



# Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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## March Agency Update:

March, 2017 | Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)'s [2016-20 Strategic Plan](#) provides a foundation and scaffolding for preparing more Oregonians with the degrees, certificates, and training they need to succeed in their goals and careers. The plan defines six key priorities that guides higher education funding and policy decisions within the HECC authority, including: goal setting, public college and university funding, pathways, student support, college affordability, and economic and community impact.

The HECC launched a new expanded website in late 2016 at [www.oregon.gov/highered](http://www.oregon.gov/highered), and among the new resources, partners can now find this and former quarterly Government to Government updates as well as other information on work and initiatives in [Coordination with Oregon Tribes](#) located in the [Equity and Student Success](#) section. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is a prominent theme and guiding priority for the HECC. As such, we are pleased to share the recently completed the [HECC Affirmative Action/Diversity & Inclusion Plan](#), which highlights activities over the past biennium and goals for the upcoming biennium.

Higher Education Budget: Governor Kate Brown released her recommended budget for 2017-19 in December. HECC has published a fact sheet on the higher education budget ([available here](#)), with key investments for higher education and will begin presentations to the Joint Ways and Means Education subcommittee in March, 2017. As detailed in the agency fact sheet, the Governor's budget invests in college affordability and opportunity by increasing and sustaining investments in Oregon's key financial aid programs to ensure that the opportunity for postsecondary success is within reach for Oregonians who are struggling financially.

- Increases funding by 8.1 percent (an increase of 3.4 percent above Current Service Level) for the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG), Oregon's longstanding need-based financial aid program serving the lowest-income Oregonians with grants of \$2,250 toward postsecondary expenses. The new funds are expected to increase the number of students served by approximately 5,000 to a total of about 85,000 students for the biennium.

## Our Commission

The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is dedicated to fostering and sustaining the best, most rewarding pathways to opportunity and success for all Oregonians through an accessible, affordable and coordinated network for educational achievement beyond a high school diploma. Oregon's higher education and workforce system serves hundreds of thousands of learners through seven public universities, 17 public community colleges, private and independent colleges and universities, workforce programs, and private career and trade schools., who oversees the work of the HECC agency.

Established in 2011, HECC is a 15-member volunteer commission responsible for advising the Oregon Legislature, the Governor, and the Chief Education Office on higher education policy. The Commission is supported by an executive director who oversees the agency.

## Events

### Full Commission Meeting:

April 13, 2017

### Funding and Achievement Subcommittee:

March 8, 2017

April 12, 2017

### Student Success and Institutional Collaboration Subcommittee: April 12, 2017

### Oregon Youth Conservation Corps Advisory Committee Meeting: April 12-13, 2017

*For email notices of upcoming public HECC meetings, or sign up for our newsletter, go to*

[www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)

- Fully funds the Oregon Promise for the biennium, providing grants to support most or all tuition at Oregon community colleges for recent high school graduates and GED recipients. First awarded in 2016, the grant is designed to support students for up to 2 years. The GRB funds the current level of support for the program, continuing support for current recipients, as well as providing grants to eligible students in the high school classes of 2017 and 2018.

The budget preserves critical investments made last biennium to Oregon's public community colleges and universities, and makes significant investments in capital and campus safety to support the ability of campuses to support student success and completion.

- Preserves the 2015-17 Legislatively Adopted Budget (LAB) investment level in the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) at \$550M.
- Preserves the 2015-17 LAB investment level in the Public University Support Fund at \$667.3M.
- Invests in bonding for 18 new capital projects at the universities, and 13 capital infrastructure projects at the community colleges, as well as campus safety investments.

This budget also preserves core funding for continued work at the state level to improve and simplify student pathways between sectors and institutions, and improve transitions from high school to postsecondary, from community college to universities, and from education to career.

Legislative Update: In the first month of the Session, HECC Executive Director Ben Cannon has provided overview presentations on higher education structure, funding, affordability, and student transfer to the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee; this and other resources are available on our HECC [legislative resources web page here](#). HECC sponsored legislation in 2017 includes HB 2331 Clarifying the State 40-40-20 Goals, HB2314 Agency Statutory Cleanup, HB 2313 Accelerated Learning Standards, and HB 2312 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Technical Changes; more information is in the [summary document here](#). After becoming aware in December that the Oregon Promise program required additional funding to meet commitments in the current year, HECC staff worked to educate legislators on the status of the program, its success in recruiting more students than anticipated, and the higher than expected credit loads per term being taken by students. Currently, [Senate Bill 55](#) is working its way through legislative committees. This bill appropriates approximately \$3.6 million to the HECC to keep the promise made to students in the current year. Another topic emerging this session is the idea of improving the process of student transfer between colleges and universities, and HECC has testified on this subject.

Reports: The Commission approved and submitted the following reports to the Oregon Legislature in recent months:

- [Report to the Oregon Legislature, Senate Bill 860 \(2015\) Career and Mentoring Pilots](#), February, 2017
- [Annual Evaluations of Public Universities with Governing Boards](#), January, 2017
- [Report to the Oregon Legislature: 2016 Annual Report on National Career Readiness Certificate Program](#), January 2017
- [HECC Cover Letter, Senate Bill 1540 \(2016\), Methods to Increase Math Degree Attainment at Oregon Public Universities](#), January, 2017
- [Report to Oregon Legislature: Senate Bill 1540 \(2016\), Methods to Increase Math Degree Attainment at Oregon Public Universities](#), January, 2017
- [Report to the Oregon Legislature: First Term of the Oregon Promise](#), December, 2016

Workforce leaders have respond to the Governor's request to prioritize the underserved: In a December [letter to the Oregon Workforce Investment Board \(OWIB\) and workforce agencies and partners](#), Governor Brown expressed that her priorities for workforce "are protecting services for children and lifting families out of poverty" by paying "attention to communities who are frequently underserved – communities of color, our rural communities, and families in poverty." In response, the OWIB and partners in the workforce system, including the HECC Office of Workforce Investments, recently provided responses, affirming the priorities of the Governor and describing potential improvements that would allow the workforce system to prioritize services to the most underserved Oregonians. HECC is joining with the OWIB and partners in the workforce system to review these, and other, formal responses, to identify areas of agreement, and develop strategies to better focus workforce investments.

## **Affordability and Financial Aid**

Financial Aid Opportunities: The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) staff have been busy working with partners statewide to process applications and to support students and families in applying for financial aid.

- OSAC-administered Private Scholarships: OSAC is processing scholarship applications since the scholarship deadline just passed at March 1 at 5:00 p.m.
- Oregon Opportunity Grant and other State and Federal Aid: [Oregon Opportunity Grant](#) is Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based grant program that helps students pay for college at public community colleges, public universities and participating private institutions statewide. Students should complete either the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) or the [Oregon Student Aid Application \(ORSAA\)](#) for the upcoming school year. The ORSAA is Oregon's alternative to the FAFSA for students who are not U.S. citizens nor eligible non-citizens, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students. OSAC uses data from the FAFSA or the ORSAA to determine students' eligibility for the Oregon Promise, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and numerous scholarships. Information from the FAFSA is also used to determine eligibility for federal aid, including the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Direct Loans, and Federal Work-Study.

- **Oregon Promise:** The [application](#) is currently open for the Oregon Promise, Oregon's new state grant program supporting community college tuition for recent high school graduates and GED recipients. Application deadlines depend on student status, including a **deadline of July 1** for students planning to begin community college in fall 2017. Learn about the Oregon Promise including deadlines for new students and renewal processes for continuing students at [www.OregonPromise.org](http://www.OregonPromise.org), or visit the [Spanish version of the Oregon Promise website here](#). Additional informational materials in English and Spanish will be available soon.

**Resources for Undocumented Students:** The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) is pleased to announce a [new web page on Financial Aid for Undocumented and DACA students](#). Undocumented students, including students with DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) status, are not eligible for federal financial aid (including the Federal Pell Grant), but may be eligible for Oregon grants and certain private scholarships. The page has information on eligibility and application processes for OSAC financial aid programs, including the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA). The page will be available in Spanish in the near future.

**Oregon Promise: early findings on impacts:** Two recent reports provide early snapshots of the impact of the Oregon Promise, Oregon's new state grant program supporting community college tuition for recent high school graduates and GED recipients. The grants were first awarded in fall 2016, and the reports take early qualitative and quantitative looks at the impact of this pioneering program, the second of its type in the nation. On February, 2017, [Education Northwest released a study](#) showing that the program appears to be influencing college-going decisions of Oregonians, with an even stronger influence on first-generation Oregonians. And in January, 2017, the HECC was able to complete the much-anticipated analysis of the first participants in the program, which was included in the [first formal biennial report to the Oregon Legislature](#). Oregon has seen a tremendous student response to the Oregon Promise: nearly 6,800 recent high school and GED completers participated in Fall, 2016, significantly exceeding earlier projections. Approximately 44 percent of the first term students were first-generation. Collectively, this preliminary data suggests that the program may have influenced an increase in the percentage of recent high school graduates enrolling in Oregon community colleges.

**Tribal Organizations invited to join FAFSA Plus+ Program:** HECC-OSAC is still expanding the FAFSA Plus+ program. We invite school districts, high schools, TRIO programs, Tribal Education Agencies, Indian Organizations, or community-based organizations to complete our non-competitive [FAFSA Plus+ Application](#). FAFSA Plus+ is a year-round program that includes FAFSA completion activities and support, College Goal Oregon (CGO) events, financial literacy information, scholarship resources, award letter help, and other college access information. OSAC shares student-level FAFSA data and best practices with sites, allowing site staff to provide targeted assistance to their students who need to complete and submit a FAFSA, make corrections, and notify students who have been selected for verification. Please direct any questions to [FAFSAplus@osac.state.or.us](mailto:FAFSAplus@osac.state.or.us).

### **Supporting Pathways and Student Success**

**New Programs Approved:** In January and February, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approved the following academic programs at Oregon community colleges (CC) and universities. **Community Colleges**—Blue Mountain CC: AAS, Veterinary Technology. Clackamas CC: Certificate, Industrial Maintenance Technology; Certificate, Industrial Maintenance; Mechanical Maintenance; AAS, Industrial Maintenance Technology. Lane CC: AAS, Business Management. Linn Benton CC: Certificate, Surgical Technician. Mt. Hood CC: Certificate, Medical Assistant; Certificate, Fitness Technology; AAS, Professional Theatre Technician; AAS, Mechatronics. Oregon Coast CC: Certificate, Advanced Medical Technician. Umpqua CC: AAS, Computer Information Systems. **Universities**—University of Oregon: BA/BS, Spatial Data Science.

**Coming Soon: Funding Opportunity for Title II Adult Education and Literacy Services, WIOA Title II:** If your organization offers adult and literacy education, please be on the alert for an upcoming funding opportunity. The HECC Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) administers Adult Basic Skills in Oregon through administration of Title II of the U.S. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), also known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Title II provides federal funds to local providers and supports their leadership and professional development in order to assure quality basic skills services for adults across Oregon. In the coming month, HECC/CCWD will issue a Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) to distribute WIOA Title II funds for the delivery of approved adult education and literacy services beginning July 1, 2017, and continuing through June 30, 2019. [READ MORE HERE](#).

**Campus Safety Public Work Group recommends ongoing safety council and investments:** In January, the Campus Safety Work Group, [presented to the Commission](#) its recommendations for a coordinated public safety strategy and plan across all of Oregon's public and private higher education institutions. The work group was first convened in 2015 by Governor Brown in the wake of the tragic Umpqua Community College shooting on October 1, 2015. The recommendations focus on improving campus safety efforts that would address a wide scope of possible safety emergencies, ranging from violent crimes to natural disasters. The recommendations are available in the [final report here](#) or in the [summary poster](#). A primary recommendation is the establishment of a Higher Education Safety and Resilience Council as a standing body to continue to advance and implement the work group's efforts with Oregon institutions, and to provide advice on needs, track changes, and provides resource recommendations to the Governor's office, the Legislature, and the HECC. The level of campus training and resources varies widely from campus to campus across the state. To address this, in the first phase of implementation, the group recommends state funding for a 3-year statewide training initiative, establishing an online training and resource portal to share promising practices and protocols across institutions, and launching a physical security grant program to pay for critical public safety infrastructure needs.

### **Economic and Community Impact**

Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) continues with its emphasis on business led strategies that serve a breadth of individuals including traditionally underserved populations- rural, communities of color, second/multiple generation impoverished and special populations such as the disability community.

### **Events and Other Updates**

HECC Equity Advisory Work Group Convenes leaders statewide for Equity Summit: Thank you to all who joined the HECC and campus leadership on January 18 for a day-long equity summit in Salem. In conjunction with the equity advisory group, comprised of equity professionals designated by public institution presidents to advise HECC staff, the summit addressed higher education diversity, equity and inclusion issues. The event was particularly focused on cultural competency for staff, faculty and administrators, and saw outstanding turnout from public institutions. Presenters focused on the ongoing application of the equity lens, the House Bill 3308 “Cultural Competency” workgroup recommendations, pending legislation, building shared definitions about cultural competencies, best practices and resources for support. We look forward to further engagement on these important issues.

HECC News Clips service: The HECC provides a regular email service including a selection of news clips primarily related to Oregon postsecondary education. If you wish to sign up for this email, please [subscribe to news clips here](#).

For more on current work of the HECC, please see recent meeting materials, or go to [oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://oregon.gov/HigherEd).