



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

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

**FROM:** Pamela Monaco, Ph.D.  
President

**SUBJECT:** Items of Interest for the January 23, 2025, Board Meeting

**DATE:** January 20, 2025

### **Strengthening Community College Grant Award**

The U.S. Department of Labor recently announced the award of \$65 million in grants to 18 community colleges to support programs that help the colleges offer affordable, high-quality workforce training to meet employers' and workers' skill development needs in critical industry sectors.

Ocean County College is one of the 18 lead colleges selected nationwide to receive a \$5,742,966 four-year Strengthening Community College Grant award to support Health First New Jersey, a consortium of Ocean County College, Middlesex County College, and Atlantic Cape Community College, to increase the number of highly-skilled healthcare workers in the region's healthcare and healthcare information technology industry sector, providing guided career pathways aligned to employment data from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

The project manager of this consortium is Dr. Joseph Konopka, Vice President of Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships. The project period is February 2, 2025, through January 31, 2029. The project's geographic scope includes four New Jersey counties, Atlantic, Cape May, Middlesex, and Ocean, and 97 municipalities. We are proud to have been selected for this prestigious award.

### **Presentation – Ocean TV-20 Board Presentation**

Ms. Mary Granahan, Television Production Director, will present on Ocean TV-20's original program, *Shore of Support*. Each month, this program features two organizations working to enhance the Ocean County community through charitable efforts. *Shore of Support* has produced 16 episodes with 30 organizations, including The United Way, Fulfill, YMCA, The Arc of Ocean County, The Red Cross, and NJ Shares. Viewers can learn about local organizations, available services, and volunteer opportunities.

*Shore of Support* can be viewed on the College's YouTube channel and Ocean TV-20 on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. and Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

### **Black History Month**

The month of February is designated nationally as Black History Month. This year's theme, "African Americans and Labor, intends to encourage broad reflections on intersections between Black people's work and their workplaces in all their iterations and key moments, themes, and events in Black history and culture across time and space and throughout the U.S., Africa, and the Diaspora. Like religion, social justice movements, and education, studying African Americans' labor and labor struggles are important organizing foci for new interpretations and reinterpretations of the Black past, present, and future. Such new considerations and reconsiderations are even more significant as the historical forces of racial oppression gather new and renewed strength in the 21<sup>st</sup> century," as per the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

The Office of Student Life and the Organization for Black Unity are sponsoring several events in February to celebrate Black History Month:

- Thursday, February 3, 2025 – Raising the African American Flag on the campus flagpole at noon, followed by the Black History Month Read-In at the Larson Student Center.
- Wednesday, February 12, 2025 – "Let's Talk: A Conversation with William "Bill" Johnson on the Black Power Movement: A Social Justice Movement from 1965 – 1975." This event is scheduled from 11 a.m. to noon in the Technology Building, Room 115.
- Wednesday, February 18, 2025 – In collaboration with the Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission, OCC will host the "The Homage Exhibit," which focuses on African American history and culture, featuring over 650 select items from the private collection of Nia and Morris McAdoo. Each artifact represents an icon, cultural phenomenon, or pivotal historical moment and accompanies works created by artists. The exhibit will be on the second floor of the Larson Student Center from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Thursday, February 27, 2025 – The lowering of the African American Flag is scheduled at the campus flagpole at noon.

It is respectfully requested that the Board of Trustees adopt the attached resolution proclaiming February as Black History Month at Ocean County College.

### **Faculty and Staff Activities, Presentations, and Publications**

- Grunin Center staff attended the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) conference in New York City in January, where they met with agents, saw artist showcases, and participated in professional development workshops.
- Dr. Madison Peschock's paper, "The War of Words and The Battle of Two Scholarly Camps," was accepted by the Northeastern Modern Language Association (NEMLA). Dr. Peschock will present the paper at the NEMLA conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in March 2025.
- Orientation for new Nursing Clinical Instructors was held on January 9 and 13, 2025. Six new Clinical Instructors are joining the School of Nursing this Spring.

- Dr. Ali Botein-Furreveg, Director of the Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education, developed the 2025 calendar of events, including an Interfaith Panel Discussion; a Kristallnacht Remembrance; a series of Yiddish films about Jewish life in Eastern Europe and New York; Entartete Kunst: The Nazi Assault on the Avant Garde; discussion and readings from Dr. Botein-Furrevig's book, *Shtetl Roots, Emigrant Routes, and a NYC Love Story*; Hitler's five million other victims; Remembering the Armenian Genocide; and Holocaust Remembrance Week, with the theme, Women and the Holocaust. Details are available on the Center's webpage.

### **Student Successes, Awards, and Honors**

- In the School of Business and Social Sciences, 68 additional Bloomberg certifications were completed by students in Fall 2024. This increase reflects Bond Grant-funded licenses in addition to regular activity in the Business Lab, bringing OCC's certification total to 305 since 2018.
- Sixty-three students completed the Nursing program in December 2024 and are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®) required to obtain licensure to practice.

### **Student Clubs**

- The Grunin Center hosted events for the following OCC Student Clubs in December: The PTK Induction Ceremony (December 6, 2024), the OCC Dance Club Recital (December 9 and 10, 2024), and the ASL Club Holiday Show (December 12 and 13, 2024). Students from five clubs also sold concessions at six shows in support of various charitable organizations.
- On December 5, 2024, the Social Work Club and Social Work students volunteered and participated in the Family Promise event on campus to raise awareness about the impact of chronic homelessness and to learn about Ocean County's resources.
- The School of Nursing collaborated with Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships to provide Medical Assistant Certificate students an opportunity to work with Nursing students in a simulation experience during the week of December 5 to 8, 2024. This simulation experience allowed the students to work as a team to care for a patient, an essential skill in healthcare to assure successful patient outcomes.
- Ms. Anais Mompoint, Program Chair and College Lecturer II in Social Work, hosted Social Work Match Day for the class of 2025 on December 11 and 12, 2024. Several programs were represented, and eight students completed the interviews. Organizations included Family Promise, CLCL (Choose Love, Celebrate Life) Foundation, Bright Harbor, Ocean Inc., New Labor, Vetwork, New Jersey Angels, Displaced Homemaker Programs, and OCC's Helping Hands. All students who participated were matched.
- On Friday, December 13, 2024, baritone Hans Tashjian and pianist Anna Keiserman presented a moving collection of English, German, and Russian songs that profoundly explored the concept of death and its impact. Following the recital, Mr. Tashjian and Ms. Keiserman each gave masterclasses in separate locations within the Grunin Center. The OCC students performed works by Schubert, Bellini, Weill, Beethoven, Ginestera, and Grieg.
- On December 17 and 18, 2024, the Social Work Club hosted a bake sale, its first fundraiser for the academic year. Club members voted to use the funds to purchase club t-shirts. Planning and executing

the bake sale allowed students to work collaboratively and use marketing, communication, and customer service skills.

- Friday, December 20, 2025, featured a full day of recitals by OCC students. The event ran from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. It featured a 10:00 a.m. student piano recital, an 11:00 a.m. individual focus piano recital by music major Ian Kanev, a noon brass and woodwind recital, a 1:15 p.m. vocal ensemble performance, and the Winter Music Club Student Recital, which featured twenty OCC students.
- From October 7 to November 15, 2024, the Business Lab hosted two OCC student teams in the annual Bloomberg Trading Challenge. Participating students were from Economics and the Introduction to Financial Software classes. The team captains were Scott MacConnell and Joshua Alvarado. Cara Conacchio, Stephen Fuschetto, Jason Smith, Kathryn Sternig, and Jacqueline Ceja Salgado were team members. Both teams consistently outperformed the benchmark index throughout the competition. Ms. Kathy Toy, College Lecturer II in Economics, advised the teams.

### **Student Support Services**

- Enrollment Services completed 647 in-person transactions in December 2024, a 35% increase over December 2023. The longest student wait time was just under six minutes, despite the rise in service transactions, and students were served, on average, in just under three minutes.
- The Enrollment Services teams made over 5,000 outgoing calls in December alone. The Success team made almost 2,000 outgoing calls, focusing on students enrolled in the Fall semester who had not yet enrolled for Spring classes. The Enrollment team focused on making calls to inquiries and applicants, completing over 3,300 calls in the same period.
- A Transfer Workshop was held at Lakewood High School on January 13, 2025, in collaboration between the College Readiness Now Grant and Transfer and Advising Services. A total of 22 juniors and 38 seniors interested in completing a high school diploma and an associate degree concurrently learned more information from Director of Transfer and Articulation Agreements Laura Wills and Assistant Director of Educational Resources Elaine Schardien.
- Two Express Enrollment Days were held to encourage new students to enroll for the Spring. The events occurred on December 11 and 17, 2024; 8 students attended and registered for classes.
- On Saturday, December 7, 2024, the Veterans and Military Resources Center (VMRC) partnered with Athletics for a basketball game to honor our veterans. Two student veterans, Hunter Mantz and Shinayo Bartholomew-Stewart, acted as honorary team captains, and Adam Sherman participated in the tip-off. During the game, donations were collected for the VMRC.
- The Office of Student Life held its annual Trailblazers Leadership Retreat on campus in the OCC Conference Center on Wednesday and Thursday, January 8 and 9, 2025. Coordinated and led by Michelle Youngs, Assistant Director of Student Life, with the help of Student Life Coordinator Theo Ponticello and Student Life Director Jen Fazio, 12 students were guided through a series of workshops on values, interests, and strengths identity. These workshops are designed to assist students in answering the question, “Who am I?” The program will conclude with the post-session on Friday, February 21, 2025, where students will explore the question, “Where am I going?”
- OCC’s Tau Iota Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa wrapped up the month of December by finishing its induction period for the Fall semester and welcoming 136 new students to the chapter. Their Induction

Ceremony was held on Friday, December 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Grunin Center Theatre, and students can still accept membership through the end of the semester.

Tau Iota members have also worked hard on their Honors in Action project for this year, which involves chronicling a Citta/Sambol Arboretum history. There is strong interest in a chapter-led effort to restore the hidden treasure on campus, and the campus community has already shown tremendous support for the project. The submission of this work to the International Headquarters for PTK secured Tau Iota's five-star chapter status once again. We are thrilled for the student leaders and chapter advisors.

- Ms. Gina Opauski, Director of Community and Workforce Development, and her team hosted an ESL Registration/Orientation during the semester break to ensure all new students are prepared for their upcoming Spring sessions.
- OCC Manahawkin is looking forward to hosting its second cohort of Lacey High School students scheduled for every Friday in Spring 2025.
- In collaboration with Campus Safety and Security, the Office of Disability Services hosted four training sessions and tabletop exercises for staff and officers. These sessions offered an overview of disruptive behavior disorders, emphasizing interventions for individuals with autism and techniques for effective de-escalation during a crisis response.

### **Outreach to Students**

- Orientation for new Nursing students was held on campus on January 10, 2025. During the orientation, students were introduced to the faculty, the program's policies and procedures, electronic textbooks, and strategies to enhance learning.
- On January 10, 2025, 48 Ocean County Vocational Technical School Pre-Nursing Program students visited the School of Nursing. Students were provided with an overview of the Nursing program and an introduction to the simulation labs, where they practiced various skills. The visit also included a video that discussed the different areas available for Registered Nurses to practice. Those involved with this effort were Ms. Linda Simmons, MSN, RN, CEN CNE, CHSE, Director of the Skills and Simulation Center Skills; Mr. John Preusse, MM, Academic Affairs Technician; Ms. Meg Nally, MSN, RN, CHPN, Lab Coordinator; and Ms. Lisa Schlesinger, MSN, RN, Lab Coordinator.

### **Community Outreach**

- The OCC Concert Band performed its holiday concert, *The Sounds of the Holidays*, on December 7, 2024, to a sold-out house.
- The Grunin Performing Arts Academy presented winter showcases featuring performances by vocal, dance, and acting students on the Grunin Center mainstage on December 12, 16, and 19, 2024.
- The OCC Repertory Theatre's run of *Broadway for the Holidays 4* was completely sold out for the fourth year from December 12 to 22, 2024.
- The Grunin Center ushered in the holidays with a variety of programming, including Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's *Wild and Swinging Holiday Party*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Nutcracker*, the *Tommy Dorsey Orchestra*, and *Christmas with the Celts*.

- Dancers Pointe Howell, a community dance center, presented two performances of *The Nutcracker* on the Grunin Center mainstage on December 9, 2024.
- The Novins Planetarium hosted the Harbor House of Ocean County for a Night Full of Stars. Senator Robert Singer was honored with proceeds from the event supporting the mission of Harbor House.
- The Planetarium combined science and the holiday for nearly 2,000 patrons over 50 shows in December, including an almost sold-out “Noon Year’s Eve” celebration over winter break.
- “Voices of OCC,” a podcast started by Dr. Ameer Sohrawardy, College Lecturer II in English, has provided an excellent platform for college community members to speak in their unique voices about their rich cultural and personal backgrounds, career ambitions, and personal goals for the future. The podcast has featured five-to-seven-minute interviews with both students and faculty members. Podcast episodes have aired on the campus radio station, WOCC, through the generous help of Mr. Lee Kobus, College Lecturer II in Humanities and Fine Arts; Ms. Maureen Conlon, Associate Director of Web Services; and Ms. Dori Londres, Marketing and Communications Writer/Editor. After transcription, the episodes are archived on Spotify, which you can access on the following website: <https://open.spotify.com/show/5IdmCOIVrpA16Eb5Me5QMY>.
- Ocean County College was invited to participate in a Marketing Expo at Donovan Catholic. Ms. Lauren Simon, the enrollment services advisor for College Pathways, and Marketing Professor Ibrahim Moustafa attended. Students were able to connect with colleges and learn about career opportunities in the field of marketing.
- Student Life Coordinator Theo Ponticello and OCC Manahawkin Club President Alani Heri organized a clothing drive to wrap up the Fall semester. This event allowed the OCC Manahawkin community to “shop” for themselves and family members. All remaining items were donated to a local Toms River charity. The OCC Manahawkin Club was founded last semester by Theo Ponticello and Alani Heri; they look forward to offering additional opportunities this Spring.

### **Professional Development**

- Dr. Ali Botein-Furrevig participated in the National Association of Scholars Constitution Day Symposium, which explored anti-constitutional ideas that have seized American higher education and what can be done.

She also participated in a discussion with Ms. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, author and curator of the POLIN Museum in Poland, who spoke about the artwork of her father, Mayer Kirshenblatt, who painted memories of life in his shtetl before the Holocaust, and how that village has become a “post-Jewish town.”

- Ms. Meg Nally, MSN, RN, Nursing Lab Coordinator, attended the *Certificate Program in Simulation* conducted by Drexel University on January 6 through 9, 2025. This immersion program educates participants on successfully incorporating simulation experiences into the healthcare curriculum.

### **Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships**

#### **Workforce Education**

- Phase 2 of the ESL Program kicked off with over 400 students; it includes 40 program sections spread over multiple locations in Ocean County, and the program continues to grow. Sites

include Ocean County College, The Church of Grace and Peace in Toms River, Vida Church in Lakewood, and Bethel Church in Lakewood. Over 50 students have transitioned from ESL Phase 1 to Phase 2.

- The Construction Pathways Grant program has officially launched and offers the Project Management program to 14 students. This program includes online, asynchronous Google Project Management courses, enabling students to earn six Google certificates along with a Google Project Management Specialist credential. In April, students will also take part in a synchronous course to obtain either the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) or Project Management Professional (PMP) certification from the Project Management Institute (PMI).

#### ➤ **Ocean County Achievement Center**

- The Center's fifth Graduation Ceremony will be held June 18, 2025, in the Gateway Building Lecture Hall.
- Since July 2024, 17 students in this program have earned the State of New Jersey High School Diploma.

#### ➤ **Work Readiness Assistance Program**

- Work Readiness Assistance Program (WRAP) participants attended a critical thinking workshop at the Planetarium. Everyone worked together as a team and used their minds to work through each step in their "escape room."

#### ➤ **Adult Education, Civic, and Workforce Preparation Program**

- As part of the Social Justice Academy project, a Multicultural Book Event was held at the college, and it included ESL students and several children. The event included a tour with demonstrations on how to use the OCC library website. Participants also enjoyed doing crafts and participated in a book raffle.
- ESL students and students seeking high school diplomas celebrated a successful term at an end-of-year gathering. I was invited to participate in festive games and conversations with the students, staff, and instructors.
- A Financial Literacy Workshop was held and included ESL and HSE students. Discussions included managing credit, compound interest, and creating budgets.

#### **Grants Administration**

- The FIPSE basic needs grant awarded \$49,376.28 in the Fall reporting term, serving 114 unique students, including 66 new students who joined the program. As of January 14, 2025, students' Fall to Spring persistence rate was 81.5%.
- A total of 400 care bags with personal hygiene and cleaning products were distributed to students before the Winter break at the Toms River campus and the Manahawkin location.
- The OCC Community Ambassadors and the NJ STARS clubs have been selected to participate in the AmeriCorps MLK Day of Service to lead a donation drive for two local non-profit organizations.

## **Security**

In accordance with New Jersey Public Law 2015, Chapter 220, and College Policy #2332, Reporting of On-Campus and Fire Events, attached is the monthly statistics report of crimes, fires, and other emergencies on campus for the reporting period of November 28, 2024, through January 17, 2024.





## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS,** February is designated nationally as Black History Month; and

**WHEREAS,** the achievements, contributions, culture, and heritage of African-Americans are celebrated in February at Ocean County College and at other educational institutions throughout the country to promote an understanding of and appreciation for the rich cultural diversity of the American people; and

**WHEREAS,** Ocean County College wishes to affirm its support for the education and advancement of African-American people by formally honoring their history and contributions each year;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the month of February 2025 be proclaimed Black History Month at Ocean County College, that programs and events continue to be implemented to celebrate this observance, and that members of the college be encouraged to participate in all activities designed to raise consciousness about African-American culture, heritage, and history.

*Adopted: January 23, 2025*

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Stephan R. Leone  
Secretary

## REQUIRED REPORTING STATISTICS

Board of Trustees Meeting: Thurs, January 23, 2025

County College Board of Trustees, for its regular meeting. This report consists of all offenses defined as reportable crimes under the federal Jeanne Clery Act, fires, and other emergencies, which occurred on campus during the reporting period of 11/28/24-1/17/25.

1.) A count and classification of all criminal incidents (defined as reportable crimes under the federal Jeanne Clery Act) which occurred on campus and which were recorded by campus security, campus security authority (CSA) or local police departments.			
DATE	CRIME	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			
2.) A list of campus alerts, threats or emergencies which occurred on campus			
DATE	ALERT/THREAT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			
3.) A count and classification of all fire incidents which occurred on campus and which were recorded by campus security and local fire departments.			
DATE	FIRE INCIDENT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

**Thomas DeSimone**