



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO: Members, OCC Board of Trustees

FROM: Pamela Monaco, Ph.D.
President

SUBJECT: Items of Interest for the August 27, 2026, Board Meeting

DATE: August 17, 2026

Hispanic Heritage Month

Ocean County College's 2026 Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration will feature a diverse lineup of cultural, educational, and community-focused events throughout September and October. The celebration will begin on September 15, 2026, with a flag-raising ceremony, featuring remarks from Dr. Yessika Garcia-Guzman, Assistant Vice President of Student Services and Financial Aid; Ms. Kate Quinn-Sanchez, College Lecturer in Spanish; a student speaker; and me. Following will be a parade honoring the 22 Spanish-speaking countries and a photo opportunity. The Counseling Center will also be hosting a series of Encuentros featuring Ms. Aida Hernandez, Associate Director of the Counseling Center, and Mr. Alan Chirino of Water, Earth, and Spirit Therapeutic Arts, kicking off on September 15 from 12:30-1:45 p.m. in the Library Building's 2nd Floor Tower Room.

Additional activities under development include dance events, cultural engagement activities, a panel discussion, a film screening, and fresh meals for students. The celebration will also highlight special campus and community events, including Laurie Hernandez's September 22, 2026, appearance and a Mariachi Herencia de México performance on October 27, 2026. Planning teams are coordinating speakers, food, entertainment, student engagement, and community partnerships, with more event information to be shared as plans are finalized.

Barnegat Bay Partnership Funding and Activities

The Barnegat Bay Partnership was selected for approximately \$4,000,000 in funding by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to restore saltmarsh within Point Pleasant. The project, occurring behind the Nellie Bennet Elementary School, will take several years to complete but aims to restore six

acres of marsh to protect nearby homes and the school from flooding, while also increasing habitat for wildlife.

A total of 16 participants, 10 of whom were students, assisted the Partnership in collecting shoreline erosion data throughout the Bay in the month of July, helping restoration practitioners identify sites in need of living shorelines.

In conjunction with Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Program, 18 students and parents participated in an educational seine of the Barnegat Bay, learning about the unique fish species of the Bay.

The Partnership published the 2026 State of the Bay report, which summarizes the health of Barnegat Bay and details the work that still needs to be done. This report is published once every five years and is accompanied by a conference on campus geared towards students and the general public on October 14, 2026. The report is available here for your review:

<https://barnegatbaypartnership.org/2026-state-of-the-bay-report/#brxe-sloiyz>

Faculty and Staff Professional Development

- Ms. Dina Sherman, Director of Procurement, recently earned her Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) certification through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services. This certification recognizes her expertise in public purchasing and contracting. The designation also allows the College to continue using a higher bid threshold, providing greater flexibility and efficiency in the purchasing process while maintaining compliance with state procurement requirements. Ms. Sherman's achievement reflects her commitment to professional development and supports the College's responsible stewardship of public resources.
- Director of Student Conduct Kayla Stahl completed the Alternative Resolution and Restorative Practices track at the Association for Student Conduct Administrators' (ASCA) 2026 Gehring Academy, gaining advanced training in restorative justice, mediation, and facilitated dialogue. These practices are being integrated into Ocean County College's student conduct processes to strengthen equitable, educational, and restorative responses to student misconduct.
- On August 4 to 6, 2026, Director of Access and Disability Services Jamie Arasz Prioli and Coordinator Heather Richman attended the annual 2026 AHEAD Virtual Conference presented by the Association on Higher Education and Disability. The international conference draws participants from around the world for three days of professional development and networking. Presenters and participants come from diverse fields, including education, technology, law, scholarship, and government, but they share a common interest in fostering equitable higher education experiences for disabled individuals. Participation in this annual conference supports ongoing professional development and awareness of current trends, enabling Access and Disability Services to continue providing high-quality services and support to OCC students.
- On July 30, 2026, Ms. Doreen Shaw, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, and Ms. Alexandria Halloran, Financial Aid Processing Specialist, attended HESAA (Higher Education Student Assistance Authority) training focused on the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) and Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) programs.
- Executive and Artistic Director of the Grunin Center Heidi M. Sheridan attended the annual Consortium of Eastern Regional Theaters Retreat in Princeton, New Jersey, on August 10 and 11, 2026.

- Grunin Center Associate Director of Education and Community Engagement Jaclyn Wood and Associate Director of Operations and Production Laura Westmoreland attended the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD) conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from August 12 to 14, 2026. This conference focused on accessibility in cultural venues.

Student Welcome Activities

- As a part of the broad effort by Student Services to welcome new students to Ocean County College, Student Life was excited to host an in-person Orientation Program for new OCC students in August. Input has been received from across the campus, including from faculty and students, in an effort to ensure the Orientation is meaningful.

The primary focus of the in-person student Orientation Program is to create a welcoming atmosphere on campus and encourage engagement, belonging, and bonding among students, as well as facilitate faculty interaction.

During Orientation, students attended workshops, had the opportunity to speak with professors, and learn about the many free resources available at OCC. There was even a workshop for parents and family members who chose to attend Orientation with their students.

On Thursday, August 6, 2026, 68 new students were welcomed; two additional orientations were held on August 11 and 19, 2026. As of August 7, 2026, 324 students signed up to attend, and registration is still open and available. Student Life and the Success Team look forward to this collaborative effort every year. Final Orientation participation will be shared with you next month.

- Orientation for new Nursing students will be held August 27, 2026, on campus, and 109 students are expected to attend the Orientation Program. During the program, students will be introduced to the Nursing faculty, program, policies and procedures, electronic textbooks, and strategies to enhance learning.
- Current Nursing students will return to campus the week of August 31, 2026, for competency validation practice sessions. All returning students are required to demonstrate competency in previously learned skills prior to entering clinical agencies the first week of the Fall semester.
- On August 6, 2026, Ms. Lauren Simon, Enrollment Services Advisor, presented to incoming student families during a Parent Presentation at New Student Orientation, focusing on the college-transition process from high school, available student resources, and strategies for a successful first semester with their new OCC students. During Orientation sessions, new part-time Multilingual Language Navigator Mariely Quinto-Sanchez assists with check-in and provides translation for Spanish-speaking families.
- On August 12, 2026, College Lecturer II/Program Chair Anais Mompont, and Field Outreach Coordinator Heather Lignelli facilitated the first Fall 2026 Match Day for the Social Work program. Match Day is a time set aside for the Social Work students at Ocean County College to participate in a two-way interview with community organizations. This process allows them to explore their interests and find the best fit for them to complete their 60 practicum hours as required for the A.S. Social Work degree.

For the upcoming Fall cohort, there are 14 registered students for the SOWK 202, Social Work Seminar, and Practicum class. Representatives from 11 different community organizations/partners were also in attendance. An additional three partners were unable to attend; however, information was provided to students and interviews scheduled outside of Match Day as additional opportunities. Mr. Tim Landers,

Interim Dean of the School of Business and Social Sciences, and two Alumni (Class 2025), Raven Moore and Abby Buser, were also in attendance and welcomed all students and partners. The alumni received an honorarium from the CTE/Perkins grant and shared tips and best practices with the new cohort as well.

Following Match Day, 12 practicum partners attended the first scheduled Orientation to ensure best practices in supporting social work students. Ms. Anais Mompoin and Ms. Heather Lignelli, Field Outreach Coordinator, facilitated the Orientation. Effective in the 2026-27 academic year, practicum partners will be required to attend an annual Orientation to have a social work student matched and placed at their agency. Orientation will be offered before the Spring and Fall semesters each academic year. This year's orientation focused on providing partners with an overview of the SOWK 202 Seminar class, its expectations, and interactive conflict-resolution scenarios. OCC Social Work Alumna Lucia McGuire-Pettersen was also present for a Q&A with partners and shared her experience as an intern and best practices from a student's perspective.

Student Support Services and Activities

- The Student Success team made 2,995 outgoing calls in July. The campaigns included stop-out, re-registration, and the summer melt campaigns. Summer melt is focused on ensuring that currently registered students are retained for the upcoming term. For this campaign, the Success Team reached out to non-traditional students and stop-out students registered for Fall 2026 to ensure they were happy with their schedules, were aware of the resources available to them, and invite them to orientation.
- Through the Funds for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) Basic Needs Grant, bath towels were purchased for the men's and women's locker rooms in the Health and Physical Education Center. Students may opt to use a complimentary towel, which are now in place.
- On August 4, 2026, in collaboration with Academic Advising, the Recruitment Team held its second Summer Express Enrollment Day. Twenty-six incoming students met with academic advisors and registered for the Fall semester. Representatives from TRIO and Financial Aid were also available to answer questions and connect students with campus resources and scholarship opportunities.
- There were 2,313 visits to the Student Enrollment Building in July. This is a 6% increase over last year. Most students needed to meet with Enrollment Services, but there were increases in both FAFSA assistance appointments and also visits with the Student Success Team.
- The Enrollment Services team completed over 7,500 calls in July, including answering almost 2,500 incoming calls. This amounts to spending 267 hours on the phone throughout the month serving students by helping with payment arrangements, assisting with registration, and reaching out after potential students inquire or apply.
- During the month of July, the Financial Aid Team assisted 95 families with their 2026-27 FAFSA, marking an 88% increase over last July. The team also assisted 256 students with Tier Two financial aid questions, a 36% increase over last July.
- From July 14 to August 6, 2026, Advising Services continued to be busy serving students:
 - Current/Returning Student Walk-In Advising: 347
 - New Student Walk-In Advising: 128
 - New Student Advising Appointments: 11
 - Virtual Advising Appointments: 229

- Advising is reviewing all new student Fall semester schedules. Advisors are also entering a complete academic plan for each student based on the Area of Study and Concentration.
- Registration and Records received high school transcripts for senior students from 18 schools. These transcripts are being evaluated for NJ STARS eligibility and upper-level mathematics placement. All transcripts are entered into the system and scanned to the students' records. Transcripts from three schools still remain to be entered.
- The Registration Department has begun working with an outside vendor to map the Pre-Nursing/Nursing program process from application through acceptance into the program.
- The Testing Center reports 268 tests were administered during the month of July 2026, representing an increase of 63.4% from June 2025.
- During July, the Registration and Records Department processed 151 outgoing calls and 475 incoming calls, along with 21 enrollment verifications and 11 chargebacks. Through QLess, 38 visits were recorded between July 14 and August 5, 2026, with an average wait time of 12 minutes and 16 seconds.
- The Displaced Homemaker's Program achieved the following goals during FY 2026:
 - Goal 1: Empower students to learn, engage, and achieve. The digital literacy program successfully met this goal by replacing a standalone course model with a structured 24-hour comprehensive model. The basic computer skills completion rate increased 27%. The workplace computer skills completion rate increased 40%
 - Goal 2: Optimize and expand enrollment of all learners. The nine-month data available from FY 2025 to the identical year-over-year FY 2026 period demonstrated a 52% increase in enrollment.
 - Goal 3: Elevate organizational effectiveness. The nine-month data available from FY 2025 to the identical year-over-year FY 2026 period demonstrated a 20% increase in inquiry to enrollment conversion.
 - Goal 4: Expand relationships with external stakeholders. During FY 2026, collaborations were formed with Flagstar Bank for financial literacy; Department of Labor for On-the-Job Training to share DHP participant resumes for job placement; Career One Stop for best practice industry standard resources and participation in services; New Jersey courts, Ocean Vicinage Court House tours, presentation, and resource center; and Ocean County College, Brookdale Community College, Ed2Go and Department of Labor to provide individualized curriculum to fit three- to six-month certifications and additional unemployment benefits during training.

During FY 2026, the Displaced Homemakers Program received contributions of support from local groups: Soroptimist International and Fairways Women's Club. The Program has also received a commitment of funding from the Ocean County College Foundation to support the foundational work necessary for participants experiencing trauma to build resilience in education and work environments.

Services will be expanded through our Displaced Homemaker network members, sharing available workshops throughout New Jersey. As efforts continue to increase community awareness of the program, it was a pleasure to receive a constituent referral from Congressman Smith's office.

Grants

Ms. Kayci Clayton, Executive Director of Grants Administration, received notification that two grant applications recently submitted were successful. They will be included in the September Finance Report for formal acceptance:

- The Ocean County Department of Human Services awarded a \$500,000 grant to OCC for Youth Employment Activities for the period October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027. In partnership with Waters & Sims Supported Employment Services, OCC provides exceptional programming to in-school and out-of-school disconnected youth through the Work Readiness Assistance Program (WRAP). The program creates opportunities for career exploration, education services, skills development, and training opportunities for youth and young adults to improve their economic position. WRAP is part of the Ocean County Achievement Center (OCAC), a department within Grants Administration. The OCAC seeks to improve the quality of life for Ocean County youth and young adults by expanding their educational, vocational, and employment opportunities. Ms. Gina Opauski, Director of the Achievement Center, is the Project Director for the grant.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded a \$71,768 grant, Inspire! Grants for Small Museums, Office of Museum Services, for the period September 1, 2026, through September 30, 2028. The Project Director is Ms. Cara Muscio, Director of the Planetarium. The OCC Planetarium will install six space-related exhibits that enable people of all ages to engage in experiential learning activities that enhance knowledge and align with the planetarium's plans to become a science center hub for the region. Project activities include purchasing the new exhibits, installing them, creating the Launch Lab space, and developing curriculum and interpretive displays for the new offerings. The project also includes evaluation and educator training. The project director will attend both regional and national conferences to disseminate the project's work with other small and large museums and planetariums. The project will benefit K-12 and college students, as well as the broader public, to engage in STEM learning and STEM careers.

Community Outreach

- The Novins Planetarium reported FY 2026 attendance of 21,120 visitors across 699 shows. This included 8,121 K-12 school-aged children attending group trips, with 4,958 coming from public K-12 schools. An additional 450 people, including students, attended programs through OCC departments, while 730 people attended private parties, most of whom were also youth.

Overall, the Planetarium's attendance was down about 10% when averaged across all categories. The hardest hit were discretionary income categories where families pay on their own. However, the planetarium saw increases in public school and adult special needs organization bookings last year. Also, camp bookings have bounced back this year.

- On July 25, 2026, the Veterans Military and Resources Center (VMRC) was pleased to participate in the Bayville Elks Veterans Resource Fair and Picnic, providing an opportunity for the VMRC staff and members of the OCC Student Veterans Organization to support local veterans. This event provided an opportunity to connect with veterans and highlight the VMRC's one-stop-shop model, which offers a holistic approach to supporting veterans throughout their academic journeys.
- In partnership with Middlesex College Dean of Students Ode Hoppie, Ms. Kayla Stahl established the Conduct Officers for Development and Education (CODE), a new professional affinity group for New Jersey community college conduct administrators. The inaugural hybrid meeting, hosted by Middlesex

College, brought together professionals statewide to exchange promising practices and address shared challenges.

Discussions focused on student conduct education, restorative practices, CARE Teams, student well-being, case management, sanctions, records management, and interinstitutional collaboration. The group plans to continue meeting regularly and develop a shared resource repository to advance equitable student conduct practices across New Jersey.

- Under the leadership of Ms. Tracey Taylor, Executive Director of Early College, the Early College Team and the Center for Teaching and Learning delivered two professional development trainings on August 11 and 19, 2026, engaging approximately 98 Embedded Instructors, School Counselors, Administrators, and School Liaisons for the upcoming academic year. The sessions highlighted the articulation process, application and registration steps, key advising practices, and standard OCC faculty procedures. The team also partnered with the Academic Deans for focused academic breakout sessions and collaborated with the Office of Access and Disability Services to share guidance on accommodations for high school students.
- Ms. Madison Caldwell, Coordinator of Early College, presented at OCVTS Performing Arts Academy's New Student Orientation on August 20, 2026. She introduced incoming freshmen and sophomores, along with their families, to the opportunity of completing an Associate in Arts, Fine and Performing Arts degree while still in high school. The session included an overview of the application and registration process, a review of the four-year academic plan, and time for students and parents to ask questions.
- Ms. Madison Caldwell and Dr. Christopher Brittain, Academic Administrator for Early College, will attend Ambassador Christian Academy's Back to School Day on August 24, 2026, to support students with applications, registration, and general questions about Early College opportunities.
- Throughout the summer, the Recruitment Team partnered with the Lakewood School-Based Program to host students on campus for college readiness sessions led by Multilingual Language Navigator Carolina Newman. During these visits, students participated in College 101 presentations, campus tours, resource exploration, and career and college vision board activities. The most recent event on July 21, 2026, brought 15 students to campus.
- On August 4, 2026, Recruitment Team members Carolina Newman and Lauren Simon, Enrollment Service Advisor, represented Ocean County College at National Night Out Against Crime at Windward Beach, Brick. The team connected with community members, shared information about the College, and collaborated with local organizations and community partners to promote educational opportunities, such as OCC's new Pathways model and Early College opportunities, to families and prospective students.
- On August 4, 2026, Ms. Jamie Prioli, Director of Access and Disability Services, presented "Transition to College for Students with Disabilities" at the Ocean County Library (Lacey branch) as part of an ongoing partnership between Access and Disability Services and the Ocean County Library System. The workshop provided high school students, families, and prospective college students with an overview of disability accommodations in higher education, including eligibility determination, documentation requirements, and the process for requesting accommodations at Ocean County College. The presentation was designed to support students preparing to transition directly from high school or return to education after a gap in enrollment.

- The Grunin Center hosted Jersey Shore Light Opera, a new veteran-owned theater company, from July 28 to August 2, 2026, to present the company's first production, *H.M.S. Pinafore*.
- On August 24, 2026, the Grunin Center will host Toms River's Broadway on Main's Theater Arts Class production of 'Toy Story.' Students in Broadway on Main's classes learn discipline and perseverance, prioritizing choreography, craft, and empowerment of the dancers.
- The Toms River Fire Training Center will hold its Firefighter Level 1 and 2 graduation in the Grunin Center on August 27, 2026.
- The Novins Planetarium and Barnegat Bay Partnership are in production on the first full-dome multimedia episode for the ReadyNJ grant.
- The Grunin Center received a Mid-Atlantic Tours grant to bring Fabiana Cozza, a Brazilian vocalist and samba artist, to OCC. In April 2027, she will perform a pop-up in the Larson Student Center, schedule a workshop with students, and offer a performance for the public.

Security Report

In accordance with New Jersey Public Law 2015, Chapter 220, and College Policy #2332, Reporting of On-Campus and Fire Events, attached is the monthly statistics report of crimes, fires, and other emergencies on campus for the reporting period of July 14, 2026, through August 20, 2026.

REQUIRED REPORTING STATISTICS

Board of Trustees Meeting: Thurs, August 27, 2026

County College Board of Trustees, for its regular meeting. This report consists of all offenses defined as reportable crimes under the federal Jeanne Clery Act, fires, and other emergencies, which occurred on campus during the reporting period of 7/14/26 – 8/20/26

1.) A count and classification of all criminal incidents (defined as reportable crimes under the federal Jeanne Clery Act) which occurred on campus and which were recorded by campus security, campus security authority (CSA) or local police departments.

DATE	CRIME	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to Report	
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			

2.) A list of campus alerts, threats or emergencies which occurred on campus

DATE	ALERT/THREAT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to Report	
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			

3.) A count and classification of all fire incidents which occurred on campus and which were recorded by campus security and local fire departments.

DATE	FIRE INCIDENT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to Report	
Occurred: Reported:			

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Thomas DeSimone