

## OCCA Update for College Boards – August 2024

### 2024-25 OCCA Leadership Update

As colleges begin the new academic year, new OCCA Executive Director Abby Lee and 2024-25 OCCA Board President Austin Fohnagy have issued a statement regarding their transition into leadership roles at OCCA and what to anticipate in the coming year. [Please click here to read the letter.](#)

### Oregon Presidents' Council Retreat

OCCA Executive Director Abby Lee and Board President Austin Fohnagy participated in the Oregon Presidents' Council (OPC) Retreat in beautiful Tillamook August 4-6. This was an opportunity for the community college presidents to gather to develop goals, preview the legislative session, and plan for the coming year. OCCA also provided logistical support and planning for the retreat, and staff members John Wykoff and Katie Archambault also attended.

### CAC Retreat

[Campus Advocacy Coordinators \(CACs\)](#) from the majority of Oregon's 17 community colleges gathered in July for their annual retreat, hosted by OCCA at Central Oregon Community College in Bend. CACs serve as a liaison for their college to OCCA to help coordinate consistent messaging about the community college budget and policy issues statewide during the legislative session.

The retreat served as an opportunity for the CACs to learn about the community college budget request, tips for effective advocacy, and messaging opportunities. In addition, the CACs spent a significant amount of the retreat putting together an advocacy plan for the 2025 Legislative Session. This plan helps to coordinate messaging about the community college budget request and needs, as well as any policy proposals, during the legislative session so that the colleges speak with one voice statewide. Legislators in past legislative sessions have expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the single statewide message from community colleges and the tactic has proven to be successful.

### Upcoming Events & Trainings

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

- **Board Member Training: September 7** – OCCA's All Board Member Training is set for Saturday, September 7, at Chemeketa Community College's Eola Center in Salem. Topics will include: how OCCA supports board members, presidents and colleges in Oregon, tips for effective and strategic board meetings and how to build consensus and focus for the board's policy governance role, how boards and colleges can hold constructive dialogues using civil discourse methods, and more. In addition, Sonny Ramaswamy, President of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), will share some best practices and advice on how board members can take a proactive role in accreditation. The event will kick off with a networking dinner on Friday evening. Registration opens this month.

Visit the OCCA website, <https://occa17.com/board-training/> for details.

- **OCCA Conference: Call for Presentations** – OCCA is now accepting proposals for breakout sessions at the 2024 OCCA Annual Conference, set for November 6-8 at Salishan Coastal Lodge in Gleneden Beach. This year’s theme is “Charting a Course to the Future,” and OCCA is looking for presentations that share best practices, showcase a unique college program, or inform other stakeholders about an event or issue affecting your institution and/or community colleges on a broader level. All presentations should relate to the conference theme, as well as at least one of the following topic areas:
  - Innovation and the Future;
  - Equitable Pathways to Good Careers;
  - Board and College Commitment to Equity;
  - Student Achievement and Data;
  - Policy and Procedure; or
  - Community Engagement and Partnerships

*All proposals must be submitted by Friday, August 16, at 5:00 p.m. PST using the [online form](#). More details on the conference and proposal submissions can be found on the OCCA Annual Conference web page, <https://occa17.com/occa-annual-conference/>.*

- **Howard Cherry Awards: Call for Nominations** – OCCA is also now accepting nominations for the annual Howard Cherry Awards, held November 7 during the OCCA Annual Conference at Salishan Coastal Lodge. The Howard Cherry Awards are named for Dr. Howard Cherry, who was a lifelong advocate for education and community involvement. Nominations may be made in the following categories:
  - Outstanding Community College Advocate
  - Outstanding Community College Board Member
  - Outstanding Community College Administrator

*Nominations must be submitted no later than Friday, August 16, at 5:00 p.m. PST using the [online form](#). More details about the Howard Cherry Awards can be found on the OCCA website, <https://www.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 to be an advocate, lobbying tips, important messaging for the Session, and the legislative process. Visit our website this fall for details, <https://occa17.com/occa-advocacy-training/>.
- **2024-2025 Lunch & Learn Webinars** – The OCCA Lunch & Learn Webinars were such a hit in 2023-24 that we’re bringing them back with a new lineup in 2024-25! These webinars – which are included as a benefit of OCCA membership – will continue to take place on the last Thursday of each month at noon (PST) starting in October (no December webinar due to the holidays).



260 13<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503.399.9912  
<https://www.occa17.com>

[Click here](#) for the schedule and stay tuned for registration details this fall!

### **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).*