

OCCA Board Meeting
March 20, 2006
Local Government Center
Salem, Oregon
10:30 am – 2:30 pm

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ATTENDANCE:

Chuck Clemans (Board President, Clackamas); Marilyn Lane (Board President-Elect, Clatsop); Rosemary Baker-Monaghan (Clatsop); Greg Hamann (Clatsop); Joe Johnson (Clackamas); Tracey Simms (Lane); Jay Bozievich (Lane); Frank Toda (CGCC); Ernie Keller (CGCC); Dean Wendle (RCC); Ann Swain (TBCC); Tom Keel (UCC); Blaine Nisson (UCC); David Bridgham (SOCC); Paul Fisher (OEA); John Turner, (BMCC); Fred Smith (KCC); Pete Nevins (KCC); Dan Ostlund (Chemeketa); Ed Dodson (Chemeketa); Gretchen Schuette (Chemeketa); Connie Lee (COCC); Ann Brodie (LBCC); Bob Silverman (MHCC); Brian Freeman (MHCC); Pat O'Connor (OCCC); Rex Krabbe (OCCC); Harold Williams (PCC); Peter Angstadt (RCC); Preston Pulliams (PCC).

OTHERS:

Terri Johanson (CCWD); Joanne Truesdell (CCWD); Andrea Henderson, Lori Sattenspiel, Kathryn Dysart, Karen Smith, Julie Suchanek and Cindy McKinney (OCCA).

CALL TO ORDER:

Chuck Clemans – Clackamas Community College and OCCA Board President called the meeting to order at 10:37 am.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Clemans asked attendees to introduce themselves.

AGENDA CHANGES:

Clemans noted that an additional item, G7 – Funding Framework, had been added to the agenda. He also called the group's attention to #2, Strategic Plan Reports, advising that he would ask each school for a report of the local board's position on the document that they received for discussion.

Consent Agenda

Motion: Ernie Keller moved to accept the consent agenda

Second: Ed Dodson

Pass, no opposition

President's Report:

Chuck Clemans addressed two measures that may come up in the legislature, TABOR (Taxpayers Bill of Rights) and reconnecting Oregon taxes to the federal tax structure, both measures having the potential to be harmful to Oregon community colleges. He stated that, irrespective of your position on tax reform, doing so by initiative has historically not proven to be a good process. Both Clemans and Ernie Keller (CGCC) attend the committee meetings where both issues are being addressed. Clemans urged individual boards to pass resolutions in opposition to both. Keller reported that these measures have the financial support of Freedom Works and the American Federation of Taxpayers, both based outside Oregon. Clemans will distribute the necessary information to the local boards for their action.

Legislative Committee Report:

Marilyn Lane (President-Elect, OCCA; Clatsop) reported that the next meeting of the Legislative Committee would be held on April 27 at Blue Mountain Community College at 1:30, immediately following the Presidents' Council meeting. While the position papers are not yet finalized, the recommendations for the funding ask and the capital construction figures should be ready in time for the May OCCA Board meeting. She would also like to have more information on the previously discussed tax issues for the next committee meeting.

Executive Director's Report:

Andrea Henderson (OCCA) reported that the OCCA staff has been busy preparing for the next legislative session. Lori Sattenspiel and Julie Suchanek (OCCA) have been traveling the state to meet with legislators as well as presenting Campus Action Plans at the colleges. Henderson attended the AACC/ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington D.C. with a great group of board members, making an impact on the legislators with whom they met. Henderson also reported that Student Scholar Day will be April 18 at Creekside Golf Club, and the awards will be given to the students by Congressman David Wu. Other OCCA events include the Governance Workshop on May 11 with Aims McGuinness, and the spring OCCA Board meeting scheduled for May 12.

Henderson told the board that we have received the building permit for the building purchased by OCCA to house the offices and that construction will begin within the next few weeks.

Preston Pulliams (PCC) added that one of the highlights of the ACCT Summit was a reception for the new national Community College Caucus, with Congressman David Wu serving as co-chair. Henderson agreed, explaining that this puts Wu in a very significant position to advocate for community colleges, and she stressed that the colleges have a responsibility to provide Wu with all of the information he needs to promote community colleges.

PRESIDENTS' COUNCIL REPORT:

Frank Toda (CGCC) stated that Presidents' Council has developed a two-year focus, with this year being the year of bridge building. To better address the issues in detail, the council organized into three committees to divide the workload. Those committees are Educational Excellence, chaired by Gretchen Schuette (Chemeketa) and co-chaired by Fred Smith (KCC); Operations, chaired by Joe Johnson (Clackamas) and co-chaired by Greg Hamann (Clatsop); and Workforce Innovations chaired by Mary Spilde (LCC) and co-chaired by Nan Poppe (PCC).

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Joanne Truesdell (CCWD) reported for Brenda Frank (SBE) who could not attend. The board had discussions about high school standards and what the students receive in the area of competencies. They are looking at models based on feedback from the white paper. The discussion centered on credits vs. proficiencies, and the dichotomy of knowing what a credit is but not being able to define proficiency. The board questioned if high schools should have "power standards", those which are an inch wide and a mile deep, as opposed to the present status. This would address the core proficiencies, however they are defined, and address the problem of skill retention in areas such as math. One question raised was, "What are math competencies and why are the math skills being taught so irrelevant that students cannot retain those skills?"

Truesdell was asked if there is discussion by the board about the roles that community colleges will play in establishing shared standards, shared entrance and placement exams. She stated that the board did review legislative concepts, one being to ensure funding to connect K – 12 – University System.

It was commented that the key word is funding. The success of high schools in preparing students for college frees up the resources of the community colleges. If the colleges provide remedial services, they should receive financial support for doing so.

Clemans added that if you push credits without pushing competencies, you add to the dropout problem.

STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

Gretchen Schuette (Chemeketa) reported on two topics: EDP and University mergers/closures. She explained how Excellence in Delivery follows the same goals as the strategic plan in the areas of universal access, quality of educational opportunities, collaboration and leadership, ATLAS, retention, rural access and career pathways. Schuette is working with Julie Suchanek (OCCA) and Lisa Zavala (OUS) to identify next steps and to test the legislative environment for some small packages that they could put forward together.

Schuette also discussed the motion to close or merge one of the universities as a way to deal with the financial challenges the system now faces. She also explained ATLAS as a degree audit system that allows the colleges to track the educational accomplishments of a student and to better define the path to enable him to reach his goals.

OSAC REPORT:

Dean Wendle (RCC) discussed ASPIRE, a program funded by the Ford Foundation and AmeriCorps, which places volunteers with students to help them prepare for college. These volunteers work with the students one-on-one beginning in middle school, helping them with counseling and finding financial resources.

Wendle reported on the Office of Degree Authorization (ODA) which works on accreditation issues by identifying and helping to eliminate fake diplomas and diploma mills. Joe Johnson (Clackamas) pointed out that the ODA has no enforcement arm. They merely advise that you have a problem. Once you have begun to pay a faculty member at a certain level - doctorate, for example – you must continue to pay at that rate unless your contract language addresses that situation. Some insurance policies have a level of coverage for this.

Clemans then announced a change in the order of the agenda so as not to interrupt the conversation about the strategic plan. The next item for discussion will be financial aid.

Financial Aid:

Julie Suchanek reported that in the 2005 legislative session the Oregon Opportunity Grant program received a \$31 million General Fund increase over the previous biennium. This additional funding has increased the number of eligible students by 34.18% to date. Some of the recommendations of the Access and Affordability Work Group were not acted upon, including a gradual increase to the maximum grant size, not to exceed the actual cost of tuition/fees at the Oregon institution in which the student is enrolled. Currently the work group is, in cooperation with the Western Interchange Commission on Higher Education, developing the Shared Responsibility Model for Oregon which recognizes that many partners share responsibility for financing the costs of attending college.

Suchanek also reported on the current status of the ASPIRE program. An informal coalition of supporters for ASPIRE has begun to spread support for ASPIRE by meeting with other education groups and business organizations. They inform these groups about the program and about possible upcoming legislation.

Discussion of the Strategic Plan:

(The comments offered have been grouped by subject matter for ease of comparison)

Clemans introduced the discussion of the strategic plan by asking each college to report the manner in which its local board prioritized the seven Unifying Issues.

Funding, Governance and Access were the three areas most commonly felt to be of the highest priority, with Funding overwhelmingly being number one. It was commented that funding drives it all, but should not be so great a focus that the other goals are overlooked. It was felt that “funding” should really be called “stability in funding.” The legislators should be given a clear understanding of what they are purchasing in the way of results when they fund community colleges. Where would the money be used if not used in support of community colleges? It was also mentioned that, while there are 7 goals for the association, each college has a different strategy objective than the group as a whole. Despite that, the issue of funding can’t disappear. In local conversations the question of the role of federal funding came into play. Some felt that it was a viable source of funding while others thought that it would diminish.

Governance was brought up by the representatives who spoke, with each placing an emphasis on local control. Local boards hear the problems first and are able to react. It will be important to balance the ask against maintaining local control. It was also stated that the colleges need to be on the offense regarding governance to avoid being made part of the Oregon University System. Community colleges could find themselves subjected to a high level of state control, much like K12. A separate board is the ideal. Centralized control gets very expensive; local control is more efficient.

When the plan was presented to the state board of education, one member saw community colleges as serving mature learners, those who are ready to learn. They felt that community colleges understand the continuum and should lead in keeping the continuum at the forefront. Community colleges should be fiercely independent and fiercely consistent. There is a real need for community colleges to communicate what they have to offer, particularly in rural communities.

It was commented that the plan does not address efficiency improvements, and it needs to place more emphasis on the students. While the goals are quite broad, it was felt that there should not be too much combining or important ideas may be lost. It was also commented that the plan did not include any discussion of cost controls. With labor costs going up at 5-6% annually while state revenue grows by less than 3%, the funding "pie" is growing more slowly than costs, particularly labor. Lack of cost control could tarnish our credibility with legislators, making local control a vulnerability.

There was disagreement with that idea. The boards and colleges are in control, it was felt, but are burdened with the task of preparing students to be ready to learn in the community college environment without the funding that is associated with that preparation. Perhaps it would be more effective to take an aggressive stance in stating the needs of community colleges and draw a line at taking on additional burdens that make the colleges more vulnerable to the demands on their resources.

Clackamas' board also discussed the scope of the plan, concluding that it is an association-wide plan, facilitated by OCCA for the benefit of all seventeen community colleges. The original discussion was about a fifteen-year plan with periodic adjustments. Funding dictates a long view to enable the group to meet the stated mission. There is a need to have a fifteen-year goal out there simply to have a long range goal. It was thought that the common interests intersect where the seventeen can work together.

Henderson then remarked that the conversation reflects that all seven items are important, with much of the conversation coalescing around funding and access. Funding gives us access. She asked where OCCA should go from here, and suggested that staff should craft a new document which would address access, funding and the concerns and ideas expressed here today.

Political Messaging:

Clemans introduced the next agenda item, Political Messaging. Kathryn Dysart (OCCA) offered three political messaging pieces which were submitted to the Legislative Committee. The committee moved it to the full board for consideration and input about the two directions for messaging. One position is that we frame the funding message around community college needs for the future and the idea of investment in community colleges. The second position is to send a message of funding crisis and a dire financial situation. The board was asked for opinions on each of these marketing approaches.

Keller asked Henderson which approach, in her experience, was more successful. She noted that, while the crisis is very real, it is a story that the legislature hears every day, so will it motivate the legislators? Everyone competes for the same dollars. There are some advantages, with extra money in the state coffers, to the message of investment in the future.

Some discussion centered around the idea that colleges are at the edge of a cliff, and asked if this message is just for the next biennium or further out. It was felt that community colleges could get a bit of a small pie of funding and struggle on, or point out how dire the situation has become.

Peter Angstadt (RCC) suggested that the message blend the positive with the harsh reality of the situation. He suggested that the message be one of investment rather than funding, highlighting a 5-10-15 year payoff for the state.

Others suggested that the message be positive, but realistic. Many have heard legislators who champion community colleges comment that they believe that the investment of last biennium “fixed” the problem. It was commented that we must be mindful of the efforts of those legislators who are community college supporters. The conversation must be about how all of the parts fit together and how the investment is in the students and their futures.

There was a brief discussion about changing the tax structure in Oregon and how the corporate kicker has become a hot topic in regard to funding. It was agreed that the group should become engaged in this discussion.

Executive Committee Nominations:

Clemans introduced nominations for the Executive Committee, adding that the slate would offer excellent representation. The nominees are:

President:	Marilyn Lane
President-Elect:	Connie Lee, <i>Nominee</i>
Secretary:	Preston Pulliams
Treasurer:	Blaine Nisson, <i>Nominee</i>
At-Large Board Member:	Brian Freeman, <i>Nominee</i>

Motion: Ed Dodson moved that the nominations be closed

Second: Ann Swain

Passed, no opposition

Voting for the Executive Committee will take place at the May, 2006 board meeting.

Budget and Dues Increase:

Henderson then addressed the OCCA budget and dues structure for 2006-2007. The OCCA budget will be presented for adoption at the May board meeting. She asked for direction on a dues increase of 3%. Clemans added that, for several years, OCCA put a moratorium on dues increases. When the inevitable catch-up took place it was painful for many community colleges. It was agreed at that time that smaller increases would be put into place more frequently.

John Turner (BMCC) asked if the dues increase would be voted on today. It will. Fred Smith (KCC) asked Henderson to explain how the increases are levied. She stated that half of the dues is split evenly among the schools; the other half is based on FTE.

Motion: Ernie Keller moved to accept the dues increase
Second: Peter Angstadt
Passed, no opposition

Other Business:

Henderson then talked about the proposed funding framework for the next biennium. Approval of the framework is not needed today; it will be submitted for approval in May. The piece was put together by the executive committees of the State Board and OCCA, as it had been for the last biennium. She asked that any requested changes be given to OCCA before it is sent to the local boards.

Clemans added that last time the request was \$521M, and that the figure was in agreement with the State Board.

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Cindy McKinney
OCCA