

# Key Findings: Statewide Higher Education Snapshots 2018-19

August, 2020

## Snapshot Key Findings

The HECC has published its third annual set of Oregon Statewide Higher Education Snapshots based on data from academic year 2018-19. The Snapshots provide uniform reporting of enrollment, affordability, and completion for Oregon students and are meant for a wide audience, including government and institutional partners, the public (including students, families, and the media), and policy makers in other settings. They focus on three primary aspects of postsecondary education, with breakouts by race/ethnicity and first-generation status, to create empirical descriptions of the State, the public institutions, and Oregon learners.

Some key findings from this year's snapshots include:

### Enrollment

- In 2018-19, over 416,000 learners (resident and nonresident) were enrolled in one of Oregon's public or private postsecondary institutions. The vast majority of these learners (376,814, or 90%) were enrolled in one of Oregon's 17 community colleges or seven public universities.
- The majority of the data in the Snapshots focuses on the characteristics of students whose home state is Oregon:
  - Among Oregon undergraduates (including Oregon and border-state students at the colleges and Oregonians in undergraduate courses at the universities), 26% identify as students of color, about half (55%) identify as white, and 19% do not report a race/ethnicity.
  - Over half of all learners at the community colleges and one-quarter of Oregon undergraduates at the public universities are adult learners over age 25.
  - About one in eight students enrolled in the community colleges and public universities is a high school student earning college credit (13%).
  - The different areas of instruction reflect the institutions' wide missions. At the community colleges, 42% of learners enrolled primarily in lower-division collegiate courses, 15% primarily in career and technical education, 2% primarily in developmental education, and 41% primarily in non-credit courses (including adult basic education, tutoring, and personal enrichment). At the public universities, students completing a graduate or professional program comprise 10% of all students, admitted undergraduates comprise 70% of all students, and those taking courses as a non-admitted student comprise 20% of all students.

### Affordability

- Among Oregon students who filed for a grant or scholarship, almost half (44%) were unable to meet the published cost of attendance with the resources of expected family contribution, federal and state grants, and an estimate of student earnings. By race/ethnicity, Asian American students face the largest affordability gap, with 54% unable to meet the published cost of attendance.
- Loans fill some of the gap in affordability, 39% of undergraduates take out federal loans. Those who graduate incur more than \$19,000 in debt, on average.

## Completion

- Completion rates continue to rise for Oregon students. At the community colleges, 48% of credential-seeking students earned an associate degree or career certificate or transferred to a four-year institution nationwide within four years. At the public universities, 66% of first-time, full-time Oregon freshmen earned a bachelor's degree within six years.
- However, these rates have wide disparities by race/ethnicity and other indicators of equity. At the colleges, only 36% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander learners and only 38% of Black/African American learners earned an award or transferred within four years, compared to 51% of white learners. First-generation college students are also less likely to earn an award or transfer (47%) than non-first-generation students (54%). At the universities, 51% of Black/African American freshmen and 55% of Native American/Alaska Native freshmen earned a bachelor's degree within six years, compared to 67% of white freshmen. Similarly, 57% of first-generation freshmen graduated within six years, compared to 71% of non-first-generation freshmen.
- Over 30,000 Oregon students earn certificates and degrees each year at the Oregon public institutions, including almost 23,000 undergraduate degrees and almost 4,000 career certificates.