



**Contacts:**

Casey White-Zollman | Communications Director, Oregon Community College Association | 503-502-5642 | [casey@occa17.com](mailto:casey@occa17.com)  
Jaclyn Youhana Garver | Communication and DEI Manager, NCMPR | [jgarver@ncmpr.org](mailto:jgarver@ncmpr.org)

April 2, 2024

## Marketing council honors Oregon Community College Association at national conference

SEATTLE, Wash. – The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) received a 2023 Gold Paragon Award from the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations (NCMPR) at the Council’s national conference last month in Seattle, Wash.

The award, for the Government/Community Relations Campaign category, showcases the Advocacy Toolkit OCCA created for community college advocates to utilize during the 2023 Oregon Legislative Session. The toolkit included talking points, informational one-pagers, testimony templates, social media guidelines, lobbying tips, and training videos. Community college administrators, staff, board members, students and other stakeholders used the toolkit items to successfully advocate for increased funding to the state’s Community College Support Fund and the passage of several policy bills in 2023. These efforts led to a 14% increase in funding for Oregon’s community colleges.

This award was accepted by OCCA’s Communications Director Casey White-Zollman, who developed the toolkit along with OCCA Deputy Director John Wykoff, during the 2024 NCMPR National Conference in Seattle March 14-16.

“OCCA’s toolkit guided community college advocates through legislative advocacy efforts, leading to a successful legislative session for community colleges in 2023,” said OCCA Interim Executive Director Karen Smith. “This win highlights the importance of clear and consistent communication in higher education advocacy. We’re grateful for NCMPR’s recognition for the hard work OCCA puts into supporting Oregon’s community colleges.”

The 2023 Paragon Awards drew 1,531 entries from 210 colleges across the country and was judged by 65 professionals from the marketing and public relations industry. Entries had to have been published, broadcast, displayed and/or used during the 2022-2023 academic year. Gold, silver and bronze Paragons were awarded in each of 47 categories.

NCMPR’s Paragon Awards recognize outstanding achievement in design, strategy and communication at community and technical colleges. It’s the only national competition of its kind that honors excellence exclusively among marketing and public relations professionals at two-year colleges.

###

*The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) represents the 17 publicly chartered community colleges and their locally elected board members in Oregon. Founded in 1962, OCCA's purpose is to support the colleges before policy-makers and partners whose actions affect the well-being of community colleges across the state.*

*NCMPR supports the professional development of community college communicators, serving more than 1,600 members from close to 600 colleges across the United States and Canada. It's the only organization of its kind that exclusively represents marketing and public relations professionals at community and technical colleges and is one of the largest affiliates of the American Association of Community Colleges. NCMPR is based in Albuquerque, New Mexico.*