

March 25, 2020

Dear OCCA Board Members,

Once again Oregon community college leaders are the living embodiment of the word “community” - not just in our institutions’ names but in the very foundations of our missions. We have come together quickly to respond to the unprecedented situation currently impacting our students, faculty, staff, families, friends and neighbors. In light of this, I wanted to take a moment to share what OCCA is doing to provide support to the 17 community colleges.

Consistent with Governor Brown’s *Stay Home, Save Lives* Executive Order (No. 20-12) issued on March 23, 2020, the OCCA office is closed and OCCA staff are teleworking from home except as needed to carry out required operational functions. Staff is available by phone and email and we are here to support and assist you. For general questions, feel free to contact OCCA staff at occa@occa17.com. We will also regularly share resources and information through various means including on the OCCA website and in our newsletter.

OCCA is hosting daily conference calls with presidents and state agency officials to address operational challenges, share resources, and facilitate statewide coordination. OCCA is also actively engaged with state legislators and the Oregon Congressional delegation to advocate for the needs of community college students and employees. We will highlight this work in the weekly OCCA newsletter starting this week. Soon we will look to elected community college board members to assist with these advocacy efforts.

As you may already know, we recently made the difficult decision to cancel our annual All-Oregon Academic Team (AOAT) luncheon scheduled in April. This event recognizes outstanding student scholars from all 17 colleges and is the highlight of the year as the inspiring stories of these students are shared. While we will not host the luncheon this year, we are planning other ways to recognize students for their accomplishments. More details will be shared about how boards of education can participate in these efforts.

Finally, we have not yet decided about the upcoming OCCA Board meeting scheduled at Columbia Gorge Community College on May 15, but it is likely that we will hold this meeting virtually using Zoom. We will provide more details by the middle of April.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. While we did not anticipate this turn of events, I remain confident in the leadership and commitment of all of you to meet the needs of our students and communities and I urge you to “keep the faith.”

Stay Safe and Be Well

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