



# Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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## February Agency Update:

February 2020 | Our partners can find former quarterly Government to Government updates as well as other information on work and initiatives in the [Coordination with Oregon Tribes](#) section of our website. We are pleased to introduce Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom, who recently joined us as the HECC's first permanent Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), who will be a representative for HECC in Government to Government meetings going forward.

Development of a Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education: In recent months, HECC, with support of the consultancy firm Coraggio Group has engaged in a statewide public outreach campaign to gain input on the development of a strategic roadmap for the future of postsecondary education and workforce training in Oregon. At its February 13 Commission meeting, the HECC reviewed a [Stakeholder Outreach Insight Report by Coraggio Group](#). This report analyzes in detail the results of public input from more than 1,600 Oregonians, and identifies five common themes arising from the input. We are thankful to all who contributed! This month Coraggio launches the project's second phase: a series of Planning Team work sessions, stakeholder retreats, Commission presentations, and other individual and small group feedback sessions that should result in the completed plan by Summer 2020.

Tribal Cultural Items Report: Executive Order 17-12 established the Task Force on Oregon Tribal Cultural Items, aimed with determining information about potential tribal cultural items in storage or on display at state public institutions and agencies. In November, the HECC submitted a report to this Task Force,

### Our Commission

#### OUR VISION:

*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. [Learn more about our vision and Strategic Plan here.](#)*

The HECC is the state entity responsible for ensuring pathways to higher education success for Oregonians statewide, and serves as a convener of institutions and partners working across the public and private higher education arena. Established in 2011, HECC is a 14-member volunteer commission responsible for advising the Oregon Legislature and the Governor on higher education policy. The Commission is supported by an executive director who oversees eight offices of the agency. To learn more about the HECC go to: [www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Pages/hecc.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Pages/hecc.aspx)

### Upcoming HECC Meetings:

**Higher Education Coordinating Commission,**  
April 9, 2020

**Higher Education Coordinating Commission  
Funding and Achievement Subcommittee  
Meeting:**  
April 8, 2020

For other [upcoming public meetings, see our website here](#). For email notices of upcoming public Commission meetings, or to sign up for our newsletter, go to [www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)

providing an inventory of potential tribal cultural items in the agency's possession. In February, the HECC received a response letter from the Task Force requesting additional information related to records, materials, and resources the agency houses, and HECC plans to respond fully as requested. The letter also indicated that the Task Force requests that agencies provide an update on Cultural Items in the agency's Annual G2G Report.

New Report Sheds Lights on the Impact of Need-Based Financial Aid: The HECC has published a new comprehensive report on the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)—Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based financial aid program—revealing that the State's investment in need-based financial aid is clearly linked with student success for the low-income students who receive it. However, due to limited State funding, the program serves only a fraction of eligible Oregonians and has not kept up with the fast-rising costs of college. Read the full [press release here](#) or go directly to the report and summary below:

- House Bill 2407(2015): [Oregon Opportunity Grant Annual Evaluation, 2020](#)  
[Two-page Issue Brief on the Oregon Opportunity Grant](#)

2020 Legislative Session: HECC staff have engaged on a variety of topics drawing legislators attention including examining how underrepresented student populations interact with higher education, credit transfer, program approval, evaluating incoming students for placement, and financial aid. Partners can find HECC testimony and presentations on our [2020 Legislative Resources page here](#). HECC has submitted a funding request to begin planning work on a new system for processing state financial aid and may also receive funds to plan an information system to communicate new transfer pathways to students. In addition, the Legislature will consider funding of several large-scale capital construction projects ranked by the HECC after the completion of the recent strategic public university capital plan report.

Featured Resource - Equity Issue Brief: We are pleased to share a [new issue brief on racial/ethnic equity in postsecondary education and training in Oregon](#), recently published by the HECC. The first in a series of topics being explored, the brief analyzes the challenges with access to and successful completion of postsecondary education and training across race/ethnicity.

Talent, Innovation, and Equity (TIE) partnership convenes Equity Council: The HECC convened the first meeting of an Equity Leadership Council (ELC) February 11 as the next step of the Talent, Innovation and Equity (TIE) Partnership aimed to improve postsecondary access and success for indigenous and underrepresented learners. The convening of the ELC builds on months of engagement with community partners over the course of 12 community meetings in 2019 to gain insights on the needs and opportunities of Oregon's Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander learners. The ELC is comprised of community leaders, educational, and postsecondary institutional leaders who will help raise state awareness about inequities; advise the HECC agency staff on how to deploy its funding, regulatory, coordinating, and policy leadership responsibilities in ways that systematically address educational inequities; and commit to designing and implementing innovative, strategic, and evidence-based solutions.

### **Affordability and Financial Aid:**

The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) continues to encourage Oregonians to apply for grants and scholarships at [OregonStudentAid.gov](#). OSAC will begin making Oregon Opportunity Grant and Oregon Promise awards in mid-March for fall 2020 applicants.

Outreach and Presentations: To help students understand the programs detailed here, and the application processes, OSAC offers numerous [videos and resources for students, counselors, students, parents, and educators](#). Schools and organizations may [request a financial aid presentation by OSAC speakers](#) to their students, and Oregon tribal partners are encouraged and welcomed to make such requests.

5 things Oregonians should know about Financial Aid: Whether Oregonians are going to college for the first time, already enrolled, or returning after time off, they should know how financial aid can help them succeed. OSAC has provided five key tips on financial aid for Oregonians planning for college, and encourages sharing this list. Read and share the full [article on the My Oregon News website here](#).

1<sup>st</sup> Step for Financial Aid is FAFSA or ORSAA: Students should complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) or the [Oregon Student Aid Application](#) (ORSAA) to be considered for federal and/or state financial aid. The FAFSA is the primary application for federal and state financial aid, and the ORSAA is Oregon's alternative for undocumented students, including students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.

**OSAC Scholarships:** Oregon students may explore over 600 privately-funded scholarships and apply for up to 40 with one application. There is no cost to apply. Scholarship funds are available for: graduating high school seniors; undergraduate and graduate college students; GED® students; undocumented and DACA students; homeschooled students; community college and vocational school students; single parents returning to school; and more. Students must apply online at [OregonStudentAid.gov](https://OregonStudentAid.gov) and submit a completed [OSAC scholarship application](#) and all other required materials by the final deadline of March 2, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. (PST).

**Oregon Opportunity Grant:** The [Oregon Opportunity Grant \(OOG\)](#) is Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based grant program that supports low-income students, including both recent high school graduates and adult learners, who pursue undergraduate degrees at eligible public and private colleges and universities. The grants are awarded until funds are exhausted, so students should complete either the FAFSA or ORSAA as soon as possible to be considered for the grant in 2020-21. Students who are first-time OOG recipients in 2019-20 will be considered for a guaranteed second year award, provided they meet [certain additional criteria detailed here](#) and submit a 2020-21 FAFSA or ORSAA by May 1, 2020.

**Oregon Promise:** Current high school seniors and GED® test graduates may apply for the [Oregon Promise Grant](#), which helps pay for tuition at Oregon community colleges. Most students must apply for Oregon Promise during their senior year, or immediately after GED® test completion. Students must enroll in a community college no later than six months after graduation. Minimum GPA requirements apply. The program has rolling deadlines depending upon graduation date; [use the "Find Your Deadline" tool](#). Students can [complete an application now](#). Students are also required to complete either the FAFSA or the ORSAA by the deadline.

**Oregon Chafee Education and Training Grant:** The Chafee grant, a federal program administered in partnership with the Oregon Department of Human Services, helps current and former child welfare foster youth pay for postsecondary education and training. For information or to apply for the grant for 2020-21, visit the Chafee section of our website at [OregonStudentAid.gov](https://OregonStudentAid.gov).

**Oregon Teacher Scholars:** Applications for 2020-21 academic year scholarships are currently open and are due by March 2, 2020 through the Oregon Teacher Scholars Program (OTSP). Created in 2017 by the State of Oregon Legislature, and launched in 2018, the OTSP addresses the need for a diverse teaching workforce in K-12 education. Over the past 20 years, Oregon's K-12 student population has become increasingly ethnically and linguistically diverse, but its educator workforce has not mirrored this change. The OTSP aims to narrow this gap by easing the financial burdens for students. Students can apply at [OregonStudentAid.gov](https://OregonStudentAid.gov). We featured just a few of the outstanding scholarship recipients for 2019-20 in our [recent newsletter here](#).

**FAFSA Plus+:** OSAC continues to invite applicants for FAFSA Plus+. FAFSA Plus+ is a year-round program that includes Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion support, FAFSA completion events, and other college access resources. OSAC shares information about FAFSA completions with participating sites, allowing site staff to provide targeted assistance to high school seniors and their families. School districts, high schools, TRIO programs, Tribal education agencies, Indian organizations, or community-based organizations are invited to complete the non-competitive [FAFSA Plus+ Application](#).

## **Supporting Pathways and Student Success**

**Planned Closure of Concordia University –Portland:** After the [recent announcement that Concordia University in Portland will close](#) after Spring semester, HECC issued a [public statement here](#). HECC has been in contact with Concordia leadership in their teach-out and transfer plans for students, and strongly encourages current students to continue their degree goals. Because Concordia University is one of the Oregon nonprofit institutions that is legally exempt from the HECC's oversight and approval processes, HECC has limited formal authorities related to this closure; however we are working to support Concordia and its students in every way we can. In addition, the HECC Office of Workforce Investments, which supports Oregon workers statewide when layoffs occur, is providing support to Concordia faculty and staff.

**Academic Program Approvals:** At its February Commission meetings, the Commission approved the following academic programs at Oregon's public community colleges. Tillamook Bay CC: Certificates of Completion in Basic Healthcare and Medical Assisting. Clackamas CC: Certificates of Completion in CTE Instruction and Juvenile Corrections; AAS in Electronics Engineering Technology; and AAS in Microelectronics Systems Technology. Linn-Benton CC: Certificate

of Completion in Medical Assisting. Rogue CC: AAS in Dental Hygiene. University of Oregon: BA/BS in Data Science; BA/BS in Neuroscience; Western Oregon University: BS in Aquarium Science. Details on these programs are in our [February 13 meeting materials](#).

## **Economic and Community Impact**

Registration Open for Oregon Talent Summit, March 9, 2020: The Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) are pleased sponsor the second Oregon Talent Summit on Monday, March 9th, 2020 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. The WTDB/HECC Talent Summit provides the opportunity for the workforce system to gather industry-based information and data related to the talent needs of Oregon's employers and our current and future workers. We encourage partners from business, workforce and talent development, higher education, K-12, Oregon tribal partners, community organizations, and other key stakeholders to [register now for this marquee event](#).

Public Comment Invited Through March 11 for Oregon's 2020-2023 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan: Oregon's 2020-2023 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan is open for public comment from now until Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 5:00 pm. By following this link you can read the draft and get all the details on how to submit your public comments. Your participation in this open public comment period is an important opportunity to contribute to the success of Oregon's workforce development system serving businesses and individuals.

## **Other Updates**

Oregon Census 2020: Census data annually informs federal funding for more than 100 programs, including school lunches, highway construction, education, and much more. HECC is joining with other state partners to spread the word, and help ensure Oregon achieves a complete 2020 Census count. Learn more: [About Oregon Census | What You Can Do](#)

Recent Reports: In addition to the reports highlighted above, HECC recently submitted the following reports to the Oregon Legislature:

- House Bill 2998 (2017): [Postsecondary Student Transfer, 2019](#)
- House Bill 4059 (2012): [Credit for Prior Learning Report, 2019](#)
- ORS 326.500: [STEM Investment Council Report, 2019](#)
- House Bill 4053 (2018): [Accelerated Learning in Oregon: Access and Impact](#)

Welcome Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom, HECC's first permanent Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). In this new role, Ms. Rivera-Lindstrom will lead equity and diversity efforts both internally and externally for the agency, supporting our goals for equitable outcomes in postsecondary education, helping staff uphold our Equity Lens in policymaking, budgeting, and supporting the HECC agency to become more inclusive, diverse, and equitable for all employees. Ms. Rivera-Lindstrom brings 24 years of service in education and extensive expertise in equity change and leadership, most recently serving as Education Equity and High School Success Coordinator for the Clackamas Education Service District since 2017. She previously served as Education Equity and English Learner Specialist for the Oregon Department of Education's Office of Equity, the Multicultural/ English as a Second Language Coordinator for Tigard High School, and numerous other roles in public education, including as an English Language/Native Spanish Teacher, ELL Assistant, Migrant Education Assistant, and more. She completed a Bachelor's in Social and Behavioral Studies, a Master of Education from Portland State University, and an education administrative credential and doctoral coursework at George Fox University.