

Working Together...for Students, our Workforce and our Region

Klamath Community College ■ Oregon Institute of Technology ■ Rogue Community College ■ Southern Oregon University

Legislative Testimony for SOHEC Bill HB 3212

March 25, 2019

Here's how the Southern Oregon Higher Education Consortium will help the region's students, workforce, and economic development:

- Broaden collaboration on **transfer pathways** for students so we are helping to “grow our own” workforce for southern Oregon.
- **Identify barriers** that make it hard for students to transfer and complete their degrees. Currently the funding model encourages us to focus on student success and completion - at our own institutions. Consortium “navigators” will work closely with students to identify the systemic issues that impede easy movement toward a degree at *any* of the four institutions, and work to eliminate these across campus boundaries.
- **Tighten alignment between programs offered and employer needs.** As a Consortium, the four institutions will collaborate to assess employer needs; identify gaps; and partner to meet regional needs using the respective strengths and resources of each partner.
- Connect the Consortium's strengths in several areas, including energy, engineering, environment, healthcare, technology and social services, to educate highly skilled professionals to serve the larger **interests of our rural communities in the region** and the state as a whole.

Spotlight on Transfer Students

Jocksana Corona started college at age 30. As a busy wife and mom, adding a full course load to her daily routine was challenging at first—but she credits the RCC community for making it possible. **“RCC enabled me to build meaningful connections and support,”** Jocksana said.



As a student in the Human Services associate degree program, Jocksana was part of a limited enrollment cohort, meaning for three years she took classes with the same group of students. “The cohort format helped me thrive academically and personally because it was like a family,” she added. “They really cared about my achievement.”

Jocksana performed so well at RCC that she was awarded the Ford Family Foundation Restart Scholarship, which opened the door to a

four-year university transfer. She is now pursuing her bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in Spanish at Southern Oregon University.

SOHEC Combined Education and Economic Stats



26,700+
enrollment (Fall
2018)



187 **degree
programs**
105 certificate,
apprenticeship
programs



3,300+ **degrees
awarded** (Class
of 2018)



\$574 million
**economic
footprint**



\$68 million
annual state
budget
allocation

“I had to switch gears and prepare for the different culture of the university, which is very fast-paced and filled with much younger students,” she said. “While I was a student at RCC, I received so much support from teachers, advisors, counselors and the RCC Foundation. They set me up for success.”



Haley Janky was a member of the RCC women’s soccer team, where she found her support system in sports. “RCC was a really great starting place for me, because I was able to get more one-on-one help being at a small school. With coach Rusty Veth, our athletic advisor Darren Van Lehn, and of course my teammates, there was no way I could fail,” Haley said.

Haley believes her coaches helped her stay focused and taught her to manage her schedule well. Then when it came time to transfer to Oregon Institute of Technology for a bachelor’s degree in radiologic science, Haley said Darren helped her navigate all the college requirements.

Once Haley graduates from Oregon Tech, she’ll spend a year completing an externship with Rogue Regional Medical Center in Medford. Afterwards, she hopes to find a good job as an X-ray technician specializing in mammography.

Shantel Lukens, a 33-year-old Army veteran and non-traditional student, enrolled in Klamath Community College because she wanted a career that would allow her to continue serving her community in some way. “Being a teacher would allow me to do that,” she said.

Lukens was born in Klamath Falls and returned after her military service to be near family, and enrolled at KCC in 2014. She later decided to take advantage of KCC’s early education partnership with Southern Oregon University that allows KCC graduates to transfer to SOU with no loss of credit and to earn a bachelor’s without having to leave the Klamath Basin. Lukens is now working toward a Bachelor of Science in Education and licensure. She will graduate this summer.



Lukens said SOU’s combination of online and hybrid courses has allowed her the flexibility to work while pursuing her degree. “I wasn’t sure working while going to school could be done, but it was manageable thanks to the flexibility of hybrid and online courses,” she said.

Lukens is now working with sixth graders enrolled at Sterns Elementary in Klamath Falls. “I think I found the age group I am loving,” she said. “They are the next generation that takes on the world.”

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