



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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TO: Board of Trustees, Oregon State University
FROM: Ben Cannon, Executive Director, HECC
DATE: March 10, 2026
SUBJECT: 2026 Q1 Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Updates

This document highlights some of the recent actions and initiatives of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). For more information on our work, initiatives, and programs, go to: www.oregon.gov/highered or [sign up for our mailings lists for email updates](#).

2026 Oregon Legislative Short Session Adjourns, with Key Legislation Adopted Relating to Postsecondary Education

On March 6, the 2026 Oregon Legislative Session adjourned, with several key policy and budgetary actions advanced in relation to Oregon's postsecondary education and training system, reviewed in summary below.

HB 4079: FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT NOTIFICATION ON CAMPUSES

Requires the governing boards of public universities, community colleges, and OHSU to adopt a policy for notifying the campus community, including students and employees, when a federal immigration authority is confirmed to have entered a campus for immigration enforcement.

HB 4124: REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

The bill directs the HECC to study the condition of Oregon's postsecondary education system in light of the distinct missions of each institution and opportunities for collaboration, and with consultation with faculty, staff, students and other institutional partners, develop recommendations for an improved framework. HECC is to deliver a preliminary report to the Legislature by October 1, 2026, and submit a final report by April 1, 2027. *The Legislature appropriated \$2.5M to HECC to support the report called for by HB 4124.*

BUDGET NOTES

Budget notes are policy directives adopted by the Ways and Means Committee at the time of the adoption of certain appropriations bills.

FUTURE HIGHER EDUCATION DELIVERY IN SOUTHERN OREGON

Southern Oregon University shall collaborate with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to develop a plan for future delivery of higher education in southern Oregon, without reliance on ongoing increases in state support, by no later than April 30, 2026.

SOU FINANCIAL HEALTH, MODELING, AND REPORTING

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) must report to the Emergency Board no later than June 2026 on Southern Oregon University's updated financial modeling and operational plan to continue through June 30, 2027. Prior to the report, SOU must collaborate with HECC to submit a report to HECC by April 30, 2026, that details the actions the university will take to ensure continued operations through June 30, 2027. Additionally, beginning May 2026, SOU must provide monthly financial statements, and an updated cash flow forecast to HECC, the Department of Administrative Services Chief Financial Office, and Legislative Fiscal Office.

OTHER BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Despite a significant risk of adverse budget action at the start of the session, the legislature did not make reductions to the HECC budget. It took the following action:

1. The Legislature appropriated \$500,000 to HECC for consulting support for meeting the terms of the first budget note.
2. The Legislature put \$15M into a Special Purpose Appropriation to support cash flow needs this biennium at Southern Oregon University. This appropriation will be released to SOU if it meets the conditions of the second budget note above.
3. The Legislature adopted HB 4134, which increases the state transient lodging tax and lists the Oregon Conservation Corps as a recipient of 0.1 percent of the new tax rate. This is anticipated to raise \$7M for OCC in the first full biennium (2027-2029). The change in tax is effective January 1, 2027.

CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

The legislature authorized the following new capital construction items:

1. OSU-Cascades Student Health and Recreation Center (\$32.0M Article XI-G, \$10.0M Article XI-Q)
2. PSU Student Housing (additional \$15.0M of XI-F).
3. WOU Roof Replacement, Heritage Hall Student Housing (\$3.1M of XI-Q)

The legislature also substituted \$35.0M of Article XI-Q for \$35.0M of Article XI-G funding it had previously authorized to support the PSU Performing Arts and Culture Center.

With Grant Support, Youth will Help Shape the Design of a Direct Admissions Program for Oregon

[HECC has been awarded a grant](#) from Meyer Memorial Trust to support youth engagement in the design of Oregon's statewide direct admissions program, a statewide initiative underway that aims to simplify and promote college access for high school students statewide. The HECC was charged by the Oregon Legislature with launching a statewide direct admissions program, and agency staff are working closely with partners to design and ultimately implement the program statewide. [Read our recent press release.](#)

Oregon Joins National Effort to Expand Education and Workforce Pathways for Justice-Impacted Individuals

The HECC, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Oregon Employment Department (OED), have announced that Oregon has officially joined the inaugural cohort of Jobs for the Future's (JFF) [Fair Chance to Advance \(FC2A\)](#) State Action Networks, a new initiative to expand postsecondary education and workforce pathways for individuals with histories of incarceration. [As one of four states selected for the initial cohort](#), Oregon—along with Kansas, Maine, and North Carolina—will receive up to \$2.1 million in funding and technical assistance valued up to \$1.8 million from JFF and the Coleridge Initiative to unify inter-agency data systems to guide decisions, strengthen reporting, and expand education-to-employment pathways, including sustaining and growing in-prison WorkSource Oregon reentry centers as a core bridge from custody to community.