

# Community college not free for some Oregon students with heavy course loads

By **ANDREW THEEN**  
The Oregonian/OregonLive

PORTLAND — Thousands of community college students will start fall classes next week through the Oregon Promise — a program designed to make school more affordable.

But the costs of attending school won't necessarily be completely covered by the state program, which may come as a surprise to some parents and students who heard about "free community college" and missed the fine print.

Last July, Gov. Kate Brown touted the program after she signed the bill into law. "In rural and urban communities alike, recent high school graduates will now be able to earn their undergraduate education tuition-free at their local community college," Brown said.

But according to the bill itself, Brown and others, may have overstated the program's reach.

While the largest share of expected Oregon Promise students said they would receive zero financial support from their parents on federal financial aid applications, state officials said several thousand students can expect to pay at least some tuition this fall.

The promise grant is available to Oregon residents who finished high school with at least a 2.5 grade point average or obtained a GED and enrolled in a community college at least part-time within six months of finishing high school.

Oregon chipped in \$10 million for the first year, but the overall plan works because the state is banking on students qualifying for other grants available to low-income students.

Ben Cannon, Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission, said the state doesn't know how many promise eligible students will show up and remain in school. But according to his office, about 3,700 students - or more than one-third of



New students walk to a preview lecture at Blue Mountain Community College's Welcome to the Wolfpack event in 2015.

eligible promise students — would expect to pay some of their tuition.

For many, that could mean a couple dollars, Cannon said, for others it "could be up to about \$300 for the year" depending on where they are enrolled.

Cannon stressed that for the thousands of low-income promise students who do qualify for the federal Pell Grants or the Oregon Opportunity Grant, tuition will not be an issue. Those two grants will cover the cost of tuition.

But not all of the roughly 10,379 students who submitted valid promise applications and are eligible for the program receive those assistance programs. And some students attending more expensive community colleges could be on the hook for paying a portion of their tuition because of how the state law established the specific grant amounts.

"This nuance has gotten lost," Cannon said, "and we may be partly to blame for that."

This year, the maximum Pell Grant is \$5,815 per year — depending on a student's financial need. In Oregon, the state may provide an additional \$2,250 per year for needy students through its Opportunity Grant.

The Oregon Promise deducts the amount of those grants from the cost of tuition first, if a student qualifies. The student is responsible for \$50 per term under the bill's language. For those

low-income Oregonians, their annual promise grant is capped at \$1,000 annually. That's money they could use to pay for books or additional student fees, or other costs not covered by the grant.

So where does the potential for a tuition gap come into play?

When Oregon lawmakers approved the program, the law specified the maximum grants to students would be capped at the average cost of tuition statewide. That figure was based on a 12-credit course load.

The average community college tuition is approximately \$3,398 per year. If a student chooses a more expensive school, or takes a heavier class load, they will owe the difference.

Sherrie Nicholson, a Corvallis resident, said her daughter's expected cost to attend Linn-Benton Community College took the family by surprise.

"It's not what the kids were told in the schools, at all," Nicholson said Monday. Her daughter, Makayla, attended West Albany High School, where she recalled she was told the Oregon Promise pays for her to attend the school. The Nicholsons expected to owe just \$50 per term.

"I think people have been misled and they're finding out now that these kids are enrolled that they're not getting what they were told," she said. Makayla Nicholson fell

perfectly into the tuition gap.

She's going to Linn Benton Community College, the cost per student credit hour is at least \$5 more than the state average, according to a state spreadsheet.

She's also enrolled in 15 credits starting next week, and the Oregon Promise is only designed to pay grants for students taking 12 credits. Nicholson's out-of-pocket costs are likely above Cannon's \$300 estimate because of her heavy course load.

The Nicholsons didn't take out any federal student loans, and they don't qualify for either grant program for low-income students.

Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton, said the state had to find a solution to cap the tuition, and a statewide average seemed like the way to go.

"This is a basic no-frills plan that is all we could afford," said Hass, who sponsored the legislation.

Hass, who has been touring some community colleges and meeting with hundreds of promise students, said lawmakers did not intend for students to have a tuition gap. "If there are some bugs to work out, we will (fix them)," he said. Hass said the turnout for the program, and the students' personal stories are "heart-warming."

Cannon said the state has been expecting to hear from students for months about situations like the Nicholsons.

But he described the situation as "rare" and added that many Oregon families wouldn't pay for any tuition.

Cannon said the higher education commission may take a look at increasing the amount of state grants to students like Makayla Nicholson who want to take a heavier course load.

Hass agreed he would like to see the credit level raised.

The state only funded the program for one school year, and Hass said he will push hard for continuing the grant in the next legislative session.

# New York firm gets \$1 million contract to review ODOT

Previous contract nixed because of conflict of interest

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The state has awarded a nearly \$1 million contract to New York-based McKinsey & Company to conduct a long-awaited management review of the Oregon Department of Transportation before lawmakers approve a transportation package in 2017.

State officials in late July nixed a previous contract with John L. Craig after revelations about his close ties with ODOT and an unearthed email showing he had sought to replace the agency's director.

Lawmakers have said they want an independent, third party review to ensure that ODOT is operating efficiently before they approve a transportation package in 2017. That legislation — one of Gov. Kate Brown's priorities as governor — could hike gas taxes and fees on drivers and funnel hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding to the agency.

In an effort to get a review finished in time for the 2017 session, the Department of Administrative Services launched an emergency process for selecting a new contractor.

Brown selected McKinsey based on the recommendations of a DAS procurement team, said Bryan Hockaday, a press secretary in Brown's office.

"McKinsey had the most responsive proposal, and they are a national company recommended for their expertise," Hockaday said.

McKinsey has 25 days to deliver its work plan for the review and until the end of February to submit a final product, Hockaday said.

DAS reached out to several firms with experience in management reviews and received proposals from McKinsey and Boston Consulting Group, Hockaday said.

Craig, who won the original \$350,000 contract to do the review, oversaw the agency's \$1.3 billion outsourced bridge repair and replacement program for six years. He stepped down as program manager of Oregon Bridge Development Partners just 15 months ago.

After questions arose whether Craig's connections with ODOT employees presented a conflict of interest, a transportation commissioner dug up an old email from Craig in which he appeared to be seeking agency Director Matt Garrett's job.

Tammy Baney, chairwoman of the Oregon Transportation Commission, received the job solicitation email from Craig in January.

She said she didn't read the entirety of its contents until after Craig landed the contract for the ODOT review, when she recalled he had previously reached out to her. After reading the email in July, she recommended that state officials revoke his contract.

## Corrections

A news brief in the Thursday, Sept. 15 edition of the *East Oregonian* incorrectly stated the daily bag limit for steelhead fishing on the Columbia River above McNary Dam. The limit is one hatchery fish per day. The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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• Chris McClellan  
541-966-0827 • [cmcclellan@eastoregonian.com](mailto:cmcclellan@eastoregonian.com)

• Stephanie Newsom  
541-278-2687 • [snewsom@eastoregonian.com](mailto:snewsom@eastoregonian.com)

• Dayle Stinson  
541-278-2670 • [dstinson@eastoregonian.com](mailto:dstinson@eastoregonian.com)

• Audra Workman  
541-564-4538 • [aworkman@eastoregonian.com](mailto:aworkman@eastoregonian.com)

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COMMERCIAL PRINTING  
Production Manager: Mike Jensen  
541-215-0824 • [mjensen@eastoregonian.com](mailto:mjensen@eastoregonian.com)

### AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
65° 48°	68° 43°	76° 48°	82° 54°	83° 50°

### PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
65° 48°	68° 43°	76° 48°	82° 54°	83° 50°

### HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
68° 46°	72° 40°	80° 46°	83° 49°	86° 50°

### ALMANAC

**PENDLETON**  
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	56°	47°
Normals	75°	48°
Records	91° (1975)	31° (1902)

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.14"  
Month to date 0.63"  
Normal month to date 0.37"  
Year to date 8.02"  
Last year to date 5.82"  
Normal year to date 8.79"

**HERMISTON**  
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	68°	46°
Normals	76°	46°
Records	96° (1967)	31° (1932)

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. Trace  
Month to date 0.45"  
Normal month to date 0.29"  
Year to date 5.44"  
Last year to date 3.48"  
Normal year to date 6.44"

### SUN AND MOON

	Last	New	First	Full
Sunrise today	6:44 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	6:50 p.m.			
Moonrise today	n.p.m.			
Moonset today	2:33 p.m.			

### REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Periods of rain today; breezy across the north. Mostly cloudy tonight.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Mostly sunny today; however, some clouds in the south and upper Treasure Valley.

Western Washington: Mostly cloudy today with a little rain. Mostly cloudy tonight. Clouds and sun tomorrow.

Eastern Washington: Sunny near the Idaho border, in the mountains and the Cascades today; sunny in the north, south and in central sections.

Cascades: A shower in spots today. Partly sunny; more clouds across the north.

Northern California: Increasing cloudiness at the coast today; sunny to partly cloudy elsewhere.

### REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	64	51	r	69	51	pc
Baker City	64	34	s	66	29	s
Bend	60	35	pc	71	39	s
Brookings	59	50	r	70	52	pc
Burns	63	30	r	70	29	pc
Enterprise	62	39	pc	63	38	s
Eugene	62	47	r	73	45	pc
Heppner	63	41	s	68	35	s
Hermiston	68	46	s	72	40	s
John Day	65	45	s	69	45	s
Klamath Falls	57	31	pc	72	37	s
La Grande	64	44	s	66	36	s
Meacham	61	41	s	63	36	s
Medford	64	45	pc	82	48	s
Newport	59	48	r	64	49	pc
North Bend	64	49	r	70	48	pc
Ontario	71	47	c	71	41	s
Pasco	70	44	s	73	41	s
Pendleton	65	48	s	68	43	s
Portland	61	50	r	69	50	pc
Redmond	62	32	pc	73	35	s
Salem	61	46	r	72	47	pc
Spokane	64	43	pc	66	42	s
Ukiah	60	38	s	64	32	s
Vancouver	59	48	r	68	47	pc
Walla Walla	64	50	s	68	47	s
Yakima	69	40	pc	73	42	s

### WORLD CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	83	63	pc	86	63	pc
Hong Kong	86	80	pc	87	80	s
Jerusalem	77	62	pc	80	65	s
London	66	52	pc	73	59	pc
Mexico City	72	53	t	72	54	t
Moscow	48	45	r	52	39	r
Paris	74	51	s	77	57	pc
Rome	76	60	pc	77	59	pc
Seoul	78	59	pc	80	62	pc
Sydney	68	58	pc	71	56	pc
Tokyo	74	70	r	77	71	t

### WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Saturday
Boardman	WSW 8-16	S 3-6
Pendleton	WSW 10-20	W 4-8

### UV INDEX TODAY

0 2 4 4 2 0

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.  
0-2, Low; 3-5, Moderate; 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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### NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

**SHOWERS** r-storms rain flurries snow ice  
**FRONTS** cold front warm front stationary front  
**LOW** high

**National Summary:** Much cooler air with spotty rain will push southward from the Great Lakes to New England today. Warmth will hold over much of the Central and Eastern states. A cool storm will bring rain to part of the West.

**Yesterday's National Extremes:** (for the 48 contiguous states)  
**High 99°** in Hays, Kan. **Low 18°** in Boca Reservoir, Calif.

### NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	75	46	pc	73	51	pc
Atlanta	89	70	pc	92	70	s
Atlanta City	82	67	pc	73	57	pc
Baltimore	87	64	pc	78	54	pc
Billings	60	47	r	57	44	sh
Birmingham	94	71	s	95	72	s
Boise	67	45	c	67	44	s
Boston	82	56	pc	66	49	pc
Charleston, SC	84	70	c	86	67	c
Chicago, IL	79	62	s	89	62	s
Chicago	79	66	pc	87	62	s
Cleveland	82	61	pc	74	54	c
Dallas	94	76	s	92	74	pc
Denver	82	47	pc	71	42	pc
Detroit	75	61	c	71	57	c
El Paso	90	65	pc	85	62	pc
Fairbanks	49	35	r	51	35	pc
Fargo	68	61	r	76	53	r
Honolulu	88	74	pc	88	76	pc
Houston	90	76	t	89	76	c
Indianapolis	87	67	s	86	66	s
Jacksonville	89	70	t	90	70	t
Kansas City	88	69	s	85	66	t
Las Vegas	80	60	s	86	65	s
Little Rock	93	73	s	95	73	pc
Los Angeles	82	62	s	92	64	s
Louisville	92	70	s	92	70	s
Memphis	96	75	s	94	74	