



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Ben Cannon, Executive Director

3225 25th Street SE

Salem, OR 97302

www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

February 26, 2021

Dear Legislator,

Attached please find the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's 2020 evaluations of Oregon State University (OSU), Portland State University (PSU), and the University of Oregon (UO). Under ORS 352.061, the HECC is required to evaluate each public university every two years.

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 OSU, PSU, and UO 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 deteriorated in the past few years due to a combination of factors including declining enrollments and increased operating expenses relative to revenues. FY 2020 results were affected by the pandemic and wildfires.

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 2020, there has been an overall decrease of resident (in-state) student enrollment (-2.6%) and, when disaggregated by race/ethnicity, there continues to be a strong increasing trend 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,

David Rives
Chair

Ben Cannon
Executive Director