

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Government-to-Government  
2014 Annual Report

Ben Cannon, Executive Director



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775 Court Street NE,  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
[www.Oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.Oregon.gov/HigherEd)

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December 29, 2014

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 first Government-to-Government Annual Report. This is a culminating and collaborative effort from our new agency, the Department of Community Colleges & Workforce Development and the Office of Student Access & Completion.

The Equity Lens, as adopted by the Oregon Education Investment Board and subsequently the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, is a focal point of our work, both internally and externally. 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)947-5982.

With sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Cannon".

Ben Cannon, Executive Director

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<i>Agency</i>	Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC)
<i>Key Contacts</i>	<p>Ben Cannon, HECC Executive Director ben.cannon@state.or.us (503) 378-5690</p> <p>Krissa Caldwell, CCWD Deputy Commissioner krissa.caldwell@state.or.us (503) 947-2414</p> <p>Bob Brew, OSAC Executive Director bob.k.brew@state.or.us (541) 687-7460</p>
<i>Liaison</i>	Cheryl Myers, HECC Chief of Staff cheryl.L.myers@state.or.us (503) 947-5982
<i>Major Areas</i>	The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has adopted as its mission the achievement of the state’s statutory target of having 40 percent of adult Oregonians with a four- year degree or better and another 40 percent with a two-year degree or postsecondary certificate by the year 2025.
<i>Agency Statement</i>	<p><b>HECC</b> In 2011, the Oregon Legislature established “40-40-20” as the State’s goal for educational attainment in Oregon, recognizing the importance of higher education as a target for enabling individual opportunity and achieving societal success in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy. The State’s 40-40-20 goal commits to a future in which all Oregonians will complete their education and gain the ability to contribute to our society and economy. The HECC is responsible for overseeing pathways to postsecondary success from the point at which students complete their secondary educations through their learning, training and mastering of skills in college and career training programs.</p> <p>Oregon enacted significant higher education governance reform in recent years, providing increased autonomy to public universities while establishing the HECC as a statewide postsecondary coordinating and funding commission. Originally chartered by the Legislature in 2011, the HECC coordinates postsecondary education in Oregon for hundreds of thousands of students enrolled in the state’s seven public universities and the Oregon Health &amp; Science University, 17 public community colleges, 67 private colleges and universities, and 220 licensed private career and trade schools.</p> <p>The HECC is a 14-member, Governor-appointed volunteer commission, and supported by an executive director, who oversees HECC staff and effective July 1, 2014, CCWD and OSAC, in supporting the Commission’s mission. The HECC additionally includes the Private Career Schools office which licenses career schools and provides educational leadership and support to over 235 private career schools in Oregon, and the Office of Degree Authorization, responsible for approval of academic programs for all degree-granting private postsecondary institutions in the state and the Veterans Education unit. The HECC’s goal is to build accessible and affordable pathways to opportunity and success for Oregonians, including historically underserved populations that can be sustained by innovative and high-performing public and private institutions of postsecondary</p>

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education throughout the state. The HECC's Strategic Plan is an action plan toward the State's visionary 40-40-20 goals, focused on four key functions 1) to broaden the pathways to the 40-40-20 goals, 2) to make the pathways accessible, affordable and supportive for students, 3) to steer the higher education enterprise, and 4) to cheer the promotion of college completion and career readiness. The HECC engages in ongoing collaboration with the nine federally-recognized tribes in order to accomplish the agency mission.

**CCWD**, along with local education and workforce partners, manages resources from the State of Oregon supporting Oregon's community colleges; federal resources supporting WorkSource Oregon career centers, adult basic skills, career and technical education, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs; and lottery funds supporting the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps.

**OSAC** is the federally-designated repository for all Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSAs) completed and submitted by Oregon students. The agency administers the Oregon Opportunity Grant (Oregon's need-based grant), John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (aka the Chafee grant) for former foster youth, and many other publicly-funded scholarship and grant programs for Oregonians pursuing higher education. OSAC also administers nearly 500 scholarship funds on behalf of private donors totaling more than \$16 million in awards per year on a self-supporting basis. The agency is also a statewide leader in higher education outreach through its ASPIRE (Access to Student assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone) mentoring program, located at roughly 145 high schools and other sites throughout Oregon.

### *Solutions and Programs*

Regular participation 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 new quarterly agency report on these and other items:

- Affordability and Productivity updates:
  - Oregon Opportunity Grant (need-based financial aid) proposed expansion and redesign.
  - Other affordability initiatives such as Pay It Forward proposal, FAFSA Completion Project, Textbook Affordability, and Viability of Tuition-Free Community Colleges.
  - Development of new model in progress for Productivity/Outcomes Based Funding.
- Higher education budget priorities and funding levels for postsecondary education in Oregon.
- Supporting Pathways toward 40-40-20 and other updates, including:
  - Dual Credit Standards and Credit for Prior Learning; feedback was generated regarding how students benefit from academic policy and initiatives in this arena.
  - Oregon Modified Diploma changes.
  - General Education Development (GED) tests and fee structure changes, along with GED program changes.
  - Fellowship Research and Report on Outreach & Engagement to Underserved Students in Higher Education.
  - National Career Readiness Certificate update.
  - College Scorecard website identification.
  - State Reciprocity Agreement status for distance education.
  - Agency integration status.

**CCWD Specific** During the first half of the calendar year of 2014, CCWD consulted with cluster members and discussed education-related legislation that emerged during the legislative session. The HECC assumed this role in the second half of 2014.

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***OSAC Specific*** As a long-time member and supporter of the Oregon Indian Coalition on Post Secondary Education (OICPSE), OSAC actively participates in OICPSE meetings and in interest sessions on tribal issues at the annual conference of the Oregon Association of State Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA). OICPSE last met in October 2013 and went on hiatus temporarily early 2014. OSAC plans to participate in meetings when OICPSE reconvenes in early 2015. OSAC provides information about private scholarships and state-funded financial aid programs of interest to tribal members.

In March 2014, OSAC signed a new participation agreement with the US Department of Education that allowed OSAC to share limited information with Oregon high schools and school districts about which of their graduating seniors had applied for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for the 2014-15 academic year.

In April 2014, OSAC implemented a pilot FAFSA Completion Project with four high schools. Participating schools uploaded a list of graduating seniors, and OSAC matched the list against FAFSA records

For 2013-14, participation in the FAFSA Completion Project was limited to high schools and school districts. However, Oregon was among several states that pushed for the Department to expand participation to other entities. In July, the Department issued a Dear Colleague Letter that authorizes state grant agencies to expand FAFSA data-sharing to federally recognized tribes and to governmental programs for low-income or at-risk (e.g., TRIO and GEAR UP), providing they have direct, established contact with students served.

At the request of the Oregon Education Investment Board and the Legislature, OSAC has been staffing a pair of work groups tasked with redesigning the Oregon Opportunity Grant award and awarding process. The Design Team met October 6 and October 23 to discuss various scenarios for redesigning the OOG award process to incentivize student retention and program completion. Redesign goals include awarding highest-need students first, using Pell eligibility criteria, focusing awards on the first two years, and awarding “year-round.”

#### *Tools and Training*

The HECC provides leadership presence at quarterly G2G meetings and coordinates activities with CCWD, OSAC, the Governor’s Office, the Oregon Education Investment Board and other education partners. CCWD and OSAC also participated in the cluster handbook development. The agency receives notification of training and informational sessions from the Legislative Commission on Indian Services and promotes opportunities for staff participation. Various agency staff participated in Tribal Information Days, Sovereignty Basics workshops, the Spring Gathering, and attend and support community-based functions.