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**Docket Item:** – Oregon Postsecondary Education System Study (HB 4124)  
Implementation Update

**Summary**

*The Legislation*

[House Bill 4124](#) directs the HECC to conduct a study of the condition of Oregon’s postsecondary education system and to develop detailed recommendations for the design, implementation and operation of a viable and improved institutional framework for public higher education in Oregon. The HECC is charged with ensuring that its recommendations:

- support access to postsecondary education institutions for students across geographic location, including rural communities and other underserved populations;
- fuel regional and statewide economic development and employment opportunities; and
- improve the financial viability of each postsecondary education institution in Oregon and the postsecondary education system as a whole, including by addressing projected enrollment, increased personnel costs, changes in federal law or priorities, sector-specific inflationary costs or other related factors.

The study must:

- evaluate the distinct objectives and missions of each category of postsecondary institution in consideration of several key variables identified in the bill; and
- identify opportunities for collaboration, restructuring, or integration in the postsecondary system.

The study may also make recommendations on several other topics identified in the bill. The HECC is required to consult with faculty, staff, students, and other public institution partners in the development of the report. The HECC must provide a preliminary report to the Legislature by October 1, 2026, and submit a final report by April 1, 2027.

*Oregon Consensus Process Scoping and Design Assessment*

As reported to the Commission in April, HECC contracted with [Oregon Consensus](#)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon Consensus exists in statute as the State of Oregon’s program for public policy conflict resolution and collaborative governance. The program provides mediation and other collaborative services to public bodies and other interested parties who are seeking agreement seeking/collaborative approaches to



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(OC) to conduct an initial assessment to guide a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative process for this important project. This assessment was completed May 15 and is included as Docket Item 7.0a.

OC's report provides the collective responses of thirteen focus groups and 31 individual interviews, with a total of 87 participants across a broad spectrum of interests.

Recommendations, detailed in the full assessment, include:

- Framing the project in terms of long-term system resiliency, with a focus not only on the practical and urgent needs of today, but also on a longer horizon with an aspirational and holistic system view.
- Several recommendations related to working with a trusted, visible and engaged consultant;
- Building common foundational principles together, with a focus on ensuring that student and community needs should be the primary 'north star.'
- Specific recommendations on the structure for collaboration, including development of a House Bill 4124 advisory group, ad-hoc design groups to develop ideas on specific components of the system, a student voices group, a postsecondary institution finance and academic administrators group, regular legislative briefings, regional community forums across the state, and use of other forums and engagement channels.

*HB 4124 Advisory Group and other Engagement Structures*

Consistent with the OC recommendations, HECC has established an Advisory Group that will help steer the project. Group membership was determined primarily by a self-nomination process. The roster is as follows.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Position (from OC report)</b>
Mary Moller	Coalition of Oregon Public Universities	4-year public higher education institutions
Abby Lee	Oregon Community College Association	Community colleges
Adrienne Mitchell	Oregon Education Association	Education unions
Ricardo Pelegrin Taboada	Interinstitutional Faculty Senate	Faculty
Matt Swanson	SEIU	Staff
Denise Callahan	Ford Family Foundation	Philanthropy

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challenging public issues. Oregon Consensus conducts assessments and, where appropriate, designs and facilitates impartial and transparent collaborative processes that foster equitable participation and durable agreements.



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Duncan Wyse	Oregon Business Council	Workforce development and economic interests
Greg Hamann	HECC	HECC
George Mendoza	LaGrande School District	K-12 education
Aryn Frazier	Center for Black Excellence	Organization that represents underrepresented communities
<i>Pending (up to 9)</i>		Tribal governments
<i>Pending</i>		Students

The Advisory Group held an orientation meeting June 10, and will meet roughly a half-day per month throughout the duration of the project. Oregon Consensus will provide facilitation and other support for the group.

As described in the OC Assessment, up to four Advisory Group meetings may be held in conjunction with regional forums intended to provide Oregonians with opportunities to connect directly with HECC staff, the research contractor (see below), and Advisory Group members.

Also consistent with the Assessment, and with continuing support from OC:

- HECC staff and Commissioner Dembrow will hold periodic briefings for interested legislators, the first of which is scheduled for later this month.
- An implementation group, consisting primarily of chief academic and fiscal officers from the public institutions and/or their designees, will be convened roughly quarterly to receive updates and weigh in on the project.
- By Fall, we will establish a student voices group to provide cross-sector, diverse perspective on the project. Stipends will be available to support student participation.

*Contractor Selection*

HB 4124 establishes that HECC should engage a third-party contractor to conduct the bulk of the research and analysis for the project. In early May, HECC issued a Request for Proposals (RFP), which closed June 4. A scoring team including HECC staff and several members of the Advisory Group is working to determine the winning proposer. A contract should be executed by early July.

Commissioners can expect regular staff updates on this project during the remainder of 2026 and early 2027, with opportunities to reflect on findings and emerging recommendations before they are brought to the Commission for final approval.



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**Materials**

7.0a HB 4124 Process Scoping and Design Assessment (Oregon Consensus)

7.0b HB 4124 Slide Presentation – Process Overview

**Staff Recommendation**

This item is for informational purposes.