



**CENTRAL OREGON**  
community college

2600 NW College Way  
Bend, Oregon 97701  
Telephone 541.383.7700  
[www.cocc.edu](http://www.cocc.edu)

June 9, 2026

Medical Assisting Program  
Central Oregon Community College

Dear Shannon, Marilyn, Jill and team,

Thank you for taking part in Department & Program Review (DPR) this year. The DPR process reveals critical connections that link your strengths, needs, values, priorities, and plans to those of the College. Further, it supports our commitment to innovation through continual improvement. We commend your dedication to empowering our students, engaging our communities, and supporting our values.

## Successes

The Medical Assistant (MA) program has an excellent record of student success, thanks to strong support from faculty, following Shannon's lead. The program also does a great job serving a diverse student population. We also noted and commend your flexibility and willingness to work with community partners to meet their workforce needs, such as an accelerated program training for St. Charles Healthcare System (SCHS) during a dire workforce shortage.

Researching and winning grants are another program strength. Two grant successes are landing the Keyes grant to pay for the Medical Assistant streaming classroom at the Bend campus, and the Oregon Health Authority grant obtained to assist Medical Assistant students with tuition and fees.

## Challenges

We realize that establishing a second medical assistant training site in Madras required much time, patience, planning, setup, hiring, troubleshooting, and building new industry partnerships. Streaming continues to be problematic despite gallant efforts on the behalf of our IT department. Finally, Madras MA students do not feel as connected as we would like to see with their Bend MA student counterparts. We appreciate that you have thought of some solutions such as 1) instructors wearing headsets to minimize background noise; 2) giving Madras MA students a sign to raise if they have a question or comment; and 3) occasionally streaming from Madras to Bend, so that Bend students can experience what that feels like. We suggest that you meet with nursing faculty to discuss connection strategies that they came up with in talking to their Madras Nursing students.

Other ongoing difficulty is the varied levels of student preparedness coming into the MA program. The extra support that the Integrated Educated and Training (IET) has provided students has made a huge difference in student success and therefore we support you keeping the IET in place going forward. Lastly, we are aware that

you barely have enough instructors to staff labs for the increased number of MA cohorts. We encourage you to keep your HR part-time instructor pool open and eventually utilize Stephanie O'Bryan for MA Instruction, especially if you lose your adjunct instructor in a year to retirement.

## Goals and needs

### **1. Improve student engagement and inclusion in multi-campus streamed instruction.**

Reliable streaming technology and strong pedagogy are both essential to this goal and foundational to a positive learning experience for students. We appreciate that MA faculty are seeking to add relevant tools and strategies to their own instructional toolboxes. Continuing that work on hybrid, synchronous teaching will help ensure that when the technology works, instruction is effective across all locations. We support continued work with the Instructional Technology team to improve tech reliability and also recommend ongoing connection with eLearning for assistance and guidance.

### **2. Sustain and formalize targeted academic support for students entering the program without prerequisites.**

Advising plays a key role in ensuring students are placed into the appropriate prerequisite courses before entering the program, and continued coordination there is important. Your successful partnership with Adult Basic Skills to provide Integrated Educated and Training (IET) has worked well to help your students succeed at the high rates they have, and we support your ongoing collaboration in that. We are glad to learn that HECC is seeing the benefits of IET for our students and has, for now, continued to provide support for that practice.

### **3. Increase laboratory capacity at the Bend campus to support larger cohorts.**

You have expressed a need (in this DPR and your last five-year assessment) for an additional walled-off exam room in Bend. Currently Madras has three such rooms while Bend has only two, creating a gap in the auditory privacy that students need during skills check-off experiences. Please work with your dean to develop and submit a facilities change request, and Campus Services will generate a new cost estimate. Then the dean will work with the VPAA and facilities advisory team to discuss the logistics of adding this request to the queue.

### **4. Strengthen instructional support for laboratory courses to ensure student safety, skill mastery, and accreditation compliance.**

The reclassification of a part-time position to adjunct status, which directly supports instructional coverage for lab courses, was already accomplished during this year's position request process.

### **5. Sustain and deepen regional workforce and clinical partnerships.**

CWE coordination continues to be supported, though some challenges have emerged with Summit Health and High Lakes Health Care, where the presence of uncertified medical assistants has made it difficult to place the program's highly trained students. Given turnover at these clinics, we recommend revisiting these partnerships

in the fall and re-engaging directly with those sites to see if they have placement opportunities for our students to work with certified MAs.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to student readiness. Together, we can build on our achievements, address the challenges ahead, and meet the evolving needs of our students.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out. We look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality and impact of the Medical Assistant program.

Sincerely yours,



Annemarie E. Hamlin  
Vice President of Academic Affairs



Julie Downing  
Instructional Dean



Gabrielle Orsi  
Assessment and Curriculum  
Administrator