



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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May Agency Update:

May 2021 | 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.

Legislative Session Commences: A focus on equitable outcomes helped guide the postsecondary education and training budget development process for 2021-2023. HECC presents regularly to legislative committees and advises the Oregon Legislature and the Governor on topics of critical concern to Oregon postsecondary education. From April 7 through May 12, HECC presented its multi-week budget presentation on the budget request for the postsecondary system to the Legislature's Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means. We presented the budget request as a comprehensive approach to meeting state postsecondary and workforce goals in the context of Oregon's conditions, history, and trends, including the impacts of the pandemic. HECC presenters were joined by voices of students, graduates, and college and university leaders. We have stressed in this presentation four key themes: 1) sustained reinvestment to support affordable, quality postsecondary options, and reengage the tens of thousands who did not enroll during the pandemic, 2) investing in reskilling and upskilling the workforce to ensure Oregon recovers strong, 3) prioritizing underserved populations to eliminate racial

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 Meetings:

Higher Education Coordinating Commission,
June 10, 2021 (tentative)

HECC Funding and Achievement Subcommittee:

June 9, 2021 (tentative)

Workforce and Talent Development Board
June 11, 2021 (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

equity gaps; and 4) addressing Oregon's college affordability crisis by prioritizing those who are struggling most. The full [presentation materials are available on our website](#), and we welcome re-sharing of any of this data or material as we continue to articulate the powerful difference that budget decisions can make for Oregonians. Partners can stay updated on other HECC testimony to the Legislature, as well as key documents and links, on our [2021 Legislative Resources web page here](#). Read the most recent [HECC Collaborations newsletter, Investing in Postsecondary Education and Training Can Move Oregon Forward](#), focused on our comprehensive budget presentations and numerous efforts underway to support student opportunity and success.

Response to the Pandemic: Since all Oregonians age 16 and over became eligible for the vaccination, Oregon colleges and universities have been encouraged to promote awareness of vaccination opportunities on their campuses; and shared [OHA's guidance on COVID-19 vaccination considerations for Oregon's Colleges, Universities and other institutes of higher education](#). Meanwhile, Oregon colleges and universities continue to operate with increased use of remote and distance learning and public health measures to prevent spread of the coronavirus. Throughout 2020, HECC has worked closely with the Oregon Health Authority and the Governor 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. In this process, we have urged institutions to utilize [Governor's Equity Framework for Pandemic Response](#). While the need for postsecondary education continues to be high, enrollment was down by over 35,000 students across the public postsecondary education landscape in Oregon in fall 2020 compared to the year prior. In addition, while federal relief dollars have provided some much-needed support, the pandemic has introduced fiscal hardships for Oregon learners and the higher education institutions that serve them. The HECC Office of Workforce Investments (OWI) continues its work to mitigate challenges for workers and employers impacted by COVID-19.

Strategic Roadmap: At its April and May public meetings, the Commission continued to discuss drafts of the Strategic Roadmap, charting a course for the future of postsecondary education and training in Oregon. The Commission is identifying five categories of strategic action and is currently working with partners and the public to further identify specific actions within each category, and determine which entities are responsible for execution. The last version of the Roadmap and supporting materials is available in [the May 13 Commission meeting materials here](#).

Federal GEER II Funds Support Initiatives Focused on Building Accessible Opportunities and On-ramps for Oregon Learners: A total of \$4.07 million dollars in federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II) will fund strategies prioritized by Governor Brown, focused on building opportunities and removing barriers to postsecondary education for Oregonians most impacted by the pandemic. The GEER funds are reserved for allocations by Governors through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSAA) Act. The higher education and training component of Oregon's funding, administered by the HECC, will be used to reengage learners in postsecondary education, improve affordable textbook and materials options by expansion of Open Education Resources, fund Oregon Youth Corps (OYC) Summer Programs, and expand partnerships to close equity gaps for students of color. More information is in our [latest newsletter here](#).

TIE Partnership Grant: With support from the Oregon HECC [Talent, Innovation, and Equity Partnership grant from Lumina Foundation](#), HECC continues work 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.

Adult Learner Outreach Toolkit: The HECC is pleased to share a toolkit of marketing resources to help Oregon postsecondary education institutions and partners to engage adult learners of color in their postsecondary education and workforce training goals. The Oregon Adult Learner Outreach toolkit includes a set of messages and documents that may be effective with adult learners from communities of color and other Oregonians interested in starting or restarting in a postsecondary education or training program. This material will soon be available in multiple languages.

Funding Formula Updates: In addition to the approval of the ARB, the HECC has completed 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 changes refine the way \$837 million in state funding is distributed among the seven public universities to incentivize investments leading to student success.

Recent Research and Reports:

Workforce Impacts of Pandemic: The Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) commissioned ECONorthwest and other researchers and policy leaders to develop a series of reports regarding key issues resulting from the pandemic. We invite our partners to explore these reports on the WTDB website here: www.oregon.gov/workforceboard/pages/index.aspx

Report Shows Oregon's Public Investment in Textbook Affordability is Saving Oregon Students Millions: The HECC announced in a [press release](#) the findings of a [new report submitted to the Oregon Legislature](#) showing that Oregon's statewide investment in textbook affordability is having a significant impact on making postsecondary education more affordable. The report analyzes the impact of the state's investment from 2015 to the present on developing and promoting high-quality, no-cost and low-cost course materials—Open Educational Resources (OER)—for use in Oregon's public colleges and universities.

Institutional Evaluations: The HECC has submitted to the Oregon Legislature its regular evaluations of public universities with governing boards. This year, the Oregon State University, Portland State University, and University of Oregon evaluations were completed, pursuant to ORS 352.061. [The reports and the cover letter are on our website here.](#)

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.

HECC Receives National Grant to Increase Financial Aid Form Completions: Oregon is seeing a [13% decline](#) in Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) completions from high school seniors. The [FAFSA and ORSAA](#) (Oregon Student Aid Application) completions are acutely lower among students of color, students experiencing poverty, and students residing in rural areas. Earlier this year, the HECC in partnership with the Oregon Department of Education [issued a request to partners](#) to increase awareness of this issue. The HECC's Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) has been awarded \$50,000 for the [Kresge/NCAN Supporting Postsecondary Enrollment During the COVID Era: FAFSA Completion Project](#). This grant allows OSAC to work in partnership with high school staff, community-based organizations, and other college support programs over the next five months to increase FAFSA/ORSAA completions. Strategies include:

1. Targeted and direct outreach for [sites where less than 50% of seniors completed the FAFSA/ORSAA by March 1, 2021](#), rural sites, youth corrections sites, and sites with foster youth.
2. Incentives for high school seniors who submit the FAFSA or ORSAA as well as [financial incentives for sites](#) who share successful strategies, or see significant improvement over the grant period.
3. Translating FAFSA/ORSAA materials to support non-English speakers.
4. Providing [in-depth training](#) for current FAFSA Plus+ and ASPIRE sites and recruiting more schools to join both programs.

Offering a [summer bridge campaign for HS seniors](#) from 2020 as well as 2021 utilizing email, texting, and direct mentoring to support the transition to life after high school.

FAFSA Plus+: OSAC continues to operate FAFSA Plus+, a year-round program that includes 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. Every FAFSA Plus+ site has the ability to upload a student roster and receive weekly updates about FAFSA completion 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 can complete the [FAFSA Plus+ Application here](#).

Oregon Promise: The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) encourages Oregon’s graduating high school seniors and GED® test graduates (those who graduated between March 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021) to apply for the Oregon Promise by the upcoming deadlines of June 1 for high school graduates and July 1 for GED® graduates. The Oregon Promise Grant is a state-funded grant for recent high school graduates and GED® test graduates to pay for tuition at Oregon’s 17 community colleges. Every student gets only [one opportunity to apply for the grant](#), which is during their senior year or immediately after completing their GED®. Applying for the grant does not bind a student to attending a particular college; they will only be asked to accept the award with their college if/when they enroll. The application process has two steps:

1. Submit the [Oregon Promise Grant Application](#) and
2. Submit the 2021-22 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA).

OSAC recently began awarding Oregon Promise grants for Class of 2021 students who have already submitted their application. In addition to being a recent high school or GED graduate, students must meet several other eligibility criteria. For 2021-22, OSAC may impose an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) limit, depending on the final legislatively-adopted budget. Until that budget is finalized, applicants with EFCs above \$42,000 will be placed in a “pending” award category. Final determination will be made in July.

Tribal Access to Oregon Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver: HECC-OSAC continues to be available to ensure tribal foster youth have access to the Oregon Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver program, which waives tuition and fees for the equivalent of 4 years of undergraduate studies after other public grants and any school aid are applied. Learn more about eligibility at www.oregonstudentaid.gov. OSAC in 2019 developed a solution to ensure that information on eligible tribal foster youth are provided to college financial aid offices to be considered for the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver. Tribes who administer their own Foster Youth programs can now upload lists of eligible students into the OSAC Partner Portal. OSAC representatives would be pleased to help any tribal staff who utilize this option (contact Kristin.Vreeland@state.or.us).

Supporting Pathways and Student Success

Academic Program Approvals: The Commission approved the following new academic programs at Oregon’s public institutions since February 2021. For more information. For details, see the [February through May 2021 Commission meeting materials here](#).

Chemeketa Community College, Certificate of Completion in Limited Electrician Apprenticeship Technologies. Columbia Gorge Community College: Basic Construction, Certificate of Completion; Construction Technology, Certificate of Completion; Advanced Manufacturing Technology, Certificate of Completion; Aviation Maintenance Technology, A.A.S. Lane Community College: Commercial Cooking, Certificate of Completion; Aviation Professional Pilot, A.A.S.; Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management, A.A.S. Portland Community College: Vascular Interventional Catheterization Technology, Certificate of Completion; Geomatics, Associate of Applied Science; Geospatial UAS Specialist, Associate of Applied Science; Civil and Construction Engineering Technology, A.A.S.; Web Development and Design, A.A.S.; Certificate of Completion in Advanced Windows Network; Certificate of Completion in Network Security-Linux, Certificate of Completion in Secure Programming, Certificate of Completion in Network Security-Windows, Certificate of Completion in Paraprofessional Educator; Treasure Valley Community College, AAS in Building and Construction Technology, AAS in Business Office Administration – Medical Office Administration. Umpqua Community College: Automotive Technology, Certificate of Completion; AAS in Criminal Justice. Eastern Oregon University: Undergraduate Generalist Special Education, B.A./B.S.; Agriculture

Entrepreneurship, B.A./B.S./B.A.S. [Southern Oregon University](#): Sustainability, B.S. [University of Oregon](#): Dance, B.F.A. [Western Oregon University](#): Professional Studies in the Deaf Community, B.S.; Creative Production, B.A.; Justice Studies, M.S.

[Youth Employment Partnerships with Tribes](#): The Oregon Youth Corps, with the support of federal funding, is able to fund youth employment programming over the summer of 2021 in many counties and sovereign nations across the state. Grants have been offered to local programs that applied for and were awarded grants in 2020 but were unable to be funded due to the pandemic. Oregon Youth Corps is entering into agreements with Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Coquille Indian Tribe for the summer of 2021.

Between now and September 2023, Oregon Youth Corps will have an Oregon Tribal Youth Corps Natural Resource Conservation Program in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Oregon Youth Corps will grant these funds to tribes in the BLM's Coos Bay and Northwest Oregon Districts as these are the BLM Districts in which the funds may be allocated.

The Oregon Youth Corps' 2021-2023 Strategic Plan focuses on breaking down barriers to access, finding methods for supporting the workforce training of future generations, and promoting a path forward, where youth can take steps toward achieving their individual, career, and educational goals. Under the Imperative of Improving Access for Opportunity, the plan specifically calls out Tribal Investment as an identified initiative and strives for grant participation in all nine federally recognized tribal governments.

It is understood there have been barriers to applying for Oregon Youth Corps funds in the past such as not allowing federally negotiated indirect cost rates. This will be changing in the future thanks to the feedback received after Oregon Youth Corps presented to the Education Cluster of Government to Government in December 2020. If there are other identified barriers to access or any questions or concerns, please contact Oregon Youth Corps Director, Doug Denning at 503-559-6003. Future Requests for Application will be released as funding becomes available over the course of the biennium.

Economic and Community Impact

[Federal relief funding](#): Oregon students, colleges, and universities received much-needed relief funds from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), and are expected to receive additional funds through the American Rescue Plan. The HECC has produced a summary of the Higher Education Emergency Relief fund distributions including estimated [ARP distributions for Oregon institutions here](#).

Other Updates

[Elevate the Essentials' Virtual Conference October 14-15, Save the Date and Call for Proposals](#): We are pleased to announce the keynote speakers of the [Oregon Adult Basic Skills Virtual Conference 2021, Elevate the Essentials](#), to be October 14 and 15 this year, and to invite proposals from presenters. The opening keynote presenter, Dr. Tony Allen, is president of the most diverse historically black institution in the US, Delaware State University. Dr. Allen also served as the CEO of President Joe Biden's Inaugural Committee. He will kick off our event, share his expertise, inspire us, and set the tone for an impactful gathering. The keynote speaker for Day 2, Representative Janeen Sollman, represents Oregon House District 30 and is also the Co-chair of Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety, and a member of various committees. She will share her personal and professional commitment to serve all Oregon learners. Partners, [please consider our online call for proposals](#). To submit a proposal, please read all of the information, prepare your material, and submit your proposal through our online portal by June 15.

[Commission Changes](#): At its April public meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to appoint a sequence of two new chairs to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission: Larry Roper was appointed to chair the Commission for coming months until such time as Terry Cross is able to take the position. Terry Cross will become the new chair of the Commission in the near future, but due to scheduling commitments he was unable to fulfill the role until summer, 2021. With the vote, Larry Roper is currently HECC chair, and Sandy Rowe continues to serve as vice chair of the Commission. David Rives, who previously served as chair since August, 2019, stepped down from that role after announcing he has taken a teaching position overseas. In addition to the leadership changes, Governor Kate Brown nominated and the Oregon Senate confirmed two new members to the Commission: Arnel Fajardo and Greg Hamann. In addition, Commissioners Sandy Rowe and Rico Lujan-Valerio were nominated for reappointment to the HECC.

Partner Reports of Note:

- [Child Care Access for Student Parents in Oregon: Challenges and Opportunities for Improving Educational and Economic Success](#), Student Parent Success team at the Institute for Women's Policy Research
- [Supporting Rural Students in Oregon in High School and Beyond: A Study of College Enrollment, Persistence, Transfer, and Completion Outcomes](#), The Ford Family Foundation worked with Education Northwest
- [Public Investment in Higher Education: Research, Strategies, and Policy Implications](#), State Higher Education Executive Officers Association