

Docket Item:

August Legislative Update

Joint Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education

The Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education is entering a new phase of work, having completed its multi-trip, cross-state listening tour in southern Oregon last month.

Fundamentally, the Task Force will be attempting to craft solutions to two central issues: 1) The lack of systemic, regular availability of services, program models, and support structures that are necessary to improve the likelihood of enrollment, retention, and completion of students from underrepresented backgrounds, and 2) Ensuring that access to both these services/models and the delivery of education and supports generally is done so in student-friendly, culturally-appropriate, and streamlined ways that account for the fact that underrepresented students in the higher education system today have multiple demands on their time and energy that do not stop upon the commencement of a term.

To craft recommendations, the Task Force is splitting into three workgroups: Affordability, Wraparound Services and Supports, and Continuous Improvement and Accountability. Each group will meet throughout the end of August and September. Following this phase, the Task Force will again convene en bloc to determine final recommendations and approve a report due at the end of the calendar year. This report ideally will be the background for a legislative bill introduced by one of the two education committees in 2023. It is possible that the bill will eliminate the need for HECC to run separate LCs on some topics.

Membership of the groups will be mainly drawn from participants in the prior listening tour sessions. HECC will be represented at the director level on each group, with Juan Baez-Arevalo, Donna Lewelling, Veronica Dujon, and Rudyane Rivera Lindstrom directly participating. Other staff will support the work from the sidelines.

HECC continues to support Task Force work behind the scenes, meeting regularly with Task Force staff and Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon to help guide and plan work when invited to do so.

Legislative Concepts for the 2023 Legislative Session

HECC staff are continuing work on 14 legislative concepts.

**Legislative
Concept**

Number	Description of Concept
LC425	<p><i>Financial Aid</i> – OSAC is working with the Student Aid Advisory Committee and other partners to develop a more robust approach to the state financial aid system that considers significant modifications to both the Oregon Opportunity Grant and the Oregon Promise, with the goal of providing more resources to a greater number of students.</p> <p>Primarily, Oregon Opportunity Grant changes are about altering award amounts and award tiers based on increased funding through the agency request budget</p> <p>Oregon Promise changes see the award being made available to students at universities, eliminating the penalty for accelerated learning credit earned in high</p>

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	<p>school, and eliminating GPA requirements.</p> <p>Additionally, a new statute is added allowing the Commission to expend funds to award persistence and encourage completion for promise recipients, an authority particularly valuable if there are unspent funds over the course of the biennium.</p> <p>The LC also makes changes designed to remove an inconsistency in eligibility for the Opportunity Grant on the basis of meeting tuition equity requirements.</p>
LC426	<p><i>Oregon Tribal Student Grant Program</i> – This concept codifies the program currently providing awards to enrolled members of federally recognized, Oregon based tribes. This concept looks and feels like the rules the Commission recently adopted, which are unusually robust, owing to the fact that the current program is operated primarily under legislative budgetary authority, and not a statute that provides for a program outline. As with the POP, this LC is one of the highest priority concepts the agency will introduce in the 2023 legislative session.</p> <p>Last year, legislators indicated a desire to consider whether eligibility for the program should be restricted to members of Oregon-based tribes, and this question is likely to reemerge.</p>
LC429	<p><i>ODA Fees</i> – This LC moves the ODA fee structure from statute to rule, allowing more flexibility and for a different process of fee adjustment when such adjustment is necessary.</p> <p>Even after the statutory change, fee increases remain subject to a legislative approval process, but the process becomes retroactive.</p>
LC446	<p><i>Transfer of Cosmetology Curriculum Development</i> – This is a reintroduction of a 2021 concept. HECC is obligated to develop curricular standards for cosmetology programs, the only curricular area over which it exercises this authority, even though HECC does not possess subject matter knowledge and a professional licensure board with such knowledge exists.</p> <p>This year, HECC has done more extensive work with stakeholders and the Health Licensing Office, and the LC will contain a provision ensuring a licensed school is represented on the state Board of Cosmetology as part of the transition.</p>
LC449	<p><i>Removing Transcript Barriers</i> – The purpose of this concept is to move towards more student-friendly policies regarding when institutions can withhold academic transcripts. Much national work and research is currently being done on this topic.</p> <p>The concept draft establishes a deadline for HECC to draft a rule on transcript withholding and engage in a workgroup process to determine the content of such a rule.</p>
LC452	<p><i>Minor and Technical Revisions</i> – This recurring concept is a placeholder for the small changes that may be required to clean up statutes that have fallen out of alignment with modern terminology, or to align statutes with current practices. These changes have no fiscal, substantive, or equity impacts.</p>
LC458	<p><i>Oregon Youth Works</i> – OWI seeks to reorganize its youth portfolio, which has expanded greatly over the course of the biennium, by creating a consolidated advisory board structure to oversee the activities of the Oregon Youth Employment Program, Oregon Youth Corps, and Oregon Conservation Corps.</p> <p>Once a more streamlined administrative structure is in place, the new board will work on a process to determine whether the eligibility criteria for these programs can be simplified through an equity lens.</p>

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<p>LC460</p>	<p><i>Regional Accreditation</i> - Under the prior federal administration, the US Department of Education eliminated any federal distinction between regional and national accreditation. State statutes refer to regional accreditation, and now require adjustment.</p> <p>The LC language updates state terminology to reflect federal terminology and clarifies that no exemptions from ODA oversight are available for non-religious institutions not already subject to an exemption.</p>
<p>LC464</p>	<p><i>HECC/Institutional Collaboration</i> – This placeholder asks the question “How can the HECC administration and the Commission better communicate and collaborate with institutional administration and institutional boards in pursuit of state goals?”</p> <p>As of this point, this concept remains a placeholder, pending discussion with the institutions.</p>
<p>LC 466</p>	<p><i>Expanding ASPIRE</i> – This LC elevates the work of community-based organizations by requiring ASPIRE programs to work directly with such organizations, and provide them with information and resources designed to encourage college and career readiness. Community-based organizations become eligible for grants to support culturally competent and multi-lingual programming in their area.</p> <p>The LC also adds ‘career pathways’ as a type of education and training about which ASPIRE will provide information and mentorship.</p>
<p>LC469</p>	<p><i>Early Childhood Behavioral Health Grants</i> – In 2019, the legislature established a grant program to improve opportunity for students seeking credentials in early childhood care and education. The Early Learning Division wants to create a more robust program for such students, and elements of their preferred program may require a statutory amendment.</p> <p>Staff are continuing conversations with ELD and counsel to determine whether such amendments are necessary for the program to serve ELDs goal, and this LC may ultimately be withdrawn for lack of need.</p>
<p>LC473</p>	<p><i>Instate Tuition for National Service</i> – The OregonServes advisory board has proposed a concept to make national service more attractive and attainable to a greater diversity of prospective applicants by awarding completers the opportunity for in state tuition. Additionally, this concept would add a state match to Segal Education Award recipients such that between state and federal awards, students would be eligible for up to \$10,000 in awards per year of national service.</p>
<p>LC478</p>	<p><i>Continuous Improvement Committee Recommendations</i> – Current law requires a study and report on improvements to the state and local workforce board system and processes. This legislative concept serves as a placeholder for recommendations that may be issued in this report.</p>
<p>LC482</p>	<p><i>Workforce Development</i> – This concept is a placeholder for any changes that may need to be made to Future Ready Oregon statutes as needs are uncovered through implementation.</p>

An Additional Legislative Concept?

The above table represents concepts in process, however, recent activity may make it necessary for HECC to inject an additional concept into legislative discussions, whether introduced formally by the Governor or through a legislator or committee route.

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With the adoption of rules by the Oregon Health Authority in May, HECC is now required to license programs offering training for future psilocybin facilitators under Ballot Measure 109. Unfortunately, the ballot measure never envisioned a role for HECC, and as such, one privilege extended to OHA, the Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission is not extended to HECC: Immunity from civil liability for actions in the psilocybin space.

Because other agencies cannot be sued, it leaves HECC as the only state entity that can be, and this may create some risk for HECC, even though it only deals in the educational aspects of the industry, and not with manufacture, distribution, or administration of psilocybin itself.

Staff are in conversations about how to introduce liability protections for HECC that mirror those of other agencies.

Staff Recommendation:

No Commission action is required. This is an informational item.