

State of Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Stakeholder Outreach Insight Report

February 05, 2020

Prepared By: Coraggio Group





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Introduction

In preparation for a new strategic vision for Oregon's postsecondary education and training system, the Higher Education Coordinating Committee engaged Coraggio Group to complete a statewide stakeholder outreach process in multiple locations and with a broad range of stakeholders across the state.

As we led these conversations in a variety of communities, from Pendleton to Corvallis and Medford to Bend, we were struck by the appreciation that stakeholders expressed for the opportunity to come together. Many participants commented on the fact that they are rarely involved with cross-system discussions, and they welcomed the chance to both share their perspective and listen to a diversity of voices. In addition, we noted that there was more common ground for these groups than anticipated; while they might not align on the "how" to achieve their goals, there is strong agreement that we can and must do better for students, and that we need to be aligned in that vision before progress can be made.

In short, we came away with a clear sense that this conversation is both timely and critically needed. The desire for better outcomes for Oregon's students is universal, and stakeholders pointed to instances where collaboration is starting to take shape. For example, we heard that the Transfer Workgroup and the Oregon Transfer Articulation Committee has made real progress with streamlining the transfer process, and that students are beginning to experience the benefits of that work. However, stakeholders agree that progress is too slow and there is still much work to be done. Issues of affordability, access, equity, preparation for postsecondary education and career readiness continue to worsen. Both students and those in the postsecondary education and training community are deeply concerned about the future and do not see a clear path towards resolution.

Given this yearning for a common purpose, Coraggio Group believes that this outreach effort was a first step in a conversation that needs to continue, and in perhaps a different way than in the past. We heard the need for an aligned vision, for goals which are agreed upon, achievable and inspiring, for clarity on each institution's role in achieving those goals, and most importantly for strong and committed leadership in taking on these issues which are so critical to Oregon's future. As you read through this report, we hope you come away with a sense of the commitment and resolve that we heard in each conversation we facilitated, and which makes our team hopeful about the potential for an Oregon where all students can thrive.

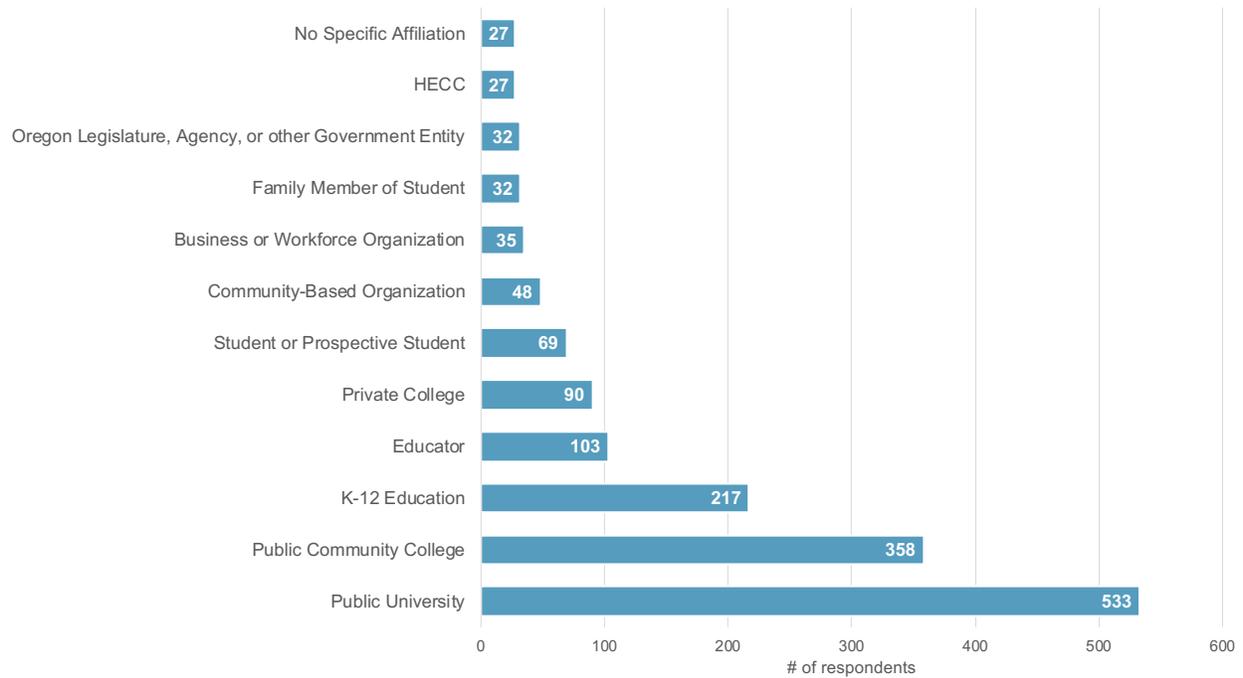
~ Coraggio Group



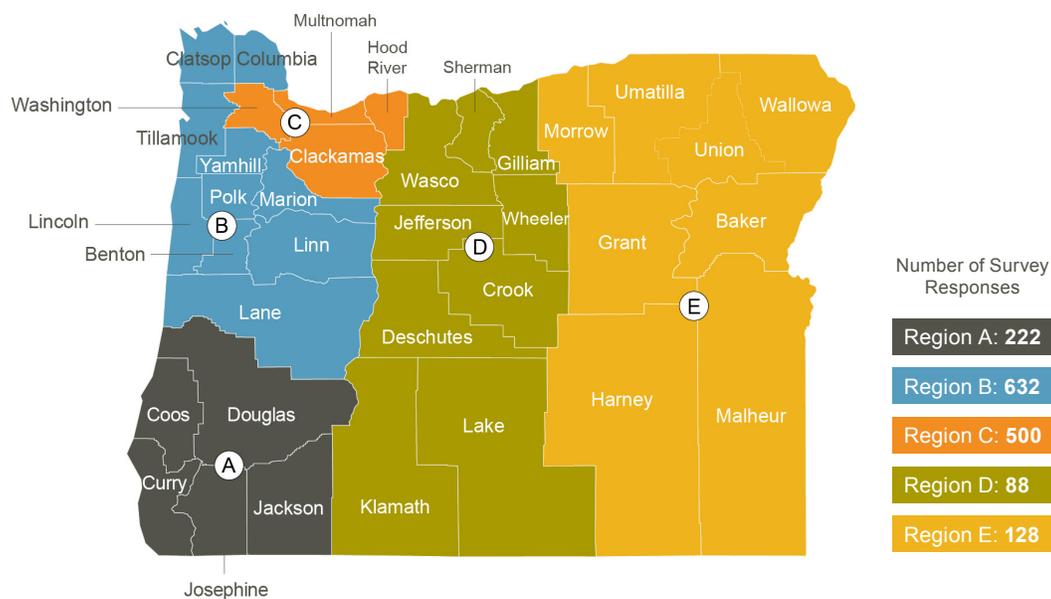
Methodology and Themes

This report is a summary of the data collection and outreach effort conducted on behalf of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). The purpose of this outreach was to gather insights from key stakeholders and members of the public as HECC prepares to create a strategic roadmap for postsecondary education and training in Oregon.

Coraggio Group conducted outreach from December 2, 2019 to January 6, 2020; gathering information through 20 one-on-one interviews, eight focus groups across Oregon, and an online survey with 1571 responses from the following self-reported demographic groups:



Every effort was made to gather input from broad stakeholder groups throughout the state. Focus groups were held in each of the five regions below, and one-on-one interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from each region.



We extend our sincere thanks to the representatives of the following organizations for participating in our interviews and focus groups. Your input is valued and appreciated:

- Aveda Institute Portland
- Beaverton School District
- Blue Mountain Community College
- Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis
- Central School District 13J
- Chemeketa Community College
- City of Ashland
- City of Monmouth
- City of Pendleton
- Clackamas Community College
- Columbia Gorge Community College
- East Cascades Works
- Eastern Oregon Regional Airport
- Eastern Oregon University
- Eastern Oregon Workforce Board
- Eugene School District 4J
- flyEUG
- G5
- Gordon Elwood Foundation
- High Desert Museum
- Hydro Flask
- Institute of Technology
- Intermountain ESD
- Juntos - OSU Open Campus
- Kairos PDX
- Lane Community College
- Lane Workforce Partnership
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Mount Hood Community College
- National University of Naturopathic Medicine
- Northwest Christian University
- Now4 OSU-Cascades
- Oregon Health & Science University
- Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges & Universities
- Oregon Business Industry
- Oregon Community College Association
- Oregon Community Foundation
- Oregon Council of Presidents
- Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Education Association
- Oregon State University
- Oregon State University-Cascades
- Oregon State University Foundation
- Oregon Student Association
- Oregon Institute of Technology
- OSU-Cascades Advocacy and Advisory Board
- Portland Community College
- Portland Community College Southeast
- Portland Public Schools
- Portland State University
- Reed College
- Service Employees International Union
- Service Employees International Union OSU
- Southern Oregon University
- St. Charles Health Systems
- Technology Association of Oregon - Central Oregon
- University of Oregon
- UO Graduate Teaching Fellowship Federation
- Western Oregon University

This report highlights key themes identified through the stakeholder engagement and outreach. Each theme is supported by relevant data and quotations. These themes were developed using several methods. Quantitative questions were analyzed using category means, percentage rates and frequencies. Qualitative, open-ended questions were analyzed by assigning themes influenced by response content and Coraggio's interpretation of those responses. Themes included in this report were identified by the frequency they were mentioned and by the number of groups and individuals who mentioned them.

Strategic Themes

- 1 The value proposition of higher education in Oregon needs greater clarity, focus, and purpose**
- 2 Stakeholders seek more cooperation, collaboration, and alignment**
- 3 Postsecondary education in Oregon has shifted from a state-funded model to a student-funded model, impacting affordability**
- 4 Student success and access to education and training is a priority for all stakeholders**
- 5 Stakeholders desire a strategy that supports regionally specific solutions**

Equity Lens

In designing this outreach effort and analyzing the responses, our team utilized the Oregon Equity Lens objectives.

Each theme includes equity considerations to guide the development of strategies. This lens was adopted by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in 2014 as a cornerstone to the State's approach to education policy and budgeting. The Equity Lens was originally developed by and adopted by the former Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) and is implemented by the Oregon Chief Education Office in addition to the HECC.

The full Oregon Equity Lens can be found here: <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Documents/State-Goals/HECC-Equity-Lens-2017-reformat.pdf>

About this Report

This report reflects current perceptions of those who responded/participated in the assessment process based on the questions they were asked. Coraggio's interpretation of perceptions are noted throughout the report as Themes and Insights, whereas quotations were captured as stated by respondents without attribution to protect their anonymity. In some cases, respondent perceptions varied, thus Higher Education Coordinating Commission may need to undertake further exploration in order to identify potential the action.



The value proposition of higher education in Oregon needs greater clarity, focus, and purpose

As stakeholders discussed the value of and vision for higher education in Oregon, we heard a strikingly diverse set of perspectives, indicating a fundamental challenge for advancing a unified strategy. While the voices we heard agree that postsecondary education needs more focus from the state's leaders, they were divergent in their reasons why it was important. Some believed it was about supporting a robust Oregon economy, others pointed to the need for individuals to fulfill their potential, some indicated a more fundamental need for an educated society, and still others focused on the advancements possible through research and innovation. While these divergent perspectives may not be in conflict, they point to a lack of clarity and purpose for the entire postsecondary education and training system. Participants in our focus groups also shared their perspective that many Oregonians, as well as legislators, may not share their belief in the value of higher education. Some might believe additional investment in higher education would be “wasted,” and that it might continue to “bloat the administrative costs” of the institutions of the state. In order to make a compelling case for more investment in higher education, Oregon needs a clear and focused expression of the value proposition of higher education.

Key Insights

- While the state goal of “40-40-20” has been held up as a potential aligning goal for postsecondary education and training, most stakeholders believe it has lost both meaning and relevance (fig. 1).
- Stakeholders agreed that the perception of Oregon's higher education system is not positive, with the most negative considering the system to be inefficient, out of touch, and even wasteful. In addition, the public has developed a cynicism about higher education in general, the value of a degree, and the cost of education (fig. 2).
- In addition, and perhaps as a result of the perceptions mentioned above, there is a broad concern about the lack of “return on investment” from postsecondary education. Further, the fact that investments in higher education tend to result in returns over longer horizons may lead to a reticence to invest.
- Given that most conversations about postsecondary education focus on students, there is a missing component that considers adult learners and the need for lifelong learning. This consideration is often neglected in the discussion of the value of higher education for Oregonians.

Implications

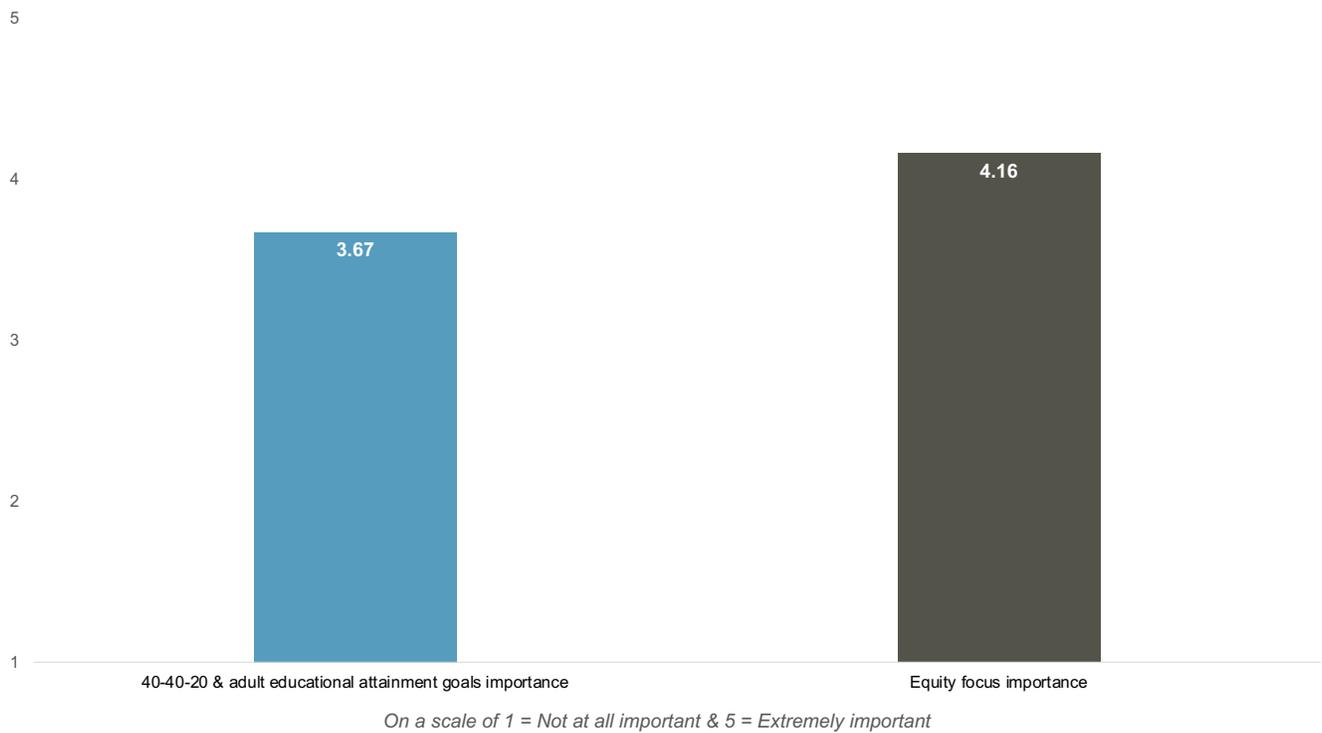
- In order to create a stronger postsecondary system for the future, Oregon's education leaders will need to forge agreement around the purpose and value proposition of higher education. This “rallying cry” will need to be compelling and consistent.
- Should the “40-40-20” goal continue to be a focus, it will need to be communicated with new context and clarity and reflected at all levels of state leadership.
- Building more support within the general public will be an important aspect of communicating the value proposition of higher education.



Equity Considerations

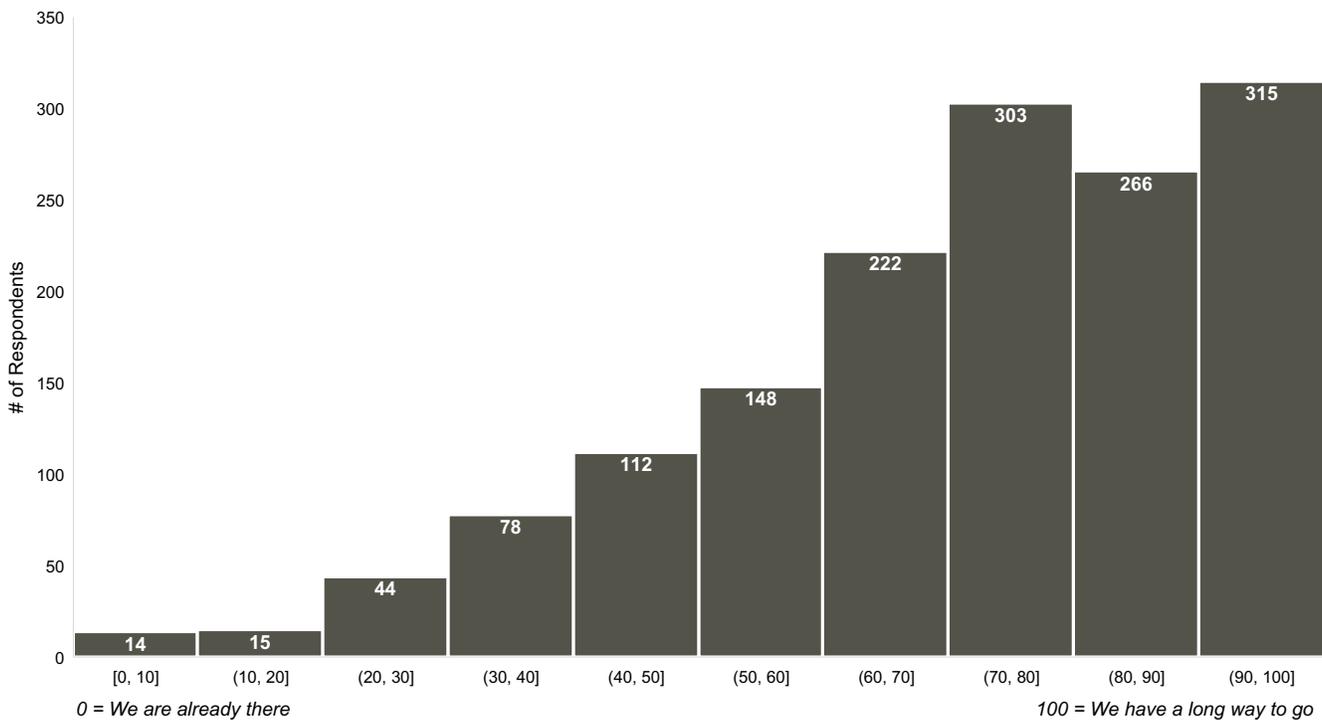
- It will be important to include underserved voices in the discussion about the value of postsecondary education to ensure a diversity of perspectives are considered.
- The “40-40-20” goal was problematic for many stakeholders given its lack of equity consideration. Should a new goal be considered, it would be beneficial to include equity as a core component.

Figure 1 Importance of current goals N=1518



Source: Stakeholder survey conducted between December 10, 2019 to January 6, 2020.

Figure 2 Thinking about your vision for postsecondary education and training in the state, how far are we from that goal today? N=1517



Source: Stakeholder survey conducted between December 10, 2019 to January 6, 2020.

Responses

“40-40-20 has been on the books for years but isn’t happening and so is meaningless without investment. It requires 100% HS graduation and we are nowhere near having a system in place that can achieve it.”

“40-40-20, I do believe it is important, but I don’t think everyone across the state does. If we don’t have a goal, where are we going? How do we make decisions?”

“All adults should have the opportunity to receive continuous education so that we are continuously growing our intelligence as a state.”

“The biggest challenge is the loss of the view of public higher education as a public good. People see it as a private good that benefits the recipient and not everyone. That is flawed. There is a tacit approval of this in the legislature. We need to make sure higher ed gets the resources needed.”

“Reframing our conversation with lawmakers and communities that a supported and accessible public university system is a common social good.”

“Restore trust between the legislature, the people of Oregon and our higher education system, so that we see it again as a public good.”

“A narrative that suggests higher education has lost its value, has no place in our current society, or is unnecessary for democracy or employment.”

“The value of a college degree is under question - and doubling down on what we have been doing for the last few hundred years isn’t going to help higher-education.”

“We haven’t valued higher education since the ‘90s.”

“Leaders do not recognize the long-running economic value of research and postsecondary education.”

“There is a lack of a consistent, generally accepted, vision for higher education in Oregon, and the importance of an educated workforce and citizens for a vital economy and society.”



“We need to articulate why we need postsecondary education and training; that it has good outputs and is important to the overall economy of the state.”

Stakeholders seek more cooperation, collaboration, and alignment

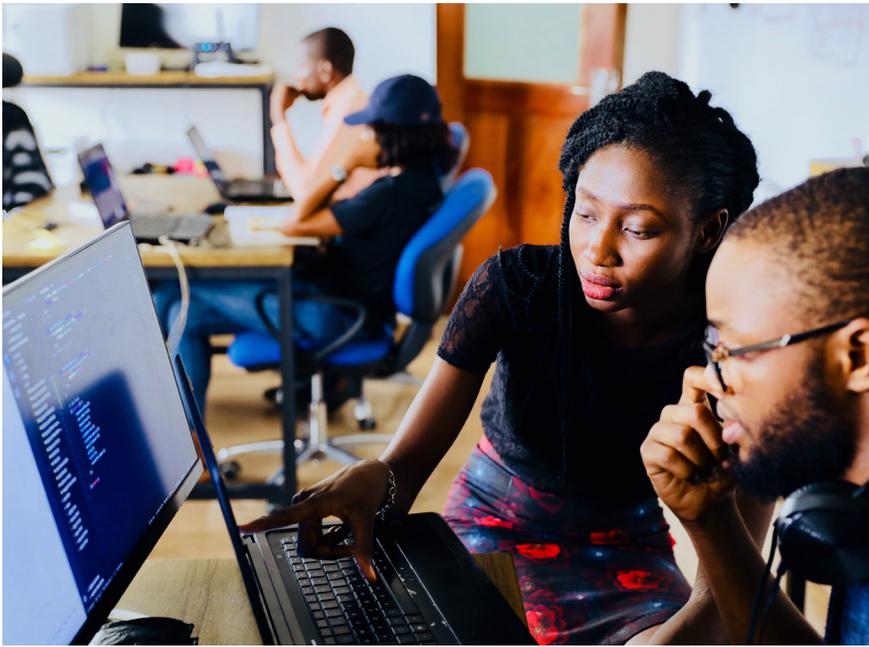
Many stakeholders are excited about the opportunity to develop a comprehensive ecosystem from P-20 through career (fig. 3) where each entity understands its role and prepares life-long learners every step of the way. The hope is that it would be seamless and nimble, increasing the opportunity to be innovative with creative programming and clear pathways. More specifically, K-12 ensures students' readiness for postsecondary education and training; postsecondary education and training prepare Oregonians for life-long employment; and employers collaborate with educational providers to communicate and train for the future needs of industry and the economy. However, in order to tackle such a large challenge, Oregon needs strong leadership and alignment within the education system to ensure coordination and collaboration. While several stakeholders believe HECC can take on that leadership role, the need for a broader coalition of support, including the legislature and the Governor, is paramount.

Key Insights

- Some stakeholders perceive competition and duplication among educational institutions instead of collaboration.
- There is confusion as to who is leading Oregon's postsecondary education and training vision for the future (fig. 4).
- Educational institutions have an opportunity to engage and incentivize Oregon's employers and industries in strategic partnerships to better prepare our workforce for the future.
- At times the current approval process for innovative postsecondary education and training is slow and cumbersome and limits effective collaboration with employers.
- While participants shared appreciation for the work of the Oregon Transfer Articulation Committee, they believe there is still more to do. Stakeholders would like to see clearly defined pathways for all Oregonians and the ability to seamlessly transfer credits among all educational institutions.

Implications

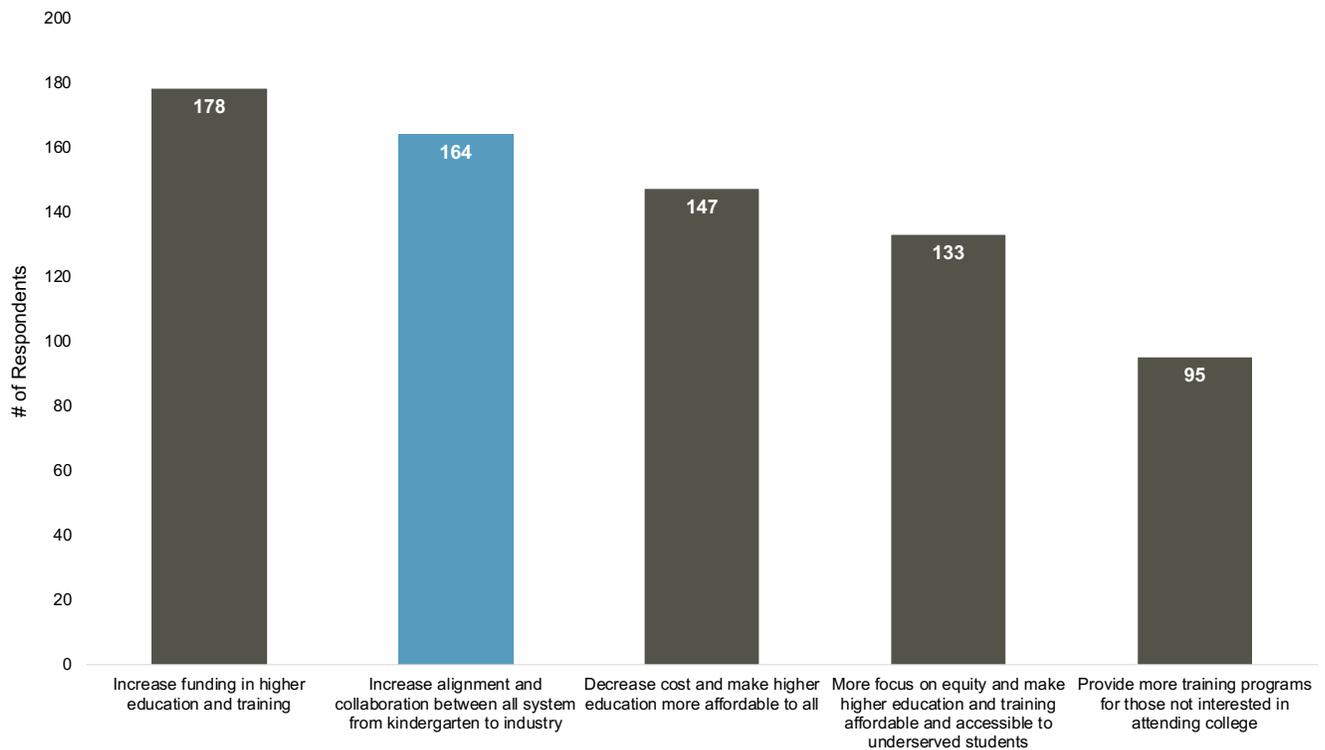
- Investments in postsecondary education and training will continue to be limited if there is perceived misalignment and competition among educational institutions.
- HECC has an opportunity as a convener to establish a clear vision, strategic roadmap, and leadership for postsecondary education and training.
- Oregonians may miss out on local employment opportunities to out-of-state applicants without the ability to quickly implement employer-endorsed educational skills training.



Equity Considerations

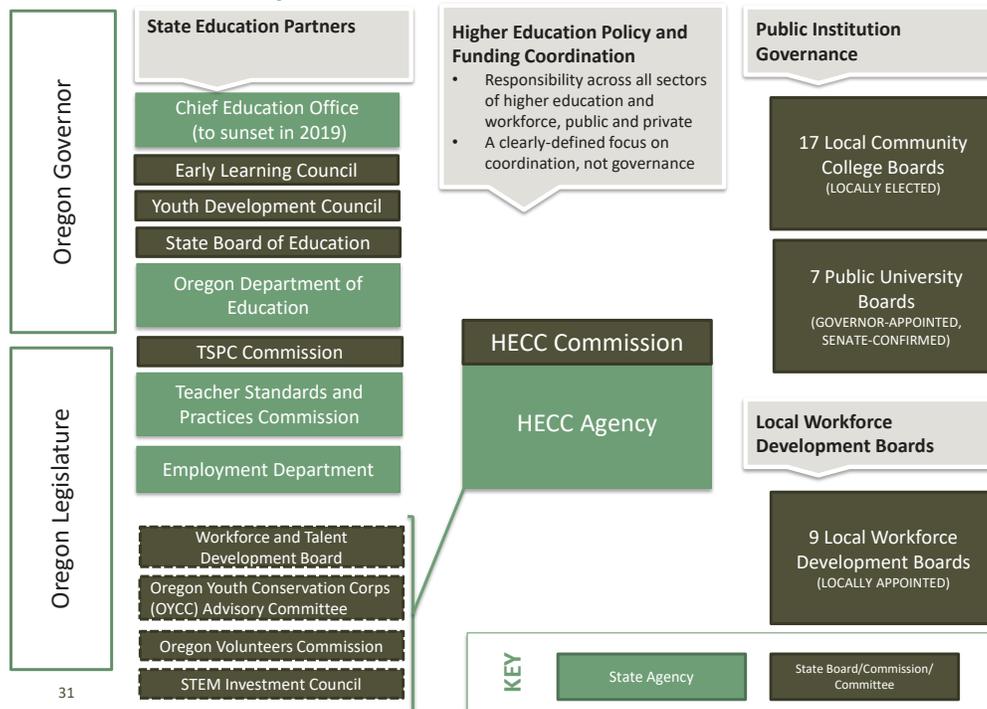
- Ensure that vulnerable and underserved populations have access to multiple educational and career pathways across institutions in the system.
- Removing barriers to transfers and supporting non-traditional pathways will improve affordability and time to degree for all students. Given the additional barriers that underserved students face, however, additional resources will be required to support their ability to successfully navigate these systems.

Figure 3 Top Five Opportunities for Higher Education and Training N=1417



Source: Stakeholder survey conducted between December 10, 2019 to January 6, 2020.

Figure 4 Postsecondary Education and Workforce Structure



Source: Introduction: HECC Budget, Strategic Priorities in Postsecondary Education Funding as presented to Joint Committee on Ways and Means. Pg. 31

Responses

“The biggest opportunity we have is that more people want to find meaningful and robust solutions to issues facing students in postsecondary education. More people [are concluding] that we need to collaborate and make meaningful progress. It is a starting point to gain alignment and find solutions moving forward.”

“[We need a] continuum in the entire education system that is proficiency-based, and more cooperation between groups instead of fighting for our piece of the pie. We need a more seamless and cooperative system.”

“[Our most significant] opportunity is the leverage when we (community colleges, universities, workforce, etc.) work together. You can’t legislate collaboration, but if the HECC has a set of compelling and strategic priorities that people can see themselves in, that can enable collaboration to move us forward. Use inclusive language of the partners that can play a role; don’t try to dictate roles. I don’t want to leave K-12 out.”

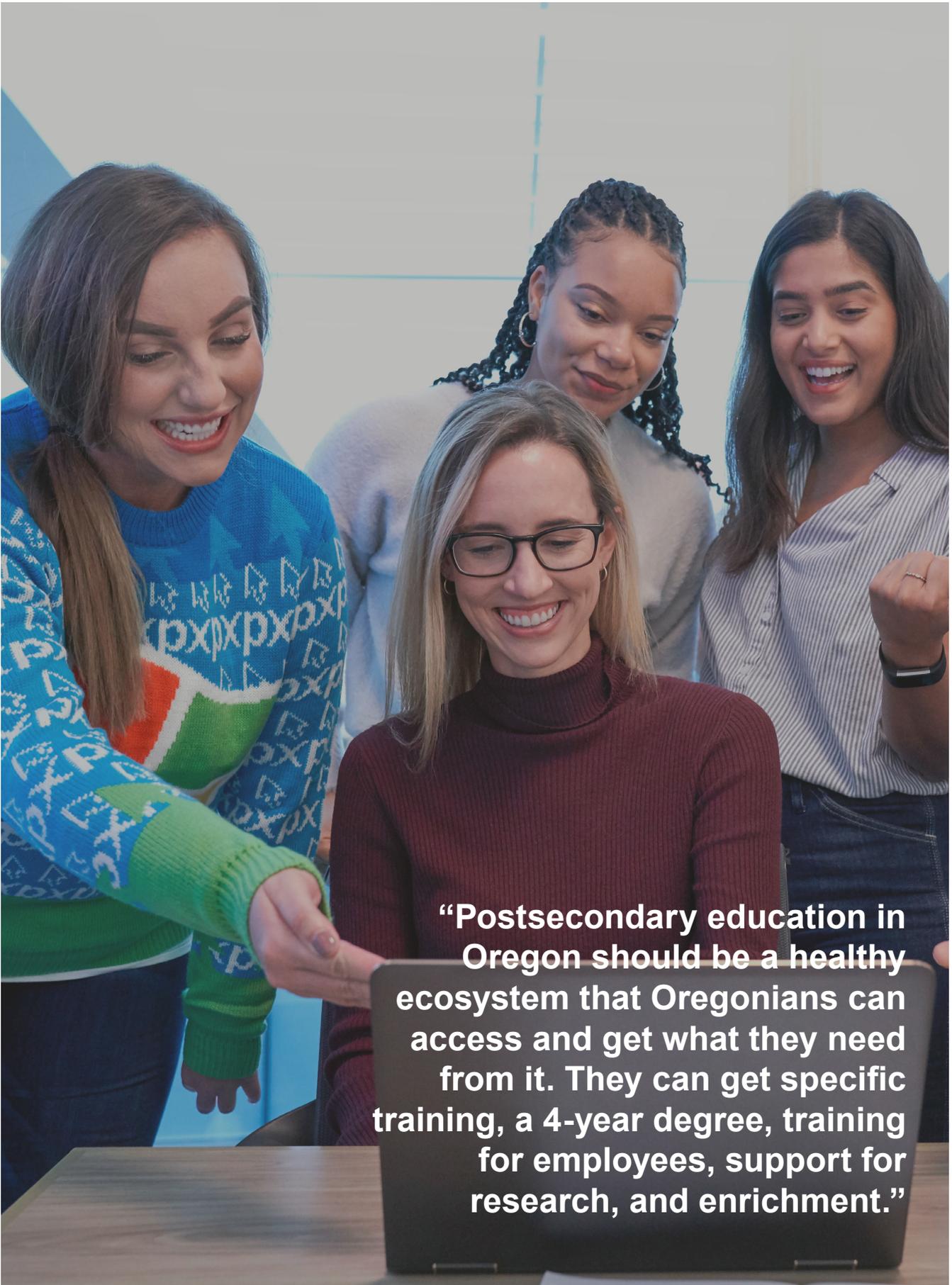
“We want a seamless system, but we don’t have it. [There is] no formalized system or process for us all to come together for alignment.... HECC doesn’t have much authority – especially with higher education. We need to rethink HECC’s authority to drive educational change and outcomes in Oregon. How do we get closer to a more seamless system from early learning to higher education?”

“We tend to back away from state level educational leadership. Where I have seen states be successful and transformative is when there is strong state level direction, and I think we have been reluctant to do that in Oregon. It is hard because the individual entities will go to the legislature and dismantle the entity like we did the chancellor’s office. It is difficult politically, but we still need to do it.”

“My vision is that we would have a connected system. Right now, we are siloed. Universities don’t talk to community colleges. Community colleges are educating Oregonians predominantly, where universities have a significant number of out-of-state students. I want universities to realize we are here for each other and that we need each other, but it doesn’t feel that way.”

“We need to be faster and nimbler. There are job opportunities and careers coming at us and we aren’t fast enough to meet them. We need to be nimble enough to react, but we need to have the budget to keep up.”

“[The most significant challenge is] a lack of coordination. We operate as separate, independent educational institutions without a proper level of regard for students as they move through a postsecondary system. They get lost and we have lousy completion rates, because we don’t operate as an integrated whole.”



“Postsecondary education in Oregon should be a healthy ecosystem that Oregonians can access and get what they need from it. They can get specific training, a 4-year degree, training for employees, support for research, and enrichment.”

Postsecondary education in Oregon has shifted from a state-funded model to a student-funded model, impacting affordability

The story of the cost of higher education is not different in Oregon from the story nationwide. The cost to students has skyrocketed, creating difficult tradeoffs for families and forcing institutions to ensure that they are creating value and communicating a clear return on investment. However, the specific nuance for Oregon is important. The cost of postsecondary education in Oregon has increased considerably since 2010; at the same time, state funding has not kept up, resulting in a shift from state funding for higher education to an increasing reliance on tuition to close the gap (fig. 5). As a result, the ability to provide access to an affordable postsecondary education for all Oregon students has become more challenging, and students are bearing the burden.

Key Insights

- Many stakeholders perceive that Oregonians are priced out of both two- and four-year degrees (fig. 6). In addition, news reports of high administrative compensation have led to the belief that administrative costs are ballooning and driving most of the increased educational costs.
- Given that state funding for postsecondary education has remained flat or stable over time, the burden of funding has shifted to a reliance on tuition to close the gap. Stakeholders highlighted the coalition behind the Student Success Act as a step in the right direction and want to see a similar effort for postsecondary education (fig. 7).
- The increasing cost of higher education has reached a boiling point, resulting in students and families bearing unsustainable levels of cost and debt.
- Given lower levels of funding, smaller and regional institutions struggle with being able to offer the programs that their students need.
- Further, all institutions are under pressure to show a “return on investment,” which many in the university community believe misses the inherent benefits to society of an educated citizenry.
- Some stakeholders encourage the state to focus on funding students rather than institutions, in order to focus the funding where it can have the most impact.

Implications

- In order to address the affordability concerns, Oregon needs to address both the rising costs as well as the funding challenge in tandem.
- While the current system rewards institutions with strong outcomes, those institutions continue to struggle to offer programs that students need and want.
- While there may be opportunities for better efficiency in the higher education system, most agree that this is a small step towards closing the funding gap.



Equity Considerations

- The increasing costs of postsecondary education and training are likely to put a larger burden on historically underserved students.
- While resources exist to make postsecondary education and training more affordable for lower income students, these resources are limited and do not fully meet the need (fig. 8).
- Underserved students face additional challenges such as food and housing insecurity, which need to be addressed in order to support their success.

Figure 5 Postsecondary Education has Become More Tuition-Dependent to Fund Operations

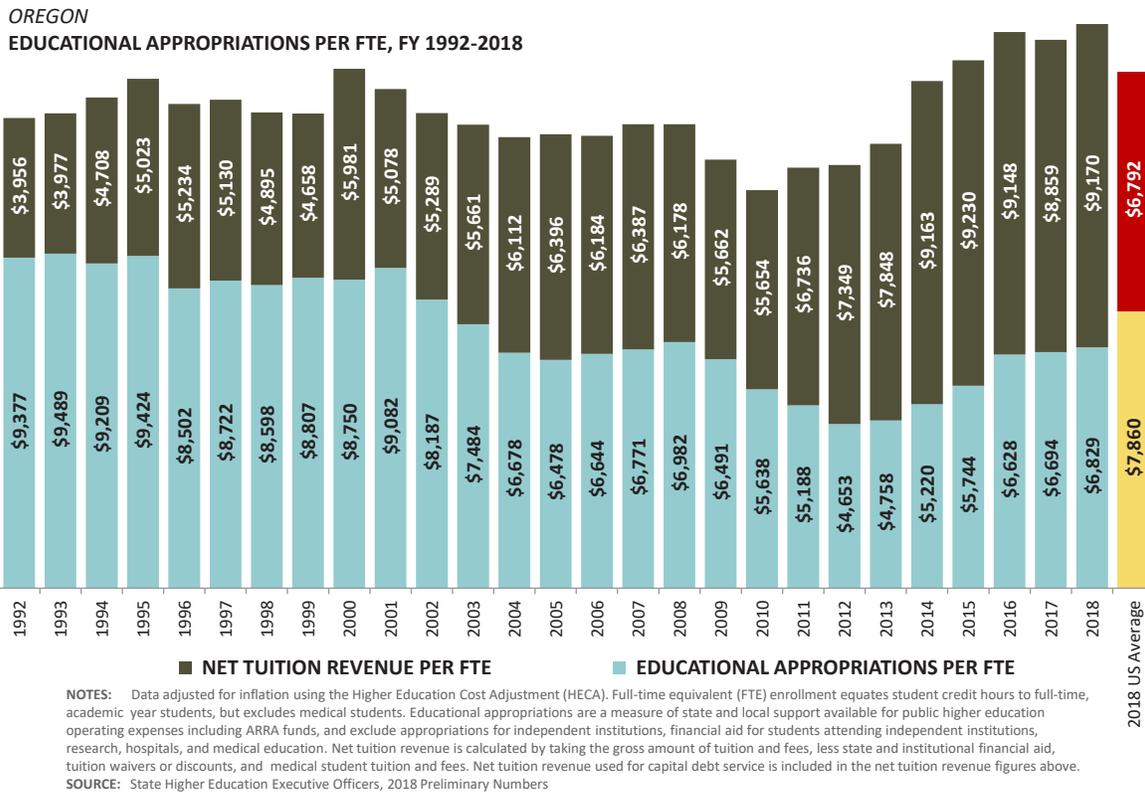
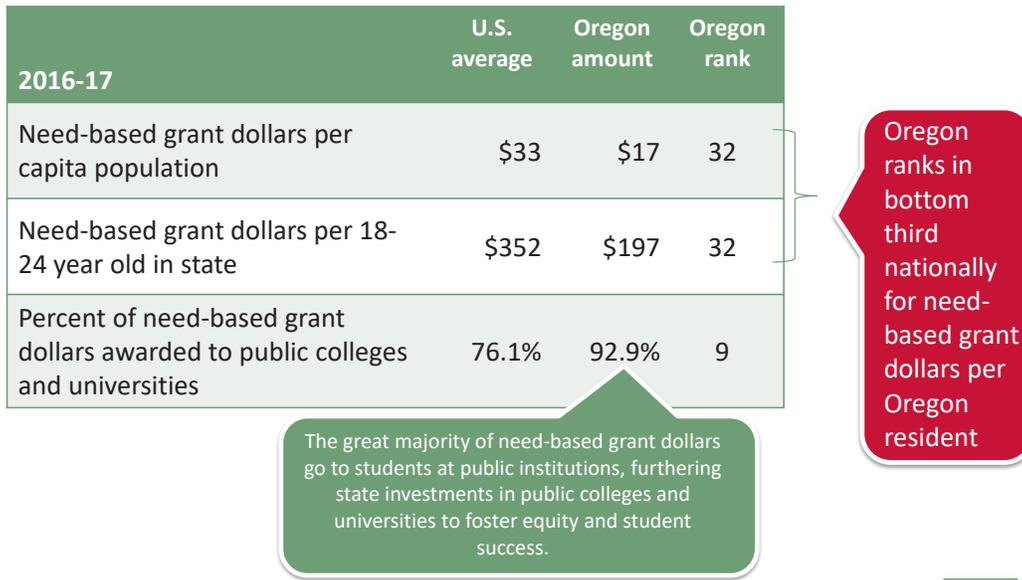


Figure 8 Oregon's National Position in Funding Student Grant Aid: Room to Grow



67 Source: National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) Survey, 2016-17 https://www.nassgapsurvey.com/survey_reports.aspx



Source: Introduction: HECC Budget, Strategic Priorities in Postsecondary Education Funding as presented to Joint Committee on Ways and Means. Pg. 67

Responses

“Affordability [should be a priority], by becoming better funded by the state so we don’t have to gouge students and scrimp.”

“Those who need postsecondary education the most cannot afford to get into it, are not supported/ encouraged to pursue it, and are not supported while they’re in it.”

“The cost of education has gone up, cost of living has gone up, but funding has not gone up. The reality is that the state has to get legitimately serious about funding higher education. We can’t keep putting the burden on students; they can’t bear it anymore.”

“The biggest challenge in the four-year sector is the percentage of the cost that has been shifted to families through tuition. 70% of our operating funds are from students and the rest are from the state. It used to be flipped.”

“Get the salaries of Administrators down to a reasonable size so funding can go to the students and not the managers in meetings.”

“Students are paying WAY too much in tuition and faculty are not being paid fairly. Public universities are being run too much like private sector, profit-seeking corporations, with over-paid high-level administrators calling the shots instead of students, faculty, and regular staff.”

“If we could figure out what it costs to successfully educate a student, then determine a funding model that supports that. Either opportunity grant or other sources. What it is not, is sending a letter to all institutions to not raise tuition. It needs to be aligned with the actual cost of education and show here’s the gap. We can’t talk about affordability if we don’t have that bigger picture.”

“Re-invest to help all public 2 and 4 year institutions provide the education and student support.”

“We have put more burden on students with tuition increases and it limits the ability for a lot of them to attend, especially for universities. [With] higher tuition and [the fact that it is] hard to complete coursework in four years [education becomes too expensive]... They don’t finish and have a lot of debt. We are shifting the burden to students and the voters don’t seem to care or understand.”

Student success and access to education and training is a priority for all stakeholders

Stakeholders' primary concern is creating an environment where all students are successful in both their educational and career pursuits to reach their desired goals (fig. 9). However, some stakeholders value a liberal arts education while others value apprenticeships and technical training that can immediately be applied to employment. Other stakeholders expressed an imperative to provide access to a quality education. Stakeholders emphasized that for many students (especially the underserved) to be successful, they need wrap-around services, which may include supports for mental health, housing and food security, cultural affinity groups, etc. These additional services will, however, increase costs and contribute to the tension around keeping administrative costs and tuition low.

Key Insights

- Students need both “soft” and “technical” skills to be resilient and adaptable in the face of a constantly changing economy and workplace.
- Many stakeholders expressed different perspectives between the value of a liberal arts education to develop our global citizens of tomorrow, and a more practical education directly connected to immediate employment.
- Resources, including wrap-around services, need to be more focused on Oregon’s future student population who will be more diverse and from underserved groups.

Implications

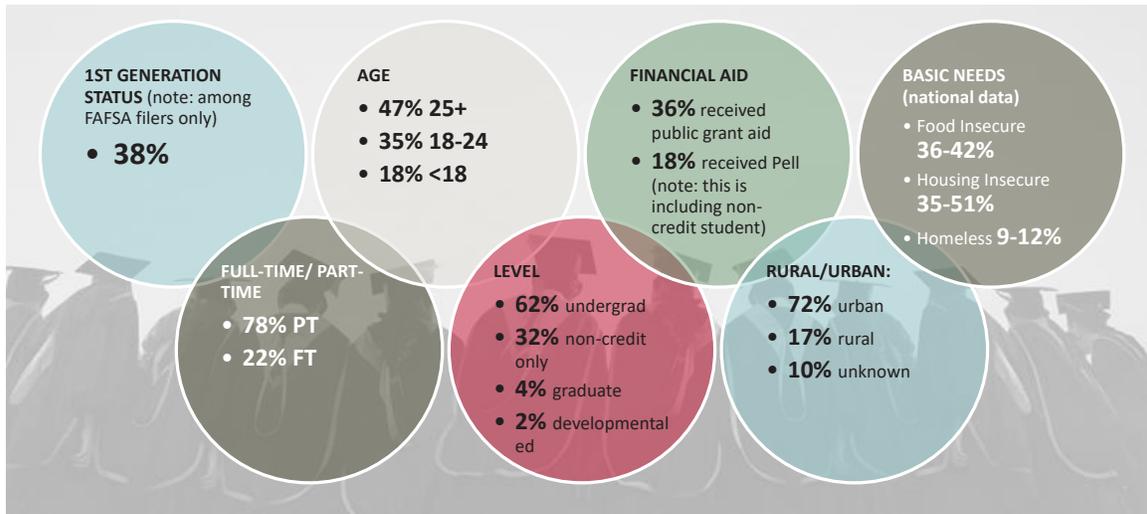
- Without wrap-around services it will be difficult for underserved students to graduate on time with limited debt, therefore creating more long-term costs to Oregon.
- In order to quickly adapt to a changing economy, Oregon will benefit from a variety of educational pathways that support the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and other “soft” skills that contribute to developing global citizens.
- Oregon needs to consider the future student demographics and create a strategy to meet the diverse needs of our evolving population (fig 12).



Equity Considerations

- It is imperative to have equitable access for all students to experience quality learning experiences with flexibility and nimbleness (fig. 10).
- Forty percent of K-12 students are students of color, and postsecondary education and training needs to break down costs and barriers to be culturally responsive to first generation students (fig. 11).
- Additional wrap-around services will be needed to support students from underserved communities as they are less likely to have the support structure than traditional students.

Figure 11 Oregon Public Postsecondary Education Students Today



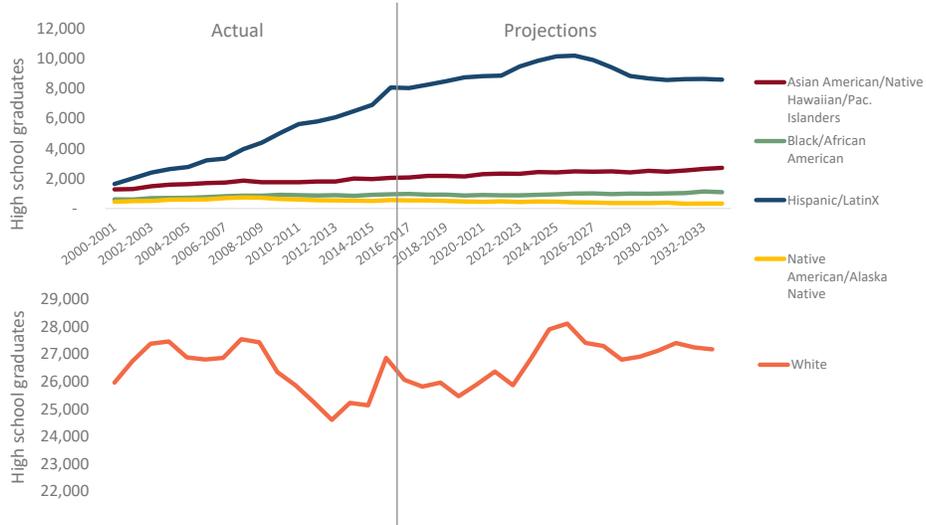
7 Sources: Data on food insecurity from *Still Hungry and Homeless in College*, based on a survey of 43,000 students at 66 colleges and universities in 20 states and Washington D.C.. By Sara Goldrick-Rab, Jed Richardson, Joel Schneider, Anthony Hernandez, and Clare Cady, Wisconsin HOPE Lab. All other data from HECC analysis of student records from public institutions and reflect Oregon undergraduate-level students, including high school students taking dual-credit courses and community college students taking non-credit courses. Data on age, area of instruction, first-generation status, gender, race/ethnicity, rural/urban status are from 2017-18. Data on full-time/part-time, Pell status, and the proportion of students receiving public grant aid are from 2016-17. Data on first-generation status and Pell status are only available for students who file for financial aid.



Source: Introduction: HECC Budget, Strategic Priorities in Postsecondary Education Funding as presented to Joint Committee on Ways and Means. Pg. 7

Figure 12 Oregon Youth Projections Show Growing Diversity

Oregon Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity, 2000-01 to 2016-17 (Actual), 2017-18 to 2033-34 (Projected)



44 Notes: Projections derived from HECC analysis and include progression ratios from kindergarten through high school graduation, use the most recent four years of data, and include students entering or exiting the public school system (typically through migration). Sources: Centers for Disease Control data on Oregon birth rates by race-ethnicity, National Center for Education Statistics data on Oregon public elementary and secondary school enrollment and on private high school graduates, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) data on public high school graduates, and historic ODE data on home school graduates.



Source: Introduction: HECC Budget, Strategic Priorities in Postsecondary Education Funding as presented to Joint Committee on Ways and Means. Pg. 44

Responses

“Create a safety net fund to help with health and housing costs – students are tapped out of debt capacity.”

“Academic support and counseling support are especially needed for students outside the community colleges. We need wrap-around services and first-generation families especially need this support.”

“We need innovate strategic partnerships between state agencies and higher education to improve access and completion.”

“Focus needs to remain on serving communities of color, low-income, refugees and first generational students.”

“Everybody has a role to play in getting students prepared for the continuum of education. It is up to us to ensure we’re proving an education that supports their desired outcomes.”

“Access for all to learning after high school. Access for all gets to equity and ability to pay. It also captures that it isn’t just colleges, but lots of paths for students.”

“The right and robust student support services in place. Once we get students into education and training, we need to address the other challenges that keep people from being successful.”

“We need to know the affordability drivers and to know what supplies the support that first generation college students need, so that their outcome are in line with majority outcomes.”

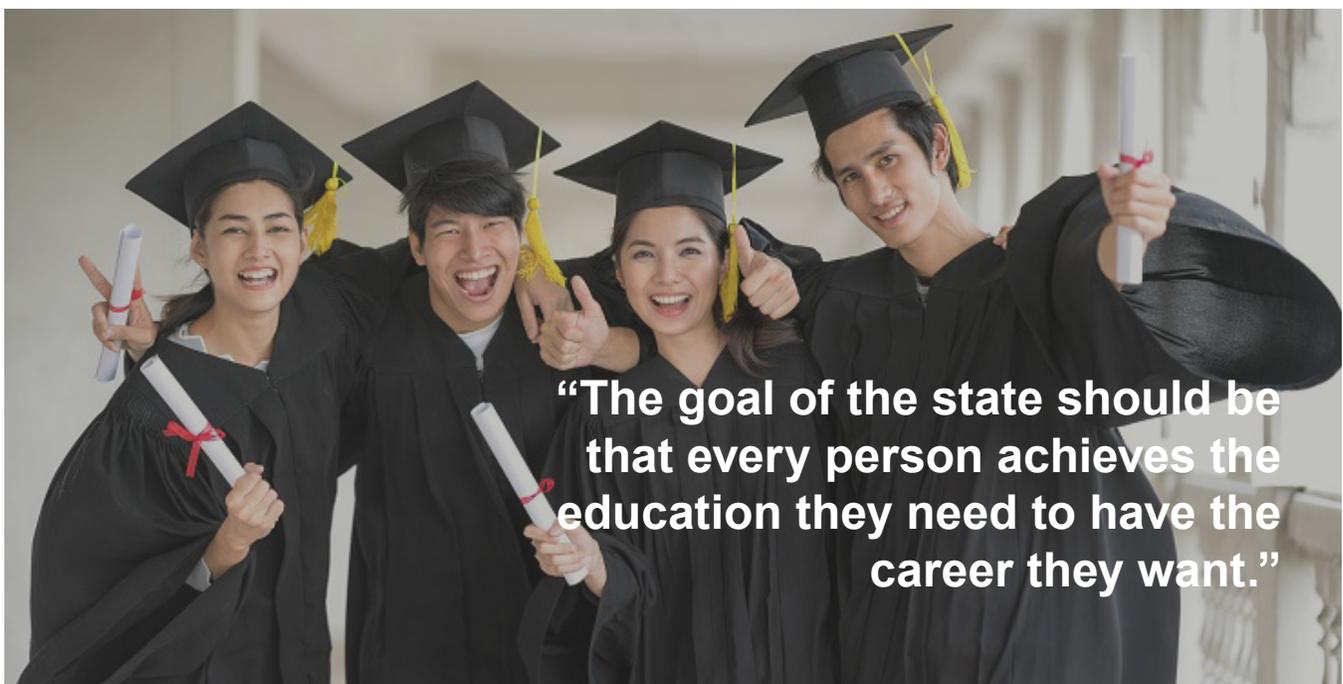
“Native and underserved populations don’t leave their homes for multiple reasons. We have to rethink how we serve them. How we get education to them.”

“As Oregon demographics change, we can more easily change the system to include under-served populations by removing outdated barriers to entry.”

“The Bend campus for OSU is very innovative and important. The applied science degree in Eugene is brilliant. We are doing some things outside the box and its great...adding more flexibility that creates more accessibility for students.”

“Youth apprenticeship model that aligns the entire system. It speeds up the process at an early age. Always moving forward and not going backward. You can get on and off when you need to like an escalator.”

“Putting the student experience first and foremost. Creating a supportive and inclusive community starting at age 18 that supports them to graduation. Oregon Promise is a start for the state in addressing affordability, but it doesn’t serve the whole person/ student in their social/emotional needs.... I believe if we map the ideal student experience from high school graduation to degree completion, we will be able to figure out the logistics and finances. Student success must be #1.”



“The goal of the state should be that every person achieves the education they need to have the career they want.”

Stakeholders desire a strategy that supports regionally specific solutions

Many of the stakeholders we heard from, particularly those in tribal, rural and Eastern Oregon communities, passionately emphasized that different parts of the state have different needs based on their cultural, geographic, and industry related uniqueness. While stakeholders acknowledged the importance of a strategy that looks across the state in a holistic way, they also desire a strategy with enough flexibility to respond to the unique needs, trends, and opportunities at the regional level with tailored solutions. This illustrates an important tension to be managed between ensuring institutions have a clear mission and programs aren't unnecessarily duplicated across the state, while also balancing an interest in regional access (fig. 13). Additionally, while some stakeholders shared success stories of collaboration between educational institutions and local employers to address workforce needs, others shared frustration at the pace of the program approval process and how this limits their ability to respond and innovate.

Key Insights

- Stakeholders want to ensure postsecondary education and training opportunities are locally available and are in alignment with current and projected needs of employers and students in their communities.
- Many communities east of the Cascades expressed the challenge of developing and maintaining talent in their region and the impact this can have on workforce, industry, economic, and community well-being.
- Especially in quickly growing areas, like Central Oregon, stakeholders expressed the importance of being able to be nimble in developing and expanding programs in response to population growth and industry needs.

Implications

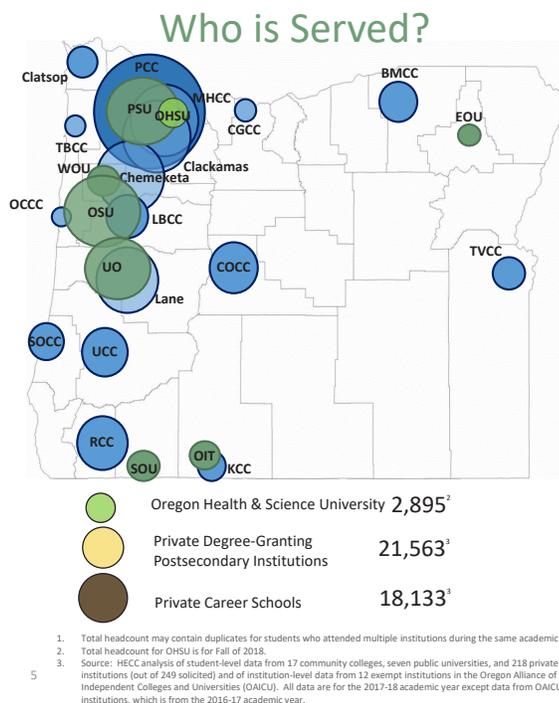
- As the strategic roadmap is developed, the unique needs, trends, and opportunities of Oregon's diverse regional communities should be intentionally considered.
- Oregon has the opportunity to encourage and support collaboration and innovation at the local level that serves to identify and respond to regional needs and opportunities.
- Oregon must thoughtfully balance a holistic view of postsecondary education and training programs across the state with a focus on ensuring access in rural and tribal communities.
- In support of nimble responses to emerging community and workforce trends, needs and opportunities, HECC should explore ways to expedite the program review and approval process.
- Tribal and rural communities will continue to have high unemployment and shrinking populations without relevant postsecondary education and training in their regions.



Equity Considerations

- As the strategic roadmap is developed it will be important to ensure stakeholders from under-represented groups, including rural, tribal, and eastern Oregon communities are invited to review drafts to ensure their needs and perspectives are considered.
- Students' experiences and needs are significantly influenced by the communities where they live, which requires regional flexibility to determine unique supports and solutions.
- For a variety of socio-economic and cultural reasons, some students cannot or will not choose to leave their home communities to pursue postsecondary education and training. Given this, a lack of locally available postsecondary education and training options in rural communities can further exacerbate inequities experienced by marginalized groups.

Figure 13 Who is Served?



ENROLLMENT	
2017-18	
Academic Year Headcount	
Public Institutions	
Universities	73,023
Community Colleges	272,254
Workforce Investment Services	
Career Services	109,630
Training Services	3,902
OR Youth Conservation Corps	751
Oregon Volunteers (who enrolled in postsecondary system)	678

Source: Introduction: HECC Budget, Strategic Priorities in Postsecondary Education Funding as presented to Joint Committee on Ways and Means. Pg. 5

Responses

“Recognize and respond to the unique workforce needs of rural areas and ensure educational offerings can keep or bring students back to the region.”

“I think it is important to realize, that 40-40-20 might actually be 10-70-20 in one area and different in another area. Depending on the industry there. It is important to realize that different areas have different types of jobs available. Especially if we are going to keep those industries in those areas.”

“Evaluate changing demographics and growth to prioritize education in growing communities with jobs.”

“In terms of reducing poverty and training our workforce, community college is where that happens. We have strong relationships with employers and can be responsive.”

“[We] need to establish a HECC subcommittee to look at approving programs as they come up, rather than waiting for commission meetings. It holds us back because we are waiting on the meetings.”

“We need to resolve the regional question and get rid of the sacred cows. There is an efficiency issue that we need to address. Why don't we have an NYU system – centrally managed with local identity?”

“In the rural areas, the education that is out there should be something that can keep people there. We exacerbate the rural/urban divide unless we have systems in place. We have one university covering 40k miles.”

“Look at our system to create centers of excellence in our regions. Newport is a good example.”

“Identifying resources across the state and how to assist the creation of new programs, subject areas, and fields in rural communities. (All cool trainings happen in Portland).”

“Lack of opportunities for Eastern Oregon residents [is a challenge].”

“There isn't enough outreach for students in rural areas to get a step ahead in either a trade or education. We need more access to classes via hybrid or online.”

“I believe community colleges reach more people and more (age 22 and older) untrained and undertrained individuals. Making education/training accessible to that group, particularly in rural Oregon, has a high return for society and community health.”

“Building a distinctive, responsive, plan to meet the regional needs with appropriate funding! Non status-quo.”



“We need to continue to tailor programs and initiatives to local demographics and business/workforce needs.”



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