

OCCA Board of Directors Meeting Takeaways – May 15, 2026

On Friday, May 15, 2026, the OCCA Board met at Columbia Gorge Community College in The Dalles, as well as provided a virtual option, for its final quarterly meeting of 2025-2026. Here are some takeaways from the meeting that you are encouraged to share with your local community college board members during your respective monthly college board meetings. OCCA hopes these takeaways will help guide your conversations at your college board meetings and elicit feedback, engagement and discussion.

OCCA 2026-27 Board & Officer Elections

The Board approved the slate of nominations from the OCCA Nominating Committee for the 2026-27 OCCA Officers and Executive Committee membership.

OCCA Bylaws and Board Policies provide that the current Vice-President will become President, current Treasurer will become Secretary, and current President will become Past-President as officers of the Association who serve on the Executive Committee. The OCCA Officers and Executive Committee members for 2026-27 are:

- President – Pat Fahey, Board Member, Rogue CC
- Vice President – Kristin Adams, Board Member, Linn-Benton CC
- Secretary – Dr. Rachel Pokrandt, President, Umpqua CC
- Treasurer – Dr. Kenny Lawson, President, Columbia Gorge CC
- Board Member At-Large – Susan Anderson, Board Member, Southwestern Oregon CC
- Board Member At-Large – Gina Sanchez-Roletto, Board Member, Portland CC
- Past President – Andrew Speer, Board Member, Mt. Hood CC
- OPC Chair (Ex-Officio) – Jessica Howard, President, Chemeketa CC
- CCWD Director (Ex-Officio) – Donna Lewelling, CCWD Director, HECC

The meeting was also the last for Mt. Hood CC Board Member Andrew Speer as OCCA President. He thanked the board and OCCA staff for their support over the past year, and others praised his thoughtful leadership.

OCCA Executive Director Evaluation

The Board approved the annual evaluation of OCCA Executive Director Dr. Abby Lee.

The Board reviewed the evaluation of Executive Director Abby Lee in Executive Session and approved the evaluation in regular session. Board President Andrew Speer praised Dr. Lee's strong leadership, strategic direction, and continued work on behalf of Oregon's community colleges, noting the Board's positive evaluation and appreciation for her ongoing service to the association and its member colleges.

Board Governance & Leadership Survey

The OCCA Member Services Committee is seeking your input to help shape future governance education, leadership development, and professional learning opportunities for Oregon's

community college board members and leaders. As part of the Committee's 2025-26 goals, OCCA has launched the Governance & Leadership Education Needs Survey to better understand the training, resource, and support needs of locally elected board members and presidents around the state.

Your feedback will directly inform:

- Board education and governance programming
- Annual Conference and professional development planning
- Future training topics and resource development
- Strategies to strengthen statewide board engagement and leadership support

The survey should take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete, and responses will help ensure OCCA's future offerings are aligned with the real needs and priorities of our member colleges. The Member Services Committee has set a goal of achieving an 80% response rate statewide, and we would greatly appreciate your participation. The survey will remain open through June 19, 2026.

To take the survey, use this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y8JCXMF>

OCCA 2026-27 Budget

The Board unanimously approved the OCCA FY 2025-26 supplemental budget and the FY2026-27 operating budget.

The OCCA Board adopted both a FY2025-26 supplemental budget and the FY2026-27 operating budget. The supplemental budget aligns spending authority with updated program activity and projected year-end actuals. OCCA continues to project a stronger-than-anticipated ending fund balance for FY2025-26 due to strong grant and event revenue and personnel savings.

The FY2026-27 budget was developed collaboratively by OCCA staff and the OCCA Budget Committee and reflects a balanced, fiscally responsible approach that maintains core advocacy and member services while addressing known cost increases associated with a long legislative session and other operational cost pressures. The adopted budget includes a 3% increase to OCCA dues and nominal use of fund balance. OCCA also continues to maintain reserve levels above established policy targets.

Community College Support Fund Budget Request

The Board heard from OCCA Executive Director Abby Lee about the presentation she made to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Funding & Achievement Committee on May 8 regarding the community college funding request for 2027-29. The request included a 7.24% increase to the Community College Support Fund (CCSF), for a total CCSF of \$908 million. It's important to note that this amount will likely change as the budget process plays out over the next several months as the HECC puts forward its Agency Request Budget and the state CSL, and

PERS cost projections are updated further.

OCCA convened a workgroup over the last several months to develop this request. The workgroup included elected board members, presidents and other community college administrators, including college business officers.

The presentation marks the first step in the 2027–29 CCSF funding process. HECC Commissioners will vote on the community college combined budget request during their June meeting. [Click here](#) to review the OCCA budget presentation to the HECC.

Board Member Development: The Role of Board Members in Negotiations

OCCA General Counsel & Senior Policy Advisor Karen Smith provided the Board with a high-level overview of the role of community college board members during employee contract negotiations. While OCCA is not directly involved in local labor negotiations, the discussion focused on governance responsibilities, communication considerations, and the importance of supporting effective board leadership during collective bargaining processes. OCCA also discussed opportunities to develop future governance resources and training to support board members navigating these complex issues across the state. Contact your college president or email Karen directly (ksmith@occa17.com) with any feedback.

Upcoming Events

OCCA Lunch & Learn Webinars – May 28, 2026 & June 25, 2026

There are just two OCCA Lunch & Learn webinars left for the current academic year.

- **May 28 – Short-Term Workforce Pell: Strategic Update & Next Steps**
OCCA has partnered with Education Design Lab, the HECC, and Chemeketa Community College for a presentation on Short-Term Workforce Pell, which is poised to impact how community colleges can deliver workforce training. This Lunch & Learn offers a concise, high-level briefing on the national direction, Oregon’s progress, and what colleges should be preparing for now.
- **June 25 – Can the Board Discuss This Issue in Closed Session?**
Join us to learn more about Oregon Public Meetings Law (PML) and requirements for Executive Session meetings. This Lunch & Learn will include an overview of the legal exemptions that allow the board to meet in Executive Session, requirements for notice and minutes, and best practices for avoiding PML violations when meeting in closed session. Karen Smith, OCCA Senior Policy Advisor & General Counsel, will lead this training and answer questions you have about Executive Sessions.

All Lunch & Learn webinars are included with your OCCA membership and will take place on the last Thursday of each month through June. To learn more and to register for either (or both!) of the

webinars, visit <https://occa17.com/lunchandlearn/>. Recordings of past Lunch & Learn webinars are also available on that web page.

2026 OCCA Conference – November 4-6, 2026: Call for Breakout Session Proposals

The annual OCCA Conference is set for November 4-6 at Sunriver Resort in central Oregon. This year's theme highlights how "Community Colleges Work for Oregon" and the critical role board members, college leaders, and partners play in that success.

OCCA has issued a call for breakout session proposals, and invites dynamic, engaging proposals for breakout sessions that showcase innovative practices, effective strategies, and meaningful outcomes that demonstrate how community colleges are working for students, communities, and the state. Breakout session tracks will include how Community Colleges Work for:

- Board Leadership & Governance
- Student Success & Institutional Effectiveness
- Oregon's Economy & Communities
- Advocacy & Investment

OCCA encourages proposals that highlight innovative approaches across all topic areas, including the use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, new service delivery models, and creative strategies that improve outcomes, strengthen governance, and advance community impact.

Conference session proposals are due by August 14 and must be submitted using OCCA's online form. Find more information about proposal submissions by visiting OCCA's Conference web page: <https://occa17.com/conference/>

2026 OCCA Howard Cherry Award Nominations

The annual OCCA Howard Cherry Awards are now accepting nominations for Outstanding Board Member, Outstanding Advocate and Outstanding Administrator. The awards are held during the OCCA Conference on November 5 at Sunriver Resort in Sunriver, OR.

All submissions must be made using OCCA's online nomination form no later than August 14. For more information on nomination requirements and submission details, visit OCCA's website: <https://occa17.com/conference/>.

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, on Twitter @ORCommColleges, and on LinkedIn @oregon-community-college-association and subscribe to the OCCA Digest e-newsletter on our website.