

2025 REPORT TO THE OREGON LEGISLATURE:

Funding The Community College Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) and
Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN)

Senate Bill 1552

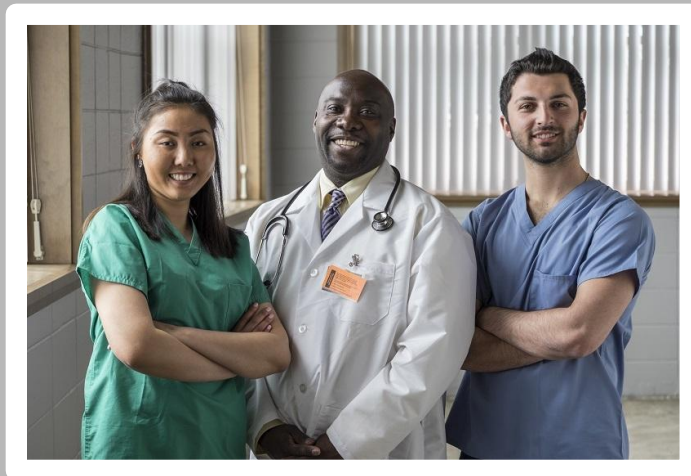


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Senate Bill 1552 (2024) establishes funding eligibility for Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) and Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN) degree programs at Oregon community colleges through the Community College Support Fund (CCSF). These programs address workforce demands and expand access to baccalaureate degrees, particularly in underserved rural areas and in urban areas with limited capacity.

Community colleges were authorized to offer BAS and BSN degrees through legislative actions in 2019 and 2023. However, state funding was not initially allocated to support these programs. With the passage of SB 1552, upper-division coursework in these programs will now qualify for funding through the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) starting in January 2025.

As of March 2025, eight of Oregon's seventeen community colleges are offering or have received HECC approval for BAS and BSN programs that will be offered to students in Fall of 2025 or 2026. The financial impact of funding these programs through the CCSF is estimated at 0.4% of total funding for FY2025, affecting reallocation among the colleges. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) estimates a total funding impact of approximately \$1.49 million for FY2025.

HECC is recommending that all Commission-approved programs continue to be funded through existing mechanisms, with no alternative funding recommendations at this time.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Community college Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) and Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN) degrees in Oregon are recent developments driven by workforce demands and educational accessibility. In 2019 and again in 2023, the Oregon Revised Statute was amended to allow community colleges to seek Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) approval for these degrees.

Emergence of Applied Baccalaureate Degrees: The concept of community colleges offering four-year degrees emerged in response to the need for more technically skilled workers in various industries. Traditional two-year associate degrees were sometimes seen as insufficient for certain specialized roles. Additionally, these degrees provide pathways for students in rural areas where there are limited opportunities to access four-year degree programs and in urban areas where there may be limited capacity.

Legislative Support and Authorization: In 2019, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 3, which authorized community colleges to offer applied baccalaureate degrees in specific fields where there was demonstrated workforce demand. In 2023, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 523, further defining a Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree as a distinct four-year community college degree pathway for registered nurses.

Implementation: Following the legislative authorization, HECC developed an approval process for Bachelor of Applied Science Pathways and, subsequently, the Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree. This extensive three-phase approval process allows interested parties to provide feedback and comment on a proposed program. Since then, Oregon community colleges have begun developing and offering these programs based on the needs of their communities.

Student Success and Community Benefits: The availability of applied baccalaureate degrees at community colleges has been seen as a positive development for both students and local communities. It allows students to stay in their communities, reduces costs associated with higher education, and helps meet the workforce needs of local industries.

Funding: When originally passed in 2019 and 2023 the bills authorizing the development and approval of BAS and BSN degrees did not include a mechanism for colleges to use state funding to support these pathways. However, in 2024, the Legislature approved the programs as eligible for funding from the CCSF and asked the Commission to report back in 2025 on the impact of funding these programs along with recommendations for funding these programs in other ways. With the change authorized by SB 1552 (2024) that creates funding eligibility for these degrees, upper-division courses in the programs will be eligible for funding from the CCSF starting in January 2025. All lower-division courses in these programs are already eligible for CCSF.

Overall, the introduction of BAS and BSN degrees in Oregon community colleges represents a strategic response to evolving educational and economic needs. It aims to enhance workforce readiness and expand access to higher education for a broader segment of the population.

BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND BACHELOR OF SCIENCE: NURSING

CURRENT STATE AND FINANCIAL IMPACTS

There are currently ten approved BAS and BSN programs either currently offered or set to be implemented at eight of Oregon’s seventeen community colleges.

Table A: Current Programs and Implementation Dates as of March 2025		
College	Program	Implementation
Chemeketa	Applied Leadership and Mgt	Fall 2024
Mt Hood	Cybersecurity	Fall 2024
Lane	Applied Business Management	Fall 2024
Lane	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2025
Central Oregon	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026
Chemeketa	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026
Klamath	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026
Linn Benton	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026
Oregon Coast	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026
Treasure Valley	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026

SB 1552 Passage

Section 37 of SB 1552 (2024) requires the HECC, as part of its budget presentation during the 2025 regular session of the legislative assembly, to report:

- The estimated impact on CCSF funding for applied baccalaureate and BSN degree programs.
- The extent to which the commission can determine the projected cost of funding applied baccalaureate and BSN degree programs through the CCSF for the 2025-26 academic year.

- Any recommendations for funding applied baccalaureate and BSN degree programs in a manner other than from the CCSF.

Estimated Financial Impact

Making these programs eligible for funding from the CCSF will likely reallocate an estimated 0.4% of total funding to the eight colleges listed. During FY2026 specifically, HECC staff currently estimates that Chemeketa and Mt Hood will gain anywhere from 0.2% to 0.4% of current funding while the remaining colleges will experience a reallocation of anywhere from 0.05% to 0.15%.

Table B: Enrollment Projections and FY2025 CCSF Implications			
College	Program	Implementation	Enrollment
Chemeketa	Applied Leadership and Mgt	Fall 2024	50
Mt Hood	Cybersecurity	Fall 2024	25
Lane	Applied Business Management	Fall 2024	60
Lane	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2025	60
Central Oregon	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026	7
Chemeketa	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026	7
Klamath	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026	7
Linn Benton	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026	7
Oregon Coast	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026	7
Treasure Valley	Bachelor of Science: Nursing	Fall 2026	7
	Total Potential Enrollment		237
	Funding per FTE (FY2025)		\$6,276
	Potential CCSF Impact		\$1,487,430
	Percent of FY2025 CCSF:		0.4%

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The HECC's policy is to fund all commission-approved programs through the related support funds (Community College Support Fund and Public University Support Fund). At this time, there are no other funding recommendations for Bachelor of Applied Science and Bachelor of Science: Nursing programs.

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