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**Docket Item:**

HECC Strategic Plan 3.0

**Background:**

One of the HECC's foremost statutory responsibilities is to adopt and implement a strategic plan for achieving the state's postsecondary goals.<sup>1</sup> As a new Commission in early 2014, the HECC adopted its [first Strategic Plan](#), "Pathways to Progress: A Strategy for Steering, Cheering, and Persevering to Achieve Oregon's Higher Education Goals." Nearly two years later, it adopted an updated [2016-2020 Strategic Plan](#) and, in 2017, a [Strategic Framework 2017-2021](#) that concisely summarizes the Commission's updated vision, mission, values, beliefs, and four key areas of strategic action for the Commission.

Given the new challenges and opportunities that have arisen in the three years since the HECC last completed a major strategic planning effort, it is appropriate for the Commission to develop a new Strategic Plan to help guide the future of postsecondary education in Oregon. In particular, the HECC intends for its Strategic Plan 3.0 to contribute to generating a new consensus among legislators, institutions, stakeholders, and the Commission about an ambitious path forward for postsecondary education that expands opportunity and equity for Oregonians through increasing levels of public investment, public accountability, coordination, and responsiveness to student and workforce needs.

The HECC's prior two strategic plans have focused closely on the particular roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for strategic action and influence available to the Commission and its staff. This was appropriate for a new organization that needed to clearly articulate – and thereby help itself and others understand – its unique and limited authorities within Oregon's new system for governing higher education. Today, however, the HECC proposes to develop a Strategic Plan in conjunction with partners that takes a holistic view of Oregon's postsecondary system, including the dynamics it faces from changing demographics, workforce needs, and fiscal conditions, and anticipates the changes that will be required in order to meet state goals for increased access, affordability, attainment, and equity. In describing this imperative for change, the new Plan will remain clear about what tools are available to the HECC as a coordinating commission, versus other actors within the postsecondary landscape including the Legislature, college and university governing boards, students, community partners, and others.

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<sup>1</sup> ORS 350.075(d)

*Process Update:*

The HECC aims to substantially complete its new Strategic Plan by February, 2020 in order to inform the Commission, partners, and legislators in the development of budget and policy recommendations prior to the 2021 legislative session.

To meet this ambitious timeline, the HECC will dedicate significant time at its remaining 2019 and early 2020 Commission meetings to review outlines and drafts, hear from the public and from partners, and provide guidance to staff. In addition, HECC staff will initiate surveys, one-on-one and small group meetings to engage a wide range of partners and stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, community leaders, employers, accreditors, institutional leaders, partner boards/agencies, and legislators. HECC staff is in the final stages of contracting with a consulting firm that will conduct much of this outreach and synthesis over the next several months in partnership with the Commission.

Since the August 2019 Commission meeting, HECC staff has met individually with 23 legislators, with several additional meetings scheduled. Legislators were asked questions such as the following:

- What may be possible over the next several years for funding Oregon postsecondary education in a way that's commensurate with our state needs and goals?
- What you think legislators need in order to feel more confident in the directions of our postsecondary system?
- What additional strategies should a state strategic plan focus on?
- What should an interim legislative process look like in order to build towards these results?

Almost universally, legislators have described a strong desire to elevate postsecondary education as a priority in 2021. Many expressed support for a robust process of legislative engagement in these issues during 2019-20, including through advising in the development of the Commission's Strategic Plan. Common themes to emerge from legislators included the need for greater affordability, better transferability of credits, more accountability for public institutions, ensuring that programs/degrees are more relevant to career, and the need for living-wage employment for faculty and staff.

In addition, HECC staff has established a small stakeholder committee that will provide leadership as outreach ramps up this fall and winter.

**Workshopping:**

During today's discussion, Commissioners are invited to provide input and direction as follows.

Vision Statement

In 2017, the Commission adopted the following vision statement:

“The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future in which all Oregonians—and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized—benefit from the transformational power of high-quality postsecondary education and training. It is a future where innovative public and private colleges, universities, and training providers help Oregonians to reach their highest potentials, build trajectories to family-wage careers, foster a more just society, and break patterns of intergenerational poverty. It is a future where postsecondary education fuels a resilient economy by anticipating workforce needs and by fostering innovation, research, and knowledge. In the future we envision, all Oregonians enjoy well-lived lives thanks to the myriad benefits of postsecondary education and training: higher earnings, lower unemployment rates, self-sufficiency, civic involvement, better health, and more. Our communities thrive as a result.”

-- From [HECC Strategic Framework 2017-21](#)

At the Commission's August 2019 meeting, Commissioners expressed interest in a vision statement that expressed greater clarity regarding the properties of a successful postsecondary education system. The following is a draft:

“The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future where the transformational impacts of postsecondary education equitably benefit all Oregonians, and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized. We envision a future where students are guaranteed affordable access to high-quality certificate and degree programs that are flexible and relevant. The backbone of this system will be a network of innovative public institutions that operate collaboratively, with clearly-defined missions and under the highest standards for transparency and public accountability.”

- What aspects of these statements resonate for you?
- What is missing from these statements?
- What additional suggestions do you have?

Context

In addition to the contextual factors described in the Commission's [August 2019 Strategic Plan docket item](#), Commissioners are encouraged to consider and discuss the following readings (also appended to this docket item):

The Chronicle Review, "[Where Did All the Students Go? Five Views on the Great Enrollment Crash.](#)" October 2, 2019. [Note: the first author is vice president for enrollment management at Oregon State University].

The New York Times Book Review, "[Is College Merely Helping Those Who Need Help Least?](#)" September 28, 2019. [Review of Paul Tough's *The Years that Matter Most*].

- What additional considerations do these pieces invoke for you related to Strategic Plan 3.0?

### Major Themes

In conversations with legislators, the Governor's office, and stakeholders over the past two months, the following themes have repeatedly emerged:

1. affordability
2. credit transferability / seamless pathways for learners
3. accountability and transparency for public institutions
4. career-connected learning
5. living-wage employment for college and university faculty and staff

Commissioners are encouraged to discuss with each other – potentially in small groups – the following. HECC staff will take notes.

- Do the five themes resonate for you? Which is most/least important? What is missing?
- For any one or more of the five themes, what principle(s) should be reflected in any strategies that we develop for the Plan?
- For any one or more of the five themes, what examples of successful practice can you share?

### **Staff Recommendation**

For discussion only.