

OCCA Update for College Boards – April 2025

Legislative Session Update: Ways & Means Committee Roadshows

The Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Ways & Means – which sets agency budgets for the biennium – began traveling throughout the state on March 22 to hear from community members who are not able to travel to Salem to testify on agency budgets and other funding bills. These hearings are official public hearings and are part of the legislative process to include constituent input in decision-making. They are also great opportunities for community college advocates to testify in support of fully funding the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) at \$920 million in HB 5525 (Higher Education Coordinating Commission's agency budget). Make sure to wear your college gear/colors!

In preparation for these public Ways & Means "Roadshows", OCCA has created a variety of testimony templates for board members, faculty, staff, students, community/industry partners and other stakeholders to personalize and use in the hearings. Testimonies are limited to two-three minutes per person in an effort to allow as many people as possible to testify during each two-hour hearing. OCCA has also created posters highlighting \$920 million for the CCSF and how "Community Colleges WORK for Oregon" in two different sizes. These testimony templates and signs are posted on the OCCA website in the [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

OCCA also is working with the Campus Advocacy Coordinators (CACs) to prepare for these hearings. Those who have hearings scheduled on their campus are encouraged to have board members, students, faculty and staff on hand to welcome the Ways & Means Committee members to campus. The first hearing was held at Mt. Hood CC in Gresham on March 22, and around 20 community college advocates attended with signs promoting \$920 million for the CCSF and wearing college gear. Even MHCC's mascot attended! Those who were called up to speak on behalf of colleges during the hearing include MHCC President Lisa Skari, Clackamas CC President Tim Cook, OCCA Board Vice President and MHCC Board Member Andrew Speer, MHCC/OCCA Board Member ShaToyia Bentley, and former state representative Jeff Reardon.

The following is the schedule for the Ways & Means Roadshows around the state:

- (COMPLETED) March 22 - Mt. Hood CC, Gresham (10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.)
- March 28 - Liberty Theater, Astoria (5:00-7:00 p.m.)
- April 4 - Old Warm Springs Elementary School, Warm Springs (5:00-7:00 p.m.)
- April 11 - Eastern Oregon University, La Grande (5:00-7:00 p.m.)
- April 16 - State Capitol, Salem (5:00-7:00 p.m.)
- April 25 - Klamath CC, Klamath Falls (5:00-7:00 p.m.)

AOAT Luncheon Registration

The All-Oregon Academic Team (AOAT) Luncheon honoring outstanding community college students is set for April 18, 2025, at Chemeketa Community College's Eola Center in Salem. This event 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. Presidents, board members, faculty and

others are encouraged to attend this inspiring event. The luncheon will feature four students, as well as keynote speaker Representative Ricki Ruiz. Get your tickets now by visiting <https://occa17.com/all-oregon-academic-team/>.

April is National Community College Month

April is National Community College Month, and it is a great opportunity to share with others about the great opportunities community colleges provide students and communities! Colleges will be featuring highlights about their programs, students, alumni, faculty and more throughout the month on social media channels, so be sure to check them out and share to help spread the word! Make sure to use some special Community College Month hashtags when you share: #CCMonth, #CCsWorkForOregon, #CTEWorks, #ORCommColleges, #CommunityCollegesWork

OCCA Prepares for Ways & Means Budget Presentation

One of the most important roles that OCCA plays in supporting community colleges is to advocate for critical funding for the Community College Support Fund (CCSF), which falls under the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) agency budget, every biennium. As part of the state budget process, OCCA will present to the Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education, emphasizing the importance of community colleges and the need for increased funding to support student success. There will also be an opportunity for public testimony as part of this process. This subcommittee makes recommendations to the full budget-setting Joint Ways & Means Committee on education budgets.

Tentatively set for April 14-16 during the HECC's budget presentation, OCCA will make the case for adequate community college funding to support the increasing needs of students and communities. OCCA's presentation will showcase the voices of students, faculty, staff, presidents, board members, and community and industry partners to help tell the story of how "Community Colleges Work for Oregon." The presentation will be followed by opportunities on April 15-16 for public testimony in support of \$920 million for the CCSF. All elected board members are encouraged to participate by attending these hearings and adding their voices in support of OCCA's budget ask.

There will also be two opportunities to testify during public testimony days on related topics:

- Affordability: April 9
- Workforce: April 10

All dates are currently tentative; to find the most current information on public hearing dates as well as to sign up to testify on those dates, please [click here](#). You can also connect to stream the OCCA community college budget presentation at that link.

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 the upcoming Lunch & Learn webinar on April 24.

Diverse Perspectives: Elevating Student Voices – Community colleges have always been a cornerstone of our communities, providing education that is accessible, welcoming and inclusive to all. “Diverse Perspectives: Elevating Student Voices with the Oregon Community College Student Association (OCCSA),” will focus on the critical role of student advocacy in strengthening statewide support for community colleges. Participants will learn how OCCA is collaborating with the revitalized OCCSA and have the opportunity to meet student leaders from across Oregon. These leaders will share their unique perspectives, highlighting how amplifying student voices fosters success and ensures equitable access to community colleges for everyone.

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.

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 is 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.

###

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.