

Oregon Community Colleges

2024 Legislative Session Priority Bills



Several bills related to community colleges and their students will come before legislators during the 2024 Legislative Session. The following are bills OCCA has identified as priorities for the Session, as well as other bills OCCA will monitor that could impact community colleges.

Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) - SB 1552

Following the Legislature's 2023 approval of \$100 million in additional OOG funding for the 2023-25 biennium, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC's) Office of Student Access & Completion (OSAC) changed how it based student award amounts from considering a student's full cost of tuition (including basic needs, transportation, child care, etc.) to only considering tuition and fees. This change disproportionately disadvantaged community college students, and **this bill would require HECC/OSAC to go back to awarding OOG grants based on the full cost of tuition. It also makes OOG program changes the authority of the HECC commission. OCCA supports HECC conferring awards to the greatest number of students possible.** This issue is included in the Omnibus Education policy bill sponsored by Sen. Michael Dembrow.

Corequisite Education - SB 1552

Offering corequisite math and writing courses in the first year of college as an alternative to traditional developmental education has been shown to increase pass rates and improve equitable outcomes. **This bill would create a work group to provide recommendations to the HECC on how best to support the ongoing transition from a pre-requisite model to an evidence-based co-requisite model of support for gateway math and writing courses, including Writing 121, Math 111, Math 105, and Math 243.** This issue is also included in the Omnibus Education policy bill sponsored by Sen. Michael Dembrow.

Semiconductor Workforce Education - HB 4154

There is an urgent need to invest in talent pathways to strengthen diversity and meet the workforce expansion resulting from the success created by the 2023 Legislature's passage of SB4 and Oregon CHIPS Fund investments. **This bill would form a statewide industry consortium, which would work with the HECC to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy to guide investments and build semiconductor education pathways.** In addition, **the bill would create the Semiconductor Talent Fund to invest funds across the education continuum, as well as invest \$30 million in one-time funds to increase Oregon's capacity to meet the workforce and research needs of the industry.**

The following bills are ones OCCA continues to monitor and track as the Session moves forward as they all will have an impact on community colleges if approved.

Student Emergency Needs Funding Package - HB 4162

College and university students in Oregon are reporting increased rates of food insecurity, housing instability, and challenges affording and accessing textbooks, transportation, childcare, and other basic needs. The 2024 Student Emergency Needs Package is a bipartisan, student-centered effort to support Oregon's Basic Needs Navigators and Textbook Affordability Program (Open Educational Resources, or OERs) with \$6 million dollars in one-time, emergency funding.

Extending Oregon Promise Eligibility to Pandemic High School Students - SB 1551

Enrollment in Oregon's community colleges plummeted during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many students opting to forego college right after graduating high school. This bill would temporarily restore Oregon Promise eligibility -- usually only available to students enrolling in community college within six months of high school graduation or passing the GED -- to allow students who graduated high school in 2020-2021 to qualify for the grant to attend college.

Digital Student Transcripts - SB 1552/HB 4078

For all public school students in grades 6 through 12, the Oregon Department of Education will collect course-level completion and grade data. This data will be shared with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), community colleges and public universities in Oregon as part of direct admissions. This issue is included as part of the Omnibus Education policy bill sponsored by Sen. Michael Dembrow.

Applied Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program - SB 1552

The Legislature approved applied baccalaureate degrees in community colleges in 2019 to help address workforce needs while also increasing degree opportunities for people across the state. This bill would direct the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to establish and administer a pilot program to encourage community colleges to offer programs for an applied baccalaureate degree. Three colleges will be selected for the pilot program. This issue is part of the Omnibus Education policy bill sponsored by Sen. Michael Dembrow.

Direct Admissions Program - SB 1552

This bill would establish a direct admissions program for community colleges and public universities in Oregon. This issue is part of the Omnibus Education policy bill sponsored by Sen. Michael Dembrow.