



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Office of the Executive Director

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Salem, Oregon 97302

[www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)

April 1, 2025

Co-Chair, Senator Janeen Sollman  
Co-Chair, Representative Ricki Ruiz  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

Dear Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz,

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions that arose during the **March 31, 2025** Higher Education Coordinating Commission presentation to the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education.

**On slide 5, we interpreted Rep. Yunker's question** regarding ORS chapter 660 to inquire if HECC's programs that serve priority populations, such as those outlined in ORS 660.300, are acceptable under state and federal anti-discrimination laws.

Priority populations, a key feature of Future Ready Oregon and defined in ORS 660.300, include: (a) Communities of color; (b) Women; (c) Low-income communities; (d) Rural and frontier communities; (e) Veterans; (f) Persons with disabilities; (g) Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals; (h) Members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes; (i) Individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age; and (j) Individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

When the Commission awards grants under Future Ready Oregon, we require our grantees to demonstrate a history or fluency in providing services to these populations so that, on balance, we can ensure that members of these populations are able to receive services that are responsive to their needs. However, all individuals are eligible for job training services under Future Ready Oregon, and we do not refuse services to individuals who are not a member of these populations. We believe that our administration of this program in this manner is fully compliant with federal law.

**On slide 19, Rep. Wright, Sen. Sollman, and Rep. McClain asked** several questions about how HECC partners with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to improve K-12 to postsecondary transitions, including data on college readiness, opportunities for K-12 career pathway exploration, dual credit and accelerated learning programs.

HECC regularly and deeply partners with both ODE and local school districts across the state on a variety of initiatives designed to enhance college readiness, align K-12 and post-secondary academic programs, smooth the college transition, and increase student success. These


collaborations include our administration of the state high school equivalency program, coordination of career and technical education programs, career connected learning programs, accelerated learning and dual credit programs, and the developing direct admissions program. We are currently examining opportunities for improvement to developmental education for students who need additional support to engage in college-level work. In addition to this academic work, HECC administers grants for and operates its own college mentorship program.

HECC also shares data with ODE to support K-12 improvements. For example, HECC provides data to populate a public dashboard on accelerated college credit for high schoolers, reports on high school students' FAFSA completion rates, and identifies first-year college student outcomes to meet ad-hoc legislative requests. HECC and ODE are also jointly planning for the expansion and improvement of reporting on the college-going rate, and HECC is providing ODE with educator pipeline data to support the K-12 educator workforce.

We are happy to provide additional detail on any of these initiatives at the request of the committee. However, we must acknowledge that due to data limitations, we do not have a robust understanding of the readiness of Oregon students to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education at the time of graduation.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kyle Thomas, Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs, at [kyle.thomas@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:kyle.thomas@hecc.oregon.gov) or at 503-480-9596.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Cannon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ben Cannon  
Executive Director