

**C OCC Board of Directors
Advocacy Committee
Meeting Agenda
June 18, 2026
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Remotely via Zoom**

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

C OCC 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**
- 4. Outreach Updates and Strategies**
- 5. Next meeting: To be determined**
- 6. Adjourn**

**COCC Board of Directors
Advocacy Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 22, 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), Kyle Matthews (Executive Assistant to the President)

- 1. Called to Order at 1:01 p.m.**
- 2. Approval of April 17, 2026 Meeting Minutes – Items 2.1-5**
 - a. Motion to approve the minutes.
 - 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. Laptops for Deer Ridge Correctional Institute (DRCI) Students-in-Custody
 - i. Merz visited DRCI on April 30 and met with COCC’s Director of Corrections Education Jay Sklenar and Biology Professor Emma Chaput to discuss this need. Students-in-custody have also written letters of concern. Merz spoke with Rep. Emerson Levy, who recommended Rep. Anthony Broadman to advocate for this issue as he manages the budget for Oregon’s Department of Corrections (DOC). Both representatives were invited to visit DRCI and meet with Sklenar.
 1. Pereira had not heard from Sklenar or either representative whether they have a meeting scheduled.
 - ii. Merz also invited Rep. Jason Kropf, who said he has some meetings with the DOC coming up, so he will try to mention this issue to them. Merz will continue to update the Committee on this matter.
 - iii. Foote Morgan asked the Committee if there is anything else they could do to submit a formal request to COCC’s delegation on this matter.
 1. Merz suggested that Chaput and Sklenar would be willing to work with the students-in-custody on a formal letter writing campaign. She also noted that many of Oregon’s inmates will be given access to tablets during the 2026 Fall term in an effort to reduce drug trafficking by replacing physical mail with email. This will present some education opportunities as well, but they will be limited by

- the software offered. She also noted that the upcoming graduation ceremony at DRCI could be an advocacy opportunity.
2. Foote Morgan concurred that the graduation could be an opportunity to advocate for laptops for students-in-custody. She asked if the event would be open to members of the public.
 3. Merz noted that the press release invited members to the media.
 4. Foote Morgan suggested that the difficulties with technology that students-in-custody have faced could be included in stories published in the media.
 5. Pereira did not know whether students-in-custody would be allowed to speak with reporters at the ceremony, but he offered to follow up with COCC's DRCI staff, and he would also be able to speak with reporters on this issue. He also suggested that DRCI staff could invite reporters to visit COCC's facilities.
 6. Merz said she has spoken with Jenn Kovitz of Hayden Homes, a company that has hired formerly incarcerated employees. Merz suggested Hayden Homes and other businesses in Central Oregon may be interested in advocating for this issue.
- iv. Foote Morgan asked if this Committee could develop an advocacy plan to enact by the Fall term.
 1. Pereira suggested that it is a good advocacy opportunity for the full Board. Merz and Skatvold concurred.
 - v. Skatvold asked if the College would be asking for funding for technology.
 1. Merz explained the issue is that many students-in-custody do not have permission to have laptops for their studies. While the welding students *do* have access to laptops, other students can only use desktop computers in DRCI's classrooms, and those computers are in high demand from different programs.
 - vi. Foote Morgan suggested that positive reporting from the media, letters of support from the College, and support from local legislators could lead to a formal request from the College to the DOC to grant permission to the students-in-custody to use laptops for their schoolwork.
 1. Pereira said he would contact COCC Instructional Dean Tony Russell to ask him for an advocacy sheet to submit such a request.
 - vii. Foote Morgan asked Pereira if he had any concerns with Committee members directly contacting reporters about this matter.
 1. Pereira said he would first like to make sure DRCI would not be opposed to reporters being at the graduation. Foote Morgan and Merz concurred and said they planned to attend the event.
- b. The most recent Oregon Presidents' Council Meeting on May 14 focused on the State's Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) capital construction

requests for matching funds. This year, there have been more requests than in years past, so additional advocacy will be needed to fund as many projects as possible. Members of Oregon's Legislative Fiscal Office will be visiting all of the requesting colleges to learn more about their projects and budgets. They visited COCC on April 29 and told the Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) that they want all of their meetings to follow COCC's example. They toured COCC's Nursing facilities, discussed increasing costs for CTE, observed livestream classes to Madras, learned about how Oregon legislation has impacted COCC, and discussed the issue with the truss in Mazama that needs to be replaced. Colleges were also asked to show how a 10% budget cut in the next biennium could affect them. The U.S. Supreme Court also ruled that a federal grant to community colleges could not be cancelled, so the OCCA is looking into what other grants could be restored.

- i. Foote Morgan asked if the shared capital requests would affect funding for the Redmond campus expansion.
 - ii. Pereira explained that grant had already been approved in the previous year, so it would not be affected. COCC is currently requesting funds for deferred maintenance and upgrades to STEM facilities.
 - iii. Foote Morgan asked if COCC is less likely to be approved as it received a grant in the previous year.
 - iv. Pereira explained that any college presidents who do not submit a request will receive a list of everyone else's requests and rank them at in terms of priority. Since the number of requests are much higher this year, either more projects will be funded this year or more will be delayed until later years.
- c. U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon toured COCC's Aviation facilities at the Bend Municipal Airport on April 20. Skatvold and Pereira attended, along with Jim Porter and other COCC senior staff. The Secretary asked questions and expressed interest in the program.
- i. Skatvold suggested that it was a successful visit and that McMahon might contact COCC in the future.
 - ii. Pereira added that the College only had four or five days to prepare for this visit. They intended to have a sit-down meeting after the tour, but that did not happen as McMahon's team wanted to visit Crook County School District as well. COCC representatives gave as many talking points as they could. This visit could lead to further advocacy opportunities in the future.

4. Outreach Updates and Strategies

- a. At the Board meeting on May 13, Foote Morgan encouraged all members to set up meetings with leaders from their respective zones and shared copies of the talking points that this Committee had developed. She asked the other

Committee members if they have done any of this work or if anyone has heard anything from other Board members.

- i. Merz suggested this Committee could do personal follow ups with the other Board members. Foote Morgan and Skatvold concurred.
- ii. Foote Morgan suggested the members of this Committee could discuss who they will contact from their respective zones, as well as whom from the Board they could follow up with. Foote Morgan will contact Joe Krenowicz and Laura Craska Cooper. Skatvold will contact Jim Porter. Merz will contact Alan Unger.
- iii. Foote Morgan said she plans to meet with the Mayor of La Pine. She asked Pereira if there is a workforce development connection in Sunriver.
 1. Pereira said he is not aware of one.
 2. Foote Morgan offered to contact Sunriver Manager Jim Lucas.
- iv. Merz suggested she could contact the Mayor of Bend.
 1. Pereira said he has a meeting scheduled with the Mayor Kebler on June 3, but encouraged Merz to schedule a meeting with her as well.
- v. Foote Morgan noted that Rick Russell and Jamie Collins were recently elected as new Deschutes County Commissioners, so it might be a good idea to meet with them.
 1. Foote Morgan will contact Collins. Merz will contact Russell.
- vi. Merz asked who is taking over leadership at OSU-Cascades.
 1. Pereira said that Dr. Christine Pollard is serving as Interim Chancellor and Dean. She was previously their equivalent to the vice president of academic affairs.
- vii. Skatvold asked if there is anyone who works in housing that should be contacted.
 1. Merz noted that Craska Cooper is the Chair of the Housing Works board and that they have a new executive director.
 2. Pereira said he recently met with their executive director and toured their latest project. Hayden Homes is also interested in partnering with COCC. He will also be meeting with East Cascade Works' Executive Director Heather Ficht and Vice Chair David Burger on May 29.
- viii. Pereira asked if Board members have ever invited congressional or gubernatorial candidates to COCC.
 1. Merz suggested it could be a good idea.
- ix. Foote Morgan suggested contacting labor union leaders to discuss deferred maintenance concerns.

5. Next meeting: Thursday, June 18 at 11:00 a.m.

6. Adjourned at 1:49 p.m.