



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting

Minutes

October 9, 2025

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Ocean County College Board of Trustees was called to order at 3:34 p.m. on Thursday, October 9, 2025, by Mr. Steven Zabarsky, Vice Chair, in room 102 of the Conference Center on the College campus and via Webex. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

Call to Order

The announcement of public meeting was made by Mrs. Connie Bello in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975. This meeting was announced on October 2, 2025, as required by the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, by providing adequate notice to the Asbury Park Press, the Atlantic City Press, the Ocean County Clerk, and the College community. The notice indicated this meeting would also be held via Webex, as per New Jersey Public Law 2020, Chapter 11, approved on March 20, 2020, for public bodies to conduct meetings by electronic means.

Public Meeting
Announcement

Mr. Leone shared a statement announcing the passing of Mr. Jerry Dasti, Chair of the Ocean County College Board of Trustees. A moment of silence was then held in Mr. Dasti's memory.

Mr. Sahradnik administered the trustee oath of office to Dr. Theresa Kubiel, who was appointed by the Ocean County Board of Commissioners to serve the remainder of the term of Mrs. Joanne Pehlivanian, who resigned from the Board in July 2025, through December 19, 2025. The trustees welcomed Dr. Kubiel to the Board.

Swearing-In of
Dr. Theresa Kubiel

Those in attendance were Mr. Zabarsky, Mr. Frank Dupignac, Mr. Stephan Leone, Mr. Lynn Canfield, Mr. Robert Fall, Ms. DiAnne Gove, Dr. Theresa Kubiel, Ms. Susan Naples, Mr. Hunter Mantz, Mr. Jack Sahradnik, Dr. Pamela Monaco, Executive Vice President Sara Winchester, Vice President Eileen Garcia, Vice President Gerald Racioppi, and Mrs. Connie Bello. Also in attendance was Commissioner Jennifer Bacchione.

Attendance

The minutes of the September 4, and 22, 2025, Board of Trustees closed session and public meetings were approved by roll call vote with an abstention by Dr. Kubiel.

Minutes Approved

Dr. Monaco introduced Ms. Gina Opauski, Director of the Ocean County Achievement Center, Ms. Allyson McNamee, Work Readiness Assistance Program Instructor and Advisor, Ms. Raquel Olivo, Integrated Education Training Program Manager, and Ms. Casey Pellegrino, Connect and Learn and WorkFirst New Jersey Digital Literacy Program Coordinator, who provided an overview of the services provided at the center through the various grant-funded programs.

Presentations

Upon a request for public comments by Mr. Zabarsky, there were no comments from the public at this time. Public Comments

Finance Committee

Mr. Dupignac shared the Investment Committee met last week and there continue to be no recommended changes to the College portfolios. Ms. Winchester discussed revisions to the FY 26 Budget, which are necessary due to the 35% increase in health benefit premiums, increased utility costs, and projected enrollment shortfall. In order to have a balanced budget, position vacancies will not be filled unless necessary, and \$1 million will be used from fund balance. Ms. Winchester explained anticipated difficulties in balancing the FY 27 Budget, which will be underway soon. The Finance Agenda was then approved unanimously as submitted upon roll call vote.

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| ➤ The statement of income and expenditures as of August 31, 2025, was accepted. | Income/Expenditures Accepted |
| ➤ The revised Ocean County College FY 2026 Budget was approved. | OCC FY 2026 Revised Budget Approved |
| ➤ The following contracts were awarded: | Contract Awarded |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A maximum of \$45,000 to Berry, Sahradnik, Kotzas, & Benson, P.C., Toms River, New Jersey, for the second year of a two-year contract from November 5, 2025, through November 4, 2026, for professional legal services at Ocean County College. ➤ A maximum of \$17,500 to Clarke Caton Hintz, P.C., Trenton, New Jersey, for professional architectural and engineering services for the replacement of the upper roof above the dome of the Planetarium Building at Ocean County College. ➤ A maximum of \$180,000 to American Government Services, LLC, Hudson, Wisconsin, for a three-year contract for a comprehensive cloud-based data management system for Health First New Jersey (HFNJ), a consortium of Ocean County College, Middlesex College, and Atlantic Cape Community College from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2029. | |
| ➤ Resolutions were adopted to award the following contracts: | Resolutions Adopted for Contract Awards |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A maximum of \$21,594 to Flinn Scientific, Inc., Batavia, Illinois, for the purchase of six Go Direct Mini gas chromatographs for the Organic Chemistry Lab in the Hierung Science Building at Ocean County College. ➤ A maximum of \$53,201.90 to SHI International Corporation, Somerset, New Jersey, for the purchase of Omnisia Horizon 8 Licenses through the NJEdge.NET Consortium for use from December 2, 2025, to December 1, 2026, by the Office of Information Technology at Ocean County College. | |

- The following contract was amended: Contracts Amended
 - An additional \$31,931.76, for a maximum total of \$9,303,215.38, to Shorelands Construction, Inc., Monmouth Beach, New Jersey, to modify a sewage ejector pump and adjust its location and to modify door hardware to accommodate a large format interchangeable core to comply with the College's standards as part of the general contractor construction services for the Grunin Center Lobby Expansion project at Ocean County College (contract originally awarded at the January 23, 2025, Board meeting).
- The contract awarded at the June 30, 2025, Board meeting to PJG Property Maintenance, LLC, Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, for grounds and landscape maintenance services was rescinded due to repeated delays and non-fulfillment of services by the vendor as outlined in the agreement. The vendor has been notified in writing of the termination of the aforementioned agreement. Rescission of Contract Award

Bylaw, Policy, and Curriculum Committee

Dr. Garcia noted the Bylaw, Policy, and Curriculum Committee met with Senate representative Ms. Caroline Brittain, Director of Academic Affairs Processes, to review the committee agenda, which was unanimously approved upon roll call vote:

- New Policies New Policies
 - Policy #9400, Administration, Administrative Operations, Software Acquisition, Use, Transfer and Removal
 - Policy #9500, Administration, General, Vendor Management
 - Policy #9600, Administration, General, Information Systems Audit
- Revised Policy Revised Policy
 - Policy #2300, Administration, Administrative Operations, Public Access to Government Records
- Rescinded Policy Rescinded Policy
 - Policy #2510, Administration, Communication Systems, Software Acquisition, Use, Transfer and Removal
- The following items, as accepted by the College Senate at its meetings on September 18, and October 2, 2025: College Senate Items Approved
 - New Policy New Policy
 - Policy #5225, Students, Campus Life, Hazing Prevention
 - New Program Option New Program Option
 - Associate in Science Degree, Advanced and Continuous Studies - Montclair Theatre Option

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Mr. Zabarsky introduced Mr. James Calamia, Assistant Vice President of Facilities, who provided an update on several ongoing projects, including the new Administration Building ground breaking, the Grunin Theatre reopening, completed Music Practice Rooms, Dental Hygiene and Radiology Programs, Facilities Master Plan, and shared the designated Veteran parking spot signs are on order. He then reported that installation of solar panels in campus parking lots for cost saving measures is being investigated. The Buildings and Grounds Agenda was then unanimously accepted as submitted upon roll call vote.

Building/Grounds
Committee Report
Accepted

Personnel Committee

Mr. Leone, Chair, presented the Personnel Report, which was unanimously approved as submitted.

Personnel Report
Approved

Student Experience Committee

Dr. Racioppi shared the Student Experience Committee, including Mr. Manz and Ms. Ellie Dowek, Student Government President, met and discussed the following items:

Student Experience
Committee Report

- Preparation of the campus for flu season by refilling hand sanitizer stations and providing sanitizing wipes for classrooms.
- The malfunctioning of many accessible doors on campus not opening fully or at all.
- Student concerns regarding lack of advanced STEM tutors. Dr. Racioppi shared challenges in finding students who are capable or available to tutor these subjects. The Tutoring Center is currently focused on tutors for courses with higher enrollment and fail rates, while continuing to solicit qualified high-level tutors.
- Complaints have been raised regarding excused absences for religious observance where assignment due dates are not delayed. Students have difficulty adhering to submission dates due to religious practices that refrain from using electricity, lights, or technology.
- Concerns regarding false Artificial Intelligence detection, with assignments being flagged incorrectly.

Mr. Zabarsky thanked Ms. Dowek for bringing these items forward and has expressed that the College will investigate the concerns.

Miscellaneous

Upon unanimous roll call vote, a resolution was adopted to provide for a closed meeting to be held on November 6, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., for the purpose of discussing personnel action, collective bargaining, and pending and anticipated litigation.

Resolution Adopted
for a Closed Meeting
November 6, 2025

The following meetings were scheduled:

Meetings
Scheduled

Thursday, November 6, 2025

1:30 p.m.	Finance Committee
1:30 p.m.	Bylaw, Policy, and Curriculum Committee
2:00 p.m.	Buildings and Grounds Committee
2:30 p.m.	Student Experience Committee
2:30 p.m.	Personnel Committee

3:00 p.m.	Closed Session
3:30 p.m.	Annual Reorganization Meeting
Immediately following	Regular Public Monthly Meeting

President's Report

Dr. Monaco shared the following:

President's Report

- Mr. Connor Nolan, a former OCC student who last attended classes in Spring 2024 having earned 63 credits, tragically lost his life in an accident on July 24, 2025. Dr. Monaco requests the trustee's approval, based on Policy #5152.1, for Mr. Nolan to be awarded an honorary posthumous associate degree, for which the trustees unanimously agreed with sincere condolences to Mr. Nolan's family, who will be contacted.
- Dr. Monaco recognized the Institutional Research team who worked with the Ocean County Business and Tourism Board to create a survey to help shape the future of tourism in Ocean County. IR team members attended Chowderfest 2025 in Long Beach Island, representing OCC. There will also be College representation at the Italian Heritage Festival in Seaside Heights.
- Fall Athletics teams are off to a great start, including Cross Country, Men's and Women's Soccer, and Volleyball teams.
- Dr. Monaco thanked all who participated in Banned Books events on campus, and acknowledged Dr. Madison Peschock, who coordinated read-ins on October 8 and 9, 2025.
- Transfer Service held a College Transfer Fair on October 7, 2025, with more than 30 colleges and universities represented on campus.
- Ms. Laura Wills, Director of Transfer Services, and Ms. Pamela Bogdan, College Lecturer II in Engineering, scheduled trips to transfer institutions around the state, including Stockton University and Princeton University, with help from Student Life.
- The Summer 2025 edition of "Ocean Views" was distributed, with thanks to Ms. Jan Kirsten, Executive Director of College Relations, and the College Relations team.
- With thanks to the Foundation and Grants Departments, OCC will be receiving a \$50,000 grant (\$25,000 a year for two years) to provide support to English Language Learners.
- Dr. Monaco then shared an email received from a student appreciative of the EOF team, with thanks to the Trustees and Administration for support of the program and team, which the student credits for their success.

Dr. Racioppi reported OCC was awarded a second TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) Grant in the amount of \$1,361,820 to be awarded over five years. He commended the efforts of Dr. Alison Noone, Student Support Services Program Director, and Ms. Kayci Clayton, Executive Director of Grants Administration, for the perfect score received on the grant submission.

Dr. Racioppi then shared FY 26 enrollment is currently down 78 students (-0.84%), and 430 credits (-0.5%), but explained that the number of dual credit high school students is currently up 174 students (+8.64%) as compared to last year and 1,252 credits (+9.59%). Fall 2025 enrollment is down 326 students (-4.95%) and 2,944 credits (-4.44%). The return of the Winter session has currently enrolled 198 students with 801 credits. The high school class of 2025 enrollment has a 23% yield, which is up from 21% in 2024.

Dr. Shawn Zakar, Executive Director of Workforce Education, shared the following Workforce and Professional Education updates:

- WPE held a Career Services Expo on October 2, 2025, with 30 organizations represented and 350 students attended. Thanks to Dr. Gay Huggins-Dickey, Director, Career Services, and Ms. Maria Galindo, Administrative Assistant, Career Services, for their work on this event.
- Career Services was awarded a \$50,000 grant over four years with thanks to Ms. Kayci Clayton, Dr. Gay Huggins-Dickey, Mr. Kenneth Malagiere, Executive Director, Foundation.
- The Ocean County Achievement Center held its Title II Orientation Event on October 6, 2025, with 139 ESL students, 29 diploma prep students (with 16 more expected to return), and 20 ESL transition students participating. Ten students are enrolled in the Work Readiness Assistant Program (WRAP), which includes the Leadership Academy and an exploration of career pathways and entrepreneurship. All courses are scheduled to begin Monday, October 13, 2025.
- Efforts continue to expand services and partnerships that support veterans and military families through the SCC5 Grant. Mr. Zakir Mirza, Project Manager, SCC5 Training Grants, met with the OCC Foundation to establish a solid collaborative relationship in support of this mission. The new Healthcare Coordinator is expected to begin within the next two weeks, pending confirmation during this board meeting.
- OCC Workforce Education has received approval to offer the majority of its courses to students utilizing VA Benefits, following over two years of sustained efforts to serve veterans through certification and credential programs. A collaborative effort is now underway involving Financial Aid, Accounting, the Veteran and Military Resource Center (VMRC), and Enrollment Services, to provide these educational opportunities.
- The Workplace Literacy Program was reviewed, highlighting the significant progress made in fund utilization through the NJCCC/NJBIA partnership, rising from one of the lowest levels of fund usage in 2024 to holding the top position in 2026, which has been exhausted.
- Community Medical Center (CMC) has engaged OCC Workforce Education to upskill its employees through a new partnership. Under this agreement, WPE will deliver the Fluency Series, which includes English language instruction and real-world healthcare-related topics specific to CMC's needs. The program also aims to create pathways for training participants to become OCC students.
- A brief update was given on the outcomes and progress made in the NJ Pathways Program, including several OCC-led projects: Additive Manufacturing opportunities for IDD students, the development of a comprehensive Drone Program (including FAA Part 107 Exam Prep and certification, with tracks in Business Enterprise and Public Safety, and modules on photography/videography), and expanded offerings for Community Health Workers, including Mental Health First Aid, Peer Recovery, and Behavioral Health (RBT certification).

Dr. Jennifer Dellner, Professor of English and Literature and College Senate Chair, reported the Senate Standing Committees met to review the revised Senate Bylaws. The College Senate meetings will be held in a hybrid format and are open to all members of the campus community.

Mr. Ken Malagiere, Executive Director, OCC Foundation, reported the following:

- The Legacy Campaign has raised over \$5 million in gifts and pledges to date. The upcoming edition of “Life and Legacy” will feature a tribute to former Foundation Board member Hirair Hovnanian and his wife, Anna, who established their first endowment in 1989.
- Following a Board review, the Foundation application process will follow a new fixed annual window from March 1 to April 30 for most requests. Approved requests will be announced in June.

The 2025-26 Blauvelt Speaker Series includes:

- Co-Founder of Leaf and Limb Basil Kamu, October 28, 2025
- Acclaimed Canadian novelist, poet, literary critic, and inventor Margaret Atwood, April 23, 2026

Upcoming Fall events include:

- 24th Annual Golf Classic at Pine Barrens Golf Club, Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- The Foundation Concert Event, with Grammy-winning trumpeter and composer Chris Botti headlining on Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Mr. Malagiere then extended sincere condolences from the entire Foundation Board to the Dasti family, OCC’s Board of Trustees, and the entire College community on the passing of Chairman Jerry Dasti.

Dr. Ali Botien-Furrevig, Director of the Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education, shared recent and upcoming center events, including Coat of Honor, Strange Bedfellows, and Stars, Stripes, and Spies.

Upon a request for public comments, Mr. Ryan Karnakowski, requested that flags at Ocean County College be lowered in respect to Mr. Dasti, which was approved unanimously by the trustees.

Public Comments

Mr. Karnakowski suggested billboard advertising be considered as a means to recruit nontraditional students. He also requested having an accessible sidewalk to the Arboretum. Commissioner Bacchione will discuss increasing the College’s social media presence with Ms. Jillian Messina, Director, Public Information of Ocean County.

Ms. Ilene Cohen, Executive Director of Athletics, offered condolences on behalf of the Athletics Department on the passing of Mr. Dasti. She then thanked Dr. Monaco for the kind words about Athletics in the October 9, 2025, President’s Report. Athletics will be accepting donations for the Helping Hands Food Pantry at the upcoming Volleyball games on October 13 and 15, 2025.

Dr. Kubiak thanked Commissioner Bacchione and the Commissioners for appointing her to the OCC Board of Trustees. She appreciates the opportunity to serve and is looking forward to contributing to the College.

Mr. Zabarsky noted the upcoming OCC Repertory Theatre Company's production of Dracula, from October 17, through October 26, 2025.

The Trustees then shared reflections on the life and service of Mr. Jerry J. Dasti, honoring his contributions and legacy.

With no further comments from the Board members or the public, the meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Stephan R. Leone
Secretary

Jodi Heitmann
Special Assistant, Operations
Office of the President