

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM REVIEW 2025–2026

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Section 1: Report on Previous Goals & Requests

Please limit your response to 250 or fewer words.

Previous APR Goal	What Happened (support with data/evidence)
Develop a strong COCC Public Health vision, brand, and identity.	PHE has built a strong brand and identity through a workforce-aligned pathway from the Community Health Certificate to the Public Health AAOT (the first of its kind in Oregon, now replicated at two other colleges). Grant-funded branding materials support visibility and student navigation. FINAL VIDEO LINK HERE – Please watch this video.
Build public health guided pathways highlighting AAOT and Workforce.	In progress. COCC has a strong partnership with OSU–Corvallis, built on shared core education since a 2022 visit to Corvallis and an ongoing guided pathway student plan . PHE is working with OSU program directors to address articulation barriers. A recent meeting with OSU–Cascades identified gaps in alignment and equivalence, which will be addressed next year through greater alignment in Core Education public health classes and Core Education overall .
Increase new student enrollment via community outreach and partnerships.	Key courses maintain 100% fill rates (e.g., PHE 183 Peer Support Specialist and PHE 282 Community Support). Enrollment rebounded in 23–24 and 24–25 after a problematic rural focus reduced participation, though it dipped again in 25–26. The new Community Health Certificate (WI25) has driven a 366% increase with a focus on rural health.
Expand academic program outreach to the Madras campus.	The program expanded rural outreach through consistent course offerings in Madras and Prineville, supported by an adjunct faculty member focused on increasing access. Plans for a rural health designation award are being reconsidered following recent staffing changes.

Section 2: Fulfilling Your Mission

Please limit your response to 500 or fewer words.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Public Health program is to transform students into public health leaders and change agents by providing access to meaningful education, career guidance, action-based research, service-learning opportunities, and innovative public health partnerships. The program supports students along their academic and career pathways, whether transferring to a bachelor's degree program or entering directly into the public health workforce.

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Progress Toward Mission Fulfillment

Since the last Academic Program Review, the program has advanced its mission through workforce-aligned programming, experiential learning, and community engagement, which has been supported by approximately \$716,000 in grant funding.

- **Workforce Alignment.** The program trained 187 OHA-approved Community Health Workers and 130 Peer Support Specialists, credentials that directly support employment in public health agencies and community-based organizations. A one-year Certificate of Completion, stackable toward the AAOT in Public Health, was created to provide focused, career-relevant training while supporting transfer and degree completion. Grant funds also supported a Health Careers Coordinator focused on admissions outreach and student navigation (see fig. 1).

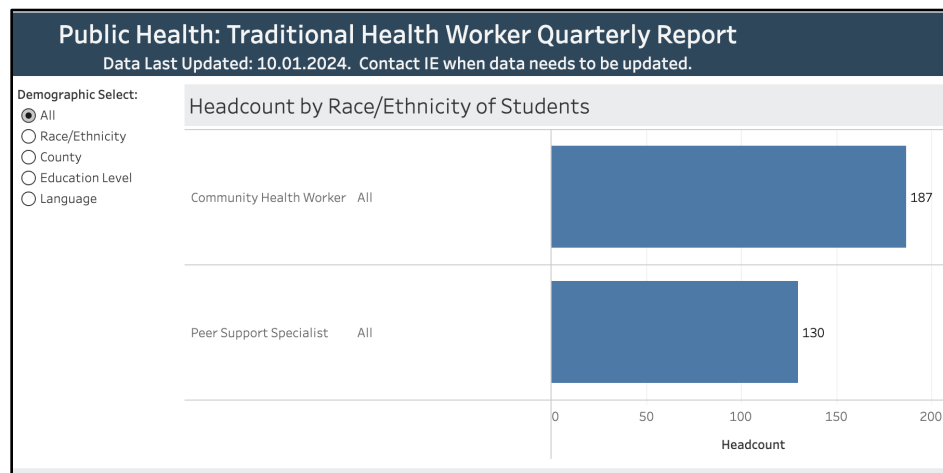


Fig. 1. Program Headcount by Race/Ethnicity of Students

- **Innovative Partnerships.** The program hosted the statewide Traditional Health Worker Summit for two consecutive years in partnership with PacificSource, with each event serving more than 60 attendees (see fig. 2). Through an HRSA grant, COCC faculty have shared curriculum and supported program development at Treasure Valley Community College, Linn-Benton Community College, and Lane Community College.



Fig. 2. Dr. Pereira Presenting at 2025 THW Summit at Redmond COCC Campus

- **Enrollment Growth.** Declared majors have grown from 16 to 25. The Community Health Worker Certificate launched in 2025 with three students; it now serves 18, a 500% increase (Appendix A). These figures do not capture the broader reach of public health courses, which serve more than a thousand students each term across the AAOT pathway (Appendix B).
- **Action-Based Research and Meaningful Education.** In partnership with COCC Addiction Studies and Oregon State University, students conducted a multicampus alcohol binge drinking outreach campaign across three campuses and presented findings at the OSU Research Symposium. A COCC student also received honorable mention at the same symposium for presenting a reproductive health survey conducted in collaboration with Deschutes County. Both projects are ongoing.
- **Sustainability Curriculum Development.** Public health faculty have led a significant, college-wide effort to expand sustainability curriculum. Three initiatives define this work: a Sustainability Designated (SD) course list, now comprising 28 approved courses across departments for 2026–27 (Appendix C); a stand-alone SUS course prefix for courses built around sustainability as a central focus, with seven approved courses for 2026–27 (Appendix D); and the Ponderosa Project, a two-day faculty workshop held in May 2025 that resulted in 24 new sustainability-focused curriculum modules, activities, or courses across the college. Monthly sustainability discussions now continue through COCC's Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ). The program has also developed two new OSU Core Education-aligned courses—Introduction to Human and Planetary Health and Health Promotion and Policy—which support seamless student transfer.

Section 3: College Goals and Initiatives

Please limit your response to 500 or fewer words.

Since our last review, the program has advanced College priorities through strategic grant development, equity-focused curriculum enhancements, and strong community partnerships. These priorities align closely with COCC's Strategic Plan pillars of workforce development, access and equity, community engagement, and long-term sustainability. By leveraging external funding and philanthropy, the program has expanded student opportunities, strengthened regional public health capacity, and positioned COCC as a key partner in addressing local workforce needs and as a statewide model.

Funding and Initiatives

Over the past five years, the program has secured approximately \$716,071 in federal and state funding, plus private donations including a new endowment expected to begin distributions this year. Collectively, these resources have supported curriculum development, scholarships, workforce training, public health outreach, applied student learning, and paid internship pathways. Further, they contribute directly to student success and regional impact. Key initiatives include:

- **American Rescue Plan Funds (\$383,096).** Funding supported public health outreach and the creation of a Health Careers Coordinator position in Admissions, working primarily with programs in the Health Careers Building. The role supported scholarships, workforce pipeline development, and regional training efforts. More than 300 Community

Health Workers (CHWs) and Peer Support Specialists received training. Grant funds also supported marketing efforts including video development. While internal challenges emerged during implementation, all grant requirements were met with cross-departmental COCC support.

- **PacificSource Grants (\$35,000).** Two external grants supported curriculum development, student scholarships, and community partnerships aligned with workforce education.
- **HRSA Grant in partnership with the Coalition of Local Health Officials (\$120,110).** An initial \$60,000 supported the creation of OregonLearns.net, a free open-access platform offering education modules and training certificates nationwide, averaging more than 1,000 views per month, along with a quarterly Health Careers Newsletter. An additional \$60,110 supported Treasure Valley Community College in developing a CHW curriculum and advanced COCC's approval as an Oregon Health Authority-recognized CHW training program, allowing students to register with the state and formalizing a key workforce pathway.
- **Central Oregon Health Council Reducing Binge Drinking Grant (\$107,865).** In partnership with OSU-Cascades, this project addresses binge drinking through student-led strategies including health promotion outreach, social media campaigns, data-informed policy engagement, and collaboration with local businesses. Work is integrated into coursework such as HS 210, PHE 284, and the Research Lab, with student research featured at the OSU Research Symposium.
- **Carol and Durlin Wallace Endowment for Rural Health (\$20,000 gift + \$50,000 endowment).** This gift and endowment fund paid CHW internships in Jefferson County, Crook County, and Warm Springs, supporting newly certified Community Health Workers and strengthening rural workforce pathways and equity-based career advancement.

Together, these grants and philanthropic investments demonstrate sustained progress toward COCC's strategic goals by expanding access, strengthening workforce pipelines, deepening community partnerships, and building long-term program sustainability.

Section 4: Diversity and Inclusion Insights

Please limit your response to 500 or fewer words.

Sarah Baron, CTE Director, holds an appointed seat on the Oregon Health Authority Traditional Health Worker (THW) Commission, housed within the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In this role, she represents community colleges and workforce development, ensuring that the perspectives of two-year institutions and nontraditional learners inform statewide health equity policy. This includes advocacy for populations historically underrepresented in higher education and for policies that reduce structural barriers to access.

Equity-Centered Admissions Practices

One concrete outcome of this advocacy is COCC's removal of required English and math placement testing for students enrolling in community health courses. Research from the Community College Research Center and the Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness consistently demonstrates that traditional placement exams disproportionately place students of color, low-income students, and adult learners into non-credit coursework, reducing the likelihood of persistence and completion. Test-optional, multiple-measures, and informed self-placement approaches have been shown to improve equity and retention without negatively affecting student outcomes.

DEI Integration in Curriculum and Community Practice

At the program level, DEI training is incorporated into the Community Health Worker (CHW) curriculum to strengthen students' cultural responsiveness and preparedness to serve diverse populations. The program also collaborated with community partners to develop a suicide prevention plan, supporting regional public health priorities while providing applied learning opportunities for students.

Student Demographics and Geographic Reach

Institutional Effectiveness data show that Public Health and Traditional Health Worker programs primarily serve White students, with consistent Latinx enrollment and smaller but stable representation from American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian students (see fig. 3). Many students are English language learners and first-generation college students, reflecting the community-based nature of public health pathways. To reduce geographic barriers for rural learners, courses rotate in-person across Prineville, Redmond, and Jefferson County. Notably, diversity increases in rural course offerings.

Instructional Practices for Diverse Learners

Program faculty emphasize plain language communication, scaffolded assignments, and applied learning to build academic confidence and professional skills. Materials are provided in students' primary languages whenever possible. Flexible, place-based course delivery is designed specifically to support ESL and first-generation students, reflecting the program's commitment to accessible, culturally responsive instruction at the classroom level.

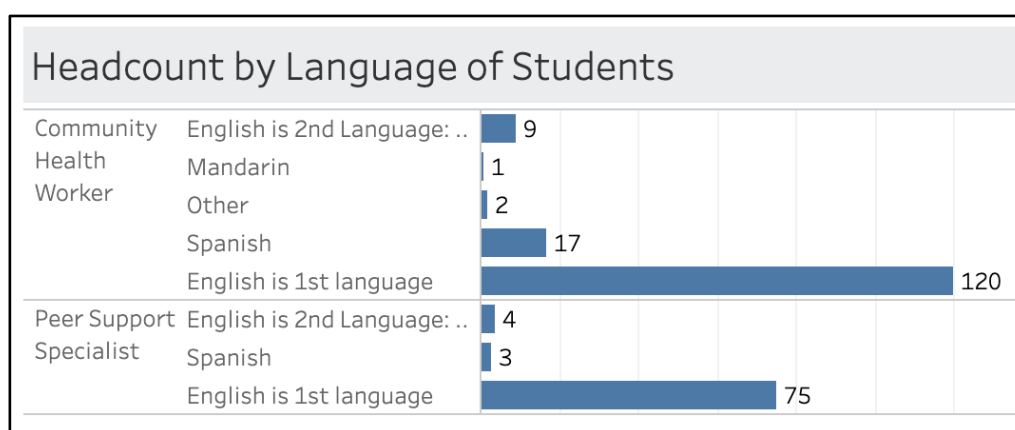


Fig. 3. Program Headcount by Language of Students

Section 5: Strengths and Accomplishments

Please limit your response to 500 or fewer words. Use at least one quantitative dataset to support your response.

The Public Health/Community Health program demonstrates strength across curriculum design, community partnerships, external funding, and workforce integration.

Curriculum Design and Applied Learning

Public health courses span multiple disciplines—Psychology, Behavioral Health, Exercise Science, Biology, and Business/Policy—and fulfill a range of degree requirements, from AAOT health and social science requirements to Oregon State University Core Education Requirements and sustainability-designated lab requirements. Applied learning is central to the program, with practicum placements at Deschutes County Health Services, the Council on Aging, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the Central Oregon Health Council, Deschutes Health Promotion, and Planned Parenthood, among others.

The program has collaborated with COCC's eLearning department to transition all courses to Universal Design for Learning (UDL)-aligned formats, consistent with statewide public health workforce recommendations for accessible, culturally responsive instruction. These templates have since been adopted as best practices by the eLearning Department.

External Funding and Resource Development

The [OregonLearns website](#), developed through a \$60,000 HRSA federal grant in partnership with the Coalition of Local Health Officials, is now fully integrated into and sustained by COCC's CTE program. Hosted on [CDC TRAIN](#), its free, open-access modules—including *What is a Traditional Health Worker?* featuring Sarah Baron, *Mental Health 101* with Sean Roberts, and a student-created course on late-life support—reach a regional newsletter audience of more than 3,000 community and workforce partners.

Two Central Oregon Health Council grants directly support practicum placements with Deschutes County Health Services, NAMI, and the Council on Aging. The Durlin Carol Wallace Endowment provides long-term funding to sustain experiential learning, community mapping, and practicum development. A pending grant with Changing Patterns aims to develop a Forensic Peer Support Curriculum for students working with justice-involved populations.

Community Engagement and Statewide Networks

Students developed a Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan in partnership with Deschutes County Health Promotion, informed by interviews with county behavioral health experts and by models at Oregon State University and the University of Oregon. Students also maintain a [community resource map](#), most recently updated at a networking event with more than 50 participants.

The program participates in the Oregon Community Health Workers Association (ORCHWA) and engages with the [Oregon Health Authority's](#) Traditional Health Worker Program, which oversees CHW, Peer Support, Doula, and other THW certifications. The CTE Director holds an appointed seat on the Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board.

Enrollment and Graduate Outcomes

Certificate enrollment is growing, with 15 students currently enrolled. The program celebrated its first graduate, Irving Daniel, who spoke at COCC's commencement ceremony. Enrollment figures do not capture the broader reach of public health coursework across other academic programs, suggesting the program's impact extends well beyond its certificate-seeking students.

Spotlight: 2025 Graduation Speaker Irving Daniel

Irving Daniel enrolled in peer support and public health professions courses to gain certifications and said he fell in love with public health. He recently received his Community Health Worker certification and is pursuing his associate's transfer degree in public health with plans to continue at Oregon State University.

"You know, the GED program was the start of me pushing through those barriers. So, I was really grateful to just meet the people that I've met there and have that kind of camaraderie with the teachers and the students," he said. "And fast forward to today, like I said, I'm getting ready to go to university." (Source: Bend Bulletin)

Section 6: Challenges

Please limit your response to 500 words. Use at least one quantitative dataset to support your response.

Enrollment and Curriculum Alignment

The program has experienced a notable decline in fill rates, dropping from 87% to 58.1% in Bend and online formats (see fig. 4). This decline coincides with a shift in faculty focus toward grant-directed activities, rural health initiatives, and service-learning courses. These are areas that, while meaningful, tend to draw lower enrollment than foundational courses like PHE 100. Separating out AAOT-aligned online courses, specifically Introduction to U.S. Health Care Systems and Introduction to Public Health, reveals fill rates above 100%, in some cases reaching 110% (see fig. 5). This pattern suggests that when public health courses are integrated into established degree pathways, students enroll successfully. When they are positioned as electives or stand-alone offerings, fill rates decline. The data point to curriculum alignment, not community relevance or grant activity alone, as a primary driver of enrollment health.

The program is actively working to address this by embedding courses into existing pathways and pursuing alignment with OSU Core Education requirements, including newly developed courses such as Introduction to Human Planetary Development and Health Promotion and Policy.

Underutilized Assets

Two significant program assets remain underutilized. The Durlin Carol Wallace Endowment, intended to support experiential learning, community mapping, and practicum development, has not yet been drawn upon. Activating this funding represents an immediate opportunity to strengthen the program's infrastructure.

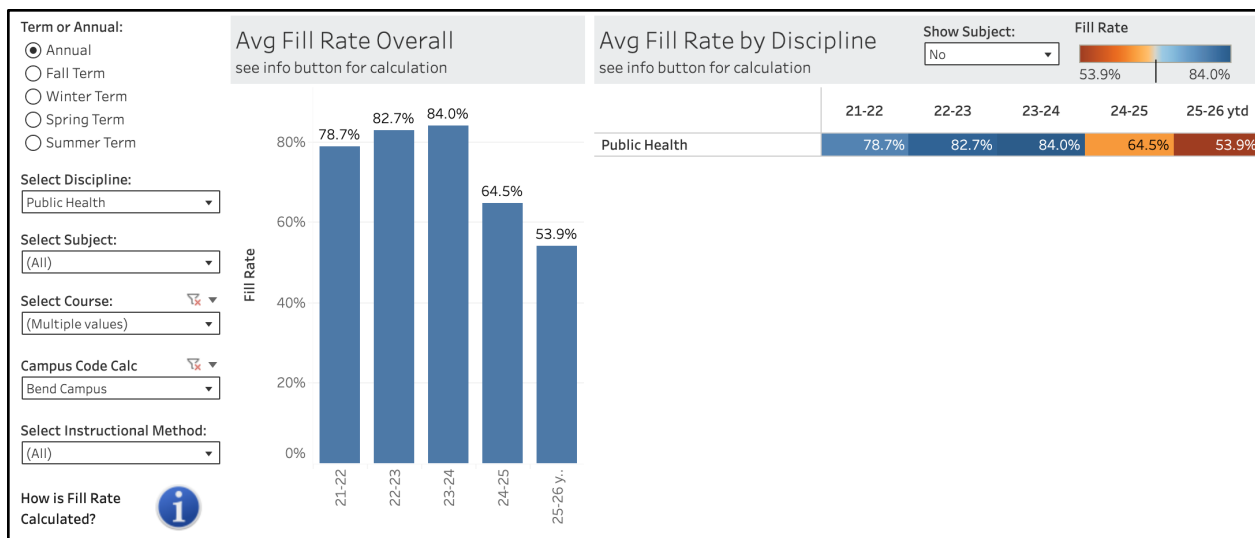


Figure 4. Program Fill Rates, Bend and Online Formats: 2019–2024

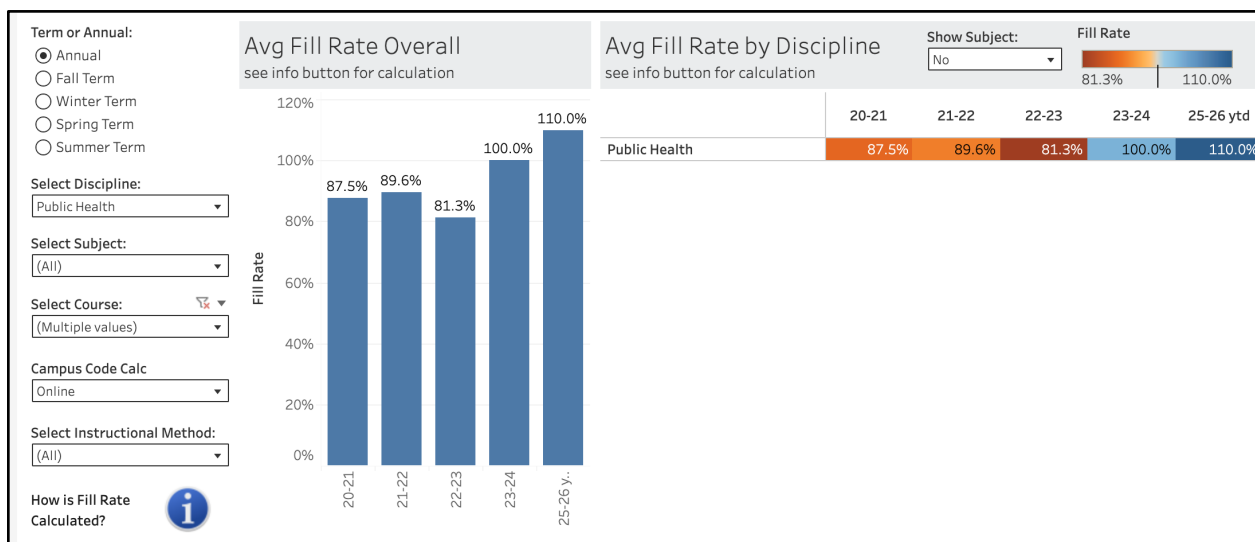


Figure 5. Fill Rates for Introduction to Public Health and Introduction to U.S. Health Care Systems

Similarly, the Student-Led Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, developed collaboratively by students, faculty, and local health partners, has not been implemented at the institutional level. The report recommended both a standing committee and a public-facing website to house its resources and training, yet these remain unrealized and are largely unknown among faculty. Given the depth of student and community investment in the project, implementation deserves institutional attention.

Visibility, Marketing, and Outreach

The program faces challenges in communicating its value to prospective students. Current college marketing approaches, particularly in rural areas, are not well suited to the targeted, pathway-oriented outreach that public health enrollment requires. The program's website does not yet reflect available career pathways or program outcomes in a way that supports recruitment. High school outreach and College Now participation also represent underdeveloped opportunities. Strengthening these areas through career pathway tools (like

LBCC's [widget-based program maps](#)), curriculum-aligned marketing, and earlier student engagement would support both visibility and enrollment recovery.

Section 7: New Goals and Resource Needs

List your goals and needs here. Include no more than five goals and indicate where/how you see these goals aligning with and/or positively impacting the current strategic plan or other important initiatives. For each goal listed in Section 7, indicate what kind of resources, strategies, or support you need to achieve your stated objectives. The DPR Response team will review these requests and recommend the next step as appropriate in their written response.

Goal	Timeline	Resources Needed	Strategic Alignment
1. Succession planning for program director. Identify and onboard a tenure-track faculty member to cross-train as program director prior to the current director's sabbatical (Spring 2027) and planned departure (2028).	Hire by 2025–26; cross-training through 2027–28	Tenure-track faculty line; HR and administrative support for hiring process	Supports institutional continuity and long-term CTE program sustainability
2. Clarify rural outreach priorities. Determine whether expansion into Madras and Prineville is an institutional priority, and if so, integrate public health into those efforts through coordinated marketing and enrollment planning.	Decision needed by end of 2024–25	Administrative direction; inclusion in rural expansion planning; shared benchmarks and decision-making rubrics for faculty	Aligns with COCC's regional access mission and rural community health workforce needs
3. Strengthen program marketing and visibility. Develop program-specific marketing tools (including career pathway visuals, website updates, and recruitment templates) that faculty can deploy independently within college guidelines.	2025–26	Coordination with MPR; template development and web support; activation of previously allocated American Rescue Act marketing funds	Supports enrollment growth and program visibility; aligns with guided pathways and student success initiatives
4. Accelerate curriculum alignment with four-year partners. Expand AAOT and Core Education alignment beyond OSU (completed) to PSU, OIT, and WOU through structured work sessions involving articulation, including staff, faculty, and deans, rather than the current one-by-one approach.	Ongoing; complete remaining three institutions by 2026–27	Coordinated meetings with partner institution leadership; faculty protected time across public health, sustainability, and exercise science	Directly supports transfer pathways, guided pathways alignment, and credential attainment goals

5. Increase enrollment and support completion through pathway integration and outreach. Embed public health courses more deeply into AAOT and four-year Core Education pathways, publish clear student roadmaps to support persistence and credential attainment, and expand high school engagement through College Now.	2025–27	Enrollment, retention, and completion benchmarks, shared rubrics for faculty and leadership; high school outreach coordination; College Now partnership development	Aligns with COCC's enrollment, success, and completion strategic priorities
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For each goal above, please indicate any resources/support you are already pursuing (or have pursued):

Goal 1: The CTE Director has initiated a sustainability and succession plan for the program director role. The program is prepared to move forward with a hire once a faculty line is confirmed.

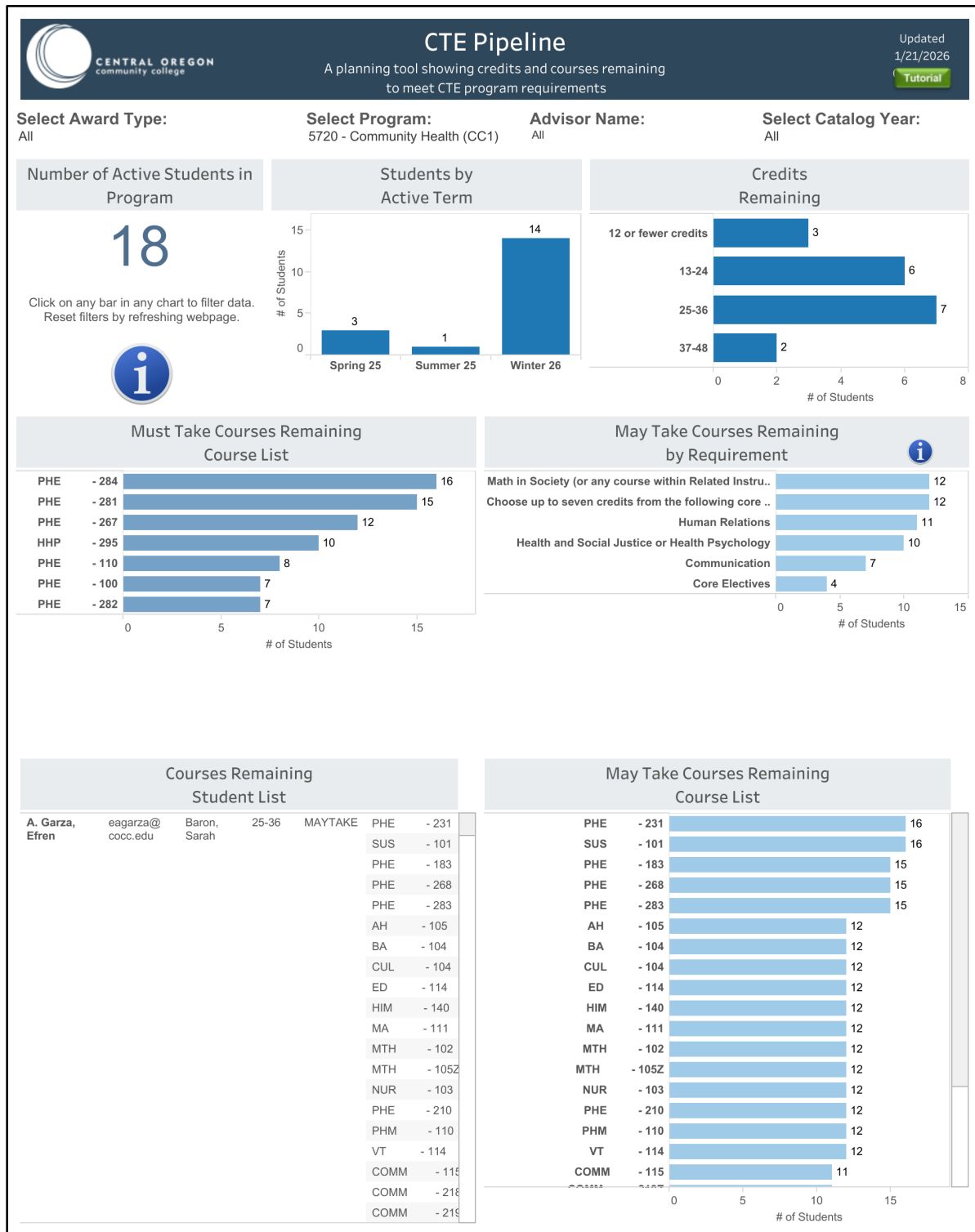
Goal 2: Following a reduction in staffing, rural-area public health courses have been paused. The program director is engaging individually with regional partners to explore how a rural health focus can be maintained within current capacity constraints.

Goal 3: The program is seeking marketing tools and templates that would allow faculty and students to conduct recruitment and outreach activities with appropriate administrative review. Coordination with the Marketing department is ongoing.

Goal 4: Faculty have begun one-on-one outreach to four-year transfer partners. The program is advocating for inclusion of faculty in joint planning meetings with OSU and COCC leadership to streamline this process and reduce the burden on individual faculty members currently managing alignment across three program areas.

Goal 5: The program has begun internal conversations about enrollment strategy and is committed to shared transparency on enrollment data. A collective, rubric-guided approach to resource allocation decisions is being proposed to ensure faculty and leadership are working from the same benchmarks.

APPENDIX A. STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM



APPENDIX B. STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC HEALTH COURSES



APPENDIX C. SUSTAINABILITY DESIGNATED (SD) COURSE LIST

Course	Title	Cr.	Satisfies
ART 297SPA	Sustainable Practices: Art Project	1	
BI 103	General Biology: Ecology	4	Discipline Studies (DS) Science Lab
BI 142	Introduction to Marine Biology	4	DS Science Lab
BI 223Z	Principles of Biology: Ecology and Evolution	5	DS Science Lab
CH 107	Physical Science: Chemistry	4	DS Science Lab
CUL 230	Nutrition and Healthy Cooking	3	Career/Tech Preparatory
CUL 235S	Farm to Table Sustainable Cuisine Practices	4	Career/Tech Preparatory
EC 201Z	Principles of Microeconomics	4	DS Social Studies
EC 202Z	Principles of Macroeconomics	4	DS Social Studies
FOR 208	Soils: Sustainable Ecosystems	4	DS Science Lab
FOR 260	Conservation of Natural Resources	3	Career/Tech Preparatory
G 163	Field Geology: Rivers, Lakes and Springs of Central Oregon	4	DS Science Lab
G 201	Geology I - The Dynamic Earth	4	DS Science Lab
G 202	Geology II - Earth's Surface	4	DS Science Lab
G 203	Geology III - Earth History	4	DS Science Lab
G100	Introduction to Geology	4	DS Science Lab
GEOG 101	Introduction to Geospatial Science & GIS	4	DS Science Lab
NUR 107	Nursing II	10	Career/Tech Preparatory
NUR 112	Intro to Community Nursing	2	Career/Tech Preparatory
NUR 207	Nursing V	10	Career/Tech Preparatory
OL 111	Introduction to Outdoor Leadership	3	
PHE 228	Health and Social Justice	4	Foundational Requirements Health; DS Cultural Literacy, Social Science. OSU Cored Education Alignment
PHE 244	Intro to Human and Planetary Health	4	Foundational Requirements Health; DS Science Lab. OSU Core Education Alignment
PHE 268	Sustainable Food and Nutrition	4	Foundational Requirements Health; DS Social Science
PSY 261	Indonesian Field Study I: Preparation to Study	3	
PSY 262	Indonesian Field Study II: Global Health: Field Training and Research	6	
PSY 263	Indonesian Field Study III: Communicating Indonesian Field Experience	3	
SOC 228	Sociology of the Environment	4	DS Social Science

APPENDIX D. APPROVED SUS COURSES FOR 2026–27

Course	Title	Credits	Satisfies
SUS 101	Introduction to Sustainability	4	DS Social Science
SUS 102	Introduction to Environmental Science	4	DS Science Lab
SUS 103	Physical Science of Climate Change	4	DS Science Lab
SUS 210	Creating a More Sustainable Society	4	DS Social Science
SUS 211	Environmental Activism	3	DS Arts and Letters, Cultural Literacy
SUS	Sustainable Practices: Art	1	
SUS 220	Sustainable Food and Agriculture	4	DS Social Science