COCC Board of Directors
Advocacy Committee
Meeting Agenda
August 19, 2026
12:00 – 1:00 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 May 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes** – Items 2.1-4

3. **Priority Advocacy Issues and Strategies**

    a. OCCA Talking Points – Items 3.1-7

4. **Outreach Updates and Strategies**

5. **Next meeting:** To be determined

6. **Adjourn**

COCC Board of Directors
Advocacy Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 17, 2026
10:00 – 11:00 a.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. **Called to Order at 10:02 a.m.**
2. **Approval of May 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes** – Items 2.1-4
    a. For item 3a.1, Merz clarified that students-in-custody at Deer Ridge Correctional Institution (DRCI) have not *written letters* of concern regarding access to laptops. They have only *expressed* their concerns.
    b. Motion to approve the minutes with the above correction.
        i. 1st: Erin Merz
        ii. 2nd: Erica Skatvold
        iii. In favor: Erin Foote Morgan, Erica Skatvold, Erin Merz
        iv. Opposed or abstained: none
3. **Priority Advocacy Issues and Strategies**
    a. Proposed Federal Grant Rule Changes
        i. Foote Morgan reminded the Committee about an email she forwarded to them regarding proposed changes to rules on federal grants. She asked if this could be something for the Committee to address and what steps could be taken.
        ii. Pereira said that the Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) is working on a unified response that COCC could support. He offered to discuss it with them further.
        iii. Alberg said that this issue has not been discussed by the OCCA's Campus Advocacy Coordinators (CAC). He will plan on asking about it during their next meeting on the Thursday after this meeting.
    b. Other OCCA Updates
        i. Pereira said that the OCCA is working on a response regarding state-level interpretations of federal legislation around how restrictive workforce Pell grants should be. The federal version says that a grant could be awarded to a program that trains for a high-demand job *or* meets a need in the community. The Oregon version of the legislation would require

both qualifications. Pereira suggested it was not of significant concern and that the Oregon legislature would favor the federal interpretation.

ii. Pereira will be attending the Oregon Presidents' Retreat during the first week of August and expects to have more information to share at the next Committee meeting.

iii. Alberg said the CAC will have a retreat the week after this meeting, so he will likely have more to share at this Committee's next meeting as well.

   1. Foote Morgan asked what is on the CAC retreat's agenda.
   2. Alberg said there would be an overview of the OCCA's annual community colleges budget request and development of key messages; the state legislation timeline; a presentation from Lightcast on the economic impact report; and some planning about legislative campus visits, lobbying in Salem, a presentation for the Ways and Means subcommittee on education in April, up-coming lunch and learn webinars, and advocacy toolkit needs. Alberg further explained that he had developed a marketing plan to disseminate some datapoints through storytelling, which he plans present to COCC's Board at a later date.

c. Laptops for Students at Deer Ridge Correctional Institution (DRCI)

i. Merz said that Sen. Anthony Broadman was not able to visit DRCI after the graduation ceremony, but either he or a member of his staff would still be interested in discussing the matter. DRCI instructor Emma Chaput had suggested including a student's voice in the conversation, but was unsure whether a student would be allowed to attend a Zoom meeting. DRCI Director of Education Jay Sklenar shared some facts about the program that would suggest that hiring a part-time IT professional to oversee the students' laptops would be unnecessary, especially since the welding students at DRCI already have access to laptops without need for additional assistance. Merz was sent contact information for Larry Bennett from Oregon's Department of Corrections (DOC) and suggested that he might be a good person to contact.

ii. Pereira suggested that contacting Bennett could be a good idea and asked Matthews to send him an email to ask if he would like to meet with COCC personnel to discuss this matter.

iii. Foote Morgan asked Merz to represent this Committee in a meeting with DOC leadership. Merz concurred.

iv. Pereira suggested that Sklenar could represent the DRCI faculty if Chaput and Jackie Currie are off contract. He also suggested inviting the DRCI Administrator as well. Merz concurred.

v. Foote Morgan asked if Sen. Broadman could be invited as well.

vi. Pereira said that would be a good idea. He noted that he is unsure whether Bennett would have final say on the matter or if it might be the next person up the chain of command. He suggested ensuring the Senator is included in a meeting with the final decision maker. He also said that Zak Boone is in contact with an organization that is willing to cover the costs for laptops if that is a barrier for the DOC.

vii. Foote Morgan suggested that Bennett would be the correct person to contact as he is the direct report to the office of the director of the DOC for matters of education and rehabilitation. Tracie Hightower, Director of Education and Training, reports to Bennett and could also be invited to a meeting.

4. **Outreach Updates and Strategies**
   a. Foote Morgan suggested that the middle of summer might not be the best time of year for outreach. She also noted that there could be new Committee members in the near future, and if that happens, a discussion on outreach strategies for 2027 may be need to wait until then.
      i. Skatvold noted that official committee appointments are made during the Board's regular meeting in September.
      ii. Matthews added that he had sent the current committee rosters to Jim Porter, who will be contacting each Board member about their areas of interest.
      iii. Skatvold suggested that it is unlikely that this Committee's roster would change and that they could start making plans for 2027 now.
   b. Foote Morgan recalled Pereira's initial meetings with community leaders as he started his position in July 2025 and asked how they have helped in his work.
      i. Pereira said, in these meetings, he has learned how much members of the community appreciate COCC, which is unique for a community college. It seems that everyone in Central Oregon is aware of and has a connection to the College. When considering applying for a bond in 2030, College leadership should consider community members who might be supportive.
   c. Foote Morgan concurred that outreach strategies around a 2030 bond should be a high priority and noted that there will be a new strategic plan for the College starting in 2027.
      i. Pereira clarified that the current strategic plan is scheduled to end in 2027, but the College could decide to extend that plan. Pereira, Aimee Metcalf, Amy Ward, and Tom Barry will take the lead on this, starting on July 1, 2027. COCC will also have an accreditation visit in 2027.
      ii. Foote Morgan suggested that the timing of a new strategic plan may be out of sync with Board member elections, noting that new Board members could join COCC and be expected to adopt a new strategic plan

that they had no part in developing. She suggested it could make more sense for a Board to have a year learn about a strategic plan before voting on it.

iii. Skatvold noted that Board member elections happen every odd numbered year.
iv. Pereira added that, if a strategic plan would begin on July 1, it would likely need to be approved by the Board by April of that year. This could avoid the problem of new Board members having to approve a new strategic plan.
v. Foote Morgan concurred, noting that she, Merz and Porter had to vote on a new strategic plan while they had only been on the Board for about two months.
vi. Pereira suggested the current strategic plan could be extended another year in order to address any unmet goals and get around the possibility of new Board members having to vote on it. For the new plan, one goal will likely focus on student success, another will likely focus on community, and a third will likely focus on people. He suggested these three points of focus could be presented to each department at the College and they could have opportunities to provide suggestions.
vii. Foote Morgan asked Pereira if there might be any outreach for feedback outside of COCC during the development of the new strategic plan.
viii. Pereira suggested there could be opportunities for community members, businesses and partners to provide feedback for the new strategic plan.

d. Foote Morgan asked other Committee members what issues could be prioritized in the next year in terms of outreach, such as the Oregon legislative session and the 2030 bond.
    i. Merz recalled making a list of stakeholder groups for this Committee to have meetings with, and their focus has been on lawmakers over the past year.
    ii. Foote Morgan suggested the Committee could reflect on its work over the past year at their next meeting. Skatvold and Merz concurred.

5. **Next meeting:** Wednesday, August 19 at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom
    a. Foote Morgan suggested planning on a standing meeting for this Committee moving forward.
6. **Adjourned at 10:49 a.m.**

Oregon Community College Association

Community Colleges Work for Oregon

Talking Points for the 2027–29 Community College Funding Request

CORE MESSAGE: Community colleges prepare workers, expand opportunity, strengthen local economies, and provide an affordable path to education in every part of Oregon. Continued state investment is essential to sustain this work.

Enrollment growth is good for Oregon—and it increases college costs

- Community college enrollment continues to grow, especially in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that prepare students for high-demand jobs across Oregon.
- This growth is good news for students, employers, and communities. It means more Oregonians are gaining skills for careers in health care, advanced manufacturing, construction, public safety, education, technology, and other critical fields.
- CTE programs are also among the most expensive programs colleges provide. They require specialized faculty, up-to-date equipment, laboratories, safety measures, technology, and often smaller class sizes.
- **As enrollment and workforce demand grow,** funding must grow with them.

Open access means serving Oregonians at every starting point

- Community colleges serve students pursuing GEDs, English-language learning, short-term workforce credentials, CTE certificates and degrees, transfer degrees, and applied bachelor's degrees.
- They serve more low-income, first-generation, rural, adult, and historically underserved students than any other sector of Oregon higher education.
- Open access also means providing the advising, financial aid assistance, tutoring, disability services, technology, basic-needs support, and other resources students need to persist and complete.
- Community colleges work for Oregon because they make education and workforce opportunity available to people who may not be able to attend a four-year institution or enroll full time.

Most community college students balance school with work and family

- Most community college students attend part time while working, raising children, caring for family members, or managing transportation, housing, and other responsibilities.
- Lightcast estimates that 73% of Oregon community college students are employed while attending college.
- Part-time attendance is not a sign of lower commitment. It reflects the realities of the working adults, parents, and other students community colleges are designed to serve.
- Funding policy should recognize the actual number of people colleges serve—not only the full-time-equivalent enrollment they represent.

Headcount shows the true number of students colleges serve

- Community colleges serve approximately 4.34 students for every one student FTE—about four people for each full-time-equivalent student.
- FTE is useful for measuring instructional activity, but headcount shows how many individual Oregonians a college is actually serving. That distinction matters because most community college students attend part time.
- A student taking four credits and a student taking sixteen credits still require many of the same base services: admissions and registration, records and transcripts, advising, financial aid processing, student accounts, technology access, tutoring, disability services, career and basic-needs support, and campus safety.
- Colleges also carry per-student and shared operating costs for facilities, utilities, custodial and security services,

technology systems, cybersecurity, compliance, and other infrastructure. Those costs are driven in significant part by the number of people using college systems and campuses—not only the credits they take.

- By FTE, community college funding appears to be about $11,600 per student. When divided among the actual students served, it is approximately $2,700 per student—closer to $3,000 than $12,000.

The DAS estimate confirms substantial pressure on the state funding contribution

- The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) estimates that the state contribution through the Community College Support Fund (CCSF) would need to increase approximately 13.7% to maintain the state-funded portion of currently authorized services in 2027–29 – significantly more than the colleges' request of 7.5 percent.
- The DAS current service level, or CSL, is a statewide technical estimate of how much the CCSF should increase under state budget methodology. It is not a guarantee that individual colleges will have enough total revenue to maintain their current service levels.
- Each college faces a different combination of enrollment changes, collectively bargained labor agreements, PERS costs, local property-tax revenue, tuition revenue, reserves, and other operating pressures.
- The CSL can also underestimate actual college costs, including salary and benefit increases required under collectively bargained contracts for faculty and staff.
- DAS estimates that maintaining the state's current funding contribution would require approximately $118.6 million in additional CCSF funding. Even a fully funded CSL would not ensure that every college could avoid tuition increases, service reductions, or further reserve spending.

The colleges' request is restrained and reflects difficult compromises

- Oregon's community colleges are requesting a 7.5% CCSF increase—well below the 13.7% DAS estimate for maintaining the state funding contribution.
- A major reason the DAS estimate is higher is the expiration of colleges' PERS revenue bonds and related side accounts. The DAS calculation reflects the loss of the PERS rate offset associated with those side accounts, while also recognizing that the related debt-service payments are ending.
- DAS is calculating the funding needed under the state's current service level methodology. It does not account for the steps colleges have already taken to absorb the higher PERS costs as those side accounts expire, including reserve spending, budget reductions, efficiencies, and other cost-saving measures.
- Many colleges have already used reserves or made cuts to mitigate the impact of the expiring side accounts. That means the 13.7% DAS estimate captures the structural PERS change, but not the difficult budget actions colleges have already taken in response.
- The colleges' 7.5% request reflects their best projections for salaries, benefits, PERS, operating costs, tuition revenue, and the CCSF distribution model—and assumes continued efficiencies, reserve spending, tuition revenue, and other difficult compromises.

Tuition cannot fill the gap

- Community college students are highly price sensitive. Even modest tuition increases can cause students to take fewer credits, delay enrollment, or leave college altogether.
- Many students are working adults, parents, or low-income students with little flexibility to absorb higher tuition and fees.
- Without adequate state funding, colleges must draw down reserves, increase tuition, or reduce courses, programs, staffing, and student services.
- Those reductions make it harder for students to complete credentials and harder for Oregon employers to find the skilled workers they need.

Community colleges produce a strong return on Oregon's investment

- Lightcast found that Oregon's community colleges generate $11 billion in annual economic impact and support approximately 120,140 jobs—one out of every 23 jobs in Oregon.
- Community college alumni account for approximately $9.9 billion of that impact through increased earnings and greater workplace productivity.

- For every dollar invested, students receive an estimated \$4.70 in higher lifetime earnings, taxpayers receive \$1.40 in added revenue and public-sector savings, and Oregon society receives \$6.50 in economic and social benefits.
- State funding for community colleges is not simply an expense. It is an investment in workers, businesses, taxpayers, and communities throughout Oregon.

Closing ask

Community colleges work for Oregon, but they need Oregon's investment to continue that work.

Support the Community College Support Fund request so colleges can serve growing enrollment, sustain high-cost workforce programs, preserve affordable access, maintain essential student services, and reduce reliance on unsustainable reserve spending.

Sources: OCCA, Understanding the Revised DAS Current Service Level Estimate for Community Colleges (June 23, 2026); OCCA, Headcount Gives a Clearer Picture of Community College Funding; Lightcast, The Economic Value of Oregon's Community Colleges (April 2026).

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OCCA TALKING POINTS

HEADCOUNT VS. FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)

How to explain what headcount shows, what FTE measures, and why both matter when comparing higher education funding

CORE MESSAGE: Headcount measures the actual number of people a college serves. FTE measures instructional load. Because community colleges serve far more part-time students, policymakers need both measures to understand funding and institutional costs.

LEAD WITH THESE POINTS

- Headcount shows the number of actual students served. Oregon community colleges serve 98,393 students in fall 2025, compared with 99,610 students at public universities.
- On a headcount basis, community colleges receive $2,671 per student served, compared with $5,387 per public university student.
- On an FTE basis, community colleges receive $11,591 per FTE, compared with $6,531 per public university FTE.
- The reason is straightforward: multiple part-time community college students are combined into a single FTE, but each of those students still creates real base costs for the institution.

THE FUNDING COMPARISON: HEADCOUNT AND FTE TELL DIFFERENT STORIES

2025 PUBLIC FUNDING + FALL 2025 ENROLLMENT	COMMUNITY COLLEGES	PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
2025 public funding per headcount	$2,671	$5,387
Students served per FTE	4.34	1.21
2025 public funding per FTE	$11,591	$6,531

*Funding comparison uses the 2025 figures from OCCA's headcount/FTE analysis: HECC fall 2025 fourth-week headcount and FTE and SHEEO State Higher Education Finance FY2025 public education appropriations.

SIMPLE WAY TO SAY IT: Headcount shows the people colleges actually serve. FTE can make community college state support look much higher because one community college FTE represents 4.34 actual students.

- The 2025 comparison starts with HECC fall 2025 headcount to show the number of actual students served, then uses FTE to show instructional load. SHEF public education appropriations per FTE are used to calculate the equivalent funding per headcount.

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HOW TO EXPLAIN HEADCOUNT AND FTE

- Headcount is the number of individual students an institution serves. It shows how many people require access to the college's systems, services and infrastructure.
- FTE stands for Full-Time Equivalent. It converts student credit or instructional activity into the equivalent of a full-time course load. Several part-time students can therefore add up to one FTE.
- Headcount answers: "How many individual people is the institution serving?" FTE answers: "How much instructional enrollment is the institution carrying?"
- Headcount and FTE answer different questions and both belong in higher education funding discussions. FTE becomes misleading only when it is described as if one FTE equals one actual student.

WHY BASE COSTS MATTER

- A college incurs significant costs simply because a student is enrolled and using the institution - before considering the cost of delivering a particular class.
- Those base costs are not perfectly fixed and they are not identical for every student, but many are driven much more by the number of people served than by the number of credits each person takes.
- For a four-credit student and a 16-credit student alike, the college must provide the basic infrastructure needed to admit, enroll, support, protect records for, communicate with and serve that individual student.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THOSE BASE COSTS?

- **Admissions, enrollment and registration:** Application processing, placement and onboarding, registration systems, identity verification, residency or eligibility work, and the staff and systems needed to maintain an active student record.
- **Financial aid administration:** FAFSA support, eligibility review, award processing, satisfactory academic progress, federal and state compliance, disbursement, reconciliation and student assistance. A part-time student still requires an individual financial aid record and compliance work.
- **Advising and student success support:** Academic advising, education planning, orientation, early alerts, retention outreach and referrals. These interactions are tied to individual students, not simply to credits generated.
- **Records and transcripts:** Maintaining the student record, grades, degree audits, transcript processing, enrollment verification, transfer information and records retention.
- **Technology and student systems:** Student information systems, portals, email and accounts, authentication, cybersecurity, help desk support, learning-platform access and many software licenses that are assigned by user rather than by credit hour.
- **Student services:** Counseling, disability/access services, career services, veterans services, benefits navigation, basic-needs referrals, tutoring coordination and other supports available to enrolled students.
- **Facilities, safety and campus operations:** Libraries, common spaces, utilities, custodial services, campus safety, emergency systems, parking and physical infrastructure that must be available when students are on campus.
- **Institutional administration and compliance:** Business services, HR, legal and regulatory compliance, accreditation, data reporting, Title IX and civil-rights compliance, communications and other infrastructure required to operate an institution and serve students.

KEY POINT: Instructional cost generally rises with credits and course load. But a large share of student-facing and institutional infrastructure costs is incurred per person or must be maintained regardless of whether that person takes four credits or 16.

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WHY THIS MATTERS PARTICULARLY FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- Part-time attendance is not an exception at community colleges; it is central to the access mission.
- Community colleges serve working adults, parents, first-generation students, high school students, displaced workers, students returning after time away, and students pursuing short-term workforce or CTE credentials. Many cannot attend full time.
- A funding comparison that counts four part-time community college students as one FTE can appropriately reflect instructional volume, but it does not capture the full student-service workload created by those four people.
- This is why headcount is especially important when discussing advising, financial aid, student services, technology, records, basic needs and other costs that are not proportional to credit load.

UNDERSTANDING CLAIMS ABOUT FUNDING PER STUDENT

- On a headcount basis, the 2025 comparison is $2,671 per community college student and $5,387 per public university student. Public universities therefore receive about twice as much public funding per individual student served.
- HECC fall 2025 fourth-week data show 98,393 community college students and 99,610 public university students. Those students generated 22,670.9 community college FTE and 82,155 university FTE - 4.34 students per community college FTE versus 1.21 students per university FTE.
- On an FTE basis, the 2025 comparison shows $11,591 in public education appropriations per community college FTE, compared with $6,531 per public university FTE. That reflects funding relative to instructional load, not funding per individual student.
- The appropriate conclusion is not that one sector is “overfunded” and the other is “underfunded” based on a single denominator. The conclusion is that FTE and headcount measure different institutional demands and both should be considered.

OCCA POSITION ON HEADCOUNT AND FTE

- Headcount shows how many individual students institutions serve and is essential for understanding student-service and base infrastructure demands.
- FTE measures instructional load well and remains important for funding and planning, but it does not measure the number of people who require student services, systems and basic infrastructure.
- For comparisons between community colleges and universities, policymakers should ask both: How much instructional load is being funded? And how many individual students are being served?

BOTTOM LINE

- Community colleges serve 98,393 students in fall 2025, nearly the same headcount as public universities at 99,610, but community colleges serve 4.34 students for every FTE compared with 1.21 at universities.
- On a headcount basis, the 2025 figures are $2,671 per community college student versus $5,387 per public university student - about twice as much per individual university student served.
- On an FTE basis, public education appropriations are $11,591 per community college FTE versus $6,531 per public university FTE. That comparison measures instructional load, not individual students.
- Every one of those students needs a student record, registration, technology access and the institutional infrastructure to support them; many also need advising, financial aid and other student services regardless of how many credits they take.
- Headcount shows the people being served. FTE measures instructional load. Oregon should look at both.

OCCA TAKEAWAY: Headcount shows the people colleges actually serve; FTE shows instructional load. Four part-time students do not become one person simply because their combined credits equal one FTE. Oregon should count both people and credits.

Sources: SHEEO, State Higher Education Finance FY2025, Tables 3.1A and 3.2A; Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Fall 2025 Oregon Public Institution Enrollment. The 2025 headcount-equivalent

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figures use the same methodology as OCCA's existing headcount/FTE comparison: SHEF appropriations per FTE multiplied by each sector's HECC fall FTE-to-headcount ratio.