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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OCCA sets legislative priorities for 2025 Session to support colleges and students

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) Board of Directors has adopted its legislative priorities for the 2025 Legislative Session, setting the stage for a focused advocacy effort to secure funding and policies that will enhance access and success for community college students across the state. The Legislative Session begins January 21, 2025.

OCCA’s 2025 legislative agenda centers on six critical areas:

1. **Increasing the Community College Support Fund (CCSF)**
2. **Raising the cap on community college capital construction matching funds**
3. **Expanding funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)**
4. **Securing resources for student basic needs**
5. **Funding support for colleges to transition to corequisite student support models**
6. **Developing an Adult Reconnect work group to reengage learners with some college credit but no credential**

“Our priorities reflect the growing needs of our students and the vital role community colleges play in providing affordable, accessible education and workforce training across Oregon,” said OCCA Executive Director Abby Lee. “We are committed to ensuring that colleges have the resources necessary to serve our communities effectively, address rising costs, and improve access for learners from all backgrounds.”

Legislative Priorities in Detail

1. Community College Support Fund (CCSF)

Governor Tina Kotek’s recently released Governor’s Recommended Budget (GRB) includes \$870.4 million for the CCSF — approximately \$50 million short of what is needed to sustain current services with only modest tuition increases. OCCA will advocate for \$920 million to cover the rising costs of operations, ensuring that colleges can maintain essential programs and avoid potential cuts.

2. Capital Construction Matching Funds Cap Increase

Since 2005, state matching funds for community college capital construction projects have been capped at \$8 million per project. Adjusted for inflation, this amount should be \$14 million today. OCCA is seeking an increase to the cap to \$14 million to address the rising costs of construction and ensure colleges can modernize and expand facilities.

3. Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) Funding

OCCA is calling for a \$150 million increase to the OOG — Oregon’s primary need-based financial aid program — bringing total funding to \$450 million. This increase would help bridge gaps in educational

attainment for students, including recent high school graduates and adult learners, making post-secondary education more attainable.

4. Student Basic Needs Funding

Recognizing the growing financial challenges faced by students, OCCA supports an ongoing \$10 million investment in programs that address food insecurity, housing, and transportation needs at community colleges and public universities. These resources are essential for student success and retention.

5. Corequisite Student Support Model Funding

Corequisite support models, which have shown significant success in improving math outcomes for underserved students, require investment to expand statewide. OCCA will advocate for \$1 million in one-time funding to provide faculty training and support, accelerating the transition to these proven models.

6. Adult Reconnect Policy Bill

To help Oregonians who paused their education during the COVID-19 pandemic, OCCA is proposing a policy initiative directing the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to study and recommend implementation strategies for Adult Reconnect programs. These programs aim to bring students with some college credit back to community colleges to complete credentials aligned with workforce needs.

Advocacy Moving Forward

OCCA is committed to advancing these priorities during the 2025 Legislative Session, working closely with lawmakers, educational leaders, and community partners to ensure Oregon's community colleges can meet the needs of their students and communities.

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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.