



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO: Members, OCC Board of Trustees

FROM: Pamela Monaco, Ph.D.
President

SUBJECT: Items of Interest for the May 28, 2026, Board Meeting

DATE: May 24, 2026

Honors by Contract

Each academic year, a committee is formed to review Honors by Contract Student Projects nominated by their instructors as outstanding from the previous year. The committee consists of two representatives from each school at OCC. The committee met on Thursday, March 26, 2026, and selected the projects of four Honors by Contract students as winners of monetary awards.

These four students presented their winning projects at the annual Spring Honors by Contract Student Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, in the Conference Center. Mr. Ken Malagiere, Executive Director of the OCC Foundation, and I were there to present the awards. The instructors who worked with the students on their projects were also honored. The Ocean County College Foundation is extremely generous in its support of the Honors by Contract Program.

I have asked Ms. Christine Pericone, Assistant Professor of Science, and Ms. Catherine Mancuso, Dean of Academic Affairs Processes and Faculty Development, to join us on Thursday to provide additional information about the Honors by Contract program and the ingenuity of the students who create the projects.

Cultural and Heritage Committee

The Committee for Access and Belonging's (CAB) 1st Annual Cultural Block Party held on March 3, 2026, was a tremendous success and a true reflection of the power of teamwork, collaboration, and community at OCC. Through the collective efforts of many administrators, faculty, staff, and students, the event created a joyful celebration of culture, access, and belonging. From College Lecturer in Social Work Anais Mompoint's vision and transformative leadership, to the hard work and dedication of OCC's student leaders, College Relations, Student Life, the TV Studio, Committee on Access and Belonging leadership,

and all the participants who shared their cultures, every contribution played a significant role in making the event meaningful and memorable. The partnership across campus demonstrated through the planning and execution of this event exemplifies OCC's strong commitment to creating a campus where everyone belongs and is welcome. The overwhelming support and participation made the 1st Annual Cultural Block Party an incredible achievement, a foundation for even greater success in the years to come.

Ms. Mompoin and a student will attend Thursday's meeting to provide additional information on the event as well as share a video from the Block Party.

Virtual Chatbot, Reggie

Ocean County College's virtual chatbot, Reggie, has found a new home on the homepage of the OCC website. Visitors to the College's website will now see a pop-up in the bottom right corner of their screens which encourages them to ask any questions they might have about the College. The chatbot uses generative AI to respond to potential and current students and community members almost instantly, providing timely feedback in a modality to which people are accustomed.

Since moving Reggie to the homepage, webchats have increased from 30-50 a week up to an incredible 700-800 a week. Users have asked about registering for classes, academic programs, and how to access their accounts, giving valuable insight that can be used to optimize the information on the sites.

Dr. Sheenah Hartigan, Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Services, will present additional information at the meeting about the success of Reggie since its move to the homepage.

Employee Total Compensation Statements

Human Resources issued Total Compensation Statements last week to all full-time employees. These statements provide a comprehensive overview of each employee's overall compensation package, including salary, benefits, retirement contributions, as well as an overview of their total vacation, sick, personal, and holiday time provided each year. The statements are intended to help employees better understand the full value of their employment and the College's investment in its workforce.

Faculty and Staff Recognition

- Ms. Calleigh Kearns, Enrollment Services Advisor, along with other departmental faculty and staff, was honored at the Ocean County Law Day Citizenship Award on May 5, 2026. In addition, Ocean County College held the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office certificate ceremony on May 12, 2026, in collaboration with the School of Arts and Humanities. The educational partnership ceremony celebrated 16 students enrolled in American Sign Language and Spanish courses who successfully completed the program. The event highlighted the continued collaboration between OCC and the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office in expanding accessible professional development and educational opportunities for community partners.
- Ms. Calleigh Kearns successfully completed the requirements for a Master's Program in May of 2026. Ms. Kearns earned a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in higher education from Rider University. She presented her research studies titled, Confidence, Connection and Capacity: Leadership Opportunities and Student Success on Two-Year College Campuses.
- Ms. Calleigh Kearns received a Commitment Award from one of our valued partnerships, Embrella, on May 2, 2026. This Award recognizes individuals and organizations who demonstrate an outstanding commitment to advocacy, access, and support for children, youth, and families involved in the child

welfare community. Ms. Kearns received this award in recognition of her work at Ocean County College supporting students with experience in the foster care system through her partnership with Embrella, helping make higher education more accessible, attainable, and student-centered for vulnerable populations.

- The School of STEM will see the departure of two long-time faculty members who are retiring from the Math Department – Ms. Maryann Birdsall, Professor of Mathematics, and Ms. Shirley Grone, Assistant Professor of Mathematics. Ms. Birdsall will retire after 42 years with OCC and Ms. Grone after 36 years.
- In the School of Business and Social Sciences, 88 additional Bloomberg certifications were completed by students since the beginning of 2026. This number reflects Bond Grant-funded licenses in addition to regular activity in the Business Lab.
- Associate Director Cara Muscio presented on the NASA FOCUS grant at the Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society. Her session focused on remote sensing activities and included a paper on the evaluation of informal education programs.
- Dr. Eugene de Silva, College Lecturer II, e-Learning, Science, published three books in the public domain in 2025-26.
 - *The Role of Intelligence in Countering Violent Extremism*
Eugene de Silva, Sinduja Umandi W. Jayaratne. © 2026. 320 pages.
 - *Global Equity and Reform Movements in 21st Century Education*
Eugene de Silva, Murage Athula Ranasinghe. © 2026. 360 pages.
 - *Digital Learning, Global Mobility, and the Future of Education*
Eugene de Silva, Murage Athula Ranasinghe. © 2026. 406 pages.

Staff Professional Development

- Senior Financial Aid Technician Madison Maresca attended a National Association of Student Aid Administrators (NASFAA) training in Woodbridge on April 29, 2026, which is her first step in becoming NASFAA certified in Direct Loans.
- The following instructors completed the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) yearly training. The purpose of this training was to enhance student retention, success, and the overall learning experience to implement in the classroom, face-to-face, and distance learning.
 - Olufemi (Lu) Ajimoko, College Lecturer II, Computer Studies
 - Sharmistha Banerjee, College Lecturer II, Economics
 - Kelly Bicking, College Lecturer II, Social Sciences
 - Cari Crumly, Lead Instructional Designer
 - Kristen D'Amico, College Lecturer II, e-Learning, Psychology
 - Tina Davis, Senior Instructional Designer
 - Stephen Downey, College Lecturer II, History
 - Caterina Gibson, College Lecturer II, Anatomy
 - Brian Gilmore, College Lecturer II, Music
 - Pam Goldsmith, College Lecturer II, Health/Health Management
 - Jack Kelnhofer, College Lecturer II, eLearning, Business, Education, and English

- Lynn Kenneally, Professor, Social Sciences
 - Jeong (Julia) Kim, College Lecturer II, Mathematics
 - Marilyn Kralik, Professor, Humanities
 - Maryjean Natoli, College Lecturer II, Nursing and Health Sciences
 - Michele Rettino, College Lecturer II, Nursing and Health Sciences
 - Nancy Rizzuto, College Lecturer II, Mathematics
 - Christopher Ruth, College Lecturer II, Philosophy
 - Sharon Scrofine, College Lecturer II, Nursing and Health Sciences
 - Ameer Sohrawardy, College Lecturer II, English
 - Daphnee St. Val, Lead Instructional Designer
 - Daniel Ward, College Lecturer II, Chemistry
 - Mark Westmoreland, College Lecturer II, Philosophy/History
 - Ana Wilson, College Lecturer II, Mathematics
 - Laura Wingler, Lead Instructional Designer
- Executive Director Heidi Sheridan, Assistant Director Jessica Zawerczuk, and Assistant Director Jaclyn Wood attended the Spring Consortium for Eastern Regional Theaters one day conference at the Zoellner Center for the Arts in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Student Leadership and Recognition

- OCC's Nursing Program graduates continue to be exceptionally successful on the NCLEX (National Council of Licensure Examiners) examination. The final passing rate of Fall 2025 graduates is 100%. In comparison, the national passing scores for Associate Degree in Nursing (AND) programs was 85.5%; for all types of nursing programs, it was 86.6%. OCC's outstanding results are a testament to the academic excellence offered to our students.
- On Friday, April 24, 2026, fourteen students, staff, and faculty from OCC joined more than 260 student leaders from across the state for the New Jersey Community College Student Leadership Summit, hosted at Brookdale Community College. The day was an incredible reminder of the transformative power of the state's community colleges and the inspiring students who lead at their colleges. This powerful gathering of students, representing honor societies, athletics, student government, community service, and the arts, brought energy and passion for leadership from all different areas of the represented campuses to the summit.

Attending on behalf of OCC were students Ellie Dowek, Sabrina Watts, Ryan Kanarkowski, Patricia Morales-Vergne, Lucia McGuire-Pettersen, Timothy Vogel, Kate Ibarra, Anne Nyangaga, Rhiannon Swope, and Brooke Schmidt. Accompanying them were Ms. Michelle Youngs, Assistant Director of Student Life; Dr. Yessika Garcia-Guzman, Assistant Dean of Student Services and Financial Aid; Ms. Jennifer Kane, Executive Director of Student Life; and Dr. Jennifer Dellner, Professor of English.

- On Monday, April 27, 2026, Phi Theta Kappa Arboretum Day was held from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students were excited to showcase the efforts started last year to restore the arboretum on campus and assist with the upkeep and maintenance going forward. PTK is committed to making sure students are aware that the arboretum exists. To that end, the Student Government partnered with Tau Iota to purchase a new garbage receptacle to be placed near the arboretum entrance.
- On May 12, 2026, the Social Work Program honored the 25 graduating students, the largest cohort of A.S Social Work to date, with a celebration and award ceremony. Social Work Program Chair Anais Mompoint made the room and the event celebratory with decorations, flowers, breakfast, and a guest speaker. Students were highlighted for completing 60+ Work-Based Learning Practicum hours at

various sites across the county. In addition, students earned the Leadership Award, and Outstanding Presentations and Assessments awards. Field Instructors (internship partners) were also invited, along with the CTE team, faculty and staff. I was also in attendance. OCC Social Work Alumna, Phyllis Johnson, was a guest speaker and shared her lifelong 40+ year journey in the field.

- The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Center has officially concluded its second tax season. A total of 23 volunteers prepared 267 tax returns in a remarkable 8.2 weeks. This exceeded the amount from last year, which was 234 completed returns. Students had a very enriching experience and have gained useful skills they can apply at their next internship or even with completing their own personal taxes. The clients continue to be extremely appreciative and grateful we were able to offer this service. Appointments quickly filled up and the Center was fully booked weeks in advance. Below are some useful statistics. The main customer base continues to be senior citizens. It is also impressive that students entered over \$6 million worth of income.
 - Total returns filed and accepted: 267 (an increase of 33 from last year)
 - Total federal refund dollars: \$221,595.00
 - Total AGI processed: \$6,432,033.00
 - Total State Refund dollars \$70,579.00
 - Tax fees saved (estimate at \$225 per return): \$60,075
 - Customer Population:
 - Seniors citizens 55+: 181 returns (68%)
 - Adult 27 – 54 years: 54 returns (20%)
 - Young adult/student/dependent ≤ 26 years: 32 returns (12%)

Congratulations are extended to Ms. Trish Archimbaud, the Site Coordinator, and all of the student volunteers from Ocean County College, Kean University, and the private sector. Clients are already asking when they can book an appointment for next year,

- Mr. Duane Grembowicz, Associate Professor of Science, provided an update on career outcomes for 12 Environmental Science students. The School of STEM would like to highlight that they successfully secured job placement and internships as of the April-May timeframe in the following:
 - Year-Round Opportunities
 - Benjamin Ackerman was promoted this spring to Chief Naturalist at Jakes Branch County Park.
 - Christopher Lanza is now Principal Park Naturalist with the Monmouth County Park System.
 - Alina Robinson has been hired by the New Jersey State Agricultural Development Committee as a program specialist for farmland preservation.
 - Kyrstal Smira became Interim Environmental Center Manager at Cattus Island County Park.
 - Meghan Yovankin is now Superintendent for the New Jersey State Park system where she oversees 70,000+ acres of state park and forest land.
 - Seasonal Opportunities
 - Tyler Abato has been hired for the 2026 seasonal lab position at the Ocean County Utilities Authority testing bathing water from Ocean County Beaches for the Ocean County Board of Health.
 - Natalya Bello will be teaching another summer for the New Logic Marine Science Camp.
 - Jared Caneal has been hired as a 2026 seasonal intermittent at Jakes Branch County Park.
 - Marcos McCourt will be an intern for the nonprofit Save Barnegat Bay.

- Randi Vereldsturmin is volunteering this summer monitoring osprey towers for the New Jersey Osprey Project.
- Andrea Walsh and Alyssa Gardella have been hired as 2026 seasonal intermittent at Cattus Island County Park.

Student Clubs

- Dr. Angel Camilo, Biology College Lecturer II, and Edmond Hong, Computer Studies College Lecturer II, reported that the OCC Makers Club held a Remote-Control Car Race Fundraiser on May 3, 2026. The event took place on a campus parking lot to raise funds for new equipment, materials, and a Makers Club scholarship. The fundraiser had 75 people in attendance, most of whom were from the community. The Club raised \$900 from the event. Dr. Camilo and Mr. Hong are co-leads of the Makers Club.
- On Tuesday, May 5, 2026, the annual Release Party for “Seascape” was held to officially unveil this year’s edition of the magazine to the campus community. Copies are available in the Student Center, and the campus community is encouraged to take a copy or view it online. We are so proud of the work of this year’s editor, Hunter Dolci, under the direction of advisor, Jayanti Tamm, Professor of English and Literature. “Seascape” is the annual showcase of creativity for our campus, featuring submissions from student literary works, including poems and short stories, as well as artwork and photography. Copies will be shared with the Board on Thursday.
- The Accounting Club held its 5th annual Accounting Symposium on Thursday, April 30, 2026. Professor Mike Bernardo was the sponsoring faculty and worked with Professor Laura Paolillo and the Club’s Executive Committee to organize. The event included seven panelists from a variety of accounting backgrounds, including accountants who work for the government, non-profits, tax firms, audit firms, the Big 4, and more. Business students were exposed to the benefits of an accounting career and all the different types of accounting pathways. The final 30 minutes of the event featured a networking session, where students spoke directly to the panelists. There were approximately 60 people in attendance.
- The Entrepreneur Club’s 6th Annual *Sink or Swim* was successfully held at Ocean County College on Thursday, April 21, 2026, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Gateway Auditorium. Finalist teams represented Toms River High School South, Lakewood High School, and Point Pleasant Beach High School. Congratulations to this year’s winners: 1st Place (\$3,000) – *Earrings by Bel* from Toms River High School South; 2nd Place (\$2,000) – *Your Friend Moxie* from Toms River High School South; 3rd Place (\$1,000) – *Tide Eye* from Point Pleasant Beach High School.

Student Honor Societies

- Sigma Kappa Delta, the English Honor Society, held its annual induction of new members on Monday, May 11, 2026. Fifty-nine new members were welcomed into the chapter during the ceremony held in the Student Center by advisors David Bordelon and Jayanti Tamm. The society’s little libraries outside the Student Center and Gateway Building are officially open to the campus community.
- On May 4, 2026, Delta Alpha Pi (DAPI) celebrated its fourth induction ceremony honoring high-achieving students with disabilities pursuing undergraduate studies at Ocean County College. This vibrant honor society promotes academic excellence, leadership, and advocacy for post-secondary students with disabilities. With chapters at over 200 institutions, Ocean County College proudly holds the distinction of being New Jersey’s first community college to establish a chapter. This year, seven students accepted the invitation to become inducted into DAPI while meeting the following criteria:

- Present with a documented disability and self-identify as an individual with a disability and be connected to the Office of Disability Services.
 - Complete a minimum of 24 credits.
 - Maintain an overall Quality Point Average of 3.10 as a full-time student.
 - Demonstrate an interest in disability issues.
- The VMRC hosted its annual SALUTE Honor Society Induction Ceremony on April 22, 2026. Four veterans are commended for induction into the honor society this year. The event was well attended by family members, current SALUTE students, and alumni. We look forward to continuing to grow the ceremony in future years.
 - On April 28, 2026, Ms. Kathy Toy, College Lecturer II in Economics, and the Office of Student Life hosted the annual induction ceremony for Alpha Beta Gamma. For this year, a total of 31 students were inducted into this honor society for Business programs. I was pleased to deliver the opening remarks with Interim Dean Tim Landers and Assistant Dean Nanci Carmody participating in the ceremony as well.

Student Activities

- On Thursday, May 7, 2026, Student Life hosted its Annual Spring Day event, which included the soft launch of the upgraded OCC App. The weather couldn't keep Student Life and the students from a day of celebrating the end of the academic year and enjoying the club-sponsored activities, including a butterfly garden and petting zoo from Daffodil Valley Homestead, and smoothies from Maui Wowi.
- On Tuesday, May 19, 2026, Student Life hosted the 59th Annual Awards Ceremony in the Grunin Center Theatre. Ocean County College presented awards and scholarships totaling over \$94,000 to graduating students. Scholars were recognized for their hard work, leadership, and commitment in the pursuit of academic excellence at the annual ceremony, which is part of OCC's Commencement Week activities.
- On April 15, 2026, the VMRC partnered with JBJ Soul Kitchen for a cooking demonstration. Eighteen student veterans and their partners participated in an evening of hands-on cooking. Staff members from JBJ Soul Kitchen guided participants through preparing a salad, seafood risotto, and key lime pie. The event was a tremendous success, and students immediately requested another cooking night during the Fall semester.
- On May 6, 2026, students at the VMRC created flower bouquets in celebration of Mother's Day. This continues to be one of VMRC's most popular events, as students enjoy learning floral design from OCC's own Ken Malagiere, Executive Director of the OCC Foundation.
- The Annual Dr. William J. Rickert Lecture Series took place throughout the month of April. Eight lectures were held during the month-long event where topics in mathematics were explored beyond normal classroom presentations. Students had the opportunity to see the human side of mathematics and be exposed to mathematical concepts and history. The Mathematics Club of Ocean County College sponsored this lecture series. The following STEM instructors each gave a presentation during the series:
 - Mr. Richard Brady, Adjunct Professor, Mathematics and Science
 - Mr. Charles Cebula, e-Learning Adjunct Professor, Mathematics and Science
 - Mr. Theodore Gordon, Instructor of Mathematics

- Ms. Jeong Kim, College Lecturer II, Mathematics
- Mr. Frankie Mennicucci, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Mathematics
- Ms. Ana Wilson, College Lecturer II, Mathematics

- On April 21, 2026, Prosecutor Bradley D. Billhimer visited the 2nd Annual "Take Back the Time" event in honor of Sexual Violence Awareness Month. This event was sponsored and facilitated by the Social Work Club in partnership with the OCC Counseling Center. Support services from St. Francis Community Center, along with other community resources, were available with resources.

- On April 27, 2026, Social Work Program Chair Anais Mompont and Field Outreach Coordinator Heather Lignelli accompanied 42 students to the NASW-NJ Annual Conference at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. Funding for coach bus and admissions was provided by the CTE team through the Perkins Grant. The National Association of Social Workers-NJ conference allows students to network with industry experts and attend workshops across the various sectors of Social Work.

- During the Spring 2026 semester, 156 new students connected with Disability Services and enrolled in classes, representing a 5.4% increase compared to the Spring 2025 semester when 148 new students registered. Overall, 487 students were connected with Disability Services during the Spring 2026 semester, compared to 477 students during the Spring 2025 semester, reflecting a cumulative increase of 2.1%.

- The School of Nursing collaborated with Workforce Professional Education to provide Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) students an opportunity to tour the Nursing Skills Labs and Simulation Center on April 29, 2026. Students participated in a simulation experience in caring for a patient with respiratory problems.

Student Recruitment and Outreach

- On May 2, 2026, Ocean County College hosted its Spring Open House, featuring representatives from a variety of academic and student affairs departments and highlighting the College's new Pathways initiatives. The event welcomed approximately 600 guests in total, including 198 unique potential students.

- The VMRC also welcomed prospective OCC students during May's Open House. Veteran and military-affiliated prospective students toured the center, learned about available services, and had the opportunity to speak with current student veterans about their transition into higher education.

- Representatives from the School of Nursing attended the College Open House on May 2, 2026. Staff provided prospective students and their families with information on admission to the School of Nursing.

- On May 28, 2026, 45 Allied Health students from Lakewood High School will visit the School of Nursing on campus for an overview of the Nursing skills lab and simulation program. The students participated in hands-on workshops and toured the campus, as well.

- On April 30, 2026, members of the Recruitment and Early College teams attended the Teen Job and Resource Fair at the Toms River branch of the Ocean County Library. There were over 100 attendees and potential students who learned about Pathways, Early College, transfer and career opportunities.

- Ms. Carolina Newman, Multilingual Language Navigator, and Ms. Lauren Simon, College Pathways Advisor, attended the Lakewood Parent CARE Fair on April 30, 2026, and the Lakewood High School

Post-Secondary Planning Night on May 4, 2026, to assist parents and students with their post-secondary planning for Fall 2026.

- The Recruitment Team attended numerous outreach and tabling events, including the Collier High School College and Career Fair, RWJ Jersey Shore Nurses Week, Teen Job and Resource Fair, EOF Application Day at Lakewood High School, and community events hosted by the YMCA and the Jersey Shore BlueClaws. Through these events, the team represented and promoted academic and student affairs departments across the College.
- Thus far, for Spring, 12 high school Express Enrollment Days (EEDs) have been held where almost 400 students have registered for Fall 2026. These days are designed to assist graduating high school seniors with enrollment steps, registration, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities. During these events, students meet with Academic Advising, participate in a campus tour, receive their student ID cards, and enjoy lunch in the Student Center.
- On May 6, 2026, a staff member from Disability Services participated as a guest panel member at the annual Ocean County Vocational Technical School Senior Transition Night, an event recognizing graduating seniors with disabilities who completed their educational programming through the OCVTS.
- High School Pathways - The Advising Office is participating this Spring in high school-specific enrollment events in collaboration with the HUB.
 - Before each event, an advisor reviews each student's Area of Study and Concentration and enters an academic plan. This plan is then adjusted for any embedded or other credits that might be posted to the student's record.
 - At the event, advisors review the Areas of Study and Concentrations with students. Advisors teach the students how to utilize Ocean Connect and Student Planning. Students learn how to customize their academic plan and create a schedule, and students register for their first semester courses.
 - After the event, an advisor reviews each student's schedule and follows up as needed to ensure that every student has an accurate schedule.
 - To date, eleven high school events have been completed, with six additional events planned between May 15 to June 3, 2026.

Student Support

- Beginning in Fall 2026, Ocean County College students enrolled in the Nursing Program will be eligible to receive a 0% interest, zero-fee loan from the New Jersey (NJ) Pay It Forward Program to cover tuition and fees. This program is designed to prepare New Jersey residents for in-demand, well-paying jobs in industries like health care. Students begin to pay back their loans once they begin working as a Registered Nurse (RN). Loan repayments go back into the NJ Pay It Forward Program so other students can benefit. Grant stipends are also available for living expenses, financial hardship, and mental services that students do not have to pay back.

The School of Nursing was required to demonstrate eligibility to offer this service to students by submitting information regarding successful program outcomes as well collaborating with the Financial Aid Department to assure students are provided with guidance and support when applying for the loan.

- Financial Aid and Nursing are pleased to announce that they have partnered with New Jersey Pay It Forward (NJPIF). NJPIF provides interest-free loans to students in the Nursing Program. Along with the loans, an eligible nursing student may also qualify for a \$375 or \$500 monthly living stipend that is nonrepayable. Ocean County College joins Brookdale Community College, Camden County College, Hudson County Community College, and Rowan College at Burlington County for this exciting pilot program. We are looking forward to expanding this opportunity to other eligible programs in the future.
- The School of STEM helped to set up a practice open lab for Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) students starting in Fall 2025, on the 2nd floor of the library, in collaboration with College Library staff; Dr. Caterina Gibson, College Lecturer II, Science; and Ms. Monique Brown, STEM, Laboratories Coordinator, Science. The open lab is a dedicated space where many of the models and slides found in the A&P lab are available for students to practice and study. During the Spring 2026 semester, 115 students signed up to use the practice lab.
- As of May 10, 2026, a total of 104 applications have been received for Commit to Complete. Of those, 67 students were approved for the waiver. Students who were not approved either did not meet the eligibility requirements or had available Financial Aid resources.
- Advising is assisting all new students with registration for their first semester. Students who do not attend a high school event have the option to schedule an in-person or virtual new student advising appointment or meet with an advisor on a walk-in basis.
- The Counseling Center continued to provide the campus community with supportive, evidence-based trainings and harm-reduction practices, including the following:
 - JED Workshop on April 1, 2026: *"You Can Help a Friend or Classmate"* – Training students to recognize signs of distress in peers.
 - QPR Training on April 15, 2026: Suicide prevention gatekeeper training for students, faculty, and staff.
 - April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The Counseling Center held a Sexual Violence Awareness Event on April 21, 2026, which was a collaborative event with the Social Work Club and community agencies, featuring the "Take Back the Time" presentation by the St. Francis Community Center.
 - "Pawse and Play" on April 7, 2026, provided students with another opportunity to take a break from their academic stressors and relax with puppies.
 - "OCC Is Stigma-Free" on April 27, 2026, focused on promoting mental health awareness to break the stigma and support health and wellness at OCC. This was a collaboration with Access & Disability Services.
 - "De-Stress Fest: Health and Wellness Event" on April 30, 2026, was a collaboration between the Counseling Center, the Health and Human Performance department, the Social Work Club, and the Psychology Club. The event gave students a dedicated time and space for relaxation, creativity, and connection. Therapy dogs and health and wellness activities were provided.

Ongoing Student Assistance

- In April 2026, the Counseling Center had its highest volume of student engagement in the department's history. The Counseling Center has remained a vital cornerstone for student retention and success, managing a significant surge in both scheduled clinical care and crisis intervention.
 - Monthly Student Testimonial – *“The Counseling Center has been the one consistent, accessible form of mental health support for me since I started at OCC whether it be scheduled sessions or walk-ins. I contribute a good portion of my academic success to the Counseling Center because a lot of students need that support in order to thrive in all other areas. Aside from my overall experience, I have met amazing people through the Counseling Center that have provided the tools for lifelong success and learning.”*
- The Counseling Center’s demand for mental health support saw a dramatic year-over-year increase, reflecting both a rising need and the successful reduction of stigma on campus:
 - Total Mental Health Counseling Sessions: 190 sessions (50–60 minutes each).
 - Case Management, Student Outreach, and Engagements: 162 total student interactions.
 - Clinical Growth: 40% increase in counseling sessions compared to April 2025.
 - Crisis Support: 164% increase in "walk-in" students requiring immediate, same-day support compared to April last year.
 - The top presenting concerns at the Counseling Center continue to be stress, anxiety, emotional regulation/coping, academic concerns, self-care, family issues, depression, suicidal ideation, financial insecurity, and social/relationship issues.
- Advising Services assisted the following students during the week of April 11 to May 12, 2026:
 - Current/Returning Student Walk-In Advising: 575
 - New Student Walk-In Advising: 145
 - New Student Advising Appointments: 24
 - Virtual Advising Appointments: 228
- When a new student meets with an advisor, they learn about the Areas of Study and receive guidance on selecting an area and corresponding concentration. Students are taught how to navigate Ocean Connect and utilize Student Planning. Students learn how to use and adjust their academic plan, create a schedule, and register for classes.
- Transfer Services, led by Ms. Laura Wills, Director of Transfer and Articulation, and Ms. Amy Nadybal, Transfer Coordinator, completed another successful semester. Here are the highlights:
 - Assisted over 100 students at a Transfer Workshop.
 - Assisted a total of 70 students at a Kean Ocean Dual Advising Day. Three more events are planned this summer.
 - Facilitated re-articulation of Stockton’s Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism Management degree to ensure students in this program have a pathway.
 - Hosted a Research Networking Event.
 - Hosted the pilot of the Princeton Speaker Series.
 - Met with PTK to assist with transfer information and applications; hosted special guest Cara McClintock, Princeton McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning, Associate Director, Community College Engagement.
 - Planned and executed College Connections Fair.

- Hosted a table at the “Good Ideas” Conference.
 - Presented to Lacey High School students about Areas of Study.
 - Hosted a Stockton 3+1 Info Session and partnered with the HUB to recruit students via text message campaign.
 - Continued to work with Jack Kent Cooke semifinalists.
 - Connected with several institutions, including Rutgers Newark, Rider University, and NYU, to discuss transfer topics and potential partnerships.
 - Facilitated the South Jersey Higher Education Alliance with Stockton University, Atlantic County Community College, Brookdale Community College, and Camden County College focused on supporting affordable and seamless education for our students, including access to baccalaureate and graduate degree options as well as student-centered services to ensure graduation and career readiness.
- The VMRC Recruitment and Enrollment Support reports the following:
- 36 recruitment calls placed to new OCC applicants.
 - 17 advising appointments conducted for Summer and Fall 2026 enrollment.
 - 39 success calls made to currently enrolled students to provide proactive support and connect them with resources.
 - 315 in-person student visits to the VMRC.
 - 512 individualized services delivered, including connections to resources, degree planning, and study support sessions.
- The Student Enrollment Building had almost 3,000 visits in the month of April. This includes 633 student visits to Academic Advising, 1,400 visits for Enrollment Services, and almost 150 visits for Financial Aid, in addition to 60 visits for multi-lingual language navigation.
- The Enrollment Team completed almost 10,000 calls in April, including answering over 2,000 incoming calls, and completing almost 7,500 outgoing calls. Student call campaigns included payment reminders, financial aid collaborative campaigns, and invitations for events, including the Open House.
- The Student Success team completed almost 4,500 outgoing calls in April, which equates to about 60 hours on the phone speaking with students about low course alerts, encouraging registration activities, and reaching out regarding faculty alerts.

Student Athletics

- The OCC Athletic Department recently completed a successful Spring season in which the men's volleyball team finished second in the country. Led by first-year head coach Jose Rafael, OCC's Vikings captured the Garden State Athletic Conference, Region 19 Championship, and NJCAA East District championships in quick succession before traveling to the College of Du Page in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, to compete for the national title. The Vikings finished the season with a 16-3 record.
- Athletics is also pleased to announce that the Baseball and Softball teams had impressive seasons as well with baseball coach Ed McRae earning his 700th career win as a coach. The men's and women's tennis teams finished 3rd in their respective region championships, and the Viking golf team finished 4th for the season, with the best score of the season on their last day of competition (OCC team score of 327 of the top 4 golfer scores). The Vikings have numerous teams and student athletes that will be nominated for academic honors; the names of those selected will be released in mid-summer.

- Coffee with the Coaches, the Student Success Team's podcast, pushed out two new episodes in the month of April. Career Exploration regarding Education careers featuring adjunct instructor, Dr. Kate Mohr; Meet Athletics with Athletic Director Ilene Cohen; and student athlete Batool Abdelmalak.

Community Outreach

- The School of Nursing held an Advisory Committee Meeting on April 15, 2026. There were 22 participants representing various clinical agencies as well as members of the community, students, faculty, and staff. End-of-program student learning outcomes and program outcomes were shared with members, including licensure pass rates, program completion rates, job placement rates, and clinical agency satisfaction survey information. Representatives from major acute care organizations spoke highly of Ocean County College graduates and indicated they are hiring new nurses, with many offering one-year Residency Programs.
- The Student Nurse Organization sponsored a blood drive in collaboration with Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health (RWJBH) on April 21, 2026, under the direction of advisors Linda Simmons, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing Skills and Simulation Labs; Mary Susan Gill, MSN, RN, Nursing College Lecturer II; and Tamila Purpuro, PhD, MSN, RN, Nursing College Lecture II. There were 53 donations.
- The Grunin Center hosted the Ocean County College America Sign Language Rock n' Roll Show on Friday, April 24, 2026, and the Student Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, May 19, 2026.
- The Ocean County College Concert Band performed its *Salute to Service* concert on May 2, 2026, dedicated to active and retired military personnel and first responders. This band includes several OCC students as members.
- Grunin Performing Arts Academy students presented their end-of-year vocal and dance showcases in the Grunin Center from April 27 through May 12, 2026.
- The Planetarium continues to integrate wellness and STEM programming by offering a public Sky Talk and Sound Bath in conjunction with Salted Soul Yoga, along with the Sunset Meditation film and *Calm in the Cosmos*, an immersive and relaxing experience for students, faculty, and staff to unwind at the end of the semester.
- On May 14, 2026, the Grunin Center hosted *Salute to Ocean County: A Celebration of Arts and Heritage*, a program organized by the Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission to honor the County's exceptional cultural organizations, artists, historians, preservationists, educators, and government leaders. The event featured performances by student winners of the Ocean County Teen Arts Festival.
- The Planetarium held its last official NASA grant event for Earth Day by welcoming families with crafts, activities, and earth-themed films, including the premier of *Unseen Earth*.
- The final show in the Grunin Center's Family Series for the season, *Mutts Gone Nuts*, occurred on April 25, 2026, with two nearly sold-out performances, including a relaxed performance.
- The Grunin Presents Series and the *Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon* series featured three outstanding performances in May: *Taylor, Simon, and King: Three America Troubadours* on May 9, 2026; Raul Midón on May 16, 2026; and *Sentimental Journey* on May 17, 2026.

- The Planetarium is excited to premier *The Great Solar System Adventure*, with the generous support of the Ocean County College Foundation.
- The Grunin Center is pleased to report a 68% increase in ticket sales revenue from FY25 to FY26 to date. While FY25 experienced reduced sales capacity due to refurbishment of the Main Stage Lobby, the trend also reflects a 24% increase in sales when comparing FY24 to FY26 year-to-date.

Workforce Development and Strategic Initiatives

➤ Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant 5 (SCC5)

The SCC5 team has enrolled 47 students in Summer 2026 healthcare workforce training programs and awarded approximately \$135,625 in scholarship funding to support access to industry-recognized healthcare credentials. Outreach efforts continue to strengthen referral partnerships with community and nonprofit organizations throughout Ocean County, including housing, reentry, recovery, and workforce development organizations, to expand awareness of SCC5 training opportunities and connect underserved populations to healthcare career pathways. To further support employer engagement and workforce alignment, SCC5 has established three Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT) committees—Curriculum and Competencies, Partnerships, and Emerging Trends—which will begin meeting in May to provide ongoing employer and stakeholder input on workforce needs, industry trends, and program development.

➤ Ocean County Achievement Center (OCAC) Outreach and Special Events

- Reminder: Ocean County Achievement Center 7th Graduation will be held June 16, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. in Gateway Building, Room 104.
- Staff participated in multiple outreach and recruitment events throughout April, including the Aging Out Event, Teen Job and Volunteering Resource Fair, and ESL Information Session. Outreach efforts also included flyer distribution throughout the Jackson community.
- Staff attended the National Coalition on Adult Basic Education Conference and the Literacy for Life Conference to support professional development and adult education best practices.

➤ Adult Transition Center

Participants attended the Student Center Job Fair and continued developing life and workplace readiness skills, including budgeting, transportation, kitchen safety, emergency preparedness, communication, and soft skills.

➤ Adult Education, Civics and Workforce Preparation

- Spring term began April 6, 2026, and continues through June 10, 2026. Current enrollment includes 230 English as a Second Language students and 76 High School Diploma/GED preparation students.
- Six Integrated Education and Training participants earned Microsoft Office Specialist certifications in Excel and PowerPoint.
- Seventeen participants are scheduled for GED testing through June, with two participants earning their high school diplomas.

- Staff participated in a consortium meeting and professional development session focused on integrating employability skills into the classroom.
- **Connect and Learn Digital Literacy**
 - Participants attended career fairs hosted by Rutgers University and Perth Amboy employers.
 - Multiple participants advanced in the IC3 Digital Literacy Certification program, including one English Language Learner achieving the highest scores in Levels 1 and 2.
 - The Connect and Learn program is scheduled to conclude on May 31, 2026, following the end of grant funding.
- **Work Readiness Assistance Program**
 - Ten new participants enrolled in the program, with 9 completing Leadership Academy and 9 enrolling in Exploration of Career Pathways and Entrepreneurship training.
 - Participants are earning industry-recognized credentials in OSHA, Cyber Safety Awareness, Customer Service and Sales, and Microsoft Office while participating in career exploration trips and guest speaker sessions.

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 April 17, 2026, through May 21, 2026.