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PARTNER UPDATE

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PARTNER UPDATE: HECC Encourages Oregonians to Engage with the Legislature's Joint Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education

Salem, OR - The Higher Education Coordinating Commission encourages postsecondary students and community members to participate in public meetings of the Oregon Legislature's Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (HB 2590, 2021), which has just commenced a historic statewide public engagement process. [Find information on the Task Force public meetings and members, or subscribe to email updates here.](#) This bipartisan Task Force will seek input from diverse students, families, and communities, in an effort to identify strategies to improve the experiences of students from underrepresented and marginalized communities. All meetings at this time will be remote with video access, with the [first public meeting scheduled for November 18, 2021.](#)

Ben Cannon, executive director of the HECC says, "We strongly urge students, families, and other partners to share their insights with the Legislative Task Force. It is critical that Oregonians help their elected leaders understand the barriers that too many Oregonians face when they attempt to access and succeed in postsecondary education. We are thankful that the Legislature has created this historic opportunity to develop community-informed solutions."

House Bill 2590, adopted in 2021, establishes the Oregon Legislature's Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education. The bill was the result of significant planning and leadership by Representative Teresa Alonso-Leon. Over the next year-and-a-half, the Task force will tour higher education institutions to view programs and services, and will hold public hearings designed to lift student voices. The Task Force plans to engage and highlight the experiences of: communities of color, rural communities, low-income students, students with physical or learning disabilities, student-parents, students with high school equivalency, LGBTQ+ students, adults, and foster students across Oregon.

Oregon continues to see [serious racial/ethnic disparities in college access and completion](#), and improving equitable outcomes is a key goal of the HECC. Learn more about the [HECC's commitment to improving equitable outcomes](#) and [recent state-led equity initiatives](#) underway here. Support of and engagement with the Task Force will

be a primary area of focus for HECC over the course of the next year-and-a-half, and into the 2023 legislative session, when it is most likely the Task Force’s policy recommendations will be considered.

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The State of Oregon's 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. For more information, go to www.Oregon.gov/HigherEd