



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO: Members, OCC Board of Trustees

FROM: Pamela Monaco, Ph.D.
President

SUBJECT: Items of Interest for the September 4, 2025, Board Meeting

DATE: August 28, 2025

Fall 2025 Colloquium

The Fall 2025 Colloquium was held on Thursday, August 28, 2025, when all employees enjoyed a full day of activities to welcome the new semester. A copy of the day's events is attached for your review. The six sessions/workshops were well received by all who attended.

Also attached is my State-of-the-College Address delivered to the College community at 2 p.m. It highlights many of the important activities that occurred over the summer and provides updates on projects underway. More importantly, I shared the difficulties we are facing as a result of declining enrollment, increasing expenses, and decreasing revenue, while also noting the need to make difficult decisions in response to these challenges.

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) has awarded Ocean County College with the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) Bronze rating. STARS is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. STARS is administered by AASHE with support and ongoing engagement from a wide variety of higher education stakeholders. The framework was developed to engage and recognize the full spectrum of colleges and universities, from community colleges to research universities, and from institutions just starting sustainability initiatives to long-time campus sustainability leaders.

Congratulations to all who contributed to this college-wide effort, including, but not limited to, Mr. James Calamia, Assistant Vice President of Facilities; Mr. Lincoln Simmons, College Lecturer II, Biology; Mr. Stan Hales, Director, Barnegat Bay Partnership; Ms. Heidi Sheridan, Executive and Artistic Director,

Grunin Center; Dr. Aqsa Sheikh, College Lecturer II, Biology; Ms. Melanie Parker, Director of Facilities Support Services; Dr. Angel Camilo, College Lecturer II, Biology; and Ms. Theo Ponticello, Student Life Coordinator.

Finance and Administration

Premiums in the NJ State Health Benefits plan for Educators are increasing an average of 35% effective January 1, 2026. While there are other choices, the majority of OCC employees are in the following plans:

NJ Direct 10	Current Premium	Premium 1/1/2026
S - SINGLE	19,011	26,091
M - MEMBER & SPOUSE	38,022	52,183
F - FAMILY	54,371	74,621
NJ Educators Health Plan		
S - SINGLE	13,756	17,974
M - MEMBER & SPOUSE	27,513	35,948
F - FAMILY	39,343	51,405

The increased premiums were announced after the College's FY26 budget had already been finalized, resulting in an anticipated shortfall of approximately \$900,000 for the second half of the fiscal year. In addition, we are facing higher than budgeted utility costs and lower-than-expected enrollment, which further impact our financial outlook. As a result, we must revise the FY26 budget to account for these increased expenses.

To help rebalance the budget, we will be implementing several cost-saving measures:

- Freezing vacant positions across departments.
- Replacing select full-time roles with part-time positions, where operationally feasible.
- Reducing expenses in other areas of operations, which may result in reduced services to the campus and to students.

Even with these reductions, we will need to utilize fund balance to fully offset the budget gap. We understand that these adjustments may raise concerns, and all changes will be discussed with trustees prior to implementation.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Ocean County College is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15 this year to honor the history, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities. A Flag-Raising Ceremony is scheduled September 15, 2025, sponsored by the OCC Cultural Heritage Committee and Student Life. Raising the flag symbolizes OCC's commitment to and recognition of the many cultures in our world. A list of the many events throughout the month is attached. All are invited to participate.

It is respectfully requested that the Board of Trustees adopt a resolution proclaiming September 15 to October 15, 2025, as Hispanic Heritage Month at Ocean County College to reaffirm the Board's support for the advancement of Hispanic and Latino people and to encourage all members of the College community

to participate in the activities scheduled to celebrate our Hispanic and Latino colleagues, students, and friends.

Faculty and Staff Presentations and Publications

- Dr. Madison Peschock, College Lecturer II in English, recently completed writing an encyclopedia article on Truman Capote and *In Cold Blood* through Gale Publishing. It is called "*In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote," *Children's Literature Review*. The article will be published by Farmington Hills/Gale Press in 2026.
- Ms. Pamela Bogdan, College Lecturer II in Engineering, will be presenting on the topic of "Experiential Learning - Regain Student Mindshare" at the C2 Summit for Pedagogical Advancements in STEM on September 26, 2025. This interactive session will discuss a holistic approach to provide STEM students with experiential learning opportunities that enhance student focus, active participation, and ultimately success. Although presented in the context of Engineering and Industrial/Technical Studies, this can be implemented for any STEM discipline. Participants in this session are encouraged to share their methods that address the unique needs and challenges of community college students in STEM.

Professional Development

- In collaboration with the Committee for Access and Belonging (CAB), four members of the Counseling Center staff participated in a professional development opportunity on Restorative Justice. This training focused on listening circle practices, providing necessary knowledge and skills for the Counseling Center to support the Committee's efforts in implementing such practices on campus.
- Disability Services co-presented *Introduction to Creating ADA Compliant Documents with Microsoft Tools* with Mr. Neil Mastroianni, Associate Director of Educational Technology, on August 21, 2025, which was held in the Library. The training provided participants with strategies to ensure Word, PowerPoint, and Excel documents meet ADA compliance standards.
- Orientation for new Nursing Clinical Instructors was held on August 12, 2025. Two new Clinical Instructors join the School of Nursing this Fall.
- Lisa Schlesinger, MSN, RN, was recently promoted to the position of Nursing College Lecturer II. Ms. Schlesinger has held various positions within the School of Nursing, including Clinical Instructor and, most recently, Nursing Skills Lab Coordinator. She received her AAS in Nursing from Ocean County College, a BSN, and an MSN from Thomas Edison State College. Ms. Schlesinger brings over 30 years of experience as an RN, in various positions within Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health, including staff nurse, Assistant Director, and Administrative Director overseeing Women's and Children's Services, the Neuroscience Inpatient Unit, and Medical-Telemetry Units.

Student Support Services and Activities

- Registration and Records is pleased to announce that OCC's I-17 recertification petition was approved to allow continued issuance of forms I-20 under section 101(a)(15)(f)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act for nonimmigrant students seeking F1 visa status. The following are approved programs: Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Science (AS), and Post-Secondary Certificates.
- The Enrollment Services team helped students during 2,179 visits in the month of July. With 1,146 transactional visits, 412 visits were for current student advising and 173 students for new student

advising. During this busy time of the year, the average student waited about nine minutes for assistance.

- The Success Team made 4,179 calls during the month of July. Their focus was to re-engage with stop-out students, as well as to assist students with a GPA below 2.0. The HUB team made 4,699 calls focusing on students that applied but never registered, new applicants, and registered students who needed to make payment arrangements. The teams, combined, spent almost 600 hours on the phone working with potential and current students to assist in the on-boarding to Ocean County College.
- Three additional Summer Express Enrollment Days were held July 29, August 7, and August 21, 2025. New students were able to speak with Academic Advising, receive a tour of the campus, and register for their Fall classes all in one visit.
- Early College representatives Tracey Taylor and Elaine Schardien, as well as Ms. Haley Abruzzese, Assistant Director of Recruitment, presented at the Grunin Performing Arts Academy freshman orientation on August 20, 2025. There will be 71 new incoming students (65 freshmen and 6 sophomores) who will have the opportunity to earn college credits while attending high school as part of the partnership between OCC and OCVTS.
- Tracey Taylor and Haley Abruzzese visited Ambassador Christian Academy (ACA), one of the college's newest high school partners on Friday, August 22, 2025, to assist students with the registration process for Early College.
- On August 4, 2025, the Early College team welcomed 30 students to campus for the 9th Lacey Township High School college academy cohort. The students were introduced to the campus, learned about resources, completed a tour, and received student IDs. They also were treated to a culinary demonstration by Mr. Sean Bipps, College Lecturer II in Business.
- Enrollment Services staff members have been attending all Summer orientation sessions in collaboration with Student Life, both for new students and parents. FIPSE grant staff provided hygiene bags and school supplies to new students, as needed. The Student Success Team hosted parent presentations on what to expect when their children enter college.
- The Office of Disability Services staff hosted an information table during New Student Orientation on August 6, 12, and 21, 2025, where they provided resource materials and engaged with students interested in applying for accommodations.
- On August 26, 2025, in collaboration with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), Disability Services hosted a campus wellness event, offering students access to additional community resources.
- At the Student Club Leader Kick-Off Meeting on August 26, 2025, the Office of Disability Services staff delivered a presentation on digital accessibility to reinforce best practices in student organization communications.
- The Veteran and Military Resource Center (VMRC) has continued its efforts in advancing recruitment, enrollment, and student success. The staff has placed 163 recruitment calls to new OCC applicants and held 16 one-on-one meetings to assist with course registration and provide Center tours.
- VMRC staff has conducted 23 Success Calls to currently enrolled Summer students, offering proactive support and connecting them to resources. The Center received 57 in-person student visits and delivered

117 individualized services, including advising, referrals, benefit navigation, and resource connections.

- The following is a VMRC Enrollment Snapshot by Fiscal Year. Data provided by Institutional Research:
 - **FY2023:** 310 students
 - **FY2024:** 341 students (↑ *10.0% Year over Year*)
 - **FY2025:** 349 students (↑ *2.3% Year over Year; 12.6% growth since FY2023*)
- The Counseling Center welcomes Ms. Richelle Corbo to the team as the new Director. The Center has been working diligently to provide services to students and the campus community, serving 42 unique students in the last month.
- The CARE Team responded to 29 reports in the month of August.
- Counseling Center staff offered two opportunities for training and professional development this month. Ms. Kelly Petrolis, Prevention Education Coordinator, and Ms. Darra Stack, Counseling Specialist, facilitated Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) training to students in the WRAP Program. This training was adapted specifically for this population, addressing the needs and learning styles of four students participating in the program.
- On July 23, 2025, Ms. Anais Mompont, College Lecturer II in Social Work and program chair, along with three students of the Social Work Club, completed the Missouri Community Action Network Poverty Simulator training through the FIPSE Basic Needs Grant. As simulator trainees, they will help facilitate the simulation as part of the campus-wide initiative to support a fully immersive experience, placing participants into the life of a real person who experienced basic needs insecurity, such as homelessness.
- With help from Student Life, the Library, Facilities Management, Mr. Edmond Hong, College Lecturer II in Computer Science, and Dr. Angel Camilo, College Lecturer II in Biology, the OCC Makerspace has been successfully relocated to OCC Library Room 101A, where it is more accessible and visible to students and faculty. The Makerspace is expected to be fully functional before the beginning of the Fall 2025 semester.
- Attached is the Ocean County College Vikings Year in Review Newsletter, from the Department of Athletics. This issue highlights key accomplishments, milestones, and exciting moments from the past year, showcasing the dedication of our student athletes, coaches, and staff, both in competition and in the classroom, and reflects the continued growth and impact of OCC's athletics program.

Student Honors and Awards

Recent Interpreter Training Program graduate, Nicholas Forlenza, has been accepted into Gallaudet University's Bachelor of Interpreting program. This is an exceptional honor, as Gallaudet admits only about 5% of hearing students into its student body. In addition to this achievement, Nicholas recently had the unique opportunity to interpret for the Ghostbusters Tour in New York City, where he rode in the Ecto-1 replica and visited several iconic filming locations. He also reached another professional milestone by interpreting his first theatre performance.

Outreach to Students

Orientation for 99 new Nursing students was held on campus on August 13, 2025. During the session, students were introduced to the faculty, policies, and procedures of the program, electronic textbooks, as well as strategies to enhance learning.

Community Outreach

- The VMRC hosted an outreach table at the Jersey Shore BlueClaws Military Appreciation Night on July 24, 2025, connecting with community members and prospective students.
- The VMRC participated in Toms River PRIDE on August 16, 2025, raising awareness of OCC's veteran and military student resources.
- Ms. Kelly Petrolis coordinated an on-campus training and networking session for Counseling Center staff and members of the CARE Team on July 23, 2025, with two community partners: St. Francis Counseling Services and Providence House Domestic Violence Services of Catholic Charities. These two organizations provide valuable resources in our community, and this informational session served to increase staff knowledge to further support OCC students.
- *Enrollment on Wheels*, OCC's newest Recruitment campaign, was seen throughout the county in the month of August. The Recruitment Team took the branded OCC van out to various high-traffic locations, including the Ocean County Mall parking lot, Windward Beach in Brick, and the Ocean County Library in Lakewood. Potential students were able to apply and register on the spot and meet with college representatives. Over 70 leads were generated through this new and innovative strategy.
- Enrollment Services Advisor Lauren Simon and Multilingual Language Navigator Carolina Newman tabled at the Windward Beach Kids Night Out event on August 5, 2025. The team met with children and teenagers of all ages and were able to make an early impression on future Vikings and their families.
- Enrollment Services Advisor for Partnerships and Outreach Calleigh Kearns attended A Night Out Against Crime, an event held on August 12, 2025, sponsored by the Lakewood Police Department. Ms. Kearns met various potential students within the community to provide information about upcoming classes and opportunities.
- Planetarium staff tabled at the Blue Claws Space Day game on July 26, 2025.
- The Planetarium hosted 26 camp groups for 26 shows in August.
- Moment to Moment Creative Collaborative, a local acting studio, rented the OCC Black Box on Monday, August 11, 2025, to present its Summer Intensive Final Showcase.
- The Grunin Center has been selected by Mid Atlantic Arts to take part in the Arts and Culture Accessibility Self-Assessment, a project of Open Door Arts. The team is currently working on this survey, which evaluates accessibility across spaces, services, communications, and programming. The results will guide the creation of a customized plan to ensure that individuals with disabilities can enjoy authentic, equitable, and meaningful experiences at OCC's theater.
- On August 7, 2025, DJ Willy Wow performed as part of the CAMP (Community Arts and Music Programs) series, funded by the Wintrode Family Foundation. Over 350 members of the community attended, including campers from the Ocean County YMCA, Lacey Township Extended School Year program, as well as the Brick PAL, Prime Time Center, Community Options, and local families. Attendees enjoyed two fun and high-energy musical performances.

Grants

- Through an additional grant from the NJCCC under the Community College Opportunity Grant, 18 Nursing I students were awarded funding to assist and support with non-tuition financial needs. Students were given uniform credit, books, stethoscopes, clinical supplies, and money for gas for off-campus clinical training.
- The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection awarded a three-year Trees for Schools grant to enhance tree equity by planting shade trees, creating inviting outdoor spaces near academic buildings for student recreation and study. The new trees will improve air quality by filtering pollution and increasing stormwater capture thanks to their deeper root systems. Native species will also support local biodiversity by providing habitat and food for insects and migratory birds.
- Student Support Services (SSS), a TRIO program designed to help eligible students earn their associate degrees, has been re-funded over \$1.3 million from the U.S. Department of Education for another five-year grant cycle. SSS supports students with disabilities in addition to first generation and low-income students to improve student success.
- Ocean County College, in partnership with OceanFirst, is launching the *Helping Hands WaveMaker Project* to support food-insecure students through OCC's Helping Hands Food Pantry and expand volunteer engagement across campus. Taking place on September 25, 2025, the event will bring together approximately 100 volunteers from OceanFirst and OCC staff in a powerful day of service and student impact.

Volunteers will use the project's awarded funding of \$2,500 entirely to shop at a local market for groceries that will be unpacked and organized in the pantry, directly benefiting students as they begin the Fall semester. The need is urgent: in 2024, 63% of surveyed OCC students reported eating less due to lack of money for food, and 61% feared running out of food entirely. With over 2,000 student visits annually, the pantry is a vital support system for OCC students.

In addition to supporting the pantry, volunteers will participate in a wide range of service and student-support activities, including:

- Athletic Support – Assist OCC's men's soccer team at its home game against Cumberland County College.
- Creative Kindness – Design and decorate cards of encouragement for local seniors and veterans.
- Student Empowerment – Take part in Operation THRIVE, OCC's trauma-informed training program, and engage directly with students to foster empathy and understanding.
- Career Readiness – Conduct mock interviews with OCC students as part of a "Career Week" initiative, providing real-world professional development and confidence-building experiences.

Workforce Education

- As part of the Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills Training Program, Workforce Education recently partnered with The ARC of Ocean County to deliver a customized Coaching and Mentoring Supervisor Training program. Over 30 participants took part across four sections, supporting the professional growth of its supervisory team.

- Workforce Education has recently launched the Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills Training Program for FY26, a collaboration between the New Jersey Consortium of Community Colleges and the New Jersey Business and Industry Association to upskill incumbent workers. Since July 1, 2025, over 350 new participants have enrolled in courses that integrate English language learning with financial literacy, computer literacy, professionalism, and other workforce-focused topics. This free program is fully subsidized through the unemployment insurance tax, ensuring broad access and impact to eligible participants.

Adult Transition Center (ACT)

The ACT Program was granted an extension through August 15, 2025. The additional time allowed the participant to work with instructors to develop work readiness skills and given exposure to career opportunities that match her skill set for the workforce. The participant also worked on an OCC application and essay about her goals to attend college, with assistance from the Library and Writing Center staff.

Work Readiness Assistance Program (WRAP)

- Seven participants completed the Leadership Academy with a community service project where they created "kindness rocks" with words or phrases to brighten up someone's day. They also earned their Teen Mental Health First Aid Certification.
- Five participants started Exploration of Career Pathways and Entrepreneurship (ECPE).
- Early Childhood Professional Education (ECPE) fieldtrips participants attended:
 - Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial, where they toured America's most decorated Navy battleship, which holds exhibits of artifacts from World War II to Korea and Vietnam, and remained in active duty during the 1980s.
 - Prior to a visit to the Six Flags Great Adventure theme park, Ms. Pamela Bogdan delivered a pre-trip lesson on rollercoasters and physics, with support from the Engineering Club. During the Great Adventure visit, participants used an app to measure speed and acceleration while riding the rollercoasters.

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 July 19, 2025, to August 28, 2025.

COLLOQUIUM

OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE FALL 2025

LIVING OCC'S VALUES • THURSDAY, AUGUST 28

8:00am-9:00am **Breakfast and Poster Session** Larson Student Center

9:00am-9:15am **Welcome**
Dr. Pamela Monaco, Ocean County College President

9:30am-10:45am **Concurrent Sessions** (Detailed descriptions and presenters are on the next page)

■ Session 1: Collaborative • TECH 115

[Cultivating a Caring Campus through Collaboration](#)

Meeting Number: 2634 098 9078 • Password: workshop1

■ Session 2: Ethical • CONF 109 A&B

[Equity in Action: Active Listening Circles and the Work of the Committee for Access and Belonging](#)

Meeting Number: 2863 639 5327 • Password: workshop2

■ Session 3: Accessible • CONF 102

Achieving the Dream: Considering the Student Journey

11:00am-12:15pm **Concurrent Sessions** (Detailed descriptions and presenters are on the next page)

■ Session 4: Opportunity-Focused • BART 203

[Learning to Livelihood: Partnering with Purpose](#)

Meeting Number: 2868 711 6587 • Password: workshop4

■ Session 5: Nurturing • CONF 102

[Nurturing Begins with Us: Stories of Support and Connection at OCC](#)

Meeting Number: 2868 066 1855 • Password: workshop5

■ Session 6: Department Overviews • TECH 115

[From Students to Staff to Community: Exploring OCC's Wide Range of Services](#)

Meeting Number: 2865 537 9914 • Password: workshop6

12:30pm-1:30pm **Lunch: Outdoor BBQ** (*weather permitting*) FREE to all OCC employees with ticket

1:30pm-2:00pm **Poster Session** Gymnasium

2:00pm-3:00pm **President's Address** Gymnasium

Meeting Number: 2870 176 1752 • Password: occpresident

Dr. Pamela Monaco, Ocean County College President

New Employees • Employees with New Positions • Retirees

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

For more info, contact Alexa Beshara Blauth at 732-255-0400 ext.2461 • abeshara@ocean.edu



Concurrent Workshop Descriptions

■ Session 1. **Cultivating a Caring Campus through Collaboration**

Presenters: Haley Abruzzese, Jim Campbell, Veronica Guevara-Lovgren, Lynn Kenneally, Jenna Puglisi, and Genevieve Mitchell (HOPE Project Coordinator, Mental Health Association of Ocean County)

This presentation will highlight the many ways in which Ocean County College encourages and advances collaboration in order to achieve its mission and vision. Led by a group of stakeholders from around OCC, the presenters will discuss ways in which shared effort and partnership with high schools, external organizations, and between faculty and staff has made a positive impact for students, the campus, and the surrounding community.

■ Session 2. **Equity in Action: Active Listening Circles and the Work of the Committee for Access and Belonging (CAB)**

Presenters: Dori Londres, Jonathan Molinaro, Anaïs Mompoin, Kayla Stahl, and Mark Westmoreland

Curious about cultivating a more inclusive campus culture? Join us for an interactive and informative session focused on the newly established Committee for Access and Belonging (CAB). This session will introduce CAB's mission and its emerging Strategic Plan. But this isn't just a presentation—it's an active conversation with each other. Participants will engage in active listening circles that foster connection and create a space for sharing, reflection, and understanding. Whether you're passionate about inclusion, eager to help shape a more equitable campus, or simply looking to engage in thoughtful dialogue, this session is for you. Join us and be part of the conversation that drives change.

■ Session 3. **Achieving the Dream: Considering the Student Journey**

Facilitators: Ana Wilson, Alison Noone, and Neil Mastroianni

In this interactive session, we'll engage in a thought-provoking game designed to highlight the stages of the student journey that can often be overlooked. Through this activity, we will step into the shoes of our students and reflect on their real-life experiences navigating college. The discussion will then focus on our experiences with the game and the barriers our students face every day, while emphasizing our institutional value of accessibility and our commitment to Achieving the Dream.

■ Session 4. **Learning to Livelihood: Partnering with Purpose**

Presenters: Gay Huggins-Dickey and Shawn Zakar

Discover how Ocean County College is redefining the role of community colleges in workforce development through intentional, equity-driven partnerships. This dynamic session will explore how the Workforce Education and Career Services departments collaborate to create clear, inclusive career pathways for all learners—credit, non-credit, ESL, and special populations alike. Learn how strategic alliances with healthcare systems, nonprofits, financial institutions, and chambers of commerce equip students with the skills, support, and confidence to thrive in today's workforce. Attendees will engage in a hands-on team-building activity and leave with actionable ideas to foster purpose-driven collaboration and expand career clarity in their roles within the institution.

■ Session 5. **Nurturing Begins with Us: Stories of Support and Connection at OCC**

Facilitators: Alexa Beshara-Blauth and Lisa Daly

Explore the value of nurturing through an engaging and reflective session that highlights how Ocean County College fosters a welcoming and supportive environment. Students often describe OCC as a safe space—one where they feel seen, supported, and encouraged as they navigate their academic and personal journeys. This session will feature a blend of short video clips and tabletop discussions centered around five key questions exploring what it means to feel welcomed, supported, and connected on campus. Attendees will have the opportunity to share their own experiences while learning how others—students, faculty, and staff—define a nurturing community. Together, we'll also reflect on the role each of us plays in shaping a campus environment where everyone feels they belong.

■ Session 6. **From Students to Staff to Community: Exploring OCC's Wide Range of Services**

Presenters: Cara Dubitsky, Elizabeth Metzger, Jamie Prioli, and Heidi Sheridan

This presentation highlights four essential areas at Ocean County College that support student and staff success as well as community engagement. Disability Services fosters success through access and support for students with disabilities. Instructional Design and Learning Systems teams design high-quality, scalable online and hybrid courses and support the learning systems that are embedded in Canvas. Human Resources promotes a dynamic work environment focused on professional growth and diversity. The Grunin Center for the Arts showcases vibrant performances across music, theater, and dance, enriching campus culture. We will share important insights, processes, and communication tools for utilizing our respective areas to support our full community.



FALL 2025 COLLOQUIUM
August 28, 2025

STATE-OF-THE-COLLEGE ADDRESS
Dr. Pamela Monaco

Good Afternoon,

(Slide 1)

Welcome back everyone, whether you have been away during the summer months **or** have enjoyed a vacation before preparing for the 2025-2026 academic year. I thoroughly enjoyed stopping into all the Colloquium sessions and hearing and observing the energy and engagement. Each session may have been organized around one of our values, but multiple values were on display in each session.

Thank you to Katie Arrigo and Eileen Thigpin for bringing their interpretive skills to our time together this afternoon.

This will be a busy year for us all as we continue to adapt to the changing higher education landscape, the evolving student population, and the different directions we continue to receive from the state and federal government and our various accreditors.

We have returned to the gym, as the Grunin Theatre is not quite ready for us. We heard you last spring when you made note about the comfort of the seating in the gym. Today, you get to experience the “cushy tushy.” (Slide 2) As you might imagine, many parents, friends, and supporters of our athletic teams that use this space have found it challenging to arise after 90 minutes or so on these bleacher seats. We now have these seats to offer as a fund raiser for our athletic teams, who do need to fund raise to finance what we hope will be their championship travels. We ask, therefore, that you return these cushions to the bin located near the door, or you may wish to support our students, too, and purchase a cushion for \$10. Your comments about the need for cushions have resulted in both increased comfort and a way for our athletes to finance their sports. Perhaps with this additional padding you will enjoy attending one of our athletic events. Whatever your choice, please bring the cushion with you as you exit and either place in the bin or donate to the student athletes’ fundraiser.

Much happened over the last several months. I asked campus leaders to provide some updates that I can share with you. Note that this is the abridged version, so I apologize in advance if you were engaged in something this summer that has not been included.

What we did this summer (abridged) (Slide 3):

- This summer, construction began on the new admin building. As a result, everyone has been engaged in more exercise due to parking lot #2R closure and the summer closure of parking lot #1 for new paving and striping as well as additional car charging stations.
- Significant progress is visible on the completion of the Grunin Center expansion.
- Jon Ross and Kayci Clayton applied for and received a grant for additional trees for the campus, so the college will be able to plant an additional 28 trees this next year.
- There is new signage including for deer crossing and the veteran parking spaces on certain roads and parking lots.
- Our facilities department led successful preventative maintenance of the all the exterior electrical transformers.
- Mary Granahan used her magic to secure a donation of a set for our broadcasting studio, and then when she met representatives from Marquis Health, they volunteered to donate two 85" screens to complete the set.
- The new music practice suite in the Grunin Center was opened.
- Our Security Department received accreditation from IACLEA, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators; OCC joins 1,000+ higher education institutions in 31 countries and is the **only** community college in the state to enjoy this accreditation.
- Summer building occupancy scheduling for energy conservation occurred for the second year in a row.
- (Slide 4) We received word from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), commending Ocean County College for completing the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) reporting process and earning a STARS Bronze rating, under the leadership of Jim Calamia and Lincoln Simmons and supported by a dedicated team.
- (Slide 5) We took a breath after a commencement week that involved many challenging decisions. We received positive feedback from students and families and paused to rethink how we will proceed with our most important celebration of our student's achievements going forward. Based on a combination of factors, we will hold the commencement ceremonies in the RWJ Barnabas Health Arena, and we will return to a Thursday ceremony.
- (Slide 6) Over the summer, we learned the fate of our funding from the State and were pleasantly surprised when much of our funding was restored in this year's budget. Thank you to the many faculty, staff, and students, who spent time lobbying in Trenton.
- The Foundation hosted its Annual Scholarship Ceremony honoring, among others, our very own Controller, Mary Lancaster. Raising over \$220,000 for scholarships, this was a wonderful evening of fellowship and community for our many supporters and the College community.

- We have been working with Marquis Health Consulting Services on ways that we can align some of our healthcare programs with their needs as we also learn where there are opportunities to develop new certificates and training.
- We have moved forward on the dental hygiene and radiography programs, including hiring the director for dental hygiene. The new program space construction will begin this fall with the target of fall 2026 enrollment.
- The State Department of Health has lifted its prohibition on our ability to develop a paramedic program, so that is now in the works.
- Faculty led students to both France and Ireland over the summer, and the faculty and students who went to France had the experience of steamy weather without air-conditioning.
- Dean Jonathan Molinaro has been working with several faculty on the alignment of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies for workforce with course learning outcomes. This alignment will allow students to demonstrate the traits and skills employers value. The eight core competencies are career and self-development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology.
- Throughout the summer, Arts and Humanities faculty met biweekly as a community of practice to discuss how Artificial Intelligence is impacting traditional assessment and workshop new ideas to engage students in learning. The group discussed their concerns as well as opportunities to teach students about A.I. through experiential learning and innovative class assignments. They will be continuing to meet over the upcoming academic year
- Dr. Gay Huggins-Dickey has been meeting with faculty on the value and importance of experiential learning as she also engages the campus on how to promote career services to our students.
- We welcomed Chancellor Youngblood to Kean Ocean, who has led the renewal and reinvigoration of our collaboration. He has spent a lot of time over the summer talking to faculty, staff, and students to strategize ways to better serve our students.
- (Slide 7) This summer, we also transitioned summer camps to a partnership with Blackstone. We had a good first year and anticipate continuing growth in the future.
- (Slide 8) The College was informed that we would receive Title II funding to continue to support programming for students wishing to learn English or earn their High School Equivalency. Then we were told we would lose the funding. And now it is restored. As a result of this initial loss of funding, we took the opportunity to consider multiple pathways to meet the need of our ELL students and create clear pathways and better communication across departments. The people listed, spent most of the summer working on a pay model for credit and non-credit and designing processes for serving students with individual goals for learning English. I am delighted with these much-needed conversations across several

departments. I would like to share a brief excerpt from a letter Gina gave to me today from the students who just completed the entire ESL sequence:

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks for all the support you have given us in this ESL program. Perhaps it does not measure how this program has helped us move forward. Many of us have left our roots behind and have ventured on this great journey, hoping to turn our lives around, not only by experience, but by opportunities. Sometimes, for ourselves, as is the case with the youngest of the program, but those of us who are here and are adults seek to improve the lives of our children, giving them a better life and opportunities in this beautiful country.

We arrive here full of hope, but lacking knowledge, especially in the management of language, a factor that is often essential to open paths or take opportunities. Knowing the language and handling it not only opens doors at work, but also helps us to contain our children, socialize and create new bonds in our new environment.

For us, who came from far away, having access to this program allows us to integrate in the right way, understand the rules of the country, understand the problems that happen around us, go to the doctor and express our ailments effectively, understand what happens in schools with our children and know if they are doing well and how we can help them improve.

This program allows us to have access to basic information to survive and interact with our environment in an effective and safe way. It allows us to raise our children without getting lost in the language barrier. Hoping that others can have the same opportunity that we have had so far, I would like to express my most sincere respects and gratitude.

I share this because it is a reminder that what we do matters, and also to illustrate how our students move from non-credit to credit as they pursue their goals.

- (Slide 9) Under James Marshall's leadership, with support from Caroline Brittain, Alexa Bashara-Blauth, and Catherine Mancuso, we held a retreat to provide an opportunity for feedback and interest in potential new programs. Based on interest and feedback, we will bring potential new programs or certificates to a new Emerging Trends committee, staffed primarily with faculty members, to review the data and evidence for consideration. The Emerging Trends Committee will then provide recommendations to the Program Development Board who will review the financial requirements, competition, marketing needs, and so forth. We will also have industry professionals as part of these discussions to ensure that these potential programs are training for in-demand jobs that lead to sustainable wage careers
- (Slide 10) A dedicated group of individuals spent several months redesigning the President's Excellence Award that has resulted in new categories and an easier process

for nominations. The nomination period will open in early fall and will inaugurate the new process.

- (Slide 11) We welcomed new students to the campus and provided orientation programs to begin creating a sense of belonging by introducing them to the many supports available throughout their academic journey.
- The College participated in multiple Pride celebrations and events in the County, thanks to students and staff from Ocean Pride and the VMRC.
- Over the past six months, as a sub-committee of the IT Governance Council, representatives from various departments around campus have been meeting to address the Title 2 mandate called WCAG 2.1. The mandate requires ADA compliance for all digital formats by April 24, 2026, and it affects all units on campus. Please check out the posters and handouts for training opportunities and more updates throughout the year.
- Over the summer, Jim Campbell and Kate Mohr conducted a train the trainer experience of the Missouri Poverty Simulation. Yesterday at the Teaching and Learning Institute, 22 people participated and gained crucial insight into the life challenges many of our students experience to one degree or another. You will understand students and people differently.
- Two long-standing Board of Trustee members, Linda Novak and Joanne Pehlivanian, retired, and we have welcomed two new Board members, Lynn Canfield and Teri Kubiell. Mr. Canfield was sworn in earlier this summer, and Dr. Teri Kubiell, an alum of our nursing program, will be sworn in next week.
- (Slide 12) Our student athletes had a great year both athletically and academically with an impressive 42 OCC student-athletes who earned placement on the 2024-25 NJCAA All-Academic Teams this year in recognition of their outstanding academic performance, including 14 students who finished the year with 4.0 grade point average. Additionally, 6 Ocean teams were honored as part of the NJCAA academic teams of the year selections: Women's Volleyball, Women's Cross Country, Women's Tennis, Women's Soccer, Men's Soccer, and Baseball.
- (Slide 13) We enjoyed a positive summer enrollment—the positive numbers were certainly assisted by the visiting students home for the summer.
- (Slide 14) The summer also provided the opportunity for Alexa Bashara Blauth, Eileen Garcia, Jerry Raccioppi, Mark Westmoreland, Ana Wilson, and me to attend the Kickoff Training for the 2025 Cohort of Achieving the Dream (AtD) Colleges. We spent time with our coaches, including a data coach. We read a lot and learned a lot about the framework and how the college can serve students even better than we are now. We all had some moments of awakening to what we can do better. Most of all, we enjoyed getting to spend time with colleagues.
- (Slide 15) Based on our AtD experience, we focused on the work ahead. We put together the core team and the data team. It was important to me that each team be co-chaired by a faculty member and someone deeply engaged with students and/or data. We have some preliminary work to do and eagerly anticipate the upcoming visit from our AtD coaches,

who will be here October 8th and 9th, providing everyone an opportunity to understand the work and see one's own role in this effort.

- (Slide 16) For just over a year, a team of people, under Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth's leadership, have been working on the strategic plan. As you know, we produced drafts, we shared these drafts with focus groups, whole classes of students provided insights and feedback, our internal and external communities were included in the process, and by spring semester we had mission, vision, and values and our Goals and Objectives established.
- Since that time, each of the four goal leaders worked with a team to develop the KPIs for each goal. Earlier today you had the opportunity to see each of the four goals.

(Slide 17) When you look at our four goals, Empower, Future-Focused, Connect, and Sustain—you see more than a strategic plan. You see a roadmap for how we will build opportunity and strengthen community in all we do.

These are not abstract ideas. They are concrete actions that will shape the daily experience of our students, our employees, and our community.

(Slide 18) We can execute these actions because of the passion, collaboration, and dedication of the people in this room.

The goals are interconnected and are supported by the work we will do through Achieving the Dream. Both are data driven processes and will provide the structure for us to better serve students, adjust to the changing high ed landscape, and respond to opportunities nimbly.

(Slide 19) I cannot stress to you how important it is for us to focus on these goals and the strategic initiatives. We must focus our time, our efforts, and our resources in ensuring future success for students, our employees, our college, and our communities. We can do this by dedicating ourselves to achieving our initiatives establishing a strong foundation, strategically expanding opportunity, and ultimately creating a lasting, transformative impact that strengthens the OCC community.

(Slide 20) You will see from the plan the initiatives, the foundational efforts, our strategic wins, and our transformational outcomes. All of the initiatives have Key Performance Indicators to chart our successes and provide key data about when we need to refocus our attention.

(Slide 21) All of this work will be monitored with updates provided by our newly formed Institutional Effectiveness Committee which replaces the previous "Guiding Coalition."

(Slide 22) Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey, and most especially our Strategic Planning Taskforce who laid the foundation of our plans; the Goal Committees who defined the actions, and every member of the OCC community who will bring these goals to life.

(Slide 23) I urge you to review the publication of our strategic plan – live on our website – as we launch this September

Now to the present state of the college.

Ocean County College has to prepare for changes that have already arrived. I would like to take a few moments to look at some enrollment history and current enrollment data to provide context for additional remarks.

(Slide 24) Over the summer, Sara Winchester requested from IR specific data that looked at enrollment without online and embedded enrollment included over the past five years.

What you see is a steady decline. This has partially been hidden because of steady increases in both online and our embedded programs but the steady decline is clear when f2f data are isolated. As a result, what we have not seen are changes in our class schedule, in our room utilization, and in our services for students—all of which should reflect current campus usage. Let's explore this data for the fall (Slide 25).

Enrollment for the fall semester reflects national trends. Fewer students are pursuing bachelor's degrees than in years past; this downward trend is reflected in our results, as our academic program offerings are primarily designed for students who intend to transfer to four-year institutions.

As of yesterday, the student headcount for the fall semester is **5.24% behind** where it was at this time last year, and credits are **5.89% lower** than they were at the same time the previous year. The actual numbers of the decrease are 307 students and 3,590 credits. I would like to point out that this is despite our enrollment team working very, very hard and trying new approaches. Some of you in one of the morning sessions, for example, heard about Enrollment on Wheels, whereby our recruitment experts went to where people are—the farmers' market, the beach, the mall—to get the word out and encourage people to come to college.

Eighty-one percent of the decrease is among traditional-aged students, those under the age of 24. Despite this, we are ahead of our enrollment of students from the Ocean County high school class of 2026. As of yesterday, we have enrolled a total of 962 students from this year's high school graduating class. This is 48 students more than the same time last year.

Clearly, we are experiencing a decline in tuition income, despite a modest tuition increase.

(Slide 26) That is not the only challenge we face. Thanks to the efforts of many of our students and members of faculty and staff, the \$20 M was restored to the community college budget as proposed by Governor Murphy. However, the Assembly has been crystal clear that we will not enjoy the same fiscal support next year. We already know state support will be less, requiring us to build a budget with less state support and weakened enrollment; we all know that spring enrollment does not eclipse fall enrollment.

In addition, federal government grants remain uncertain for the future. Our Title II grant was restored at the last moment, and for now Title III is funded. The priorities of the government continue to shift and uncertainty is a certainty. It is impossible to build budgets on uncertainty.

(Slide 27) We also received a sizeable increase to our health care costs. One of the benefits many people take for granted is employer subsidized health premiums. OCC provides very good health insurance, but it comes at a cost to individuals and employers. Premiums in the NJ State Health Benefits plan for Educators are increasing an average of 35% effective 1/1/26. While there are other choices, the majority of OCC employees are in the following plans:

NJ Direct 10	Current Premium	1/1/2026
S - SINGLE	19,011	26,091
M - MEMBER & SPOUSE	38,022	52,183
F - FAMILY	54,371	74,621
NJ Educators Health Plan		
S - SINGLE	13,756	17,974
M - MEMBER & SPOUSE	27,513	35,948
F - FAMILY	39,343	51,405

The increased premiums were announced **after** the FY26 budget had already been finalized, resulting in an anticipated shortfall of approximately \$900,000 for the second half of the fiscal year. In addition, we are facing higher than budgeted utility costs and lower-than-expected enrollment, which further impact our financial outlook. As a result, we must revise the FY26 budget to account for these increased expenses.

To help rebalance the budget, we will be implementing several cost-saving measures (Slide 28):

- Freezing vacant positions across departments.
- Replacing select full-time roles with part-time positions, where operationally feasible.
- Reducing expenses in other areas of operations, which may result in reduced services to the campus and to students.

Even with these reductions, we will need to utilize fund balance to fully offset the budget gap. We understand that these adjustments may raise concerns, and we are committed to transparency and thoughtful planning as we move forward.

You may also remember that last year we spoke about the changes in who is coming to college and what they want to achieve. (Slide 29) Fewer students are seeking community college education for transfer to a four-year school. Data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center shows the number of students enrolled in vocational-focused community colleges increased 16% from 2022 to 2023 alone. As you know, OCC does not have a lot to offer—yet—in these fields. Our other NJ county colleges that offer more vocational focused programs have not experienced the enrollment declines we are facing.

There are many reasons today's students seek a different college experience and outcome than most of us when we were undergraduates. The high cost of college isn't the only factor driving many young people toward skilled trades. With the use of artificial intelligence on the rise, many Gen Zers see manual labor as less vulnerable to this emerging technology than white-collar careers. Professions such as paralegals, for example, will soon be performed through AI. For years students were encouraged to study computer science due to the financial incentive and the chance to work on interesting projects. This led to large enrollments at both two- and four-year colleges. Now, the spread of AI programming tools is derailing the employment dreams of many of these students. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of NY, "Among college graduates ages 22 to 27, computer science graduates face some of the highest unemployment rates, of over 6%." The Federal Reserve Bank of NY also notes that "the labor market for recent college graduates in

2025, so far, is among the most challenging in the last decade, apart from the pandemic period.” Many of today’s students consider vocational schools or vocational programs a straight path to well-paying jobs. Some have even dubbed this generation the Toolbelt Generation.

Thus, the shift we see among students and family is toward clear and concrete paths to careers with sustainable incomes. According to the recently published book, *More Essential Than Ever: Community College Pathways to Educational and Career Success*, “Community colleges today will need to make concerted efforts to strengthen pathways to post-completion success in employment and further education and thus ensure that students’ investment of effort, time, and money pays off.”

I share this with you to help explain why OCC has to change our mix of programs we offer, the kinds of supports we offer, and how we function as a business.

We will develop more programs, especially short-term certificates, in addition to the new workforce programs already mentioned. We will continue to reduce the barriers to transfer for those students seeking a four-year degree. And we will use data to drive our decisions.

The majority of our students transfer to two universities, Kean University followed by Stockton University; Rutgers and Rowan are distant third and fourth choices. We can also track the degrees students select when transferring, allowing us to work intentionally with our four-year partners for a smooth transfer process. And remember—an increasing number of students are choosing degrees that lead to **work**, not to transfer. At the same time, universities are cutting programs and repackaging others. The University of NC system, St. Cloud State, Delta State, and even the bastion of liberal arts, the University of Chicago, are cutting and consolidating programs. The University of Chicago, citing new federal policies and shifts in the “underlying financial models” for higher education, shared that the Arts and Humanities division is consolidating its 15 departments into eight, reducing language instruction, and establishing minimum class and program sizes.

“The status quo is not an option,” said Deborah Nelson, dean of the Division of the Arts and Humanities. We, too, need to reject doing things the same way, with the same courses, aligned in the same degrees, as a solution for the future.

(Slide 30) Consequently, we need to streamline what we offer, when we offer, and how we offer programs and courses. This can be painful at times, as it means recognizing how things have changed and will continue to change. It is also an opportunity to design a curriculum that prepares students well for their futures, and I hope you see this as a project that will lead to better outcomes for students.

We work in an industry—a business—that continues to evolve. Our students are different people with very different interests than pre-pandemic students, much less than when we were college students. We are going through a disruption in higher education that mirrors that which occurred in the 1970s, when the kind of classes offered on campuses, the kinds of majors offered, and the tools and outcomes were challenged and changed. If we continue to offer the kinds of programs, delivered the ways our professors delivered to us, and without an explicit focus on job, we will neither attract nor serve students. As Carl Benedikt Frey, an economist with the University of Oxford and author of the book *How Progress Ends: Technology, Innovation, and the Fate of Nations*, shares, “A college diploma used to be an ironclad job guarantee. Today, it seems more like a lottery ticket with shrinking odds.”

What employers demand evolves as technology, social needs, and global concerns change. We owe to our students and our community the capacity to lead change and to demonstrate once again that we are of and for the community.

This work will require us to think differently than we may have in the past, but the outcomes will strengthen us institutionally and will better prepare our students for the future.

(Slide 31) I welcome questions or comments.

WELCOME

Living Ocean County College's Values



COMFORT + SUPPORT FOR ATHLETES

- Enjoy the cushy upgrade
- Please return cushion to bin at exit
- or -
- Purchase for \$10 to support our student athletes





REVIEW OF SUMMER



- Physical Plant
- Security
- Campus Improvements

SUSTAINABILITY TASKFORCE

- Eric Antonelli
- Sean Bips
- Kevin Byrne
- Jim Calamia
- Angel Camilo
- Stan Hales
- Marilyn Kralik
- Charlotte Langeveld
- Melanie Parker
- Theo Ponticello
- Dorean Shaw
- Aqsa Sheikh
- Heidi Sheridan
- Lincoln Simmons



COMMENCEMENT





REVIEW OF SUMMER



- Funding
- Programs
- Partnerships

SUMMER CAMPS



ENGLISH LANGUAGE WORKING GROUP

- Cory Atkinson
- Kayci Clayton
- Samantha Glassford
- Veronica Guevara-Lovgren
- Sheenah Hartigan
- Anthony Jordan
- Joe Konopka
- Bibiana Luna Rojas
- Catherine Mancuso
- Jonathan Molinaro
- Carolina Newman
- Gina Opauski
- Anna Regan
- Sergio Torrico Saniz
- Shawn Zakar



EMERGING TRENDS COMMITTEE

- Amy Bobish
- Anais Mompont
- Beth Brierley
- Calleigh Kearns
- Caterina Gibson
- Danielle Pfeffer
- Edmond Hong
- James Hadley
- James Marshall
- Jason Molloy
- Jonathan Molinaro
- Michael Mitchell
- Sergio Torrico-Saniz
- Susan Schneider





PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

REVISION COMMITTEE:

- Jacqueline D'Amore
- Alyssa Exner
- Dina Sherman
- Cara Dubitsky
- Julia Kim
- Laura Westmoreland





REVIEW OF SUMMER



- Students
- WCAG
- Board of Trustees

EXCELLENCE ON & OFF THE FIELD

42 student-athletes named to NJCAA All-Academic Teams

Six Ocean teams recognized as NJCAA Academic Teams of the Year

Men's Baseball



Women's Cross Country



Men's Soccer



Women's Soccer



Women's Tennis



Women's Volleyball



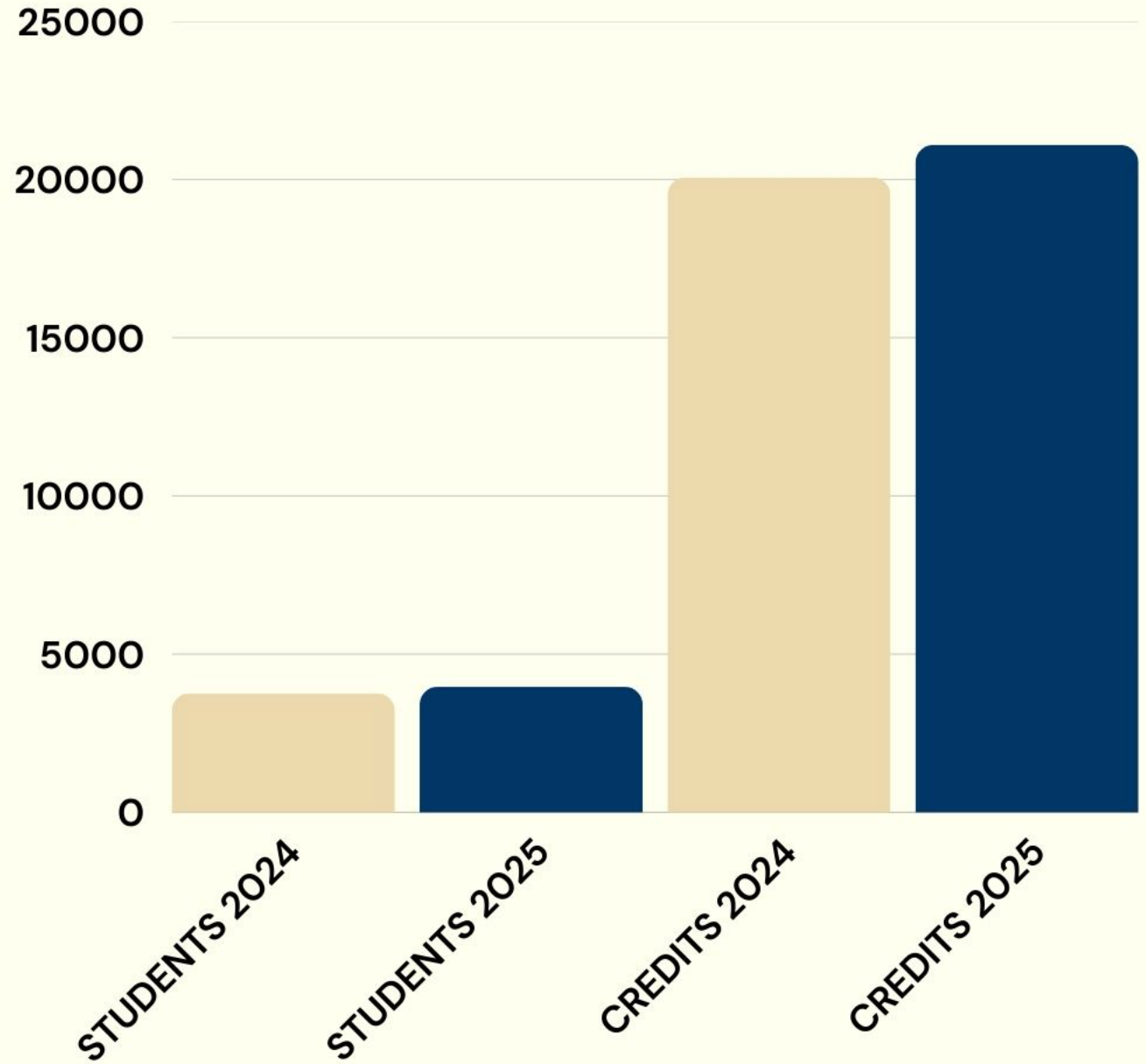
SUMMER ENROLLMENT DATA



3,963 students registered
+205 students from 2024



21,090 credits being taken
+5.13% students from 2024



ACHIEVING THE DREAM

Who went



What we learned



Who is leading



AtD TEAM MEMBERS

The Core Team:



**Mark Westmoreland
and Alison Noone, Co-chairs**

- Alexa Beshara-Blauth
- Beth Brierley
- Eileen Garcia
- Sam Glassford
- Anthony Jordan
- Marilyn Kralik
- Neil Mastroianni
- Pamela Monaco
- Jerry Racioppi
- Laura Wills
- Ana Wilson

The Data Team:



**Alexa Beshara-Blauth
and Ana Wilson, Co-chairs**

- Caroline Brittain
- James Hadley
- Anthony Jordan
- Mary Lancaster
- Jeff McWeeney
- Jonathan Molinaro
- Anna Regan
- Joseph Rua
- Vandana Saini
- Maria Tchaplygin

The background of the slide features a photograph of the Ocean County College entrance. A large, dark metal archway spans the top of the frame, with the words "Ocean County College" in white, sans-serif font. The arch is supported by a stone pillar on the right. The sky is clear blue, and some greenery is visible at the bottom.

Ocean County College

STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR MISSION

Ocean County College empowers diverse learners to achieve their goals while enriching the communities we serve.

OUR VISION

To inspire our students and community to learn, discover, and thrive.

OUR VALUES:

- O** Opportunity-focused
- C** Collaborative
- E** Ethical
- A** Accessible
- N** Nurturing

GOAL 1 EMPOWER

Create and sustain an environment that continuously improves equitable student access, retention, and success.



COMMITTEE

Jerry Racioppi
Vandana Saini
Craig Santicola
Jennifer Dellner
Sheenah Hartigan
Kate Mohr
Nancy Rizzuto
Samantha Glassford
Shawn Zaker
Vivian Lynn

GOAL 2 FUTURE-FOCUSED

Design and deliver programs that respond to evolving community and workforce needs.

COMMITTEE

Eileen Garcia

Joe Konopka

Jonathan Molinaro

Craig Santicola

Tracy Walsh

Biz Metzger

James Marshall

Gay Huggins-Dickey

Janine Emma



GOAL 3 CONNECT

Cultivate a positive and collaborative workplace culture.

COMMITTEE

Joe Konopka

Eileen Garcia

Jonathan Molinaro

Craig Santicola

Tracy Walsh

Biz Metzger

James Marshall

Gay Huggins-Dickey

Janine Emma



GOAL 4 SUSTAIN

Cultivate a positive and collaborative workplace culture.

COMMITTEE

Sara Winchester

Timothy Landers

Ann Feneis

Donna Carbone

Melanie Parker

Kate Mohr

Kayci Clayton

Laura Paolillo

Nanci Carmody



INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

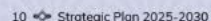
- Alexa Beshara-Blauth
- Kayci Clayton
- Lisa Daly
- Eileen Garcia
- Samantha Glassford
- Gay Huggins-Dickey
- Joe Konopka
- Timothy Landers
- Vivian Lynn
- James Marshall
- Christina Matuszewski
- Laura Paolillo
- Jerry Racioppi
- Vandana Saini
- Alyssa Tipton
- Ryan Ward
- Sara Winchester
- Michelle Youngs



STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE

- Alexa Beshara-Blauth
- Erich Carstens
- Lisa Daly
- Jennifer Dellner
- Eileen Garcia
- Samantha Glassford
- Christine Healey
- Joe Konopka
- Timothy Landers
- Ken Malagiere
- James Marshall
- Christina Matuszewski
- Jenna McAteer
- Pamela Monaco
- Jerry Racioppi
- Vandana Saini
- Ryan Ward
- Sara Winchester
- Harry Young
- Shawn Zakar

OCEAN.EDU



OUR MISSION

OUR VISION

OUR VALUES:

Building Opportunity Strengthening Community 11

Opportunity-Focused:

Collaborative:

Ethical:

Accessible:

Nurturing:

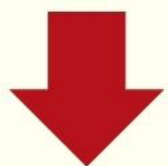
We are sensitive to the experiences and needs of our students, staff, and community, fostering a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable and supported.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

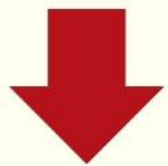
Total FY Credit Enrollment: excluding embedded and DL credits



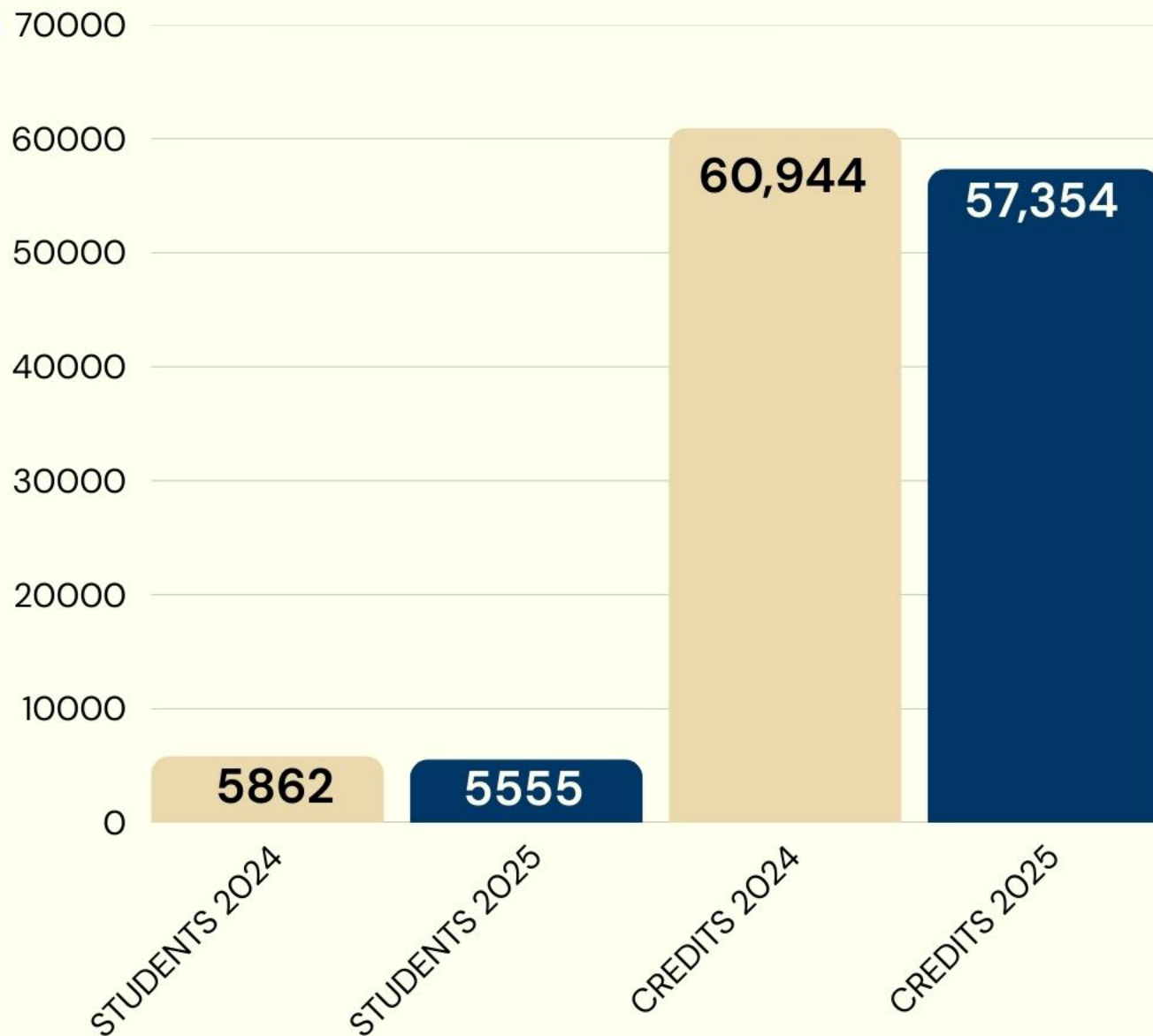
FALL ENROLLMENT DATA



5,555 students registered
-307 students from 2024



57,354 credits being taken
-5.89% students from 2024





HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES

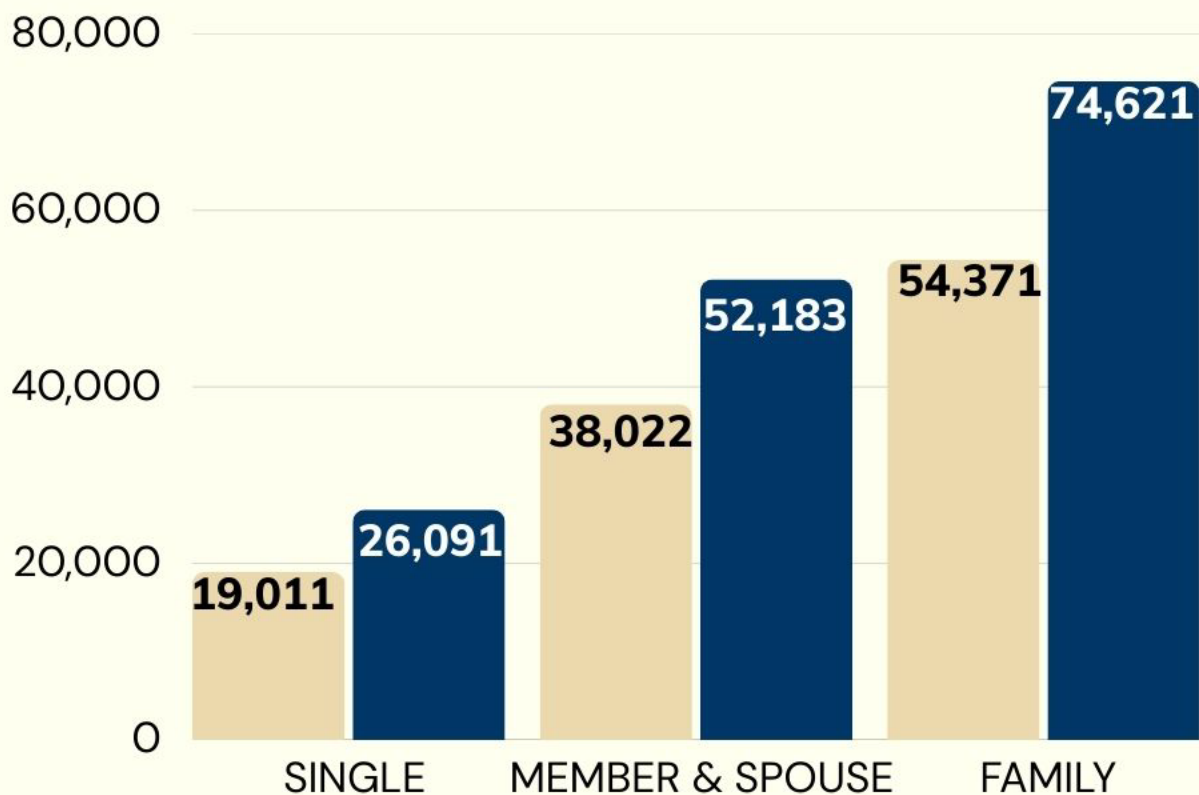


- Funding
- Expenses

EMPLOYER SUBSIDIZED HEALTH PREMIUMS

NJ Direct 10

● Current Premium ● Jan 1, 2026



NJ Educators Health Plan

● Current Premium ● Jan 1, 2026



DRIVING EFFICIENCY & REDUCING COSTS

Freeze
Vacant
Positions

Full-Time
vs
Part-Time

Reduce
Expenses



HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES



- Changes in Student Interests
- Program Development

An aerial photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there are several modern, multi-story academic buildings with large windows and flat roofs. A large, circular green lawn is visible in the lower right. To the left, there's a large parking lot and some older, smaller buildings. The campus is surrounded by lush green trees. In the background, a large body of water, likely a lake or bay, stretches across the horizon under a clear blue sky. A dark blue banner with the text "LOOKING AHEAD" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

LOOKING AHEAD



QUESTIONS?





OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE VIKINGS YEAR IN REVIEW

A Newsletter from the OCC Department of Athletics • Sept. 2024-June 2025



Ocean Women's Soccer Secures Third Straight Region 19 Title

OCC Women's Soccer continued their dominance last fall, capturing their third consecutive Region 19 championship. Under the leadership of head coach Breeana Cassidy, the Vikings have now claimed the region title in each of her first three seasons at the helm. Ocean made an early statement, opening the season with five straight shutout victories and winning seven of their first eight matches. The team finished the season with a strong overall record of 10-5-1, further cementing their status as a regional powerhouse.

NJCAA All-American Team: Rory Hagen, Katherin Munoz

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team: Leilani Borges, Rory Hagen, Katherin Munoz, Brooke Ossimina

All-Garden State Athletic Conference Team: Leilani Borges, Alyssa Duff, Rory Hagen, Katherin Munoz, Brooke Ossimina

OCC Golf Delivers Consistent Performance Throughout 2025 Season

The OCC Golf team's 2025 season was defined by remarkable consistency, finishing no lower than third place in all six of their matches. The Vikings opened the season on a high note with a 1st place finish at Seaview Bay on March 31, setting the tone for a strong campaign. They closed out the year with a solid 3rd place showing at the Region 19 Championship Tournament, held May 13-14 at Ash Brook Golf Course in Scotch Plains, NJ. OCC's steady performance throughout the season reflects a team that remained competitive from start to finish.

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team: Rocco Scarabino



Vikings Men's Soccer Battles Through Season, Reaches District Final

The Vikings Men's Soccer team endured a see-saw start to their season, alternating wins and losses through their first eight matches. After a 2-5 start, the Vikings turned things around in impressive fashion with a seven-game unbeaten streak, highlighted by four shutouts and two postseason victories. That late-season surge carried OCC into the District B Final, where their run ultimately came to an end—falling just short of a Region 19 championship. Despite the tough finish, the Vikings demonstrated resilience and growth, making a strong statement in the postseason.

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team: Alex Baginski, Jack Eubanks, Jayson Nardone

All-Garden State Athletic Conference Team: Alex Baginski, Jack Eubanks, Jayson Nardone



OCC Athletics Department Announces New Men's & Women's Volleyball Coaching Staff

In July, the OCC Athletic Department welcomed a new coaching lineup for its volleyball programs. Dan Torsiello has been appointed as the head coach of the Women's Volleyball team, joined by Katelyn Reilly as the new assistant coach.

On the men's side, Jose Rafael was named head coach of the Men's Volleyball squad, and Hannah Steidle has joined the team in the role of assistant coach.



Men's Basketball Finishes Strong

The Vikings Men's Basketball team opened their season with a rollercoaster of results—starting with three straight wins, followed by a five-game skid, then two more victories and another loss. But the team found its rhythm in the second half of the season, catching fire to win 11 of their final 14 games. OCC closed the year with a 16-9 overall record, marking their best season since 2016-17. The Vikings were especially dominant at home, compiling an impressive 12-1 record inside the OCC gym, proving nearly unbeatable in front of their home crowd. The late-season surge and strong home-court presence point to a promising future for the program.

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team: Jamari Smith

All-Garden State Athletic Conference Team: Jamari Smith

Ocean County College's Ilene Cohen Honored with NJ Council of County Colleges "Spirit Award"

Ocean County College Executive Director of Athletics, Ilene Cohen, was presented with the prestigious "Spirit Award" by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges on June 5. The ceremony took place at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City.

With over 30 years of experience in athletic administration and inductions into both The College of New Jersey and Union High School Athletic Halls of Fame, Ilene was recognized for her unwavering dedication to student-athletes and her impactful service to the community.

Reflecting on the honor, Cohen shared, "What an incredible evening. I am truly honored by this recognition. It's not a job when it's about loving what you do and who you do it with, as well as the difference one can make for students."

The celebration also highlighted Ocean County College student Areeba Zulkarnain, who was named an "NJ Student of the Year" at the event.

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges, governed by the presidents and trustees of New Jersey's 18 community colleges and established by state law, serves over 230,000 students annually. The council's mission is to provide high-quality education, foster career growth, and enhance workforce skills across the state.

To learn more about the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, visit njcommunitycolleges.org.



42 Student-Athletes Named to 2024-25 NJCAA All-Academic Teams

Congratulations to the following 42 OCC student-athletes, each of whom were recently named to the 2024-25 NJCAA All-Academic Teams!



1st Team (4.0 GPA)

Batool Abdelmalak (W. Cross Country)
Claudia Cosme (W. Volleyball)
Max Dyba (M. Soccer)
Dekari Harrell (M. Basketball)
Alyssa Maisano (W. Soccer)
Jason Marchitello (M. Soccer)
Angela Matthews (W. Basketball)
Jordan Motyka (W. Volleyball/Softball)
Robert Peirson (M. Basketball/M. Volleyball)
Rocco Scarabino (Golf)
Daniel Sicknick (Golf)
Emma Stich (W. Volleyball)
Mateusz Torba (M. Soccer)
Rhianon Wohlrab (W. Volleyball)

2nd Team (3.80 – 3.99 GPA)

Anthony Bilello (Baseball)
Natalie Christie (W. Soccer)
Victor Cisneros (M. Cross Country)
Julianna Cummings (W. Soccer)
Anthony Eckerson (Baseball)
Omar Hadid (M. Basketball)
Tom LaSpina (Baseball)
Amber LoPresti (W. Tennis)
Anna Malandro (W. Volleyball)
Shay Searles (W. Volleyball)
Joseph Spisso (M. Basketball)
Nickolas Vecchio (M. Soccer)

3rd Team (3.60 – 3.79 GPA)

Dorian Alston (M. Basketball)
David Alvarez (M. Volleyball)
Madison Bernardo (Softball)
Evan Booth (Baseball)
Emily Browner (W. Cross Country)
Brogan Duelly (M. Volleyball)
Alyssa Duff (W. Soccer)
Joshua Evans (M. Soccer)
Cristian Garced (Baseball)
Jillianna Howard (W. Basketball/Softball)
Clairissa Joseph (W. Basketball)
Daniel Kejda (M. Volleyball)
Evan Kwortnik (Baseball)
Steven Miller (Baseball)
Joe Nascimento (Baseball)
Madison Todd (W. Soccer)

Ocean County College Recognized by NJCAA for Team Academic Excellence

The NJCAA has announced its Academic Teams of the Year for each sport, recognizing teams that achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Ocean County College is proud to have six athletic teams honored for their academic achievements!



Women's Volleyball – 3.73 GPA



Women's Soccer – 3.16 GPA



Women's Cross Country – 3.44 GPA



Men's Soccer – 3.07 GPA



Women's Tennis – 3.36 GPA



Baseball – 3.06 GPA

**Congratulations to our student-athletes for their hard work and
commitment to excellence both on the field and in the classroom!**

OCC Student-Athletes Excel Academically

Our student-athletes demonstrated excellence in their sport and classroom during their seasons. An impressive 100 students earned All-Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) Academic Team honors by maintaining a 3.00 GPA or higher. Additionally, 84 athletes were named to the All-Region 19 Academic Team, achieving a 3.25 GPA or higher, while 25 student-athletes proudly finished the season with a perfect 4.0 GPA. These achievements reflect our student-athletes' dedication and hard work, who strive for greatness in every aspect of their college experience.

■ All-Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) (3.0 GPA or higher)

◆ All-Region 19 (3.25 GPA or higher)

★ 4.0 GPA

FALL 2024

ESPORTS

Victor Colon
(Esports/M. Cross Country) ■◆
Sam Gross ■◆
Christian Riley ■◆

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Dekari Harrell ■◆★
Robert Peirson ■◆★
Dorian Alston ■◆★
Dylan Csik ■◆
Aiden Falduto ■◆
Omar Hadid ■◆
Myles Marabuto ■◆
Joseph Spisso ■◆
Brian Starrett ■◆
Evan Weiner ■◆

MEN'S SOCCER

Jason Marchitello ■◆★
Mateusz Torba ■◆★
Sam Barney ■◆
Ken Caruso ■◆
Max Dyba ■◆
Owen Elliott ■◆
Jack Eubanks ■◆
Joshua Evans ■◆
Julian Marfino ■◆
Aidan Marotta ■◆
Chase Norling ■◆
Nick Vecchio ■◆
Michael Vivolo ■◆
Danny Eberlin ■

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Tatiana Hernandez ■◆
Jillanna Howard ■◆
Clairissa Joseph ■◆
Angela Matthews ■◆
Brooke Schmidt ■◆

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Batool Abdelmalak ■◆★
Gianna Browner ■◆★
Emily Flores ■◆★
Emily Ciance ■◆
Isabelle Towey ■◆

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Julianna Cummings ■◆★
Alyssa Maisano ■◆★
Leilani Borges ■◆
Natalie Christie ■◆
Alyssa Duff ■◆

Loghan Henry ■◆
Taylor Lewis ■◆
Brianna Merz ■◆
Isabella Silva ■◆
Madison Todd ■◆
Morgan Dobbin ■◆
Arianna McMahon ■

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Claudia Cosme ■◆★
Jordan Motyka ■◆★
Emma Stich ■◆★
Rhianon Wohlrab ■◆★
Sofia Arguedas ■◆
Averie Barneman ■◆
Anna Malandro ■◆
Angela Matthews ■◆
Shay Searles ■◆
Abby Szuba ■◆

SPRING 2025

BASEBALL

Anthony Bilello ■◆★
Evan Booth ■◆★
Evan Kwortnik ■◆★
Tom LaSpina ■◆★
Ryan Mulcahey ■◆★
Anthony Eckerson ■◆
Cristian Garced ■◆
Joe Nascimento ■◆
Sabastian Sussino ■◆
Dominic Urso ■◆
Ryan Ushock ■◆
Brendan Lavin ■◆
Patrick McKay ■◆
Shaun Olcott ■◆

GOLF

Rocco Scarabino ■◆★
Daniel Sicknick ■◆★
Maxx Agnello ■◆
Brayden Anhorn ■◆
James Borowski ■◆
Dallas Weisse ■◆

SOFTBALL

Madison Bernardo ■◆★
Jordan Motyka ■◆★
Sofia Arguedas ■◆
Jalena Carpenter ■◆
Nina DiGeronimo ■◆
Jillianna Howard ■◆
Averie Barneman ■◆

MEN'S TENNIS

Joseph Zamudio ■◆
Yael Carpinteyro ■◆
Aiden Falduto ■◆
Christian Riley ■◆

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Erika Breitenbach ■◆★
Amber LoPresti ■◆
Ashley Chandler ■◆
Annellie Lopez ■◆

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Danny Kejda ■◆★
Robert Peirson ■◆★
David Alvarez ■◆
Sam Barney ■◆
Daniel Brunke ■◆
Brogan Duelly ■◆
Erick Ortiz ■◆

**Congratulations to all of our
outstanding student-athletes!**

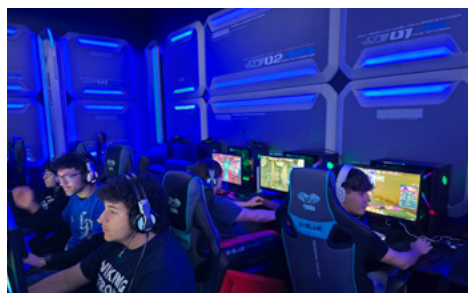
ESPORTS

With two singles championships in their first five years, the Esports team has already established a strong tradition of success. Although this year saw the team narrowly miss the postseason, the Vikings remain poised to bounce back and continue their upward trajectory in the seasons ahead.

CROSS COUNTRY (M/W)

The Women's Cross Country team delivered a strong performance, finishing 2nd overall at the Region 19 Championship held on October 27 at Branch Brook Park in Newark, NJ. Freshman standout Batool Abdelmalak led the charge all season and capped off her impressive campaign by placing 7th individually at the championship, showcasing tremendous potential for the Vikings moving forward.

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team:
Batool Abdelmalak



WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

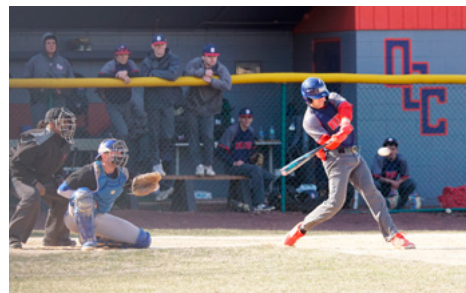
The Women's Volleyball team finished their 2024-25 campaign with a solid 10-8 overall record. The Vikings advanced to the NJCAA East District B Semi-Final, where they faced a tough challenge against perennial rival Raritan Valley CC, ultimately falling short. The team's competitive season highlights their continued growth and determination.

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team: Claudia Cosme, Anna Malandro, Abby Szuba
All-Garden State Athletic Conference Team: Claudia Cosme, Anna Malandro

BASEBALL

Competing in one of the nation's toughest regions, the Vikings baseball team fought through a challenging, injury-plagued season to finish with 11 hard-earned wins. Sophomore team captain Ryan Ushock led the charge offensively, delivering an impressive 7 home runs and maintaining a .413 batting average, providing steady leadership on and off the field.

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team:
Ryan Ushock
All-Garden State Athletic Conference Team: Ryan Ushock



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Vikings Women's Basketball team showed promising growth during the 2024-25 season under new head coach Sarah Porter, doubling their win total with 6 victories—a significant improvement over the previous two years.

The Vikings' success was fueled by standout performances from freshman Brooke Schmidt, who averaged 16.7 points and 9.8 rebounds per game, and sophomore Tatiana Hernandez, contributing 14.1 points and 5.8 rebounds per game. These dual threats have set the foundation for an exciting future.

SOFTBALL

After enduring two consecutive winless seasons, the Vikings softball team finally struck gold, earning their first victory in three seasons on March 29. The team went on to capture three wins overall this season. The Vikings are determined to build on this momentum. Onward and upward for Softball in 2026!

TENNIS (M/W)

The Women's Tennis team faced a difficult rebuilding season, finishing winless through six matches as they worked to build experience and depth for next season.

Meanwhile, the Men's Tennis team secured two hard-fought wins against Brookdale CC, ending the season with a 2-4 overall record. Both teams look forward to growth and development in the upcoming season.

NJCAA All-Region 19 Team:
Aiden Falduto
All-Garden State Athletic Conference Team: Aiden Falduto



Meet the OCC Athletic Administration Staff and Head Coaches



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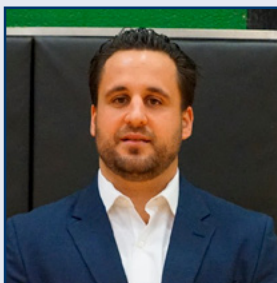
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Breeana Cassidy
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Vidar the Viking
Mascot



Ready to be an OCC Viking?

Are you interested in competing in collegiate athletics this fall? The Ocean County College Athletic Department is actively recruiting year-round for the following programs:

Baseball

Basketball (Men's/Women's)

Cross Country (Men's/Women's)

Esports

Golf

Soccer (Men's/Women's)

Softball

Tennis (Men's/Women's)

Volleyball (Men's/Women's)



Get started today! Fill out our [recruiting form](#) and [student-athlete eligibility forms](#) online.

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- Schedules
- Live scoring
- Event statistics
- Audio & video links (when available)
- Photo galleries
- Event recaps

 OCEAN CC VIKING ATHLETICS

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Hispanic Heritage Month and Latinx Heritage Month

Ocean County College proudly joins the National celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15). This federally recognized observance honors the history, culture, and contributions of people with ancestry from Spanish-speaking countries. Established in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week by President Lyndon B. Johnson and expanded to a month in 1988 under President Ronald Reagan, the observance highlights the contributions of Hispanic communities in shaping the United States.

Alongside this observance, many institutions and organizations also celebrate Latinx Heritage Month. While not an official federal designation, Latinx Heritage Month recognizes people with roots in Latin America regardless of language. The term “Latinx” is also used as a gender-inclusive alternative to “Latino” or “Latina,” reflecting the diversity and intersectionality of Latin American identities. The two terms are often used together, yet they reflect slightly different focuses:

- Hispanic Heritage Month emphasizes the shared connection to the Spanish language.
- Latinx Heritage Month expands the celebration to include all Latin American cultures and recognizes evolving, inclusive identities.

At Ocean County College, we proudly celebrate and honor our Hispanic and Latinx students, faculty, and staff, whose vibrant cultures, rich traditions, and meaningful contributions strengthen and enrich our campus community. In 2024, OCC held its inaugural flag-raising ceremony, symbolizing Ocean County College’s commitment to honoring the rich traditions and contributions of the Hispanic and Latinx communities both on our campus and beyond. This year, the flag will fly once again from September 15 – October 15, serving as a visible commitment to our Hispanic and Latinx members.

A variety of events, cultural programs, and opportunities to learn and celebrate will be offered throughout the month.

- **Robert J. Novins Planetarium: Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month Through Astronomy**

This September, join us for special showings of two inspiring films that highlight Hispanic and Central/South American Cultures.

- **Big Astronomy:** Discover the powerful stories of astronomers working in Chile, home to some of the world's most advanced observatories.

Showtimes:

- Tuesday, September 17 at 1:30 PM
- Wednesday, September 18 at 1:30 PM
- Friday, September 20 at 4:30 PM

[Tickets and Information](#)

- **The First Stargazers:** Explore ancient skywatching traditions, including a brief segment on the Maya civilization and their astronomical insights.

Showtimes:

- Tuesday, September 24 at 1:30 PM
- Wednesday, September 25 at 1:30 PM
- Friday, September 27 at 4:30 PM

[Tickets and Information](#)

- **Tutoring Center Events**

Students, Faculty, and Staff, the Tutoring Center cordially invites you to celebrate, educate, and take up space by participating in one of our many Hispanic Heritage Month events, such as our photo op, hunt for knowledge, student mosaic, and much more! Click the link below for dates and details:

<https://occtutoringcenterhhmevents.my.canva.site/>

- **Ocean County College Library**

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by checking out [OCC Library Overdrive](#) for access to eBooks written by Hispanic and Latinx authors

REQUIRED REPORTING STATISTICS

Board of Trustees Meeting: Thurs, September 4, 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 7/19/25 – 8/28/25.

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