



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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September Agency Update:

September, 2016 | 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 will guide higher education funding and policy decisions within the HECC authority, including:

- **Goal-setting:** sharpening state higher education goals in specific areas, including for working-age adults, and better reporting our progress towards meeting them.
- **Public College and University Funding:** supporting sustainable state funding linked to student success.
- **Pathways:** simplifying and aligning student pathways from cradle to career.
- **Student Support:** enhancing student success, safety, and completion.
- **College Affordability:** limiting student costs for attending college in Oregon.
- **Economic and Community Impact:** contributing to prosperous workforce, economy, and communities.

The HECC met at Columbia Gorge Community College in August for a meeting focused on the budget recommendation for higher education for the upcoming biennium and a discussion with state and national leaders on the role of the state coordinating board. The afternoon of the August 11 meeting was focused on a vibrant discussion of the role of the HECC in a national and state context. The conversation followed a [presentation by Dennis Jones, president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems \(NCHEMS\)](#) on promising practices nationwide pertaining to the roles and functions of coordinating boards, the national report "[State Policy Leadership for the Future](#)" by [Aims McGuinness \(Education Commission for the States\)](#), and [framing questions posed by Director Ben Cannon](#). Mr. Jones emphasized that the primary functions of a state

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 14-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 HECC agency. For more information, see About Us on the HECC website.

Events

October 13, 2016: Funding and Achievement Subcommittee, Salem

October 12, 2016: Funding and Achievement Subcommittee, Salem

October 12, 2016, Student Success and Institutional Collaboration Subcommittee, Salem

For email notices of upcoming public HECC meetings, or sign up for our newsletter, go to www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

coordinating board should focus on establishing the “what” of state goals and the metrics on progress toward them, while leaving the “how” to our partners at colleges, universities, and the organizations and communities that support them.

Funding and Coordination to Achieve Oregon’s Goals: On September 1, the HECC submitted the agency’s budget request for higher education, recommending to the Governor an ambitious budget for higher education that would enable a significant step forward towards making higher education more affordable, with smoother student pathways, higher likelihood of completion, and better ability to collect and analyze data to inform state policy-making. The budget request was approved at the August 11 Commission meeting, and reflects the HECC’s ongoing focus on streamlining connections between levels and sectors of higher education, so that students have the fewest roadblocks and the best chances for success. The [agency budget request detailed here](#) reflects the priorities adopted in our Commission’s “[Strategic Plan 2016-2020](#),” and was developed after six months of deliberation by our Commission and its Funding and Achievement Subcommittee, with significant input from stakeholders.

The HECC’s largest recommended 2017-2019 budget items are focused on student success and affordability including priority investments in need-based financial aid to bring Oregon to the national average, continuation of the Oregon Promise, and significant increases in funding for our public colleges and universities, specifically:

- Increases in need-based financial aid including a proposed increase of \$60.6M to the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG), bringing the OOG funding to \$200M
- An increase of \$34M to the Oregon Promise grant program for community college students, including \$30M in additional funding to continue the existing program, bringing the total to \$44M
- Increases in the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) of \$244.8M, bringing it to a total of \$795M
- Increases in the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) of \$278M, bringing it to a total of \$943M

In addition to these largest budget items, the HECC highlighted the need for specific policy option packages that support the Commission’s key strategies for enhancing pathways, affordability, economic impact, and student success. These include modest agency capacity increases to support the HECC’s ability to operate efficiently and transparently, to provide rich data and analysis to policymakers, and to appropriately oversee state investments in higher education. Finally, the Commission ranked capital requests from the community colleges and public universities according to specific statewide criteria. The Governor and her advisers will consider these requests as she builds her own proposed budget for review by the Legislature.

Affordability and Financial Aid

[FAFSA opens early this year:](#) With federal changes, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opens early this year, on October 1, 2016. Please help us get the message out to students and families! Go to: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

[Invitation to Host a College Goal Oregon Event:](#) With the FAFSA opening early, we are working with partners to best prepare students and families. High schools, colleges, and community-based college access organizations are invited to join the fun of helping students complete the FAFSA by hosting a College Goal Oregon (CGO) event. CGO events are a part of the year-round FAFSA Plus+ program and help students and their families become aware of the FAFSA and how to apply for financial aid. Several colleges, high schools, and community-based organizations across Oregon will host events this coming October. Attendees receive free education including information on navigating through the steps to apply for financial aid, learning about scholarship opportunities, completing the FAFSA, and overcoming other postsecondary education financial aid challenges. This education is provided by trained volunteers and financial aid experts. If your organization would like to host one or more CGO events please contact [Kristin Vreeland](#) at OSAC to complete the event notification form. OSAC will provide training and resources to CGO site coordinators and volunteers, as well as guidance on planning and coordinating a CGO event. For more information, check out our updated website CollegeGoalOregon.gov.

[Oregon Opportunity Grant:](#) Effective for the 2016-2017 academic year, Oregon Opportunity Grants will be awarded first to students with the greatest financial need, and OSAC is busy notifying students of these awards. OSAC is using the federally calculated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to determine financial need and will award grants based on students’ EFCs, starting with EFCs of \$0. This is a change in policy resulting from the State’s passage of House Bill 2407 in 2015. OSAC will continue to make awards until funds are exhausted. A fixed amount of \$2,250 is available for full-time, full-year attendance at any eligible Oregon-based postsecondary institution. Students’ financial need must be at or above \$2,250 to be considered. OSAC releases a portion of the award to the student’s school account at the start of each academic term (quarter or semester) and prorates awards for students enrolled at least half time.

[OSAC Scholarships:](#) OSAC administers over 500 private scholarships for Oregon students to pursue college and career training beyond high school. The OSAC Scholarship application will open in November for scholarship awards in 2017-18. Go to: <http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/scholarships.aspx>

Oregon Promise: As of August 31, 2016, 10,277 Oregon students are eligible to receive grants under the new Oregon Promise program. Awards for Fall 2016 are still in process, so the total number of Oregon Promise recipients will not be known until students enroll in community college this fall. The Oregon Promise application will be opening in October for the 2017-18 academic year. Go to the OSAC website at <http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/>

Oregon Promise Student Supports Program: The Oregon Promise eMentoring and Student Support Program is intended to help Oregon Promise recipients stay on track and be successful throughout their community college journey. Oregon Promise students will receive emails and texts throughout the collegiate academic year with friendly reminders, tips, and college-specific articles that will aid in their success. Students also have the opportunity to receive eMentoring via an Oregon Promise eMentor. This eMentor will communicate with the student through monitored email or text. Students receive one-on-one support from an Oregon Promise eMentor on college-related questions or problems that may arise throughout the year. Topics can include financial aid, scholarships, academic interests, graduation requirements, navigating campus, and more. For more information about this program, contact the Oregon Promise eMentoring Coordinator, Collin Ellis, at OPSupport@osac.state.or.us.

Open educational resource (OER) grants in action, focused on tuition affordability for high-enrollment courses: We are pleased to report that with recent grants, 9 campuses across the state are working to expand the availability of open educational resources (OERS) to reduce textbook cost for Oregon students. Through the Open Education Resources (OER) grant program, funded as a result of HB2871 (2015), the HECC awarded grants to 5 community colleges and 4 universities to adopt and implement OER into 15 courses that were identified as high enrollment and having high cost textbooks. This is a great display of collaboration among the universities and community colleges to save students money and help them towards completing college degrees. A list of the grant awardees can be found on the [HECC OER webpage](#) here.

Supporting Pathways and Student Success

HECC supports students after ITT Tech's closure: Following ITT's recent announcement of its immediate closure, the HECC is stepping in to inform local students of their options for moving forward with their degrees. ITT is a national for-profit chain of colleges with two Oregon campuses, located in Salem and Portland, that are authorized to offer associate and bachelor's degrees by the HECC. HECC staff are in direct contact with current Oregon ITT Technical Institute students to ensure they are informed of their current options as consumers and learners, and a [webpage on the HECC site has been created for ongoing ITT student updates](#). The updates includes specific guidance on transfer of credit to other schools, transcripts, federal student aid, loan discharge, surety bond information veterans benefits, and key contacts in Oregon. ITT's closure announcement follows a decision by the U.S. Department of Education to impose new restrictions related to participation in federal financial aid programs. Prior to the announcement, HECC had already begun mapping guidance for students in the event of closure, including proactively requesting student contact information and other specific information from the school.

Research building on Transfer Student Bill of Rights informs new efforts to improve transfer pathways: The HECC and campus partners statewide are finding common solutions to ensure that transfer students can appropriately apply credits they take toward their intended degree programs. In the 2015 session the Oregon Legislature passed [House Bill 2525](#) requiring HECC to investigate why some credits for coursework at community colleges were not counted toward bachelor's degrees at Oregon public universities, and to create a new research plan that tracks and reports transfer student success outcomes. In June, 2016, the HECC approved the HB 2525 [report](#), which surveys the current state of inter-sector or vertical transfer, and collects and analyzes quantitative data (credits accumulated per degree) and applications of current transfer policy and practice. Qualitative data on transfer student experiences is examined in a [companion report](#) (completed by University of Oregon MPA students). Taken together, this in-depth report and research has prompted a proposal in the upcoming budget cycle to build a common transfer equivalency platform and to fund increased support for transfer student data research and reporting.

Community College Placement Final Report: After months of work group discussions, collaborative activity and agency research, in August, HECC approved the final HB 2681 report, which makes recommendations for multiple measures to be used for placement in community colleges: [House Bill 2681 Community College Course Placement Final Report](#).

HECC adopts standards and peer review process for new forms of accelerated learning: Thousands of students statewide benefit from college credit earned during high school, and as new types of partnerships and strategies to deliver college-level learning have grown, enrollment in these programs has also grown. HECC is working to support the success of accelerated college credit students by ensuring standards are upheld in partnership with educators statewide. The HECC adopted [additional standards for accelerated learning credit](#) in June, 2016, and will coordinate a peer review cycle for programs, which will include not only Dual Credit but also additional opportunities with Sponsored Dual Credit and Assessment-based Learning Credit. The new standards provide specific guidelines for each of these forms of accelerated college credit partnerships, related to curriculum, faculty, requirements, tuition and fees, assessments, program improvement, transferability of credits, and more.

C3 Reach Higher Oregon Summer Summit fuels regional planning and counselor connections: We invite you to learn about the needs of Oregon students – in their own words – in this [video](#) that was premiered at the C3 Reach Higher Oregon: Summer Summit 2016. The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion is proud to have played a key role in the Summit, which was organized by C3: *Career College Collaborative*, and made possible through the combined efforts of OSAC, the Chief Education Office, the Department of Education, and numerous other partners. As part of the national Reach Higher initiative, the Summit was aimed at mobilizing career and college advising

supports for all students. On July 19-20, this first-ever Summit brought together 375 school and community members – administrators, counselors, advisors, college access professionals, and others – in Bend to learn and work together. The Summit was designed to inspire and inform regional educational planning, to provide the support and tools for counselors and advisors to meaningfully guide students, and to bridge student advising between K-12 and higher education or career.

National accreditor at-risk of losing U.S. Department of Education recognition: An accrediting body that accredits 9 postsecondary institutions in Oregon could lose its status, and HECC is in communication with the schools that may be affected should such a decision be made. The U.S. Department of Education received a recommendation in June to deny continued recognition to the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS). In support of Oregon students, the HECC is working with licensing boards and schools to identify any potential impacts on current students enrolled at ACICS accredited institutions, should a final determination be made. More information:

- [US Department of Education Updates on staff reports and Secretary decision letters](#)
- [Information on what accreditation means for students](#)

New Programs Approved: In August, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approved the following academic programs at Oregon community colleges and universities. University approvals: Portland State University, B.A./B.S. in Urban and Public Affairs. Community college program approvals: Central Oregon Community College, A.A.S., Hospitality Management; Klamath Community College, A.A.S, Emergency Response Operations; Portland Community College, A.A.S, Professional Music.

Economic and Community Impact

Apprenticeships: The HECC Office of Workforce Investments continues their work to increase apprenticeship opportunities in Oregon. A \$3.2 million grant application has been submitted to the federal Department of Labor (DOL) in order to expand apprenticeships beyond the most utilized building trades to non-traditional industries such as information technology as well as underserved populations. An additional DOL grant application to serve dislocated workers through re-employment and data integration was also submitted for consideration.

The Oregon Youth Conservation Corps wrapped up its summer employment opportunities for crews across the state. Grants for school year programs have been signed. The next opportunity for grants occurs in the winter of 2017 for summer crew opportunities to work in partnership with public land partners.

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.

Partner updates

Oregon Student Success Center: The Oregon Community College Association has announced the launch of the [Oregon Student Success Center](#) for Oregon's 17 community colleges. The primary work of the Center will concentrate on knitting together research, policies, and promising practices to increase understanding and interconnectedness, assist colleges in the analysis and use of data, as well as provide leadership to create the vision for future student success work. The Center is a collaboration with the State, institutions, and foundations that will be part of a [network with twelve other states](#).

2016 Educator Equity Report: In July, the Chief Education Office announced release of the 2016 Educator Equity Report documenting Oregon's progress towards increasing the number of educators who reflect the student population across the state. Click [here](#) for a full copy of the Report and Appendices.

Other Updates

Expanded Website coming soon: The HECC is currently developing a new and expanded website to fully represent the mission and scope of the Commission and agency work. Thanks to all partners who have helped us with feedback through our recent tests and surveys!

College and Career Readiness Event Calendar: OSAC is pleased to share the College and Career Readiness Event Calendar and welcomes submissions of events for students, parents, and educators. To submit an event for consideration, please email us.

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.