



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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September Agency Update:

September 2020 | Our partners can find previous quarterly Government to Government updates as well as other information on work and initiatives in the [Coordination with Oregon Tribes](#) section of our website.

Response to the Pandemic: As we approach the Fall term, many Oregonians are closely following colleges decisions on whether they are resuming in-person instruction, offering remote and distance learning, or a combination. The HECC continues working closely with the institutions in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority to communicate and clarify the [public health standards all Oregon colleges and universities](#) must follow for any in-person operations at public and private colleges statewide. The current higher education guidelines in effect are the guidelines first released on June 12 by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), [HECC OHA Public Health Guidelines for the Conduct of In-person Instructional, Residential, and Research Activities at Oregon Colleges and Universities](#), as well as Governor Brown's accompanying [Executive Order 20-28 Operation of Higher Education Institutions during Coronavirus Pandemic](#). Under these standards, each public or private Oregon college and university has the flexibility to determine how and when students return to campus, but must meet, at a minimum, the public health requirements contained in the guidance. As we focus on health and safety, we have also urged institutions to utilize the [Governor's Equity Framework for Pandemic Response](#) and to be

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

Upcoming HECC Meetings:

Higher Education Coordinating Commission, October 8, 2020 (tentative)
HECC Funding and Achievement Subcommittee: September 9, 2020, October 8, 2020 (tentative)
Oregon Volunteers Commission: September 4, 2020 (tentative)
Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB): September 11, 2020 (tentative)
Private Career School Advisory Committee, September 10, 2020 (tentative)
For other [upcoming public meetings of the HECC, see our website here.](#) For [Affiliated Boards \(WTDB, others, see here\)](#). For email notices of upcoming public Commission meetings, or to sign up for our newsletter, go to www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

extremely vigilant to the disproportionate economic fallout of the pandemic, which threatens to deepen existing inequalities along the lines of race, income, and geography in our higher education system.

Strategic Roadmap Leads to Interim Guiding Principles During Pandemic: Since late 2019 the HECC has worked with partners on developing a Strategic Roadmap for the future of postsecondary education in Oregon. We have shared offer a [few interim guiding principles](#) which have emerged from our initial work and asked all stakeholders to keep these guiding principles in mind as they take steps towards navigating the current crisis.

1. Postsecondary education and training are central to Oregon's return to strength and prosperity
2. Affordability and access to postsecondary education and training require investments of the state funding
3. Equity must be central to all we do
4. To achieve our shared goals, we must all commit to collaborate and work together in new ways

Equity Leadership: Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the HECC, presented at the August 11 public HECC meeting on the HECC's recent internal and external goals and initiatives related to racial justice and equity. In November 2019, the HECC began examining its equity processes, levels of understanding of how to authentically engage in the work, and identifying what was needed to strengthen the agency's long-standing commitment to equity and partnership with higher education institutions and other state agencies. Internally, agency leadership has adopted four overarching equity goals that will support consistency and accountability to the HECC's work and operationalizing of our equity lens. [Read more here.](#)

Workforce Initiatives during COVID-19: In addition to the resources already noted, the HECC Office of Workforce Investments (OWI), with agency and community partners, has undertaken extensive work to mitigate challenges for workers and employers impacted by COVID-19. The OWI works with the Oregon Employment Department, partner agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate Rapid Response services supporting affected workers and businesses during reported layoffs. Recently, this team issued [bilingual videos and communications](#) on topics important to workers experiencing layoffs: unemployment insurance, health insurance, and WorkSource Oregon resources. Through these partnerships, Oregon's COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance resources and information are now available [in fifteen languages](#). The OWI continues to support businesses and Oregon's nine [Local Workforce Development Boards](#) in their service by securing \$6M in new federal grant dollars to support dislocated workers, keeping local boards and workforce partners informed of opportunities, distributing \$1.1 million in layoff aversion funds to help businesses stay open or minimize the length of time employees are out of work, and more. The agency recently received two \$3M dollar federal grants from the U.S. Department of Labor for Disaster and Employment Recovery to support temporary jobs and training for dislocated workers affected by the pandemic. In addition, OWI will be working in collaboration with the Oregon Business Council (OBC) and ECONorthwest to update the recently released 2020 Oregon Talent Assessment, to address the outlook for dislocated workers from industries affected by the pandemic.

Budget Development Process for 2021-2023: HECC has finalized and submitted to the Department of Administrative Services a comprehensive and integrated Agency Budget Request (ARB) for Oregon's 2021-2023 biennial investments in the postsecondary education enterprise. Over public meetings from February through August, the HECC considered analysis and presentations on key budget components, to develop the recommended budget. At its [August 11 public meeting](#), Commissioners approved the biennial budget proposals related to 2021-2023 operational funding and capital projects at Oregon's public institutions, proposals related to financial aid, and new initiatives (policy option packages). All [the public materials on these proposals are on our website](#) under Commission materials. The ARB includes a substantial increase and redesign of the state's financial aid program to better serve Oregonian youth in the pipeline as well as adult students, with state financial aid funding increasing by \$289.2 above current service level (CSL). It also calls for increases to the public university funds of \$22.5M, an increase to the Community College Support Fund of \$32.9M above CSL, \$35M for a competitive Innovative Grant program focused on supporting equitable outcomes at the community colleges, bonding authority for prioritized capital projects at the institutions, as well as numerous other funding packages related to expanding workforce opportunities, improving streamlined and innovative approaches to learner pathways, equitably serving underserved and adult learner populations, and agency operation needs. The HECC is continuing to work with partners on legislative concepts for possible introduction as 2021 legislative bills, in conjunction with the agency's development of budget recommendations.

Legislative Updates: The Legislature held its second special session of 2020 on Monday, August 10th. The session was almost exclusively dedicated to budget issues related to the coronavirus and associated economic downturn, and several budget cuts were made to postsecondary education programs for 2020-21. Notably, the major operating funds for the community colleges and universities were not reduced. However, reductions were made to a number of specific financial aid and statewide programs [detailed in the update to the Commission here](#), including a \$3.6M reduction to the Oregon Promise.

Eyes remain turned toward Capitol Hill as negotiations have slowed down on a potential additional stimulus package. Both Democrat and Republican proposals contain significant funding for higher education, though major differences exist between the total size of each party and chamber's proposal. Tentative agreement between the House and the Administration to adopt a clean continuing resolution to continue funding the Government past the end of September means one leverage point for a coronavirus relief may be taken off the table, and there is no definitive timeline for adoption of the next relief package.

Funding Formula Review: In addition to the approval of the ARB, the HECC is nearing completion of an extensive year-long review of the [funding distribution model for the public universities](#) in the state, the first comprehensive review since the model was launched in 2015. The funding formula creates state financial incentives for universities to increase the number of resident students who complete degrees, with additional funding weights for students of color, low-income, rural, and veteran students. The review process will be discussed next at the September 9 public HECC subcommittee meeting.

Recent Research and Reports:

HECC Releases Third Annual Statewide Snapshots: Over 376,000 students whose home state is Oregon were enrolled at public community colleges and universities in 2018-19, and completion rates for students at the state's public institutions continue to rise. However, large percentages of Oregon learners face affordability challenges and serious inequities in education and training, including in graduation. These and other insights are evident in the HECC's [third annual Statewide Higher Education Snapshots](#), a set of 27 one-page reader-friendly summaries on Oregon's postsecondary learners in 2018-19. The Snapshots answer frequently asked data questions on enrollment, affordability, and outcomes on Oregon public postsecondary students—with break-outs by race/ethnicity and first-generation status, among others. By clicking on the locations of interest on the [Oregon map here](#), readers can explore all Snapshots including the aggregate statewide data summaries (the [statewide summary](#), [community college summary](#), and [public university summary](#)), as well as 24 individual Snapshots for each of Oregon's public postsecondary education institutions. See the summary in our [HECC Collaborations newsletter here](#).

Focus Group Research Illuminates Systemic Barriers for Adult Learners of Color: We are pleased to present the results of HECC-sponsored focus group research illuminating the barriers to enrollment and completion faced by adult learners from underrepresented populations in Oregon: [Exploring Experiences of Postsecondary Education for Adult Learners from Communities of Color in Oregon](#), prepared for the HECC by researchers at SOU and PSU. This research is a key component of the HECC [Talent, Innovation, and Equity \("TIE"\) partnership grant](#) to help reduce educational disparities faced by students of color. In this report, the researchers describe four categories of barriers faced by adult learners--economic, social and cultural, institutional, and structural and identity-based—as well as supports and interventions that were reported in removing these barriers.

Issue Brief: Enrollment Impact of COVID-19 in Public Postsecondary Institutions, Preliminary Data: In its most recent issue brief, HECC explores preliminary data to evaluate the [impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on 2020 Spring term enrollment and continuation at Oregon's public institutions](#).

Other Legislative Reports: HECC has recently submitted the following reports to the Oregon Legislature.

- HB 5024 (2019) Budget Note: [Report to the Oregon Legislature: Collecting Institutional Financial Data](#)
- House Bill 2263 (2019): [Report to the Oregon Legislature: Graduate Credit for Dual Credit Teachers](#)

Affordability and Financial Aid:

The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) continues to encourage Oregonians to pursue grants and scholarships at [OregonStudentAid.gov](#).

Outreach and Presentations: To help students understand the programs detailed here, and the application processes, OSAC offers numerous [videos and resources for students, counselors, 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.

1st 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. Learn more about Financial Aid Programs Administered by the HECC at www.oregonstudentaid.gov

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

Talent, Innovation, and Equity (TIE) partnership: The Oregon HECC Talent, Innovation, and Equity Partnership grant continues to build momentum from our statewide equity roundtable listening tour in 2019-2020. The Leadership Council for Equity, comprising of leaders from various postsecondary institutions and cultural community organizations, are developing culturally relevant and responsive tangible tools aimed to disrupt systemic practices in Oregon's postsecondary landscape that have created disproportionate educational achievement gaps amongst Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders learners. In addition, in Spring 2020, HECC issued a Request for Proposals for subgrants to postsecondary institutions in Oregon to expand funding for or to facilitate the formation of a collaborative partnership partnerships with Cultural Community-based Organizations (CBOs), and the agency is currently evaluating proposals. [Learn more here](#).

Academic Program Approvals: At its August Commission meetings, the Commission approved the following academic programs at Oregon's public colleges and universities: Blue Mountain Community College: Certificate, Medical Assisting; AAS, Industrial Systems Technology; Chemeketa Community College, Certificate, Computer Information Systems; Klamath Community College, AAS, Lab Technician; Western Oregon University, B.S. in Economics and Mathematics. For more information, see the [August 13, 2020 HECC public meeting materials here](#).

HECC Supports Students and Employees after Closure of Pioneer Pacific College: Students impacted by the [closure of Pioneer Pacific College can find Frequently Asked Questions](#), including a growing list of transfer options for specific programs. The HECC was notified of the planned closure of Pioneer Pacific College in Springfield, Beaverton, and Portland, including Oregon Culinary Institute, with a final closure date of July 31, 2020. As the authorizing agency for the college, the HECC Office of Academic Policy and Authorization is taking steps to assist students that were enrolled at the time of closure by compiling a list of institutions that have the same or similar programs and are interested in providing transfer opportunities. In addition to these efforts, the HECC Office of Workforce Investments is responsible for Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) and works with state workforce partners to support businesses and individuals experiencing layoffs.

Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship Supported by Federal Grant: HECC recently received a \$450,000 grant from the Department of Labor to expand activities to promote Registered Apprenticeships across the state in partnership with Oregon community colleges and state agency partners. The grant will allow HECC to work with partners to promote and expand registered Apprenticeship in the workforce system, increase alignment between workforce, education, and industry partners, and improve data sharing and collection.

OSAC Pilots Summer Bridge Campaign to Encourage Education After High School: Every summer thousands of college-bound students don't end up attending college, and the pandemic has added significant uncertainty for many families. To help them avoid any pitfalls they may face, the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) is piloting a "Summer Bridge" campaign, reaching out to more than 15,000 recent high school graduates and GED completers statewide by email on a weekly basis to give them tools and tips to succeed this academic year.

Economic and Community Impact

Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) update: The Workforce Talent and Development Board, supported by the HECC Office of Workforce Investments, is pleased to report that their State Plan has been formally approved by the Department of Labor. They are working on an Artificial Intelligence Report which will be provided to the Governor and Legislature, as well as additional workforce analysis including a report on Essential Employability, an addendum to the Talent Assessment to focus on the COVID impact to Oregon industries, and other reports to guide statewide workforce efforts. They are also planning for a Workforce Leadership Summit this October in partnership with the Oregon Business Council.

Oregon Volunteers update: Oregon Volunteers reports that COVID-19 greatly affected AmeriCorps programming in Oregon. With the shutdown of schools, organizations, parks, etc., many programs had to quickly pivot and identify ways to not only participate in crisis response, but keep members in service and receiving living allowance benefits. Oregon Volunteers, the state Commission for AmeriCorps in Oregon, quickly worked with programs to identify solutions, and strategize new service opportunities members could participate in safely. Programs pivoted many activities to teleservice, such as online tutoring, or to crisis response, such as food distribution in underserved communities, and to supplement school-based food programs.

HECC has participated in numerous public forums recently to answer questions related to the pandemic.

HECC Participates in Higher Education Town Hall Convened by Representative Teresa Alonso León: HECC leaders were delighted to take part in a virtual town hall meeting convened by Representative Teresa Alonso León, on July 29, 2020 providing an opportunity for students and educators to voice their needs and concerns concerning COVID-19 and the upcoming academic year.

Facebook Live Event on Fall at Oregon's Colleges: HECC Executive Director Ben Cannon joined Dr. Tom Jeanne, Deputy State Health Officer for the Oregon Health Authority for a Facebook Live on Wednesday August 12 about what to expect at Oregon colleges and universities during COVID-19. The event video is available for viewing on the [OHA YouTube Channel here](#).

Other Updates

HECC Executive Director Ben Cannon to serve on California Higher Education Recovery with Equity Taskforce: HECC Executive Director Ben Cannon is one of numerous higher education experts serving on a State of California taskforce focused on equity in higher education during the pandemic recovery. See the [press release here](#).

Commission Membership Update: On August 31, Governor Brown announced her nomination of Helen Edwards and Ricardo Lujan-Valerio to the HECC. These appointments require confirmation by the State Senate, which is scheduled to meet September 24th. If confirmed they will fill two voting positions that are vacant after the resignation of former commissioners Tayo Akins and Carmen Rubio in April and August, 2020 respectively.