



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Ben Cannon, Executive Director

3225 25th Street SE

Salem, OR 97302

www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

February 28, 2022

Dear Legislator,

Attached please find the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's 2021 evaluations of Eastern Oregon University (EOU), Oregon Institute of Technology (Oregon Tech), Southern Oregon University (SOU), and Western Oregon University (WOU). Under ORS 352.061, the HECC is required to evaluate each public university every two years. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the contributions of each institution to State objectives for higher education as articulated in statute and in the HECC's Strategic Plan and Roadmap for Oregon Postsecondary Education and Training.

Under statute, each evaluation must include:

- A report on the university's achievement of outcomes, measures of progress, goals and targets;
- An assessment of the university's progress toward achieving the mission of all education beyond high school as described in ORS 350.014; and
- An assessment as to how well the establishment of a governing board at the university comports with the findings set forth in ORS 352.025.

This year's evaluations highlight the significant contributions EOU, Oregon Tech, SOU, and WOU make to the State of Oregon and to their communities. They draw attention to recent trends in enrollment, completion, and diversity, and measure the universities' performance against a set of established financial metrics.

As measured by the composite financial index (CFI), the financial condition of most of the Institutions has improved largely due to extraordinary federal revenues received which have allowed the universities to offset the revenue losses and increased costs associated with responding to the pandemic. Moving forward, the HECC will take a keen interest in cost-saving measures and sustainability, given the temporary nature of the federal revenues received.

ORS 352.061 requires the HECC to conduct annual evaluations of public universities in Oregon according to specific statutory criteria. Overall, the HECC's approach is to assess each university's contributions to statewide goals for higher education. Of the universities evaluated in 2021, there has been an overall decrease of resident (in-state) student enrollment (-4.0%) and, when disaggregated by race/ethnicity, there continues to be a strong increasing trend (7.0%) of resident under-represented student completions.

It is worth noting that as a coordinating commission, the HECC has no direct authority over many critical functions of the university, including curriculum, finances, and personnel. We hope and expect that these evaluations, as well as other reports the HECC undertakes, provide guidance and support to institutional leaders and the Legislature as they work to improve Oregon higher education.

Yours sincerely,

Terry L. Cross
Chair

Ben Cannon
Executive Director