



# Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Ben Cannon, Executive Director  
Rudyane Rivera-Lindstrom, Director of DEI, [rudyane.rivera-lindstrom@state.or.us](mailto:rudyane.rivera-lindstrom@state.or.us)

Phone: 503-378-5690  
| Email: [rudyane.rivera-lindstrom@state.or.us](mailto:rudyane.rivera-lindstrom@state.or.us)  
3225 25th Street SE | Salem, OR 97302  
[www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)

## February Agency Update:

February 2022 | Our partners can find previous quarterly Government to Government updates as well as other information on work and initiatives in the [Coordination with Tribes](#) section of our website.

Strategic Roadmap: Oregon's [Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training](#) was finalized in 2021 after an extensive public engagement and development process. The Roadmap sets an ambitious path forward by describing how postsecondary systems, policies, and practices need to change in order to achieve Oregon's [goals for educational attainment and equity](#). The HECC is now in the process of developing and seeking input from partners on potential funding and policy proposals for 2023-25 aimed to advance the Strategic Roadmap, and invites input from Tribes and other partners.

Agency Report to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services: In December 2021, HECC provided its [Annual Report to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services](#), 2021 summarizing HECC actions and initiatives the HECC in 2021 to foster postsecondary education and training opportunities and pathways for tribal students and learners in Oregon.

2022 Legislative Session Update: Find updates on recent HECC testimony and other legislative resources on our [2022 Legislative Resources page here](#) and in our [latest agency newsletter](#). Highlights are included below.

### Our Commission

#### OUR VISION:

*The State of Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future in which all Oregonians—and especially those whom our systems have underserved and marginalized—benefit from the transformational power of high-quality postsecondary education and training. [Learn more about our vision and Strategic Plan here.](#)*

#### [Sign up for HECC newsletters and updates](#)

[here:](#) you can customize your subscriptions according to your interests. We just added numerous new options for update topics.

The HECC is the state entity responsible for ensuring pathways to higher education success for Oregonians statewide, and serves as a convener of institutions and partners working across the public and private higher education arena. Established in 2011, HECC is a volunteer commission responsible for advising the Oregon Legislature and the Governor on higher education policy. The Commission is supported by an executive director who oversees eight offices of the agency. To learn more about the HECC go to: [www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Pages/hecc.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Pages/hecc.aspx)

### Upcoming Meetings:

**Higher Education Coordinating Commission,**  
April 14, 2022  
**HECC Funding and Achievement**  
**Subcommittee:** April 13, 2022

*For other [upcoming public meetings of the HECC, see our website here.](#) For [Affiliated Boards \(WTDB, others, see here\)](#). For email notices of upcoming public Commission meetings, or to sign up for our newsletter, go to [www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)*

#### **Grant and Contracting Opportunities:**

Explore all HECC [Grants and Contracting Opportunities here.](#)

Future Tribal Access Grant Would Significantly Increase Supports for Enrolled Members of Oregon-Based Tribes: We are pleased to be working with Oregon's Tribal leadership and the Governor's Office on the development of a \$19 million package creating new grants targeted to students who are members of one of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, and look forward to continued conversations. The Tribal Access Grant would fund most undergraduate and graduate higher education expenses of enrolled members of Oregon-based Tribes. If approved, this would be a historically significant investment to support recognized members of Oregon-based Tribes, regardless of current state of residency, as they work toward their first associates, bachelor's, and master's degrees at eligible Oregon colleges and universities. The Tribal Access Grant would ensure that the most significant educational expenses are eliminated, improving affordable access to Oregon public and non-profit institutions of higher education for Tribal students. The HECC looks forward to conversations on this proposal, and we will implement the grant in time for the 2022-2023 academic year through the Office of Student Access and Completion if it is approved. Due to the nature of the legislative appropriation, the program will need to be reauthorized in 2023 in order to continue on a permanent basis. For more information or to provide input, contact [Kyle.Thomas@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:Kyle.Thomas@hecc.oregon.gov).

Future Ready: Addressing Oregon's Workforce Needs with an Equity Lens: One of Governor Kate Brown's major proposals for the 2022 Legislative Session is Future Ready Oregon 2022 (SB 1545), a \$200 million package of investments to give people the education, training, and resources they need to get into good-paying jobs. Focused on equitable prosperity, this funding would focus on realizing the full potential of Oregon's workforce, and meeting the needs of Oregon's employers today and into the future. In particular, Future Ready Oregon 2022 focuses on advancing opportunities for historically underserved communities, including adult learners, dislocated workers, and youth. Investments emphasize recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities, while prioritizing key populations, including people of color, women, people with low incomes, rural communities, veterans, and Oregonians who are incarcerated and formerly incarcerated. If approved, many of the funds would be administered through the HECC, working with state and local workforce boards, community-based and culturally-specific organizations, education & training providers, employers, and other partners, and bolstering current HECC statewide workforce strategies.

- The Governor's Office has published an [article and FAQ on the proposal here](#) and a [two-page summary here](#).
- HECC staff [presented to the Commission on this proposal at the February 10 public meeting](#)

HECC Proposes Doubling Oregon Promise Grant Amount for Low-Income Students: As in prior Sessions, the HECC continues to advocate for an increased focus on equity in state financial aid program design. This Legislative Session, we have proposed modifying the Oregon Promise Grant to distribute more funds to low-income students. Currently designed, the award amount for low-income students has not changed as college costs have increased. To better support low-income students struggling with the increasing costs of college, HECC has proposed doubling the minimum award amount from \$1,000 to \$2,000, and indexing future increases to the increase with the average community college tuition rate. We have also proposed removing the \$50 per term co-pay, reducing the grade-point-average (GPA) requirement from 2.5 to 2.0, and eliminating the first-year experience. See [recent testimony here](#).

HECC Encourages Participation in the Legislature's Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education: The HECC encourages postsecondary students and community members to participate in public meetings of the Oregon Legislature's Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (HB 2590, 2021), which has commenced a historic statewide public engagement process. In recognition of the [deep disparities in access to and success](#) in Oregon postsecondary education, Oregon established this task force, charged with visiting postsecondary institutions and meeting with students and other stakeholders to examine issues of access, retention, graduation, and entry into the workforce. [Find information on the Task Force public meetings and members, or subscribe to email updates here.](#)

### **Recent Research and Reports:**

New Equity Briefs Highlight Comprehensive Data on Students of Color in Higher Education and Training: The HECC Office of Research and Data is pleased to announce a new series of research publications, [Equity Briefs](#), providing an in-depth look at data on the challenges and successes of public college or university students of color. Each Equity Brief focuses on the challenges of success—from high school through college and into the workplace—and where progress in reducing gaps has or has not been made for each racial/ethnic group. There are separate analyses for Asian American/Asian learners, Black/African American learners, Latino/a/x/Hispanic learners, [Native American/Alaska Native learners](#), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander learners.

Recommendations for Adults in Custody to Access Federal Aid: HECC recently submitted a [report to the Oregon Legislature from the SB 234 Workgroup, Postsecondary Education for Adults in Custody](#). The report offers recommendations on how to establish a coordinated, statewide approach to best serve Oregon adults currently in custody who will become eligible soon for federal Pell grants due to 2020 changes in federal law. The report is the result of more than 5 public meetings of the SB 234 Workgroup, which was convened in fall 2021 as directed by SB 234 (2021).

### **Affordability and Financial Aid:**

The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) continues to encourage Oregonians to pursue grants and scholarships at [OregonStudentAid.gov](#).

OSAC Grant Applications for 2022-23 School Year: To be eligible for most types of financial aid, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA). These applications compile financial information and other details about students and families, which the US Department of Education and the State of Oregon use to determine financial need and eligibility for various financial aid opportunities. OSAC continues to encourage Oregonians to [complete the FAFSA or ORSAA](#) and to apply for the, Oregon Promise Grant, the Oregon Child Care Grant, and other state grant programs. Find details and apply at [OregonStudentAid.gov](#).

Webinars on Financial Aid Applications - OSAC is hosting numerous webinars this month for practitioners, students, and families looking for financial aid application assistance. Topics include: the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA), grants and FAFSA Plus+.

OSAC offers the FAFSA Plus+ program for schools, community-based organizations, and other sites that work with a specific student population. Becoming a FAFSA Plus+ site allows an organization to upload a roster of students and then be able to see the FAFSA filing status for those students. Learn more and [sign up to become a FAFSA Plus+ site](#) for free.

Due to the current state of COVID-19 in Oregon, OSAC is going to continue our **outreach and presentations across the state digitally**. Go online to [request support](#) from OSAC at an upcoming event, in a classroom, or providing training to your students/communities. Here are a few key outreach materials:

- [OSAC Update](#): Key deadlines, financial aid and access programs, and changes for the coming 21/22 academic year.
- [Free Publications and Posters](#): Order or download free posters and brochures here including the OSAC Poster, a quick reminder for students to apply for financial aid, including the FAFSA/ORSAA, grants, and scholarships. English and Spanish versions available.
- [Student Budgets](#): Lists the common expected costs from Oregon's public universities, community colleges, and independent colleges.
- [Oregon Promise Grant Handout](#): Updated handout for the Oregon Promise Grant
- [OR Public University Requirements](#): List of the admissions requirements across the Oregon Public Universities

Tribal Access to Oregon Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver: HECC-OSAC continues to be available to ensure Tribal foster youth have access to the Oregon Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver program, which waives tuition and fees for the equivalent of 4 years of undergraduate studies after other public grants and any school aid are applied. Learn more about eligibility at [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](#). OSAC representatives would be pleased to help any Tribal staff. Please contact Kristin.Vreeland@state.or.us).

### **Supporting Pathways and Student Success**

Transfer Council Focused on Streamlining Transfer Pathways: The [Transfer Council](#)—convened in October 2021, and comprised of representatives from Oregon public universities, community colleges, and high schools— is working to develop and advance work to streamline student transfer pathways between institutions. The HECC recently submitted to the Oregon Legislature a [report on the progress of the Transfer Council work to date](#). This work is intended to simplify transfer and reduce the time and cost of earning a degree. All meetings are public, with details on the [HECC website here](#).

Equity Lens Updated with a Focus on Postsecondary Education and Training: In December 2021, the Commission adopted an updated version of the Equity Lens, now titled the [Oregon HECC Equity Lens](#) with a renewed focus on application in postsecondary education and training. The Oregon HECC Equity Lens is

a cornerstone to the State's approach to postsecondary education and training policy and funding, with a focus on Oregonians who are currently and historically underserved in access to and success in postsecondary education and training. The HECC adopted the original Oregon Equity Lens in 2014, and has applied the Lens as a cornerstone to postsecondary education and training policy and funding since its first year as an agency. This update draws on the State of [Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging for the State of Oregon](#) published by the Governor's Office in Fall, 2021, as well as the 2021 [Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training](#).

Oregon Apprenticeship Website: To learn more about apprenticeship or explore apprenticeship opportunities please visit [www.oregonapprenticeship.org](http://www.oregonapprenticeship.org). Registered Apprenticeship provides individuals with a job, education, and an entry point into a lifelong career. Registered Apprenticeship helps employers develop and cultivate a skilled, certified, and engaged workforce.

The Workforce & Talent Development Board's (WTDB) new website: The redesigned WTDB website at [www.oregon.gov/workforceboard](http://www.oregon.gov/workforceboard) is focused on the vision of the WTDB to foster equitable prosperity for all Oregonians, and offers resources for workers, employers, students, educators and trainers and more.

Academic Program Approvals: At its February public meeting, the Commission approved the following new academic programs—Columbia Gorge Community College (CC): AAS in Advanced Manufacturing and Fabrication; AAS in Construction Technology; Lane CC: AAS in Aviation Unmanned Aircraft Systems; Certificate of Completion in Wildland Fire Management; Oregon Coast CC: Certificate of Completion in Shipbuilding and Repair Level II; Eastern Oregon University: BA/BS, Public Relations; Master of Public Administration; Oregon State University: BA/BS, Contemporary Music Industry; MA/MS Communication; Western Oregon University: BA/Bachelor of Arts and Science, Data Analytics. At its October Commission meeting, the HECC approved the following new academic programs—Portland CC, AAS, Video Production and Emerging Media; Western Oregon University, Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Applied Baccalaureate Program Proposals Advance to Third Phase: At its February public meeting, the Commission received program proposals for new bachelors of applied science degrees at Chemeketa CC BAS, Management and Leadership, and Mt Hood CC: BAS, Cybersecurity. These programs were both approved to move into Phase Three of the [program approval process for applied baccalaureate degrees at community colleges](#).

## **Economic and Community Impact**

HECC GRANT OPPORTUNITIES: Requests for Applications (RFA): For information on these and other grant and contracting opportunities with the HECC please visit [Grants and Contracting Opportunities here](#).

- **Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC) Grants**: Request for Applications (RFA) for Oregon Conservation Corps grants to aid in reducing wildfire risk to communities. Closing date for initial round: March 4, 2022.
- **Oregon Youth Employment Program (OYEP)**: RFA for OYEP State Youth Work Experience for Local Workforce Development Boards. Closing date: March 8, 2022.
- **WIOA Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Funds**: RFA for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Funds. Closing date: March 18, 2022.
- **Oregon GED® Program Wraparound Services Grant**: RFA for the 2021-2023 Oregon GED® Program Wraparound Services Grant. Closing date: March 31, 2022.

## **AMERICORPS AND OREGONSERVES GRANT OPPORTUNITIES:**

OregonServes, the AmeriCorps State Service Commission, and administrator of AmeriCorps Program State funding, will be hosting information sessions for the **upcoming FY22 AmeriCorps State Formula Grants and AmeriCorps Planning Grant opportunities**. Grant priorities for Oregon-based programs include COVID-19 response and recovery, public health, environmental equity and climate action, workforce development, and grants to historically underserved or underrepresented communities. Eligible applicants include Tribes, governments, nonprofit organizations, and education institutions. To view the AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity, visit the AmeriCorps website. The Oregon-based Request for Applications will be released early March, with a

mid-April submission deadline. To get a preview of the application process, interested applicants should register for one related information webinar. For more information, contact [oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov). **Formula Grant Webinars:** March 10th, 2-3:30pm, [Registration Link](#), March 16th, 9-10:30am, [Registration Link](#). **Planning Grant Webinar:** March 15th, 10:30-11:30am, [Registration Link](#)

AmeriCorps, the federal agency, also announces the **2022 National Tribal Grants Competition**. With the 2022 AmeriCorps State and National Tribal Grants competition, AmeriCorps seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources into disaster services like COVID-19 response, economic opportunities, education including traditional knowledge and indigenous language, civic and social engagement, environmental stewardship, healthy futures and veterans and military families. For more information, visit the [AmeriCorps website](#).

SAVE THE DATE: Save the Date for April 12 for the Oregon Talent Summit: We are pleased to share that the Oregon Talent Summit will be held April 12, 2022, co-hosted by the Workforce and Talent Development Board and HECC. Mark your calendars now and watch for updates as we unveil the speaker line up.

Strategies to advance Oregon's Adult Educational Attainment Goal: State and institution leaders continue to work to transform policies and remove barriers to better serve adults who need retraining and other non-traditional learners in support of the Adult Attainment Goal. In 2019, the HECC and the WTDB convened an Adult Learner Advisory Committee (ALAC) to advise staff in these efforts. In 2021, the HECC and WTDB released the [Adult Learner Advisory Committee \(ALAC\) Report](#), a comprehensive report designed to inform state strategies to increase credential completion among Oregon working-age adults, including an in-depth overview of adult learners in Oregon today, and identification of "Credentials that Work" for high wage-high demand fields.

AmeriCorps Updates: The AmeriCorps Segal Education Award, a \$6495 award earned after completing a term of AmeriCorps, can be used to pay back student loans or pay for college, trade school, or related student costs. In the 2021 Legislative Session, Oregon passed HB2433, exempting the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award from state tax, enabling AmeriCorps members to further leverage the benefits of the award. To assist members in understanding how this relates to their tax filing, OregonServes, the state commission for AmeriCorps, has created a [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document](#). AmeriCorps Programs in Oregon recently collaborated on a virtual job fair to raise awareness of the existing AmeriCorps position opportunities across the state. Member positions are available in environmental stewardship, community capacity building, education and more. Attendees received information on the benefits of AmeriCorps, including the living allowance, job skill development, education award and more. [Stay up to date on OregonServes news, and access the FAQ and Virtual Job Fair recording, by visiting this link.](#)

## **Other Updates**

Commission to Expand Membership with 2021 Legislation: Senate Confirms New Commissioners Appointed by the Governor. With the passage of SB 712 in 2021, several changes were made to the membership of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission which take effect with appointments confirmed after January 1, 2022. The bill adds a member to the Commission who is currently a graduate student, and converts positions that are currently nonvoting positions to voting positions. Once all positions are converted, the Commission will have 15 voting member slots. On February 10, the Oregon Senate confirmed [Governor Brown's appointments of new Commissioners to the HECC](#) for terms that beginning March 1, 2022. Former State Senator Richard Devlin will serve in the position currently held by Commissioner Larry Roper, whose term will expire; Motutama Sipelli will serve in the new graduate student position; and Aislyn Matias will serve in the position currently held by Enrique Farrera, whose term will expire. In addition, we are delighted to announce that on November 17, 2021, the Oregon Senate confirmed the Governor's appointment of Rukaiyah Adams as a voting member of the HECC.

Julia Steinberger appointed Interim Director of Office of Workforce Investments: We are pleased to share that Julia Steinberger will serve as Interim Director of the HECC Office of Workforce Investment (OWI) starting November 1, 2021.