

## OCCA Update for College Boards – October 2024

### September Legislative Days

Oregon community colleges had several opportunities to testify during quarterly “Legislative Days” Sept. 23-25. Legislators heard invited testimony that provided updates on ongoing and new topics they may want to address in the 2025 Session. OCCA worked with the chair of the House Committee on Higher Education to provide an update on emerging community college Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) programs. The Committee also heard an update from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) on the ongoing work to create more seamless transfer from community colleges to four-year public universities. OCCA has been closely involved in legislative work around better transfer pathways from community colleges to public universities. A computer science faculty member from Portland Community College testified.

This was the final “Legislative Days” before the Sept. 27 deadline for legislators to file bills that will be released prior to the start of the 2025 Legislative Session.

### OCCA Board Training – Thank You!

OCCA held its annual Board Member Training event on Sept. 7 and would like to thank everyone who participated. The training was well-attended, with around 30 elected board members and presidents participating. They heard from Sonny Ramaswamy, President of the Northwest Commission on Colleges & Universities (NWCCU), who shared best practices and advice on how board members can take a more proactive role in accreditation. Other topics included how OCCA can serve the needs of colleges and board members, what to expect in the upcoming legislative session, information on public meeting laws, and strategies to combat the looming enrollment cliff. The afternoon included an interactive training led by Essential Partners focused on leading dialogue across differences. Attendees were given tools to use to listen and connect with each other differently and to encourage discussion that allows for differences to be heard. OCCA encourages anyone who attended to please take a brief [feedback survey](#) so that we can improve upon future events.

### OCCA Meets with Federal Delegation in DC

OCCA Deputy Director John Wykoff traveled to Washington, DC, in September along with representatives from Portland Community College and Lane Community College to meet with Oregon’s federal delegation. During the trip, they met with Oregon delegation House and Senate staffers advocating for short-term Pell Grants, Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act reauthorization, fiscal year 2025 appropriations, ending taxation on the Pell Grant and the issue of fraudulent applications which have affected community colleges across the country.

### OCCA Board to Meet Oct. 4

The OCCA Board of Directors will meet for their fall quarterly meeting on Friday, Oct. 4. The meeting will be hybrid, with those in-person attending at Rogue Community College in Grants Pass. The Board will approve member appointments to OCCA committees for the 2024-25 year, hear a legislative update and learn about upcoming training opportunities, as well as meet with higher education consultant, Miriam Friedman, around the development of an OCCA Values Statement. The full agenda can be found at <https://occa17.com/occa-meetings/>.

### Upcoming Events & Trainings

OCCA has a great schedule of events set for 2024-25! [Click here](#) to see an overview (or visit our website, <https://occa17.com/calendar/>) and see below for details about events coming this fall that will benefit board members.

- **OCCA Conference:**
  - **Registration Now Open!** – Early Bird Registration for the OCCA Annual Conference is now open! This special rate will be available on the conference [web page](#) through Oct. 4, so book soon to get the discount. Regular registration will then be available through Oct. 18. The conference will take place Nov. 6-8 at Salishan Coastal Lodge in beautiful Gleneden Beach. OCCA has secured a block of rooms at a special conference rate of \$169 +fees per night at the Salishan Coastal Lodge. Visit the OCCA conference web page for details on how to secure this rate: <https://occa17.com/occa-annual-conference/>. Hotel rooms must be booked by Oct. 4 to secure this special rate.
  - **Breakout Presentations Announced** – OCCA has announced the breakout presentations for the conference. A preview of all presentations and presenters can be found on the OCCA Conference web page, <https://occa17.com/occa-annual-conference/>.
- **Virtual Advocacy Training** – OCCA will host a virtual Advocacy Training on Thursday, October 10, for community college board members, presidents, Campus Advocacy Coordinators (CACs), students, and other college faculty, staff and stakeholders who will serve or are interested in serving as an advocate during the 2025 Legislative Session. In this free training, participants will learn how to be an effective advocate for community college budget and policy issues, the various ways in which you can be an advocate (hint: it doesn't always mean meeting with legislators!), lobbying tips, important messaging for the Session, and the basics of the legislative process. Visit our website for all the details and to register for free, <https://occa17.com/occa-advocacy-training/>.
- **Register for the October Lunch & Learn Webinar** – The first Lunch & Learn webinar for 2024-25 will take place on Oct. 31: "OCCA 101." Attendees will learn how OCCA serves colleges and about key initiatives. These webinars – which are included in OCCA membership – will continue to take place on the last Thursday of each month at noon through June (no December webinar due to the holidays). [Click here](#) for the schedule and [click here](#) to get registered for one or all the webinars!

### **OCCA Digest e-newsletter**

The *OCCA Digest* is a monthly e-newsletter that highlights updates during the Legislative Session, important events, news, and announcements. It's a great way to stay connected with information important to community colleges in Oregon and learn how you can take action to support colleges and students.

To sign up to receive this free e-newsletter, visit <https://occa17.com/resources/newsletter/> and click the "Sign Up" button. The OCCA Digest will come from OCCA Communications Director Casey White-Zollman at [casey@occa17.com](mailto:casey@occa17.com), so be sure to add her email to your contacts to ensure the email arrives in your inbox and not your spam folder.

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*Oregon Community College Association was founded in 1962 with the purpose of providing support to the colleges before policymakers and partners whose actions affect the wellbeing of community colleges across the state. OCCA represents the 17 publicly chartered community colleges and their locally elected board members. Leading with racial equity, we advocate, communicate, and collaborate to strengthen community colleges for the benefit of Oregonians, particularly those historically underserved or systemically marginalized in higher education. Have questions about OCCA and our work to support Oregon's community colleges? Contact [occa@occa17.com](mailto:occa@occa17.com).*