COCC Board of Directors
Advocacy Committee
Meeting Agenda
October 28, 2026
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Remotely via Zoom

Committee Members: Erin Foote Morgan (Chair), Erica Skatvold, Erin Merz

COCC Staff: Greg Pereira (President), Lucas Alberg (Director of Marketing and Public Relations), Kyle Matthews (Executive Assistant to the President)

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Approval of September 23, 2026 Meeting Minutes** – Items 2.1-4

3. **Priority Advocacy Issues and Strategies**
    a. National
        i. Federal lawsuit
        ii. Any others
    b. State
        i. 2027 Legislative session
            1. Oregon Legislature Calendar
    c. Local
        i. COCC Bond

4. **Outreach Updates and Strategies**
    a. Elected leader engagement – Items 3.1-2
    b. Budget reductions and targeted outreach

5. **Standing meeting time**

6. **Adjourn**

COCC Board of Directors
Advocacy Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2026
2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Remotely via Zoom

Committee Members: Erin Foote Morgan (Chair), Erica Skatvold, Erin Merz

COCC Staff: Greg Pereira (President), Kyle Matthews (Executive Assistant to the President)

1. **Call to Order**
    a. The meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m.
2. **Approval of July 17, 2026 Meeting Minutes** – Items 2.1-4
    a. Motion to approve the minutes.
        i. 1st: Erica Skatvold
        ii. 2nd: Erin Foote Morgan
        iii. In favor: Erin Foote Morgan, Erica Skatvold
        iv. Opposed/abstained: none (Erin Merz was absent during the vote)
3. **Federal Lawsuit Update**
    a. Pereira explained that this lawsuit involves 14 of Oregon's 17 community colleges, including COCC. The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) is trying to help coordinate joint representation for those involved, but each college can also opt for individual representation or not challenge the lawsuit. As of this meeting, COCC has not yet been served any legal documents regarding this case.
    b. Foote Morgan asked Pereira to remind the Committee what this lawsuit entails.
        i. Pereira reminded the Committee about the context around the lawsuit.
        ii. Foote Morgan shared a link to the lawsuit: https://www.justice.gov/d9/2026-08/2026.08.27_usa_v._or_tuition_as_filed.pdf
    c. Foote Morgan asked if there is any action the Committee could consider taking regarding this matter.
        i. Pereira suggested that there is no need for immediate action. After the Board decides how to proceed, this Committee could consider messaging to explain this situation.
4. **Evaluate Past Committee Performance and Discuss 2027 Goal Setting**
    a. Foote Morgan noted that, in the past, this Committee has aspired to develop a calendar of goals for the year, expanding outreach and tracking legislation that would affect COCC.

b. Merz suggested that the Committee had a lot of good conversations around potential advocacy efforts, and that finding a solution to allow students-in-custody at Deer Ridge Correctional Institute (DRCI) to use laptops to be an accomplishment. Foote Morgan concurred.
    i. Pereira suggested that this would not have happened if the Committee did not get involved. Foote Morgan and Merz concurred.
c. Foote Morgan suggested that COCC's letter of petition in opposition to reducing state funding for community colleges was another accomplishment. Merz concurred.
    i. Foote Morgan estimated that 1,700 individuals signed the petition and asked if there were any similar petitions in the state.
    ii. Pereira said there were similar petitions, but none had nearly as many signatures.
d. Foote Morgan suggested that the accomplishments named above were good foundational steps for the Committee and asked what else could be done, noting Merz' prior suggestion on tracking their goals. She also suggested that their outreach meetings with legislators could be considered an accomplishment and that those meetings could be better tracked in the future, and that the Committee could aspire to be involved in Oregon's next legislative session.
    i. Merz concurred and suggested that budget advocacy with the state could be an important subject to discuss.
e. Skatvold asked if the Committee could discuss ideas before setting goals for the coming year. Foote Morgan concurred.
f. Foote Morgan noted that the incoming federal lawsuit discussed earlier could be another advocacy opportunity.
g. Merz suggested there could also be an advocacy opportunity in the ongoing labor negotiations across Oregon.
    i. Foote Morgan suggested that it could be a reason to increase outreach efforts during the fall quarter.
h. Skatvold asked if the increase in Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) rates could be an advocacy opportunity.
    i. Pereira suggested that it might not be an opportunity, as those rates increase often and COCC had a better return than expected this year.
i. Pereira suggested that applying for a GO bond around 2030 would be an advocacy opportunity. This can be discussed further at the special Board meeting on Friday during the presentation on the facilities master plan. Merz concurred.
j. Foote Morgan suggested that the Committee's agendas could be more strategic in the coming year. She will work with Matthews on setting a slate of priority meetings.
    i. Merz concurred and suggested that the Committee could plan to regularly follow up on who they should schedule outreach meetings with.

k. Foote Morgan asked if there is any legislation in Salem that the Committee should be following.
    i. Pereira said that matching funds from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) could be topics to follow. COCC has historically been asked to not pursue individual advocacy on this matter, but rather support a joint effort led by the OCCA. Another potential topic to follow would be HB 4124, which could lead to community colleges merging with four-year institutions if passed. Once the findings on this matter have been released, the Committee will be able to create talking points about it. Pereira suggested that it is unlikely that COCC would be expected to merge with another institution, but the bill could also prevent community colleges from offering bachelor's degrees
l. Merz noted that there was nothing unusual to report from OCCA's most recent update.
m. Skatvold asked if there was anything of note regarding the CCSF.
    i. Pereira said that the Oregon Presidents Council (OPC) has recommended some changes to the CCSF. When it was first established, appropriation was adjusted every three years based on the colleges' enrollments. Metrics have since been added to incentivize completion, retention, working with the most vulnerable populations, etc. However, these changes did not include new funding. While that has not significantly affected COCC or some other colleges, there has not been enough funding to meet the rise in enrollments since the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the OPC and some of the community colleges' business officers have formed a workgroup to reexamine this funding model and make any recommendations to HECC. Pereira is part of that workgroup. If a recommendation is developed, the Advocacy Committee could then discuss the potential for supporting it.
n. Foote Morgan asked if it would be helpful for the Committee to map out its activity for the 2026-27 fiscal year.
    i. Merz suggested that some planning for advocacy along the potential new GO bond's timeline could be a good idea. Foote Morgan concurred.
    ii. Pereira noted that COCC recently had its first meeting with a public relations firm with experience in raising public support for community college bonds. College leadership has also been meeting with financial consultants from Piper Sander about whether COCC should seek the same bond rate as before or a higher rate to meet rising costs. COCC's current bond will sunset in 2030, so while timing is not urgent, the College could consider applying for a bond sooner.

iii. Foote Morgan asked for the name of the public relations firm that COCC is in contact with.
    1. Pereira said their name is Wright Public Affairs.
    2. Foote Morgan suggested COCC send out a request for proposal from other public relations firms. Pereira concurred.

5. **Priority Advocacy Issues and Strategies**
    a. Laptops for DRCI Students-in-Custody
        i. Merz reported that she, Pereira and members of COCC's DRCI faculty met twice with senior staff from Oregon's Department of Corrections (DOC) to discuss the students' needs for laptops. After the first meeting, the DOC employees said they would take the proposal into consideration. At the second meeting, COCC was granted permission to create a pilot program that would allow students-in-custody to test new educational technology. The cost for the hardware will be covered through a grant from the Roundhouse Foundation and COCC will cover software, labor, maintenance, and any remaining costs. Students could have access to laptops within the next few months.
        ii. Pereira suggested that these meetings helped clear up some mis-communication between COCC and DOC.
    b. OCCA Talking Points – Item 4.1-3
        i. This item was tabled until the next meeting.
    c. Lightcast Economic Impact Report
        i. This item was tabled until the next meeting.
6. **Outreach Updates and Strategies**
    a. This item was tabled until the next meeting.
7. **Next meeting:** To be determined
    a. Foote Morgan suggested the Committee could plan on revisiting the list of priority outreach contacts at their next meeting. Merz and Pereira concurred.
8. **Adjourn**
    a. The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

COCC's Elected Legislators

- State Rep. Emerson Levy (D), District 53
    - Bend, south Redmond, Tumalo, Sisters, Eagle Crest and Black Butte
    - **Erin Foote Morgan and Dr. Chesley met with her on 1/30/25**

- State Rep. Jason Kropf (D), District 54
    - Bend
    - **Erin Merz and Dr. Chesley met with him on 1/27/25**

- State Rep. Werner Reschke (R), District 55
    - Bend, Deschutes River Woods, Sunriver, La Pine, Gilcrest, Chiloquin, Chemult, Chiloquin, Sprague River, Beatty, Bly, Bonanza, Dairy, Malin, Merrill and most of the south eastern parts of Klamath Falls
    - **Erin Foote Morgan and Dr. Chesley met with him on 2/3/25**

- State Rep. Vicki Breese-Iverson (R), District 59
    - Crook County and parts of Jefferson and Deschutes Counties
    - **Laura Craska Cooper and Dr. Chesley met with her on 2/11/25**

- State Sen. Anthony Broadman (D), District 27
    - Bend, Redmond, Tumalo, Sisters, Black Butte, and Eagle Crest
    - **Erin Merz and Dr. Chesley met with him on 1/23/25**

- State Sen. Diane Linthicum (R), District 28
    - Jackson, Klamath, Lake, Deschutes and Crook counties
    - Erin Foote Morgan can meet with her. **Follow-up email sent on 5/7/26.**

- State Sen. Mike McClane (R), District 30
    - Baker, Crook, Grant, Harney, Lake, Malheur and Parts of Deschutes and Jefferson Counties
    - **Laura Craska Cooper and Dr. Chesley met with him on 1/15/25**

- U.S. Rep. Janelle Bynum (D), District 5
    - Linn County, most of Clackamas and Deschutes counties, and parts of Multnomah and Marion counties
    - **Foote Morgan and Dr. Pereira will meet with members of Bynum's staff on 8/11/25**

- U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz (R), District 2
    - Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Douglas (partial), Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jackson, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Wheeler Counties
    - **Follow-up email sent to Margie Anderson on 1/17/25**

- U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D)
    - **Erin Foote Morgan and Dr. Chesley met with his legislative assistant on 1/6/25**

- U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D)

- **Erin Foote Morgan and Dr. Chesley met with his regional representative on 1/31/2025**