



Oregon  
Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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April 2, 2015

Co-Chair, Senator Rod Monroe  
Co-Chair, Representative Betty Komp  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

Dear Co-Chairs Monroe and Komp,

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions that arose during the April 1 Higher Education Coordinating Commission's presentation to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education.

First, we would also like to follow up on Co-Chair Monroe's request on March 31 to compare the tuition and state investment in community colleges from 2007 to today, adjusting for inflation, in order to demonstrate how much additional investment would be needed to maintain the same inflation-adjusted tuition as was the case in 2007. Please see the attached slides for our calculations. A biennial appropriation totaling \$603M (including additional funding of \$123M over a base of \$480M) would be required to replace the revenue generated by increasing tuition above inflation since 2007.

We would like to add a correction to our statements regarding GED® fees in the letter dated April 1, in response to Co-Chair Komp's question on these fees. There was a paper version of the GED® test series and a computer version, each of which had different fees in the past. The paper version was discontinued in 2014. We reported in our letter dated April 1 that the cost for GED® tests has declined (from \$175 for the 2002 series test series), but these figures represented a comparison of the computer test costs only. The current test series costs students a total of \$152 for all four tests and is computer-based only. Co-Chair Komp was correct when she pointed out that there was, until introduction of the 2014 series test, a lower cost option to take the test via pen and paper instead of via computer. The paper test cost in 2002 was \$110 for all five tests. This figure included the costs of the tests themselves at \$8 per test for five tests (\$40), the fee that the state assessed students (\$35) and the local test center fees (average \$35). Therefore, costs for GED® tests have increased for students.

Co-Chair Monroe asked how the increase in associates degrees and certificates awarded by Oregon's community colleges to Hispanics from 2006 to the present compares to the overall increase in Oregon's Hispanic population. The data tells us that from 2006 to 2013, Oregon's Hispanic population increased 27.6% (from 379,034 to 483,761). In the same period of time, the credentials awarded to Hispanics by Oregon's community colleges increased by 355.4% (from 399 to 1,817). We would like to note, however, that due to 2010 changes in federal methodology relating to the reporting of ethnicity, the number of students characterized as Hispanic increased substantially. We can see from the data that this may account for the much faster increase in credentials awarded to Hispanics from 2010 forward. Nonetheless, it is clear that the credentials awarded to Hispanics increased at a substantially faster rate than their share of the Oregon population.

Co-Chair Monroe asked how many students transfer from Oregon's community colleges to Oregon-based private colleges and universities. According to data provided by the Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities, in 2014, 12% of all first-time freshmen at their institutions (811 out of 5,058) had attended Oregon Community Colleges at some point. Furthermore, 44% of all transfer students had previously attended Oregon community colleges. We were unable to determine how many of those students earned associates degrees before transferring to a private college or university.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our legislative deputy director Dana Richardson at [dana.richardson@state.or.us](mailto:dana.richardson@state.or.us).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Cannon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ben Cannon  
Executive Director, HECC