

Fall 2012 Colloquium  
August 30, 2012  
President's State of the College Address

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Well, a funny thing happened on the way to the Forum! Please pardon this less than formal presentation setup. My Emergency Room doctor had a sense of humor. He told me I had to be admitted at least overnight. He said, "With a broken ankle on your right side and a hematoma on your left thigh, you don't have a leg to stand on!" And so, I am sitting!

But, I am delighted to be here with you on this lovely late summer day. Welcome to what I know is going to be one of the most vigorous, challenging, and fulfilling years ever at Ocean County College.

To begin, please help welcome the following distinguished guests to this Fall 2012 Colloquium:

Mr. Van Thulin, Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Mrs. Linda Novak, Vice Chair of the Board  
Mrs. Joanne Pehlivanian, Trustee  
Mr. Michael Palmerson, our new student/alumni representative on the Board

I also want to recognize and thank our two interpreters today, Meredith Devine and Peg Jackowsky.

I am genuinely happy to see everyone here today, each and every one of you, and deeply pleased and proud to report to you that the state of our College is, in so many ways, truly excellent. Together with our Board of Trustees, our Leadership Team, and all of you, we are more than ready to continue improving as we strive to become the premier public college in New Jersey and one of the finest in the nation. Naturally, to meet all the challenges that our continued growth and success will require of us, we must all grab an oar and pull in the right direction. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "No member of a crew is praised for the rugged individuality of his rowing."

I have several announcements this morning:

First, and most significantly, I announce with great pleasure that we have a new Vice President of Academic Affairs at Ocean County College, Dr. Jianping Wang. Dr. Wang—please stand and be recognized. As most of you are aware, Dr. Wang comes to us with a diverse and distinguished record of achievement. She holds two Master's Degrees – from Beijing University and from the Harvard Graduate School of Education – and a Doctorate from the Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, California. She has, most recently, served as the Division Dean of Arts and Humanities and then the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at SUNY Westchester Community College in Valhalla, New York. Prior to that, Dr. Wang served as a Director of IR and a Special Assistant to the President at Roxbury Community College in Boston. Since 1982, she has also taught courses in composition, literature, and education as an adjunct professor.

In recognition of her achievements and contributions, Dr. Wang has been awarded a number of honors, including the Dynamic Achiever in Education, Kellogg Research Fellow, and Regional Outstanding Leadership Award. In addition, she serves as the President of the Board of Directors for the American Association of Community Colleges Asian/Pacific Islanders' Council, as a member of the Advisory Board for the Institute for Community College Development at Cornell University, as the Liaison Officer to the SUNY Office of Global Education, and as a representative to the Faculty Research Network at NYU. For ten years, Dr. Wang served as a board director for the YWCA in Boston and White Plains.

In her spare time, Dr. Wang devotes herself to promoting cross-cultural exchange and understanding. She is the co-founder and President of Huaxia Institute of Cultural Exchange, a non-profit organization specializing in providing educational services to Families with Children from China. Dr. Wang also volunteers as a consultant to private Chinese universities. She frequently participates and presents at various professional conferences and local community events.

We feel very blessed to have found such an outstanding scholar, teacher, and academic leader.

Second, I would like to introduce several other new additions to the Ocean County College family:

- Dr. Laurie Culbreth, Dean of Adjunct Faculty. Dr. Culbreth earned a doctorate in English Education from Florida State University and master's and bachelor's degrees in Secondary Education from Troy State University. She served as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Florida Keys Community College, Instructional Chair of Arts and Humanities at Colorado Mountain College at Steamboat Springs, and Interim Director of Secondary Education and Director of the Price Campus at Utah State University. In addition, Dr. Culbreth taught English and Secondary Education as both a full-time and adjunct faculty member. Please welcome Dr. Laurie Culbreth.
- Tracey Walsh, our new Dean of Nursing, is unable to be here today because of a death in her family; you probably remember her as an Assistant Professor of Nursing here at OCC from 2006 to 2008. Ms. Walsh earned both her master's and bachelor's degrees in Nursing from Seton Hall University after receiving her associate degree in Nursing from Ocean County College! Most recently, she has been the Director of Educational Services at Kimball Medical Center, and she has served in a variety of administrative positions at Community Medical Center and the Deborah Heart and Lung Center over many years. When she returns, please welcome Dean Tracey Walsh.

Other new employees include:

- Lisa Braunwell, Instructor of Nursing
- Kerry Falloon, Library Technical Services Administrator
- Patricia Guazzelli, Student Support Services Specialist

- Sabreena Joynes, Assistant Director of Payroll
- Angela Stephen, Manager of Accounts Receivable
- I am also happy to announce that Dr. Yehia Elmogahzy has moved from an acting capacity to the permanent position of Dean of Mathematics, Science, and Technology. Congratulations, Dr. Elmogahzy.
- Dr. Mary Morley has assumed the permanent position of Director of Institutional Research. Congratulations, Dr. Morley!

During the day, please say hello and extend a warm personal welcome to all of our new colleagues.

Third, Enrollment: As of this morning, enrollments for the Fall 2012 semester were 9,533. This represents an increase of 2.1% over fall 2011. However, credit hours are down 1%. We've scanned the New Jersey community college environment for comparable data and find that, on average, enrollment is down 1.9%. Based on these results, we do not anticipate any further budget adjustments, barring some worse news for the spring semester, which we do not anticipate at this time.

Fourth, Accreditation Update: This is just to advise you that the first rough chapter drafts of the self-study document were completed this summer and are currently undergoing a team review process. Pending completion of the review, teams will be embarking on in-depth research in their various areas. I urge you to give them your cooperation with regard to surveys, focus groups, interviews, and any other information-gathering activities they embark upon.

As we start this new academic year, I first want to mention just a few of the many achievements of our faculty and staff during the past academic year:

In the School of Nursing, faculty participated in many Student Nurse Organization functions, such as the recent bone marrow screening held on campus to identify a possible donor for an Ocean County resident. An articulation agreement with the University of Medicine and Dentistry was recently signed to offer, through the School of Nursing, various allied health programs such as A.A.S. degrees in Dental Hygiene and Occupational Therapy Assistant.

Dr. Colleen Manzetti, who is leaving us for Monmouth University this fall and who will be much missed, and several Nursing students participated in the 2011 Nurses Week Opening Ceremony at the United States Army - Walson Medical Support Element Unit, while Professor Lois Donovan traveled to Honduras as a member of the American Honduran Medical Mission to work with the medically indigent for ten days in August 2011. In January 2012, Professor Donovan, along with a local physician, presented their research findings at the Monmouth County Alzheimer's Support Group on "Outcomes in Research-What's New."

Professor Sandra Kearns serves on the Executive Board of the New Jersey State Nurses Association and acts as a consultant to the New Jersey Nursing Students. She is a Bereavement Co-Facilitator and Eucharistic Minister at St. Luke's Church in Toms River. Professors Nancy

Schlossbach, Lois Donovan, and Drs. Leah Kelly and Tracey Walsh and Colleen Manzetti are working with the New Jersey Nursing Initiative and Kean University to develop a seamless BSN model at Ocean County College, a unique, collaborative approach through a Robert Wood Johnson grant.

During the 2011-2012 school year, our School of Language and the Arts faculty were actively engaged in the teaching and learning process and demonstrated their institutional and professional engagement in many ways.

For example, Dr. Mary Ellen Carr (English) formed a new student club, “Alliteration,” that hosted workshops for beginning writers, where all aspiring academic allegorists align and adapt ancient ambiguous allusions. Dr. Carr collaborated with the Ocean County Library staff to organize the Community Writers’ Program in December 2011, in which OCC creative writing students performed and read to interested community members.

Professor Karin Gargone (music) accompanied more than 15 of her students to enable them to present live chamber music performances in the community on several occasions.

Professor Jack Kelnhofer (English) created a library of video lectures for use by both on-line and classroom students, videos currently accessible on Ocean Cruiser.

During the Spring semester, Professor Nat Bard (art) provided OCC students with an opportunity to participate in a juried art show in which they presented their work and received comments from a professional artist.

In addition, Professor Martin Novelli (humanities) presented a lecture on James Baldwin at the Southern Education Center as part of our *Black History Month Celebration*.

Karin Gargone presented a “Hymn Playing Workshop” at a meeting of the Monmouth chapter of the American Guild of Organists and also collaborated with Professors Pat Kennedy (art history) and Rick Trimble (history) to present “Civil War Perspectives through Period Imagery and Music” and “The Power of Memory: Gettysburg, an American Icon.”

Finally, Professor Gary Shaffer (communications) moderated a panel discussion entitled “Extremely Fast and Incredibly Close: How Hyper Local Web Sites are Changing the Way News is Gathered, Reported, and Consumed,” at the New Jersey Communication Association Annual Conference.

Language and the Arts faculty are also active authors, such as Jack Kelnhofer, who has completed his own translation of the elegiac poetry from the Exeter Book as well as a new translation of Beowulf with the intent of creating a student’s study guide and a writer’s guide to the poem. Professor Jayanti Tamm (English) continues to write for the *Huffington Post* and Professor Judy Angona (English) published several articles in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, such as “Living Our Teaching Lives in Tight Budget Times.” Martin Novelli, in conjunction with Dr. Frank Wetta, completed a year-long project by writing a book based on the United States Reconstruction Period (1865-1877).

Dr. Beth Brierley (theater) was selected to serve as an adjudicator in “Point’s Got Talent,” Point Pleasant Schools’ version of the popular television talent show, and Dr. Henry Jackson was selected to participate in the Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness.

In the School of Social Science and Human Services, faculty members continued to contribute to their respective fields. Ben Castillo, faculty member and former Dean of Social Science and Human Services, spent the past year providing training to the Afghan police force. Mr. Castillo will rejoin the faculty this fall to work more closely with the Homeland Security program. Welcome home, Benny.

Professor Christine Kitchin presented evening lectures on “Native Americans along the Expedition: Lewis and Clark in Indian Country” as part of the traveling exhibit on Lewis and Clark through the Ocean County Library.

Brad Young, Instructor of Political Science, accompanied a group of OCC students to the United States Institute of Peace Seminars in Washington, D.C., as the faculty advisor.

Richard O’Meara, College Lecturer in Homeland Security, held a retrospective Homeland Security Commemoration and Conference on September 12, 2011, at OCC.

Professor Ed Kissling was an exhibitor at the National Association for Developmental Education Annual Conference and moderated two sessions; he also provided Continuing Legal Education through Marino CLE at New York Law School on N.J. Real Estate Law.

Phi Beta Lambda advisor, Associate Professor Katherine Dillon, Business Studies, brought OCC student members of PBL to the national leadership conference in San Antonio, Texas, where OCC students, competing against 500 students from two- and four-year colleges, proudly took home 24 awards. Professor Dillon was honored as the Outstanding Local Advisor, and Associate Professor of Business Studies Barbara Napolitano was awarded Chapter Professional of the Year. Professor Dillon was also selected for the OCC Full-Time Faculty Member of the Year Award in May 2012.

Dean Labollita, College Lecturer, hosted a weeklong conference for addictions professionals in the community through the Public Service Institute during August 2011, at which he was also a seminar presenter. Professor Labollita coordinated the hosting of the New Jersey Prevention Network’s (NJPN) Annual Conference this past spring on the Ocean County College campus, and he was officially recognized by NJPN for his professional efforts toward advocacy and awareness of the prevalence of Drunk Driving, during January 2012.

Dr. Neil Lavender was co-researcher of a 500 subject study that looked at work stress in an article titled, “Differentiation of Self in the Workplace and its Relation to Work Stress and Work Satisfaction,” along with Alan A. Cavaiola, Callie Peters, and Nadya Hamdan. The article appeared in the *Journal of Psychological Issues in Organizational Culture, Volume 3, Issue 1*, April 2012.

Faculty members of the School of Math, Science, and Technology have contributed diversely in 2011-2012. Professors William Rickert and Vicki McMillian sponsored workshops for teaching/learning in remedial math for the math faculty. Professors Ted Gordon and Shirley Grone (math), Donald George (CSIT), Duane Grembowicz, Chris Spencer, and Eric Antonelli (science) participated in a successful pilot study designed to measure the effectiveness of the online tool, CruiseEval. In Spring, 2012, the majority of faculty members in the Science Department submitted a comprehensive 200-page curricular document to the Vice President of Academic Affairs to be used for new faculty orientation.

In December 2011, Dr. Yehia Elmogahzy, the Dean of the Math, Science, and Technology School, prepared a document on “post-tenure review” for Vice President Strada, based on a national study of over 20 community colleges and 18 universities. Dr. Elmogahzy also was my representative in attending and speaking to the MUAA dinner and, in July 2012, submitted a draft proposal to the National Science Foundation under the ATE funding program.

Chris Spencer was a presenter at the 2012 Spring Colloquium on the Middle States Self-Study Special Topics and also serves as one of the eight Team Leaders for the Self-Study. Marc Labella organized the Science Club and Adjuncts for the Spring, 2012, Open House. Vicki McMillian was a Judge for ASA/NCTM Statistical Project Competition for K-12 students, and she also organized and presented “Best Practices in Math XL” for full-time and adjunct OCC Math faculty in October 2011.

Dr. Marcia Bradley was selected as Biltmore’s Who’s Who among Professionals 2011-2012. During my hospital stay, one of the X-ray technicians took time to tell me about how great her OCC educational experience had been and singled out especially Marcia Bradley as the best teacher she had throughout her entire college career. Marcia may remember her as the macaroon cookie-recipe-student - proof positive that the work of the great teacher has a very long and sustained reach.

Professor Michael Pezzimenti presented the 2011 EOF Summer Program Mathematics Lecture in August 2011 and also attended the new math standards meeting at Mercer Community College. Dr. Loring Garrison made a presentation to the STAR Astronomy Club in Monmouth County entitled “Star Formation – What’s New?” and also helped in the preparation of the Mid-Atlantic Planetarium Society conference held at OCC May 16 – 19.

Marc Labella co-chaired Barnegat Bay Day/Go Green Expo on July 6 at the Long Beach Island Foundation for the Arts and Sciences.

On June 9, 2012, in a collaborative project, the School of Math, Science, and Technology participated in the Green Day Fair in Seaside Park with displays produced by numerous math and science faculty, full-time and adjunct, to illustrate the levels of organization found in nature. This event attracted about 400 participants and both the Green Day Committee and Verizon expressed an interest in partnering with Ocean County College again on similar projects.

As is evident from just this sampling of accomplishments, we have a diverse and energetic faculty and staff that have achieved great things. Congratulations!

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Upon the advent of new leadership and a new approach in Academic Affairs, my thoughts have turned many times in these past days and months to the attributes of academic leadership, in general, and specifically at our College. I want to take a moment to put into perspective and to contrast what we have here at OCC from the fractured world we live in – a world that we must, to a reasonable degree, both understand and accommodate.

A significant part of the problem faced by modern society is what psychologists call “normalcy bias.” You have heard me speak in prior colloquia of the need to adapt to the disruptive and divisive forces around us that represent threats, real material actual threats, to institutional growth, stability, health, and indeed, survival. We see evidence of these threats in the news brought to us constantly throughout each day.

We see economic hazards, such as monumental debt, runaway speculation by banking institutions seemingly bereft of the capacity to self-regulate, governmental officials who lack the courage to do what they and every citizen knows is necessary but which they fail to do because facing the problem honestly might cause them to lose an election. We see international strife that threatens the very right of nations to exist so enthralled are radical leaders with religious extremism they make a virtue of sending children to their deaths as martyrs in their dogmatic cause.

No point in elaborating further because there is no time today to chronicle even a representative sample of the follies that drive humankind to hostility and division and greed for petty gain. What is interesting, though, is our seeming inability to recognize these threats as something that can “happen here.”

How is this phenomenon explained? Unfortunately, it seems to be in our nature as a species. It is our natural cognitive structure. It is a psychological phenomenon that prevents people from seeing unconventional threats. This is “normalcy bias.” People overestimate their previous experience and underestimate their future experience. They understand the paradigm of current experience and cannot see any other paradigm as possible – until, of course, it emerges and we make what Thomas Kuhn, in his influential book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), called a ‘paradigm shift’ and we have a new normalcy that we come to understand and assume to be permanent.

I raise this issue because it is within our capacity as an institution to learn to overcome the normalcy bias and think unconventionally about the future, accept the reality of the threats around us, and together devise plans to assure our future survival and happiness. To be successful, we must face those real threats unafraid and be prepared to invent new ways to remain viable, relevant, and meaningful.

As you are aware, we have, during the Self-Study process for our 2014 accreditation visit, clarified and directly focused on transfer as our major mission. We recognize the number of our entering students who indicate their desire to transfer (consistently between 75 and 80%), we recognize and take enormous pride in the fact that our graduation rates are among the top in the sector both locally and nationally, and we are proud of both our own program requirements as well as our many articulation agreements, both of which permit our students to transfer successfully and complete their four-year degrees at outstanding four-year colleges and universities. We have achieved our transfer mission primarily, to my thinking, in large part due to what could be called the “big ten” attributes of academic leadership. I want to articulate each of these briefly for you this morning as they can, I believe, edify both our current successes and inform our continuing pursuit of excellence.

However, while it appears that our traditional commitment to the transfer mission seems to be a strategy that will assure future success for OCC, how we deliver it, where, when, and under what system of rewards for productive delivery that will permit success is a fundamental issue that must be examined, unafraid, and which will require that we change, adapt, find a new paradigm, or suffer the consequences of being swept away by these powerful forces beating on our trusted and familiar old model of higher education institutions.

I believe we can succeed in remaking the institution without losing the character, underlying values, and basic mission of the College. And, the answer as to how we succeed lies in academic leadership.

On a personal note, these academic leadership tenets are ones that have been important to me, deeply, personally meaningful to me, from the time I was a young boy growing up in a working class family in Keene, NH, when I frequented the campus of Keene State College, located just a few blocks from my wife Judy’s home and a short bicycle ride for me to the tennis courts, gym, pool, auditorium, and basketball courts.

It was a readily-accessible center of cultural leadership in our community and became a beacon of light for me and each of my three sisters, all of whom attended very fine colleges and universities thanks to the burning commitment of our parents who saw education as the route to a better life, a life with purpose. As first generation college students, we understood the value of the great gift our parents struggled to provide for us. So, I believe, deeply, in what we do here at OCC as only someone could who grew up as I did admiring the professors, deans, coaches, and, yes, the president of my hometown college – some of whom were the parents of my public school classmates and aspirational role models for a young lad seeking to understand the meaning of life and hoping to find it through learning. To me, what we do here is more than socially enabling, it is nothing less than a noble calling, one that requires the deepest respect and commitment to fundamental values that have been enshrined in American culture since the founding of the nation. So, here’s the “big ten” tenets of academic leadership:

1. High Quality Curricular and Academic Programs: First and foremost, for any college or university, the measure of the institution will be the quality of its academic programs. It is every bit as important to design programs that reflect traditional academic standards as it is to provide the educational innovations and best practices that ensure effective learning. As TS

Eliot tells us in *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, poets and thinkers challenge the received wisdom and, placing their individual stamp on it, change it forever. This is also true of academic leaders.

2. Cultural Diversity: Holding appreciation for the nature and uniqueness of our native culture, as well as the impact made upon it by the cultures of a diverse world, is a requisite for developing educational experiences offering the proper balance between the native and the foreign. Nothing we have seen in the past fifty years has diminished the significance of the global village. Just the opposite! In 1964, Marshall McLuhan described how the globe has been contracted into a village by electronic technology and by the instantaneous movement of information from every quarter to every point at the same time. In bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion, electronic speed heightened human awareness of mutual responsibility to an intense degree. So, incorporating diverse perspectives includes awareness that the medium, indeed, is the message; and thus the village inevitably not only becomes imbued with the mores of other cultures, but also becomes a vast experiment in assimilating rapid change delivered relentlessly, constantly, and ubiquitously via global interdependence.
3. Our Role in International Education: As we recognize our responsibility to the global village, to the greater good of the human community, we must also ask how we as a College can best serve this village, our community. There are multiple pathways to demonstrate this leadership attribute, and we must rule nothing out as we survey the capabilities of Ocean County College to enter actively into the world of international education.
4. Academic Excellence in Online Learning: As with any educational program offered by our College, academic excellence in online learning is essential: curricular fidelity, excellence in teaching, superior delivery modes, enriched digital content, learning outcomes measures, and regular and varied modes of interactivity between faculty and students, between students and each other, and between both faculty and students and the larger community of learners. Accrediting agencies expect the same degree of assessment vigor be brought to e-learning as is brought to learning in the traditional classroom.
5. Using Assessment and Data to Improve Learning: While any assessment process can move to extremes by imposing ineffective and artificial criteria on the measurement of student learning, commitment to working continuously to make learning outcomes assessment a learner-centered activity whereby faculty curricular experts play the major role in designing the assessment instruments is a hallmark of academic leadership. We all know that not everything that happens in the classroom can be measured. Students, we hope, are still enthralled and inspired by a teacher's magic. But we must work to measure well those things that can be measured so that we can demonstrate to those who don't believe in magic that effective, necessary and sufficient student learning has happened.
6. Planning and Budgeting in a Time of Shrinking Resources: Planning and budgeting is the job of all academicians, not just administrators. It is not a job academicians are inclined to cherish, but, very simply, one that must be done. We cannot run the College without buying things, paying our bills and our employees. It is up to the academician to be engaged in this

process to insure we are buying the right things to support student learning, and that the institution can afford these things.

7. Applying Analytical and Managerial Skills to the Academic Environment: Managing in an academic environment is in some ways similar to managing a business. It means insuring that people get to work on time, do the job they're paid to do, obey the rules and procedures of the institution, behave appropriately, and contribute to the planning and budgeting processes that keeps the enterprise competitive and on a sure fiscal footing.

On the other hand, academicians are researchers, thinkers, explorers, creators, questioners, debaters, and, yes, experts. And these are not the collection of qualities of your average work force. So it does require a very special set of management skills to both 'do' the work of the College and allow academicians to do their work as well. Conflict is inevitable. But conflict resolution is also highly possible. The good leader learns about those possibilities, and persists.

8. Contributing to Institutional Advancement and the Public Face of the College: College professors and administrators belong to one of the most highly respected professions in our country. As a result, they are crucially positioned to enhance and advance the public image of the College they serve. Their behavior in the community, public services rendered, the speaking engagements and cultural activities participated in, all can enhance the way the community sees the College and contribute to its success. This is a shared responsibility of all academic leaders, regardless of their primary job function.

9. Law, Public Policy, and Public Practice: Everyone, of course, must obey the law or suffer the consequences. Had some of the leaders at Penn State understood this simple truth, chances are the university would not now be under the pressure for reform that it is currently experiencing at a terrible cost. There are, however, far more subtle laws and public policies that govern educational institutions, and it behooves every leader in the profession to know and understand them so as to protect and serve our students, and our institution, best.

10. Principles of Human Development: In higher education, we operate on the overarching principle that, as students learn, they grow fuller and better and perhaps even wiser. On a day-to-day basis, however, we are aware that these abstractions become real life behaviors. There is the garden variety behavior as it relates to civility and morality; there are issues with respect and decency or abuse and bullying; there are academic crimes like cheating and plagiarism; there are felonies like drug and alcohol abuse. If we as educators are not open to respond to these challenges affecting our students' human development and able to find the kind of services available to address these needs, we are only partially prepared to manage our academic responsibilities. This can become, no doubt, more than we bargained for when we trained for our profession. But a true academic leader cannot pass on this one.

So, that's my big ten list! Sound like a lot to do? It is, indeed; but, it is the exercise of these qualities and skills that happen daily in the life of academic leaders, no matter what academic title they bear—Dean, Professor, Vice President, Adjunct — and, it is these skills

which define the person *as* a leader and, not accidentally, it is these qualities that directly reflect the vision, values, and mission of this College. If you haven't read it lately, let me remind you:

### **The College Vision**

Ocean County College aspires to be an institution of distinction where faculty and staff serve to awaken students to a love of learning. We foster educational innovation through effective teaching/learning strategies designed to develop and nurture intentional learners who are informed and empowered.

We employ technology and learning outcomes assessment to enhance student success. We offer quality life-enhancing cultural and athletic activities and take full advantage of our seacoast and pineland environment to enhance the curriculum. Our nationally recognized planning and resource management model, our institutional effectiveness design, and our continuing creation of strategic partnerships signify our intention of reinventing the collegiate structure and taking a leadership position in the academic community. Our ultimate vision is to ensure that our students have what they need to transfer well, to find meaningful career opportunities, and to thrive in an increasingly diverse and complex world. Our vision is, very simply, to be the best.

Ladies and gentlemen, we can, from this very village, impact and change the world. It is not necessary that we see and mimic the discontinuities, the negative irrational exuberance and enervating divisiveness of the political world and our economic environment, nor lose our equilibrium in the clash of ideologies, or inevitably become intransigent and mindless true believers. Let us do what academic leaders do – rise above ... come together ... innovate ... create new knowledge and solutions ... and try to love one another as we grapple with our daunting challenges and our glorious opportunities. Thank you!

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Before you go, I am very pleased to announce the 2012 Ocean County College Employee of the Year...

This year's recipient is known to her colleagues as a person who always demonstrates a positive attitude and work ethic. She is a team player and enjoys great relationships with everyone she encounters from both within the College and from the community. She has extensive knowledge of her office computer programs and is able to assist her co-workers as needed. She has improved the efficiency and streamlined the operation of her office through the redesign of various forms.

Our Employee of the Year began her employment at OCC in 2001 as a student worker and a reservist at the Southern Education Center. In 2004, she joined the Admissions Office as an administrative assistant, moving to the Financial Aid office in 2005, and then returning to the Admissions Office in 2006. She also works in the Bookstore as a reserve cashier.

Please help me extend congratulations to **Michele Marcum as the 2012 Employee of the Year!** Michele, please come join me...