

OCCA Board of Directors Meeting Takeaways – February 7, 2025

On Friday, February 7, 2025, the OCCA Board met remotely for its quarterly meeting. Here are some takeaways from the meeting that can be shared with local community college board members.

Legislative Session: Board Takes Bill Positions

OCCA Deputy Director John Wykoff presented recommendations to the Board from the OCCA Legislative Committee regarding three proposed bills in the legislature and asked the Board to take a position on each.

- **SB 478** – This bill changes four aspects of Community College governance:
 - Requires each community college board to include a full-time student as a voting board member
 - Requires community college boards to vote on whether the college can join any state or national associations
 - Allows community college board members to receive a monthly stipend of \$500.
 - Requires board members to have a publicly available college email address.

The Legislative Committee recommended the Board oppose this bill unless substantially amended, notably the sections requiring a full-time student as a voting board member who is not elected by the college district voters and requiring the Board to vote on whether the college may join state or national organizations. Wykoff noted that requiring a voting student member erodes the foundation of elected governance. He also pointed out that the majority of community college students are part-time, and requiring the board representative to be a full-time student would exclude the majority of current community college students. Wykoff also pointed out that the community colleges were not consulted before this bill was published, despite the fact that the bill directly addresses community college governance.

The Board voted to oppose SB 478 unless favorably amended.

- **HB 2669** – This bill is a priority for the OEA and American Federation of Teachers and would require community colleges to pay part-time instructors at the same hourly rate as full-time instructors, regardless of the difference in responsibilities. Wykoff testified against this bill during a public hearing on Feb. 6. His testimony was primarily about the policy and focused on the different job roles and responsibilities between part- and full-time faculty. Wykoff noted that this bill will go to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means (Subcommittee on Education) because it includes the appropriation of funds to cover the cost of this mandate, so OCCA is in the process of collecting information to estimate the fiscal impact. Potential favorable amendments to the bill would include permissive language to give community colleges the option to pay all faculty the same hourly rate to teach, or to create a salary pool which colleges can draw from to pay part-time faculty for additional responsibilities such as committees.

The Board voted to oppose HB 2669 unless favorably amended.

- **HB 3220 (-2 amendment)** – The original bill language required nursing clinical programs to have a student to faculty ratio of 10:1. The current ratio is 8:1. Brett Rowlett from Lane

Community College spoke with the bill's sponsor, Representative Nancy Nathanson, about some concerns, including that some clinical sites are unable to accommodate a 10:1 ratio, which would limit the clinical sites available. In response, Rep. Nathanson put forward a proposed amendment with permissive language allowing, but not requiring, a ratio of up to 10:1. Wykoff shared that community college nursing directors appreciated the amended permissive language.

The Board voted to support HB 3220 with the -2 amendment.

OCCA Receives Clean Audit Report

Toby Roth, with Grove, Muller & Swank, REDW Advisors & CPAs, presented the OCCA Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Audit Report to the Board. The audit was clean, and the financial statements were accurate and free from error. There were also no significant concerns with the organization's financial procedures, and no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses were identified. Board members expressed their appreciation to OCCA Director of Operations Katie Archambault for her work on the audit and OCCA's financials throughout the year.

First Reading: OCCA Values Statement

Miriam Friedman with Strategic Spark Consulting worked with the Executive Committee to develop a draft values statement for the Board to give a first reading. OCCA Executive Director Abby Lee said that in the process of developing the values statement, the Executive Committee determined the need for a vision statement that prefaces the values. Both statements will be brought to the Board for approval at its May meeting. [Click here to review the draft.](#)

Nominations for 2025-2026 OCCA Executive Committee

The slate of nominees for the 2025-2026 OCCA Executive Committee was presented to the Board with recommendations from the OCCA Nominating Committee. The nominees are:

- President – Andrew Speer, Board Member, Mt Hood Community College
- Vice-President – Pat Fahey, Board Member, Rogue Community College
- Secretary – Jessica Howard, President, Chemeketa Community College
- Treasurer – Rachel Pokrandt, President, Umpqua Community College
- At-Large (2024-26) - Kristin Adams, Board Member, Linn-Benton Community College
- At-Large (2025-27) – Susan Anderson, Board Member, Southwestern Community College
- Past President – Austin Fohnagy, Board Member, Lane Community College

In addition to these officers and Executive Committee members, there will be two Ex-Officio members who serve on the Executive Committee by virtue of their positions:

- Oregon Presidents' Council Chair – Mark Browning, President, Blue Mountain Community College
- Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development Director – Donna Lewelling

The board will take action on this slate of nominees at its May meeting, when nominations may also be made from the floor.

Federal Issues

Carrie Warick-Smith, the Vice President of Public Policy at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), gave a national perspective on current federal issues. She provided an overview of the 119th Congress and President Trump's Cabinet nominees. She also shared [ACCT's community college legislative priorities](#):

- Oppose: Risk-sharing; cutting support to low-income students
- Support: Tax-free Pell Grants, Bipartisan Workforce Pell
- Support WIOA Reauthorization
- Title III, IV, V, VI Appropriations Priorities
- Farm Bill: SNAP and Rural Community College support

OCCA Senior Policy Advisor/General Counsel Karen Smith then provided an Oregon perspective on federal issues. Smith has been closely monitoring information about federal executive orders, guidelines, and new laws. Her primary message to the Board was to reassure communities, students, faculty and staff that we remain committed to the mission and values of the colleges in serving students in their education and career goals. Smith cautioned against over complying before additional guidance is provided by the federal government.

OCCA has started to include federal updates in the OCCA Digest, which is released weekly during the legislative session. The Undocumented & DACA Students Resource Page has local, state-wide, and national resources, and will continue to be updated. [Click here to view the page](#).

Upcoming Events

OCCA Legislative Summit – March 5-6, 2025

The 2025 Legislative Summit & Lobby Day will take place March 5 and 6 in Salem. 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 will hear from legislators, experienced community college advocates, and students. Learn advocacy best practices and important messaging as we work to support community colleges during the 2025 Legislative Session. Following the summit on March 5, there will be a Legislator Reception. This is a great opportunity to mingle with legislators and their staff, as well as enjoy an amazing spread of appetizers from Southwestern Oregon Community College's culinary program and wine from Chemeketa and Umpqua community colleges' wine programs. There will also be a Showcase of CTE programs from colleges around the state. The summit will take place March 5 at the Salem Convention Center, while March 6 is the day for colleges to meet with legislators at the Capitol. Register now on OCCA's website, <https://occa17.com/legislative-summit/>.

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. This event honors high-achieving community college students who demonstrate academic excellence and intellectual rigor combined with leadership and service that extends their



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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.

Have a question about any of this information or other community college issues? Want to learn how to get more involved with the OCCA Board? Contact OCCA staff at occa@occa17.com or visit www.occa17.com. Be sure to also follow us on Facebook @OregonCommunityCollegeAssociation and on Twitter @ORCommColleges and subscribe to the OCCA Digest e-newsletter on our website.