



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Jon H. Larson, Ph.D.*

**TO:** Members, OCC Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Jon H. Larson, Ph.D.  
President

**SUBJECT:** Items of Interest for the **December 7, 2015, Board Meeting**

**DATE:** December 2, 2015

## Commendations/ Presentations

- **Dr. William Rickert, Professor of Mathematics, will attend Monday's meeting to report on several very special events:**
  - **Saturday, November 14, was a very good day for Ocean County College and the Ocean County chess community. Grandmaster Irina Krush, a seven-time winner of the U.S. Women's Chess Championship, visited Ocean County College to lecture and exhibit her skills by playing 35 simultaneous chess games. The event was free, but there was a \$15 fee to play against Ms. Krush. Of the 35 boards, she won 34, with one draw. The event was well attended, and there was great participation and interest from the audience. Dr. Rickert will share photographs of the event on Monday.**
  - **Earlier that same day, the Ocean County College Library accepted an extensive donation of rare chess books from Mr. Steven Doyle '79. Mr. Doyle has been civically dedicated to local, national, and global chess communities for decades. In addition to being a loyal supporter of the OCC Chess Club, he has served as the President of the Toms River Chess Club and President of the U.S. Chess Federation. He has held the position of the Vice President of the World Chess Federation and is currently a trustee of the U.S. Chess Trust. In addition to the chess book collection donation, Mr. Doyle has pledged monetary donations to the College through the OCC Foundation in 2016 and 2017.**

**We are grateful for Mr. Doyle's support and honored to have him as a member of our alumni constituency. The Library and the College are excited to share this**

outstanding collection of chess books, maybe one of the best in the country, with students, alumni, and the entire Ocean County community.

- Each fall and spring semester, the Tau Iota Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa inducts new members into its organization. On Friday, December 4, 164 students will be recognized as new inductees for the fall 2015 semester. These students have completed the minimum requirement of at least 15 OCC credits and maintained a grade point average of 3.60 or better. They have chosen scholarship, leadership, service, and fellowship as their hallmarks. The Tau Iota officers and advisors are pleased that Ms. Ashley Geffken Eddy, New Jersey President for the PTK Middle States Region, will be a special guest speaker at the ceremony on Friday evening. PTK advisors are Dr. William Rickert; Ms. Carolyn Showalter, Assistant Professor of Mathematics; and Dr. Jennifer Dellner, Professor of English.
- In May 2015, OCC student Christopher Coon had the opportunity to intern for former Speaker of the House, John Boehner. He was introduced to the political process on Capitol Hill, had the opportunity to work with the Republican National Committee and Congressman Tom MacArthur, and met prominent politicians, such as former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and current Speaker of the House Paul Ryan. Through this experience, Christopher realized that his long-term goal is to make it back to Washington, D.C., and into politics. Mr. Jason Ghibesi, Lecturer II of Political Sciences, was his Faculty Mentor during this internship experience. As Mr. Ghibesi notes, “political science internships are extremely valuable to students who are considering pursuing political science programs as they provide students with career guidance and valuable work experience.”
- Melanie Fernandez, an OCC second-year student studying Liberal Arts and American Sign Language-Interpreter Training, is the recipient of the 2015-16 New Jersey Association of New Student Advocates Community College Student Scholarship. Melanie was nominated by her ACAD instructor, Adjunct Assistant Professor Pat McDermitt, after completing her first semester in December 2014, earning a 4.0 GPA. She is now a Peer Mentor in the Center for Student Success, visiting first-year classes to explain the array of support services available to students and offering her assistance to other students to access the appropriate resources in order to become successful. Melanie is an Orientation Leader and a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Gay Straight Alliance on campus.
- Last month, Adjunct Assistant Professor Kathy DiMario attended the Board meeting to share with you her book, “What Kind of Dog Am I?” I didn’t realize at the time that a former OCC student, Ms. Tara Ackaway, is Ms. DiMario’s publicist.

After graduating from OCC’s Digital Mass Media Program in 2012, Tara went on to receive a bachelor’s degree in communications from Monmouth University. Using internships as a stepping stone to paid work, Tara entered the field of public relations. Currently, she works as a social media consultant and publicist. Her areas of expertise include event planning, social media campaigns and press events.

In addition to Ms. DiMario, Tara's clients include the **Association of Women Inventors and Entrepreneurs**, **Lisa Ascolese** (aka "**The Inventress**"), and product developers **Noel Wilkins** and **Earl McCall**. Her clients benefit from her mix of talent and determination. Her efforts have led to **high-profile media exposure** in such outlets as Fox's "**Good Day Philadelphia**," the Home Shopping Network, "**The Asbury Park Press**," ABC TV's "**Here and Now**," and "**Essence**" magazine.

Appreciation is expressed to **Mr. Gary Shaffer**, Assistant Professor of Humanities, not only for his **mentorship** to Ms. Ackaway while an OCC student but also for informing us of her **outstanding accomplishments** since her graduation.

### Student Affairs

After receiving many suggestions from students, I am pleased to tell you the **official name** of OCC's Viking mascot...**Vidar** (*pronounced Vee-dahr*). Vidar was made an official member of the Ocean County College campus community on Tuesday, November 10, during a ceremony in the Student Center, at which time he received his official Ocean County College ID card. The name Vidar was submitted by OCC freshman and Computer Studies major, **Michael Mastrianni**; more than 125 OCC students voted in the contest.

Vidar has been very busy this semester assisting our **Admissions ambassadors** on tours; checking out the **Toms River Halloween Parade**; popping in during **Career Week**, **Welcome Week**, and **Fall Fest**; and greeting and posing for pictures with Ocean County guidance counselors during our **NJ STARS Workshop** last month.

Vidar's plans for the spring semester include visiting as many Ocean County high schools as possible to **hand deliver acceptance letters** to some most amazing new students. He is also planning to **conquer southern Ocean County** by spending time meeting students at the **Southern Education Center** and checking out some of the **local entertainment and attractions**. To keep track of his adventures, send him a *Friend Request* on Facebook (*Vidar the Viking*).

### Academic Affairs

As the semester winds down, the Academic Affairs Division has been focusing on a number of events and initiatives:

- **School Relations** hosted the **annual Tech Prep Robotics Competition** on Wednesday, December 2, with 85 middle and high school students from 6 schools participating. Tuition scholarships of \$500, \$250, and \$125 were awarded to first, second, and third place teams. **Mr. Neil Schiller**, Professor of Engineering, was an excellent Master of Ceremonies, and the event was supported by staff from across the campus.
- On Tuesday, December 1, the **Honors by Contract Program** held its awards ceremony and presentation of student projects. The Honors by Contract Program gives students

the opportunity to **work individually** with **faculty members** on directed **higher-level educational activities** that are related to **course objectives**. A **student** who completes **regular course assignments** in addition to **faculty-directed, higher-level academic assignments** will have the **designation** denoted on his/her transcript. A **student** who **successfully completes four Honors by Contract courses** with an overall GPA of **3.5 or above** will **graduate from Ocean County College** as an **Ocean County College Honors Student**. This **designation** will be noted on the **student's transcript and diploma**, as well as in the **commencement program**. This semester's program included **80 students** in a **wide range of disciplines**, including **mathematics, science, arts, humanities, and social sciences**.

- The **School of Nursing and Health Sciences** is busy **preparing its students for final exams** and their **preceptorships**.
- During this **holiday season**, the **OCC Repertory Theatre** will be presenting the play, **"Doubt: A Parable."** The **dance company** will present its **annual dance concert** on **Friday, December 11**. On **Friday, November 20**, **photographer Joe Guerriero** spoke on the **current state of affairs in Cuba**.
- With the support of **funding from the Investors Foundation**, **Ocean County College** will be **launching the first initiative** of the **OCC STEM Academy** during the **spring semester** with **65 chemistry students** from **Toms River High School South**. In **February**, the program will **kick off** with an **assembly at the school** to **introduce and excite the students** about the **STEM Academy**. Following the **assembly**, **Mr. Vijay Ramdeen, Lecturer II of Chemistry**, will be **visiting Toms River South for four weeks** to conduct **STEM-related lessons** in **three college prep chemistry courses**. The **lesson topics** will include **Synthesis of Aspirin, Ink Chromatography, Atomic Line Spectrum, and Polymer Ball Design**. The **initiative** will **culminate with students** visiting the **OCC campus on Thursday, March 10**, for a **STEM Day**, at which time they will be **divided into groups** to participate in **two of four workshops** led by **OCC faculty and staff**. The **interactive workshops** will cover various **STEM-related themes**, such as **light spectrum at the Planetarium, a crime scene lab, mechatronics, and physiology**.

This project is under the leadership of **Dr. Lisa DiBisceglie, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs**; **Ms. Eileen Schilling, Executive Director of Academic Assessment and School Relations**; **Dr. Roseann Bar, Dean of the School of Business and Social Sciences**; **Mr. Paul Silberquit, Dean of the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**; **Ms. Jane MacDonald, Lecturer II of Education**; and **Mr. Vijay Ramdeen**.

- **e-Learning** is currently in a **partnership with Sussex County Community College** wherein **OCC** is providing **Sussex** with **LMS technology, course content, and training and support services to faculty and students**, all of which allows **Sussex** entry into its **local online market**. A **similar model** has been developed with **Eastwick College** located in **Hohokus, New Jersey**.

With the launch of five online degree completion programs by Kean University, OCC Online and Kean Online will be working together more closely, with OCC providing additional coursework to 80 Kean students.

OCC Online and Ms. Eileen Schilling are securing articulation agreements with Arizona State University, Charter Oak College, Colorado State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Temple University.

- **IMI and OCC: Ocean County College's First International Partnership** - Dr. Maysa Hayward, Dean of Instructional Outreach, and Mr. Jeff Harmon, Associate Vice President of e-Learning and Learning Enterprises, recently traveled to Cairo, Egypt, to conduct the inaugural training for OCC's first international partner, the IMI (International Company for Human Resources and Management Development) Group. Dr. Hayward and Mr. Harmon trained 13 IMI facilitators on technology and pedagogy and developed the infrastructure needed to commence language training for IMI trainees this fall.

Dr. Hayward and Mr. Harmon will make a brief PowerPoint presentation at Monday's meeting to apprise the trustees of the efficacy of this training endeavor and detail ongoing and future partnership plans of this nature.

#### **Finance and Administration**

- **Jon and Judith Larson Student Center** - Please join the College community at the ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the new Jon and Judith Larson Student Center on Friday, January 22, at 3:30 p.m. The afternoon will include food and fun with the opportunity to tour the new facility, meet the new food service provider, and discover the building's many amenities.
- **Alumni** - On Wednesday, October 28, Ms. Rebecca Feiler-White, Director of Alumni Relations, hosted an Alumni Networking event at Tuscan House Bistro in Toms River for alumni to reconnect with old friends and establish new networks. Additionally, Ms. Feiler-White seized the opportunity to discuss upcoming College initiatives and receive feedback on alumni programs and services. The event had a great turnout and attendees represented alumni from the Class of 1978 through the Class of 2014.

OCC alumni have remembered the College with gracious donations. One such gift was from Mr. John Murphy '90, a Toms River resident, who donated an NCAA backboard to the Athletics Department to support the College's basketball program and student athletes.

- **Grants** – The following grant proposals, totaling \$282,442, have recently been submitted by the College:
  - **Stewart Funding Bill 966 - Radiological Response Plan Equipment Grant (\$27,527)** - To purchase specific equipment needed to implement a Radiological Response Plan.



- **NEH Challenge Grant (\$146,547)** - To support development of a **Humanities Center** and create an **A.S. Degree in Humanities**.
- **Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Grant (\$10,500)** - To support the production of **Dancing at Lughnasa**.
- **Microsoft Hololens (\$97,868)** - To develop **Microsoft Hololens 3D modeling and manipulation capabilities** for use in **remedial and introductory STEM programs**.
- **Facilities** - **Facilities Management** hosts **safety training courses** on campus for **essential staff** through the **MEL Safety Institute (MSI)**. The **training** provides **essential knowledge and skills** necessary to **safely manage and provide** for the **College campus**. **MSI** trains over **30,000 employees** each year in a **broad range of safety topics** required by **PEOSHA** and other **agencies**. Additional **MSI training** has already been **scheduled for 2016**. Since the **initiation of this training**, **safety awareness and knowledge of safety protocols** have **increased**, which, in turn, will hopefully **reduce injury claims on campus** and in the **Maintenance Department**.
- **Office of Information Technology** - After working for **two years** towards its **implementation**, the **Colleague Microsoft SQL conversion** was **completed** over the **Thanksgiving weekend**. Being on the **SQL platform** has many **benefits**, such as ensuring that **OCC** is using the **latest supported version of Colleague**, improving **reporting capabilities**, and taking advantage of the latest **Ellucian innovations**, such as **Colleague SaS** (a **cloud-based version of the ERP**).

This **major accomplishment** was **completed** under the **leadership of Mr. Hatem Akl, Chief Information Officer**. The **IT team, Ellucian Managed Services, and OCC staff** worked **diligently** to make this project a **success**. The following **individuals** are **commended** for their **dedication** to this project and their **outstanding work** to ensure the **success of this conversion**:

- **Ed Tafaro, Executive Director, OIT**
- **Chuck Keeler, Ellucian General Manager**
- **Kevin Leahy, Ellucian CIO, Transition Services**
- **Ed Browne, Ellucian Senior Programmer Analyst**
- **Craig McKeough, Ellucian Senior Programmer Analyst**
- **Joseph Pelkey, Programmer Analyst**
- **Rick Mortellaro, Programmer Analyst**
- **Sally Crawford, Systems Analyst**
- **Kerry McEachen, Systems Administrator**
- **David Wechter, Programmer Analyst**
- **Edwin Ayres, Senior Programmer Analyst**
- **Ben Sievers, Ellucian Programmer Analyst**
- **Bryan Cochran, Colleague Technical Lead**
- **Anthony Jordan, Programmer Analyst**

- Sean O'Leary, Network Systems Administrator
- Patrick Stivale, Network Systems Administrator

The success of the **migration project** was in no small part due to the **end users** who spent many hours **testing every application** to be sure there were **no unexpected problems** when the **system** went live. Many of the users **volunteered their time** over the **Thanksgiving weekend to complete testing**. In keeping with the **principles** established in **Charting Our New Course**, this accomplishment will be noted with a **celebratory luncheon** honoring the **staff who persisted over two years to bring this project to conclusion**.

- **Learning Management System (LMS) Selection Process** - As you are aware, the College has been considering the **procurement** of a new **Learning Management System (LMS)** to **replace** the current **Pearson Learning Studio**. The College took advantage of a recently completed **Request for Proposals** by **NJEDge** that **evaluated** and **negotiated contracts** with **four major LMS providers**. The products on the approved list were **Canvas**, **Blackboard Learn**, **Blackboard Moodlerooms**, **Desire to Learn (D2L)**, and **Web Study**. The College then decided to use a **multi-phase approach** in selecting the **final product**. The following is a brief description of each phase.
  - **Phase 1:** A **ten-member committee** comprised of **faculty, administrators, and technical staff** determined the **major criteria** required in the **new system**. The **vendors** were invited to make **presentations**, which were **evaluated** by the **committee**. Based on the evaluations, it was determined that **Canvas** and **D2L** met the College's needs and should be **explored further**.
  - **Phase 2:** Each **vendor** set up a **sandbox** (a sample of its system) and held **training sessions**, followed by **open labs**. **Faculty, students, and staff** were asked to **evaluate** their **experiences**, after which the **vendors** held **open forums**. The **vendors** also conducted **online sessions** for remote **e-Learning faculty**, who also **evaluated** the **systems**.
  - **Phase 3:** **Reference checks** were conducted on each **vendor** relating to **implementation services** and **ongoing support**.
  - **Phase 4:** Each **vendor** was asked to provide **final pricing** based on **criteria** defined by **e-Learning** and the **academic area**.
  - **Phase 5:** The **financial viability** of each **company** was **reviewed** by **Executive Vice President Sara Winchester**.
  - **Phase 6:** **CIO Hatem Akl**, worked with the **Institutional Research Office** to **rate** the **two products** based on **faculty survey results**, **technical review results**, **reference check results**, and **cost estimates** submitted by both vendors.

Following this **extensive, comprehensive review**, a **recommendation** is being presented to the **Board on Monday** to award a **three-year contract** to **Canvas Learning Management Systems** to serve as the College's new **Learning Management System provider**.

- **The Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts** – Approximately **350 people** attended the **Alvin Ailey II performance** on **Thursday, November 5**, making it one of the **highest viewed performances** for a week night at the **Grunin Center**.

**Two December performances** are already sold out, the **Westminster Concert Bell Choir** on **December 4** and the **Vienna Boys' Choir** on **December 16**.

The **Grunin Center** has partnered with **Prime 13, Villa Almafì, and Panini Ristorante** to offer **dinner show packages** for a variety of **performances** throughout the year. The **dinners** have been well received by **patrons** and **host restaurants**.

**Upcoming performances** include:

- The **Repertory Theatre Company's "Doubt, A Parable,"** directed by **Mr. Paul Chalakani, College Lecturer II of Communications and Theatre**, is being presented from **Thursday, December 3, through Sunday, December 6, at 7:30 p.m.** **"Doubt: A Parable"** won the **2005 Pulitzer Prize for Drama** as well as a **Tony Award for Best Play**.
- The **16-member Westminster Concert Bell Choir** is performing on **Friday, December 4, at 8:00 p.m.** The **Choir, conducted by Kathleen Ebling Shaw**, is composed of **undergraduate and graduate students of Westminster Choir College of Rider University**.
- On **Saturday, December 5**, an **Ocean County College tradition, Yates Musical Theatre's "A Christmas Carol"** will be performed at **1:00 p.m.** This **musical adaptation** is the **timeless tale** of miserly **Ebenezer Scrooge**, who hates Christmas.
- The **OCC Concert Band** presents **"Sounds of the Seasons"** on **Saturday, December 5, at 8:00 p.m.** The **OCC Concert Band**, with its **joyous tribute** to the holiday season, will help to make your spirit bright with its renditions of **"Sleigh Bells," "Carol of the Bells," "Christmas Festival," "C'est Noel,"** and **new, exciting arrangements** of many more holiday favorites.
- On **Friday, December 11**, **Canadian Brass** will perform at **8:00 p.m.** With an **international reputation**, **Canadian Brass** has truly earned the **distinction** of **"the world's most famous brass group."**
- **Ballet for Young Audience's "The Nutcracker"** will take place on **Sunday, December 13, at 1:00 p.m.** Another **Ocean County College tradition** and **Ocean County favorite**, this **delightful ballet** is a **dream story** brought to life through **music, dance, and beautiful costumes**.



- On Wednesday, December 16, the Vienna Boys' Choir will perform at 7:30 p.m. The Choir has been singing at the court in Vienna since the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. As one of the best known boys' choirs in the world, the Vienna Boys' Choir has been an enduring symbol of Austria for more than 500 years.
- **Planetarium** - At last month's meeting, the College accepted the donation of a holiday themed Planetarium show, "Let it Snow." The generosity of the donor, Mrs. Tara Murtha, continued as she sponsored a free premier event in the Planetarium on Sunday, November 22. Friends of the Planetarium were invited, and staff members provided a tour for individuals who were not familiar with our campus.
- **Human Resources** - The search for the Provost/Vice President for Learning Enterprises is underway. The search is being facilitated by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). ACCT is an experienced higher education search firm that has already begun national recruiting for this key position. Internally, the search committee has been selected, which includes representation from all areas of the College.
- **Accounting** – The Fiscal Year 2015 Audit Report will be presented for the Board's acceptance on Monday. The final audit report was delayed pending the release of pension liability numbers from the State of New Jersey.

Effective with the close of FY 2015, the College has adopted the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's (GASB) Statement 68, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions, and Statement 71, Pension Transition for Contributions Made Subsequent to the Measurement Date. This is notable because, for the first time, Statements 68 and 71 require the College to report its share of the defined benefit pension liabilities and expenses, as well as the related deferred outflows and inflows of resources allocated to it by the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). The July 1, 2014, balance of the net pension liability and related deferred outflows and inflows of resources is reported in the Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position as a restatement to the 2015 Net Position, beginning of year. The June 30, 2014, financial statements will not be restated.

The adoption of GASB Statements 68 and 71 dramatically reduced the FY 2015 unrestricted net position in the financial statements. This decrease in net position reflects the College's long-term liability for pensions, but it does not impact the unrestricted fund balance.

- **Purchasing** - Efforts to increase the effectiveness of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges' Joint Purchasing Consortium have continued. OCC spearheaded an effort to help New Jersey community colleges save money while satisfying the new obligations under the Affordable Care Act (Internal Revenue Code Sections 6055 and 6056). Of the 19 colleges, 8 have signed up to use the same information return preparation services; as result, all 8 will realize significant savings.