
HECC Strategic Plan Discussion Series

Strategy 3: Pathways

Background: Over the coming months, the Commission will engage in a series of discussions designed to prepare for potential revisions to its 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, tentatively scheduled to be considered by the Commission at its August, 2017 meeting. These discussions will provide an opportunity for the Commission to reflect upon the strategies it adopted for the current version of the plan, levers associated with moving the plan forward, and opportunities for potential revisions. Commission staff will identify successes and barriers to completion of the strategies currently within the plan.

At its February meeting, the Commission will focus on strategies contained within the third section of the Strategic Plan, which calls for the HECC to work with partners to simplify and align pathways in the higher education network from preK to career. The Strategic Plan notes that a central reason for the existence of our coordinating commission is to engineer simpler, more effective, and efficient learning pathways for learners in every postsecondary sector—public and private, trade school and university, online and traditional. It commits the Commission to pursuing **four primary strategies related to learner “pathways”** (these constitute the four columns in the table below):

1. Developing the pipeline: support colleges and universities in fostering deeper partnerships with school districts and community or regional organizations (e.g. Regional Achievement Collaboratives) to improve preK-12 outcomes.
2. Improving the alignment of learning standards and outcomes between high school and higher education, between higher education institutions themselves, and between higher education and career.
3. Promoting degree pathways and related initiatives that increase opportunities for postsecondary students to build on career-oriented education and workplace experience
4. Creating better connections between higher education and training and employer needs.

The Strategic Plan notes that the tools/levers at our disposal for this work are significant, and include the following:

- The publication of data, collected and analyzed by the HECC, that helps inform learners about their education options and likelihood of successful completion and job attainment.

- The convening of academic experts, including national experts and Oregon faculty from multiple institutions and sectors, to lead and advise in the development and updating of common certificate/degree pathways.
- The approval and application of standards related to dual credit (ORS 340.310), credit for prior learning (ORS 351.751), and transfer degrees at community colleges (ORS 341.430).
- The approval of new or significant changes to academic programs at community colleges and public universities (ORS 352.089, 341.465, and 351.735).
- The licensure and oversight of private career schools and non-exempt private degree-granting schools, in accordance with standards established by the law and by HECC administrative rule.
- The annual evaluation of public universities, which may report on their contributions to creating smoother pathways for learners including community college transfer students (ORS 352.061).
- The recommendation of the state budget and decisions about state funding allocations for community colleges and public universities.
- The encouragement and facilitation of innovative strategies for student success including accelerated pathways, online learning, and new degree transfer partnerships.

The Strategic Plan emphasizes that this work is not possible without active engagement both with and by our multiple partners including higher education institutions and multiple state agency partners such as the Oregon Department of Education, the Employment Department, and the Chief Education Office.

The following table attempts to illustrate (in abbreviated fashion) some of the work that is underway, barriers we have encountered, and questions to consider for each of the four primary “Pathways”-related strategies endorsed by the Commission in its 2016-20 Strategic Plan.

HECC Strategic Plan Discussion Series
Strategy 3: Pathways

	Strategy: Develop the Pipeline From K-12	Strategy: Improve the Alignment of Learning Standards and Outcomes	Strategy: Promote Degree Pathways and Related Initiatives	Strategy: Create Better Connections to Employer Needs
HECC Offices*	OSAC, CCWD, OWI, R&D	CCWD, PPS, University Coordination, R&D	CCWD, University Coordination, PPS, OWI, R&D	OWI, CCWD, University Coordination, R&D
Partners**	K-12 school districts, schools Local workforce boards GED preparation providers ODE, CEo	Higher education institutions K-12 school districts ODE, CEo	Higher education institutions Employment Dept., ODE, DHS	Higher education institutions Oregon Workforce Investment Board Employment Dept., BOLI STEM Hubs/STEM Council
Measurable Successes	FAFSA application increases 2016 Rising levels of GED support and success Greater levels of participation in accelerated learning	Adoption of standards for expanded forms of accelerated learning Adoption of a new (statistics) math pathway for transfer degrees Re-alignment of GED scoring, placement	Continued development of "Career Pathways" initiative HECC support for student transitions after career-oriented school closures (e.g. Heald, ITT)	Back-to-Work Oregon (job trainings) New university funding formula weights certain high-demand degrees Middle 40 report (partnership with OWIB)
Activities Underway	ASPIRE leadership Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) "C3" Coordination FAFSA+ and other HS outreach Support for GED Wrap-Around Services National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) oversight	Implementation of accelerated learning standards Robust conversations on transfer policy Linking math pathways to K-12 Annual AP/IB score alignment Credit for Prior Learning standards, implementation	Development and support for various pathways initiatives (career pathways, guided pathways) Continued conversations about expanding Applied Baccalaureate options at public institutions Implementation of Credit for Prior Learning standards	Using labor market information for program approval Convening Sector Strategies Support for apprenticeship Support for on-the-job training

	Strategy: Develop the Pipeline	Strategy: Improve the Alignment of Learning Standards and Outcomes	Strategy: Promote Degree Pathways and Related Initiatives	Strategy: Create Better Connections to Employer Needs
Challenges	<p>The HECC’s authorities give it only a very modest opportunity to play a role in “fostering ... partnerships” between higher education and K-12</p> <p>Measuring success and the lack of a statewide longitudinal system</p>	<p>Transfer pathways remain hard to navigate among multiple institutions</p> <p>There is diffuse ownership and authority for outcomes and learning standards (K-12, higher education), and some resistance to HECC leadership in this domain</p> <p>Funding the faculty convenings that are key to aligning outcomes</p> <p>Insufficient data inhibits clear analysis</p>	<p>Coordination of responsibility for this work</p> <p>Insufficient data inhibits clear analysis</p>	<p>Employer needs are continually changing</p> <p>Lack of integrated higher education or state data system</p> <p>The HECC has relatively little direct authority / capacity to proactively shape how higher education institutions reflect employer needs</p>
Potential Opportunities	<p>Reframe this strategy to reflect the significant ways the HECC provides service and support to the pre-college/pre-workforce population</p> <p>Continue and deepen our focus on equity in our outreach work</p>	<p>Identify funding source(s) to support additional participation</p> <p>Increase our efforts to align learning outcomes/pathways with private higher education institutions</p> <p>Deepen involvement in WICHE Interstate Passport</p>	<p>Western Governor’s University as OOG-eligible institution</p> <p>Strategic funding to support these efforts</p>	<p>Continue to focus on well-defined pathways to careers</p> <p>Better data linkage between higher education and employment</p>
Questions for Commission	<p>Should the Strategic Plan emphasize the direct service efforts the HECC is making to “develop” the college/work pipeline?</p> <p>What additional partnerships should the HECC pursue to strengthen our work in this area?</p> <p>How do we “nest” our pre-college/pre-workforce programs strategically within the HECC, in order to maximize their impact?</p>	<p>What approaches should HECC take to leverage additional funding for this work, especially to support public university participation?</p> <p>How do we continue to support institutions in their quest to improve data quality?</p> <p>What is the appropriate “pace” for us to take to this work?</p>	<p>What focus should HECC place on aligning AAS “terminal degrees” to BA degrees?</p> <p>What priority should we give to connecting certifications, including those delivered by non-traditional education providers, to higher education and workforce?</p>	<p>How hard should we push using limited tools (eg program approval, funding allocations) to shape the responsiveness of higher education and training institutions to workforce needs?</p> <p>What is the role that HECC should play as mediator between employers and post-secondary education providers?</p>

*HECC Offices: Workforce Investment (OWI), Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD), Private Post-Secondary (PPS), University Coordination, Student Access and Completion (OSAC), Research and Data (R&D)

**State Agency Partners: Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Chief Education Office (CEdO), Oregon Employment Department, Department of Human Services (DHS), Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI)