



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Office of the Executive Director

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Salem, Oregon 97302

www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

April 3, 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 **April 2, 2025** Higher Education Coordinating Commission presentation to the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education.

On slide 129, Sen. Sollman asked whether the Oregon Promise program should benefit high-income students, or whether the eligibility criteria should be narrowed to students with financial need. We leave this question up to the legislature. For 2023-2024, just under half (46%) of Oregon Promise recipients were Pell Grant-eligible, and 30% of Oregon Promise dollars went to Pell-eligible students. Additional characteristics and outcomes of Oregon Promise students are available in our recently published [biennial evaluation report](#), and we would be happy to provide any other desired information about the program to the committee upon request.

Also on slide 129, Rep. Wright asked if HECC is aware of any policy bills that have passed over the last five years that inadvertently raised costs for some students by lowering costs for other students. There are many causes of rising college costs. In terms of college affordability policy, we feel that any bill that provides tuition or fee waivers for certain groups of students can be viewed as causing a trade-off wherein students who are not included as beneficiaries of the waiver may experience increased costs as an indirect consequence. However, we believe these impacts are relatively minimal. Appendix A includes examples from the 2021 and 2023 legislative sessions of enacted legislation that expanded tuition and fee waivers for certain student groups.

On slide 155, Sen. Weber asked about a central portal where students can access scholarship applications. Students can visit OregonStudentAid.gov to access grant and scholarship information. The direct link to the scholarship landing page is [here](#), where students can apply to over 600 private scholarships via a central portal, browse the scholarship catalogue, and access additional support, including the phone number and email address for staff in the Office of Student Access and Completion.

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 or at 503-480-9596.

Sincerely,

Ben Cannon

Executive Director

Appendix A: Examples of Enacted Legislation That Expanded Tuition and Fee Waivers for Certain Student Groups

2021 Legislative Session

- **SB 553 – In State Tuition for Certain Pacific Island and Special Visa Students:** Granted the right of in-state tuition to students from the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of Micronesia (Compact of Free Association, i.e. COFA, students), provided they have not previously established residency in any other state prior to Oregon. It also extended the right of in-state tuition to federally-recognized refugees and special immigrant visa holders, as these terms are defined in the legislation. Under the bill, Eastern Oregon University would, for three years, receive a subsidy equal to the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition costs for COFA students it enrolls. Beginning the fourth year, and beginning the first year for all other institutions, students will be considered in-state students for funding formula purposes.

2023 Legislative Session

- **SB 272 – Compact of Free Association Student Tuition:** Added OHSU to the list of institutions required to offer in-state tuition to students from Compact of Free Association states.
- **SB 449 – Foster Youth Tuition Waivers:** Expanded tuition waivers for undergraduate study to former foster children who have been adopted, provided they have spent six or more months in DHS custody for out-of-home placement, or under the jurisdiction of a tribal court for the same. These provisions applied to individuals adopted on or after January 1, 2012, for future tuition only.