

2024

END OF SESSION LEGISLATIVE REPORT

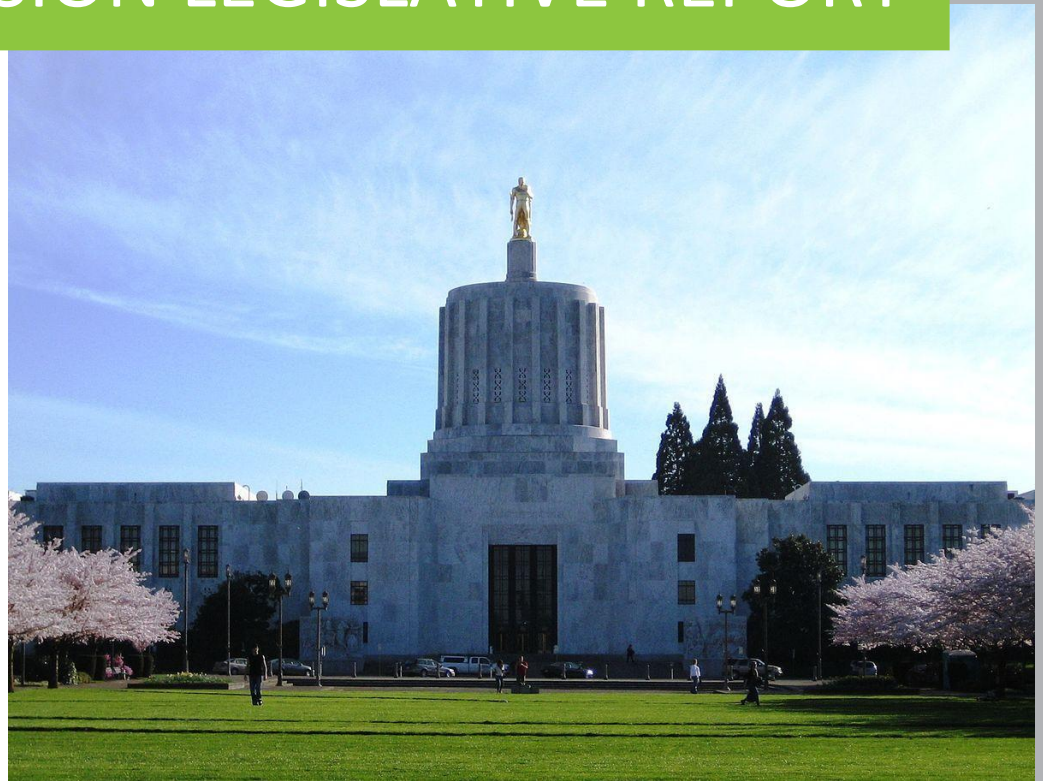


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2024 Legislative Session Highlights

Session Overview

Legislators and the Governor entered the 2024 Legislative Session with relative bipartisan agreement about the major issues they hoped to address. This included housing, behavioral health and addiction along with making significant changes to Oregon’s experiment with drug decriminalization. With biennial budgets set during the longer odd numbered year sessions, legislators are typically hesitant to appropriate larger sums of money during the short “off-year” sessions. However, Legislators made significant investments in both housing and behavioral health and addiction services. The largest area of investment was housing with legislators allocating \$386 million to address Oregon’s housing shortage, though Governor Tina Kotek originally asked lawmakers for \$500 million.

OCCA went into the February Legislative Session with two legislative policy priorities – a legislatively-created work group to support and accelerate the adoption of corequisite education at Oregon community colleges, and a change to how decisions regarding the Oregon Opportunity Grant are made at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Both concepts passed as part of the Senate Education Omnibus Bill, SB 1552.

OCCA also supported two funding-related requests as part of a separate coalition related to student basic needs and Open Educational Resources (HB 4162) and one related to the semi-conductor workforce (HB 4154). Both bills passed out of the House Higher Education Committee and were subsequently referred to the Ways and Means committee but did not move forward from there.

Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)

OCCA worked with Senate Education Committee Chair Michael Dembrow and the HECC on legislation to bring greater accountability and transparency to the way policy decisions are

made to the Oregon Opportunity Grant – Oregon’s largest need-based financial aid program. Prior to the legislation, the director of the Office of Student Access and Completion had statutory authority to make most significant decisions related to the Oregon Opportunity Grant. This legislation requires the full Commission to conduct a public rulemaking process when significant changes to the Oregon Opportunity Grant are proposed.

Corequisite Workgroup

OCCA developed this legislation collaboratively with the HECC, Rep. Ricki Ruiz, and Sen. Michael Dembrow. The legislatively created workgroup will make recommendations to the Executive Director of the HECC for how best to support and accelerate the transition to a corequisite model to support students and ensure success in college-level courses.

Advocacy

OCCA provided community college board members, presidents, students, faculty, and staff with several tools, resources, and activities to connect with legislators and advocate for community college budget policy bills during the 2024 Legislative Session.

- **Direct Advocacy:** OCCA engaged in direct legislative advocacy before and during the Legislative Session. OCCA presented at several informational hearings regarding the Oregon Opportunity Grant and corequisite education. OCCA also engaged directly with advocacy partners including labor, students, and other sector partners.
- **Advocacy Toolkit:** OCCA created this online toolkit for college board members, advocates, and stakeholders to have a one-stop shop for advocacy tools. The toolkit – available on the OCCA website, as well as in Basecamp – included talking points and one-page information sheets for each legislative priority, social media guidelines, and other related documents helpful for those advocating on behalf of the colleges. OCCA continued to update the toolkit throughout the Session to keep it relevant for advocates.
- **One-Click Politics:** This is the new grassroots advocacy platform that OCCA utilizes to give college board members, presidents, staff, faculty, students, and other stakeholders and advocates an easy way to contact legislators about important issues. The platform allows users to contact legislators via email, video message, or phone. Because the 2024 Session was so short, OCCA conducted one campaign. The campaign – part of the Feb. 13 Community College Day of Action – generated 434 emails to legislators by 235 advocates and reached 71 legislators with consistent messaging.
- **CTE Month:** OCCA once again held a virtual CTE Month during National CTE Month in February to promote and highlight community college Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. OCCA prefers to hold a CTE Day at the Capital, but due to ongoing construction at the statehouse, an in-person event was once again not possible in 2024. Using tools and guidance from OCCA, colleges instead promoted their programs on social media, highlighting different career pathway themes each week.

- **Day of Action:** OCCA hosted a Day of Action on Feb. 13, 2024, to encourage community college advocates to reach out to legislators regarding access to the Oregon Opportunity Grant for community college students. OCCA created flyers for the event and worked directly with colleges to encourage them to hold events on campus to promote sending messages to legislators through the Day of Action One-Click campaign. The event was successful, and several colleges met in-person at the Capitol with their legislators.
- **Weekly Legislative Calls:** OCCA hosted a Zoom call each Monday afternoon during the Legislative Session to update college board members, presidents, and other staff on the Session. Each call provided an update on what was happening at the Capital, a report on upcoming and recent bill hearings, and solicited colleges to advocate on certain issues or provide testimony. These calls were well-attended each week.
- **OCCA Digest:** Each week, the *OCCA Digest* e-newsletter provided subscribers with updates on the Session, calls to action for advocacy campaigns through One-Click Politics or other activities like the Day of Action, and a calendar of upcoming hearings. The *OCCA Digest* currently has nearly 700 subscribers, comprised primarily of college board members, presidents, and staff/faculty.
- **Campus Advocacy Coordinators (CACs):** OCCA led this team of advocacy leaders from institutions to help share consistent messages and advocacy activities throughout the Session. The CACs were critical liaisons between OCCA and the colleges related to legislative advocacy during the Session. Ahead of the Session, OCCA held a retreat for CACs in July 2023 to prepare for the Session.

Priority Bills*

(P) = Passed (DNP) = Did Not Pass

** For the short Session, OCCA staff used an equity tool developed recently by the OCCA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee as part of the process leading to recommended positions on proposed legislation.*

Campus Safety

(P) Sexual Misconduct Survey Council ([HB 4164](#)) – Removes the condition on reimbursement for expenses for nonlegislative members of the Sexual Misconduct Survey Council. This bill fixes issues raised by community colleges and universities around implementation of [HB 3456 \(2023\)](#). Most importantly, it extends the deadline for the Council to develop a survey to the start of the 2025-26 academic year. It clarifies that students enrolled at the institution within the last year must have an opportunity to respond to the survey but removes the requirement to offer it to students on leave of absence. In addition, the bill provides a process to waive the requirement to partner with

a local victim advocacy organization if not feasible and retains the requirement that an advocacy agency assist in developing training regarding sexual misconduct. The bill adds reporting requirements on the number of students or employees who reported sexual misconduct but did not pursue an investigation, and the number of ongoing investigations into an accusation of sexual misconduct. Effective on passage.

Required Implementation: Prepare for reporting required data to the Legislature, HECC, and the Director of Human Services by October 1, 2024. Reporting requirements are specified in Section 7 of HB 4164. Ensure training is conducted annually for students and employees consistent with requirements found in ORS 350.343. Develop policies and practices related to academic program requirements waivers; provide the contact information of college office charged with handling complaints; employ certified advocate (if applicable); and enter into and maintain a memorandum of understanding with a community based domestic and sexual violence advocacy agency (unless waiver obtained from HECC).

CTE/STEM

(DNP) Semiconductor Talent Sustaining Fund ([HB 4154](#)) – Establishes the Semiconductor Talent Sustaining Fund and subaccounts of the fund. This legislation had originally sought \$40 million in funding to support semiconductor workforce education and training with about \$15 million going directly to community colleges and public universities. The funds would be distributed by the HECC. While the legislation ultimately passed, it did not receive funding. This means a Semiconductor Talent Sustaining Fund will be set up at HECC that may receive private donations, federal funds, or state funds in the future.

(DNP) Behavioral Health Workforce ([SB 1592](#)) – Appropriates moneys from the General Fund to the HECC for distribution to certain institutions of higher education to expand the behavioral health workforce in Oregon. This legislation proposed \$6 million to go to five of the seven public universities to start or expand Master’s of Social Work programs (Portland State University, Southern Oregon University, Eastern Oregon University, and Oregon Institute of Technology). OCCA testified that this approach left out major portions of the behavioral health workforce pipeline, including community colleges. While this legislation did not move forward, \$4 million in funding for the five universities for the Master’s program was included in [HB 5204](#).

Education Policy

(P) Omnibus Education Policy ([SB 1552](#)) – This legislation was a committee bill from the Senate Education Committee which included 20 separate topics related to all sectors of public education. Many of the issues covered in the legislation are adjustments to existing policy though a few were new initiatives. The legislation contained two OCCA Session policy priorities: a corequisite education work group and changes to the Oregon Opportunity Grant decision-making process. This legislation includes an emergency clause and is effective on passage.

Section 9: Student Information

This section requires the Department of Education to develop a plan for the collection of course-level completion and grade data for all public-school students in grades 6 through 12. A report is due to the Legislature by September 15, 2024. OCCA supported this provision as it will positively impact community college use of multiple measures for placement, which utilizes high school GPA and grade in last math or writing course.

Section 11: Direct Admissions

This section directs the HECC to implement a direct admissions program for community colleges and universities. OCCA supported this policy.

Section 15: Oregon Opportunity Grant

The section changes authority for setting policy related to the Oregon Opportunity Grant from the Director of the Office of Student Access and Completion to the full HECC.

Section 28: Open Educational Resources Program

This section made technical changes to align statute related to Open Educational Resources (OERs).

Section 33: Corequisite Workgroup

This section establishes a work group to study evidence-based corequisite student support models, including models that use in-class tutoring, online learning labs, paired courses, and other aligned academic supports. Recommendations from the workgroup regarding steps and resources required for community colleges to transition from traditional prerequisite development education to evidence-based corequisite student support models are due to the HECC by December 15, 2024.

Section 35: Applied Baccalaureate Programs

This section directs the HECC to report, as part of its 2025 Ways and Means presentation, the following:

- The estimated impact of applied baccalaureate (AB) or BSN programs on the Community College Support Fund (CCSF)
- The approximate cost of funding AB and BSN programs
- Any recommendations the Commission may have for funding AB or BSN programs.

It further directs the HECC to begin reimbursing FTE for AB and BSN programs in the 2025-26 academic year.

Section 39: Faculty Health Care Benefits

This provision clarifies that part-time faculty who work, not just teach, at an institution may be eligible for health care benefits. Expands the types and duration of work that a part-time faculty member may do at a public institution of higher education in order to select it as their home institution for purposes of receiving health care benefits. **Required Implementation:** Ensure institutional eligibility requirements for SB 551 part-time faculty health benefits are consistent with this change.

Section 43: Transfer Council Sub-Committee Meetings

Subcommittees of the Transfer Council that relate to the common course numbering system and the coordination, establishment, alignment, effectiveness and maintenance of Major Transfer Maps (MTMs) no longer must be public meetings. This will help ease some workload issues for HECC staff. Effective on passage.

Elections

(P) Voter Registration ([SB 1577](#)) – Extends automatic voter registration to applicants for admission to public institutions of higher education. As proposed, this legislation would have required colleges and universities to provide contact information for all applicants who were U.S. citizens for the purpose of automatic voter registration. OCCA informed legislators, along with other higher education stakeholders, that providing such information would violate the Federal Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). The bill was amended to be a study of possible ways to expand the state’s automatic voter registration program.

(P) Artificial Intelligence in Campaigns ([SB 1571](#)) – Requires a disclosure of the use of artificial intelligence synthetic media in campaign communications. Defines “synthetic media” and sets a reasonable person standard. Applies to candidate and measure

campaign communications. This measure gives the Secretary of State authority to enforce violations of this new required disclosure. Allows the circuit court to impose a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for any violation of this requirement. Effective on passage.

Financial Aid

(DNP) Oregon Promise Pandemic Waiver ([SB 1551](#)) – Waives the requirement that an otherwise eligible Oregon Promise Grant recipient must have completed high school within six months of enrolling in certain community college courses for those individuals who completed high school or its equivalent in 2020 or 2021 during a specified period. This legislation was intended to extend the Oregon Promise to students who were leaving high school during the pandemic and did not apply for the Oregon Promise within six months of graduating from high school as the program requires. OCCA supported the legislation though it ultimately did not pass largely due to the potentially significant fiscal impact of the expansion.

(P) HECC College Access & Success Grant Program ([HB 4163](#)) – Requires the HECC to establish a grant program for the purpose of supporting organizations to expand the scope and community reach of college access and success programs. OCCA supported this legislation, which originally had \$5 million for community college access and success programs. The legislature did not allocate funding for the program, but the legislation creates a fund at the HECC that may receive private donations or state or federal funds in the future.

Operations

(P) Public Meetings Law Advice ([HB 4117](#)) -- Authorizes the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) to issue advisory opinions on the application of the public meetings law to actual or hypothetical circumstances. With OGEC's expanded authority to enforce all aspects of Oregon Public Meetings Law, this bill gives the Commission authority to provide written and oral advice in the same manner OGEC does for ethics law related questions. Effective on passage.

(P) Public Meeting Livestreaming & Recordings ([SB 1502](#)) – Requires school districts, education service districts, community college districts and public universities to make video recordings of governing body meetings or, if the public body's facilities lack broadband Internet access, to make audio recordings, and to post the video or audio recordings, as applicable, of the meetings on their official public body websites or social

media sites. Excludes executive sessions and does not apply to school districts with less than 50 students. As initially proposed this bill would have required boards to livestream meetings. After OCCA raised concerns about livestreaming, the bill was amended to require only the making and posting of a video recording after meetings. Audio recordings are permitted if broadband internet access is lacking. Applies to any meetings of the board except executive sessions. The bill does not specify how long a recording must be posted or retained.

Required Implementation: Effective January 1, 2025, community colleges must make video recordings of board meetings and post the videos within seven (7) days of the meetings on the college's website or social media site.

(P) Recreational Immunity Public Land Access ([SB 1576](#)) – Modifies provisions relating to recreational immunity and makes some of the changes temporary. An amendment was added to this bill to address a recent court case involving recreational activities on land open to public access. OCCA joined other state and local governments in support of this amendment and submitted written testimony. This is a temporary fix to ensure that public access for recreational activities remains open until the Legislature can address it further in the 2025 session. Effective on passage.

Student Services

(P) Home & Small Center Child Care Fund ([HB 4158](#)) – Establishes the Home and Small Center Child Care Fund. Directs the Oregon Business Development Department to administer a grant program to provide financial assistance to child care facilities that serve a maximum of 75 children for the purpose of establishing or expanding child care infrastructure. This legislation provides \$4.5 million to the Oregon Business Development Department to expand child care services at small providers as well as \$500,000 to the Department of Early Learning and Care for technical support.

Student Success

(DNP) Open Educational Resources & Basic Needs Funding ([HB 4162](#)) – Appropriates moneys to the HECC for the purpose of carrying out Oregon's Open Educational Resources (OER) Program. Appropriates moneys to the HECC for the purpose of the establishment and awarding of grants for basic needs programming at public institutions of higher education. This was the key legislative item for the Oregon Student Association for the

Session. In the end, legislators did not feel the funding requested in the bill met the measure for one-time funding as student basic needs is a much larger, persistent issue.

Questions

Please do not hesitate to contact OCCA Deputy Director John Wykoff at jwykoff@occa17.com or 503-399-9912 if you have any questions about the 2024 Legislative Session and the bills OCCA tracked.