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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.

2025 Legislative Agenda Items

Community College Support Fund - \$920 million to the CCSF to fund current services with only modest tuition increases on average statewide. At this funding level many colleges may still face programming cuts.

Increase the Cap on Community College Capital Construction Projects – Since 2005 the state has capped XI-G Bond funding colleges may receive for capital projects at \$8 million. Adjusting for inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index, that number would be nearly \$14 million in today's dollars. Colleges are requesting cap be increased to \$14 million per project.

Oregon Opportunity Grant Funding – Increase the Oregon Opportunity Grant by \$150 million to \$450 million.*

Student Basic Needs - \$10 million in ongoing funding for student basic needs programs at community colleges and public universities.*

Corequisite Transition – \$1 million in one-time funds for faculty release time and training.

Adult Reconnect Policy Bill – Bill to direct the HECC to convene workgroup on adult reconnect.

Behavioral Health Addiction Counseling Funding – \$7.5 million in ongoing funding to produce 250 additional addiction counselors statewide.**

Cybersecurity – \$3.57 million in ongoing funding to support base- cybersecurity at community colleges.

Applied Baccalaureate Programs – \$2.5 million in one-time funding for up to 12 new community college applied baccalaureate programs.

Adult Reconnect - \$10 million in funding for last-dollar grant program for individuals 25 years and over seeking an associate degree or industry-recognized certificates or credentials.

Eighth Quarter Payment - \$100-\$115 million in one-time funding to reverse an ongoing deferment of the final CCSF payment to colleges in which the Eighth quarter payment of each biennium is deferred to first quarter of the following biennium

*These proposals are supported by the members a coalition of a coalition including community colleges, public universities, students and labor. OCCA supported a previous version of this proposal.

**OCCA is convening a workgroup of college behavioral health directors to evaluate the cost and outcomes in the current version of the proposal.

OREGON'S Community Colleges



2025 COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUPPORT FUND (CCSF) REQUEST

Oregon's community colleges have been innovative and strategic through challenging times, and enrollments are climbing as a result. State support is critical to maintaining access and fostering student success.

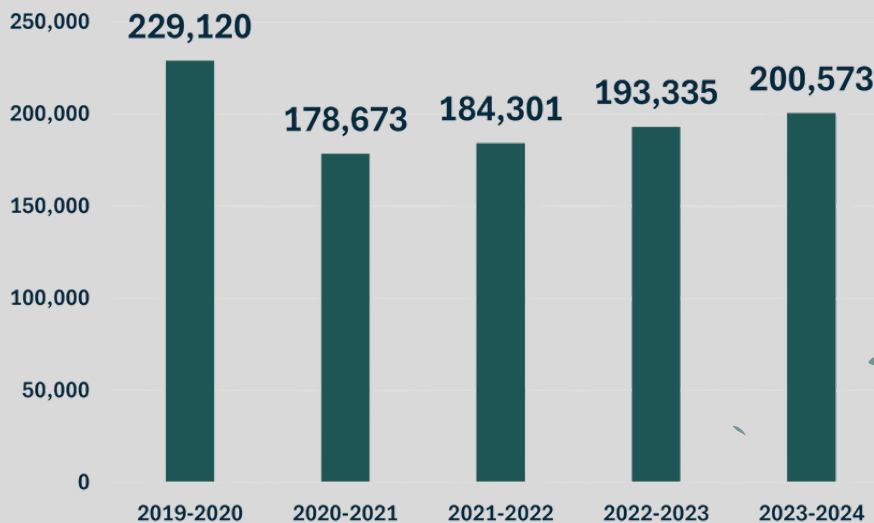
**COLLEGES NEED
YOUR SUPPORT!**

\$920 MILLION

Why?

- Student enrollment continues to increase across the state - statewide fall term headcount is up 4.3% and FTE is up 7% over 2023
- College costs are projected to grow 14.9% for the biennium
- Many employee contracts have reflected recent high inflation.
- The final biennium of federal relief funds has ended.
- Community colleges are adapting to serve changing student needs.

Headcount - Statewide



While not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, community college enrollment continues to steadily increase. Fall enrollment figures for 2024-2025 show significant increases at the majority of the colleges.

Source: HECC Data Mart, 2019-2024



ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES



Capital Construction Cap

Adjusts for inflation to support capital projects critical to community colleges. An adjustment to the cap hasn't been made since Article XI-G bonds first became available to colleges in 2005. **Cost: Raises the cap from \$8 million to \$14 million (ongoing)**



Oregon Opportunity Grant

Expands access to need-based financial aid, benefiting high school graduates and working adults, and addressing inequities in educational attainment. Increases the OOG to \$450 million. **Cost: \$150 million (ongoing)**



Student Basic Needs

Addresses growing challenges in food, housing, and transportation to support student success at Oregon's public community colleges and universities. **Cost: \$10 million (ongoing)**



Corequisite Transition

Requests funds to support faculty release time and training for the transition to corequisite supports. The Corequisite Workgroup was mandated by SB1552 in 2024. **Cost: \$1 million (one-time)**



Adult Reconnect Policy

Directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to convene a workgroup for reengaging adults with some college but no degree, addressing enrollment declines and workforce needs. **Cost: \$0**



**Oregon's 17
Community
Colleges**



College Board Resolution – 2025 Community College Legislative Priorities

Whereas:

1. Community colleges are the only sector of public post-secondary education open to all students, regardless of education or skill level.
2. Community colleges serve the largest number of underrepresented and first-generation students in Oregon, playing a vital role in reducing educational, economic, and social inequities.
3. Community colleges provide critical programs, including Career and Technical Education, workforce training, short-term certificates, GED programs, and dual-credit courses for all Oregonians.
4. They are essential for bridging high school to four-year degrees and upskilling adults to meet workforce demands.
5. Insufficient financial aid and capped funding hinder students' ability to pursue post-secondary education and training.

Be it Resolved:

The _____ Board of Directors supports the Oregon Community College Association Board's Legislative Priorities for the 2025 Legislative Session, including:

- **\$920 million for the Community College Support Fund (CCSF):** Ensures current service levels with modest statewide tuition increases.
- **\$150 million increase for the Oregon Opportunity Grant:** Expands access to need-based financial aid, benefiting high school graduates and working adults, and addressing inequities in educational attainment.
- **Raising the Article XI-G Bond funding cap to \$14 million:** Adjusts for inflation to support capital projects critical to community colleges. An adjustment to the cap hasn't been made since Article XI-G bonds first became available to colleges in 2005.
- **\$10 million for student basic needs:** Addresses growing challenges in food, housing, and transportation to support student success.
- **\$1 million for corequisite supports:** Funds faculty release time and training as well as implementation to improve student success in math during the first year of college, particularly for historically underrepresented students.
- **Adult Reconnect policy bill:** Directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to convene a workgroup for reengaging adults with some college but no degree, addressing enrollment declines and workforce needs.

Community colleges are essential to Oregon's education and workforce ecosystems, and these priorities will strengthen their ability to serve students, businesses, and communities statewide.

Board of Education President

Date