

# Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

Higher education in Oregon is a complex network of private and public career schools, colleges, and universities that collectively awards more than 45,000 degrees and certificates a year.

**The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is the State of Oregon's sole board and agency responsible for ensuring pathways to educational success from the point at which students are completing their formal high school experience and moving forward to learning, training and mastering skills in college and career training programs.** HECC serves as a policy leader and convener of higher education institutions and partners in the preK-12 to college to career pipeline.

Its 2016-2020 Strategic Plan outlines six broad strategies that will help guide the Commission and its staff in developing specific work plans, budget recommendations and policies over the next five years. The HECC will pursue these strategies in partnership with institutions, community-based organizations, workforce partners, and students and their families.

As progress is made and needed adjustments are identified, the HECC will make updates to this plan and its strategies.

## Strategy 1: Goal-setting

Building on the state's 40-40-20 Goal, the HECC aims to sharpen Oregon's higher education goals and better describe the state's progress in meeting them by:

- Working with partners to develop a new adult educational attainment goal, distinct from 40-40-20, that reflects labor market demands and employment opportunities;
- Developing actionable interim 40-40-20 targets for overall student cohorts and underrepresented student populations to ensure that all groups reach 40-40-20 in the same timeframe;
- Conducting public reporting on higher education outcomes in a more systematic way and with an equity focus; and
- Improving state and institutional capacity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting on student data.

## Strategy 2: Public College and University Funding

As the sole entity responsible for proposing a comprehensive higher education budget to the Governor and Legislature, the HECC will develop a budgeting model that links state funding inputs to student achievement and will work with partners to advocate for funding levels required to meet state goals.

## OREGON'S PROGRESS TOWARD 40-40-20

In 2011, the State of Oregon enacted legislation known as the "40-40-20 Goal" that created an aspirational goal for Oregon's educational achievement that seeks to have at least 40% of Oregon's working age population (aged 25-64) hold a bachelor's degree or higher, 40% to have hold an associate degree or certificate, and 20% percent to hold a high school diploma or equivalent by 2025.

While Oregon has considerable work to do before reaching 40-40-20, the overall trend is positive. Between 2006 and 2013, the percentage of working-age Oregonians with associate degrees or higher edged upward from 38% to almost 41%.

Yet, these improvements have not been seen equally by all groups. Data shows that students in Oregon's education pipeline (preK-12 system)—especially low-income, rural, and students of color—still are not accessing and succeeding in higher education at equitable rates.

The HECC will take a lead role in convening partners to further align programming and supports to close the achievement and opportunity gap for low-income students, students of color, and recent high school graduates—as well as deepen connections between Oregon's education and workforce systems.

### Strategy 3: Pathways

The HECC will work with partners to simplify and align pathways in the higher education network from preK to career by:

- Supporting colleges and universities to foster deeper partnerships with school districts and community organizations to improve preK-12 outcomes;
- Improving the alignment of learning standards and outcomes between high school and higher education, between higher education institutions themselves, and between higher education and career;
- Promoting degree pathways and related initiatives that increase opportunities for postsecondary students to build on career-oriented education and workplace experience; and
- Creating better connections between higher education and training and employer needs.

### Strategy 4: Student Support

The HECC will work to strengthen the ability of campuses and communities to support student success and completion by:

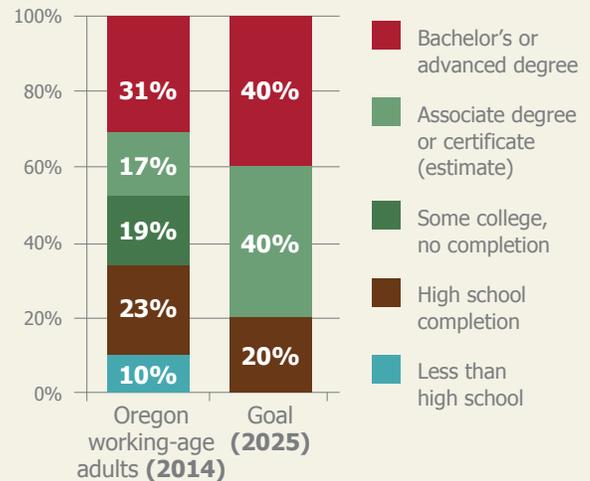
- Using funding models to incentivize institutions to invest in student safety and success;
- Considering the creation of a strategic fund that can be used to support statewide, collaborative, university-led initiatives focused on improving student success;
- Working with the Legislature and partners to ensure that funding proposals focused on access and affordability are complemented by funding dedicated to student success;
- In partnership with institutions, supporting the development of center(s) to research, develop, and disseminate best practices for student safety and success; and
- Engaging students, families, and community groups as partners in efforts to improve student success.

### Strategy 5: Affordability

The HECC seeks to limit the cost incurred by all students pursuing postsecondary education, with a particular focus on students in Oregon’s education pipeline. Key elements of this strategy include:

- Developing a set of affordability measures that can be used to guide policy and to measure progress, and reporting annually on progress/status;

**TABLE 1** Educational Attainment Rates for Oregon Adults Versus 40-40-20 Goal



**Note:** Working-age adults are 25-64 years old. The high school completion group includes people who self-report to have some college but no degree; the number of individuals in this group with certificates or credentials is unknown.

**Source:** HECC analysis of the American Community Survey, ECONW

- Supporting innovations that lower student and family cost while maintaining or increasing quality;
- Increasing state financial aid so that is on par with the national average per student;
- Continuing to promote Oregonians’ access to the state and federal financial aid system, including through FAFSA and ORSAA completion efforts; and
- Connecting young Oregonians to the promise of affordable higher education.

### Strategy 6: Economic and Community Impact

The HECC will work with partners and the communities they serve to maximize the impact of postsecondary education on Oregonians’ economic, civic, cultural, and personal well-being. This includes:

- Developing a structure to prioritize and promote university-led research with tools such as funding-based incentives;
- Collaborating with partners in Oregon’s workforce system to develop metrics to focus investments in the workforce system; and
- Making investments that support higher education’s unique role in promoting the cultural, economic and civic vitality of Oregon.

**Vision Statement:** The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is dedicated to fostering and sustaining high quality, rewarding pathways to opportunity and success for all Oregonians through an accessible, affordable and coordinated network for educational achievement beyond high school.

