

From: [Melinda Wilde](#)
To: [CCC Board of Education](#)
Subject: Objection to CCC elimination of Auto restoration and Street Rod Construction courses
Date: Friday, May 9, 2025 5:09:58 PM
Attachments: [9May25.pdf](#)

You don't often get email from mwildeatty@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear CCC Board:

Please provide the attached letter to the CCC Board of Education members. I am unable to attend your next meeting and rather than sign up to speak, I send this letter in my place. Please see the attached letter objecting to elimination of the above-described courses at CCC. I can attend such a meeting by zoom and would like to testify if it is possible by zoom.

Very truly yours,

Melinda Wilde

--

Melinda B. Wilde, LLC
Attorney at Law
NMLS #228277
P.O. Box 14652
Portland, OR 97293
(503)238-6658
email: mwildeatty@gmail.com

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

The information contained in this message is intended only for the addressee or addressee's authorized agent. The message may contain information that is privileged, confidential, or otherwise exempt from disclosure. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient or recipient's authorized agent, then you are notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this message is prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender by return email.

Tax Advice Notice: To comply with certain U.S. Treasury regulations, we inform you that, unless expressly stated otherwise, any U.S. federal tax advice contained in this e-mail, including attachments, is not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used, by any person for the purpose of avoiding any penalties that may be imposed by the Internal Revenue Service.

Melinda B. Wilde, LLC.

ATTORNEY AT LAW

P.O. Box 14652, Portland, OR 97293
1300 SE Oak St., Portland, OR 97214

tel. (503)238-6658
fax.(503)232-0966
email:mwildeatty@gmail.com

May 9, 2025

Dear CCC decision-makers:

I am and have been a student of CCC's automotive restoration, street rod construction for many years, and an occasional student in the fix-your-own car and small engine repair classes. These programs are incredible sources of information. The auto restoration and street rod classes have produced award-winning restorations, with students consistently taking top honors at car shows. This is not a mere hobby, but it is an art form that fosters pride, dedication, and achievement. The highly skilled instructors are irreplaceable, sharing not only technical expertise, but wisdom accumulated over decades. Hot rod restoration skills are highly valued and restoration shops are constantly seeking skilled mechanics and auto body specialists for older classic cars that are constantly increasing in value. The cost to pay for restorations from a shop have skyrocketed and the quality of workmanship is diminishing.

I was very disappointed to learn of your recent decision to eliminate all of these programs in spite of the 2022 Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) recommendation that Oregon community colleges need more programs to target part-time and older students. Eliminating these classes would be a grave mistake, disregarding the program's immense contributions to students, the broader community, and even the college itself. I implore you to reconsider your decision or at least leave one auto restoration class operating to preserve one of the best and only programs of its type in the Pacific NW.

If your decision to completely eliminate these classes is based upon declining enrollment, I believe your data is skewed. These classes have traditionally been well-attended with wait-lists in spite of disruptions and interference that would have ended less popular courses. For example, in 2017, the school paved the new parking lot which made the automotive building virtually inaccessible for those hauling valuable classic project cars on a trailer. The post-2017 reconfiguration of the parking lot requires that those parking their project trailers must use five spaces or more rather than 2 in the pre-2017 configuration. Students receive expensive parking tickets even though alternative and more accommodating parking is no longer available. The computer registration system is impossible for new students to navigate and difficult for continuing students as well. I have witnessed how hard it is for my friends to sign up for these classes and many give up before they are enrolled. The courses were unavailable at all during the covid pandemic, so use of those years for calculating attendance data is improper. The courses

were unavailable when the location of these classes were moved from one side of Barlow Hall to the other. The mechanical side was supplied by equipment and materials by Subaru, who recognized the need for more trained auto mechanics by its donation. The tuition for these classes has more than tripled in 15 years since I started taking them. Restoring project cars is an expensive endeavor and the increase in tuition definitely deters participation, but particularly for lower income and diverse participants. The school offers no financial assistance except age waivers. It is my understanding that the State of Oregon subsidizes the age waivers recognizing the years senior taxpayers have already contributed. I have a 20-year old son of a friend who would like to take these classes with me, but he can only afford to take one or two courses per year due to the high tuition costs – even with me paying for the parts, safety equipment and materials necessary to work on the cars. The administration fails to take into consideration these financial expenses each student pays in addition to tuition. Even so, students continue to enroll and attend these classes. The only reason the courses cannot accommodate more students is space. The buildings simply cannot accommodate more projects. Students and taxpayers were lead to believe the last bond measure was intended to improve and enlarge the automotive project, but instead you now seek to eliminate a significant reason many of us supported the last bond and encouraged our friends and neighbors to support the bond.

Canceling all of these classes without proper advance notice leaves many students, myself included, stranded—midway through projects in which we have invested substantial time, money and effort. Most of us have no other option where we can complete the restoration work and will be irreparably harmed by the elimination of the only location where many students can restore their own vehicles. The cost to pay for professional restoration is prohibitively expensive. There is incentive for adversely affected students to seek legal redress for the lack of advance notice. There are others that believe this action is improperly directed at the seniors to eliminate courses where they receive reduced tuition. I hope it does not come to that.

In 15 years, I have never seen an administrator visit our classes. There is no way an administrator can judge the effectiveness and reach of these classes without visiting. These classes run in evenings and weekends so they do not compete with traditional degree programs. They utilize space that would otherwise sit empty – decreasing the need for security to prevent vandalism and the waste of energy needed to heat empty buildings.

The facilities are needed by the community. It is impossible for members of the public to recreate the space, the painting booths, ventilation system, metals recycling and facilities for proper handling of liquid materials used in the restoration process, not to mention the invaluable expertise and knowledge of the instructors. After 15 years, I continue to learn something new in every single class without exception. This type of community access to facilities and expertise already possessed by the community college and paid for by bond levies that most student voted for and paid for and will continue to pay for, is part of the community access community colleges are uniquely intended to provide. You run

a significant risk of offending taxpayers willingness to vote for bond levies when you take away their access to meaningful use of the facilities. There are others who have expressed to me their desire to change their estate planning to eliminate gifts to CCC as a result of this action. These are funds CCC will never know it lost as a result of this ill-advised action. Hot rod construction and restoration is a big and increasing industry. This is not the time to eliminate these programs simple because the decision-makers do not understand the need for these programs. CCC has made no effort to publicize these programs, yet they continue to attract students.

Many of these vehicles would otherwise be scrapped, meaning these programs play a crucial role in preservation, sustainability and recycling – not to mention the historical significance of these vehicles.

Unlike conventional degree-focused programs, these classes are open to all, welcoming students from ages 14 to 80+. The result is a multi-generational learning environment where students learn not just from instructors, but where younger students learn from seasoned hobbyists, and older students benefit from fresh perspectives. It is not a passive learning environment but integrates physical, mental, and ingenuity in one class. My oldest son is a senior engineer at Apple Inc. owed in large part to the skills for thinking outside of the box or textbook that he learned in these classes. With older cars, sometimes replacement parts cannot be obtained and rather than giving up, students learn to make their own. In computing, innovative ideas have no textbook solution – and as an implementing engineer, he must make his own solutions. He took his driver's test at age 16 in a car we were working on in one of these classes and he drove that car all through college. Completed projects attract other students and their friends. The learning goes beyond formal instruction—students teach and inspire one another, fostering collaboration, mentorship and friendships. Restoration of classic cars requires knowledge and expertise and as the older generation ages out, it is imperative that they pass their knowledge to the next generation in order to preserve and restore historically significant automobiles, or the knowledge will be lost.

These automotive restoration classes are a shining example of what community colleges should offer – accessible, valuable, and meaningful education that enriches lives that can but do not necessarily lead to a career path. To dismantle them is to disregard their historical significance and community impact. Instead of eliminating these classes, the college should be looking for ways to support and expand them, ensuring that future generations can continue to learn, create, and restore classic automobiles.

Please reconsider your decision to eliminate these classes.

Very truly yours,

/s/ *Melinda B. Wilde*

Melinda B. Wilde

cc: CCC board of education