



Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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September Agency Update:

September 2021 | Our partners can find previous quarterly Government to Government updates as well as other information on work and initiatives in the [Coordination with Oregon Tribes](#) section of our website.

Strategic Roadmap: The agency announced in a [press release in August, 2021](#) that after an extensive public engagement and development process that commenced in 2019, the HECC has finalized Oregon's [Strategic Roadmap for Postsecondary Education and Training](#). 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 Roadmap is intended to guide not only HECC initiatives, but also those of Oregon's postsecondary education and training partners statewide. The Roadmap sets the following **five categories for strategic action** as major areas of focus, with specific examples described in the document: 1) transform and innovate to serve students and learners best; 2) center higher education and workforce training capacity on current and future state needs; 3) ensure that postsecondary learners can afford to meet their basic needs; 4) create and support a continuum of pathways from education and training to career; and 5) increase public investment to meet Oregon's postsecondary goals. To advance the Roadmap in coming months, the HECC and its partners will embark on a **process to determine what specific actions will be required** to achieve the change it describes, including timelines for initiatives or proposals. [Read more about the Roadmap here.](#)

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.](#)

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 14-member 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

Upcoming Meetings:

Higher Education Coordinating Commission,
October 7, 2021 (tentative)

HECC Funding and Achievement Subcommittee:

October 6, 2021 (tentative)

Workforce and Talent Development Board
September 10, 2021 (tentative)

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

Legislative and Budget Outcomes: We are pleased to release summary documents to serve as resources to our state and institutional partners on the results of the 2021 Legislative Session for Oregon postsecondary education and workforce training. For a high-level overview of the postsecondary education budget, see the Fact Sheet below.

- [Fact Sheet: Legislatively Adopted Budget for Higher Education 2021-23](#)

For a longer comprehensive overview of key legislative investments and bills approved during Oregon's 2021 Legislative Session, including bill descriptions, details on the biennial budget, and capital investment information, see the Legislative Summary.

- [HECC Legislative Summary, 2021-23 Postsecondary Budget and Key Policy Bills](#)

The Legislature made significant investments to reinvest in Oregon's public colleges and universities, and to address the college affordability crisis too many Oregonians face. The 2021-23 state investment in **community colleges increased 10.5 percent from 2019-21, and state support for public university operations increased 8.1 percent**. These investments support operational expenses for the institutions, and are expected to be sufficient to **mitigate tuition increases during the biennium**. We are thankful that the Legislature also was able to increase **investment in Oregon's deeply underfunded need-based financial aid program, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, by 21.8 percent**, which will support [approximately 11,000 additional grants to students this biennium](#). Funding for the Oregon Promise Grant was sustained at current service level. In addition, legislation passed to: support benefits navigators on public college campuses (HB 2835); add requirements for transparency of costs for course materials (HB 2919); modernize the information technology system used for state financial aid awards (FAMIS); and more. The Legislature also added \$5 million in new funding to expand the work of five college access and outreach programs that serve underserved populations, including the Commission's own ASPIRE program.

The Legislature also supported the HECC agency's work to foster learner pathways in several key areas. It approved funding and legislation to **sustain and bolster the HECC's work to improve transfer pathways** from public community colleges to universities, including launching the development of a common course numbering system through SB 233 and the establishment of a central authority to resolve transfer policy issues. For the first time in HECC history, state general fund investments are made in **youth employment initiatives**. The Legislature adopted HB 2092, HECC-sponsored legislation bolstering the equity policies of the Oregon Youth Employment Program, and providing \$9 million in state investment to operate the program for the first time since it was established in statute. Funding is also provided through SB 553 for the creation of the Oregon Conservation Corps program to aid in forest management and wildfire mitigation. And we are excited that among other funding needs, the agency received funding for two **new positions in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** to expand our community engagement and equity leadership.

In recognition of the [deep disparities in access to and success](#) in Oregon postsecondary education, Oregon established a legislative **Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education** (HB 2590), charged with visiting postsecondary institutions and meeting with students and other stakeholders to examine issues of access, retention, graduation, and entry into the workforce. The HECC looks forward to supporting legislators as they tour sites around Oregon and develop student success policy proposals for the 2023 session. We also look forward to further engagement with the **Racial Justice Council**, which played a key role in the development of the Governor's Recommended Budget for this biennium, and is now permanently established through HB 2167.

Continued Response to the Pandemic: While the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has had a substantial role in public health guidelines for the colleges and universities for much of the pandemic, HECC does not currently manage these guidelines, as the executive order on that was rescinded in June, 2021. Oregon colleges and universities are subject to statewide requirements issued by the Governor's Office and OHA. They have also been advised to consult Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and their local health authorities as they develop operating plans going forward. In addition, all seven of Oregon's public universities, at least two of its 17 community colleges, and numerous Oregon private institutions have vaccine requirements of some degree (details vary). This is an institutional decision, not a state requirement.

Recent Equity and Student Success Initiatives and Activities: The HECC's commitment to equity informs policy decision making, funding recommendations, ongoing programs as well as special initiatives. The HECC [Equity and Student Success initiatives web page](#) has recently been updated to describe **recent agency efforts to support institutions and partners in equitably serving historically underrepresented populations.**

Featured Resource: Real Opportunity video: We encourage viewing and sharing this short inspirational and informational video on the need to dramatically improve racial equity in higher education and workforce training. [Real Opportunity: Supporting College Success for Underserved Students of Color will Move Oregon Forward.](#)

Oregon's Adult Outreach Marketing Toolkit Now Available in Nine Languages: In early 2021, HECC released a toolkit of marketing resources to help Oregon postsecondary education institutions and partners to engage adult learners of color in their postsecondary education and workforce training goals: Oregon Adult Learner Outreach toolkit. We are pleased to report that [this toolkit is now translated into eight languages](#) in addition to English.

Recent Research and Reports:

Fourth Annual "Statewide Higher Education Snapshots" Highlight Key Metrics on Oregon Institutions and Students: Over 397,000 students were enrolled at public community colleges and universities in 2019-20, and completion rates for students at the state's public institutions continued to rise. However, large percentages of Oregon learners face affordability challenges and serious inequities in education and training, including in graduation. These and other insights are evident in the **HECC's fourth annual Statewide Higher Education Snapshots, a set of 27 one-page reader-friendly summaries on Oregon's postsecondary learners in 2019-20.** The Snapshots answer frequently asked data questions on enrollment, affordability, and outcomes regarding Oregon public postsecondary students—with break-outs by race/ethnicity and first-generation status, among others. By clicking on the locations of interest on the [Oregon map here](#), readers can explore all Snapshots, including statewide data summaries (the [statewide summary](#), [community college summary](#), and [public university summary](#)), as well as 24 individual Snapshots for each of Oregon's public postsecondary education institutions.

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](#).

Coming soon! A new design for OregonStudentAid.gov: The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) is excited to announce that [www.OregonStudentAid.gov](#), the hub for state-administered financial aid and access programs, will have a new design this fall! OSAC has been working hard to give [OregonStudentAid.gov](#) a more modern look and a more intuitive design for students, families, educators, and anyone else visiting our site.

With Increased Funding, State Plans to Award Oregon Opportunity Grants to Thousands More Students, Encourages Applications: The HECC Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) [announced in a recent press release](#) that the recent approval of an additional \$28.8 million to the state's need-based college financial aid program, the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG), will allow the HECC to immediately begin awarding more financial aid to current and future Oregon students to support college affordability statewide. These additional funds, approved in Senate Bill 5528 by the 2021 State Legislature and signed by Governor Brown on July 27, 2021 increase the grant's total funding by 21.8 percent in comparison to the last biennium's legislatively adopted budget to a total of \$200 million. The HECC invites partners to spread the word about the increased funding and to encourage Oregonians who may enroll in an Oregon college this year to [file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\) or the Oregon Student Aid Application \(ORSAA\) as soon as possible](#) if they have not already done so. [Read more here.](#)

The **OSAC Scholarship Portal** will be opening November 1st and along with the full [OregonStudentAid.gov](#) website, this site will have a new look and feel. As part of this update, the application will be mobile-first, meaning that students will be able to access the portal and work on their applications from a mobile phone.

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 few key outreach materials for reference:

- [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

OSAC will be distributing a **monthly email newsletter** containing helpful tools, workshops, financial aid updates, grant & scholarships tips, and more. To be added onto the email listserv email Kerry.thomas@hecc.oregon.gov

[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 in 2019 developed a solution to ensure that information on eligible tribal foster youth are provided to college financial aid offices to be considered for the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver. Tribes who administer their own Foster Youth programs can now upload lists of eligible students into the OSAC Partner Portal. OSAC representatives would be pleased to help any tribal staff who utilize this option (contact Kristin.Vreeland@state.or.us).

Supporting Pathways and Student Success

[Academic Program Approvals](#): At its June and August Commission meetings, the Commission approved the following new academic programs. For details on these programs, see the [June 10 meeting materials](#) and [August 12 meeting materials here](#).

[Community college programs](#) -- Blue Mountain CC: AAS, Precision Agriculture. Central Oregon CC: AAS, Manufacturing Machining Technician. Clackamas CC: Certificate of Completion Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technology; AAS, Automotive Service Technology; Certificate of Completion Healthcare Careers; AAS, Educación Infantil y Estudios Familiares; Certificate of Completion in Educación Infantil y Estudios Familiares; Certificate of Completion in Clinical Laboratory Assistant/Phlebotomy. Chemeketa CC: Certificate of Completion in Irrigation Technician; Certificate of Completion in Automotive Machining; Certificate of Completion in Auto Body Repair; AAS in Diesel Technology; Certificate of Completion in Construction Trades and Apprenticeship Readiness. Portland CC: Certificate of Completion in Accounting Clerk; Certificate of Completion in Accelerated Accounting. Treasure Valley CC: Certificate of Completion in Construction Trades and Apprenticeship Readiness; AAS in Industrial Manufacturing & Automation Control System.

[Public University Programs](#) -- Eastern Oregon University, BA/BS, Marketing; BA/BS, Data Analytics. Oregon State University: B.S., Geology; B.S., Climate Science. Portland State University, MS, Geographic Information Science. University of Oregon: B.A./B.S., Native American and Indigenous Studies; Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Spanish.

[Statement of Need for Bachelor of Applied Science \(BAS\) programs](#) -- At its August meeting, the Commission also approved the following statements of need. This is a required step in the [program approval process for Bachelor of Applied Science programs, described here](#). For details, see the [August 12 meeting materials here](#). Mt Hood CC: Community College Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Statement of Need, Cybersecurity. Chemeketa CC: Community College Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Statement of Need, Applied Management and Leadership.

Economic and Community Impact

Americorps Program Recruitment: Oregon Volunteers' AmeriCorps programs are actively recruiting for the next cohort of members eager to meet community's pressing needs and earn an education award for college – now state-tax free in Oregon! [Positions are still open](#) in education, conservation, health programs and more. Partners are invited to raise awareness about [AmeriCorps opportunities](#) with the new [What's at your core?](#) marketing campaign.

Other Updates

Virtual Conference Opportunity: [Elevate the Essentials: The Oregon Adult Basic Skills Virtual Conference 2021](#), October 14-15, 2021. The Oregon Adult Basic Skills Virtual Conference 2021 provides quality, relevant professional development and networking opportunities for adult basic education professionals, administrators, and students including those in GED® test education, Adult Basic Education, Corrections, ESOL, and Career & Technical Education. [Registration is now open. Early bird tickets are \\$50 each and are available here.](#)

Public Health Corps funding: Open to Oregon community organizations, tribes, and local governments, AmeriCorps has announced the launch of [Public Health Corps funding](#). Organizations invested in increasing the public health workforce in Oregon can contact Oregon Volunteers for more information at carie.e.bauer@hecc.oregon.gov.

Donna Lewelling Appointed Director, Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD): We are pleased to announce that Donna Lewelling has been hired as the new director of HECC's [Office of CCWD](#), the office responsible for coordination, leadership and resources to Oregon's 17 locally-governed community colleges, adult basic skills providers, postsecondary career and technical education programs, and other partnerships to advance statewide goals.

Partner News: New Website Promotes Awareness of Oregon Community Colleges -The Oregon Community College Marketing & Public Relations affinity group, in coordination with the Oregon Community College Association, is excited to launch a new website aimed at creating statewide awareness of Oregon's 17 community colleges. The new site, www.oregoncommunitycolleges.com, provides information about the state's colleges, financial aid, degrees/certificates and success stories, as well as how to take your next step in learning more or enrolling at a community college.