

OCEAN VIEWS

A Magazine for Ocean County College Alumni, Our College Family and the Community
Winter - Spring 2021 • Vol. XV: No. 1



**RENEE
WASKOVICH
WHITE**
'04

A.S. NURSING
PROSECUTOR
MOM OF 4

Winter - Spring 2021
Vol. XV: No. 1

A magazine for Ocean County
College Alumni, Our College Family
and the Community

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Ready To Get Back in the Game





Veronica Guevara-Lovgren, AJ Trump, executive director OCC Student Services, and Yessika Garcia-Guzman at Lakewood High School.

The Lakewood Initiative Has Begun

For years, Yessika Garcia-Guzman, executive director of Financial Aid, and Veronica Guevara-Lovgren, assistant dean of Arts & Humanities, talked about the Latinx community in Lakewood, wondering how to improve and increase access to its recent high school graduates and adults who may want to return to college. After speaking with Gerald Racioppi, Ed.D., vice president of Student Affairs, and Joseph Konopka, Ph.D., vice president of Academic Affairs, they reviewed a survey created by Lakewood High School guidance counselor Oscar Orellana to identify barriers to enrollment for members of that population.

“It was transportation and costs,” says Guevara-Lovgren. “We found there were many obstacles in terms of getting to campus and affording college.”

The first issue was dealt with when it was decided that OCC would run classes at Lakewood High School, and a memorandum of understanding was signed with the school district in the summer of 2019. The affordability question, especially for undocumented students, was answered by a change in New Jersey legislation that offers them an alternative financial aid application.

The first classes, chosen to help students

fulfill general education requirements, were popular, and students and planners are enthusiastic about the initiative’s future.

The issue hit close to home for Guevara-Lovgren, a first-generation college student whose parents are immigrants. She describes teaching an undocumented student who had to pay out-of-pocket for courses at OCC, taking years to earn her degree.

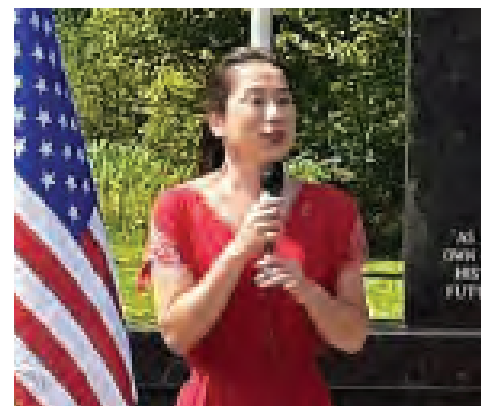
“Her struggle impacted me deeply. Let’s remove barriers and obstacles to the struggle [to get an education],” she says. “We have a responsibility and obligation to do that.”

Despite the unexpected extra hours spent in meetings with potential students, parents, guidance counselors and others in the Lakewood community, Guevara-Lovgren and Garcia-Guzman continue to support the initiative they envisioned and encourage anyone interested in enrolling or participating to email them.

“Although the classes were small, and then we went remote, we have started to see an increase in the number of students enrolling from this Lakewood community,” says Guevara-Lovgren, “and we are hopefully optimistic that it will continue.”

Making Beautiful Music

Sungii Kim, an adjunct assistant professor in OCC’s Music Department, is an ardent supporter of the Korean community in Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. Last summer, she performed the Korean and American national anthems at the new Korean War Memorial and America Korea Alliance Peace Park in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The event commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Korean War and acknowledged the strong relationship between the two countries. Kim performs abroad, teaches private music students and gives master classes in South Korea, where she was born and reared. The soprano earned her master’s degree at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, studied at the Manhattan School of Music and earned her doctorate from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. (www.sungiiikim.com).



“ Let’s remove barriers to the struggle [to get an education]. ”
 Veronica Guevara-Lovgren • assistant dean of Arts & Humanities

NURSING STUDENTS RETURN TO THE CAMPUS



Teresa (Tracy) Walsh Ph.D., MSN, RN-BC, dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences said, “I spoke to each student and encouraged them to follow the policies and procedures implemented to assure the health of everyone who utilizes the building — to embrace the necessity of the changes, of the challenges — and they have. It’s been very successful.”

OCC’s nursing students were among the first students to come back to campus in the fall 2020 semester. Per OCC’s Restart Plan for the fall, most students continued remote learning, while those in certain courses requiring significant hands-on instruction, including nursing, returned in a highly structured, safe environment.

Approximately 130 students graduate each year from the Nursing Program, which welcomes 110 new students each fall semester and 90 each spring; much of their coursework requires hands-on practice of nursing skills. Fall 2020 saw the return of about 350 students to the H. Hovnanian Health Sciences Building.

In addition to attending remote lectures, students are required to complete laboratory work on campus — skills and simulation labs — getting the practice required for all clinical placements, performed in one of

the more-than 20 hospitals and healthcare facilities that collaborate with OCC to offer patient care experiences. The program faced unique challenges given the mandatory restrictions placed on the campus and the region.

“We had to develop new processes and protocols based on the CDC and Department of Health guidelines,” says Teresa (Tracy) Walsh. She and her staff created a complex schedule to provide students with practice in the skills and simulation labs, rotating groups of 10 students and staggering their arrival and departure times; scheduling the cleaning of rooms and all equipment between groups (in collaboration with the Facilities Department); and helping students acclimate to the new environment, including security and health safety checks, with assistance from the Security Department.





The Scene of the Crime

DNA analysis, shoe and tire impressions, analysis of drugs, chemicals and bodily fluids, and examination of traces of paint, hair and fibers — no, it's not a set-up for an episode of one of the *CSI* series. These are all elements of the Forensic Science program at OCC that are now even more realistic and impressive when performed in the College's new, state-of-the-art Criminal Investigative Sciences Center (known colloquially as the Crime Scene Lab), located in the Security building.

"This program gives students an application of physical sciences combined with the law," says Tom Lesniak, part-time teacher at OCC and former forensic scientist for the state of New Jersey for 37 years. "It shows them what crime scenes are *really* like."

The new lab is critical for this type of work, offering students a chance to learn the value of observation and attention to detail. Lesniak stresses the need for law enforcement individuals to develop a good eye, to learn how to photograph details and to package evidence correctly.

Students learn how to develop fingerprints and compare them, what it's possible to learn from a strand of hair, how to identify a shoe from a bloody footprint, good notetaking, and laws and safeguards that are critical to this line of work.

During the pandemic, lab studies are being done in-person, on campus on a rotating schedule — about four pods of six students come to campus once a month. But students also get to try out certain techniques at home with a packet prepared by Lesniak and the other instructors. They practice seemingly small tasks, such as putting torn documents or a broken toothpick back together, for example. These puzzles hold

answers, just waiting for the students to find them. Small portable microscopes and magnifying glasses, graph paper to sketch a crime scene to scale and more are part of their "Lab-at-Home" packets.

"Anyone with good observation to detail, precise notetaking, sharp sense of reasoning and who is passionate about the field will make a good student in this field," adds Lesniak.

The Crime Scene Lab is a fully furnished apartment with kitchen, living room, bedroom and bathroom in which crime scenes will be staged for students to decipher.

"This lab is critical for students who want to go into law enforcement or criminal investigation," says Roseann Bar, Ph.D., dean of the School of Business & Social Sciences. "Our Criminal Investigation students will use this replication of a real-life crime scene for their capstone course."

Professors will use the apartment's camera system to monitor the students' progress: Did they follow the right protocols? Did they touch anything or move anything they shouldn't? Did they follow the appropriate chain of command?

"Having top quality professionals from state forensics labs teaching our students in a state-of-the-art center where they learn the reality of working a crime scene makes all the difference and enhances their classroom theory," adds Bar.



Bösendorfer Arrives!

OCC's Bösendorfer Imperial Grand piano was delivered in September!

After about a year of housing and using a community member's Bösendorfer, and beginning a series of professional recitals in addition to those by students and faculty, OCC College Lecturer II Brian Gilmore began the search for a Bösendorfer that OCC might purchase.

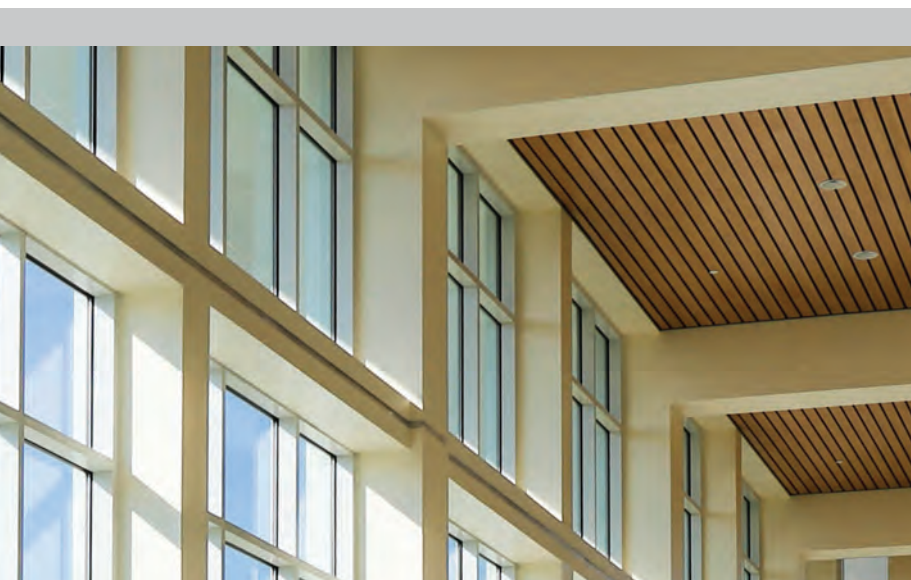
"The professional recital series was a resounding success, and each recital gained a larger and wider audience," says Gilmore. A new series was created for the 2020-21 year, and he found an instrument that belonged to Garrick Ohlsson, one of America's greatest living pianists.

According to Gilmore, the 40-year-old piano has been beautifully maintained with most of its working action replaced or reconditioned just 10 years ago. And, after hearing about OCC's new music major and the College's mission to enrich the community, Ohlsson offered the piano to OCC at a reduced price.

The OCC Foundation purchased the instrument and gifted it to the College, however, its delivery was delayed and the spring recitals canceled because of the onset of COVID-19. Two concerts were recorded in December and will be broadcast at a future date. The College will welcome a live audience when it is feasible once again.

"The OCC Foundation Board approved the funding, and we purchased the instrument at a generous discount," says Ken Malagiere, executive director of the Foundation. "We are proud to be the new owners; our students now have the opportunity to play on the Rolls Royce of pianos."

"Every step along the way toward the actual purchase has been within the vision of creating extraordinary musical opportunities for our students, promoting excellence in our Performing Arts degree program and offering unique musical experiences to the larger OCC community," says Karin Gargone, music program chair and instructor of Humanities and Fine Arts.



ARTS ON CAMPUS INSTALLATION NO. 2 READY TO GO



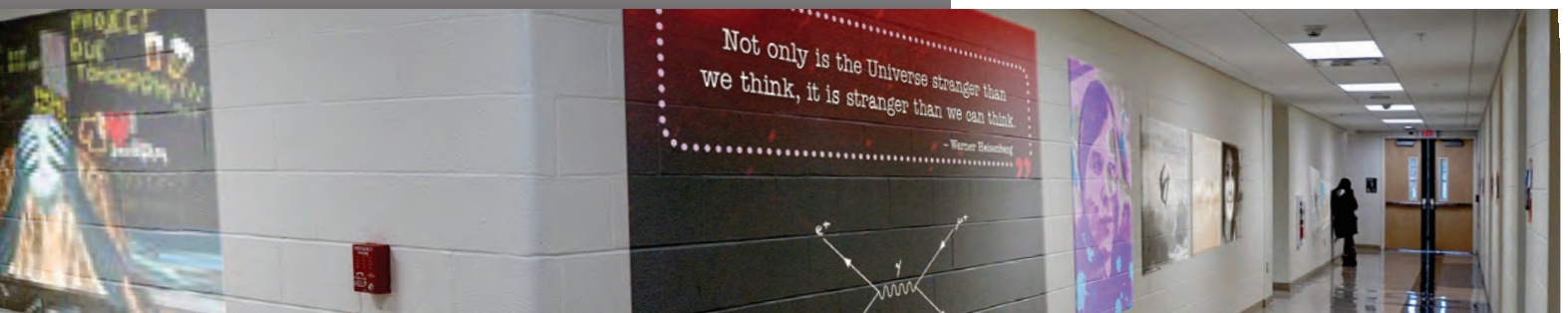
The Arts on Campus initiative experienced a successful season in 2019 with its installation of student artwork on the third floor of OCC's Instructional Building. In process for several years, the project's goals are both humble and lofty. Exhibits of artwork created by students in the Graphic Design, Photography and Fine Arts programs bring recognition to the quality of these programs and the talents of OCC students. Increasing community awareness of the installation(s) will help provide an intellectually rich environment while expanding OCC's role as a cultural center for the broader community.

The initiative will promote artists from the community, provide permanent student displays, run an annual juried art show and secure permanent gallery space on campus.

"We want to encourage our students to explore their creativity as they learn about art, and by displaying their work, we recognize their efforts as we offer the opportunity for learning and entertainment for various community groups," says Heidi Sheridan, dean of the School of Arts & Humanities. **"It is a way for OCC to build community, embrace diversity and empower the students, scholars, educators, audiences and advocates who will shape the College's future."**

The second installation, which includes photos, graphic designs and fine art, initially planned for March 2020 on the second floor of the Instructional Building, was approved in late fall.

"Through the artwork featured on our walls, we were able to show that engaging the imagination through art and academia gives our students the affirmation needed to beat sometimes overwhelming odds," says Renate Pustiak, college lecturer.





OUR CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

THROUGHOUT 2020, MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AT OCC HAVE CONTINUED ON SCHEDULE AND ON BUDGET.

The new Student Enrollment Building, a 16,261-square-foot facility on the site of the former College Center, is slated to be completed in the summer of 2021. The building will improve the enrollment process flow, providing a one-stop shop for

students. Advising, Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration & Records and The Hub will be housed there.

And off-campus, the Philip J. Citta Center for Sailing and Maritime Arts and Sciences, on Mill Creek Road in Berkeley Township,

will provide an ideal spot for the OCC Sailing Team to train and practice. The Phase II design, including a 2,500-square-foot sailing boathouse and improvements to the parking lot, are complete, and the project is moving forward.

Timing Was Everything for OCC's Information Technology

Ocean County College has always taken a proactive approach to technological updates on campus for its students, faculty and staff, which helped when campus went to remote learning in mid-March 2020.

A contract renewal with Cisco, the company that owns WebEx, had just been signed, allowing the campus community

to react more easily and make the switch to virtual communication and online learning.

"We had planned for a more controlled roll-out (at the end of March)," says James C. (JR) Ross, chief information officer. "But we pivoted quickly and had all faculty and others ready to go in short order."

The extension of spring break gave the IT Department extra time to gather Chromebooks and laptops from classrooms for students without their own

devices at home. Ross explains that faculty also needed to be able to connect to run classes remotely as well as communicate directly with individual students.

A streamlined process was developed that expanded OCC's virtual desktop environment, replaced routers for better bandwidth and upgraded security software. Funding from the CARES Act helped the College acquire additional equipment including laptops and monitors.



e-

Faculty, Students Pivot Successfully to Remote Learning

Thanks to the leadership of an experienced e-learning pro, the dedication of her team and the collaboration of everyone involved, OCC's campus transition to remote learning went more smoothly than some.

OVER EARNING LEADERSHIP



Imagine beginning a new job and instead of having time to acclimate, you are thrown immediately into the fire, only the “fire” is a virus that turns your new workplace on its head and calls on you to use every bit of your training, skills and experience to ensure that life and work continue as smoothly as possible for everyone.

If you are Eileen Garcia, Ed.D., vice president of e-Learning and Learning Enterprises at Ocean County College since January 2020, you not only can imagine this scenario, you lived it last spring.

“As February rolled along, President Larson was concerned about the virus, and we had many meetings about it,” says Garcia. “I said to my teams, ‘There is a good chance that the College will have to close.’ And I was still getting to know my staff then. By the time the College got into WebEx, we were pros at conference calling.”

She and everyone in her department went into immediate all-hands-on-deck mode. They met with deans and asked where and what type of training was required, knowing they would need to assist those faculty who typically taught only in-person classes to transition to some sort of remote learning. They reviewed the training courses they had designed to that date and broke them down into smaller pieces to make it

easier for faculty to access specific topics. They had training ready to go when the college did close, right before the March break.

Course designers were designated to specific schools, and Garcia and school deans identified “super users,” those with previous online experience, to work with the designers to help other faculty learn to use Canvas, WebEx and other software.

“We set up a triage to look at specific areas and issues and did group and individual training,” she says. Everyone was very busy — deans, faculty, e-Learning — we were a well-oiled team. That collaboration and communication were crucial; everyone was willing to go back to the table if something didn’t work. And it worked!”

As the spring semester progressed, the collaborations continued, and when more help was needed, Garcia was able to hire part-time designers to help bring courses fully online thanks to funding from the CARES Act (the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act passed on March 27). They also helped develop the science and nursing labs required for the fall semester.

“We did our best to help faculty avoid frustration, to streamline and make it as easy

for them as possible, and we did. They all reacted great,” she adds. “We support the faculty so they can help their students.”

More and different technology is always under review as formerly face-to-face classes convert to all remote learning or a hybrid version of their former selves. Blended design is different than design for all-online courses, and faculty input on what works and what doesn’t is key.

From Florida to New Jersey

Garcia moved from south Florida, where she had worked for 29 years at Broward College, an institution of about 60,000 students, to Toms River at the end of 2019. She was the Dean of Academic Affairs for Broward’s online campus and Dean for STEM for the entire campus and the college’s international unit.

After deciding it was time for a change and searching, she found Ocean County College and decided it was the best fit. “OCC wanted to increase its online offerings as well as its international program, and I was ready to embark on a new and exciting adventure,” she says. “And I love the weather here.”

And then the virus appeared. Garcia has compared the pandemic to hurricane tracking in Florida. “And I’ve been in hurricane mode since March.”

Born and reared in Venezuela, Garcia completed all her higher education in the United States; community college at Broward, then Florida Atlantic University for her B.S. and M.S.; and then to Florida International University, where she earned her Ed.D., all the time living in Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton.

Although she loves the beach, her time to visit it in New Jersey has been limited, but the avid cyclist has made time to get out to ride as much as possible to get to know the area.

“ We support the faculty so they can help their students. ”

- Eileen Garcia, Ed.D., vice president of e-Learning



RENEE '04 WHITE

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Around age 16, Renee Waskovich White '04 A.S. Nursing got her first taste of working multiple jobs, a pattern she has continued throughout her life. She was a lifeguard at Lacey Lakes and scooped ice cream at Honey Bubbles on Long Beach Island, and those summer jobs were good preparation for the ambitious teen's multitasking future. Today, she holds several degrees and is skilled in at least two professions.

Born and reared in Lacey Township, White, 44, lives in Manahawkin with her husband, Brian, a defense attorney, and their four children. Thomas, 19, currently studies criminal justice at OCC; Reagan, 18, is a liberal arts student at OCC; Sean, 17, plans to enroll at OCC to study criminal justice (while still in high school); and Steven, 10, who, according to his mom, "will probably go to OCC."

As a full-time prosecutor in the Special Offender's Unit in Toms River, which includes a diversion program for individuals with mental illness who have been charged with

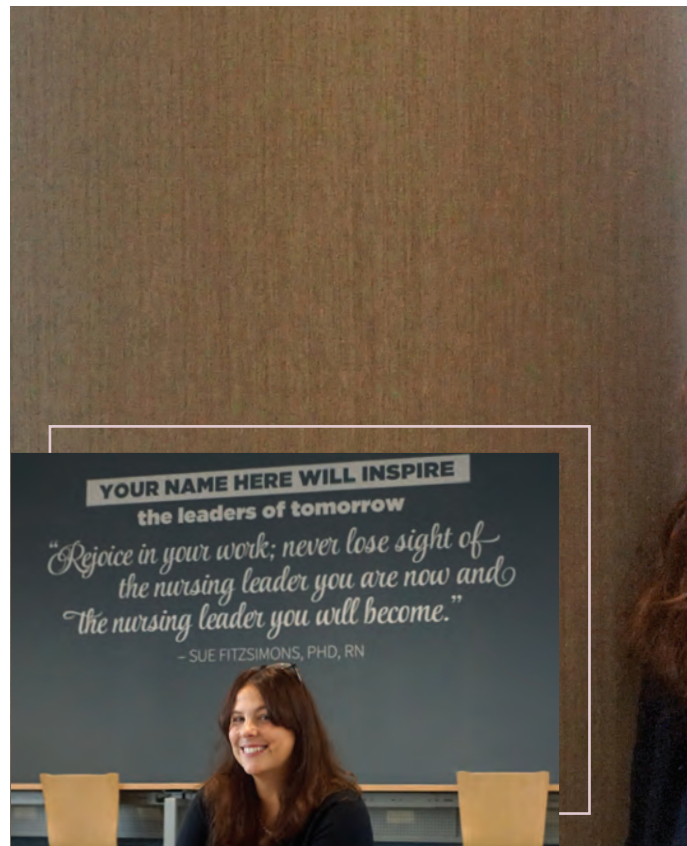
a crime, and a unit she helped establish, White's natural compassion shines through.

"We're here to do justice, as well as prosecute," she says of her defendants who have PTSD, Alzheimer's, autism or other neurocognitive disorders. "Prosecution is prosecuting people appropriately, and sometimes that's in the form of a dismissal. Sometimes it's treatment, not jail."

On the weekends, White is a family nurse-practitioner at CityMD, an urgent care facility with locations in Toms River, Lacey and Manahawkin.

She also teaches in the nursing program at Stockton University on Wednesday nights and as an adjunct at OCC. The behavioral health practice in Little Egg Harbor that she owns and operates as a certified psychiatric nurse practitioner, Micrennic Health, was named using the first three letters of her name and those of her two sisters, Michelle and Nicole.

When asked how she manages to do it all, she replies, "My life is like a well-oiled puzzle," with a laugh.



FOLLOWING HER WINDING PATH

White enrolled at Rutgers, New Brunswick (New Jersey), after high school and earned a double major in History and Administration of Justice. After graduating in 1998, she earned a law degree from Widener University School of Law in Wilmington, Delaware, in 2001, with plans to go to medical school next. (She had been working at A.I. DuPont Children's Hospital while attending Widener.)

As they say about best-laid plans ... "I had gotten married and had my first child while at Widener," White says. "I delivered right before graduation and still walked [in the graduation ceremony]," pride in her accomplishment evident in her voice. "It wasn't easy, but I did it. And then I re-evaluated my life plan."

White had taken biology classes at OCC in preparation for med school and fell in love with the College.

"The school is close to home, is beautiful and part of my local community. After Rutgers and Widener, which are very good schools, taking bio at OCC felt like just as good of an



She pursued her OCC degree while working as an attorney and emergency room technician — and while raising three young children.

“Nursing is in my blood, and it always has been,” says White. She explains that her cousin, Ryan, with whom she always has been close (they are only four days apart in age) had leukemia when they were young. Later, while in high school, her friend and next-door neighbor, Amy, also developed the disease. She watched both of them struggle.

“I remember thinking I wanted to help them — I wanted to help sick people. And as long as I can remember wanting to be something, it was wanting to help those who are sick. I know I took the scenic route to get here, but OCC gave that to me. It’s part of who I am, and I own it,” she says.

OCC’s welcoming environment made the challenging nursing program easier. “The tremendous professors at OCC were a big part of my life. I never felt weird or different for being an attorney. It was just as challenging as Rutgers and Widener, and [choosing OCC] was the best thing I ever did.”

White earned a post-master’s certificate toward her psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, and is double-board certified as a family and psychiatric nurse practitioner. She is working toward her Doctorate of Nursing Practice at Yale and expects to defend her dissertation in 2023. She looks forward to the day she can nurse full-time.

In 2020, White worked in field hospitals with COVID-19 patients and served as president of the Ocean County Bar Association as its president.

White also is involved with the 100 Women Campaign at Ocean County College, something she calls “the best thing ever,” and a perfect way to bring in funding while allowing professional women to network and advocate for students.

“The advocacy of so many others got me to where I am today, and if I can give that back ... it’s what it’s all about,” says White. “It’s a fantastic way to be involved as an alum. OCC gave me nursing and my ability to be a nurse. I felt an acceptance there and was inspired to give back. OCC was there for me, and I’ll always be there for them.”

education, if not better,” she says.

After graduating from Widener and with an infant at home, White found herself working for a law office during the day and as a unit secretary at Community Medical Center in Toms River at night — just because she loved healthcare. The veteran nurses with whom she worked wondered aloud why their colleague didn’t enroll at OCC and become a nurse.

“And I thought, ‘why not?’” White says.

While a nursing student, White had not one additional child, but two. Reagan was born early in her first year at OCC, and Sean, at the end of her second. She graduated in 2004 and, in typical fashion, made the puzzle fit together by working weekend nights as a registered nurse in the emergency room at Community. She continued to practice law during the week. In 2006, White decided she wanted to practice criminal law and left the firm of Gluck & Allen to work in the Ocean County

Prosecutor’s Office.

“At the time, assistant prosecutors were prohibited from working a second job, which was devastating,” says White. “It’s an arduous process, getting a law passed, but I knew joining the Assistant Prosecutors Association of New Jersey and having their advocacy would help me change that law.”

And she did. But she missed nursing so much that she volunteered her time at Community for the year it took for the change to be instituted. She says she has always been blessed with “advocates,” those who would work with her and support her — those who embrace her choices and offer to help, beginning with her parents and extending over the years to friends, her husband, and their children. In this case, her friends and other prosecutors lobbied along with her. She simply could not envision her life without either of the two professions to which she has been drawn.



I know I took the scenic route to get here, but OCC gave that to me. It’s part of who I am, and I own it.



- Renee Waskovich White

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**RENEE
 WHITE**

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**THE 100 WOMEN
 CAMPAIGN**

The mission of the 100 Women Campaign, an initiative of the Ocean County College Foundation, is to bring dynamic, innovative and accomplished women together to support each other while encouraging education at OCC.

These women also act as mentors to OCC's students, helping them develop the skills they need to succeed and offering them a wealth of knowledge and experience. Members pledge to donate \$100 per year for five years.

The program also offers two scholarships to current students who are Ocean County residents. The 100 Women STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Scholarship is open to students enrolled in one of OCC's STEM-related degree programs, and the 100 Women Campaign Health & Social Sciences Scholarship is open to students enrolled in any one of OCC's health and social sciences-related degree programs.

"The 100 Women Campaign has been an innovative movement at Ocean County College," says Ken Malagiere, executive director of the Ocean County College Foundation. "The members support one another in personal and professional endeavors and foster an environment in which our students can flourish through mentorships and much-needed scholarship support. The Foundation is so pleased to champion these efforts and be the beneficiary of the members' incredible generosity."

**A
 BODY
 OF WORK
 2021**



OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE PRESENTS YEAR-LONG SOCIAL JUSTICE SERIES

*Monthly events are focused on current issues facing the world
as seen through the lens of the arts and humanities.*

Ocean County College

began presenting a year-long series of interactive events, films and lectures dealing with social justice issues in the fall of 2020. Topics include race, hunger, immigration, environmental change, gender and LGBTQ concerns, and more.

The Social Justice Series originated before the campus closed last spring. Its emphasis is on providing various means for students (and community members) to interact with others through hands-on events. OCC's Foundation, Student Life, the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Business and Social Sciences, Center for Access and Equity, the Library and the Grunin Center for the Arts collaborated in the series' creation.

"So much of art, music and literature is about what is happening in the here and now, as artists react to what is happening in the world. The way different disciplines in the arts and humanities create art, music or literature, or even discussion, can help shed a different light on social issues," says Heidi Sheridan, dean of the School of Arts and Humanities.

"We couldn't anticipate the pandemic, so we adapted and tried our best to ensure every event would be as interactive as possible," says Sheridan. To that end, there will be a dance master class, film showings followed by Q&A sessions, panel discussions, poetry readings and workshops. Everything will include audience participation.

The keynote presenter is award-winning actress and author Anna Deveare Smith (*West Wing*, *Nurse Jackie*, *Black-ish*). Deveare Smith appeared virtually on Nov. 5, and the current plan has her appearing in person on April 1. This event is sponsored by the Blauvelt Speakers' Series, which is funded in part by the generosity of the late Bradford Thomas & Eleanor G. Blauvelt and The Wintrode Family Foundation.

UPCOMING EVENTS



**Ashani
Mufuko**

Dance
Economic
Lecture

**March 3
10 a.m.
to noon**



**Film
Screening**

Hidden
Figures

**March 12
11 a.m.**



**Visiting
Writers**

Anna
Deveare
Smith

**April 1
12:30 p.m.
Live**



**Olivia
Gatwood**

Social
Justice
Poet

**April 12
11 a.m.**



**Earth Day
Film
Screening**

Tomorrow

**April 22
9:30 a.m.**



**Nimbus
Dance**

Dance
Speaks
Out

April 24
More Details
To Come

All events are open to the public (registration is not required)
and will be presented virtually via WebEx. Links to each program are posted on OCC's website
<https://www.ocean.edu/social-justice-series/>.

For more information, visit <https://www.ocean.edu/social-justice-series/>
or contact Dean Heidi Sheridan at hsheridan@ocean.edu

S U P P O R T

STUDENT SUCCESS



During the past year, OCC students have met some previously unthinkable challenges. Together with the College, faculty and dedicated staff, the OCC Foundation championed the students in many ways. The Foundation pledged up to \$1 million in much-needed scholarship support that enabled them to pursue their education, even during a global pandemic.

The Foundation also facilitated critical programs, including the distribution of crisis food boxes through its partnership with Fulfill and the Helping Hands Food Pantry. Alison Noone, assistant director of Student Life, directed the effort to help alleviate the food insecurity of some students and their families. Furthermore, the Foundation supported innovative, virtual programming for the campus and the broader community when so many other venues had to close completely.

For nearly two decades, the Foundation has sponsored the Annual Golf Classic to meet its mission of supporting students through scholarships, endowments, special projects and academic programs. And in 2020, the OCC Foundation was determined to continue raising critical funds for scholarship support, even with social distancing precautions in place.

This year's October event attracted 112 golfers and raised \$64,000 — both numbers set new records for the event, according to Sherri Bray, assistant director of special events and advancement, who says, “Our goal is to help as many students as we possibly can.”

Although the day dawned grey and drizzly and the ground was rather soggy, by midday, the sun was out, and the players were obviously excited to be there, enthusiastic about playing and supporting OCC students.

“It was a chance to be outdoors, socialize and have an enjoyable day, a way for business people and OCC alumni to connect while supporting this worthwhile cause,” says Bray.

Bray and her team of volunteers worked closely with the Pine Barrens Golf Club to establish safety measures — outdoor registration, hand sanitizers and outdoor dining — ensuring that everyone felt comfortable. All golfers received an OCC Foundation-branded face mask.

I N G

3

MEETING LAST YEAR'S CHALLENGES...

“Every year, we’re able to get together for a lighthearted round of golf to raise money for scholarships and special program support,” says Ken Malagiere, executive director of the OCC Foundation. “Golfers were in good spirits and excited to play and appreciated the precautions we took. The Foundation will continue to create meaningful educational opportunities for our students that enrich their lives through the OCC experience.”

Whether through its signature fundraisers or new, adapted events and programs, the Foundation is ready to meet the challenges of evolving circumstances.

SAVE THE DATE!

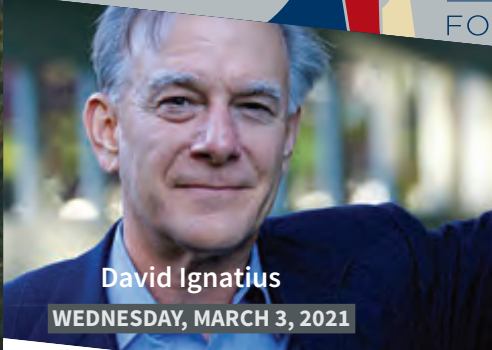
BLAUVELT SPEAKER SERIES

PRESENTED BY




OCEAN
COUNTY COLLEGE

FOUNDATION



David Ignatius
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021



Best-selling author and prize-winning columnist for the Washington Post



Dr. Temple Grandin
SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2021



“Grandin has reached a stunning level of sophistication about herself and the science of autism.”
- *New York Review of Books*



Doris Kearns Goodwin
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2021



Acclaimed historian, Pulitzer Prize winner for History, and *New York Times* bestselling author

FOUNDATION EVENTS

The mission of the Ocean County College Foundation is broad and encompasses a variety of means to reach its goal of supporting OCC students in their pursuit of higher education. For more than 50 years, it has been dedicated to the growth and development of the College through scholarships, endowments, and capital and special projects. The Foundation has partnered with community leaders in business, industry, education and government toward a common goal of providing OCC students a quality, affordable education. To contact the OCC Foundation, get more information, or make a gift, visit www.go.ocean.edu/foundation or call 732-255-0492.

KEEPING THE ARTS

ALIVE

The Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts proudly presented presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin in the fall of 2021 through the Blauvelt Speaker Series. She was part of a variety of virtual events offered by the Grunin Center.

In the last several years, OCC's Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts has become a must-visit destination for folks from around the region who love the arts. Always a popular local venue for arts patrons seeking a variety of entertainers and speakers, the Center's professional performances and educational offerings have increased since the Grunin Foundation's generous endowment in 2014 and the OCC Foundation's continued support of the Blauvelt Speaker Series.

With the campus closed and in-person gatherings of all types on standby since March 2020, all of last year's scheduled events were canceled or postponed. By September, though, the Grunin Center had created a virtual lineup that appealed to all ages.

At the top of that list was the esteemed Doris Kearns Goodwin, presidential historian, Pulitzer Prize-winner and *New York Times* No. 1 best-selling author. Goodwin won the Pulitzer Prize for *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*, and her book, *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, was adapted into an award-winning five-part television series.

Goodwin's seventh book, *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, is a culmination of her 50-year career spent studying American presidents, focusing on Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson. Published in September 2018, the book provides an accessible and essential road map for aspiring and established leaders in every field, and for all of us in our everyday lives.

Her discussion on Nov. 16, "Election 2020: Where Do We Go from Here? A Historical Perspective," was a timely and impressive look at last year's election process and how it fit into the country's past and future. On the day Goodwin made her presentation, the 2020 election had been called for Joseph Biden, who, with 306 electoral votes, was slated to be the 46th president of the United States — although Donald Trump had not yet conceded. She said she was hopeful, and that the majority of people (in the country) hunger for healing. "We have more in common than we think," she said.

“ History gives us hope, perspective and lessons. ”

- Doris Kearns Goodwin

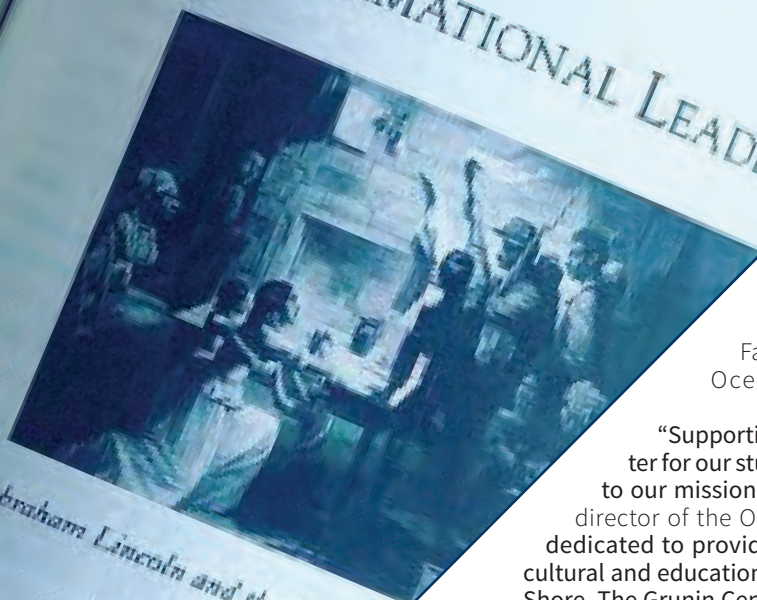
ARTS | ENTERTAINMENT | EXPLORATION EXPERIENCE OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE!

Concerts · Theater · Jazz · Dance · Planetarium · Family Shows

For more information on the lineup for 2021, visit www.grunincenter.org

Jay and Linda
GRUNIN CENTER
FOR THE ARTS

NINE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS



Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation

When Abraham Lincoln em-
1861, the house was not
ration, seven southern states had
Union. At a meeting in Mont-
ese seven states formed a
cing former Mississippi
of the Confederate States
ined to tear apart the
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Goodwin also discussed how past presidents, including Abraham Lincoln, Lyndon Johnson, and both Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, made their way through critical times in the country's history, leading us to a stronger America. She also talked about the fact that great leaders have excellent character and strong moral convictions and discussed the importance of historians and truth-tellers to share the weaknesses of past leaders as well as their strengths. "It's so important to look at facts and work with actual sources and discard misinformation," she said. "Both from the past and in the present."

Goodwin will return to OCC's campus on Wednesday Oct. 6, 2021, and this time, in person. Her appearances at the Grunin Center are part of the Blauvelt Speaker Series, funded in part by the generosity of the late Bradford Thomas & Eleanor G. Blauvelt and The Wintrode Family Foundation, and sponsored by the Ocean County College Foundation.

"Supporting this series and this vibrant arts center for our students and community speaks directly to our mission," says Kenneth J. Malagiere, executive director of the OCC Foundation. "The Foundation is dedicated to providing scholarships and experiences of cultural and educational value right here on the New Jersey Shore. The Grunin Center has quickly become a jewel in the crown of the OCC experience."

Not a "normal" year

"In a normal year, we generally have 70-100 performances," says Jessica Zawerczuk, assistant director for marketing and sales at the Grunin Center. "It wasn't normal though, and we've been open to all opportunities. Our team is ready as soon as campus reopens!"

Virtual events at the Grunin Center started in September and continued throughout the semester with entertaining and enriching performances. Shows ranged from family-friendly programming with The Amazing Max magic show and Jeff Boyer's interactive Big Bubble Bonanza to an evening of jazz with Suzanne Vega and a Moody Blues tribute with GO NOW! Irish tenor, Michael Londra, performed with the Irish Concert Orchestra in A Virtually Celtic Christmas, filmed at the National Opera House of Ireland, on Dec. 12.

The Grunin Center's new virtual shows are available to audiences near and far, to all those who support the arts and the Center. The Grunin Center team is passionate about the arts and the impact art has on education, adds Zawerczuk. "The show must go on!"

James Vitkuske '20

PBL STATE PRESIDENT FOUND FOCUS AT OCC

When James Vitkuske '20 enrolled at Ocean County College in 2017, he knew it was close to his home in Waretown, affordable and that he would get an excellent education there. He had spoken to alumni who overwhelmingly advised him that OCC provided them with a top-notch education, one-on-one support from professors and an overall positive experience.

What he didn't know, exactly, was what his career path would be. Business was always on his radar, but the way his world expanded once he got to OCC helped him choose and define his goals.

"My experience at OCC shaped me, gave me the ability to find where I wanted to go and to find the right path," he says. Many parts of his OCC experience stand out, but joining the College's Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) chapter, becoming its president, and then gaining the same office in the New Jersey organization (a position he retains) are his favorite memories.

When he started his term as PBL chapter president, Vitkuske was the only member. He knew that was not ideal, so he enlisted the faculty in the School of Business and Social Sciences to help market

Phi Beta Lambda. With their help, he increased membership to 25 students, and together, they brought a broader awareness to the organization and its value.

Club recognition events, where he and other members had a platform to share PBL ideals and information; meeting other business students and working together to help each other figure out their next steps — the networking aspect — appealed to him.

He also prepared PBL members for the annual State Leadership Conference, where they compete in two events, ranging from public speaking to management concepts, and the virtual National Leadership Conference. In 2020, the state conference was canceled because of the pandemic, and members automatically advanced to the national level, where five members from OCC's chapter competed. Vitkuske placed 8th in Management Concepts, Drew Murphy placed 8th in Hospitality Management, and Kenneth Paulaukas placed 7th in Accounting Analysis and Decision Making.

Meanwhile, as state president, Vitkuske was tasked with growing the number of chapters in New Jersey, helping plan the State Leadership Conference and creating initiatives that benefit PBL members.

P R E S

"I am the first state president to come from Ocean County College," he says, adding that he is proud of the fact that he nearly brought the state conference to campus for the first time in the 40-plus years OCC has been affiliated with Phi Beta Lambda.

"During my term, we added a chapter at Georgian Court, and we are in the process of setting up a chapter at Stockton University. I am grateful to have been elected to a second term as the state president of Phi Beta Lambda for New Jersey," he adds.

Vitkuske, now 22, was accepted to Rutgers University in New Brunswick, where he plans to focus on forensic accounting. As

part of the OCC graduating class of 2020, his commencement experience was unique, as it was held entirely online. Being unable to share the day in person with his classmates was not what the gregarious Vitkuske had expected. Still, the announcement that he had received the Dollie and Harry David Sussna Award from the OCC Foundation during the virtual ceremony for his involvement in campus activities was a real honor.

"I increased PBL's membership and brought attention to what it really is — an organization that's dedicated to allowing business majors to network with like-minded students and practice hard



I D E N T

and soft business skills with each other and members of the business world,” he says.

He is grateful for the \$2,500 award, which he is saving while he continues to live at home and study remotely.

Vitkuske credits his participation in PBL with a list of valuable lessons he has learned:

Leadership is a team effort; patience, empathy and vision make a great leader; you improve when you receive constructive criticism; and know when to listen.

“

I’m indebted to OCC and my business professors, each one of whom acted as a mentor to me, ... I never felt alone when navigating the challenging topics, and I’m grateful to them all.

”

James Vitkuske

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Native plant sale at the Jersey-Friendly Yards conference

Protect the Barnegat Bay Watershed. Get Involved!

The Barnegat Bay Partnership offers various educational and outreach programming for interested residents and a mix of organizations that need volunteer help.

Humans impact the natural world around them every day, in many ways. Often, they aren't even fully aware of what they do to the environment. When it concerns the Barnegat Bay watershed (roughly the area encompassing Ocean County and a small portion of southern Monmouth County), the Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP) gets into the act.

This group of federal, state, municipal, academic, business and private organizations works with the Barnegat Bay watershed communities to restore, protect and enhance its water quality and natural resources. The BBP is a department of OCC, and its Volunteer Master Naturalist Program is run through the College's Continuing and Professional Education Department.

“ We are one of 28 programs within the National Estuary Program. We work to protect and restore the Barnegat Bay watershed's natural resources through sound science and education — increasing public understanding of the bay's ecology and how humans can help protect and restore it. **”**

- Karen Walzer, outreach coordinator for BBP

Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference

The Jersey-Friendly Yards website, JerseyYards.org, is one of the primary ways BBP educates. The site is full of practical information on how to use natural landscaping practices for New Jersey property owners, gardeners and those who love the land.

With partners Ocean County Soil Conservation District and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County, BBP hosted the third annual Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference at OCC in October 2019, with 200 participants.

“In 2020, we offered a series of webinars and had great feedback,” says Walzer. “People don't always realize that pollution from their yards goes into the bay. We teach them how to reduce their use of fertilizers, capture stormwater and find the right plants to support the local environment.”



More Education and Outreach

The BBP focuses on four areas in its plan for protecting the bay: water quality, water supply, living resources and land use. “Clean water is important for both people and the fish and wildlife that call this area home, and what we do on land affects the quality of our water,” says Walzer.

In 2019, the BBP exhibited at 31 events, reaching more than 14,000 attendees, offering the public a way to engage and learn through interactive models and displays.

The Barnegat Bay Volunteer Master Naturalist Program

The Master Naturalist Program was offered twice at OCC in 2019, adding 25 graduates to its program. Since the program’s inception in 2010, graduates have contributed thousands of volunteer hours throughout the watershed by presenting educational programs, assisting with scientific research and participating in stewardship projects, such as maintaining nature trails. In 2019, volunteers logged a total of 1,335 volunteer hours.

It takes commitment to become a master naturalist, with each course consisting of daylong training on five Saturdays. Students visit different watershed locations on the bay and inland that drain into the bay. Forty hours of volunteer service are required in a calendar year, with nearly 30 different partners who need volunteers for their work, meaning there are projects to match almost any interest.

“The program is for adults who want to learn about ecology and wildlife and are interested in educating others,” explains Walzer. “It’s a lifelong learning experience, and this training is the first step where you get the basics. Hopefully, the students go on and keep learning.” The mix of participants includes experts in their fields and others who just want to get involved somehow and learn and have fun, she adds.

Participants must complete the Master Naturalist course before volunteering with the program.



Drone demonstration by Dr. Morris Emyeart at the Retreat

Jersey Shore Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey

BBP staff provide leadership to the local chapter of New Jersey’s Native Plant Society, a statewide nonprofit that protects its native plants. Volunteers from the Jersey Shore chapter educate the public about the benefits of native plants to restoring healthy habitats for plants and animals in our watershed.

“People want to know what they can do, so our mission is about education, yes, but also about encouraging them to engage in helpful actions,” says Walzer.

And just what can we do? Number one, conserve water, indoors and outdoors. If you’re a boater, don’t dump waste in the bay. Plant native plants to use minimal water and pesticides.

“And get motivated. Look for information — and we’ve made it easy to find — and take action,” she adds.



Naturalist students visit Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center

For information on how you can be a part of maintaining the health and well-being of the Barnegat Bay watershed’s water, plants and animals, visit www.barnegatbaypartnership.org and email Karen Walzer at kwalzer@ocean.edu with questions.

STUDENT-ATHLETES READY

Last March 13, all OCC sports teams postponed play for two weeks, but as pandemic conditions worsened around the country, the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and OCC canceled the spring season. OCC's student-athletes, who arrive early to campus and maintain solid grade point averages in order to play their sport, were understandably disappointed.

In mid-July 2020, the College announced that OCC's fall sports programs — soccer, volleyball, cross country and tennis — would be postponed. According to Ilene Cohen, executive director of OCC Athletics, the decision was not made lightly, but in compliance with New Jersey's coronavirus pandemic-related rules and regulations and the NJCAA plan to postpone fall sports.

In accordance with New Jersey regulations, the decision was made in late December 2020 to cancel all spring sports practices and competitions.

The good news

Collegiate student-athletes are allowed to play for a total of four years under NCAA guidelines (two under NJCAA), meaning many of them would lose eligibility to play, essentially having to sit out a year that they were ready, willing and able to participate.

However, Cohen got good news in late October for those disappointed and worried student-athletes, in the form of a ruling by NJCAA. "All student-athletes who meet the College's academic requirements will be able to participate and not have 2020-21 count against the total number of years student-athletes can play. It's a big deal," says Cohen.

"Student-athletes have their goals and want to be successful in their sport. To do that, they have to meet GPA requirements, and then they're rewarded with ongoing participation." She stressed to the students that they need to do "A" to get to "B," and just like the alphabet, academics comes before athletics. She tells them to stay focused on that and remain eligible.

According to the announcement made by the NJCAA on Oct. 22:

... all 2020-21 NJCAA sport seasons (fall, winter, spring) will not count toward student-athlete eligibility. The eligibility relief is provided to all NJCAA student-athletes regardless of sport season participation in the 2020-21 academic year.

"The uncertainty surrounding the pandemic has put collegiate sports in a very challenging situation," stated Troy Tucker, NJCAA Eligibility Committee Chair. "Today's decision by the Board of Regents to grant a blanket year of participation waiver provides our institutions and student-athletes with the ability to choose to participate this academic year without the fear of using a year of eligibility for a potentially shortened or interrupted season."

Current eligibility and academic requirements will still apply for student-athletes to compete in the 2020-21 regular and postseason competition.

New in 2020 — Women's Lacrosse

Women's Lacrosse was added to OCC's spring roster in 2020, and the team played one game before the campus closed. Although they didn't get to prove their moxie on the field, they performed so well academically that, as a team, they were named the NJCAA Academic Team of the year in Lacrosse. The team earned a 3.5 cumulative GPA for the 2019-20 academic year.

"We have a great group of team members and coaches who are eager to get on the field as soon as it is safe for everyone," says Cohen.

Esports update

With in-person sports events on hold, E-sports took off for Ocean County College. Under Coach John Ruhl, OCC team member David Ripinsky won the Spring 2020 NJCAAE Super Smash Bros. Ultimate (Singles) Championship. Additional games are in the works that would allow for additional interested students to get involved. According to Ruhl, consideration is being given to other games sponsored by NJCAAE, including one that includes three-on-three play, offering a team approach. For more information on E-sports, contact Coach John Ruhl at www.occ-e-sports@ocean.edu



TO GET BACK IN THE GAME

Season down, but not out

OCC's Men's Baseball played their full season in spring 2019, and that fall, Head Coach Ed McRae evaluated the 35-40 players, made his roster and headed into 2020 raring to go. The regular season opened, and the team played three games in New Jersey while preparing to leave for Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and a series of 10 games.

"On our spring training trip, we play teams from all over the country, and everyone plays to get the experience and so I can continue my evaluations," says McRae.

Unfortunately, on March 13, two days before they were scheduled to get on the road, McRae got the call that spring sports had been shut down for two weeks. "Then the pandemic took over," he says.

The team had raised funds for their travel and were prepared for what McRae calls "a great bonding experience, practice and fun."

While there was no fall season, McRae is hoping to move forward with the spring 2021 season full-tilt.

"We are staying positive, and I'm staying in touch with my players, encouraging them with their studies and letting them know I'm thinking of them," he says. "We want to make sure our student-athletes are doing well in all areas of their lives."

One player, Justin Vega, 19, has had his nonprofit group to think about, and he plans for the day when he can both play ball and help the kids in his Lakewood neighborhood again. Vega and a friend started Hood Health in the summer of 2018 to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy mindsets among the youth.

"Our community isn't as blessed with opportunity, and kids are expected to provide for themselves at a very young age," says Vega. "It's difficult to have a proper positive mindset when you're forced to grow up so quickly."

The group focused on fundraising, buying backpacks and filling them with school supplies. In coordination with several local businesses, they distributed them on Unity Day, Sept. 2, 2019, in D'Zio Park in Lakewood. Although the pandemic has curtailed their efforts, Vega looks forward to the day he can once again help the area's schoolchildren — and to the day he can play ball again.

The Business Administration major has played baseball since before he can remember, playing every position in high school, but is concentrating on pitching now.

"The team's morale plummeted for a time [last spring], but soon we realized it was time to get over it and get to work. We've all continued to work out on our own and are ready to compete now," says Vega. "And it's been a pleasure to have Coach McRae leading us, with as much experience as he has is an asset for us all."

Our Philosophy

The Athletics Department mission is aligned with OCC's commitment to the intellectual, cultural, physical and social development of our student-athletes. Athletics encourages self-discipline, cooperation, sportsmanship and integrity. We believe that these qualities lead to achievement in academics and athletics and provide the skills necessary for lifelong learning. Read about the Vikings' 2020 year in review here www.VikingsYearInReview.com



Sean Bernardo '19



OCC COMMUNITY TRENDING | 🔍

Ocean County College
21,276 followers

Salute to Veterans! Remembering last year's Veterans Day Commemoration at the Veterans Memorial located on the Toms River Campus.

#MyOcean #VeteransDay2020 #OceanCountyCollege #OceanCounty #SaluteToVeterans



Reactions: 42

Instagram

oceancountycollege • Follow

Meet Julia Cicciolone! Julia is an American Sign Language tutor at OCC and is currently a second-year student of OCC's Interpreter Training Program. #Fact In 2019, Julia joined the OCC's Interpreter Training Program and has loved it ever since! #MeetTheTutors

#DYK you can make a WebEx appointment with a peer tutor like Julia in subjects like ASL, biology, chemistry, and computers? Tune into our stories to learn more.

You can also visit go.ocean.edu/tutoring or the link in our bio to find out what courses are

Liked by shewoemakes and others

Ocean County College
@OCEANEDU

Congratulations to one of our newest graduates, Kyroles Abdelmasseh Abd, who just received his A.S. in Business Administration through our partnership with @RasmussenUniversity



Liked by shewoemakes and others

Ocean County College
21,276 followers

"Most people have a negative attitude about math, and I love changing that!" - Dr. William Roberts

Dr. William Roberts - A career of numbers since the summer of '67 in 1967, Mathematics Professor Dr. William Roberts, then 24 years old, made the first of many trips - sometimes by bicycle, sometimes by

Liked by janethanepire and others

Ocean County College
21,276 followers

Dr. Adam Christian uses the clinic as a classroom for veterinarian students

#FACT Dr. Christian's class provides a hands-on learning experience with targeted instruction and clear learning objectives.

Dr Christian says "Today, we did pharmacology, drug calculations, which is always the toughest part so we do them together, and scrubbed into 'surgery'"

#LovePets? Learn more about our VA assistant program at [ocean.edu/va](#)

#MyOcean #OceanCountyCollege #VeterinarianAssistant #CPE



Reactions: 40

Ocean County College
December 2 at 9:58 AM


Last week, Ocean County College President Dr. Jon H. Larson and Kean University President, Lambert O. Reedell, Esq., signed an amendment to the degree completion agreement between Ocean County College and Kean University!

This amendment expands student pathways to Kean University following the completion of an associate degree at Ocean County College.

#FACT Students attending OCC have a unique opportunity to continue their education and earn a Bachelor's degree from Kean University without leaving OCC's campus—saving time and money—thanks to a partnership forged in 2008 between OCC and Kean University.

To learn more, visit [http://occc.edu/kean](#)

#MyOcean #OceanCountyCollege #KeanUniversity #KeanOcean #Undergraduate #Student #College #Degree #HigherEducation #OceanCounty



Liked by shewoemakes and others

Instagram

oceancountycollege • Follow

Congratulations to our alumna, Anan El-Bassily for completing her Bachelor of Business Administration from Rasmussen University this past spring!

#FACT Anan has in Egypt and graduated from OCC in 2019 through OCC's partnership with Rasmussen University!

#MyOcean #OceanCountyCollege #KeanUniversity #RasmussenUniversity #StudentsSuccess #Alumni

ananelbassily is so grateful for leading me to where I truly stand today! #Rasmussen

Liked by janethanepire and others

