



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Items of Interest for the October 9, 2025, Board Meeting

**DATE:** October 5, 2025

### **Ocean County Achievement Center**

Established in 2018, the Ocean County Achievement Center (OCAC), hosted at Ocean County College, serves as the programming hub through which young adults and adults are matched to academic programs, career exploration, work readiness training, on-the-job learning, leadership development, mental health awareness, financial literacy, integrated education and training, and other goal-directed opportunities. OCAC focuses on providing wraparound support services to individuals 16+ years of age who are out of school and live in Ocean County.

Many participants of OCAC are faced with challenges, such as the criminal justice system, mental health, substance abuse, education deficiencies, language barriers, homelessness, poverty, child abuse/neglect, and transportation. These barriers affect the overall social, emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of the individual and the families. The case management and programs aim to advise and guide the participants to grow and achieve goals for education, career, employment, and financial stability. The supportive services from OCC's Foundation, Counseling, Tutoring, and Helping Hands are essential to help many get through the day.

I have asked Ms. Gina Opauski, Director of the Ocean County Achievement Center, to present at the Board meeting and share additional information. She will introduce Ms. Allyson McNamee, Program Instructor and Advisor (Work Readiness Assistance Program); Ms. Raquel Olivo, Program Manager of Integrated Education and Training (Title II); and Ms. Casey Pellegrino, Program Coordinator (Connect and Learn: WorkFirst New Jersey Digital Literacy).

### **Award of Honorary Posthumous Degree**

Policy #5152.1 allows for an Honorary Associate Degree to be awarded posthumously upon the recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee and the approval of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the President, and the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Connor Nolan, an Ocean County College student, lost his life in a tragic accident on July 24, 2025. The OCC Registrar requested consideration for an honorary posthumous associate degree to be bestowed to Connor for his academic achievement. Connor needed to complete a few more credits to earn his degree in Criminal Justice. He had earned a grade point average of 3.51.

It is respectfully requested, following the procedure to the policy, that the Board of Trustees consider the granting of an Associate in Science degree in Criminal Justice to Mr. Connor Nolan. If approved, his family will be contacted.

### **Ocean County Vocational Technical School**

On September 15, 2025, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on the Ocean County College campus to celebrate the official opening of the Ocean County Vocational Technical School's (OCVTS) Law and Public Safety Academy. This milestone follows the Academy's relocation in early September to the Russell Building, where it joined the OCVTS Pre-Nursing program.

With the Russell Building now fully occupied by OCVTS, the space stands as a symbol of a dynamic and mutually beneficial partnership between OCC and OCVTS, one that enhances educational opportunities and fosters collaboration across institutions.

Several Ocean County Commissioners attended the ceremony, offering remarks and congratulations to both schools for their ongoing commitment to working together in support of Ocean County students.

### **Faculty and Staff Accomplishments**

Dr. Jim Campbell, Program Manager of the FIPSE Basic Needs Grant, defended his dissertation, "A Quantitative Observational Examination of Student Retention Intervention Outcomes at a Two-Year Community College," on September 22, 2025. He earned his Doctorate of Education degree from South College in Knoxville, Tennessee.

### **Faculty and Staff Presentations and Publications**

Ms. Laura Wingler, Lead Instructional Designer, and Ms. Elizabeth Metzger, Director of Instructional Design and Learning Systems, recently published their article in the Journal of the Instructional Technology Council (JITC) titled, *Master Course Templates in Online Education: Enhancing Aligned Learning, Accessibility, and Overall Success for Students and Faculty*. Their work showcases OCC's successful use of master course templates to strengthen online education. By standardizing design and aligning with institutional goals, the model ensures consistent, high-quality learning experiences across courses. The updates have resulted in an increase in student pass rates in Distance Learning courses. This publication reflects both the innovative design practices and collaborative efforts of the team, demonstrating how the department continues to lead in creating scalable, student-centered online education models that support engagement and success for a diverse student population.

## **Professional Education**

On August 27, 2025, Ms. Anais Mompoint, College Lecturer II in Social Work, participated in the Teaching and Learning Institute along with Dean of School of Arts and Humanities Jonathan Molinaro, Assistant Director of Student Conduct Kayla Stahl, and one Social Work student, Lucia McGuire-Pettersen, to discuss the topic, “Conduct Intervention through Community Building.”

## **Student Support Services and Activities**

- In August 2025, Enrollment Services and related offices had 3,237 unique visits, with an average wait of just over 12 minutes. Students mostly visited Enrollment Services (1,800 visits in August) and then Academic Advising (nearly 700 visits).
- In August 2025, the HUB team spent a total of 370 hours making 4,980 outgoing calls, while the Student Success team made 2,739 calls. Campaigns included calls for no-pay, re-registration, cancellations, and stop-outs.
- In August 2025, the Veteran and Military Resources Center (VMRC) made 118 recruitment calls to new OCC applicants, held 7 meetings to assist with registration, provided Center tours, and completed 56 calls to enrolled students to offer support and connect them to resources.
- The VMRC reported 244 in-person student visits, which included 294 services, such as advising, referrals, benefit navigation, and resource connection. The Center also held two Student Life orientation sessions to welcome new students and highlight services for veterans and military-affiliated individuals.
- Disability Services supported 464 students for the Fall 2025 semester, with 32 additional students under review. Since September 1, 2025, 150 student meetings were held for accommodations, guidance, and support. Five walk-in events were hosted at the Toms River and Manahawkin campuses for immediate support.
- In August 2025, the Counseling Center served 92 students. The CARE Team responded to 47 reports. Staff offer services in the Counseling Center, virtually, at OCC Manahawkin and in the Veteran and Military Resources Center.
- The Counseling Center recognized September as National Suicide Prevention Month with the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Fresh Check Day on September 23, 2025, with 23 campus departments and community partners participating. The Center hosted booths with activities focused on mental health, wellness, and resources, connecting with over 170 students.
- Advising established key coursework tracks for Kean Ocean articulations and allied health programs. These tracks help advisors quickly identify coursework based on students' majors and common courses for allied health program transfers.
- Ms. Laura Wills, Director of Transfer and Articulation, and Ms. Amy Nadybal, Transfer Coordinator, are hosting Transfer Workshops this Fall. Students learn to plan transfers, utilize NJ Transfer, navigate college websites, and select majors that align with their transfer and career goals. Afterward, students can register for Transfer Group Advising to receive personalized guidance and review transfer credits. OCC students can connect with four-year institutions directly on campus.

- Transfer Services and OCC's Success Coaches collaborated to support students applying for Jack Kent Cooke Scholarships, which offers \$55,000 over two to three years for a bachelor's degree, along with advising and opportunities for internships, travel, and graduate programs. Two Scholarship Chats were hosted to discuss opportunities and next steps.
- Student leaders and advisors from over 50 campus clubs participated in the Fall Semester Club Fair on September 16 and 17, 2025. New and returning students connected with clubs to learn about their missions, goals, and upcoming events.
- On September 16 and 17, 2025, Student Life held a Voter Registration Drive on campus with the League of Women Voters of Ocean County, registering 42 new voters and reaching over 100 students. More registration days are planned in October for National Voter Education Week.

### **Student Clubs and Activities**

- Ms. Anais Mompoint, College Lecturer II in Social Work and Advisor to the Social Work Club, participated in Fresh Check Day sponsored by the Counseling Center on September 23, 2025. Fresh Check Day aims to bring awareness to mental health on the college campus. This year, the Social Work Club facilitated two topics focusing on Empower and Uplifting others. For Fall 2025, three students of the social work program are completing their Internships (135 hours). Students are placed at Bright Harbor; O.C.E.A.N., Inc; and Evolve Recovery Center.
- The School of Nursing admitted 109 new students into the program for the Fall 2025 semester. A total of 324 students enrolled in the program this semester. Thirty-four Clinical Instructors provide education for 36 clinical groups within various health care facilities.
- Nursing students returned to campus the week of August 25, 2025, to practice skills in preparation for the Fall semester. All returning Nursing students are required to demonstrate competency in skills prior to entering clinical agencies.
- On September 9, 2025, the Social Work Club hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fall Social to welcome current and new club members. The club aims to build knowledge about the social work profession and inspire students to bring change to their communities around social issues.
- Ms. Pamela Bogdan, College Lecturer II in Engineering, and Ms. Laura Wills, Director of Transfer Services and Articulation, recently scheduled trips to transfer institutions around the state to provide Engineering and Industrial/Technical Studies students with a special experience beyond general tours. The trips are done in coordination between Advising, the Engineering and Industrial/Technical Studies program, and Student Life.

The Fall 2025 schedule includes Princeton University, October 2; New Jersey Institute of Technology, October 24; Rutgers University, November 7; The College of New Jersey, November 21; and Rowan University, date to be determined.

- Ms. Alexa Stier performed in the newly renovated Bösendorfer room as part of the Afternoon Recital Series. This series is in collaboration with the School of Arts and Humanities and the Music Club.
- The Novins Planetarium showcased two films for Hispanic Heritage month, *Big Astronomy* and the *First Stargazers*.

- The Grunin Center and the Novins Planetarium welcomed Federal work study students to their areas. The students will assist with customer service operations in the box offices of the two venues.

### **Outreach to Students**

- On August 4, 2025, Mr. Sean Bips, College Lecturer II in Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism Management (HRTM), prepared desserts for the OCC Early College students in an effort to support their student orientation. Fresh herbs from the on-campus hydroponic gardens were used, and students were provided with information on farm-to-table systems and taught about the applications of fresh herbs in food production. The academic requirements for the HRTM Program and Culinary Option were also reviewed with prospective students, and brochures for the program and option were distributed to the students.
- In collaboration with Student Life and Honors by Contract, OCC hosted a Research Networking event on Wednesday, October 1, 2025, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the Instructional Building Lobby to help students find opportunities for research that will assist them in their educational and career goals.

This initiative is a part of the college-wide goal to help students achieve new and innovative transfer opportunities and scholarships, including the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship, Voyager Scholarship, and Princeton Transfer Scholars Initiative. It will also help us increase the number of students participating in the Honors by Contract program to graduate with honors and achieve scholarship monies from the OCC Foundation. This program is a way to connect with students who may be interested in exploring new programs, such as Social Work, Engineering, Computer Science, Fine Arts, and Music.

The success of this event last Spring was a direct result of the great work and contributions from our faculty, staff, and administrators to the OCC community.

### **Community Outreach**

- The Grunin Center is back to operating in the Main Stage Theatre this Fall, beginning the season with CeCe Teneal's Divas of Soul, followed by Garrison Keillor, Swingadelic presents "The Three Louies," the Bronx Wanderers, and Julie Fowlis.
- In collaboration with the OCC Foundation, the Grunin Center presented Ms. Maureen Dowd on September 16, 2025, and Admiral James Stavridis will be on campus on October 8, 2025, as part of the Blauvelt Speaker Series.
- On September 19, 2025, the Grunin Center hosted a premiere of the film *We Can't Leave* by local filmmaker, Mike Lordi, with 125 guests in attendance.
- On October 4, 2025, the Planetarium hosted International Observe the Moon Night through the NASA Anchor Grant FOCUS program. Over 150 people registered for this family science event, which included activities as well as the premiere of the film *Forward! to the Moon*. International Observe the Moon Night is an annual event to celebrate lunar observation, science, and exploration.
- On September 15, 2025, Dr. Jim Campbell, Program Manager of the FIPSE Grant, hosted the Missouri Community Action Network Poverty Simulation at JFK Medical Center in Edison for Hackensack Meridian Health's Youth Professionals Program. Over 50 Hackensack Meridian Health (HMH) members, including Dr. Amy Friedman, participated.

- The Veterans Club partnered with the Kean Ocean Student Veterans Organization to table at Kean Ocean's "Welcome Back" event. Members connected with students, sharing information about campus services and opportunities for participation.
- On September 3, 2025, the VMRC was a key partner at the "Gratitude and Connection" event, hosted by the 99<sup>th</sup> Readiness Division for Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Staff engaged with service members and families to share OCC programs and support. OCC was again featured on September 30, 2025, at the "Hope and Purpose" event, which closed the month's activities for Suicide Prevention. This partnership also led to an invitation from the Army Reserve Command at the Joint Base to participate in family support and drill weekends, showcasing VMRC.
- The Early College team, led by Ms. Tracey Taylor, Executive Director of Early College, completed 15 high school events in September, including presentations, registration days, parent sessions, and back-to-school nights. Schools visited included Point Borough, Point Beach, Ambassador Christian Academy, Brick Township, Brick Memorial, Central Regional, Manchester Township, Lacey, Academy of Law and Public Safety, and Performing Arts Academy.
- The Recruitment Team, led by Ms. Haley Abruzzese, Assistant Director of Recruitment, conducted 12 visits to Ocean County high schools in September for Pathways presentations, back-to-school nights, Education days, and senior nights. The team visited Point Beach, Lakewood, Brick Township, Brick Memorial, Point Borough, Manchester, New Egypt, and Toms River South.
- On September 23, 2025, the Ocean County Department of Human Services and Disability Services hosted a free webinar, "Emergency Preparedness for the Whole Community," for National Preparedness Month, with participants from across New Jersey. Ms. Jamie Arasz Prioli, Director of Access and Disability Services, was guest speaker; she emphasized preparedness for individuals with disabilities, including students.
- Four-year partners, including Georgian Court University, Rowan, Stockton University, The College of New Jersey, Thomas Edison State University, and Kean Ocean, will be on campus this fall to meet with students and answer questions about transfer and admission. The Transfer Fair on October 7, 2025, will feature 30+ institutions for OCC students.
- Transfer Services hosts Dual Advising for students, allowing OCC students to meet with advisors from Kean Ocean and Ocean County College to discuss credit transfer. Stockton University will be on campus for Instant Admission appointments.
- College Relations is thrilled to share the latest edition of *Ocean Views*. Centered on the theme "Arts on Campus," this issue celebrates people and programs that demonstrate how the arts help us better understand our world. Feature stories spotlight several campus initiatives that showcase student creativity and explore how OCC's arts programs are preparing students for the future. The issue also highlights community engagement at the Grunin Center, OCC's "Trash for Treasure" competition, and an interview with Mr. Phil Zitelli '68. Copies are available in College Relations; a digital version is also available on ocean.edu.

## **Grants**

- Ocean County College received a second TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) Grant of \$1,361,820 over five years, enhancing support for students with disabilities. This will effectively double the size of OCC's existing TRiO program. The grant enhances advising, tutoring, mentoring, financial literacy,

transfer guidance, and career planning tailored to students' needs. It aims to improve persistence, retention, and graduation rates, expanding access to resources that foster success beyond college. This effort will reduce barriers and support students in reaching their educational and professional goals.

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Alison Noone, Program Director, and the grants team led by Ms. Kayci Clayton, Executive Director for Grants Administration, for developing such a strong proposal to enable this expansion of the program.

- In the first 16 days of the Fall semester, 26 FIPSE grant applications were submitted, mainly for transportation and housing. The grants staff was able to assist all of the students.
- The Novins Planetarium received a \$5,000 grant from the FirstEnergy Foundation, Cosmos Classroom: K-12 Science Education Program. This program will support educational endeavors by not only sustaining and increasing the capacity of the Planetarium, but also promoting its science programming to additional schools and youth-serving community organizations by providing hands-on activities, supplies, and new film licenses. Ms. Heidi Sheridan, Executive and Artistic Director of the Grunin Center, will serve as the project manager.

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

#### **➤ Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education**

Dr. Ali Botein-Furrevig, Director for the Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education, provided the following information:

- Recent lectures and presentations included:
  - *Code of Honor* on September 16, 2025, about Muslims who sheltered and saved Jewish residents and refugees in Albania during the Holocaust, and
  - *Strange Bedfellows* on September 30, 2025, regarding corporate America's strategic collaborations with Nazis during the Holocaust.
- On October 16, 2025, Stars, Stripes, and Spies will be offered pertaining to the double lives of Hollywood legends during the Holocaust.
- Dr. Botein-Furrevig participated in a book discussion with author Joshua Green at the Museum of Jewish Heritage on *Unstoppable: Siggi B. Wilzig's Astonishing Journey from Auschwitz Survivor and Penniless Immigrant to Wall Street Legend* and joined a Duke University seminar with Professor Lisa Silverman on her forthcoming work, *The Postwar Antisemite*.
- **Career Services**
  - Eleven events were posted on Handshake to promote career opportunities, and local job and internship flyers were distributed. All postings were made available via the OCC Career Services app to increase student access, and staff conducted seven individual student appointments for career guidance and planning.

Outreach and events included:

- Tabling at Student Orientation on August 6, 12, and 21, 2025, to introduce new students to career services.
  - August 12, 2025 – Connected with Marquis Healthcare to explore partnership opportunities.
  - August 19, 2025 – Delivered a Career Project presentation for Student Success students.
  - August 28, 2025 – Career Services presented at the faculty colloquium, strengthening collaboration with academic departments.
- **Center for Adult Transition**
- The program ended on August 15, 2025, with three participants completing work readiness classes.
  - One of the participants attended the Blue Claws Stadium and Battleship New Jersey career exploration workshop and field trip.
- **Adult Education, Civics, and Workforce Preparation Program (Title II)**
- Since June, 15 participants have earned their State of New Jersey High School Diplomas. With the release of Title II award funds, staff have been scheduling appointments for diploma and ESL inquiries. The ESL waitlist now exceeds 400 students, and staff are actively reaching out to connect individuals with available OCC classes through academic and grant opportunities.
- **Connect and Learn: Work Force New Jersey Digital Literacy**
- Staff have been conducting outreach throughout Central Jersey to bring information and awareness about the program.
- **Work Readiness Assistance Program (WRAP)**
- A new position has been added to support recruitment and outreach efforts for connecting with and retaining young adults. In August, participants earned several certifications through the program curriculum, including OSHA-10 (5), CPR and Basic Life Skills (5), Microsoft Certifications (4), Customer Service and Sales Credential (5), QPR (4), and Bloodborne Pathogens (5). Four participants attended a career exploration field trip at Blue Claws Stadium, where staff shared insights about careers in sports and stadium operations, followed by enjoying a game.
- **Workforce Education**
- Workforce Education presented an ESL course option to Community Medical Center employees in Toms River, with 12 staff members attending. A program is expected to be finalized in the coming months.
  - In August and September, Workforce Education delivered customized training for community partners, including Coaching and Mentoring for over 40 employees of The Arc, Ocean County Chapter, and Customer Service and Office 365 for more than 50 O.C.E.A.N., Inc., employees.
  - Ocean County College's Workforce Education is now approved for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs funding, allowing veterans, service members, and their families to use VA benefits for non-credit career training and professional development courses.



## **Security Report**

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 August 29, 2025, to October 3, 2025.

## REQUIRED REPORTING STATISTICS

Board of Trustees Meeting: Thurs, October 9, 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 8/29/25 – 10/3/25.

<b>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.</b>			
DATE	CRIME	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			
<b>2.) A list of campus alerts, threats or emergencies which occurred on campus</b>			
DATE	ALERT/THREAT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			
<b>3.) A count and classification of all fire incidents which occurred on campus and which were recorded by campus security and local fire departments.</b>			
DATE	FIRE INCIDENT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

**Thomas DeSimone**