for the partnerships they created with the Legislature and with each other; our efforts were well-coordinated, and well-received.

### **2015-17 Budget Highlights**

The Legislature approved significant investments to make postsecondary education more affordable in the 2015-17 budget, with a strategic focus on those who are most challenged by college costs, including:

- A total of \$140.9M, representing a 23.6% increase of funding over the 2013-15 LAB, for the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)—Oregon's need-based grant program—to improve affordability for Oregon's highest-need students. Approximately 16,000 additional students will be served through this new investment.
- House Bill 2407, the HECC's recommended restructure for the OOG, targeting the grant program to Oregon's high-need, high-promise students who are on track to succeed academically but struggling with college costs. This bill improves the grant's predictability by creating an extended application period and guaranteeing the grant for a second year to eligible students who receive it their first year.
- Senate Bill 81, the "Oregon Promise," provides a \$10M appropriation targeted toward tuition payments for students who are recent Oregon high school graduates or GED recipients attending and pursuing a certificate or degree at one of Oregon's 17 community colleges. The program will be administered by OSAC under the HECC, and grants begin in 2016-17. Go to [www.oregonpromise.org](http://www.oregonpromise.org) for details, or see the [Oregon Promise fact sheet here](#).

The 2015-17 budget reinvests in Oregon's public universities and community colleges after years of underfunding, supporting the HECC's strategic focus on student success outcomes.

- The Public University Support Fund (PUSF) supporting Oregon's 7 public universities increased to \$665.0M, a 27.8% increase over the 2013-15 LAB. All funds will flow through the [new student success and completion funding allocation model](#) approved by the HECC in April 2015. This adjustment better aligns state investment with access and completion to achieve the state's ambitious 40-40-20 attainment goal. A budget note pertaining to this investment indicates that additional funds are to be used for campus investments in targeted tuition remissions for undergraduate Oregonians and programs to improve student graduation; the universities will report to the HECC and legislative committees how they have invested these funds.
- The Community College Support Fund (CCSF) supporting Oregon's 17 community colleges increased to \$550M, an 18.0% increase over the 2013-15 Legislatively Adopted Budget (LAB).

As a result of these key investments, Oregon has reached its high water mark for appropriations per student over the last twenty years at its public community colleges and universities (see historical charts in [Initial Budget Update](#)).

### **2015-17 Legislative Highlights**

In addition to the funding increases, the Legislature charged our commission and agency with significant public policy work on issues that are critical to the students and communities we collectively serve. In the coming biennium, we will coordinate the efforts of nearly 30 work groups in their research, analysis, and reports on issues ranging from open educational resources, to transfer student pathways, accelerated learning, and more. In addition to the House Bill 2407 and Senate Bill 81 noted above, key bill highlights are below:

[House Bill 2410](#) allows community colleges to award non-credit training certificates;

[House Bill 2525](#) strengthens the Transfer Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and develops research to better understand and address student loss of credit upon transfer;

[House Bill 2645](#) establishes priority enrollment for veterans at public institutions that have existing priority enrollment systems;

[House Bill 2871](#) makes open education resources (think free textbooks!) more widely available;

[House Bill 2973](#) develops affordable baccalaureate degrees;

[House Bill 3308](#) studies and reports on disparities among traditionally marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented communities in higher education;

[House Bill 3516](#) provides additional financial protection for students attending private postsecondary schools that close or experience financial distress;

[Senate Bill 418](#) focuses on increasing accelerated learning options in Oregon and promotes the success of students participating in the Oregon Promise grant

program; and

[Senate Bill 860](#) develops a pilot program for two public universities to design and develop a career advising and mentorship program.

### **Other Updates:**

#### **Broadening the pathways to our 40/40/20 goals**

Save the Date: 2nd Annual GED Summit, November 19-20: The HECC Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development in collaboration with the Chief Education Office is pleased to announce the second annual GED Summit: Creating Promising, Designing Success to be held November 19-20 at Sheraton at the Airport, in Portland. All state and local organizations working with the GED are welcome to attend. Themes will include: preparation and instruction, accommodations, corrections, best practices, transitions, and persistence. Registration will open in September, and scholarships will be available for qualifying participants. For information, please email Teresa Alonso Leon at [teresa.alonsoleon@state.or.us](mailto:teresa.alonsoleon@state.or.us) or Angela Bluhm at [angela.bluhm@ode.state.or.us](mailto:angela.bluhm@ode.state.or.us) or [subscribe to our listserve](#).

General Educational Development (GED) update: We are pleased to report that Oregonians who elect to complete the GED battery of tests performed at rates exceeding the national pass rate. During 2014, the most recent year for which pass rate information is available and the first year of the revised battery of GED tests, 1,771 candidates passed all five sub-tests and met or exceeded the minimum passing standard. This constitutes a pass rate of 75% compared to the national rate of 62%. By comparison, in 2013 (the last year of the old test), 11,542 out of 13,007 candidates successfully completed the GED, a pass rate of 88.7%. Oregon completers continue to do well on the tests, and they will be the direct beneficiaries of work done during the most recent legislative session regarding programs designed to help all students complete their education and compete ably for sustaining wage jobs.

Credit for Prior Learning- American Council on Education Summit, November 13: HECC will be sponsoring an upcoming event related to credit for credit for prior learning. The American Council on Education (ACE): Dispelling the Mystery of the Academic Review Process and Transcript Services event will be held on November 13, 2015 at the Portland Sheraton Airport Hotel. The event will provide professional development opportunity for Oregon Postsecondary institutions in the area of ACE evaluation processes. The event is open to all Oregon postsecondary institutions and online registration will be opening the week of September 15th. For more information, contact Donna Lewelling, HECC Academic & Student Affairs Policy Specialist at [donna.j.lewelling@state.or.us](mailto:donna.j.lewelling@state.or.us).

#### **Accessible, affordable and supportive pathways**

Save the Date: Annual ASPIRE conference, October 2: The Office of Student Access and Completion is pleased to announce the 15th Annual ASPIRE Fall Conference is taking place Friday, October 2, 2015 at the Salem Convention Center. The keynote speaker is Greg Darnieder, Senior College Advisor, from the U. S. Department of Education who will share news about education around the nation. ASPIRE coordinators and volunteers, school staff members, educators, and ILP providers interested in college and career readiness for students will receive a full day of site collaboration and workshop topics such as: Volunteer Management, Options Beyond High School, Financial Aid Literacy, OSAC Scholarships, and much more. To register online, go to [ASPIRE Conference registration](#).

Oregon Promise: The Office of Student Access & Completion (OSAC) is developing an application process, administrative rules, and program policies for new Oregon Promise program. As of 9/4/15, the OSAC website includes a webpage with general program information and a link to a HECC fact sheet about the program. Additional information will be added to this page as it becomes available. The program will first be available in 2016-17 to qualified Oregon residents who enroll in an eligible Oregon community college program within 6 months of completing high school (or equivalent) in Oregon.

Oregon Opportunity Grant: OSAC is also revising administrative rules and policies for the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) program to reflect program changes from HB 2407 that take effect for the 2016-17 academic year. These changes include prioritizing OOG awards first to students with the highest financial need and guaranteeing award for a second year to students who continue to make a timely application and continue to meet all other eligibility criteria. Undocumented students will be eligible for Opportunity Grants, starting in the 2016-17 academic year. OSAC is working on an alternative FAFSA-like application process for these students so that they can be considered for OOG awards along with other Oregon residents.

Student Child Care Grants, Chafee Awards: For the 2015-16 academic year, we have awarded 85 Student Child Care Grants totaling \$463,236. To date, we have also made Chafee awards totaling \$428,107 to 123 eligible former foster youth, with much more expected as the year progresses.

**Promotion of college completion and career readiness**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) on July 22, 2014. The Act is designed to assist job seekers as they seek to access employment, training, support services, and education necessary to successfully enter the labor market. It is also designed to help skilled job seekers find a match with employers seeking to compete effectively in the global economy. The Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB), an integral part of the implementation of WIOA, is on track to complete its strategic plan in the near future. Among other next steps, the OWIB will be involved in the development of Oregon's State Plan in conjunction with WIOA. This plan will offer common visions and goals as a framework for development of Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) planning documents. State plans must be submitted to the federal agencies by March 3, 2016.

**Other Updates:**

**Staffing:**

The HECC is pleased to announce the hire of Dr. Veronica Dujon as Director of Academic Planning and Policy for the HECC Office of University Coordination. Dr. Dujon will start in mid-October. We are also pleased to have on board [Dr. Daniel Findley as Director of the Office of Community Colleges & Workforce Development](#). Dr. Findley began his position on July 6, 2015.

**Communications Resources:**

HECC News Clips service: The HECC has started a regular email including a selection of news clips primarily related to Oregon postsecondary education. If you wish to sign up for this email, [subscribe to news clips here](#).

New Website: The HECC website has a new look and feel, with new resources at the same prior url of [www.oregon.gov/highered](http://www.oregon.gov/highered). Take a look! We are pleased to have this new location on the State of Oregon site, and we will launch an expanded site at this location to share more on the comprehensive work of our agency and commission in 2016.

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