

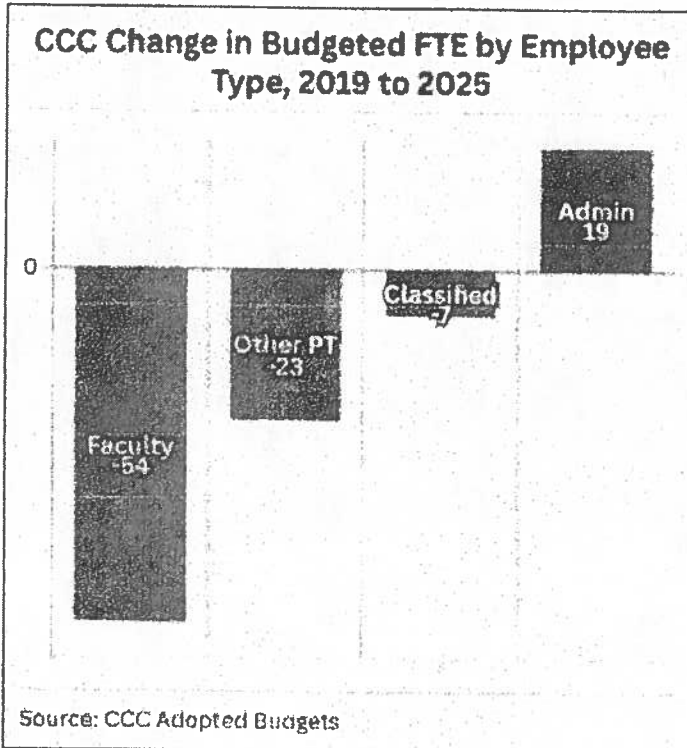
Received For the Record  
from Melinda Wilde  
5/21/2025  
Budget Committee Meeting  
Public Comment



## ADDING ADMINISTRATORS, CUTTING FACULTY AND STAFF

Between 2019 and 2025, CCC increased the number of budgeted Administrative positions by 40% while cutting faculty, classified and other positions.<sup>3</sup>

Clackamas also increased spending on management salaries faster than its Community College peers. CCC's expenditures on management salaries increased by 110% between 2019 and 2024, while peer colleges increased by 57%.<sup>4</sup>



CCC added 19 Administrative FTE to the budget between 2019 and 2025, adding an estimated \$3.3 million in salary expenditures.

At the same time, the College cut 54 faculty and 7 Classified positions from the budget.

CCC's Proposed FY2026 Budget cuts another 20 Faculty FTE and 6 Classified FTE.

*Jeff  
Schaefer*

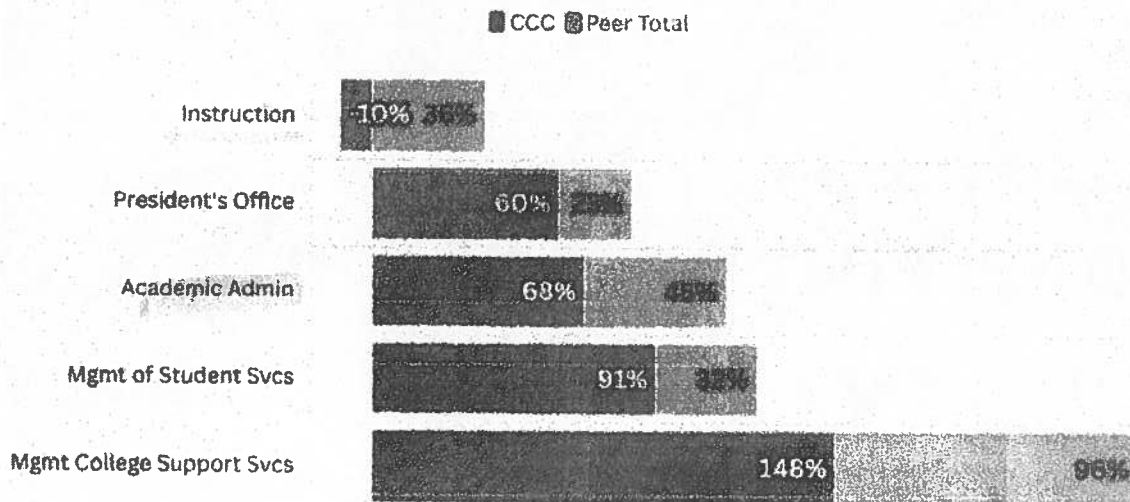
<sup>3</sup> Clackamas Community College Adopted Budgets, 2019 to 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Higher Education Coordinating Commission, CCIFS Revenues and Expenditures by Object Type – All Funds, FY2019 and FY2024 for Clackamas, Linn-Benton, Lane, Chemeketa and Mount Hood Community College. Peer totals do not include Clackamas.

## INVESTING IN MANAGEMENT, NOT INSTRUCTION

Between 2019 and 2024, CCC increased spending on key administrative and management functions - Academic Administration, Management of Student Services, Management of College Support, and the President's Office - while **cutting spending for student instruction**. In contrast, CCC's mid-sized Oregon Community Colleges peers increased their investment in Instruction, and their spending on management-related functions grew more slowly.<sup>1</sup>

### Change in Per-Student Expenditures by Function (All Funds), CCC and Peer Colleges, 2019 - 2024



Source: Oregon HECC, CCIFS, Expenditures by Function, FY 2019 and 2024. • Peer Colleges are Mid-Sized (by Total FTE) Oregon Community Colleges - Chemeketa, Lane, Linn-Benton and Mount Hood.

*The College's Proposed FY2026 Budget increases spending on Executive Administration by 16% and Instruction and Student Services Administration by 53%. Together, that adds \$1.2 million in administrative spending to the budget.*

If Clackamas Community College increased spending on these functions at the same rate as peer colleges, ~~it would have spent \$19 million more on Instruction in 2024.~~ If CCC's growth in spending aligned with its peers, then it would have spent \$1 million less on the Management of Student Support Services in 2024, \$768k less on Academic Administration, \$408k less on the Management of College Support Services and \$175k less on the President's Office.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Coordinating Commission, CCIFS Revenues and Expenditures by Function Type - All Funds, FY19 and FY24. Peer Colleges are based on 2024 Student FTE only and include Chemeketa, Lane, Linn-Benton and Mount Hood. Peer Totals do not include Clackamas.

<sup>2</sup> Multiplies the per student difference between CCC's 2024 actual spending and CCC's spending if the same rate of increase as peer colleges was applied to the function's 2019 expenditures, by the 2024 Student FTE.

## **Known Legal Sex**

- Female = 51.7%
- Male = 48.3%

## **Average Age**

- Lower Division Collegiate = 23
- CTE Apprenticeship, Preparatory, Supplemental = 35
- Post-Secondary Remedial = 27
- ABE/GED/AHS = 31
- ESL = 38
- Adult Continuing ED = 62
- Personal Enrichment = 59

## **Race/Ethnicity**

- American Indian/Alaska Native = 0.7%
- Asian = 3.5%
- Black = 1.7%
- Hispanic = 13.8%
- Multiracial = 3.7%
- Pacific Islander = 0.3%
- White = 45.4%
- Unknown = 31.0%

## **Degree Intent**

- AA, AAOT, AS = 11.8%
- AAS, Certificate = 16.6%
- AGS = 8.6%
- Adult High School = 0.3%
- Other or Unknown = 64.4%

## **Degree and Certificates Awarded**

### **Total Awards = 1,144**

- AA, AAOT, AS = 24.0%
- AAS, Certificate = 51.6%
- AGS = 15.4%
- Adult High School = 1.5%
- Other = 7.5%



## EDUCATION

## More oversight needed of community colleges after performance and enrollment declines, audit finds

The Secretary of State's Office said the commission in charge of Oregon's 17 community colleges needs to improve student achievement and access

BY: **ALEX BAUMHARDT** - DECEMBER 20, 2022 5:45 AM



Chemeketa Community College in Salem is among many in Oregon facing enrollment losses during the last few years. (File/Salem Reporter)

The commission tasked with overseeing Oregon's 17 community colleges must do more to increase student performance, achievement and access, according to an audit by the Secretary of State's Office.

In its report published Monday, auditors said the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, or HECC, had done a good job of

helping to narrow equity gaps in enrollment and completion at state community colleges since the last audit in 2015.

But Oregon's six-year graduation rates from community colleges continue to lag behind those of other states; enrollments have fallen faster than in many other states; and despite expanding state financial aid programs to offer students more money, gaps have grown among who gets it, leaving behind many part-time and older students who make up the bulk of community college students, the audit said.

Auditors called on the commission to collect better data on student achievement from colleges and to improve transparency around that data. They wrote that HECC will need it to help guide better investments in the state's community college system as the schools weather financial instability in the years ahead.

### **The higher ed commission**

Oregon's Legislature established the Higher Education Coordinating Commission in 2011 to be the statewide authority for post-secondary education. It is responsible for helping coordinate the locally elected boards that govern each community college, and for collecting data from them to help to develop strategic plans and state budget requests. Across all institutions of higher education in Oregon, HECC is responsible for improving access for underserved populations, especially through state financial aid and grant programs.

The commission itself is made up of 15 volunteers appointed by the governor, including a representative from every state congressional district, along with four members of the general public and six members who are students, faculty or staff from state four-year universities and community colleges. The last time the Secretary of State's Office took a close look at Oregon's community colleges was in 2015, when it audited the former Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development that was wrapped into the higher ed commission HECC shortly after.

### **Findings**

The commission's efforts to boost enrollment among diverse populations during the last few years have been successful, the audit found. At least 28% of students enrolled in Oregon's community colleges today are students of color, according to HECC. That's about twice the rate at most four-year universities in the state. Half



are nontraditional college students, older than 25, and more than half qualify for federal Pell Grants available to low-income students or students from low-income households. But the community colleges are not doing enough to help the growing number of students struggling with food and housing security, according to the auditors, and the commission and the colleges are not collecting enough data on these students.

“Crucial student support services are inadequately monitored and supported,” auditors wrote.

There’s also a lack of data to explain why the average six-year graduation rate among students enrolled in Oregon’s community colleges is so much lower than rates nationally.

Oregon ranked 39th nationwide, with about 38% of community college students graduating in six years, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. The state has remained below the national average for community college completion – about 42% – for the last eight years.

“The system continues to lack transparency and accountability,” auditors wrote.

They found that the commission has done a good job of advocating for more state aid to community colleges to boost student access, but they said there are not enough programs to target part-time and older students and the cost of tuition and housing continues to rise more rapidly than the amount of state aid available.

“State financial aid still has substantial gaps and an inequitable design. Monitoring of college stability is minimal, despite declining finances and enrollment drops that outpace the nation,” they said.

## **Enrollment declines**

Despite increased state funding over the years, community colleges are struggling to sustain their operations because of enrollment declines.

Oregon’s community colleges enroll 60,000 fewer students today than they did a decade ago – a 40% drop – while the state’s population has grown. This is a steeper drop than in many other states, auditors found. Even with state funding for community colleges above the national average, Oregon’s community colleges project they will need an increase of 44% in state funding during the next two years to maintain their operations.

Because of this, schools are struggling with financial sustainability and staffing. One major challenge auditors identified was a lack of advising and support staff at schools. Leaders at most Oregon's community colleges told the auditors that they either can't afford academic advisers or have very few, assigning up to 900 students per adviser.

High turnover among staff at community colleges is a problem fueled in large part by low salaries and being overworked, the audit found. Community colleges in Oregon rely too much on adjunct faculty, auditors wrote. About 80% of instructional staff at Oregon's colleges are not on a tenure track, compared with about 66% nationally.

## Recommendations

- Auditors made several recommendations: Improve data collection and transparency.
- Use that data to adopt a performance-based funding model for the state's community colleges and reward them for boosting diverse enrollment and improving student completion rates.
- Improve financial aid to part-time and older students.
- Analyze and report annually on the financial health and sustainability of the state's community colleges.

Auditors also recommended that the governor's office and the Legislature help the commission and the community colleges achieve these changes by increasing funding and staff.

In response to the audit, Ben Cannon, executive director of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, told the Secretary of State's Office that the commission generally agreed with the agency's findings and recommendations. The commission is challenged by budgetary and statutory limitations, he said in a written response.

"The HECC possesses neither the dedicated staff nor the financial resources to implement the recommendations alone. To implement the more robust system of supports recommended in this audit would likely require expanding the HECC's authority," he said.

A similar agency governing Washington's community colleges has 239 staff, Cannon wrote. Oregon has just 20 focused on community college programs. The Washington agency has five full-time policy and research analysts and 13 staff dedicated to data collection and



analysis. Cannon said the commission has one full-time employee dedicated to collecting and analyzing community college data.

Nevertheless, he said the commission “is committed to taking actions to support the goals of improving community college performance, student support, and sustainability amid persistent enrollment declines.”

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### ALEX BAUMHARDT



Senior reporter Alex Baumhardt covers education and the environment for the Oregon Capital Chronicle. Before coming to Oregon, she was a national radio producer and reporter covering education for American Public Media's documentaries and investigations unit, APM Reports. She earned a master's degree in digital and visual media as a U.S. Fulbright scholar in Spain, and has reported from the Arctic to the Antarctic for national and international media and from Minnesota and Oregon for The Washington Post.

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May 9, 2025

Dear CCC decision-makers:

I am and have been a student of CCC's automotive restoration, street rod construction for many years, and an occasional student in the fix-your-own car and small engine repair classes. These programs are incredible sources of information. The auto restoration and street rod classes have produced award-winning restorations, with students consistently taking top honors at car shows. This is not a mere hobby, but it is an art form that fosters pride, dedication, and achievement. The highly skilled instructors are irreplaceable, sharing not only technical expertise, but wisdom accumulated over decades. Hot rod restoration skills are highly valued and restoration shops are constantly seeking skilled mechanics and auto body specialists for older classic cars that are constantly increasing in value. The cost to pay for restorations from a shop have skyrocketed and the quality of workmanship is diminishing.

I was very disappointed to learn of your recent decision to eliminate all of these programs in spite of the 2022 Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) recommendation that Oregon community colleges need more programs to target part-time and older students. Eliminating these classes would be a grave mistake, disregarding the program's immense contributions to students, the broader community, and even the college itself. I implore you to reconsider your decision or at least leave one auto restoration class operating to preserve one of the best and only programs of its type in the Pacific NW.

If your decision to completely eliminate these classes is based upon declining enrollment, I believe your data is skewed. These classes have traditionally been well-attended with wait-lists in spite of disruptions and interference that would have ended less popular courses. For example, in 2017, the school paved the new parking lot which made the automotive building virtually inaccessible for those hauling valuable classic project cars on a trailer. The post-2017 reconfiguration of the parking lot requires that those parking their project trailers must use five spaces or more rather than 2 in the pre-2017 configuration. Students receive expensive parking tickets even though alternative and more accommodating parking is no longer available. The computer registration system is impossible for new students to navigate and difficult for continuing students as well. I have witnessed how hard it is for my friends to sign up for these classes and many give up before they are enrolled. The courses were unavailable at all during the covid pandemic, so use of those years for calculating attendance data is improper. The courses

were unavailable when the location of these classes were moved from one side of Barlow Hall to the other. The mechanical side was supplied by equipment and materials by Subaru, who recognized the need for more trained auto mechanics by its donation. The tuition for these classes has more than tripled in 15 years since I started taking them. Restoring project cars is an expensive endeavor and the increase in tuition definitely deters participation, but particularly for lower income and diverse participants. The school offers no financial assistance except age waivers. It is my understanding that the State of Oregon subsidizes the age waivers recognizing the years senior taxpayers have already contributed. I have a 20-year old son of a friend who would like to take these classes with me, but he can only afford to take one or two courses per year due to the high tuition costs – even with me paying for the parts, safety equipment and materials necessary to work on the cars. The administration fails to take into consideration these financial expenses each student pays in addition to tuition. Even so, students continue to enroll and attend these classes. The only reason the courses cannot accommodate more students is space. The buildings simply cannot accommodate more projects. Students and taxpayers were lead to believe the last bond measure was intended to improve and enlarge the automotive project, but instead you now seek to eliminate a significant reason many of us supported the last bond and encouraged our friends and neighbors to support the bond.

Canceling all of these classes without proper advance notice leaves many students, myself included, stranded—midway through projects in which we have invested substantial time, money and effort. Most of us have no other option where we can complete the restoration work and will be irreparably harmed by the elimination of the only location where many students can restore their own vehicles. The cost to pay for professional restoration is prohibitively expensive. There is incentive for adversely affected students to seek legal redress for the lack of advance notice. There are others that believe this action is improperly directed at the seniors to eliminate courses where they receive reduced tuition. I hope it does not come to that.

In 15 years, I have never seen an administrator visit our classes. There is no way an administrator can judge the effectiveness and reach of these classes without visiting. These classes run in evenings and weekends so they do not compete with traditional degree programs. They utilize space that would otherwise sit empty – decreasing the need for security to prevent vandalism and the waste of energy needed to heat empty buildings.

The facilities are needed by the community. It is impossible for members of the public to recreate the space, the painting booths, ventilation system, metals recycling and facilities for proper handling of liquid materials used in the restoration process, not to mention the invaluable expertise and knowledge of the instructors. After 15 years, I continue to learn something new in every single class without exception. This type of community access to facilities and expertise already possessed by the community college and paid for by bond levies that most student voted for and paid for and will continue to pay for, is part of the community access community colleges are uniquely intended to provide. You run

a significant risk of offending taxpayers willingness to vote for bond levies when you take away their access to meaningful use of the facilities. There are others who have expressed to me their desire to change their estate planning to eliminate gifts to CCC as a result of this action. These are funds CCC will never know it lost as a result of this ill-advised action. Hot rod construction and restoration is a big and increasing industry. This is not the time to eliminate these programs simply because the decision-makers do not understand the need for these programs. CCC has made no effort to publicize these programs, yet they continue to attract students.

Many of these vehicles would otherwise be scrapped, meaning these programs play a crucial role in preservation, sustainability and recycling – not to mention the historical significance of these vehicles.

Unlike conventional degree-focused programs, these classes are open to all, welcoming students from ages 14 to 80+. The result is a multi-generational learning environment where students learn not just from instructors, but where younger students learn from seasoned hobbyists, and older students benefit from fresh perspectives. It is not a passive learning environment but integrates physical, mental, and ingenuity in one class. My oldest son is a senior engineer at Apple Inc. owed in large part to the skills for thinking outside of the box or textbook that he learned in these classes. With older cars, sometimes replacement parts cannot be obtained and rather than giving up, students learn to make their own. In computing, innovative ideas have no textbook solution – and as an implementing engineer, he must make his own solutions. He took his driver's test at age 16 in a car we were working on in one of these classes and he drove that car all through college. Completed projects attract other students and their friends. The learning goes beyond formal instruction—students teach and inspire one another, fostering collaboration, mentorship and friendships. Restoration of classic cars requires knowledge and expertise and as the older generation ages out, it is imperative that they pass their knowledge to the next generation in order to preserve and restore historically significant automobiles, or the knowledge will be lost.

These automotive restoration classes are a shining example of what community colleges should offer – accessible, valuable, and meaningful education that enriches lives that can but do not necessarily lead to a career path. To dismantle them is to disregard their historical significance and community impact. Instead of eliminating these classes, the college should be looking for ways to support and expand them, ensuring that future generations can continue to learn, create, and restore classic automobiles.

Please reconsider your decision to eliminate these classes.

Very truly yours,

/s/ *Melinda B. Wilde*

Melinda B. Wilde

cc: CCC board of education