Clackamas Community College’s Board of Education unanimously appointed a politically active alum at its meeting Wednesday night.

Oregon City resident Chris Groener, a union representative for United Food and Commercial Workers No. 555, first became involved with the college when his father, former CCC Board Member Ralph Groener, took him to his meetings in the 1970s.

Both he and Jo Crenshaw and participated in preliminary interviews with board members Jane Reid, Jean Bidstrup and Judy Ervin last week. Both candidates were well acquainted with Chuck Clemans, who had held the Zone 4 seat before he died in a Dec. 22 car crash near Molalla.

For Reid, chairwoman of the board, the 6-0 vote on April 11 affirmed the subcommittee’s recommendation to appoint Groener, although she noted it was a tough choice.

“It was a kind of nice challenge that you like to have in that we had two wonderfully qualified candidates,” she said.

It came down to Groener’s “real interest in policy,” which Reid notes could help the board advocate for adequate community-college funding in Salem, where state lawmakers have forced painful cuts on CCC in the past couple of sessions. Groener’s candidacy was also aided by the fact that he promised to run for election, because Reid and other board members valued the “consistency” that extended service would bring to the governing body. Groener’s appointment to the board continues through June 30, 2013, and in May of that year he plans to run for election to the remainder of the unexpired term, ending in 2015.

“We were thinking about the kinds of things that will be coming up in the future, and Chris would really add a lot to the mix of experience we already have,” she said.

Groener, a current Oregon City Planning Commission member, was chairman of the Clackamas County Democratic Party Organization Committee and served on the Clackamas County BCC Task Force. He launched his political career by becoming president of Portland State University’s student association for the 1997-98 school year after attending CCC for two years.

Crenshaw is the owner of the Hilltop McDonald’s Restaurant and also attended community college. The former member of the Oregon City Urban Renewal Commission is planning to remain a member of the CCC Foundation Board and local chambers of commerce.