HOUSE BILL 3418: FINAL REPORT TO THE OREGON LEGISLATURE

SUBMITTED BY:
TASK FORCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS
Cover photos, courtesy of Oregon University System, left to right: University of Oregon, Southern Oregon University, Oregon State University
October 15, 2012

Senate President Peter Courtney
Co-Speaker of the House Bruce Hanna
Co-Speaker of the House Arnie Roblan
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear President Courtney, Speaker Hanna and Speaker Roblan:

As the co-chairs of the Task Force on Higher Education Student and Institutional Success created by HB 3418 last session, we are submitting the Task Force’s final report as required by the bill.

We have identified and described the effects of the significant barriers to success that must be overcome for students to achieve Oregon’s 40-40-20 goal. While many of these barriers can be attributed to Oregon’s standing as one of the bottom five states in America in public funding for post-secondary education, overcoming these barriers is not just about money.

Our work over the last year identified a wide range of exemplary programs among all of Oregon’s community colleges and public universities. These programs are making a difference, but the challenge is how to enable and encourage institutions across this continuum to transform these programs from being considered as “exemplary” into being regarded as “standard practice”.

This will not happen as a result of passing legislation, or by merely appropriating more money, although the latter is very much needed. The Report includes a number of recommendations on how the newly adopted Achievement Compacts and the multi-institutional focus envisioned in SB 909 can be used to encourage and motivate change, particularly at institutions that are experiencing difficulty in meeting their goals.

Universal – as opposed to isolated – improvement will require further involvement by the Oregon Education Investment Board, the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and the Oregon Student Access Commission.
The Report’s Executive Summary succinctly lists specific recommendations and suggestions for additional work, including:

1. **Replicate and adapt effective practices within base budgets:** The Task Force challenges the 17 community colleges, 7 OUS institutions and 197 K-12 school districts to examine the successful activities that have been identified in this report to determine if these practices are appropriate for them in order to improve student success and attain the 40-40-20 goal.

2. **Fund programmatic elements in 2013-15:** The Task Force urges the legislature to fund the elements in the 2013-15 proposed budgets for the Oregon University System, Department of Community College and Workforce Development, and the Oregon Student Access Commission.

3. **Turn best practices into standard practices at institutions:** Ultimately, institutions that are failing to meet their Achievement Compacts should be evaluated to determine the extent to which they are implementing the practices identified by the Task Force. Even if funding for education is not increased, institutions across the entire education continuum that are not making progress should be encouraged in the strongest possible ways to implement these programs in a manner that reflects local needs and challenges.

4. **Fund research capacity in order to answer critical questions about how financial aid in general, and Oregon Opportunity Grants in particular, can contribute to increased completion rates and student success:** Community colleges, universities and the Oregon Student Access Commission need much more information in order to form a better understanding of how both the funding and administration of the Oregon Opportunity Grant program can further contribute to student success. The Report poses questions that need to be answered in order to better link student success to financial aid.

The Task Force identified additional analyses that would improve understanding about student and institutional success, including:

- **Address the role technology such as online and digital learning can play in both improving student success and decreasing the costs of providing post-secondary education.** This issue should be taken up in a concerted way by the appropriate body – the Oregon Education Investment Board, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and the Oregon University System.

- **Evaluate the costs associated with expanding implementation of many of the programs identified as exemplary.** Over the next six months the Task Force believes the Oregon University System and Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development should review the costs associated with the programs identified in this report. This information will enable institutions to more readily determine which of these programs have minimal costs and are readily adaptable.

- **Increase the degree to which institutions assess how particular programs, practices and activities either contribute to – or detract from – student success.** An increased level of self-assessment will help guide decisions on which of the programs identified by the Task Force are suited for particular institutions or situations.
We appreciate your interest in identifying and addressing the barriers facing students who wish to succeed in Oregon’s post-secondary education institutions. We also look forward to working with the appropriate legislative committees in the coming months and into the 2013 legislative session as the Oregon Legislative Assembly seeks to address the challenges facing Oregon’s education system.

Sincerely,

Jim Francesconi, Co-Chair

Ed Dodson, Co-Chair
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October, 2012

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I. Executive Summary

The Oregon Legislative Assembly created the Task Force on Higher Education Student and Institutional Success when it passed HB 3418 during the 2011 Legislative Session. The bill outlines the membership requirements for the 17-member Task Force with 13 members appointed by the Governor and four legislators appointed by the Senate President and Speakers of the House. See Appendix A for the Task Force Membership.

The bill includes five specific charges to the Task Force:

The Task Force shall, for higher education students and institutions in this state:
(a) Examine best practices and models for accomplishing student and institutional success, as such success is measured by achievement of the mission of higher education set forth in ORS 351.009 and the policy for community colleges set forth in ORS 341.009;
(b) Consider institutional and statutory barriers to student success and completion of programs;
(c) Examine methods for students to acquire basic skills and career preparation skills;
(d) Review alternative funding options for providing necessary services to students and promoting best practices for student success and completion; and
(e) Compare alternative funding options instituted in other states for improving student and institutional success.

As required by the bill, the Task Force submitted an initial report to the Legislature in December 2011.

This final report fulfills the requirements of HB 3418, which requires the Task Force to submit a full report to the Legislature by October 15, 2012.

During the past year the Task Force has thoroughly identified and defined the barriers that inhibit and preclude student success. It is not surprising in a state that ranks nationally among the bottom five in terms of state support for post-secondary education, that the Task Force found the lack of funding to be a foundational barrier. The problem is not getting any better: Over the last two biennia, funding on a per-student basis at state universities and community colleges has decreased significantly.

While this report identifies a host of barriers to success that have resulted from the lack of funding – including increased costs (affordability) and reductions in classes and services to students among the most important – the Task Force spent a great deal of time identifying the strategies and activities that are currently being employed, and could potentially be used to overcome these barriers, whether or not more funding is made available.

This report includes a list of exemplary programs across Oregon’s community colleges and public universities that are known to work in addressing the six “programmatic and structural barriers” facing

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1 HB 3418, Section 1(2)(a-e).: http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/hb3400.dir/hb3418.en.pdf
students as they move along the educational continuum from high school to community colleges and universities:

1. Poor management of transitions between education institutions
2. Insufficient support for underrepresented communities
3. Insufficient number of full time faculty
4. Limited support services such as advising and tutoring
5. Insufficient support for career and technical education (CTE) programs
6. Inadequate post-secondary preparation

Students succeed and fail due to many factors, not all of which can be addressed by institutions, programs or more funding. Furthermore, just as there are many causes for failure, there is no single cure. In order to make a real difference in student success and degree attainment across the higher education sector, Oregon must adopt an integrated effort along the education continuum and in unconventional ways that employ technology and on-line learning opportunities.

The Task Force has sought to identify and recommend strategies that begin before students enter post-secondary education institutions and that carry forward across all activities both inside and outside the classroom. The Task Force recommendations are aimed at proven practices that are known to be effective, rather than simply adding more programs or searching for a “silver bullet”.

The Task Force has developed a number of recommendations for overcoming these barriers with the ultimate objective of achieving Oregon’s 40-40-20 goal. Some of the recommendations will enable universities and community colleges to be more cost-effective. Others will require funding – and the Task Force has identified specific budget recommendations proposed by the Oregon University System (OUS), Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD), and the Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC) for consideration during the 2013 legislative session. All of the recommendations reflect landmark education bills passed during the 2011 and 2012 legislative sessions.

The Task Force does not believe post-secondary education institutions in Oregon need new statutes or directives to help them overcome the barriers to student success. The barriers do not exist because statutes do not provide sufficient authority for post-secondary institutions to act. Nor will the problem be solved merely as a result of direction from the legislature.

The Task Force has identified a broad range of activities across community colleges and universities that contribute to student and institutional success. The programmatic recommendations are not intended to result in requirements or mandates that institutions implement any particular programs; rather, they are intended to result in efforts that replicate and adapt effective practices within base budgets.

The Task Force believes that as the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) and other entities define and further administer Achievement Compacts, the exemplary programs identified by the Task Force will move forward toward becoming “standard practice”. For institutions that are having difficulty meeting their Achievement Compacts, this report provides a helpful inventory that can be used or adapted.
THIS REPORT INCLUDES FOUR BASIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Replicate and adapt effective practices within base budgets.**

   The Task Force challenges the 17 community colleges, 7 OUS institutions and 197 K-12 school districts to examine the successful activities that have been identified in this report to determine if these practices are appropriate methods for them to improve student success and attain the 40-40-20 goal.

   Taking into account the individuality and heterogeneity of Oregon’s post-secondary education institutions, the Task Force believes the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), the OEIB, and the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE), the State Board of Education (SBE) and the CCWD should hold the programs identified in this report as exemplars to be adopted by school districts, community college districts and universities to address student success.

2. **Fund programmatic elements in 2013-15.**

   The Task Force urges the legislature to fund the activities outlined in the 2013-15 proposed budgets for OUS, CCWD, and OSAC. These investments will help institutions make progress, though they are not sufficient to significantly improve Oregon’s status among the bottom five states in the country in terms of funding for post-secondary education.

3. **Turn best practices into standard practices at institutions – the long term impact of Achievement Compacts.**

   The practices identified by the Task Force are intended to provide institutions across the educational continuum with a set of tools they can use to increase their level of student success – as indicated by increased completion and graduation rates as well as the perceived quality of educational experiences.

   Institutions that are failing to meet their Achievement Compacts should be evaluated to determine the extent to which they have implemented the practices identified by the Task Force, taking into account unique local conditions and challenges. Even if funding for education is not increased, institutions across the entire education continuum that are not making progress should be encouraged in the strongest possible ways to implement these programs in a manner that reflects local needs and challenges.

4. **Fund research capacity in order to answer critical questions about how financial aid in general, and Oregon Opportunity Grants in particular, can contribute to increased completion rates and student success.**

   Community colleges, universities and OSAC need much more information in order to form a better understanding of how both the funding and administration of the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) program can further contribute to student success. Regardless of whether funding is increased, decreased, or stays the same, the Task Force believes research needs to address a number of fundamental issues to determine how OOG can further contribute to completion rates and student success. The legislature should dedicate funding for research that analyzes the effectiveness of investments in the OOG. Funding for the Education Research components identified above at OSAC, CCWD, and OUS should help address the following questions:
a. How does OOG influence student success and completion?
b. How can OOG be used to support students who are college-ready, not just with financially need?
c. Can OOG be both adequate and predictable?
d. How does OOG fit with institutional financial aid?
e. Does adding new institutions to those already eligible for OOG influence the completion rates for current OOG recipients?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

HB 3418 calls upon the Task Force to “review alternative funding options instituted in other states for improving student and institutional success.” While the Task Force undertook an extensive literature review (see Appendices C and D) it did not survey the practices in other states for a number of reasons. In 2011, Oregon adopted landmark legislation that fundamentally changed the manner in which it funds and assesses education across the entire education continuum, including:

- SB 253 which established the 40-40-20 goal to achieve, by the year 2025, a population that consists of 40% with a baccalaureate degree or higher, 40% with an associate’s degree or certificate, and 20% with a high school diploma;
- SB 242 which restructured the relationship between Oregon’s public universities and the state, and established the HECC -- a new entity to increase the coordination between community colleges and universities; and
- SB 909 which created the OEIB and empowered and directed it to develop recommendations for funding education along the entire education continuum from early childhood to post graduate levels in a manner that stresses achievement and completion.

Given the time and resources available to the Task Force, it saw little utility in seeking models from other states for change at a time when the education institutions in Oregon and the manner in which they are funded are already undergoing significant change. The Task Force found value in continuing to concentrate on the changes Oregon has embarked upon to ensure they meet the needs of Oregonians. In addition, because Oregon ranks among the bottom five states in state support for post-secondary education, the Task Force believes that a survey of other states would merely result in the conclusion that Oregon should increase its investments in post-secondary education.

These factors led the Task Force to focus its attention on identifying the practices it believes can be implemented across the education continuum to improve student success under the new education structure that has been implemented in Oregon.

To the extent that the provision in HB 3418 calls for a review of other states to determine the best way to implement “performance-based” funding models, the Task Force agrees that over the next several biennia the legislature and the OEIB should conduct an inventory of other states to determine how they are implementing such funding schemes. This will ensure that the efforts in Oregon reflect the lessons learned elsewhere.

Although it was not specifically mentioned in HB 3418, the Task Force identified the issue of “Quality” as an important element that needs to be better addressed as the legislature and OEIB consider student
and institutional success, particularly as both move toward performance-based funding. The concept of a quality education is not new to post-secondary education institutions as they must periodically undergo accreditation reviews. But quality is not easily addressed in performance-based funding schemes. The Task Force believes that the use of Achievement Compacts and other methods should not detract from efforts to increase quality and address the larger mission of post-secondary education institutions in Oregon.

FUTURE WORK:

- The Task Force did not address in depth the role that technology, in particular on-line and digital learning, can play in both improving student success and decreasing the costs of providing post-secondary education. This issue should be taken up in a concerted way by the appropriate bodies – OEIB, HECC, and SBHE in order to help institutions implement innovative teaching practices.

- The Task Force was not able to thoroughly evaluate the costs associated with implementing many of the programs it identified as exemplary. The Task Force believes that over the next six months OUS and CCWD should review the costs associated with the programs identified in this report. This information will enable institutions and others to more readily determine which of these programs have minimal costs and are readily adaptable across districts and institutions. This near-term action will go far in transforming exemplary programs into standard practices.

- The Task Force also encourages institutions to increase the degree to which they assess how particular programs, practices and activities either contribute to – or detract from – student success. An increased level of self-assessment will help guide institutions in analyzing which of the programs identified by the Task Force are suited for their particular needs.
II: An Overview of the Barriers to Student and Institutional Success

In its December 2011 Interim Report the Task Force identified 12 barriers to achieving student and institutional success. This document reflects subsequent efforts by the Task Force to winnow the list of 12 barriers down in order to focus its recommendations and future work. The goal was to identify workable and realistic strategies that could be employed across the education continuum – including high schools, community colleges and universities. Since December 2011, the Task Force sought to further define these barriers and to identify workable and realistic strategies that could be employed across the education continuum – including high schools, community colleges and universities – to overcome these barriers.

While the Task Force achieved consensus around common challenges facing universities and community colleges across Oregon, they also noted there may be unique issues at specific institutions or in specific areas of the state that create barriers for student and institutional success. For example, concerns were raised that increases in top-level administrative personnel have diminished the resources available for teaching at one institution. While information collected by OUS indicates that administrative costs are increasing, it is also true that administrative costs are increasing at a slower rate than other costs.

Some institutions have expressed concerns that reductions in administrative staff could threaten the capacity to implement or continue identified best practices. The Task Force believes all post-secondary institutions should review their cost structures and administrative norms to determine the extent to which they can direct resources away from administrative activities that do not contribute to student success.

Although not all concerns raised by individual Task Force members have been addressed in this report, all of the members are concerned about the barriers listed below.

II-A. Foundational Barrier: Lack of funding that increases costs to students and limits services that can be provided

1. Decline in state general fund appropriations for post-secondary education: Woven into all of the barriers identified by the Task Force is a trend of decreased state general fund appropriations per student FTE over the last three biennia at Oregon’s public universities and community colleges (See Figures 1 & 2). This decline has been a major factor in driving tuition increases and has made a post-secondary education increasingly unaffordable for many students in Oregon. Reduced funding has also limited the services institutions can provide to assure success for those students who can afford to attend.

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3 Task Force members each were provided with 5 votes (in the form of adhesive dots) and distributed them among the 12 barriers. Members could place no more than two dots on any one barrier. Eleven of the 17 Task Force members participated in this exercise.
2. **Affordability:** The Task Force identified the high cost of attendance and how it affects students as a significant barrier. While high costs not only prevent potential students from attending in the first place, it also causes more students to attend part time, stop out in the course of their education, and accumulate a level of debt that may result in other long-term financial difficulties. Additionally, it limits the range of extracurricular activities and support services that students may access due to the burden of increased work hours and other commitments that students take on to finance their education. All of these factors limit access, increase the time to completion, and decrease the likelihood of completion.

Limitations to access affect all post-secondary students, from community colleges to the graduate level. Limited access and lack of student success not only will hinder Oregon from reaching its 40-40-20 goal, but can increase costs. At the undergraduate level, a high level of stopping or dropping
out will result in the state needing higher levels of enrollment and investment to reach the 40-40-20 goal. At the graduate level, lack of access will limit the ability of institutions to enable teaching assistantships to address undergraduate teaching needs.

3. **Limited Services**: The Task Force also indicated that Oregon’s status among the bottom five states in funding for post-secondary education prevents a comprehensive approach that could significantly improve both student and institutional success. Continuous declines in state funding cause the institutions to decrease the resources that can be allocated to undergraduate instruction and critical support services; e.g., fewer sections of required classes are offered, and tutoring in math and other subjects are often curtailed.

Post-secondary institutions will have a difficult time improving the delivery of services to students without increased resources. Without significant incentives that would enable institutions to adopt comprehensive programs, institutions will continue to make marginal improvements and will be limited in their level of success.

Increased support needs to address both operating and capital needs at universities and community colleges. Without significant increases in capital support and technological improvements, institutions will not have the capacity to meet the 40-40-20 goal.

**II-B. Programmatic and Structural Barriers**

In addition to affordability, the task force identified six programmatic and structural barriers facing students in post-secondary education. These barriers are identified below. This final report reflects a many of the comments that were made during the regional discussions in September and October. The recommendations of the Task Force are aimed at overcoming each of these barriers.

1. **Poor management of transitions between education institutions**
   
   High schools, community colleges and universities need to work together to ensure that transitions are clear and that credits are transferred to the maximum benefit of students. They also need to ensure that the learning in all courses provides an adequate foundation for subsequent coursework at higher levels. This includes identifying and removing unjustified redundancies between programs, and eliminating organizational redundancies and complicated organizational structures and/or silos that impede efficiency.

   There is simply not enough communication and understanding between educational sectors. Currently there is a confusing array of Advanced Placement, dual credit, and other programs between high school and post-secondary institutions. Post-secondary institutions and high schools need to work together to ensure that high school teachers are trained to teach these classes. Post-secondary institutions need to be clear about expectations at the next level of instruction and learning in order to enable high quality teaching of high school classes. Institutions currently lack awareness of each other’s policies and practices.

   Transitions need to start well before 12th grade, and the degree to which resources are pooled into one cohesive transition program will increase the likelihood of success. The current ratio of high school counselors to students makes this effort more difficult, as there are insufficient numbers to support student needs. In addition, more work needs to be completed around the issue of who carries the costs of providing greater opportunities for high school students to enroll in post-secondary classes. Currently, the cost for students to obtain college credit varies greatly across
post-secondary institutions. The current funding model does not encourage school districts to motivate students to enroll in community college and university courses because the districts may lose state funds for doing so.

Admissions policies may also facilitate transitions from high school to post-secondary institutions. Examples include a guaranteed admission track so students know if they achieve certain GPA, test scores or other criteria that they will be admitted.

Transitions are even more difficult for adult learners who have been out of school for a significant period of time because they lack access to structured advice on how to navigate many of the complex issues they may face, especially if they lack basic skills and are also working and supporting a family.

Finally, student completion is slowed when institutions do not have the capacity to adopt new technologies that may ease transitions. Further difficulties occur when institutions lack effective assessments of learning, particularly when that learning has been completed outside of traditional post-secondary contexts. Efforts to improve transitions also need to address students seeking to move from unemployment or under-employment.

2. **Insufficient support for underrepresented communities**

   Underrepresented communities in post-secondary education institutions lack a community of learning that identifies with their unique cultures, backgrounds and needs. Faculty and staff on campuses may lack the cultural competence to deal effectively with an increasingly diverse student body. Institutions are challenged – for a variety of reasons – in recruiting and retaining qualified underrepresented faculty. One particular challenge includes the lack of infrastructure to support this group of faculty once they are hired (i.e., mentoring). As a result, students from underrepresented communities often do not have role models among the faculty and staff on their campus. “Underrepresented” can include race, ethnicity, age, income, gender identity and sexual orientation, students with dependents, veteran status, disability, and locational issues.

3. **Insufficient number of full-time faculty**

   Many Task Force members believe that limited full-time faculty resources result in fewer course offerings, unmanageable class sizes, increasing faculty loads, and dwindling course support. Limited resources for faculty and academic support also reduce opportunities for effective advising, mentoring and career guidance. All of these factors limit student access to faculty and are significant barriers to successful classroom engagement and learning, degree completion and job placement upon graduation. Non-tenured track and non-full-time faculty also face challenges that create instability. For example, contingent faculty may lack job security and predictability and this may contribute to the lack of success for students, who cannot rely on a steady consistent mentoring both inside and outside the classroom.

   Current dependence on adjunct and part-time faculty (especially without providing adequate opportunities and time for them to act as mentors outside of the classroom) further limits student access to the most strongly documented “best practice” for student success. Lack of faculty/student engagement affects learning, mentoring for civic involvement, degree completion and job placement upon graduation.

4. **Limited support services such as advising and tutoring**

   When students lack academic advice, mentorship and career guidance they are likely to have a difficult time navigating among careers, majors, and classes within institutions. They face even
steeper challenges when navigating the transitions between high schools, community colleges and universities. Campuses may lack the ability to provide support services such as tutoring in addition to providing mentorship and advising opportunities to students. Institutions are currently limited in their ability to connect advising and mentoring to alternative learning experiences. In addition, post-secondary education institutions are not well-connected and coordinated with social service agencies.

5. **Insufficient support for career and technical education (CTE) programs**
Career and technical education (CTE) programs address the needs of employers and communities while often reaching into non-traditional student populations. CTE programs have provided clear pathways for high school students to transition to college, but with funding cuts at the high school level and lack of education surrounding CTE related careers, students may be unaware of the rich career environment and opportunities that exist.

6. **Inadequate post-secondary preparation**
Students who enter community colleges and universities without the necessary educational base and learning habits are least likely to succeed. Students who are not exposed to the potential of a postsecondary education while in middle school or high school may never expand their horizons beyond a high school diploma. Being ready for career and college are critical to success as an adult.

A greater dialogue between K-12 and post-secondary institutions about expectations can serve to reduce the need for remediation when students enter post-secondary institutions. Increased efforts will lower the cost to students because they will not need to pay for remedial coursework that does not necessarily fulfill their degree requirements. For example, Oregon State University and the University of Oregon have partnered with local school districts and community colleges to review math curricula to ensure that student work at each level results in the ability to succeed at the next.

Even where K-12 schools have improved efforts to prepare students for post-secondary education, community colleges and universities need to improve the manner in which they provide remedial education for students. These efforts are necessary not only because it will take time to improve efforts in high schools to prepare students for post-secondary education, but also because not all efforts at the K-12 level will have an immediate effect.

In addition, remedial efforts in post-secondary education will be needed for older students who are entering, or re-entering post-secondary education after years away from educational institutions. These students include displaced workers and military veterans who initially never intended to go beyond a high school education.
III. Overcoming the Barriers to Student and Institutional Success: There are no Silver Bullets

Students succeed and fail due to many factors, not all of which can be addressed by institutions, programs or more funding. The Task Force has developed a number of recommendations for overcoming these barriers with the ultimate objective of achieving Oregon’s 40-40-20 goal. Some of the recommendations will enable community colleges and universities to be more cost-effective. Others will require funding – and the Task Force has identified specific budget recommendations proposed by OUS, OSAC and CCWD for consideration during the 2013 legislative session. All of the recommendations reflect landmark education bills passed during the 2011 and 2012 legislative sessions.

III-A. Linking efforts to address the barriers to the OEIB and Achievement Compacts

The Task Force recommendations are intended to link to the work of the OEIB and its Achievement Compacts for high schools, community colleges and universities. The passage of SB 909 during the 2011 legislative session and the subsequent work accomplished by the OEIB have resulted in a number of significant changes in Oregon’s education system.

First, the OEIB is approaching funding along the entire education continuum, from early childhood programs that prepare children for kindergarten through to post-secondary programs that prepare graduates for the workplace. This approach should help address one of the Task Force’s findings: efforts to address student success need to begin with students in high schools. The more the lines between grades 11-14 are blurred by college readiness and preparation programs and college credit for high school students, the more likely students will succeed when they reach post-secondary institutions.

Second, by establishing Achievement Compacts that are based on completion and achievement, the OEIB seeks to focus community colleges and universities on improving student success. Funding and implementing the activities recommended by the Task Force in this report will serve to overcome many of the barriers to success identified by the Task Force. And doing so will help institutions meet their Achievement Compacts. Nevertheless, meeting the Achievement Compacts will not occur without sustained investments over the long term.

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4 The 40-40-20 goal was established by the legislature in 2011 with the passage of SB 253 (http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/sb0200.dir/sb0253.en.pdf). Under the bill, by the year 2025, 40% of all Oregonians will attain a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher, 40% will attain an associate degree or certificate, and 20% would attain a high school diploma.

5 SB 909, http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/sb0900.dir/sb0909.en.pdf
Elements in Community College and University Achievement Compacts
That Relate to Student Success

Community Colleges: Several of the outcomes on the community college Achievement Compacts relate directly to student success and persistence. This is because they were drawn from the Student Success Oversight Committees measurements, called “milestones and momentum points”. Completion measures include increases in Adult High School diplomas/GEDs, certificates, associate degrees and transfers to four-year institutions. Progress measures include students completing developmental math and English, earning 15 or 30 credits in an academic year, and percent of students passing a national licensure exam. Finally Connections outcomes include the number of high school students who are dually enrolled at a community college, the number of community college students who are dually enrolled at an OUS institution, and the number of community college students who successfully transfer to OUS. Future additions to the compacts will include a measure of students successfully completing a program of study at a community college and an outcome to track the success of students transitioning to employment.

OUS: OUS Achievement Compacts reflect the System’s commitment to measurable outcomes that are strongly linked to student success. Completion measures include increases in the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to Oregonians and to rural Oregonians, and the number of advanced degrees awarded to Oregonians. Quality measures are entirely about student success, as measured by employment outcomes and employer and alumni satisfaction. And Connections measures include tracking of high school graduates who have earned dual credit, and community college transfers who complete a bachelor’s degree. Finally, all of the above measures in future years of the Achievement Compacts will include accountability for outcomes for disadvantaged students; i.e., those who are traditionally underserved in higher education.

III-B. Addressing the problem from start to finish

In order to make a real difference in student success and degree attainment in post-secondary education we must adopt an integrated effort along the education continuum that uses multiple approaches, including the use of new media, digital, on-line learning and other technological innovations. This approach follows the advice of Patrick Terenzini: “Do not zero in on finding the silver bullet. There aren’t any. The effects of college are cumulative across a range of activities.”

The Task Force has sought to identify and recommend strategies that begin before students enter post-secondary education institutions, and that carry forward across all activities both inside and outside the classroom. The Task force used national research to create for Oregon a complete picture of student success.

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The Task Force recommendations are aimed at proven practices that are known to be effective, rather than just adding more programs or searching for a “silver bullet”. The Task Force has organized its recommendations along this roadmap that includes five basic steps:

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<th>The Road Map to Success – Five Elements for Success</th>
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<td>1. Pre-Matriculation Success – K-12 partnerships with post-secondary institutions to promote a college-going culture with commitments to life-long learning, dual credit options, and preparation for post-secondary learning.</td>
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<td>2. Planning for Success – Assessments, placements, orientation, academic goal setting and planning and registration before classes begin.</td>
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<td>3. Initiating Success – First year experiences, student success courses, creating learning communities and accelerated or fast track developmental education.</td>
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<td>4. Sustaining Success – class attendance, alerts and interventions, experiential learning, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and support for faculty development in effective learning strategies.</td>
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<td>5. Academic/Classroom Success – first-year seminars, learning communities, writing intensive courses, common intellectual experiences, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning and community-based learning, internships, capstone courses and projects, and effective documentation and assessments of prior learning experiences.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

These five activities create cumulative and strong effects on student persistence and success when all are present. They need to be tailored to individual campuses, employ an expansive approach to what constitutes “the classroom”, and consider these elements not so much as “steps” but as a progression toward competency and completion. However, unless all five areas are addressed on all K-12 and post-secondary campuses, student success will be not be consistent.

The Task Force formed a work group to evaluate the actions currently being undertaken by community colleges and universities to address these barriers. The work group approached this effort with the belief that high impact strategies to address the programmatic and structural barriers identified by the Task Force need to be applied across the education continuum, from start to finish. These activities also must be tailored to individual campuses.

The recommendations in this report are based on a survey the Task Force conducted of community colleges and universities. Upon receiving responses from academic and student services personnel in the community colleges and universities, the Task Force formed an “Evaluation Subgroup” that consisted of a number of Task Force members in addition to content experts in the OUS Chancellor’s Office, Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and university and community college campuses.

The Evaluation Subgroup first identified activities submitted by the institutions and sought to align them with the barriers identified by the Task Force. The evaluation subgroup then narrowed the list further based on a set of evaluation criteria developed by the full Task Force over several meetings.
Criteria for Evaluating Measures to Increase Student Success

- Does the measure involve multiple institutions and/or sectors?
- Does the measure leverage existing funds?
- Is the measure based on established effective practice?
- What are the outcomes and how will they be measured?
- Does the measure provide a cost-effective return on investment?
- Is there evidence of institution-wide commitment?
- Does the activity match the strategy?
- Is the measure adaptable and/or scalable?
- Is the measure sustainable?
- Does the measure benefit under-represented students?
- Will the measure contribute to reaching Achievement Compact/40-40-20 targets?

For each campus the specific programs, activities, and approaches to accomplish these high-impact practices will be different, just as their student demographics, missions, and communities are different. The Task Force does not believe that specific programs should be funded or mandated with the intent that they be applied across all campuses. Instead, resources should be allocated to encourage and support campuses as they follow the road map elements identified in this report.

Post-secondary education institutions in Oregon do not need new statutes or directives to help them overcome the barriers to student success identified by the Task Force. The problem does not exist because statutes do not provide sufficient authority for post-secondary institutions to act. Nor will the problem be solved merely as a result of direction from the legislature. Rather, the problem centers primarily on the need for funding, and the need for technical assistance to ensure that best practices at institutions can be easily and readily adapted by others.
IV. Steps to Address the Barriers to Student Success


The Task Force supports proposals that were submitted to the Governor by the Oregon University System (OUS), Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) and the Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC) for the 2013-15 budget that are aimed at improving student and institutional success. The budget requests listed below address some of the programmatic and structural barriers identified by the Task Force.

1. **Education Research Unit**. All of the education entities have joined together to create a combined research group. They have proposed general fund allocations for the 2013-15 biennium in the following amounts:
   - OSAC $148K.
   - OUS: $1.6M ($600K for research center support and $1M related to a longitudinal data system).
   - CCWD $378K.

   The purpose of this research unit would be to use the state longitudinal data system to provide research and analysis of educational issues in Oregon. This effort can, and should, address the relationship of completion rates with the OOG. Overall additional research will help policymakers, educational institutions, parents and students make sound, data-driven decisions. The Task Force believes that investment in a research unit would assist in answering questions regarding each sector of public education as well as enable institutions to track students across the entire educational continuum to the workforce.

   Funding these programs will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
   - Affordability.
   - Support for underrepresented communities.
   - Management of transitions.
   - Postsecondary preparation.
   - Support services (advising, tutoring).
   - Support for career/technical education.

2. **Limit tuition increases**. By increasing general fund education and general allocations to OUS and community colleges, the legislature can help manage tuition increases. Limiting tuition increases to a level consistent with median family incomes or consumer price indexes would improve all of the following success indicators: first-time freshman participation rates, as well as retention rates, completion rates and time-to-degree for all levels.
   - OUS has proposed a $12 million general fund increase to limit the degree to which tuition would otherwise need to be used to supplant funding shortfalls (OUS estimates that approximately $52 million would be needed to hold tuition increases to a level equivalent to the Portland Consumer Price Index).
Funding this program will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
  
  - Affordability.
  - Support for underrepresented communities.

3. **Increase OOG funding.** OSAC is seeking $8.4 million in increased funding for grants. The amount requested would accommodate an approximate $50 increase in the OOG award amount for approximately the same number of students currently receiving awards. Additional funding would be required to make significant increases in award amounts or to increase the number of students served.

Funding this program will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
  
  - Affordability.
  - Support for underrepresented communities.

4. **Degree Progress/Retention.** The portfolio of student success programs funded through this program would improve the effectiveness of existing academic policies and services; support early identification of students at risk; provide intentional advising and charting a pathway to degree completion; improve communication; address academic needs of under-prepared students; address financial concerns; ease transition to college using peer mentoring; focus on success of underrepresented students; make effective use of data; reduce the number of high-failure courses; and manage capacity of programs and course offerings for timely progress to graduation.

  - OUS is proposing $2.7 million for Degree Progress/Retention programs across all seven campuses intended to ensure that once students enter an OUS institution they are successful in completing their degree.
  - CCWD is proposing $2.8 million to continue strategic investments in student progress, retention and completion initiatives.

Funding these programs will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
  
  - Support for underrepresented communities.
  - Management of transitions.
  - Postsecondary preparation.
  - Support services (advising, tutoring).

5. **Precollege programs.** The programs funded would correlate directly to student success in high school and an increased post-secondary attendance rate among Oregonians. These measures would create a clear pathway for elementary, middle school and high schools students to be college and career ready and to remove any barriers that prevent successful transitions.

  - OUS has proposed $441K to fund a portfolio of high impact pre-college practices in collaboration with its K-12 and Community College partners.

Funding these programs will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
  
  - Support for underrepresented communities.
  - Management of transitions.
6. **ASPIRE Expansion.** OSAC is seeking $2.7 million to expand the ASPIRE program. ASPIRE prepares Oregon youth for an education beyond high school and contributes to the 40-40-20 goal. ASPIRE provides mentoring and inspiration to youth in middle schools, high schools and community based organizations. At the current funding level, including replacement for the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG), the program encompasses 145 sites. Additional funding would expand the ASPIRE program to eventually mentor every middle school and high school student in Oregon.

Funding this program will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
- Support for underrepresented communities.
- Management of transitions.
- Postsecondary preparation.

7. **Eastern Promise.** The Eastern Promise involves Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC), Eastern Oregon University (EOU) and the Intermountain Education Services District (ESD) working together to create a truly seamless pipeline of students from K-12 to post-secondary and to provide the necessary tools to ensure success. The goal is to create a “college-going culture” by collaborating to break down barriers for students in a rural setting.

   - OUS is seeking $1.1 million for the Eastern Promise program which is designed to improve academic success among the children and youth of rural Oregon through university, community college and K-12 partnerships that build a culture that actively promotes high school and college completion.

Funding this program will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
- Support for underrepresented communities.
- Management of transitions.
- Postsecondary preparation.

8. **Replace OSAC’s current Financial Aid Management System (FAMS).** OSAC is seeking $1.5 million in funding to purchase and maintain a new management system to increase its information security and student privacy initiatives. OSAC currently uses a legacy system that is nearing the end of its life expectancy. The Task Force also believes that consideration in this process should be given to other data management needs, particularly to ensure that all data systems support efforts that would allow education agencies to track student progress across multiple institutions and sectors over significant periods of time.

Funding this program will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force: Affordability
- Support for underrepresented communities.
- Management of transitions.
- Support services (advising, tutoring).

9. **ASPIRE Stability.** OSAC is seeking $1.4 million to replace the loss of a College Access Challenge Grant. Oregon lost CACG funding for 2012-13 because the state was not able to meet ongoing federal maintenance of effort requirements.
Funding this program will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
   o Affordability.
   o Support for underrepresented communities.
   o Management of transitions.

10. **Innovative Practices in Educator Preparation.** OUS is seeking $12.5 million to improve pre-kindergarten through grade 20 student success by creating a seamless system of professional preparation and development in partnership with PK-12 teachers, administrators, counselors and other professionals. The program will develop visible, high-impact, high-quality models for educator internships that prepare candidates to effectively work with diverse students. It will also improve the exchange of data to improve educator preparation, hiring, induction, and evaluation. By providing in-service professional development the program is also aimed at increasing the involvement of OUS universities in supporting educators throughout their careers.

   Funding this program will help overcome the following barriers identified by the Task Force:
   o Support for underrepresented communities.
   o Management of transitions.
   o Postsecondary preparation.
   o Support services (advising, tutoring).

11. **Capital Funding.** The Task Force also discussed the need for continuing capital investments to ensure that universities and community colleges have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of students across Oregon. A comprehensive funding package that addresses both operation and structural needs – including technology and innovation – is needed to address both student and institutional success.

**IV-B. The Financial Barriers: Affordability/cost of attendance – linking the Oregon Opportunity Grant to completion**

The Task Force invested a significant amount of time seeking a better understanding of the role Oregon Opportunity Grants (OOG) plays in overcoming the financial barriers facing students. More information is needed in order to form a better understanding of how both the funding and administration of the OOG program can further contribute to student success.

Regardless of whether funding is increased, decreased, or stays the same, the Task Force believes research needs to address a number of fundamental issues to determine how OOG can further contribute to completion rates and student success. The legislature should consider investing dedicated funding for research that analyzes the effectiveness of investments in the OOG. Funding for the Education Research components identified above at OSAC, CCWD, and OUS should help address the following questions:

1. **How does OOG influence student success and completion?** Answering this question will help institutions determine if they need to target further preparation or other support services for those students who receive OOG. It will also help to determine how to assist students as they move along the education system between high school, community colleges and four-year institutions.
2. **How can OOG be used to support students who are college ready, not just with financial need?**

Addressing this question will help to determine if there are factors in addition to financial need that should be considered in awarding OOG to applicants. Increasing attention on continued persistence for those students who receive OOG does not necessarily mean that the program should move away from its goal of providing access. However, drawing a connection between OOG and persistence will facilitate decisions about increased funding for OOG.

3. **Can OOG be both adequate and predictable?** Addressing this question will help determine if program changes will assist students in persisting through to graduation. More needs to be known about how the configuration of grants affects completion before significant changes are made.

   For example, there has been discussion about “front-loading” grants – in essence configuring them to cover all or most of a student’s unmet need in the first two years in order to improve access. While more students will be able to attend and persist at two- or four-year institutions, it is not known what effect reducing grants for the years after the first two years will have on persistence for students attending four-year institutions or for those who do not complete an associate degree or certificate in the first two years.

   The Task Force believes that targeting OOG funding to particular programs such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is an intriguing idea, but should not be pursued until some of the more fundamental issues regarding access, persistence, and eligibility are better understood.

4. **How does OOG fit with institutional financial aid?** Addressing this question will help guide how institutions invest other resources such as tuition remissions and scholarship assistance to increase completion rates.

5. **Does adding new institutions influence the completion rates for current OOG recipients?** The Task Force invested a significant amount of time discussing the issue of whether students attending the Western Governor’s University (WGU) should be eligible to receive OOG. HB 4059, passed during the 2012 legislative session calls for the HECC to address this issue. The Task Force believes that HECC should address the following question:

   - How will extending eligibility to students who attend WGU affect students who are currently using OOG?
   - Will providing grants to students attending WGU affect – either positively or negatively – the overall completion rates for students who receive Opportunity Grants?

The Task Force does not believe it is fruitful to address a number of issues that are associated with the administration of the OOG program because they already have a long history of consideration. For example, unless the legislature chooses to make it a priority, the Task Force does not see the merit of considering significant changes in the proportion of funding or number of grants distributed to students based on the kind of institution they attend – community college, independent university, or OUS institution.

Appendix C provides a summary of the research regarding the linkage between financial aid and student success.
IV-C. Campus-Based Affordability Measures

The Task Force identified a number of successful practices currently being used to address affordability.

- **PathwayOregon, University of Oregon** -- UO promises to cover four years of tuition and fees for eligible lower-income Oregon residents. In addition to financial support, PathwayOregon students have access to comprehensive academic support and career guidance in order to ensure a rich academic experience and timely graduation. Students in the program have an average GPA of 3.05 and a freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of 87 percent. Oregon residents who have at least a 3.4 high school GPA and are eligible for the Pell Grant are automatically enrolled in the program. PathwayOregon has made an immense difference in the lives of its participants – 44 percent of whom are first-generation college students.

- **Bridge to Success, Oregon State University** – Campus-based financial aid covers tuition and fees with gift funding for students who are eligible for Oregon Opportunity Grants and Pell Grants. Institutional funding is used to fill any gap that OOG and Pell Grant funds don’t meet. The neediest students receive gift aid to cover books and supplies.

- **Financial Aid Literacy Seminar, Umpqua Community College**—UCC developed the Seminar in response to changes in federal regulations that affect both the institution and students and help student borrow responsibly.

- **Student Financial Aid Portal, Lane Community College**—“Where Do I Stand?” is a channel in the LCC student web portal that lets students track their financial aid, loan debt accumulated., and anticipated aid/loan eligibility.

- **Serve, Earn and Learn, Oregon Coast Community College**—Pell eligible students are offered service learning scholarships in exchange for on-campus educational assignments with a variety of college mentors.

IV-D. The Programmatic and Structural Barriers

The Task Force has identified a broad range of activities across community colleges and universities that contribute to student and institutional success. The programmatic and structural recommendations are not intended to result in requirements or mandates that institutions implement any particular programs. They are intended to result in efforts that replicate and adapt effective practices within base budgets.

Oregon needs to move from being able to cite exemplary programs toward making these programs “standard practices”. The Task Force is looking to further implementation of Achievement Compacts and implementing actions along the five steps for success (see Roadmap, p. 13) over the next several biennia, as well as the development of a long-term funding model to help institutions turn best practices into standard practices.

In the near term, institutions can help move these practices forward by providing more robust information about them. This can be accomplished by tracking the success of current and potential
practices and identifying the costs of these practices so other institutions know what may be needed to implement them.

**BARRIER 1: POOR MANAGEMENT OF TRANSITIONS**

High schools, community colleges and universities need to work together to ensure that transitions are clear and that credits are transferred to the maximum benefit of students. Efforts to improve transitions also need to address students seeking to move from un-employment or under-employment.

**Strategies that work:**

- **Eastern Promise, EOU/BMCC/TVCC/InterMountain ESD**—a collaboration to improve and expand educational opportunities for students in rural eastern Oregon, including Advanced Placement testing, dual credit and credit by proficiency options.

- **Accelerated Learning Options, Linn-Benton Community College**—high school students take LBCC classes for college credit, paid for by their high schools. The program includes frequent contact with program coordinator, required progress reports, and academic advising.

- **Reverse Transfer, Linn-Benton Community College and Oregon State University**—students who have transferred to OSU prior to receiving an associate’s degree would be able to earn it after transfer through a collaboration with OSU.

- **Freshman Interest Group (FIG) Program, University of Oregon**—this program creates an atmosphere like that of a small liberal arts college but makes use of the many resources of a major research university. In a FIG, 20-25 first-term students are co-enrolled in two regular university classes, but have the distinct advantage of further exploration of the material in the classes under the guidance of a faculty member and an advanced undergraduate assistant. Students are introduced to the topic of the FIG and to one another, even before they come to campus, through a shared summer reading. During fall term, the FIG meets each week for discussions, fieldtrips, and various hands-on activities that help them to think across the disciplines and to understand the thematic connections between the two classes. Students who start out in a FIG earn significantly higher grades throughout their first year and beyond and show significantly higher persistence and graduation rates than non-FIG students.

**Potential Initiatives:**

- **Veteran’s Office, Oregon Institute of Technology**—this program would connect both prospective and current student veterans with services and benefits.

- **Mandatory Orientation, Klamath Community College**—all new students would be required to meet with an advisor prior to beginning their studies at KCC.

- **Destination Graduation, Linn-Benton Community College**—LBCC wants to implement a 1-credit college readiness course that also connects each student with an LBCC advisor.

- **Portland Community College, Summer Bridges Programs**—programs would provide basic skill-building and college success skills, in addition to Accelerated Math and immersion classes in reading and writing.
**BARRIER 2: INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES**

Underrepresented communities in post-secondary education institutions lack a community of learning that identifies with their unique cultures, backgrounds and needs. “Underrepresented” can include race, ethnicity, age, income, gender, disability and locational issues.

**Strategies that work:**

- Diversity Commitment Scholarship, Western Oregon University—the program offers 1st-year classes, intensive academic monitoring, and annual academic planning for 70+ Diversity Scholars from underrepresented groups whose communities otherwise lack “college knowledge”.
- Pirates to Raiders Program, Southern Oregon University—SOU has implemented a partnership with Phoenix-Talent School District that guarantees SOU admission for completion of program elements that include GPA requirements and college preparation classes.
- Summer Bridge Program, Oregon State University—OSU offers a 3-week living/learning community for incoming students with weaker academic preparation, including a comprehensive transitional curriculum, social activities, and academic support.
- Strength in Diversity Program, Chemeketa Community College—this is a dual track program that offers a curriculum for professional staff development plus an initiative to diversify the faculty.

**Potential Initiatives:**

- Tech Opportunities Program (TOP), Oregon Institute of Technology—this program serves students with academic need who have disabilities or are first-generation or low-income. Current federal funding would be supplemented or enhanced with state/institutional funds.

**BARRIER 3: INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF FULL-TIME FACULTY**

Without an adequate number of full-time faculty, institutions are limited in offering sufficient courses and may face unmanageable class sizes, increasing faculty loads, and dwindling course support. Limited resources for faculty and academic support also reduce opportunities for effective advising, mentoring and career guidance. This is an essential long-term, long range investment, and the Task Force recognizes that initiatives to promote and sustain student academic achievement require sufficient full-time faculty to ensure their success.

Addressing this problem will take a two-pronged effort. First, this is one area that may benefit from targeted legislative appropriations with clear expectations about what is to be accomplished. Second, institutions will need to examine and implement incentives for encouraging more engagement by part-time adjunct faculty outside the classroom.

**Strategies that work:**

- Provost’s Hiring Initiative, Oregon State University—in 2010 OSU embarked on a process to recruit and hire 90 new full-time tenure track faculty across multiple disciplines. The new hires will fill lost faculty positions over the last decade due to budget constraints.
Potential Initiatives:

- Create incentives to encourage faculty to take on student mentorship, coaching, and advising roles.

**BARRIER 4: LIMITED SUPPORT SERVICES (ADVISING, TUTORING)**

When students lack academic advice, mentorship and career guidance they are likely to have a difficult time navigating among careers, majors, and classes within institutions, and face even steeper challenges when navigating the transitions between high schools, community colleges and four year universities.

**Strategies that work:**

- Student Success Center, Oregon Institute of Technology—peer tutors are provided in math, writing, science, engineering, and computer science, aided by an early warning program.
- Supplemental Instruction (SI), Oregon State University—SI provides group tutoring for students in targeted high risk classes, including sessions on note-taking and test preparation.
- New Student Week, Western Oregon University—this program offers new students a comprehensive transition program providing support, resources and connections to the campus.
- Student Success Portfolio of Initiatives, Portland State University—the portfolio includes degree maps and Milestones, targeted advising for specific at-risk student populations, and intentional, mandatory academic advising for all 1st-year students.

**Potential Initiatives:**

- Freshman Year Experience, Rogue Community College—the college would provide prescriptive advising, orientation, and “intentional career certainty interventions” with all new-to-RCC students.
- Mandatory Advising and Orientation, Portland Community College—this potential PCC program would offer personalized assistance for new students, providing student success/persistence strategies and programming.
- Supplemental Instruction, Portland Community College—SI would provide group tutoring for students in high risk classes (see OSU, above).
- Retention/Completion Specialist, Portland Community College—PCC would create a staff position to coordinate student success programming PCC-wide.
- Peer Tutoring, Oregon State University—OSU would expand Supplemental Instruction to include the top ten high-enrollment classes with the highest rates of students receiving D or F grades or withdrawing from the class.
- Mandatory Advising, Clatsop Community College—all degree-seeking students would be required to meet with an academic advisor prior to course registration.
- Mandatory Advising, Linn-Benton Community College—see Clatsop Community College (above).
- Intensive Advising, Tillamook Bay Community College: see Clatsop Community College (above).
• Early Alert, Chemeketa Community College—an automated early alert system would help faculty and student services staff identify and intervene with students at risk of failure in academic classes.

BARRIER 5: INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR CAREER/TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

Career and technical education (CTE) programs address the needs of employers and communities while often reaching into non-traditional student populations. CTE programs are clear pathways for high school students to transition to college.

Strategies that work:

• Career & Technical Education Center, Chemeketa Community College—the Center provides career navigation tools, peer tutoring, and support services to students along with CTE information, referral and job development services.

• Career and College Ready, Tillamook Bay Community College—this is a collaborative project with Tillamook High School, embedding career and college readiness in the high school culture; students will graduate from high school with at least one college course completed.

Potential Initiatives:

• Employment/Career Preparation, Southern Oregon University—this program in development would include an academic course focused on career preparation, as well as campus employment that hones job skills and a career focus aligned with academic majors.

• Career Services, Central Oregon Community College—this expansion of services would include four career coaches embedded within specific academic programs, providing comprehensive career and academic guidance and support to students.

• CTE Program Advisors, Portland Community College—PCC would expand the number of embedded program advisors in CTE areas, increasing the awareness of advisors in all disciplines (not just CTE).

BARRIER 6: INADEQUATE POSTSECONDARY PREPARATION

Students who enter community colleges and universities without the necessary educational base and learning habits are least likely to succeed. And students who are not exposed to the potential of a postsecondary education while in middle school or high school may never expand their horizons beyond a high school diploma.

Strategies that work:

• High School Partnerships, Portland Community College—PCC has 30+ collaborations with high schools to provide dual credit and college preparation/transition programs; e.g., Middle College, Early College, Gateway to College, and FutureConnect.

• Mandatory Testing and Prerequisites, Portland Community College—all PCC courses now have established prerequisites and test scores, to ensure student academic success.
• Student Success Required First Term Course, Oregon Coast Community College—this is a mandatory College Survival and Success course for new students with demonstrated positive effects on persistence.

**Potential Initiatives:**

• College-Ready Lane County—an education partnership pilot project managed by the Educational Policy Improvement Center. It is designed to stimulate and create instructor partnerships by engaging university and community college faculty with secondary and middle school educators in Lane County. The partnership assesses college readiness status, creates new and strengthens existing connections, identifies and addresses policy and practice improvements and documents the overall effort so that it can be replicated across the State of Oregon. The project uses the Four Keys to College and Career Readiness as the focus of network activities and ensures that activities are directly linked to factors associated with readiness for college success. The project will produce an Oregon College and Career Readiness Toolkit.

• Early Intervention for At-Risk Students, Central Oregon Community College — COCC wants to create a program that identifies at-risk students prior to enrollment, providing tailored academic and support services.

• Structured Learning Assistance (SLA), Central Oregon Community College—SLA would provide embedded tutoring for high attrition and/or early skills classes at COCC.

• Summer Bridge Program, Portland Community College (see Oregon State University, above).

### IV-E. Basic and Career Skills Preparation

HB 3414 calls for the Task Force to “examine methods for students to acquire basic skills and career preparation skills”. At its May meeting, the Task Force reviewed the opportunities and challenges associated with preparing Oregonians for entering the workforce. A 2008 study conducted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) revealed that 286,553 working age adults (ages 16-64) in Oregon — 11% of the population — had not completed a high school diploma or equivalent. According to the study, lifetime earnings for Oregonians who do not complete a high school diploma are approximately $400,000 less than those who do earn a diploma. Moreover, those with a diploma are 7.5% more likely to participate in the workforce than those without a diploma. Those with a high school diploma contribute more to the economy through higher earnings and they are less likely to be unemployed. The CAEL/NCHEMS study also indicated that Oregonians with a bachelor’s degree earn nearly twice as much over their lifetimes than Oregonians who only have a high school diploma.

In an effort to address these numbers, CCWD is working with community colleges to develop and implement evidence-based practices that are effectively reducing the skill attainment gap and are preparing Oregonians for post-secondary education and the workforce. These initiatives, as well as enhancements that are planned for the 2013-15 biennium, are discussed below.

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*Adult Learning in Focus: National and State-by-State Data; CAEL in partnership with NCHEMS; 2008*
1. CURRENT INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT BASIC SKILL AND CAREER PREPARATION

a. Oregon Pathways for Adult Basic Skills (OPABS)

Oregon Pathways for Adult Basic Skills (OPABS) is designed to test new processes in curriculum development that build on the work of existing federal and foundation projects and national demonstration programs such as the Nellie Mae Foundation’s Adult Basic Education Transition Initiative and Jobs For the Future’s project, Breaking Through: Helping Low-Skilled Adults Enter and Succeed in College and Careers. OPABS also applies research from a number of studies to increase the effectiveness of community college Career and Technical Education (CTE) curricula.\(^8\)

The overall goals for OPABS include:

- Building a pipeline of Adult Basic Skills (ABS) learners prepared to enter postsecondary education, training programs, and jobs in high-demand career areas.

- Developing a basic skills system with high-quality services and processes, including the development of formal connections to postsecondary education and WorkSource Oregon One-Stop Centers, and facilitating the transition of ABS learners to further education and employment.

The services provided include:

- **Recruitment, Learner Orientation, Assessment, and Placement in Courses**: ABS programs encourage learners to consider postsecondary education as a next step and develop an individual course of study that can maximize educational attainment.

- **Instruction**: Five accelerated basic skills courses incorporate applied occupational content from Oregon’s “high demand” industries, including Health Services (certified nurse’s assistant, medical records), Industrial & Engineering Systems (welding, construction), and Business & Management (hospitality, food and beverage services). Coursework is presented in these contexts to familiarize learners with workplace terminology, tasks they might perform on the job, and other aspects of employment in specific fields.

Currently 12 of the 17 community colleges have adopted the OPABS curriculum. The remaining five community colleges plan to adapt the curriculum over the next two years. Initial student data collected from the OPABS initiative includes background characteristics of learners, changes in attendance patterns, and pre-post skill gains, transition to credit post-secondary programs. These data, from program year 2010-11, are currently being evaluated through a contract with Abt Associates.

b. Career Pathways

The nationally recognized Career Pathways program is designed to meet the needs of the nearly 300,000 Oregonians over the age of 16 who lack a high school diploma. Many of these individuals are unemployed or underemployed, and lack the basic skills that Oregon employers require. Launched in 2004, Career Pathways focuses on providing complete short-term certificate programs for unemployed

\(^8\) Relevant studies include: Gillespie, M. *EFF research principle: A contextualized approach to curriculum and instruction.* (n.d.) Paris, K., and Huske, L. *Critical Issue: Developing and Applied and Integrated Curriculum.* 1998; Mazzeo, C., Rab, S.Y., & Alssid, J.L. *Building bridges to college and careers; Contextualized basic skills programs at community colleges.* 2003
or underemployed Oregonians, as well as high school graduates who need additional education. These programs can be completed in less than one year, lead to either immediate employment in high demand occupations, or provide a seamless “pathway” to the next level of a degree or certificate related to the occupation. Career Pathways reflects Oregon’s increased focus on educational achievements though the use of certificates that demonstrate completion and attainment.

The Career Pathways Initiative also assists in achieving the 40-40-20 goal by providing services to meet the needs of adults with limited academic skills and who may be juggling the demands of work and family. Career Pathways programs are specifically designed to meet these challenges by organizing the curriculum in segments, which allows students to complete a portion of the certificate program, stop out as work and family or skill development demands dictate, then return to take additional segments of the curriculum without losing trajectory to completion.

Over the last eight years, the Career Pathways Initiative has built the foundation across all 17 of Oregon’s community colleges for delivering over 200 short-term, post-secondary credit certificates that can be earned in as little as one term or up to three terms. The program includes an extensive infrastructure of “roadmaps” of career pathways constructed with input from employers. These roadmaps show prospective students how they can attain a long-term career and educational goal by starting with an achievable milestone. The skills learned in the short-term certificates are needed by employers and completion of a career pathways program qualifies a person to go to work. The program also provides individuals an opportunity to pursue additional education and career advancement goals.

More than 3,400 Oregonians have earned career pathways certificates in the last five years, and this number can be increased dramatically because the critical infrastructure is now in place for reaching more adult learners.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BASIC SKILLS AND CAREER PREPARATION IN THE 2013-15 BIENNIAL

a. Basic Skills — Acceleration and Co-enrollment of ABS students: The Task Force supports efforts that enable low-skilled adult learners to quickly and effectively prepare for, secure and retain good jobs.

In order to provide well-integrated educational and support services that effectively bridge transitions from entry into adult basic skills through completion certificate programs and employment or higher-level educational credentials, the Task Force recommends the following:

- **Integrate Pathways Oregon**: Build upon the successful CTE career pathways framework by further integrating ABS and CTE programs into community college curricula. A key component of this effort will be implementation of hybrid on-line CTE/ABS program delivery options.

- **Move Toward Scale and Sustainability**: Use baseline data for the participating colleges to determine the completion rates and to establish key student transition points and milestones.

- **Implement Adult Basic Education to Credentials Pathways**: Implement model of co-enrollment of adult basic skills and CTE students. Integration of instruction in basic skills with instruction in college-level professional-technical skills will increase the rate at which adult basic education and English-as-a-second-language students advance to college-level programs and complete postsecondary credentials.
• **Collect and Track Data for Continuous Improvement:** Although Oregon is able to track ABS students through postsecondary education and into the labor market, it is not currently possible, at the state level, to identify ABS students and track them throughout their educational careers.

**b. Career Pathways:** The Task Force recommends a number of key activities related to the Career Pathways Initiative in 2013-2015:

• **Expand Career Pathways:** Continue to expand career pathway programs, based upon employer demand, as needed beyond the over 200 certificates currently offered across the state by 25%.

• **Improve student transfer:** Support the goal of HB 3521, the Transfer Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, passed in 2011. Specifically, community colleges should specifically review and provide clear indications of how credits earned by students at other institutions of higher education will be counted toward completion.

• **Continue to develop the Pathways Certificate research study:** Supports incorporating recommendations from the Center for Community College Research at Columbia University to guide how CCWD will continue to refine the Pathways research study design.

• **Further integrate student supports:** To ensure that students complete certificate programs, are placed in jobs, and advance to further education, the Pathways initiative should develop deliberate strategies to provide students access to basic academic skills instruction, academic advising and career coaching.

• **Increase the number of students completing career pathways programs:** Supports the goal for the 2013-15 biennium of increasing student completions by 25% over the 2011-13 biennium.
V. Recommendations

1. Replicate and adapt effective practices within base budgets.

The Task Force challenges the 17 community colleges, 7 OUS institutions and 197 K-12 school districts to examine the successful activities that have been identified in this report to determine if these practices are appropriate methods for improving student success and attain the 40-40-20 goal.

Taking into account the individuality and heterogeneity of Oregon’s post-secondary education institutions, the Task Force believes the HECC, the OEIB, and the SBHE and the SBE should hold the programs identified in this report as exemplars to be adopted by school districts, community college districts and universities to address student success.


The Task Force urges the legislature to fund the elements in the 2013-15 proposed budgets for OUS, CCWD, and OSAC. These investments will help institutions make progress, though they are not sufficient to improve Oregon’s status among the bottom five states in the country in terms of funding for post-secondary education.

3. Turn best practices into standard practices at institutions – the long term impact of Achievement Compacts.

The practices identified by the Task Force are intended to provide institutions across the educational continuum with a set of tools they can use to increase their level of student success – as indicated by increased completion and graduation rates.

Institutions that are failing to meet their Achievement Compacts should be evaluated to determine the extent to which they have implemented the practices identified by the Task Force, or ones that are similar. Even if funding for education is not increased, institutions across the entire education continuum that are not making progress should be encouraged in the strongest possible ways to implement these programs in a manner that reflects local needs and challenges.

4. Fund research capacity in order to answer critical questions about how financial aid in general, and Oregon Opportunity Grants in particular, can contribute to increased completion rates and student success.

Community colleges, universities and the OSAC need much more information in order to form a better understanding of how both the funding and administration of the OOG program can further contribute to student success. Regardless of whether funding is increased, decreased, or stays the same, the Task Force believes research needs to address a number of fundamental issues to determine how OOG can further contribute to completion rates and student success. The legislature should dedicate funding for research that analyzes the effectiveness of investments in the OOG. Funding for the Education Research components identified above at OSAC, CCWD, and OUS should help address the following questions:
a. How does OOG influence student success and completion?

b. How can OOG be used to support students who are college ready, not just financially needy?

c. Can OOG be both adequate and predictable?

d. How does OOG fit with institutional financial aid?

e. Does adding new institutions to those already eligible for OOG influence the completion rates for current OOG recipients?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

HB 3418 calls upon the Task Force to “review alternative funding options instituted in other states for improving student and institutional success.” While the Task Force undertook an extensive literature review (see Appendices C and D) it did not undertake a survey of practices in other states for a number of reasons. In 2011, Oregon adopted landmark legislation that fundamentally changed the manner in which it funds and assesses education across the entire education continuum:

• SB 253, which established the 40-40-20 goal to achieve by the year 2025 a population that consists of 40% with a baccalaureate degrees or higher, 40% with an associate’s degree or certificate, and 20% with a high school diploma.

• SB 242, which restructured the relationship between Oregon’s public universities and the state, and established the HECC — a new entity to increase the coordination between community colleges and universities.

• SB 909 which created the OEIB and empowered and directed it to develop recommendations for funding education along the entire education continuum from early childhood to post graduate levels in a manner that stresses achievement and completion.

Given the time and resources available to the Task Force it saw little utility in seeking models from other states for change at a time when the education institutions in Oregon and the manner in which they are funded are already undergoing significant change. The Task Force found value in continuing to concentrate on the changes we have embarked upon to ensure they meet the needs of Oregonians.

In addition, because Oregon ranks among the bottom five states in state support for post-secondary education, the Task Force believes that a survey of other states would merely result in the conclusion that Oregon should increase its investments in post-secondary education.

These factors led the Task Force to focus its attention on identifying the practices it believes can be implemented across the education continuum to improve student success under the new education structure that has been implemented in Oregon.

FUTURE WORK:

• The Task Force did not address in depth the role that technology, in particular on-line and digital learning — can play in both improving student success and decreasing the costs of providing post-secondary education. This issue should be taken up in a concerted way by the appropriate bodies — OEIB, HECC, SBE and SBHE — in order to help institutions implement innovative teaching practices.
• The Task Force was not able to thoroughly evaluate the costs associated with implementing many of the programs it identified as exemplary. Over the next six months the Task Force believes OUS and CCWD should review the costs associated with the programs identified in this report. This information will enable institutions and others to more readily determine which of these programs have minimal costs and are readily adaptable across districts and institutions. This near-term action will go far in transforming exemplary programs into standard practices.

• The Task Force also encourages institutions to increase the degree to which they assess how particular programs, practices and activities either contribute to — or detract from — student success. An increased level of self-assessment will help guide institutions in analyzing which of the programs identified by the Task Force are best suited for their particular needs.
Appendix A: Task Force Members

Members appointed by the Governor

**Ed Dodson, Co-Chair**  
Chemeketa Community College Board of Directors, retired teacher and administrator

**Jim Francesconi, Co-Chair**  
State Board of Higher Education member and attorney with the law firm of Haglund, Kelley, Horngren, Jones, & Wilder LLP

**Jackie Altamirano**  
Mount Hood Community College student, President of the Associated Students of MHCC

**June Chrisman**  
Chief Human Resources Officer, Providence Health and Services, Oregon Region

**Ben Eckstein**  
University of Oregon student, President of Student Government (2011-12)

**Jon Eldridge**  
Vice President for Student Affairs, Southern Oregon University

**Betty Fung**  
Oregon Institute of Technology student

**Beth Gerot**  
Co-Owner, Woodruff Nursery and Landscapes

**Dr. Connie Green**  
President, Tillamook Bay Community College

**Dr. G.L A. Harris**  
Associate Professor, College of Urban & Public Affairs, Portland State University

**Juliet Long**  
Instructor and Department Chair, Computer Science, Rogue Community College

**Dr. Rosemary Powers**  
Professor of Sociology, College of Arts & Sciences, Eastern Oregon University

**Dr. Ed Ray**  
President, Oregon State University

Members appointed by the President of the Senate and Co-Speakers of the House (two members each)

**Sen. Mark Hass (D-Tigard)**

**Sen. David Nelson (R-Pendleton)**

**Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland)**

**Rep. Mark Johnson (R-Hood River)**
TASK FORCE STAFF

Dr. Cam Preus
Commissioner, Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development

Dr. Sona Andrews
Vice Chancellor of Academic Strategies, Oregon University System (through July 2012)

Joe Holliday
Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Student Success Initiatives, Oregon University System

Anna Teske
Policy Coordinator, Academic Strategies, Oregon University System

Jock Mills
Governor’s Education Investment Project (on loan from Oregon State University)
Appendix B: Meeting Dates and Agendas

November 7, 2011
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/state_board/jointb/files/November-7th-meeting-materials-sm.pdf

November 18, 2011
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/state_board/jointb/files/11-18web.pdf

February 3, 2012
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/state_board/jointb/files/Feb3rdmaterials.pdf

March 14, 2012
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/dept/board/March14TFmaterials.pdf

May 17, 2012
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/dept/plan/May17meetingmaterials.pdf

July 10, 2012
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/dept/plan/July10docket.pdf

September 7, 2012
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/dept/plan/Stept7web.pdf

October 2, 2012
Link to meeting materials: http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/dept/plan/Oct2meetingmaterials.pdf

REGIONAL MEETINGS:

- **September 11, 2012**
  Higher Education Center, Medford, Oregon
- **September 13, 2012**
  Portland Community College- Cascade, Portland, Oregon
- **September 14, 2012**
  Oregon Coast Community College, Newport, Oregon
- **September 17, 2012**
  Lane Community College, Eugene, Oregon
- **September 26, 2012**
  Oregon State University-Cascades, Bend, Oregon
- **October 5, 2012**
  Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, Oregon
Appendix C: Summary of research on the linkage between financial aid and student success

CURRENT LITERATURE REGARDING EFFECT OF NEED-BASED AID ON COMPLETION

Despite these complexities, there are a number of factors that are known. Completion to graduation or a certificate is important in order to meet Oregon’s 40-40-20 goal. Students who drop or stop out not only deter Oregon from reaching the 40-40-20 goal, they also increase costs. As was highlighted in the discussion of barriers to success in this report, a high degree of stopping or dropping out at the undergraduate level creates the need to further increase enrollments and capacity. At the graduate level, reduced completion rates limit the ability of institutions to use teaching assistantships to meet undergraduate teaching needs.

Researchers have recently begun to study the effect of need-based financial aid on student success and completion. One study suggested, “Students who receive need-based aid may be more likely to succeed in college because they were motivated enough to seek out additional financial resources and complete the necessary application forms. This would lead to an overestimate of the effect of need-based aid eligibility on college attainment.”

Some studies have examined the effect on student enrollment and persistence of the most well-known need-based aid, the Federal Pell Grant. Pell Grants are awarded to those in the lowest income brackets in order to provide the extra support a low-income student may need in order to make college a possibility. The Castleman and Long study also suggests that financial aid may lower the real or perceived cost of college attendance to the point that students “on the margin”, like those who receive Pell, decide to enroll. The same study found that Pell Grant recipients are poorer and may be more likely to drop out, even with the presence of need-based aid.

Additional grant aid of $1,000 increased the probability of immediate enrollment in a four-year institution by 3.2%; and the probability of staying continuously enrolled through spring semester rose 4.3%. Thus, Castleman and Long support the notion that financial aid can positively affect initial college enrollment but not necessarily persistence or completion. This finding was supported by Des-Jardins, Ahlburg, and McCall (2002) who found that need-based aid has no long-term effect on continued enrollment probabilities. As a result, analysis linking financial aid to completion needs to consider that for some grant recipients there may be no control group because without aid, they never would have applied or attended post-secondary education.

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One goal of another study was to determine the tipping point for financial aid levels that maximize the state’s return on investment. The researchers found that in order to find even minimal progression in student success, a student’s Percent of Need Met with Gift Aid had to reach 70 percent or greater. This indicates that it takes a substantial investment of additional gift aid to achieve modest improvements in success. The study concluded that “...academic preparation, as reflected in the number of developmental education courses taken, was the strongest predictor of student success, exceeding the strength of any financial aid metric.”

Yet, other studies suggest that front-loaded financial aid programs may improve student retention in the first years of college. While another suggests “that increases in financial aid decrease the likelihood that students withdraw from school.”

A 2012 report from the Brookings Institution makes several recommendations for state grant models. One endorsement that directly corresponds to current OOG distribution is that states should not use a first-come, first-served practice for awarding aid. The report calls that practice “arbitrary” as it may disadvantage marginalized students, “Vulnerable students are more likely than others to miss announced deadlines, but expecting them to meet an un-announced deadline is particularly unreasonable.” The report also recommends that states move away from student aid models that are purely “need-based”. It recommends incorporating incentives for academic progression. The report suggests that the completion of credits to retain aid eligibility, as opposed to maintenance of a certain GPA, is preferred as a GPA threshold may induce students to take fewer or easier courses in order to maintain higher grades. By incentivizing of academic progress will also assist states in reducing time-to-degree and thus the cost-per-degree.

Clearly more research needs to be done. From what is currently available, the Task Force believes several other factors – such as enrollment in development courses -- are more influential on student persistence and completion than receipt of need-based aid. As the Noel-Levitz and AIR study concluded, “financial aid appears to not be an efficient tool to counteract the adverse effects of inadequate academic preparation.” Nevertheless, the Task Force believes financial aid is quite effective in addressing the impacts of tuition increases due to decreased state investments in post-secondary education.

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13 Noel-Levitz, p. 7

14 Des Jardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2002


17 Noel-Levitz and AIR, (2012), p. 11
Appendix D: Literature Review of the Barriers to Student Success

INSUFFICIENT FUNDING AND LIMITED ABILITY OF STUDENTS TO PAY

The Art of Student Retention, Educational Policy Institute, Dr. Watson Scott Swail, 2004

“In 2002, in a study conducted for the Lumina for Education Foundation, we looked at retention practices at 19 public and private institutions that serve low-income students; half had a high six-year graduation rate and half had a low six-year graduation rate..... we expected to find that schools with high graduation rates would have dedicated staff, were committed to retaining students, and utilized...learning strategies that make a difference in the learning atmosphere and social climate of the institution. And we found what we expected. However, we were astonished to find what we really didn’t want to find: resources trumped all other factors. Regardless of the factors noted above, schools with money were able to secure additional resources as necessary, could implement almost any strategy they wanted to....”


Chapter 8 looks at the effects of financial aid and pricing nationally, includes a section on “Behavioral Effects of Student Aid Grants and Tuition Price Changes”:

“A number of empirical studies conclude that...college-going behavior of lower-income families is...[more]responsive to variations in price....” P. 149

“Money does indeed matter when it comes to both college entry and persistence...and it is not only the amount of aid ... [but] how simply and clearly aid is delivered....” P. 162 (study cites clear evidence of the success of the Georgia HOPE scholarship program through analysis of 2000 census data on college completion rates by state)


As many as 2.4 million bachelor’s degrees among college-qualified low- and moderate-income students will be lost in the current decade due to financial barriers. Recently available data updates these numbers to nearly 3.2 million (ACSFA 2008).


“Community college students are less likely than students enrolled in other sectors to rely on student loans...but many higher education professional are concerned that these students are
not borrowing enough and are instead working excessively and enrolling part-time. These patterns make it more difficult for them to succeed in earning degrees and certificates” (p. 5).

*Time is the Enemy*, Complete College America, 2011

“75% of [postsecondary] students are college commuters, often juggling families, jobs, and school” (p. 6)

*Promise Lost: College-Qualified Students Who Don’t Enroll in College*, Institute for Higher Education Policy, November 2008, provides a comparison of college-qualified students who attend college versus those who don’t. Key findings include belief by non-goers that the cost of college was too high, loan aversion, and the need to work for pay.

“Most non-college-goers believed the cost of college was too high….non-college-goers considered the price of college and the availability of aid to be central factors in the decision not to attend college.” p. 28


“…the Rethinking Student Aid Group saw “powerful statistical evidence that large and simple programs to subsidize college costs have a measurable impact on both initial attendance and college completion.” This group found that improving the system of postsecondary finance alone would not meet all challenges. “Nonetheless,” they stated, “in a society with an educational system beset as ours is by severe and persistent economic inequalities, the system of student financial aid is a significant point of leverage, and one that, we believe, can influence preparation in the precollege years as well as success in college” (Baum, McPherson, & Steele, 2008)

**POOR MANAGEMENT OF TRANSITIONS**


Chapter 7: Transfer Students and the Path From Two Year to Four Year College

“Beginning at a two-year college decreases bachelor’s degree attainment rates by approximately 30 percentage points.” P. 134 (Conversely, students who do transfer to a four-year college are 7-10% more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree than their native freshman counterparts with similar entry characteristics. p. 142)


[There are] three critical transition points for students who start at a community college and intend to obtain a bachelor’s degree: enrollment, persistence, and transfer. Students encounter
barriers at each stage that often prevent them from attaining a degree, barriers that fall into five categories: academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial. P. i.

Academic: 42% of entering community college students took at least one remedial course (U.S. Department of Education 2003)

Social: college-qualified low-income, first generation, and other underserved students are more likely to lack [social] supports and are at greater risk (Choy 2002; Bailey and Morest 2006)

Informational: Many students lack information about college preparation and benefits, the admissions process, and what to expect from college (Vargas 2004).

Complexity: students...make mistakes or incorrect choices regarding courses, major, enrollment status, and need for financial assistance (Rosenbaum et al. 2006)

Financial: Borrowing funds may be necessary if state and federal grant aid is insufficient; however, low-income and minority students in particular are averse to taking out loans to pay for education (ECMC Group Foundation 2003; Price 2004)

**Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do. National Center for Educational Evaluation, 2009**

“Low-income and first-generation students often face challenges in completing the steps to college entry, such as taking college admissions tests, searching for colleges, submitting college applications, and selecting a college. Students may not be aware of these steps, may lack information on how to complete them, and may not receive sufficient support and advice from those around them” (p. 31).

**INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS**


“The U.S. educational system harbors huge disparities in outcomes—especially as measured by graduation rates—that are systematically related to race/ethnicity and gender, as well as to socioeconomic status....the only way to substantially improve overall levels of educational attainment is by improving graduation rates for the rapidly growing Hispanic population, for underrepresented minority students in general...and for students from low-SES backgrounds.” P. 224

**Student Aversion to Borrowing: Who Borrows and Who Doesn’t, Institute for Higher Education Policy and Excelencia in Education, December, 2008**

“Students from certain racial/ethnic...groups may have a cultural or familiar perspective on debt that encourages them not to borrow.” P. 6

“Some of the strategies of non-borrowers may affect...degree attainment....Non-borrowing Black and Hispanic students with...need who started college in 2003-04 were considerably more
likely than borrowers from the same racial/ethnic groups to have left school without a degree by 2006: 51 and 41 percent, compared with 39 and 32 percent for borrowers.” P. 7


Breaking Barriers: A Report on Community Forums by the OSBHE Student Participation & Completion Committee, November, 2008

Culminating report looks at barriers to higher education access in Oregon, including race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, first generation college status, rural/urban divide:

“Looking at educational attainment rates by race and ethnicity, the disparities make it clear that Oregon needs to aggressively address equal opportunities for all students to have a chance to attend and complete postsecondary education. Of critical concern are: the growing Hispanic/Latino population in Oregon who currently have the lowest freshman participation rates among ethnic groups, and the American Indian and the African-American populations who have the lowest 6-year graduation rates.” P. 4


Deil-Amen and DeLuca (2010) describe an underserved third of students in the United States, which refers to a population of students that is prepared neither for college nor for success in the labor market at the time of high school graduation. This underserved third is comprised of people who are likely to be of lower socioeconomic status (SES), part of an underrepresented minority, immigrant English language learners, or first-generation college students.

Community College Student Success: What Institutional Characteristics Make a Difference? New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center, 2005

Low-income, minority, and first-generation college students all have even lower six-year completion rates. And those who do complete among these populations tend to earn lower-level credentials—for example, a certificate rather than an associate or bachelor’s degree.

INSUFFICIENT # OF FULL-TIME FACULTY AND LIMITED SUPPORT SERVICES (E.G. ADVISING/TUTORING)


“The growing use of part-time and full-time non tenure-track faculty adversely affects undergraduate students enrolled at 4-year colleges and universities by reducing their 5- and 6-year graduation rates. For any given size increase in the shares of either part-time or full-time non tenure-track faculty, the magnitudes of these negative effects appear to be larger at public institutions.....Other factors held constant, a 10 percentage point increase in the percentage of part-time faculty at a public masters’ level institution is associated with about a 3 percentage point reduction in the graduation rate at the institution and a 10 percentage point increase in
the percentage of full-time faculty that are not on tenure-track lines is associated with about a 4.4 percentage point reduction in the graduation rate at the institution.” P. 11


Jacoby discovered that increases in the ratio of part-time faculty have a strong, highly significant negative effect on graduation rates. He found that, although better faculty-to-student ratios resulted in better graduation outcomes overall, students in small classes with contingent faculty were about as successful as students in large classes with full-time tenure-track faculty, suggesting that a high faculty-to-student ratio did not compensate for the negative effects of part-time instructors on graduation outcomes. Jacoby pointed to decreased student integration as the key negative outcome of high proportions of part-time faculty. Because part-time faculty often lack resources such as private offices, mailboxes, and telephones, they have less incentive and capacity to support students outside of the classroom, a likely cause of decreases in rates of graduation.


Chapter 10, Student-Faculty Interaction; and Chapter 12, Supportive Campus Environments (connected to NSSE and DEEP work at Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, isolating the characteristics of 4-year colleges with higher than predicted graduation rates based on student and institutional characteristics. These chapters highlight two of five documented, effective DEEP practices.)

“Faculty and staff...at DEEP colleges...are generally accessible and responsive to students’ needs, both in and out of classrooms. Academic advising is framed by a holistic philosophy of student development...advising is about being available to students, being responsive to their educational needs...and helping them develop as independent thinkers and problem solvers.” P. 207

Colleges...with supportive campus environments are characterized by high-quality student relationships with other students, faculty, and...administrative personnel. The institutions not only make available resources that students can use...but they also find ways to induce students to actually use these resources.” P. 260

A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success, Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012

“While academic planning certainly includes course selection, community college students need advising that helps them set and maintain long-term goals. This type of advising and planning centers on creating a clear path from where students are now to their ultimate educational goals.” (p. 11).

“42% of part-time students and 19% of full-time students work more than 30 hours per week. More than half care for dependents. But only 26% of entering students say a staff member
talked with them about their commitments outside of class to help them figure out how many courses to take” (p. 29).

*Redesigning Community Colleges for Completion: Lessons from Research on High-Performance Organizations*, New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center, 2011

“While the effects of part-time instructors on student learning and success is still debated, at least two studies have found that community colleges with higher proportions of part-time faculty have lower rates of student completion and transfer than those with fewer adjuncts (Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2008; Jacoby, 2006). Another study that used student-level data found that community college students’ likelihood of transferring to a four-year college or university is significantly lower the more their exposure to part-time instructors increases (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009)” (p. 22).

**REMEDIAL/DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION**

More than half of community college students will eventually enroll in at least one remedial course, and many additional students are assigned to remediation but never enroll (Bailey, 2009; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

*Challenge and Opportunity: Rethinking the Role and Function of Developmental Education in Community College*, Thomas Bailey (2009), New Directions for Community Colleges, no. 145, Jossey-Bass.

“Developmental education is one of the most difficult issues confronting community colleges. Community colleges are charged with teaching students college-level material, yet a majority of their students arrive with academic skills in at least one subject area that are judged to be too weak to allow them to engage successfully in college-level work” (p. 11).

“Degree completion for remedial students is also rare. Less than one-quarter of community college students in the NELS [National Education Longitudinal Study] sample who enrolled in developmental education complete a degree or certificate within eight years of enrollment in college” (p. 14).


“The costs of remediation to the taxpayer are substantial, but the financial, psychological, and opportunity costs borne by the students themselves may be even more significant. While they are enrolled in remediation, students accumulate debt, spend time and money, and bear the opportunity cost of lost earnings. In some states, they deplete their eligibility for financial aid. Moreover, many students referred to developmental classes, most of whom are high school graduates, are surprised and discouraged when they learn that they must delay their college education and in effect return to high school. A recent survey of remedial students found that a majority believed that they were prepared for college (Strong American Schools, 2008). This can cause students to become frustrated and to give up and leave college (Rosenbaum, 2001; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2002)” (p. 4)
**Time is the Enemy, Complete College America, 2011.**

Remedial students are much less likely to graduate:
- 1-year certificate in 1.5 years = 13.1%
- 2-year associate degree in 3 years = 9.5%
- 4-year bachelor’s degree in 6 years = 35.1%

“Remedial classes have become the Bermuda Triangle of higher education. Most students are lost, and few will ever be seen on graduation day: 50.1% of those seeking an associate degree require remediation and 20.7% of those seeking a bachelor’s degree require remediation” (p. 14).

**Paying Double: Inadequate High Schools and Community College Remediation, Alliance for Excellent Education, August 2006.**

“Individual states, and the nation as a whole, are not only paying to academically remediate thousands of young adults, but they are also facing future financial loss because students who need remediation are more likely to leave college without a degree, becoming more likely to earn less than if they had gotten a college diploma. Research shows that the leading predictor that a student will drop out of college is the need for remedial reading. While 58 percent of students who take no remedial education courses earn a Bachelor’s degree within eight years, only 17 percent of students who enroll in a remedial reading course receive a BA or BS within the same time period (NCES, 2004a)” (p. 3).
Appendix E: Summary of Comments on the Draft Report

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT FROM MEETINGS IN MEDFORD, PORTLAND, NEWPORT, EUGENE, BEND, AND LA GRANDE
SEPTEMBER 11 – OCTOBER 5, 2012

Over 100 Oregonians attended one of the six regional discussion and comment sessions held by Task Force members and staff across the state. Following a brief PowerPoint summary of its work, the Task Force members sought comments from those in attendance. At each of the meetings, the comments focused on the barriers to student success rather than the strategies to address them.

Stakeholders included current college students and graduates; student officers and staff of the Oregon Student Association; faculty and staff members from community colleges and universities; K-12 School District representatives; board members from the Oregon Education Investment Board, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Community Colleges, and Oregon State Board of Higher Education; and other interested community organizations and private citizens.

The discussions involved many personal stories of barriers encountered by the students and graduates in attendance, as well as observations and experiences of faculty, staff, and education board members who work directly with students and with policies and practices that affect student success. Many of the comments confirmed the findings and recommendations of the Task Force or provided vivid personal illustrations of the barriers to student success identified in the report.

A number of comments identified high impact practices on campuses and in communities that had not been identified by the Task Force. To the extent possible, the input we received has been integrated directly into this final report.

HAVE WE ADEQUATELY IDENTIFIED THE BARRIERS TO STUDENT SUCCESS?

Insufficient Funding/Inability of Students to Pay Costs

- Affordability is the “gorilla in the room”, the biggest rock (parental income is the single best predictor of college-going--the problem is social inequality).
- Class unavailability—some classes are only offered once a year.
- Lack of facilities and capacity issues.
- Tuition increases, textbooks, living expenses, health insurance (can’t be included in COA for financial aid).
- Budget cuts in critical student support such as math tutoring.
- Where are tax dollars for education going, to students or into pay and benefits for employees? How do we get Oregonians to care enough to vote yes at the ballot box?
- Structural barriers that deny financial aid eligibility for short courses not fitting into academic calendar.
• Education is funded on the backs of students. If students can’t afford to attend, what is everyone else going to do? (multiple comments).
• Underfunded Oregon Opportunity Grant: changes in award create difficulties for students, as well as financial predictability for those that qualify.
• Students that need to work cannot always invest enough time into courses, let alone knowing campus support services and student engagement opportunities.
• Open access (community colleges) is a closed door for students from rural areas who lack resources.
• Families are breaking apart today, there isn’t money or support for going to college.

**Insufficient Support for Underrepresented Communities:**
• There is a lack of cultural competency for serving LGBTQ students.
• Student parents are an at-risk group, not mentioned in report.
• Many native American students’ parents aren’t college-savvy.
• There is a disconnect between DHS and higher education, higher education for TANF parents; privacy laws are a hindrance here.
• Displaced workers and veterans may never have intended to go to college but now they are here, unprepared.
• The campus veterans service person never seems to be in the office.
• Lack of support for underrepresented students, and understanding of how their educational needs are different from traditional students.
• Lack of diverse faculty to support diverse student populations. Students need examples of success within their communities and support network.
• What about undocumented students—barriers to information exist. “Schools not prisons”.
• Open access (community colleges) is a closed door for students from rural areas who lack resources or transportation.
• Difficult to take a full load of classes and work full or part-time – more classes should be offered at flexible times so students can keep up and graduate on time.
• PELL grant limitations of 6 years will impact ability of students to finish if they are always worried about their aid ending.

**Poor Management of Transitions Between Education Institutions:**
• Students who go from HS directly to a 4-yr college have particular difficulty (CCs have more developmental education college success classes).
• Students don’t know the difference between 2-year and 4-year schools, they bounce around due to lack of front-end advice.
• GED holders who did poorly in high school don’t have access to scholarships, they are “written off”.

Courses don’t transfer easily from CC to university or generally between post-secondary institutions.

Poor management of transitions, and departmentally within institutions. [Student with academic hold because system did not indicate student had met with advisor. Scholarship dollars withheld until error resolved].

Dual credits not meeting needs, and may create scenarios where students are not prepared for upper division coursework.

Need to define better the transition between high school and college, there is a confusing array of AP, dual credit, etc. Transition needs to start before 12th grade, and resources should be pooled into one cohesive transition program.

The high school diploma is currently an “end” when it should be an “invitation” to go further. (Although community colleges are open access institutions, this is poorly understood by students and counselors).

There is a critical lack of high school counselors to help with transitions, a 400-1 or 500-1 ratio

Lack of awareness of each other’s policies and practices, not enough communication and understanding between sectors.

Need to be sure that high school counselors are involved as student success strategies are instituted in post-secondary education to ease the transitions from one institution to another.

Clearly articulated exit and entrance standards so all parties know what is expected.

Inadequate Preparation for Post-Secondary Education:

Displaced workers and veterans may never have intended to go to college but now they are here, unprepared.

Rural schools don’t have guidance counselors and lack sufficient college prep classes such as 2nd language.

Students don’t know the difference between 2-year and 4-year schools, they bounce around due to lack of front-end advice.

Returning adults who do poorly on tests are not allowed to take final exams (grades are too low/won’t pass).

High schools don’t make college prep a priority and some students don’t see college as a legitimate option.

HS is a “social battleground” and academics take a back seat.

GED holders who did poorly in high school don’t have access to scholarships, they are “written off”.

Dual credits not meeting needs, and may create scenarios where students are not prepared for upper division coursework.

The school day, week, and year are too short, especially for students who are not keeping up/not ready for the next grade.

Cuts in the International Baccalaureate program resulted in students only getting half the time needed to complete successfully.
• Consider redesigning high school to look more like college so students have a better idea of expectations.

**Insufficient Numbers of Full-Time Faculty:**
• Part-time faculty are undercompensated, working 2-3 jobs just to make a living with no time to do other things on campus.
• There are insufficient incentives for faculty to do more advising
• Limited opportunities for part-time faculty to advance to full-time positions. Part-time faculty are taking on the responsibility of full-time faculty in order to provide mentorship and other services to students (multiple comments).
• Over-reliance on part time faculty, and lack of support and benefits from campuses—part time faculty are under employed and there are real repercussions for campuses, students and education in general (multiple comments).
• Fast enrollment growth caused UO to increase non-tenure-track faculty to meet increased demand; need to find a way to move back in the direction of tenure-track.

**Limited Support Services, e.g. Advising and Tutoring:**
• Not enough 1st term/1st year support that would set students up for success.
• Academic advising is poor or inconsistent (students take more classes than they need to).
• Bad advising—students are advised in groups of 30 (student has “gone through” six advisors).
• Student support services such as tutoring are the first things cut when budgets are tight (math tutoring, e.g.).
• Poor customer service—don’t just say “I don’t know,” say “I don’t know and I’ll find out for you”.
• Poor/inconsistent academic advising and mentorship (multiple comments).
• Institutional barriers to students limit success (communication between departments, etc.).
• Look more deeply at student success courses and be sure to use data to evaluate which practices are really having a positive impact. Not all student support practices produce the same measureable results.

**Insufficient Support for Career & Technical Education Programs**
• No comments to date.
• Emerging Theme: Student Engagement.
• We shouldn’t forget the importance of student involvement in student government, clubs, living in the dorms—students stay because they feel like they belong, it is a “transformational experience”.
• Administrators are more student-centered and take student issues to heart.

**Other Barriers**
• Has the Task Force looked at student health and its connection with student success?
• Transportation remains a serious barrier to students in rural communities.

HAVE WE ADEQUATELY IDENTIFIED STRATEGIES?

General:
• The Montana example—we need to look beyond Oregon for new ideas, approaches in other states.
• Maybe we need new structures, e.g., have 11th/12th graders working more with 1st/2nd year college students (“grades” 13-14); look at successful middle college programs in NC or Washington (Running Start).
• Best practices are often grant-funded and not sustainable. We should be careful how many grants we seek—don’t pursue 15 if you can only sustain 5.
• Not convinced that the high impact practices identified in the draft report have proven their effectiveness. This points to the need for built-in program assessment to know if effective, and effective “for whom” (certain populations, small student cohorts or large groups, etc.).
• We need stable, baseline funding to reach a certain plateau of funding for high impact practices, and to keep the tight-loose structure, we should be able to choose 6 of 10 known strategies, for example, as long as we are producing desired outcomes.

Insufficient Funding/Inability of Students to Pay Costs
• Western Governors University may be a partial solution to affordability because tuition is lower.
• LCC is piloting a financial literacy class. LCC would like to see their high impact practices included in the report.
• Tuition equity for undocumented students is an OSA priority (also “schools not prisons”).
• Peer advising/tutoring is a less expensive option (students with personal skills trained to be advisors.
• People who are opposed to tax reform/increases need to be convinced why they should open their wallets.
• Where are tax dollars for education going, to students or into pay and benefits for employees? How do we get Oregonians to care enough to vote yes at the ballot box?
• Bonding initiatives to reframe Oregon Opportunity Grant/other funding models.
• Find ways to provide consistency in how Oregon Opportunity Grant is administered. Streamline process for students who qualify.
• Reframe tax structure and revenue streams in Oregon—find a ways to ease tax burden on Oregonians while getting creative about ways to fund education.

Insufficient Support for Underrepresented Communities:
• Need academic/college success classes targeted to specific groups, such as tribal members, veterans, smaller cohorts with targeted resources.
• Alternative measures for success.
Underrepresented students need role models in higher education—faculty, staff, and peer mentors.

Diversity scholarships that include intensive advising need to be more widely available, especially for first-generation students and other students with no support or college knowledge at home.

Tuition equity.

Expansion of TRIO, Gear UP and ASPIRE program.

Poor Management of Transitions Between Education Institutions:

- “College Ready Lane County” is a collaboration of UO, LCC, and the Count.
- Need better linkage of Common Core State Standards to higher education. Strengthen the curriculum connection between high schools and college.
- Suggest a free, state-funded “Year 13”, even if just one course, to help transitions and student planning.
- PCC has good academic success classes that prepare students for academic success and transfer to 4-year (a personal coach from the “career center” made a huge difference, student transferred to a 4-yr).
- Increase oversight of dual credit options to make sure they are really college level courses.
- We need a guaranteed admission track so students know if they achieve certain GPA, scores, etc., they will be admitted. For example, an honors diploma should equal college admission.
- How do we incentivize high schools/school districts to accelerate students (they currently lose FTE for doing so). Washington’s Running Start did this, but lost its funding. Community colleges in Oregon have Expanded Options, but we don’t know how well it is working and it doesn’t align well with high school academic calendars.
- Texas has a common undergraduate core curriculum which makes transfer smoother and minimizes loss of credits upon transfer. Could we at least “beef up” the Oregon Transfer Module (OTM) as a step in that direction?
- Oregon anticipates getting grant funding for “College Application Week,” which should help with transitions.

Inadequate Preparation for Post-Secondary Education:

- “College Ready Lane County” is a collaboration of UO, LCC, and the County.
- EPIC, Dave Conley is a national expert on college readiness, should be utilized here.
- Need better linkage of Common Core State Standards to higher education. Strengthen the curriculum connection between high schools and colleges.
- Suggest a free, state-funded “Year 13”, even if just one course, to help transitions and student planning.
- PCC has good academic success classes that prepare students for academic success and transfer to 4-year (a personal coach from the “career center” made a huge difference, student transferred to a 4-yr).
• Personal coaches and advisors such as the ones at PCC, who proactively work with students to identify their strengths and interests and connect them with volunteer work and experiential learning opportunities.

• Focus on quality in addition to completion. Consider what kind of learning teaches students professional success and career readiness.

• Increase oversight of dual credit options to make sure they are really college level courses.

**Insufficient Numbers of Full-Time Faculty:**

• Create rigorous hiring terms—make sure student and faculty needs are being met. Institutions need to place value on these relationships, and support advancement of part-time faculty.

**Limited Support Services, e.g. Advising and Tutoring:**

• Can there be more/better incentives to get faculty to focus more on advising and coaching?

• Ease navigation through the system—mandate language for clearer pathways through legislation.

• The Bend area has many retired professionals who could be put to use as advisors and mentors (there was a similar comment from an Ashland resident at the Medford public meeting).

**Insufficient Support for Career & Technical Education Programs**

• No comments to date.

**Emerging Theme: Student Engagement**

• If students have a sense that they are part of something bigger—a connection to the campus—they will stay. Clubs, student government, it could even be a good dorm experience and making friends. [there were several statements in agreement with this].

**MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS**

• Fast enrollment growth has caused universities to increase non-tenure-track faculty to meet increased demand; need to find a way to move back in the direction of tenure-track.

• Need earlier, more robust involvement with the employing community, also need their input on what student success means.

• What is missing from the report is a literature review, analysis of student achievement data, rigor brought by experts (Appendices C & D address this issue).

• Why aren’t there any K-12 people on the Task Force? (One member of the Task Force serves on a K-12 School Board).

• The voices of students seem to be absent from the TF report (Three students serve on the Task Force).

• There won’t be sufficient funds to do all of this, the Task Force needs to prioritize its recommendations; what strategies will make the most difference? Incremental changes won’t get us to 40-40-20.
• Assumption seems to be how to do more with less, but the problem isn’t lack of money, it is where the money is spent. We shouldn’t have to choose between strategies if they are all needed.

• What is missing in the report is anything about the quality of the teacher in the classroom, their classroom management skills, student-centeredness.

• Put social services offices (see DHS, TANF comments above) on community college campuses, a one-stop approach.

• Eugene-Springfield-Bethel-UO-LCC collaboration needs to be expanded to included Cresswell, other school districts.

• Research on OOG/TF work should tap faculty expertise on all our campuses.

• We should move some responsibility for improving college readiness to communities—there are models for doing that.

• Families are breaking apart today, there isn’t money or support for going to college.

• Can we use technology to change current construct of higher education/service delivery?

• Career and professional development to enhance the skills and credentials of counselors (and others) who interact directly with students to provide accurate information about college and careers and positively motive them to graduate and enroll in post-secondary education.

• Change the advising model to work intensely with post-secondary students who have undeclared majors and those in developmental courses to focus on individual needs.

• College going culture begins with the family – set the expectations for college attendance just like middle school to high school.