



June 8, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Casey White-Zollman, Communications Director
casey@occa17.com | 503-502-5642

HECC approves redesigned community college funding model

SALEM, Ore. – After a year-long collaborative process, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) earlier today (June 8) approved a redesign to how local and state taxpayer funds are distributed to Oregon’s 17 community colleges. This new model dedicates an increased proportion of more than \$550 million in tax dollars to student success outcomes and equity improvements for students.

This is the first time since the late 1990s that the formula has been significantly reviewed and updated in relation to statewide goals and reflects an intentional focus on improving success among underserved populations. The HECC’s review process began in March 2022 and included consultation with an advisory work group of community college perspectives, including college presidents, business officers, student affairs staff, institutional researchers, and faculty.

The current funding model for community colleges uses full time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment as the basis for distributing taxpayer funds, supplemented by a basic payment component to support college operations.

“We hope focusing part of the funding toward student success will further accelerate and support equity and student success efforts at the colleges,” said Karen Smith, Interim Executive Director of the Oregon Community College Association, which was heavily involved in the redesign process.

The updated model remains FTE-based for much of the formula while introducing two new components. These additions aim to enhance equitable student success and advance Oregon’s educational goals for both young people and adults, acknowledging the need for different levels of support to ensure equal opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. Ultimately, a maximum of ten percent of the total taxpayer funds will be allocated through these new components.

The first component allocates funds proportionally to the enrollment of underserved groups, while the second component ties funding to the course and program completion and achievements, particularly of underserved groups. The student success components prioritize low-income learners, adult students, career/technical education seekers, and underrepresented students based on race/ethnicity.

(more)



“Community colleges exist to provide equitable access to higher education in our communities,” said Mt. Hood Community College President Lisa Skari, who was a member of the formula redesign advisory work group. “The new model provides clarity and transparency as to how we align with state goals and focus on the success of our students, while also acknowledging these desired results require financial investments.”

The new funding formula will be reviewed in three years after it goes into effect next year. Moving forward, OCCA hopes to continue working collaboratively with the Commission and staff to monitor and assess how the new formula is working and whether it produces unintended consequences so necessary adjustments can be made.

###

The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) represents the 17 publicly chartered community colleges and their locally elected board members in Oregon. Founded in 1962, OCCA’s purpose is to support the colleges before policy-makers and partners whose actions affect the well-being of community colleges across the state.