

Docket Item: 8.0

October Legislative Update

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

The Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students is in the workgroup phase, with three workgroups each meeting every week or two with large groups of participants representing students, staff, leadership, and other non-institutional partners. These groups are centered on three different issues: affordability, student supports, and climate and accountability.

At this stage the workgroups have heard from various stakeholders on proposals individual stakeholders or groups of stakeholders would like to see included in Task Force recommendations. HECC is promoting the following general proposals and concepts in these discussions:

Affordability – Staff are promoting the Commission’s adopted Policy Option Package to dramatically scale up the state’s financial aid investment to support true affordability for low and middle-income Oregonians seeking higher education.

Student Supports – Staff are supporting a single-point-of-entry model to student services coupled with a systems-based approach to student services, wherein the Legislature does not simply fund a preferred basket of programs already established, but looks at the gaps filled by any one program and strives, through funding and policy, to strategically improve student enrollment, retention and completion efforts across student demographics.

Culture and Accountability – Staff are supporting efforts to highlight and elevate campus-based culture/climate work in a way that ensures campus leadership, faculty, and staff are all working to improve campus equity and take responsibility for equitable student outcomes.

As of this moment, it is not clear how Task Force members will undertake the careful work of winnowing proposals down into a final package.

The most significant risk to the Task Force is legislative will. What will the Legislature decide to do with the Task Force report and recommendations? The answer is not known at this time. It remains highly unlikely that there will be additional revenues in the next biennium to support Task Force recommendations.

At minimum, it appears that the Task Force activities are likely to generate momentum toward an unspecified increase in state financial investments.

Legislative Concepts for the 2023 Legislative Session

HECC staff have finalized and submitted to legislative counsel 15 legislative concepts.

***Legislative
Concept
Number***

Description of Concept

<p>LC425</p>	<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 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>
<p>LC426</p>	<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>
<p>LC429</p>	<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</p>

	<p>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>
LC460	<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-</p>

	religious institutions not already subject to an exemption.
LC464	<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. Sen. Dembrow is concurrently convening a workgroup discussion on governance, and his process may serve as an entry point for collaboration concepts.</p>
LC 466	<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>
LC469	<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>
NEW LC472	<p><i>Immunity from civil liability</i> – This concept places HECC amongst other state entities (OLCC, OHA, and Department of Agriculture) with oversight over some aspect of psilocybin therapy by specifying HECC is immune from civil liability over its role, as are these other agencies.</p>
LC473	<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>
LC478	<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>
LC482	<p><i>Workforce Development</i> – This concept is a placeholder for any changes</p>



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that may need to be made to Future Ready Oregon statutes as needs are uncovered through implementation.

Staff Recommendation:

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