
Notes on the Evolution of the HECC's Strategic Direction

At its last several meetings, the Commission has begun to discuss how to elevate equitable student success within the context of Oregon higher education and in consideration of the HECC's specific roles and responsibilities. These conversations could result in new strategic initiatives to be launched by the Commission and its staff within the next year. Additionally, they may lay the groundwork for a 2019 update/revision to the Commission's Strategic Plan, which was last modified by the HECC in late 2017.

At its August 2nd meeting, the Commission received a [presentation](#) from Executive Director Cannon that highlighted key student success and demographic data and identified potential areas of additional strategic focus. In the discussion that followed, Commissioners suggested a variety of potential new or elevated areas of focus for the HECC. They also suggested new or different ways of doing the work.

The following represents an incomplete list of ideas and perspectives that emerged from the Commission's August 2nd discussion. It is intended to form the basis for continued Commission discussion at the October and November HECC meetings. Commissioners should correct, modify, extend, withdraw, and/or supplement this document. Staff will use it to help prioritize and/or modify the agency's existing work, develop proposals for new future strategic initiatives, and to start working on the next iteration of the Commission's strategic plan.

Commissioners made several suggestions for new areas of emphasis within the HECC's existing Strategic Framework. For example:

Reporting

- The HECC should develop the tools and expertise to ensure that it can provide timely, actionable, and longitudinal information about the progress of learners (eg the rates at which high school graduates enroll and complete in postsecondary education).

Funding

- The business models of colleges and universities may be fundamentally misaligned with public resources, changing demographics, and student/employer preferences. High tuition increases are one consequence of this mismatch. The HECC should better understand institutional dynamics and catalyze change to address them.
- The HECC's Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM) for allocating state funding to public universities has entered its fifth year of implementation. The HECC will undertake a detailed review of the model starting in 2019. What is working? What needs to change?
- The HECC should broaden public and institutional understanding of the way that it funds colleges and universities (for example, the SSCM's focus on completion and equity).

Pathways

- The HECC should use the results of the Talent Assessment and its leverage within the workforce system and higher education to strengthen the likelihood that postsecondary education and training prepares students for resilient and rewarding careers.

- The HECC should help forge a stronger connection between post-secondary education institutions and their PK-12 partners, particularly in their work to address issues such as poverty and trauma.

Commissioners also suggested potential new areas for HECC strategic activity. For example:

- The HECC should play a greater role in conducting research, or engaging with external researchers, to address the significant challenges facing higher education.
- The HECC should become a hub of institutional best practices that can be disseminated back out to practitioners.

Commissioners also dedicated significant time to discussing ways that HECC may need to do the work differently. For example:

- The Commission (and/or its staff) should work closely with students to develop a more student-centered lens for its outreach and communications.
- Commissioners should become more active public ambassadors for the HECC's work and for higher education.
- The Commission should ask the field: what are our strengths and weaknesses?

Finally, Commissioners raised broad questions about the responsibilities of the HECC for leadership in an era of significant challenge:

- What is the HECC's role in filling the leadership vacuum that appears to exist around higher education in Oregon? What role can the HECC play to build a political coalition that includes business community and other advocates for higher education?
- "With leadership and courage, the HECC should elevate the missions of our institutions in their common focus on access, equity, and care for the most profoundly needy."