

OCCA Update for College Boards – February 2025

Federal Issues Update

Executive Order on Federal Grant Funding: An executive order from the White House to pause funding on federal financial grant assistance caused distress among the colleges on Jan. 28 when it appeared some federal assistance for students and programs could be at risk. However, before the end of the day Jan. 28, a federal judge put a freeze on the executive order to halt any pause on funding until further review. Attorneys general from 22 states, including Oregon, also filed a lawsuit against the order by the end of that day. By the morning of Jan. 29, the White House Office of Management & Budget released a memo completely rescinding the order altogether. Regardless, OCCA recognizes that this news and the uncertainty and vagueness surrounding the executive order caused distress and frustration for our colleges, and we have continued to closely follow developments and how they could impact our colleges.

Undocumented/DACA Student Resources: Oregon community colleges are committed to safe learning environments for all students. OCCA understands that undocumented and DACA community college students may have many questions and uncertainties about their rights, options and resources. OCCA recently created a webpage as a resource to students and college employees who are navigating the changes in federal immigration policy that may impact access to education and workforce training at Oregon’s community colleges. The page includes links to college webpages and other state and federal resources. We are adding resources as they are released and actively monitoring developments at the federal level related to students and immigration.

The resource page can be found at <https://www.occa17.com/undocumentedstudents/>.

Legislative Session Update

The 2025 Legislative Session is in full swing, and OCCA has been hard at work meeting with legislators in the Capitol, testifying in bill hearings, and keeping watch over the nearly 100 bills that could have an impact on community colleges (with more being added nearly every day!). Here are some bills we’re keeping a particularly close eye on:

- [HB 5525](#) – This is the budget bill for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). The Community College Support Fund (CCSF) resides within this budget, along with the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Currently, HB 5525 identifies a need for \$858.9 million for the CCSF; however, OCCA will advocate for a true Current Service Level of \$920 million to better support the true needs of the colleges. In addition, HB 5525 lists the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$276 million for the 2025-27 biennium, but OCCA will advocate for \$450 million to expand access to more Oregonians needing financial assistance to attain an education.
- [HB 5505](#) – This is the bill for capital construction funding for community college projects (Article XI-G bond funds). A separate request to increase the cap on Article XI-G matching funds from \$8 million to \$14 million does not yet have a bill number.
- [SB 478](#) – This bill would change community college board governance and responsibilities. The bill proposes to require boards to approve a college’s membership in a state or national

association, permit colleges to provide up to \$500 monthly stipends for board members (which can be declined by board members when offered), require boards to have official email addresses available on the college website, and require an additional voting board member who is a full-time student. These mandates are not required by any other locally elected board in the state. The OCCA Board will be asked to take a position on this bill at its meeting Feb. 7.

- [HB 2669](#) – This bill requires colleges to pay part-time and full-time faculty at the same per-hour rate. OCCA has been opposed to this bill when it has come up in the past as it is not equitable since part-time faculty do not have the same roles and responsibilities as full-time faculty. OCCA will testify on the bill next week.
- [HB 3182](#) – This is the Student Basic Needs bill that OCCA supports. It directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to administer a grant program to fund basic needs programming. It also directs HECC to create a task force on student housing to study student housing needs, as well as to provide grants to certain organizations that help low-income college students with housing.

Advocacy Toolkit: OCCA has once again provided an online Advocacy Toolkit, updated for the 2025 Legislative Session. This toolkit includes informational one-pagers on various funding/policy bills and OCCA legislative priorities, talking points, testimony templates (for both oral and written testimonies), letters to the editor templates, and more. The Toolkit will be updated throughout the Legislative Session as needed. Find the Advocacy Toolkit at <https://www.occa17.com/advocacy-toolkit/>.

Legislative Summit Registration

Registration for the OCCA Legislative Summit on March 5 at the Salem Convention Center is now open! This important event is a great opportunity for college presidents, board members, campus advocacy coordinators, students and other advocates to learn more about how proposed bills could impact community colleges during the Legislative Session. You'll hear from legislators, experienced community college advocates, and students. Learn advocacy strategies and important messaging as we work to support community colleges during the 2025 Legislative Session. In addition, the Summit will conclude with a Legislator Reception, during which legislators and their staff come to mingle with Summit attendees. Delectable and hearty appetizers will be created and served by students in Southwestern Oregon Community College's Oregon Coast Culinary Institute, and complimentary wine will be provided by the wine studies and viticulture programs at Chemeketa Community College and Umpqua Community College. In addition, this year's reception will feature a showcase of CTE programs at our colleges. Don't miss it!

Register now and access hotel block information at <https://www.occa17.com/legislative-summit/>.

Following the Summit, there will be a Community College Lobby Day at the Capitol on March 6. Colleges should schedule their own meetings with local legislators for this day. This is a great

opportunity to advocate for community colleges with your legislators!

OCCA Board to Meet Feb. 7

The OCCA Board of Directors will meet virtually on Feb. 7 for its regular meeting. On the docket for discussion is the first reading of nominees for the 2025-26 OCCA Executive Committee and officer positions, as well as a review of OCCA's recent annual audit. The Board will also have a first reading of a new OCCA vision and values statement. In addition, the Board will be asked to take a position on SB 478, which could change community college board responsibilities and governance. For the full agenda, please visit <https://www.occa17.com/occa-meetings/>.

Call to Action: Board Member Resources

OCCA is developing a Board Member Resources page on our website to include information relevant to both elected college and OCCA board members. This page will have quick links to important board member information, training and engagement opportunities, and more. OCCA wants to hear from Board members about what YOU would like to see on this page! Please email casey@occa17.com with your suggestions.

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.

- **Lunch & Learn Webinars**

Workforce & Economic Development – Thanks to those who joined us for the 2025 Legislative Priorities & Advocacy Lunch and Learn in January! The next Lunch & Learn webinar is set for February 27, 2025, at noon and will highlight workforce and economic development and community colleges' roles and impacts on our state's workforce and economy. Register for this and other Lunch & Learn webinars on the OCCA website: <https://occa17.com/lunchandlearn/>. You can also find recordings from past Lunch & Learn webinars on this page.

- **2025 OCCA Legislative Summit & Lobby Day – March 5-6, 2025**

See above.

- **2025 All-Oregon Academic Team Luncheon – April 18, 2025**

The AOAT Luncheon is set for April 18, 2025, at Chemeketa Community College's Eola Center in Salem to honor outstanding community college students. This honor recognizes high-achieving community college students who demonstrate academic excellence and intellectual rigor combined with leadership and service that extends their education beyond the classroom to benefit society. Be on the lookout in early spring for details on how to register to attend this inspiring event.

OCCA Digest e-newsletter

The *OCCA Digest* is a monthly e-newsletter that highlights updates during the Legislative



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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. The newsletter is published the first Friday of each month, *except for during a legislative session, at which time it becomes a weekly publication that comes out on Thursdays.*

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, 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.