

HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION
Government to Government 2015 Annual Report



OREGON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



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Salem, Oregon 97301
www.Oregon.gov/HigherEd

December 1, 2015

Karen Quigley
Legislative Commission on Indian Affairs
900 Court Street NE, Room 167
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Karen:

As Executive Director of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission agency, I am pleased to submit our 2015 Government-to-Government Annual Report.

The Equity Lens, as adopted by the Oregon Education Investment Board [now the Chief Education Office] and subsequently the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, is a focal point of our work, both internally and externally. We have engaged a higher education Equity Advisory group, comprised of institutional equity leaders who provide advice and feedback to the agency on matters of diversity and inclusion. Throughout our organization, we hold high expectations to contribute to the access, growth and success of *all* individuals and stakeholders we are privileged to work alongside and serve.

You have my continuing commitment to promote best practices in the support of continued partnership and engagement with our tribal partners in our quest for student educational and career success.

Should questions or clarifications arise regarding our plan, please contact myself or our Chief of Staff, Cheryl Myers at (503)877-4303.

With sincere regards,

Ben Cannon, Executive Director

ABOUT THE HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION

Agency Higher Education Coordinating Commission
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Major Areas The Higher Education Coordinating Commission has adopted as its mission the achievement of the state’s statutory target of having 40 percent of Oregonians with a four-year degree or better and another 40 percent with a two-year degree or postsecondary certificate by the year 2025.

Agency Statement The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is dedicated to fostering and sustaining the best, most rewarding pathways to opportunity and success for all Oregonians through an accessible, affordable and coordinated network for educational achievement beyond a high school diploma. Oregon’s higher education and workforce system serves hundreds of thousands of learners through seven public universities, 17 public community colleges, private and independent colleges and universities, workforce programs, and private career and trade schools.

As the State of Oregon’s single, comprehensive portal to all sectors of higher education, the HECC is uniquely positioned to provide strategic focus in areas such as: investing resources to maximize student success, increasing postsecondary affordability, improving pathways to and within postsecondary institutions, and connecting job-seekers with employment.

Established in 2011, HECC is a 14-member volunteer commission responsible for advising [the Oregon Legislature](#), [the Governor](#), and the [Chief Education Office](#) on higher education policy. Its statutory authorities include the development of biennial budget recommendations for public postsecondary education in Oregon, making funding allocations to Oregon’s public community colleges and public universities, approving new academic programs for the public institutions, allocating Oregon Opportunity Grants (state need-based student aid), authorizing degrees that are proposed by private and out-of-state (distance) providers, licensing private career and trade schools, overseeing programs for veterans, and implementing other legislative directives. The Commission is supported by an executive director, who oversees the work of the HECC agency, the seven offices described below, all of which support the statutory responsibilities of the Commission.



The Office of the Executive Director, Policy, and Communications carries out the central executive role of the agency, as well as communications, legislative affairs, human resources, policy initiatives, and other roles for the integrated agency.

The Office of Student Access & Completion (OSAC) administers a variety of state, federal, and privately funded student financial aid programs for the benefit of Oregonians attending institutions of postsecondary education, including the Oregon Opportunity Grant and the Oregon Promise. OSAC also administers other student outreach programs, such as Oregon ASPIRE, and works in partnership with foundations, private individuals, financial institutions, and employers.

The Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) provides coordination and resources related to Oregon’s 17 community colleges, 18 adult basic skills providers, and 9 local workforce areas. CCWD also provides statewide administration of workforce and education programs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the General Educational Development (GED), and other workforce and education programs for the benefit of Oregonians.

The Office of University Coordination provides academic and fiscal coordination related to Oregon’s seven public universities, including coordination of the academic program approval process, statewide initiatives and legislative directives to enhance postsecondary pathways and student success, biennial budget recommendations for the Public University Support Fund, Public University State Programs, and capital investments, fiscal reporting and analysis, and the allocation of state funding.

The Office of Private Postsecondary Education oversees the quality, integrity, and diversity of private postsecondary programs in Oregon for the benefit of students and consumers. The Office includes the [Office of Degree Authorization](#), which authorizes private degree-granting institutions and distance education providers, [Private Career Schools](#) which licenses and supports private career and trade schools, and [Veterans Education](#) which provides oversight of programs for veterans.

The Office of Research and Data collects, analyzes, and reports research and data on postsecondary education including data on students, courses, demographics, enrollments, academic performance, and academic pathways to comply with state and

federal reporting requirements and inform decisions on the postsecondary education enterprise.

The Office of Operations provides accounting, budget, procurement, payroll, and information technology support for all HECC offices.

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

The agency regularly participated in the quarterly Government to Government education cluster meetings and activities, as well as special informational and educational activities related to postsecondary education, workforce development and financial aid.

Updates were provided in person and via the quarterly agency report on these and other items. The 2015 updates are available on our website www.Oregon.gov/highered under News and Updates.

- A significant amount of this past year's activities was directed toward higher education legislative, budget and funding level priorities for postsecondary education in Oregon, which included the largest single-biennium increase in state funding for higher education in two decades. The HECC coordinated closely this session with PK-20 partners on goals for the educational continuum, including the Chief Education Office (formerly the Oregon Education Investment Board), the Oregon Department of Education, leadership of Oregon's seven public universities and 17 community colleges, and partner organizations such as the Oregon Student Association and the Oregon Community College Association. For the first time, Oregon's largest public universities advocated under the leadership of their governing boards, similar to their community college counterparts. Campus leaders, HECC Commissioners and staff, and student advocates worked in coordinated partnership with Oregon's Legislature. The HECC thanks Governor Brown, House Speaker Tina Kotek, Senate President Peter Courtney, and all members of the Oregon Legislature for wrestling deeply with critical issues in postsecondary education, and adopting a budget that strategically reinvests in Oregon's postsecondary institutions and the students and communities they serve.

A few bills of particular interest are highlighted below; a full summary can be found in the 2015 legislative summary on our [website](#):

- Senate Bill 81: A major area of work the HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) has been the launch of the new Oregon Promise program, created through SB 81. The Oregon Promise program is a new state program that gives the high school Class of 2016 and qualified GED® recipients the opportunity for full or partial tuition grants to attend community college; the application period opened on November 1 and Oregon students are encouraged to apply. OSAC introduced the program to

Oregon students, launched an application process and procedures, and is working on administrative rules for this program.

- Senate Bill 932: Eligibility for financial aid through the Oregon Opportunity Grant is made available through this bill to students who are not citizens or lawful permanent residents who meet the criteria for exemption from nonresident tuition described in ORS 351.641.
- Senate Bill 418: A work group has been meeting on this bill, which focuses on identifying ways to improve college readiness with an emphasis on accelerated learning and retention and success of students who receive the Oregon Promise. Recommendations will be brought to the HECC in January 2016.
- House Bill 2016: directs the HECC to participate in an advisory group charged with developing and implementing a statewide education plan for black or African-American students, or students who are not covered under existing culturally specific statewide education plans who have experienced disproportionate results in education due to historical practices.
- House Bill 2407: Under this bill, the Oregon Opportunity Grant changes from being awarded on a first-come first-serve basis, to being awarded to the highest need students first, with a focus on improving student access and completion.
- House Bill 2847: directs the Access to Student assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone (ASPIRE) program administered by OSAC to include financial aid instruction to high school students and families.
- House Bill 2645: establishes a priority system for qualified students (active members of Armed Forces of the United States or qualified veterans) at universities and community colleges that currently have an established priority enrollment system.
- House Bill 2871: focuses on making open education resources (think free textbooks) more widely available. This will be accomplished by implementing an OER grant program, and promoting on Oregon campuses the use of free and accessible teaching, learning and research resources that can be legally adapted and redistributed for students' use at low or no cost.
- House Bill 2525: strengthens the Transfer Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and develops research to better understand and address student loss of credit upon transfer.
- House Bill 2681: related to placement testing and policies at the community colleges. HECC staff members are collaborating with others to leverage previous work related to developmental education, and will bring a report to commissioners in December and January.
- House Bill 3308: directs the HECC to convene a workgroup to analyze and make recommendations on how to address disparities in higher education among traditionally marginalized, underserved and underrepresented communities through continuing education
- House Bill 3335: As directed by this bill, HECC staff members are researching approaches to the problem of university students stopping out after the equivalent of two years and the possibility of receiving a "General Education Credential".

- House Bill 3375: focused on Educator Equity; HECC will require Oregon’s 6 public university teacher preparation programs to prepare written plans that address the recruitment, selection, retention, and graduation of diverse educators. The HECC will further consider recommendations on this bill in 2016.
- House Bill 2973: focused on researching “affordable bachelor’s degrees.” HECC staff are researching models for these degrees, surveying current programs, and gauging interest, and will report in February 2016.

The HECC is currently developing an updated (2016-20) Strategic Plan, a statutory responsibility of the Commission, and a truly exciting opportunity to forge a deliberate path toward our collective postsecondary education goals. We shared a direct invitation to tribal chairs and tribal education leads previously and encourage additional tribal community input and feedback on the development of the 2016-20 Strategic Plan.

- [Higher Education Coordinating Commission Strategic Planning web page](#)
 - [Current Draft Outline to Strategic Plan](#)
 - [Public Input Survey](#)

We reported on numerous initiatives throughout the year:

- Affordability and Productivity updates:
 - The new Oregon Promise provides grants for new high school graduates and eligible GED® recipients who will begin community college classes in Fall 2016. A new toolkit has been released to schools and communities statewide containing informational materials including a video, FAQ, infographic, and more at OregonPromise.org. Applications will remain open through March 1, 2016.
 - Scholarships and Grants: Oregon Opportunity Grant (need-based financial aid) availability, expansion and redesign; additional scholarship and grant opportunities managed by OSAC. Each year, OSAC awards over \$80 million in grants and scholarships to Oregon students at all stages of their post-secondary career – from first-year through graduate school, at community colleges, universities, specialty schools. Through March 1 is the time to apply for these programs: OregonStudentAid.gov for more information.
 - OSAC’s FAFSA Completion Pilot Project, Textbook Affordability, ASPIRE expansion.
 - Development of the new Student Success and Completion model for the seven public universities, focusing on greater focus for access and successful completion of degrees for resident students. The model includes extra attention to the needs of historically underserved college students.
- Broadening Pathways toward 40-40-20 and other updates, including:
 - Colleges and universities usage of Smarter Balanced scores.
 - Distance Education updates via the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).
 - Noncredit Training Certificates approval.

- General Education Credential (GED) updates.
- Continuing efforts regarding Credit for Prior Learning.

PARTICIPATION

The HECC provides leadership presence at quarterly G2G meetings and coordinates activities with the Governor's Office, the Chief Education Office and other education partners. The agency receives notification of training and informational sessions from the Legislative Commission on Indian Services and promotes opportunities for staff participation. At the September G2G, we were pleased to affirm the intent of Oregon public universities to continue their commitments regarding residence classification of members of Oregon tribes and the demonstrated proficiency in an American Indian language to meet all or part of the second language requirement as certified by the governing body of any federally recognized tribe.

Agency staff participated in Tribal Information Days, the February Oregon Indian Coalition on Postsecondary Education, and attend and support community-based functions. Additionally, the Executive Director presented at the August Legislative Commission on Indian Services convening and participated in the October Tribal Leaders Meet & Greet, which included a discussion of the 2015 AI/AN Education State Plan.

