

# Oregon PELL GRANTS:

## *Women Raise Rural Vigor*

By Frank Mensel, Senior Fellow, Education Policy Center;  
Michael Malley, Research Associate, The University of Alabama;  
in collaboration with Reine Thomas, Chemeketa Community College

### Key Findings

- Oregon's 14 rural colleges, like those of other rural states, are heavily dependent on Pell Grant vouchers for enrollment, often 50% or more of the total.
- Pell Grants vouchers drive--by a growing margin--college access in Oregon, affirming this national trend.
- Pell Grant vouchers are propelling women using community colleges into the majority of undergraduate enrollments.
- Pell Grants vouchers are used for general education for transfer as well as for technical education programs that lead employment, making Pell critical to workforce training & economic development.
- Such research can benefit both higher education and the national interest by matching traditional degrees more closely with the skill demands of the 21st century, while making them equally attractive to men and women.
- The implications of these Pell studies on American economic competitiveness are an urgent call for expanded research.

### INTRODUCTION

The Pell Grant voucher is the Federal Government's most significant program for access to Higher Education. This study of the Pell Grant voucher awarded by Oregon community colleges in the 2012-13 college year adds another graphic chapter to the series of such studies led by the Education Policy Center at The University of Alabama. Much of the series focus so far has been rural America. Of Oregon's 17 community colleges, 14 are classified as rural-serving by the Basic Classification of the prestigious Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The other three are Portland, the largest urban community college of the Pacific Northwest, and the nearby suburban colleges of Mt. Hood and Clackamas.

Most conspicuous in the data is the heavy dependence of rural colleges on the Pell Grant voucher. On average, at rural Oregon's 14 colleges, Pell Grant recipients number more than half of the FTE enrollment. This is consistent with earlier state wide studies across Kansas, Arkansas, Alabama, and Mississippi, in which rural colleges commonly show half or more of their FTE enrollment earning credits through Pell.

This trend beckons much more extensive research, which is high priority for the Education Policy Center. It is obvious that community colleges and Pell Grants are making an important contribution to the economic and cultural fortunes of rural communities, counties, and states. Community college operations alone account for nearly 300,000 jobs in rural America. Additionally, Pell vouchers are spent almost entirely in the college and the surrounding community. The education that students receive at community colleges usually increase personal earnings, which in turn benefit the entire community and region.

Also conspicuous in the data is the lead women hold across categories in Oregon, except in Clackamas and Lane, where the genders essentially ran neck and neck with regard to enrollment, and at Clatsop, where men outnumbered women in headcount, FTE, and credits earned. *At every other college, women outpace men by varying margins in headcount enrollment, full-time equivalency (FTE), and college credits earned at 14 of 17 Community Colleges.*

The picture on Pell Grants is parallel but clearly different. Women outpaced men on Pell Grants by a significant margin at nearly every college. The same is true of credits completed by recipients of the Pell Grant voucher by gender.

Oregon Community Colleges by Carnegie Classification	Total Pell Awards (\$\$)	Credits Earned		Enrollment			
				Unduplicated Headcount		Full-Time Equivalent	
		Total	% on Pell	Total	% on Pell	Total	% on Pell
Rural (14 of 17)	\$133,952,323	1,367,957	53	93,692	41	46,778	53
Suburban (2 of 17)	\$30,853,727	483,044	41	33,960	28	16,690	40
Urban (1 of 17)	\$64,512,664	887,072	44	59,572	35	30,383	46
Totals and Averages	\$229,318,714	2,738,073	51	187,224	39	93,851	51

## *Oregon's Landscape: Pell Drives Female Enrollments*

At Portland, the only urban-serving college in the state, men ran within 6% of women in FTE, yet trailed them in credits completed by roughly 12%. In Pell Grants, women led men 11,481 to 9,280, a spread of 25%. In credits completed by Pell recipients, women outworked men 213,332 to 171,217, a spread of nearly 25%. The Pell voucher is clearly driving Oregon's female enrollments.

This disparity remarkably is greatest at two of the smallest colleges. At Oregon Coast, with a headcount of just 783, 482 are women, and men trailed in credits completed 4,536 to 7,668. Pell Grant vouchers favored women 159 to 99, or by 60%, and in credits completed by Pell recipients, women led 3,671 to 2,095, a margin of 75%.

At Columbia Gorge, women earned almost twice the credits of men, 17,835 against 9,427. They were slightly less than double men in headcount, 1,106 to 632, yet more than double in Pell recipients. They completed 10,058 credits, nearly 70% of the total credits earned by Pell recipients.

### *State Capital*

At Chemeketa in Salem, the state capital, where government is the largest employer, women were ahead in every category. Women earned 56% of total credits earned at the institution, while women Pell recipients garnered 60% of the 177,007 credits earned through Pell.

Salem and Chemeketa may well be a microcosm of the national pattern in which women are in ascendency in both higher education and the workforce. Today women are claiming three of every five new bachelor degrees nationally, and their penetration is growing in the graduate schools producing all the leading professions, with the exception of engineering.

### *Contrasting Suburbs*

Clackamas and Mt. Hood offer a study in contrasts as major suburbs of Portland, in enrollment and the flow of Pell. While Mt. Hood is roughly one fourth larger in credit headcount enrollment, it's half again larger in credit FTE enrollment, and has some 80% more Pell Grants than Clackamas.

At Clackamas, women and men run essentially even in headcount enrollment, FTE enrollment, and credits completed. Men tallied 107,407 credits completed, and women 109,903. Yet women

held the advantage in the number of Pell Grant vouchers awarded, 1,974 to 1,511, and in credits Pell recipients earned, 41,000 to 31,000.

At Mt. Hood women held larger advantages in all the same categories. There were half again as many women as men on Pell Grants vouchers, 3,824 to 2,455, and they topped men in credits completed by almost the same margin.

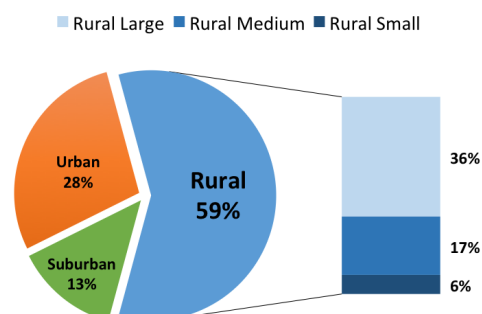
A few studies have indicated that Pell Grant recipients who manage to give all their time to their studies, getting by without a job, are the better students, and have higher completion rates, than students who mix job and school. Yet the vast majority of community college students are already in the workforce, full-time or part-time. Deeper research in this area is sorely needed.

### *Rural Colleges*

Among Oregon's 14 rural community colleges, Lane, Rogue, and Linn-Benton are deemed large rural-serving institutions by the Carnegie Classification. Central Oregon is categorized as a medium rural-serving college. Somewhat equal in unduplicated credit headcount, these four colleges naturally vary in the enrollment supported by Pell vouchers.

Lane, in Eugene, also home of the University of Oregon, has the largest headcount at 12,845. Linn-Benton, in Albany, near Oregon State University, is at 12,062 headcount. Their respective Pell grant counts are 60% at Lane and 24% at Linn-Benton. Pell Grant FTE at Lane is 65% of the total credit FTE, and those students earn 64% of the total college credits earned. A study of Pell students' dual-enrollment patterns between neighboring universities and community colleges warrants further research.

**Pell Grants Awarded in Oregon Community Colleges by Carnegie Classification, FY 2012-13**



Central Oregon and Rogue are both above 11,000 headcount. Central Oregon is larger in FTE, with 6,571 to Rogue's 4,415, yet these colleges both have strong showings of Pell recipients, comprising 56% and 60% of total credit FTE, respectively.

At medium-sized rural colleges Blue Mountain, Clatsop, Southwestern, Treasure Valley and Umpqua, credit student headcount ranges from 4,734 at Treasure Valley to 2,716 at Clatsop. Pell Grant FTE registers a high of 66% of total college credit FTE at both Treasure Valley with 1,773 Pell FTE and at Umpqua with 936 Pell FTE.

*In credits completed, women led men at all five colleges.* The gap is wider in credits completed by the female Pell recipients as evidenced by 67% at Blue Mountain and 61% at Southwestern.

Blue Mountain Community College President Cam Preus, who championed the Oregon Pell Survey, underscores that Pell Grant investments contribute mightily to the development of human capital and economic development in rural communities.

At these rural colleges, women run well ahead of men on Pell Grant vouchers. At the typical college Pell Grants number more than half the FTE enrollment. Clearly, Oregon is a largely rural state, and this pattern is consistent with the other rural states for which the Education Policy Center has made similar Pell studies.

In Pell utilization in rural colleges, Oregon looks much like Kansas, where the original studies of Pell were made. Both are strong in agriculture, i.e., farming industries, and their colleges show less Pell dependence than those covered by similar EPC studies, including Maine and three in the deep South – Alabama, Arkansas the Mississippi.

All of these studies reflect a significant linkage between community colleges, Pell Grants, education attainment, and the economic and cultural fortunes of the areas they serve. The community college is often the largest employer in the county it serves, with both the payroll and Pell Grants spreading income from the campus to the community while cultivating an educated workforce in rural America. Community colleges are making a large contribution to rural life and the prosperity of the matchless American breadbasket.

*see table on back page*

## Closing Remarks

*This report, the latest in our series of the importance of Pell Grants to rural America, documents the critically important role of federal direct grant student aid to access with excellence for women in our country. It debunks the myth that the Pell Grant program serves only our nation's urban centers with majority-minority populations. The Pell Grant voucher helps all students, be they attending rural, suburban, or urban community colleges. And the Pell Grant voucher program is of special importance and relevance to female students, who now comprise 60 percent and more of the total student body at many U.S. community colleges.*

*Moving forward, the Education Policy Center and its partners will be continuing our research on Pell Grants. We have special interest in focusing on how students use Pell Grants to access for-credit programs that lead to Associate's Degrees that prepare persons for the world of work. We also will be investigating the role of Pell Grants in retaining students, and propelling students forward to graduation.*

Stephen G. Katsinas  
Director & Professor  
Education Policy Center

## About the Authors:

**Frank Mensel** in the 1980s and early '90s lead Congressional liaison for both the American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees, the only leader ever to hold this dual appointment. He first served AACC 1968-73 when he was intensively involved with Sen. Claiborne Pell in the enactment and funding of the Pell Grant. Now with the EPC, he is spearheading research on Pell Grants' economic and cultural power, with the view that "they are the greatest benefit by far for colleges and students ever enacted by Congress." Mensel has an honorary doctor's degree from the Utah Board of Regents.

**Michael Malley**, an M.P.A. student and Research Associate for the Education Policy Center at The University of Alabama, has and continues to track the impact of Pell Grants at the state and national level. He recently co-authored the report, *Leveraging Federal Funding Streams to Build Rural Economies*, published by the Education Policy Center and the Rural Community College Alliance February 2014.

**Reine Thomas**, recently retired, has served as an instructional administrator at three Oregon community colleges over the past twenty-five years. She conducted her doctoral research on rural community colleges at Oregon State University.

Oregon's Community Colleges	Class	Pell Grants Awarded In Dollar (\$\$)				Credits Earned			Enrollment					
									Unduplicated Headcount			Full-Time Equivalent		
									Total	Students (on Pell)		Total	Students (on Pell)	
		Total	Men	Women	% Women	Total	No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Columbia Gorge	RS	2,162,642	667,843	1,494,749	69	27,262	14,438	53	1,741	671	39	847	465	55
Klamath	RS	9,970,057	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,810	1,217	67	973	-	-
Oregon Coast	RS	829,851	314,516	515,335	62	12,204	5,766	47	783	258	33	430	201	47
Blue Mountain	RM	4,216,250	1,294,861	2,908,856	69	78,509	34,626	44	4,368	1,313	30	2,036	882	43
Central Oregon	RM	15,693,175	6,458,970	9,234,205	59	160,114	103,067	64	11,404	4,914	43	6,571	3,671	56
Treasure Valley	RM	7,589,613	2,861,718	4,724,249	62	72,469	47,397	65	4,734	2,492	53	2,664	1,773	67
Umpqua	RM	6,510,323	2,482,473	4,027,850	62	65,759	43,375	66	3,606	1,991	55	1,419	936	66
Clatsop	RM	1,819,919	605,371	1,214,548	67	30,299	11,591	38	2,716	540	20	1,049	431	41
Southwestern	RM	3,806,450	1,483,128	2,312,551	61	61,612	28,099	46	4,334	1,140	26	2,094	947	45
Chemeketa	RL	27,459,063	10,869,049	16,489,620	60	349,558	177,007	51	22,239	8,215	37	10,667	5,485	51
Lane	RL	31,194,161	14,057,742	16,936,017	54	174,209	111,946	64	12,845	7,718	60	7,830	5,124	65
Linn-Benton	RL	9,077,993	3,725,034	5,248,186	58	181,582	63,590	35	12,062	2,892	24	5,782	2,047	35
Rogue	RL	13,622,826	5,399,743	8,223,083	60	154,380	90,795	59	11,050	4,384	40	4,415	2,649	60
Mt. Hood	SS	19,663,916	7,689,694	11,974,222	61	265,734	127,514	48	18,827	6,279	33	9,985	4,538	45
Clackamas	SM	11,189,811	4,738,947	6,450,864	58	217,310	73,185	34	15,133	3,485	23	6,706	2,296	34
Portland	UM	64,512,664	28,431,907	35,552,119	55	887,072	387,734	44	59,572	20,944	35	30,383	14,072	46
Total/ Avg.	-	176,720,434	74,912,116	100,874,111	57	2,229,845	1,031,771	46	151,728	53,917	36	75,768	36,211	48

Definitions: "Class" is representative of the Basic Classification of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; "RS"= Rural Small; "RM"= Rural Medium; "RL"= Rural Large; "SS"=Suburban Single Campus; "SM"= Suburban Multi-Campus; "US"= Urban Single Campus; "Um"= Urban Multi-Campus.

Notes: Oregon CC FTE is clock-hour based, NOT credit-based and therefore is not comparable to non-Oregon community college FTE data.

\*\*Klamath Total Pell Dollars breakdown is not by dollar but awards by gender.

\*\*\*Tillamook Bay data is embedded in PCC's data for this time period, and is not included in this table.

## ABOUT THE EDUCATION POLICY CENTER

The College of Education's Education Policy Center seeks to inform and improve education policy-making and practice, and our understanding of the roles education plays in a free and equitable society, through a coordinated program of research, topical and historical analyses of education-related issues, and services for education practitioners and policy-makers in Alabama and the nation. For more information call (205) 348-2470 or visit us at [www.uaedpolicy.ua.edu](http://www.uaedpolicy.ua.edu).

### On-Going Center Projects Include:

Annual Surveys of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges on finance and access issues:

see [www.uaedpolicy.ua.edu/access--funding-surveys.html](http://www.uaedpolicy.ua.edu/access--funding-surveys.html).

Rural community colleges: The Center hosts the Rural Community College Alliance's webpage, as it fulfills its role as RCCA's research arm.

History of education research: *More Than Science or Sputnik, the National Defense Education Act*, by Center Associate Director

Wayne J. Urban, published in 2010. Urban is now completing a biography on former Harvard University Pres. James Bryant Conant.

Student access research: Since 2010, the Center has published 19 studies on Pell Grants, and student aid issues.

The University of Alabama Superintendent's Academy, a partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education, broadens the pool of diverse, well-prepared leaders for Alabama's 137 public city and county school districts.

Public access colleges research: The Center's work on Associate's Colleges classifications is included in the 2005 and 2010

Basic Classification published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, included in all federal education data sets.

Director: Stephen G. Katsinas, Ph.D.

Associate Director: Wayne J. Urban, Ph.D.

Director, The University of Alabama Superintendent's Academy: Richard L. Rice, Jr., Ph.D., J.D., C.P.A.

Research Associates: Jonathan Koh, Louis Shedd, Michael Malley, Lucas Adair, Nelson Tidwell, Undre Phillips, and Amanda Harbison.

Senior Fellows: Mary Allen Jolley, Vincent A. Lacey, John Petrovic, R. Frank Mensel, Pat Moeck, David S. Murphy, Robert Pedersen, James "Skip" Dotherow, Mark M. D'Amico, Janice N. Friedel, James E. Davis, Arthur Dunning, and Linda Serra Hagedorn.

Research Fellows: John Petrovic, Delphine Harris, Michael A. Kenamer, John Clinton Kinkad, Kristie R Rankin, Melissa P. Tarrant, Anne Williamson, and Brian Johnson.