

HB 4124 - Oregon Higher Education Assessment

Direction to the HECC to assess Oregon's post-high school structure and recommend a financially sustainable framework that supports students and fuels regional and statewide economic development.

RATIONALE: Oregon's public universities and community colleges, which have unique missions and serve distinct populations, are engines of economic growth that should be aligned to meet regional and state economic need—but these institutions face fierce headwinds.

Current and projected demographic, enrollment and market conditions and trends—coupled with the competitive landscape for post-secondary education institutions, including the effects of online and out-of-state programs—threaten financial and enrollment sustainability. At the same time, market competition has eroded cross-institutional collaboration, impaired focus on regional and state needs, and undermined public confidence in the system as a vital source of economic development and employment opportunities.

To ensure that it continues to meet the diverse needs of our students, economy and workforce, it is critical to reevaluate the accessibility, financial resilience, efficiency and effectiveness of our post-secondary education system.

LEGISLATION: With [HB 4124](#), the HECC will conduct a study of the condition of Oregon's post-secondary education system and develop recommendations for the design, implementation and operation of an institutional framework that:

- Supports access to post-secondary education institutions for students across the state, including rural communities and other underserved populations.
- Fuels regional and statewide economic development and employment opportunities
- Improves the financial viability of the post-secondary education system including. projected enrollment, increased personnel costs, changes in federal law or priorities, sector-specific inflationary costs or other related factors.

The study *must* evaluate and make recommendations on:

- The distinct objectives and missions of post-secondary institutions with consideration of key variables such as research, public services, instruction, academic programming, educational model and student population served.
- Opportunities for collaboration, restructuring or integration in the post-secondary education system.

The study *may* evaluate and make recommendations on:

- The development of academic programs and specialties to support regional and state economic development and workforce needs.
- Instances of unnecessary program duplication and unmet program needs.
- Structures to connect students and graduates to employment opportunities.
- Funding strategies that foster collaboration, restructuring or integration.
- Metrics of affordability for students and financial health.

HB 4124 requires recommendations to be submitted to the Legislature before December 1, 2026, to allow legislation, if needed, to be prepared for the 2027 session.

For info: Rep Pam Marsh – rep.pammarsh@oregonlegislature.gov