



January 2, 2026

TINA KOTEK  
GOVERNOR

Greg Hamann, Chair  
Ben Cannon, Executive Director  
Higher Education Coordinating Commission  
3225 25<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Salem, OR 97302

RE: Higher Education in Oregon

Dear Chair Hamann and Director Cannon,

Higher education across the country and in Oregon is at a critical moment for its future growth and sustainability. As the state navigates a challenging fiscal environment, it is essential that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) provide clear and coordinated leadership to our public colleges and universities.

The state's current revenue outlook requires every public agency and institution to plan and operate with fiscal discipline, transparency, and a shared understanding of budget realities. Oregon's higher education institutions must be prepared to make difficult decisions that preserve affordability and access for students while maintaining long-term institutional stability.

I am asking HECC to take a proactive role in setting expectations for institutional fiscal management, planning, and communication. Specifically, HECC should:

1. Provide clear fiscal guidance to public universities and community colleges that reflects the state's current and projected budget environment.
2. Explore and implement, where appropriate, collaborative approaches to cost containment, shared services, and efficiency measures that can strengthen institutional sustainability.
3. Set expectations for transparency and accountability in how institutions communicate their financial challenges and decisions to students, faculty, and the public.
4. Support long-term planning efforts that align institutional priorities with Oregon's broader education, workforce, and economic goals, even with constrained resources – specifically exploring options, legislative and/or administrative, that enhance institutions' ability to become financially sustainable while strengthening the value and prosperity of higher education in Oregon.

Now is the time for HECC to lead with clarity and confidence ensuring that Oregon's higher education institutions remain strong, equitable, and financially sustainable. I appreciate your continued partnership and commitment to advancing opportunity for every Oregon student.

Sincerely,

Governor Tina Kotek