

**DRAFT OUTLINE**  
**HECC STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020**  
**SEPTEMBER 25, 2015**

**Part 1: The state's higher education goals and our progress towards them**

1. A 40-40-20 update
  - a. Progress and trends, with a particular focus on what has occurred since 2013 (HECC's last strategic plan).
  - b. Challenges with the application of 40-40-20 to the adult population
  - c. Feasibility of achieving 40-40-20 by 2025?
2. Our other (ultimate) goals for higher education and training:
  - a. contributions to quality of life and effective citizenship
  - b. production of research and knowledge
  - c. contributions to workforce demands and employment opportunities
  - d. contributions to economic development

**Part 2: Key understandings about the current higher education landscape**

1. Improving higher education attainment is deeply dependent on improving high school completion rates. While significant progress can be made towards the former without improving the latter, the ceiling for this approach is significantly below 40-40-20.
2. Limitations on public resources, competition for state dollars, and the diminished ability of students to pick up the slack through tuition mean that Oregon higher education will not meet state goals without simultaneously addressing each of the following: (a) cost structures, (b) delivery models, and (c) public funding levels.
3. To meet our goals, Oregon higher education must serve students who are increasingly complex: more diverse, lower income, with greater desire for options and information, a greater need for flexibility, and a greater need for support.
4. Oregon students are increasingly accessing higher education through a variety of institutions, timelines, and delivery systems.
5. Top-down approaches to influencing higher education processes and outcomes are likely to be met with resistance and, ultimately, to fail. Significant and sustainable changes to higher education are only possible with leadership, engagement, and partnership from students, faculty, administrators, board members, and other community members who are most directly responsible for higher education processes and outcomes.
6. While various other state, national, and international organizations exist for the promotion of collaboration between actors at all levels of higher education, the HECC is uniquely and solely focused on meeting Oregon's public goals and needs. As a result, it is responsible for provoking and convening conversations that are unlikely to occur in its absence, including those focused on promoting equitable and efficient progress towards meeting state goals and objectives.

7. Higher education is a critical tool for Oregon industry and the economy through (a) skill development, including abstract and creative thinking; and (b) research and innovation that responds to and drives the Oregon economy.

### **Part 3: The HECC's roles and responsibilities**

1. Review the HECC's (limited) role within the new governance arrangements for Oregon post-secondary education:
  - a. State strategic plan for higher education
  - b. State budget development/recommendations
  - c. State funding allocations
  - d. Mission approvals and annual evaluations (public universities)
  - e. Program approvals (community colleges and public universities)
  - f. Strategies, standards, and convenings for inter-institutional coordination
  - g. State programs, policies, and recommendations for improving access, affordability, and student success
  - h. Higher education data collection, analysis, and reporting.
  - i. In conjunction with the Oregon Workforce Investment Board and Oregon Department of Employment, implementation of the federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act
  - j. Licensing, authorization, and oversight of non-exempt private colleges/universities and career schools.
2. Our approach to strategic planning: to describe a "big vision" that the HECC helps to advance through "little actions" and especially, through partnerships.

### **Part 4: HECC strategies 2016-2020: Goal-setting; Student Supports; Pathways; Affordability**

1. **Goal-setting.** Sharpen our state goals
  - a. Background/data/context (mostly covered above under "The state's higher education goals and our progress towards them").
  - b. A discussion of HECC levers
    - i. Data definitions, warehousing, and analysis
    - ii. Data reporting: shining a spotlight (eg KPMs, University Evaluations, VFA, Dashboards)
    - iii. Policy recommendations to Legislature, Governor
  - c. Our strategies
    - i. Propose to the Legislature a new adult educational attainment goal, to be linked with labor market opportunities and economic development strategies.
    - ii. In conjunction with OWIB, consider development of specific goals for dislocated workers, training, GED, etc.
    - iii. Develop interim 40-40-20 targets, both for the aggregate student population as well as subgroups.
    - iv. Conduct public reporting on higher education outcomes, in aggregate and by institution, in a more systematic way and with an equity focus.

- v. Work with colleges and universities to develop stronger mechanisms to capture student intent (ie goals).
- vi. Improve state and institutional capacity for capturing, monitoring, analyzing, and reporting on student data.

2. **Student Support.** Improve campus and community-based support for student access and completion

a. Background/data/context

- i. Student completion, not just enrollment, is our primary challenge and opportunity.
- ii. The most effective interventions to support student success appear to be those that rely on counseling, tutoring, coaching, and mentorship.
- iii. Institutions struggle to bring these interventions to scale.
- iv. Funding pressures have forced institutions to rely increasingly on adjunct faculty. This reduces opportunities for students to receive long-term support, guidance, and mentorship from faculty.
- v. Community engagement (including families, community-based organizations, and others) are critical for fostering and sustaining student success, especially for underrepresented students.

b. How we will measure progress in this area

- i. TBD

c. A discussion of HECC levers

- i. Recommendations to Legislature and Governor on budget and policy.
- ii. Funding allocations to public institutions.
- iii. Strategic funds/grants to incentivize promising practices.
- iv. Convening experts and stakeholders: to share promising practices and build partnerships among community organizations, student organizations, and campus experts.
- v. Engaging the community beyond the campuses, forming business, community/family, workforce, K-12, partnerships and alliances to build a college-going culture. Using data and publicity to help Oregonians understand the value and successful pathways to higher education and the labor market.
- vi. Creating tools and engaging students and families to help them navigate the higher education system more successfully.

d. Our strategies

- i. Implement, monitor, and adjust HECC funding allocation formulas to create incentives for institutions to invest in student success.
- ii. Consider the creation of a strategic fund within the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) for the support of statewide, university-led initiatives to improve student success.
- iii. In partnership with institutions, support the development of technical assistance center(s) to disseminate best practices for student success.

- iv. Work with the Legislature and other partners to ensure that funding proposals focused on tuition/access are complemented by funding dedicated to student success.
  - v. Engage students, families, and community groups as partners in efforts to improve student success.
  - vi. Reduce reliance on adjunct faculty through increased state investments in institutional capacity.
3. **Pathways.** Simplify and coordinate systems and structures for student entry, navigation, completion, and exit/re-entry to career.
- a. Background/data/context
    - i. Higher education today has increasing levels of connection to and responsibility for the larger P-20 education system. Much of that work can effectively occur through partnerships that are developed on a local/regional basis (eg Regional Achievement Collaboratives).
    - ii. Today's colleges and universities cannot be successful as stand-alone, isolated institutions, especially given the increasingly underrepresented, non-traditional, and mobile populations they serve.
    - iii. To effectively serve increasingly complex students who seek to access higher education in relevant and innovative methods, the P-20 system should be structured to enhance the portability, flexibility, coherence, and relevance of post-secondary options and ultimately, the ability of students to pursue successful careers.
    - iv. Flexibility for students must be sustained within an environment of guided pathways that reduces opportunities for student "impulsiveness."
  - b. How we will measure progress:
    - i. completion [including employment data in the future]
    - ii. TBD
  - c. A discussion of HECC levers
    - i. Publishing data
    - ii. Convening faculty, institutions
    - iii. Setting standards, creating transparent public results
    - iv. Budget development and strategic investment
  - d. Our strategies
    - i. Developing the pipeline: support colleges and universities in taking increasing responsibility for improving K-12 (especially high school) outcomes.
    - ii. Alignment: identify general education courses that are truly portable; make CTE courses more transferable; establish common course equivalencies and outcomes; align standards for core lower division courses; support institutions in creating guided pathways for students.

- iii. Access: enhance opportunities of high school students to access meaningful post-secondary opportunities and to transition smoothly to college or career; establish better onramps for adult learners.
  - iv. Promote structures and initiatives that engage students in exploring, deliberating, and declaring their interest/intent earlier.
  - v. Career: Create better connection and alliance of higher education and training with employer needs
4. **Affordability.** Limit student and family cost for all, with a particular focus on ensuring that Oregon middle schoolers (and older) can reasonably expect to have options for a truly affordable higher education experience.
- a. Background/data/context
    - i. Higher education provides high return on investment (ROI) for individuals, for families and communities, and for the state. Just as the benefits of higher education are broadly shared, so should be the costs.
    - ii. The total cost of meeting our higher education goals varies significantly depending on what assumptions we make about what the student experience should be. A pragmatic and student-centered approach should use public funding and policies to promote the availability of diverse options for earning certificates and degrees (eg residential and non-residential, brick-and-mortar and online, full- and part-time).
    - iii. Although the cost of higher education in Oregon remains low compared to that of other state systems, we lag far behind other states in providing need-based financial aid.
    - iv. Policy efforts to improve affordability for students and families have had limited success, partly because we have failed to take a more encompassing view of the subject. For example: increases in grant funding that are offset by tuition increases; focus on access as the primary goal of the affordability agenda without similar levels of attention to student aspiration and success. We have not assessed with sufficient rigor the various components of an affordability agenda (price, cost of living vs. learning, grants, loans, time-to-degree, likelihood of completion) and their contribution to career and lifelong success.
  - b. How we will measure progress
    - i. Development of a more comprehensive affordability benchmark
  - c. A discussion of HECC levers
    - i. Tuition cap (5% at universities)
    - ii. State investment: OOG and institutions
    - iii. Institutional accountability through reporting
    - iv. OOG allocation methodology
    - v. Policy recommendations to Legislature, Governor
    - vi. Improving completion rates, diminishing time-to-degree, improving transitions to well-paying work (see above)

- d. Our strategies
  - i. Develop a better affordability benchmark: publicly acceptable but more nuanced than tuition
  - ii. Connect middle schoolers (and up) to the promise of affordability
  - iii. Support innovations that might lower cost structures consistent with high quality (eg textbook affordability, WGU).
  - iv. Increase state financial aid to the national average per student (while ensuring that this isn't merely offset by tuition increases that result from diminished state support).

## **Part 5: Conclusion**

Missing elements:

- Strategies for research, innovation, and economic development.
- The need for a better inventory of our existing higher education capacity and its relationship to our goals. We should have a position on the extent to which we have a capacity problem.
- The role of regional approaches (eg work through Regional Achievement Collaboratives)