

# Findings and Recommendations Related to Systemic Accountability and Continuous Improvement

Note: For the below numbered items, Task Force Findings are in regular font, **followed by Recommendations in bold font.** 

Below Findings and Recommendations are listed *Examples of related policies*, which are policy ideas submitted by work group participants or Task Force Members.

1. The task force finds that since the dissolution of the Oregon University System and the establishment of university governing boards and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, there have been questions about the state-level accountability of Oregon's systems of funding and coordination. While the Student Success and Completion funding model holds institutions accountable for investments in serving underrepresented students, its influence on institutional policies and outcomes is limited by the overall amount of funding it distributes to universities. The task force recommends that policies enacted by the legislature focus on increasing clear communication of student outcomes, particularly for historically underserved populations and increase accountability at the local level along with increased investments in universities and students.

Examples of related policies:
Campus Accountability Teams (SA-17)
Build on HB 2864 Cultural Competency (5)
Accountability for Transition-to-work (6)

2. The task force finds that higher education has historically been and persists today as an institution constructed to serve the dominant culture. As the demographics in Oregon continue to change, and students of color along with other underserved groups become a greater share of students at institutions, leadership, faculty, and staff must evolve to create new accessible systems that incorporate culturally responsive teaching and counseling to better serve the changing population. The task force recommends that institutions must undertake hiring, training, and cultural competency practices that improve the ability of institutions and student-facing faculty and staff to interact with, diagnose the concerns of, and provide equitable opportunity in all aspects of institutional life to such students.

#### Examples of related policies:

Cultural Competency Training for Advisers and Counselors (SA-16) Mandatory Ethnic Studies (11) Comprehensive Orientation (10) Permanent Adult-In-Custody Committee (8), (SA-5), (SA-17)

3. The task force acknowledges the hard work that institutional personnel are currently doing, and finds that students, faculty, and staff reported a lack of diverse educators and staff. The task force further finds that the extra work asked of diverse educators and staff creates campus environments that may lead to high rates of burnout and turnover. **The task force** 

recommends that public higher education institutions renew their focus on recruiting diverse educators and staff and compensating them for labor that is currently unpaid. *Examples of related policies:* Learning Journeys/Family Support (3)

4. The task force finds that Oregon has an ongoing educational equity crisis, and this crisis continues to perpetuate systemic barriers and bias that create climate issues on campus where students do not feel supported or that they do not belong. Institutions of higher education are unique environments that represent an opportunity for Oregon to employ a systematic approach to operationalizing equity commitments. This operationalization should address leadership and faculty continuous professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and managing transformational change, access and enrollment, academic policies and practices, and student supports and belonging. The task force recommends that a state committee focused on the development of equity in practice should be established to examine the question of what collaborative accountability with the state can look like in support of authentic implementation of an equity minded system on campuses, to serve as a forum to highlight and disseminate the best of equity practices around the state, and to further advise the legislature when statutory or funding modifications would result in tangible positive impacts.

Examples of Related policies: Equity minded Data Collection (7) Metrics for Higher Education Accountability (4)

5. The task force finds that students, faculty, and staff are concerned that people of color are employed as adjunct faculty at a higher rate, leading to functionally discriminatory rates of pay. Further, the task force heard that low pay and a lack of job security for adjunct faculty and some staff lead to high rates of turnover. The task force recommends that public institutions of higher education study the disproportionate impact of the use of adjunct faculty, particularly the lack of pay parity between adjunct and tenured faculty.

Examples of related policies:
Equity minded Data Collection (7)
Metrics for Higher Education Accountability (4)

6. The task force finds that chief diversity officers or directors help to ensure diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) are prioritized and made core institutional values in university/college operations. They are typically asked to develop a comprehensive DEI strategy and plan for the university or college in efforts to operationalize the commitment to equity in the institution by leading in an equity minded framework that would intentionally evaluate systems. identify barriers for students and staff, build consistent capacity of understanding to enhance and/or create culture and learning environments that are welcoming and allow students to thrive so that they can complete their work/career pathway. These efforts may fall short due to the hierarchal view that the work only happens in multi-cultural offices or due to the fact that this work is not prioritized as part of an institution's overall strategic plan. These DEIJ roles must move past compliance, and lead to ensure the perspective and inclusion of our underserved and marginalized students are represented in policy, practice, curriculum, budget, and overall leadership decisions that impact the students being served. Out of Oregon's 24 institutions of higher education, only 15 have designated DEIJ roles that are designated leadership roles as part of the executive cabinet of their institution. The task force recommends that all 24 public institutions should have this leadership-level role, which should be sufficiently

#### resourced to support institution wide equity activity.

Related policies: Permanent funding for DEI work (1) Build on HB 2864 Cultural Competency (5)

7. The task force finds that students, faculty, and staff do not understand how their institutions allocate resources for purposes of supporting underrepresented members of the campus community, including how institutional budgets are determined. The task force recommends that public higher education institutions involve broader representation of the campus community in resource allocation processes and decision-making.

Examples of related policies: Student Fee Autonomy/Shared Governance (12) Debt Collection Act (13) Student Legal Services (14)

## Policy Proposals Submitted by Work Group Members

Members of the Systemic Accountability and Continuous Improvement work group submitted the following proposals:

#### **Proposal SA-1: Permanent Staffing and Funding for Equity Positions**

This proposal would require permanent support positions at community colleges for students of color, LGBTQSIA+ students, student veterans, first-generation, and low-income students.

Timeline for implementation: 18 months

Implementation responsibility: Community colleges, with state funding

Impact on existing statutes or programs: Not specified

Background: Current law requires higher education institutions to have benefit navigator positions on campus to assist students with accessing public benefits. This proposal would extend that model to include a variety of support positions.

#### **Proposal SA-2: Scaling Student Success Programs Toward Institutional Change**

This proposal would increase funding for proven support programs such as TRIO, Future Connect, and Educational Opportunities Program.

Timeline for implementation: 3-6 months

Implementation responsibility: Community colleges, presumably with state funding Impact on existing statutes or programs: Increase funding for existing programs Background:

### Proposal SA-3: Learning Journeys – Critical Partners and Pipelines for Safe, Inclusive, and Resilient Communities

This submission envisions campus communities as familial environments, greater recruitment and retention rates for staff of color. The submitter proposes:

- Funding and support for campus childcare
- Creation of paid internship opportunities for underrepresented students

Timeline for implementation: Not specified

Implementation responsibility: Institutional leaders

Impact on existing programs: HB 2864

Background:

#### **Proposal SA-4: Requirement of Metrics for Higher Education**

This proposal would require institutions to capture measurable data to address specific opportunities for improvement.

Timeline for implementation: Beginning July 1, 2023

Implementation responsibility: Institutions, high schools, possibly HECC

Impact on existing programs: Not specified

Background: In 2011, Oregon decentralized control of its higher education system, opting instead for local control at the institutional level. While the Higher Education Coordinating Commission collects and publishes some performance data at the institutional level, this proposal would expand that data collection and require its use in addressing institutional improvement efforts.

### Proposal SA-5: Build on Institutional Cultural Competency Approaches by Supporting Approaches Such as Targeted Universalism

This proposal would provide support to institutions for setting universal goals built on the requirements of HB 2864.

Timeline for implementation: Fall 2023

Implementation responsibility: Institutions, with state funding

Impact on existing programs: Expansion of existing work under HB 2864

Background: In 2017, the Oregon Legislature enacted <u>House Bill 2864</u>, requiring each higher education institution to establish a process to enact cultural competency standards for the institution and its employees. The measure required training for employees, the creation of institution-wide goals, and a biennial report.

#### Proposal SA-6: Higher Education Accountability for Transition-to-Work Success

This proposal calls for funding to support underrepresented students in internships, career preparation, and transitioning to work.

Timeline for implementation: 2023-2025 biennium

Implementation responsibility: HECC-distributed block grants to institutions

Impact on existing programs: Not specified

Background: While existing programs such as TRIO and other institutional efforts support students through degree attainment, this proposal would strengthen efforts to support students as they move from college into careers. Throughout its site visits, the task force heard from students who sought more assistance moving into careers.

### Proposal SA-7: Strengthening Equity Minded Data Capacity of Higher Education Institutions

This proposal would provide support to institutions for data analysts and data infrastructure at institutions to strengthen data collection and analysis.

Timeline for implementation: 1-3 academic years

Implementation responsibility: Institutions, with state funding

Impact on existing programs: Not specified

Background: In 2011, Oregon decentralized control of its higher education system, opting instead for local control at the institutional level. While the Higher Education

Coordinating Commission collects and publishes some performance data at the institutional level, this proposal would expand the collection and use of data in local decision making.

### Proposal SA-8: Establishment of a Permanent Committee for Post-Secondary Education for Adults in Custody

This proposal recommends establishment of a permanent coordinating body comprising DOC, OCHEP, and HECC to manage prison-based higher education programs.

Timeline for implementation: 1 year to create committee; 2 years to create shared coordination strategy; 2+ years for implementing minimum statewide standards for prison-based higher education courses; 5+ years to measure enrollment, outcomes, and trends.

Implementation responsibility: HECC, DOC, OCHEP, current and former AICs, and AIC providers.

Impact on existing programs: Existing programs in DOC, HECC, OCHEP, and provider institutions would be impacted as coordination and standards are aligned.

Background: Oregon law requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide an education system within each correctional institution for adults in custody. The stated objective of this education system is twofold: To implement a basic skills development program which assesses each adult's academic and intellectual competency, and to provide adults in custody with professional and occupational skills to prepare them for jobs post-release. DOC offers several educational programs to adults in custody, including preparation for the General Education Development (GED) high school equivalency test, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, community college courses, and special education programs for adults in custody with disabilities.

#### **Proposal SA-9: Expanding Eligibility for the Oregon Promise Grant**

This proposal would eliminate the requirement that Oregon Promise recipients be recent high school graduates.

Timeline for implementation: Dependent on funding

Implementation responsibility: HECC and Oregon Student Aid

Impact on existing programs: Oregon Promise Grant

Background: The Oregon Promise program was created by Senate Bill 81 (2015) and is the state's second-largest, state-funded financial aid program. Oregon Promise is a

grant available to Oregon high school graduates or students who pass the General Educational Development (GED) test, subject to certain eligibility requirements, to provide financial assistance for tuition and fees at Oregon community colleges. Although the Oregon Promise is not a means-tested aid program, when sufficient funds are unavailable, Oregon law allows the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to deny eligibility to students whose expected family contribution (EFC) is above a certain threshold as determined by the HECC by rule.

#### **Proposal SA-10: Comprehensive Orientation for All Oregon Students**

This proposal would standardize and impose minimum standards for new student orientations, such as requiring specific content and requiring translation in Spanish for orientation events.

Timeline for implementation: 1 year

Implementation responsibility: Higher education institutions

Impact on existing programs: Submitters unsure

Background: Currently, state law is silent on orientation programs at Oregon's institutions of higher education. Each institution controls orientation at the local level. This proposal would impose minimum standards on all public higher education institutions in Oregon.

### Proposal SA-11: Ethnic Studies Requirements at Oregon Higher Education Institutions

This proposal would require all students to take a required course in ethnic studies in order to receive an undergraduate degree.

Timeline for implementation: Not specified

Implementation responsibility: HECC and institutions

Impact on existing programs: Ethnic studies departments, courses, and instructors will see increased demand.

Background: In response to passage of HB 3308 in 2015, HECC convened a work group to address disparities in higher education through continuing education. The work

group surveyed students, who identified creation of ethnic studies departments at all public institutions of higher education as a key recommendation. Currently, \*\* of Oregon's 24 higher education institutions have ethnic studies departments.

### Proposal SA-12: HECC Statewide Task Force on Student Fee Autonomy and Shared Governance

This proposal would create a task force convened by HECC with members drawn from student leadership to study issues that have arisen around student fee autonomy, including statutory requirements and timelines.

Timeline for implementation: 1-2 years

Implementation responsibility: HECC

Impact on existing programs: Existing statutes regarding student fee autonomy

Background: Students at Oregon's public universities and community colleges are subject to mandatory enrollment, incidental, and student-initiated fees in addition to tuition. These fees typically cover student involvement activities and programs. Mandatory incidental and student-initiated fees differ from mandatory enrollment fees in that they are requested by student governments and collected by institutional boards, and are not subject to the same advisory guidelines as mandatory enrollment fees. Oregon law allows institutional boards or presidents to reject requests for incidental and student-initiated fees for a variety of reasons, including if the fee increase is greater than five percent and if the fee request is determined to not be advantageous to the cultural or physical development of students.

#### **Proposal SA-13: Educational Debt Collection Practices Act**

This proposal would prohibit institutions from withholding transcripts or barring registration as a debt collection measure.

Timeline for implementation: 2024-2025 school year

Implementation responsibility: Institutions for implementation; HECC for oversight

Impact on existing programs: Not specified\*

\*Staff note: this proposal may have an impact on institutional revenue streams

Background: According to <u>news reports</u>, eight states have prohibited or restricted the use of transcript holds as debt collection measures: California, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, and Washington. However, institutions in these states may still bar students from registering for classes if they owe money.

#### **Proposal SA-14: Strengthening Student Legal Services for Oregon Students**

This proposal would require institutions to allow for broader use of free legal support services for students, to include disputes involving the university itself.

Timeline for implementation: A few years

Implementation responsibility: Student governments, universities, HECC

Impact on existing programs: Student fee autonomy, existing legal services programs

Background:

#### **Proposal SA-15: Centralized Statewide Student Resources Portal**

This proposal would create and centralize a student resources portal in the form of a website, app, or virtual center. The portal would allow for easier access to existing resources that students may not be aware of.

Timeline for implementation: A few years

Implementation responsibility: HECC

Impact on existing programs: Not specified

Background:

### Proposal SA-16: Cultural Competency for Academic Advisors and Mental Health Counselors

This proposal would require higher education institutions to create and implement a plan for diversifying their advising and counseling workforces. Additionally, the proposal would mandate cultural competency training for academic advisors and mental health counselors.

Timeline for implementation: A few years

Implementation responsibility: Institutions, with support from HECC

Impact on existing programs: Existing advising and counseling programs

Background: In 2017, the Oregon Legislature enacted <u>House Bill 2864</u>, requiring each higher education institution to establish a process to enact cultural competency standards for the institution and its employees. The measure required training for employees, the creation of institution-wide goals, and a biennial report.

#### **Proposal SA-17: Campus Accountability Teams**

This proposal would require the creation of Campus Accountability Teams on each campus. The Teams could be existing bodies designated to serve this function. Each team would review campus' efforts to improve the cultural inclusion climate for diverse students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Teams would be responsible for drafting formal responses or appraisals of campus efforts, and campus leaders would be required to respond with timelines addressing the concerns and recommendations of the team. Each team would be required to present its report to the board, annually. The process would be overseen by HECC, which would periodically convene teams from multiple campuses to assess the process.

Timeline for implementation: Ongoing

Implementation responsibility: Legislature, students, institutional leaders, institutional boards, faculty, staff, accountability team members, members of related institutional committees or work groups.

Impact on existing programs: HB 2864

Background:

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