



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO: Members, OCC Board of Trustees

FROM: Pamela Monaco, Ph.D.
President

SUBJECT: Items of Interest for the March 26, 2026, Board Meeting

DATE: March 23, 2026

Student Recognition/National Girls and Women in Sports Day

February 4, 2026, marked the 40th anniversary of National Girls and Women in Sports Day. What began in 1987 as a special celebration in our nation's Capital has grown into a nationwide movement recognizing the achievements, leadership, and impact of girls and women in sports.

On February 1, 2026, the first-ever New Jersey Collegiate Athletic Association Region 19 National Girls and Women in Sports Day Reception was held at Middlesex College in Edison, New Jersey. At the reception, Ms. Batool Abdelmalak was recognized as Ocean County College's Woman Athlete of the Year. In addition to Batool receiving this prestigious award, she was selected to speak on behalf of all the award recipients. She did a tremendous job representing not only herself, but Ocean County College, at the reception.

Batool is an exceptionally accomplished student-athlete. Academically, she is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and has earned a 4.0 grade point average throughout her two years at OCC. Athletically, she has been a leader on OCC's cross-country team, earning Most Valuable Player honors and NJCAA All-Region 19 Team recognition in both seasons she competed, 2024 and 2025.

Beyond the classroom and competition, Batool has made a meaningful impact through service and leadership. She volunteers at her church, New Hope Fellowship, helped with the relaunch of OCC's annual 5K, where she also earned a medal in her age bracket as a participant; and serves as Treasurer for both the Fashion Club and CRU (Campus Crusade for Christ). In addition, she assists fellow students as a member of the HUB student worker staff.

Ms. Ilene Cohen, Executive Director of Athletics, will introduce Batool at Thursday's meeting. It will provide the opportunity for us to congratulate Batool for her exceptional achievements and her well-deserved honor.

Ocean County College Economic Impact Study

Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Executive Director, Institutional Planning, Effectiveness, and Compliance, and Mr. Joseph Rua, Assistant Director, Institutional Research, will present an overview of the Economic Impact Study conducted in partnership with Lightcast. This study evaluates the overall value of Ocean County College by examining its contributions to the regional economy and the benefits generated for key stakeholders, including students, taxpayers, and society.

The presentation will highlight the purpose and scope of the study, as well as OCC's role in providing the institutional data that informed the analysis. The briefing will frame how the College's educational programs, operations, and alumni contribute to workforce development and the broader economic vitality of Ocean County.

Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

- Dr. Christopher Brittain, Academic Administrator, for the Early College Program, successfully defended his dissertation on March 19, 2026, earning a Doctorate of Education from Fairleigh Dickinson University. His dissertation is entitled, "Degree of Separation: Institutional Communication and Engagement among Community College Non-Degree Learners."
- The Library's Technical Services Department has successfully completed the transition to Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, marking an important step in the modernization of the OCC Library. Approximately 60,000 library items were equipped with RFID tags by a team of library staff and student workers.

This new technology enhances both access and technical services operations. RFID allows library staff to quickly conduct inventory with handheld scanners, locate missing items more efficiently, and collect valuable usage data to improve library services.

RFID also introduces new conveniences for students, including self-checkout stations for faster borrowing. In addition, the system strengthens library security by tracking materials as they pass through sensors at the library entrances and exits.

- OCC's College Relations team received a Gold Award in the category of Notes/Cards/Invitations from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) for the Library Ribbon Cutting Invitation.

The piece was created to invite campus and community stakeholders to celebrate the reopening of the College's newly renovated Library following a year-long revitalization project. The audience included state and county officials, project partners, students, faculty, staff, and community members. The invitation featured a distinctive, three-dimensional vintage library card design, complete with a pocket, sepia tones, and Dewey Decimal details, evoking the history of libraries while reflecting their modern evolution.

This concept aligned with remarks at the event, highlighting the transformation of library spaces to meet the needs of today's students. This national recognition underscores the College's excellence in design, storytelling, and community engagement.

Central Oregon Community College received the Silver Award, and the Community College of Rhode Island won the Bronze Award.

- In February, OCC's TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) submitted the Annual Performance Report for 2024-2025 with impressive results. The following criteria was used to score the TRIO SSS program: Funded Number of Participants, Persistence, Good Academic Standing, Associate Degree Attainment, and Associate Degree and Transfer to a Four-Year Institution. The TRIO SSS program met and exceeded the project's approved objectives in all criteria, earning 15 out of 15 experience points. A summary of the results follows:

The program met or exceeded all standard objectives, earning the maximum 15 points available. Persistence reached 90%, surpassing the 75% target, while Good Academic Standing was achieved at 92%, exceeding the 90% benchmark. Degree or Certificate Attainment was 42%, above the 39% goal, and the rate of students earning a Credential and Transferring to a Four-Year Institution reached 35%, exceeding the 25% target. Additionally, the program served 157 participants against a funded target of 140, achieving 112% of its service goal. Overall, these results reflect strong performance across all measured criteria. The Annual Performance Report is attached.

During this reporting year, 47 students graduated, 30 of whom also transferred to four-year institutions. Two TRIO students graduated with 4.0 cumulative GPAs.

TRIO SSS must also adhere to the 2/3, 1/3 eligibility ratio set forth by the grant. Of the 157 students served, 108 were first-generation and low-income college students and/or students with disabilities who are also low-income (69%). Of the 157 students served, 26 were students with disabilities (including disabled and low-income), and 9 were students with disabilities who are also low-income (35%).

Special thanks are extended to the entire TRIO SSS team for working hard in attaining these outstanding results.

- Ocean County College is fully compliant, effective March 1, 2026, with the requirements of Local Finance Notice 2026-01 and New Jersey Public Law 2025, Chapter 72 (P.L. 2025, c. 72). In accordance with the law, the College has established a Public Notices webpage on its official website at <https://www.ocean.edu/public-notice/>, where all required legal and public notices are posted. The Public Notices webpage will be clearly accessible on the College's website and has been mapped to the New Jersey Secretary of State's statewide legal notices list at <https://www.nj.gov/state/statewide-legal-notice-list.shtml> to ensure public access. All notices posted on the College's Public Notices webpage are maintained for a minimum of one year after publication, as required by law. Ms. Dina Sherman, Director of Procurement, and Ms. Maureen Conlon, Associate Director of Web Services, are commended for taking the necessary steps to ensure the College is in compliance with the law.
- On March 3, 2026, two members of the Financial Aid team, Mr. Harry Young and Ms. Gordana Campo, attended the meeting of the New Jersey Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NJAVPA) held at Raritan Valley Community College. We are proud to announce that Mr. Young was elected as the Secretary of NJAVPA. OCC looks forward to hosting a meeting in the near future.

Faculty and Staff Presentations and Publications

- On January 14, 2026, Mr. Shawn Oates, College Lecturer II, Library Outreach, presented at OCC's Spring 2026 Teaching and Learning Institute with colleagues, Library Associate Professor Catherine Pontoriero and Information Literacy Liaison College Lecturer Madison Akins. The presentation,

“Designing Research Assignments with Library Resources in Mind,” was designed to give faculty a brief overview of the resources offered by the library and to encourage faculty to consider these resources when designing research assignments to ensure that students are using appropriate resources.

- On March 6, 2026, Dr. Madison Peschock, College Lecturer II in English and Literature, gave a paper, “Teaching Thru the Archives and the Value of Using Primary Sources in the Undergraduate Classroom,” at the Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA) conference, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dr. Peschock’s teaching and her inspiration towards students were highlighted in the current issue of OCC’s *Ocean Views* magazine.

In addition, Dr. Peschock has authored an encyclopedia entry on *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote. This work will be published by Gale Publishing.

- Dr. Mark William Westmoreland, College Lecturer II in Philosophy, continued his research on the importance of education, with a focus on ethics and character development. He presented his paper, “Bergsonian Pedagogy in Mexico,” as part of a panel titled “Identity Musings in Latinx Cultural Production” at the conference.

Student Clubs and Activities

- On February 19, 2026, the Social Work Club hosted a "Black History Month Chat and Chew" forum in the Student Center. The conversations, facilitated by Kamari Jones, the Social Work Club President, included questions for the 16 students and 2 faculty members who were present.
- On March 3, 2026, the Social Work Club supported the Committee for Access and Belonging, Cultural Heritage Subcommittee, in hosting its Inaugural Cultural Block Party. During the event, 15 different cultures were represented and over 150 students attended. Additionally, 25 freshman students from Manchester High School attended the event during their visit to the College.
- OCC Mathematics Club celebrated Pi Day on March 3, 2026, by making a paper chain representing the Pi digits and eating a pizza (pie) for lunch. The paper chain was made with strips of colored paper to correspond to the different Pi numerical digits. The students celebrated Pi Day until 3:14 p.m., also representative of the mathematical theme. The paper chain is displayed in the Instructional Building Atrium. Advisors of the Mathematics Club, Ms. Julia Kim, College Lecturer II in Mathematics, and Mr. Frankie Mennicucci, Adjunct Assistant Professor in Mathematics, hosted this event.
- On March 4, 2026, the OCC Mathematics and Engineering Clubs hosted workshops for the STEM Symposium. High school students from Manchester, Lakewood, and Toms River East high schools attended.

During the math workshop, students played Prime Climb, a mathematical board game designed to work with prime numbers in a fun and engaging way. Students practiced addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division as part of the game play. At the end of the workshops, students took a puzzle cube home, reinforcing mathematical learning beyond the workshop. Ms. Julia Kim, and Mr. Frankie Mennicucci facilitated the math workshop at this event.

During the engineering workshop, students were given two choices of activities between electrical and mechanical engineering disciplines. Both of these activities promoted problem solving by using topics related to STEM, while giving students the opportunity to use equipment they may not have seen or used before. In the electrical activity, students used an oscilloscope and a frequency generator to see how a sine wave is affected when variables are changed. In the mechanical activity, students made a

joint out of paper clips, which was then tested with the tensile tester. Ms. Pamela Bogdan, College Lecturer II in Engineering, and OCC Engineering Club students Alma Ladino, Christopher Nieto, and Ayzaiah Sakoor, facilitated the engineering workshop at this event.

- In honor of Women's History Month, the OCC Mathematics Club will host a Women in STEM Workshop on March 31, 2026. Mr. Richard Brady, e-Learning Adjunct Professor of Science, will lead a presentation highlighting women who have made significant contributions to mathematics, physics, and astronomy – including many whose achievements were historically overlooked. Attendees will learn about these scientists and the lasting impact of their work.
- Librarian Shawn Oates became a faculty advisor for the Makers Club in Fall 2025 and helped establish a closer partnership between the club and the library.
- On March 13, 2026, in collaboration with the School of Arts and Humanities and the OCC Music Club, College Lecturer Brian Gilmore welcomed Victoria Schwartzman, a piano soloist and chamber musician.

Student Honors

- Student Life is pleased to announce that, based on eligibility criteria, 894 invitations went out to students this Spring to join OCC's Tau Iota Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. PTK is holding its annual induction ceremony for new members on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Grunin Center Theatre. All members of the OCC community are invited to attend the induction to support students' academic achievements. Students may accept their membership invitation through the end of the semester.

Current Phi Theta Kappa officers Sabrina Watts, Ellie Dowek, Anellie Lopez, Ana Jimenez, and Ayleen Mujica are travelling to Baltimore, Maryland, from March 25 to 28, 2026, to represent Ocean County College at both the PTK Middle States Regional Convention and Catalyst. We look forward to sharing Tau Iota's achievements with you upon the return of the students.

Student Support Services and Activities

- The Student Success team completed 2,544 outgoing calls in the month of February, spending over 34 hours on the phone with students. This included low course average alerts and faculty alerts. In the month of February alone, 22.8% of all students received a low course alert, meaning their average in one or more courses dropped below a 70%. This accounted for 1,299 unique students.
- The Student Success team hosted Coffee on the Coaches on March 10, 2026, and 28 students attended. These drop-in sessions, held in the Student Center, provides coffee and cookies and is an informal way for students to check in with coaches about how their semester is going.
- There were 1,785 visits in the month of February according to QLess Tempo, the virtual queuing system. The average wait time for a student was just under four minutes. Of those visits, more than half were assisted by the HUB, while another 280+ visits were for academic advising. The multi-lingual queue had almost 40 visits, as well.
- The Enrollment Services team made 2,353 outgoing calls in the month of February, including calls for non-payment, to applicants who never enrolled, and to students who were dropped from their classes and never re-registered. In addition, the team fielded another 1,415 incoming calls in the same time frame.

- Financial Aid hosted three FAFSA workshops in February and three in March, serving a total of 18 families (10 in February and 8 in March). While students are encouraged to reserve a seat in advance, the Financial Aid office gladly welcomed five walk-ins during the course of those sessions, demonstrating continued accessibility and support for our students and their families.
- The Disability Services Office has been actively supporting students and the broader campus community, serving 376 students this semester, reflecting an increase of 7.1% compared to last Spring. Staff continue to provide services through both in-person and virtual formats. The office hosted two special events for students, “Color, Chill, and Connect,” which focused on wellness and relaxation.
- Veterans and Military Resources Center (VMRC) enrollment support shows a total of eight recruitment calls were placed to new OCC applicants, along with two advising appointments scheduled for summer 2026. Additionally, 76 success calls were made to currently enrolled students to provide proactive support and to connect them with helpful resources.

Student support services reported 222 in-person student visits to the VMRC and 342 individualized services delivered (connection to resources, information on benefits, studying sessions, etc.).

- The Counseling Center has been diligent in assisting students and the campus community, serving 101 students since the Center’s last report. The staff continue to offer services through multiple access points in the Counseling Center, virtually, and within the Veterans and Military Resources Center. In addition to direct services, the team has actively supported the campus community by hosting a variety of events and collaborating across departments to promote mental health awareness and to connect students with essential resources.
- On February 12, 2026, the Counseling Center hosted Puppy Yoga with “Doggy Noses and Yoga Poses” as an opportunity for the campus community to enjoy relaxation and movement with the company of puppies from a local animal rescue. This event brought 80 members of the campus community together, including students, faculty, and staff.
- On February 20, 2026, Ms. Kelly Petrolis, Prevention Education Coordinator, and Ms. Darra Stack, Counseling Specialist, facilitated Mental Health First Aid Training for 21 students, faculty, and staff. This training offers certification for participants to effectively recognize the signs of a mental health crisis and intervene to ensure individuals gain access to necessary support.
- Counseling Center Grant Coordinators Joan Groffie and Melissa Decker, as well as the department graduate student interns, provided wellness activities and mental health resources throughout the month at tabling events around campus. These outreach efforts are designed to increase help-seeking behavior by engaging with the community and ensuring students, faculty, and staff are aware of accessible resources.
- Students enjoyed tackling hunger with the Helping Hands food pantry at their Souper Bowl Funday event on Wednesday, February 4, 2026. In addition to enjoying snacks and fun activities, students participated in four quarters of trivia. Topics included general football knowledge, facts about food insecurity, and information on community resources. Many thanks to everyone who donated food to the food drive. Staff and students look forward to Wednesday, April 22, 2026, when Clubs for a Cause will be outside on the campus mall. This event has proven to be a fun and successful opportunity for students and the campus community.

- The Missouri CAN Poverty Simulation was held twice during the month of March. On March 10, 2026, more than 10 students and an additional 10 staff members participated in the simulation. On March 23, 2026, an additional three classes of students attended, making it the largest simulation completed, to date.
- Student Life sponsored its first trip of the semester on Saturday, February 21, 2026. Over 50 students traveled to the American Dream Mall in East Rutherford, New Jersey, for a day of fun and adventure. On Sunday, March 8, 2026, there was a trip for the OCC community to see *Chess* on Broadway. Other upcoming trips this semester include day trips to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Turtle Back Zoo, and an overnight trip to Boston, co-sponsored by the History Club and made possible in part by special funding provided from the OCC Foundation.
- The Stay Late in 8 Program hosted by Student Life continues this semester. Students have enjoyed participating in several activities, including air dry clay creations, karaoke, and glow stick bingo. This weekly Tuesday night event is a great place for students to meet new people and get connected on campus by participating in the weekly activity, doing their homework, or just hanging out and relaxing.
- From February 2 through March 13, 2026, Advising Services conducted 470 walk-in advising sessions and 234 virtual advising appointments. Advisors completed caseload review for assigned students. As part of this review, advisors assess and update each student's academic plan, ensuring it is accurate and up to date. Advisors also reach out to students with potential issues that can be proactively addressed.
- Advising is currently working with IT to create curriculum tracks for each Pathways concentration. This work involves:
 - Review of each concentration to ensure understanding of how suggested courses fit into the degree
 - Creation of placeholders
 - Creation of a course block for each term within each concentration
 - Creation of a curriculum track for each concentration
 - Sending the created tracks to IT for entry into Colleague
- Advising and Transfer Services offered two Information Sessions for Pre-Nursing students this Spring. These sessions are open to faculty and staff who advise Pre-Nursing students and/or students who want to learn more about the Nursing Program. These sessions were coordinated by Assistant Director of Counseling Victoria Rod.

Representatives from Pre-Nursing Admissions, the Nursing program, Academic Advising and Transfer Services, Career Services, and the Student Success Team provided attendees with information on admission requirements, the Nursing curriculum and clinicals, study skills, and career resources for students.

- Ms. Laura Wills, Director of Transfer Services and Articulation, and Ms. Amy Nadybal, Transfer Services Coordinator, hosted several transfer events in February and March:
 - At the virtual Florida College Fair held on February 19, 2026, students were able to explore colleges and universities across Florida and chat live with admissions representatives.
 - At the Transfer Workshops, students are able to connect with a transfer advisor, learn how to utilize NJ Transfer, and ask questions about their majors and transfer goals.

- Advising was pleased to host the College Connections Transfer Event on March 11, 2026. Representatives from top New Jersey universities and colleges were available on campus to meet with students. Colleges attending the fair included Drew University, Georgian Court University, Kean Ocean, Montclair State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rowan University, Rutgers Business School – New Brunswick, Rutgers University – New Brunswick, Stockton University, and The College of New Jersey.
- The Student Veterans Organization, in partnership with the Kean Ocean Center for Veterans Success, hosted a table at the Cultural Block Party on March 3, 2026. Student veterans shared meaningful artifacts from their time in service, offered MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) for participants to taste, and facilitated interactive games highlighting aspects of military culture. This event provided a valuable opportunity for student veterans to engage with the broader campus community, fostering dialogue, connection, and greater understanding.
- Beginning this Spring, the Lakewood Vet Center will utilize the VMRC as a Community Access Point, providing students with access to a Vet Center counselor on a biweekly basis. Throughout February and March, the VMRC and Counseling Center collaborated closely with Vet Center leadership to establish this important partnership. This initiative will expand access to vital mental health services for eligible student veterans, particularly those who may face barriers to traveling to the Lakewood location.
- Through its partnership with the Lakewood Vet Center, the VMRC is proud to collaborate with Guitars for Vets, an organization that uses music as a tool for stress reduction and community building. The VMRC will host a veteran “jam session” on April 8, 2026, offering participants a creative and supportive environment to connect with one another.
- The VMRC is excited to share that OCC student veterans and their partners will participate in a hands-on cooking experience at JBJ Soul Kitchen on April 15, 2026. Guided by the organization’s volunteers, participants will engage in preparing a full meal, from appetizers through dessert. This experience is designed to build practical life skills while strengthening community engagement and connection with fellow veteran families.
- The Ocean County College library currently offers Information Literacy videos which introduce students to the library’s online resources and how best to access them. The videos are both introductory and subject specific and are geared towards distance learning students and students who have not had an information literacy session. They are also available for faculty and students who would like a refresher in the online resources of the library. There are four videos in the collection and additional videos will be created in the summer.

The videos were created by Ms. Madison Akins, College Lecturer II, Information Literacy Liaison; Ms. Catherine Pontoriero, Associate Professor, Library; Mr. Shawn Oates, College Lecturer II, Library Outreach; and Ms. Kristen Smith, Information Access Technician.

Ms. Madison Atkins is working with Dr. Henry Jackson, College Lecturer II, Student Success, to distribute the introductory videos to students in all Student Success (STSC) course sections. The videos will be embedded in the Canvas course shells for STSC sections beginning in the Fall 2026.

Information about the videos can be found by accessing the Library LibGuide at <https://ocean.libguides.com/libraryintroduction>.

- On February 3, 2026, I joined the Social Work 202: Seminar and Practicum course, led by Ms. Anais Mompoint, College Lecturer II in Social Work, and spoke with the 25 students who are expected to graduate in May 2026. During the class, students reflected on their strengths and areas for growth as they engaged in goal setting for their practicum.
- On March 3, 2026, Ms. Julia Kim, College Lecturer II in Mathematics, participated in OCC's 1st Annual Cultural Block Party held in the Student Center. During the event, Ms. Kim shared aspects of her Korean heritage with the many students who attended. Students learned how to write their names in Korean, were introduced to the traditional game Gonggi, and sampled authentic Korean snacks. Students had a fun and interactive experience exploring Korean culture.

Student Recruitment

- Ms. Madison Caldwell, Coordinator of Early College, presented to freshmen and sophomores at Brick Memorial High School at the annual Brick and Beyond event on March 11, 2026.
- The Early College Team participated in Lacey Township High School's orientation for College Academy students on March 24, 2026, highlighting the academic and financial benefits of earning an associate degree while still in high school.
- Ms. Calleigh Kearns, Enrollment Services Advisor, represented Ocean County College at the Causeway Cares Summer in Winter Carnival in Manahawkin on March 1, 2026. Ms. Kearns was able to meet with local community members and played "Plinko" for prizes.
- On March 3, 2026, College Pathways Advisor Lauren Simon coordinated a Freshman Seminar Visit with Manchester High School, welcoming 58 students to campus. The day featured a show at the Planetarium, Student Success Time Management workshop, Music and Nursing demonstrations, a Workforce Roundtable, and participation in the Cultural Heritage Block Party, providing students with early exposure to academic programs and campus life.
- Throughout March, the Recruitment Team actively represented the College at numerous college fairs, community events, and outreach opportunities, including Adult ESL classes in Toms River, Brick Memorial and Beyond College 101 Presentation, Lacey Township College and Career Fair, Jackson Township College Fair, the Engineering Fair at Rutgers University, multiple STEM fairs, and the Ocean County School Counselors Association College Fair, among others.
- College Pathways Advisor Lauren Simon hosted two informational sessions in February. The NJ STARS Information Session, presented in collaboration with Academic Advising, Kean Ocean, Financial Aid, EOF, and Athletics, provided students and families with guidance on scholarship eligibility and academic pathways at both Ocean County College and Kean University. Additionally, Ms. Simon facilitated a College Knowledge Webinar for parents and students covering the college enrollment process, financial aid, OCC programs, and transfer opportunities.
- Ms. Lauren Simon and Multilingual Language Navigator Carolina Newman delivered a College 101 presentation and campus tour for approximately 100 students from the Hispanic Heritage Club at Toms River Intermediate Schools, introducing Middle School students to college readiness concepts and the opportunities available at Ocean County College.
- As members of the Ocean County School Counselors Association (OCSCA) Executive Board, Assistant Director of Recruitment Haley Abruzzese and College Pathways Advisor Lauren Simon hosted the annual Good Ideas Conference for 225 K-12 school counselors from Ocean and Monmouth

counties in the Gateway Building on March 20, 2026. The event featured breakfast provided by Kean University, a keynote speaker, professional workshops, lunch sponsored by Enrollment Services, and optional campus tours led by student workers.

- Partnerships and Outreach Advisor Calleigh Kearns and the Recruitment Team are hosting the 3rd Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt on March 25, 2026, and hope to welcome more than 200 community members to campus for a family-friendly engagement event that strengthens OCC's connection with the local community.
- Ms. Jamie Prioli, Director of Access and Disability Services, conducted community outreach at the Brick High School Special Education Resources and Transition Fair on March 19, 2026. She also participated in the Ocean Vicinage Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement on March 12, 2026. In addition, Ms. Prioli continues her engagement with key community partners through regular attendance at the monthly Ocean County Mental Health Board meetings and the bi-monthly meetings of the Ocean County Commission for Individuals with Disabilities.
- On March 3, 2026, 26 students from Manchester High School visited the School of Nursing. Ms. Linda Simmons, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing Skills and Simulation Labs; Ms. Margaret Nally, MSN, RN, Lab Coordinator; and Mr. John Preusse, BM, MM, Academic Affairs Technician, provided students with an overview of the Nursing Program and an introduction to the simulation labs where they practiced listening to body sounds. Hand hygiene techniques were demonstrated, and students had the opportunity to practice their skills. The visit also included a video that discussed the various areas available for Registered Nurses to practice.
- On March 3, 2026, students from Manchester High School visited the Toms River campus as part of the high school's Freshman Seminar program. During the visit, Mr. Brian Gilmore, College Lecturer II in Humanities, joined OCC music students Danielle Adolfsen (voice), John Alarcon (violin), Seth Nikolay (piano), and Kevin Izvorski (alto saxophone) for a thirty-minute performance featuring works by Mozart, Fauré, Bach, Chopin, Bozza, and Creston.

The event was organized by Ms. Lauren Simon, Enrollment Services Advisor, who coordinated the high school's visit to give students a firsthand experience of OCC's vibrant music program.

- Mr. John Preusse represented the School of Nursing and Health Sciences at Pre-Nursing Information Sessions on February 2 and March 5, 2026. A total of 21 students attended the in-person sessions that were held in collaboration with OCC's Advising team. Information sessions are held for students who plan on entering the Nursing Program to review the admission process, program requirements, and to answer any questions they may have.
- On March 4, 2026, the Student Success team collaborated with Academic Advising to host the first STEM symposium. More than 75 students from Lakewood and Toms River East high schools attended the on-campus event. The students were treated to interactive poster sessions with STEM students from OCC, heard a speaker from Princeton University, and ate lunch at the College.
- On March 13, 2026, as part of the Schools 'n Stage program, the Grunin Center had a full house for two performances of Mexico Beyond Mariachi: Trekking Mexico, including 18 K-12 groups. The performances take students on a folkloric, educational experience through historic and geographical regions throughout the country.
- In July, August, and December 2025, Ms. Jennifer Lennon, Assistant Director of Library Services, and Mr. Shawn Oates, College Lecturer II, Library Outreach, hosted three digital literacy workshops for

students at the Lacey Branch of the Ocean County Library. Sixteen students participated, including volunteers from the library's Service and Achievement in the Library (SAIL) program.

The workshops introduced students to fundamental digital skills, including file organization and the use of Microsoft Office applications, such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. An information literacy component was also included, where students learned strategies to search for and evaluate information on the Internet. In addition, participants were introduced to free online resources and Ocean County Library tools that allow them to further explore topics covered during the workshops.

Additional digital literacy workshops were held in the OCC Library as part of the high school's College Academy Orientation. The sessions were led by Ms. Jennifer Lennon, Assistant Library Director, Access Services, and Ms. Madison Akins, College Lecturer II, Information Literacy Liaison.

Using the digital literacy orientation model from Ocean County College's Student Success courses, the workshops provided students with an overview of library resources and introduced strategies for locating and evaluating information found on the Internet.

Student Activities

- The Library Archives preserve the history of Ocean County College through a rich collection of historical publications, photographs, films, and institutional records. For many years, students, alumni, faculty, and staff have relied on the archives as an important resource for researching the College's past and uncovering stories that helped shape the campus community.

Today, the archives are helping shed light on a decades-old mystery involving a tree planted on the Toms River campus in memory of a beloved faculty member. Over time, the tree disappeared, and it remained unclear whether it had ever been replaced.

Leonello Flavin, a student worker in the archives and President of the Ocean Prism Club at OCC, recently began exploring this story as part of his archival work. Through careful research, Leo uncovered documents and records that reveal the layers of this long-forgotten history. The faculty member, who was fondly remembered by students and colleagues, was honored with a memorial tree that was planted on campus. However, more than thirty years ago, the tree was reportedly removed in an act of vandalism. Whether a new tree was planted afterward remains uncertain, though the chestnut tree located near the W. K. Russell Building may be the replacement.

Following his curiosity and using the resources available in the archives, Leo helped bring this lost piece of OCC history back, into the present. The archives house a wide range of historical materials, including the College Catalog, Viking News, Barda – OCC's yearbook – and many other documents that connect the College's past with its present. Together, these materials preserve OCC's legacy and serve as a valuable resource for both the College community and the public.

- The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Center re-opened on campus for its second year on February 2, 2026. This Program assists qualified individuals in the community with preparing and filing their tax returns. Accounting students from both Ocean County College and Kean University have been trained and certified by the IRS and will prepare income tax returns for free through the VITA program. The program is available to underserved populations, including the elderly or those with modest incomes. The VITA Center not only helps our community, but it also offers students hands-on experience in the accounting profession.

OCC alumna Trish Archimbaud serves as the program's VITA Center Site Coordinator. The Center is located on the College's Toms River campus in the Library, Room 1, Library Tower. Since early March, the volunteers have processed 65 tax returns and continue to be fully booked with 172 appointments scheduled until April 15, 2026.

Appointments are available Monday through Thursday, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and on Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Walk-in and drop-off services are not available. The VITA Center will remain open through April 15, 2026.

- On February 10 and 11, 2026, two social work students, Molly Bryceland and Lucia McGuire-Pettersen, were hired through Federal Work Study to support program initiatives. This is the first approval for the Social Work Program to host Federal Work-Study students.
- OCC students Anne Nyangana and Alma Ladino will present the Flash Talk, "Discovering Hidden Bias in AI" at the Capital Region Celebration of Women in Computing 2026, hosted by the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), on March 28, 2026, in Washington, D.C.

ACM is the world's largest and oldest international scientific and educational computing society. Their participation reflects the ongoing work of the OCC Engineering Club to provide students with opportunities to publish technical papers, and present at leading STEM conferences.

Student Career Opportunities

- On March 4, 2026, Mr. Ryan Smith, BSN, RN, Assistant Nurse Manager at the Hackensack Meridian Health/Ocean University Medical Center Heart and Vascular Center and a graduate of Ocean County College, met with students who are preparing to graduate from the Nursing Program following this semester. Mr. Smith discussed his experiences as a male nurse and his journey in professional nursing practice.
- On March 4, 2026, graduating Nursing students attended a presentation sponsored by the New Jersey Sharing Network. Ms. Amy Young, RN, CPTC, Director of Family and Community Services, discussed the vital role of the registered nurse in organ and tissue donation, procurement, and transplantation. The presentation is especially pertinent as it correlates to the curriculum covered within the final semester of the Nursing program that includes caring for the patient at the end of life.
- On March 4, 2026, representatives from Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health, Ms. Paula Bertagna, BSN, RN, Director of Nurse Recruitment, and Ms. Diane Poullos, RN, Director of Talent Acquisition and Innovation, presented information to graduating students regarding the New Graduate Residency Program at Community Medical Center. The application process as well as the schedule of events included in this year-long program were discussed.
- Dr. Stephanie Frattini, College Lecturer II in Business, hosted a college-wide LinkedIn Workshop, Build Your Professional Presence, on Wednesday March 4, 2026. The workshop was designed to help students and professionals understand how to effectively use LinkedIn as a career development and networking tool. Approximately 40 students attended.

The workshop covered the following topics, titled:

- What LinkedIn is and why it matters for your career
- How to create and strengthen a professional LinkedIn profile
- Building and expanding your professional network

- Using LinkedIn to search for jobs and internships
- Participating in conversations, posting content, and engaging professionally
- An overview of LinkedIn Learning and professional development resources

After the presentations, students were invited to participate in a LinkedIn workshop to create or enhance their current profile, while obtaining practical guidance and actionable tips to help tell their professional story and stand out to employers and recruiters.

- On March 10, 2026, the Student Nurse Organization (SNO) held a Career Day under the direction of the SNO Advisors Ms. Linda Simmons, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing Skills and Simulation Labs; Ms. Mary Sue Gill, MSN, RN, College Lecturer II; and Ms. Tamila Purpuro, PhD, MSN, RN, College Lecturer II. Representatives from 22 agencies attended the event. Students were provided with information on applying for positions within various healthcare agencies following completion of the Nursing Program. Information was also available to students who are currently attending the Nursing Program regarding application for Nursing Assistant positions while they continue their studies, as well as enrolling in a BSN completion program. There were 99 students who attended this event.

Community Outreach

- On February 14, 2026, the Grunin Center hosted a performance of Jane Austen’s Playlist. The performance drew an audience of approximately 150 attendees. Among the performers was OCC music student Hilda Howlett, who showcased her talent on the flute as part of the ensemble.

The event also included a pre-performance luncheon, where guests enjoyed live piano music performed by OCC student Seth Nikolay and college alumnus Luke Nokes.

- On February 20, 2026, Moldovan pianist and composer Dr. Alexander Timofeev performed for an audience of nearly 85 community members and students.

The program featured works by Bach, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Scriabin, Tkach, as well as Dr. Timofeev’s original composition, Fantasy on a Theme of Mozart. The performance also included a special collaboration with Rowan University dance faculty members Leslie Elkins and Paule Turner.

Prior to the recital, Dr. Timofeev conducted a masterclass, working with local high school student Christina Dakrat, current OCC student Seth Nikolay, and OCC alumnus Ian Kanev. The session focused on selected repertoire, including Chopin’s Waltz in E minor, Debussy’s Arabesque in E major, and Beethoven’s Sonata, Op. 2, No. 2 (Movement IV).

As guests arrived, Seth Nikolay and Ian Kanev welcomed patrons with live piano performances in the lobby, setting the tone for an engaging and memorable afternoon.

- On March 13, 2026, the College welcomed guest artist Victoria Schwartzman for a piano recital in the newly renovated Bosendorfer Recital Room at the Grunin Center. The performance featured works by Beethoven, Chopin, Prokofiev, and Rachmaninov and drew a full house of community members and OCC students.

Before the recital, OCC student Seth Nikolay and OCC alumnus Ian Kanev performed in the gallery, welcoming patrons as they arrived. Following the recital, Ms. Schwartzman led a 90-minute masterclass with three students: 10-year-old Barnegat pianist Wyatt Wire, Seth Nikolay, and Ian Kanev.

Audience members who stayed after the performance had the opportunity to observe the students explore a range of pieces, including Bach's Invention in C Major, BWV 772; Chopin's Waltz in C# Minor, Op. 64, No. 2; and Debussy's Prelude Book II, No. 3, "La Puerta del Vino."

- The Spring season at the Grunin Center is off to a busy start with its Grunin Presents series including performances by Cherish the Ladies, Socks in the Frying Pan, Beginnings: A Celebration of the Music of Chicago, and Celtic Angels Ireland.
- On February 28, 2026, in collaboration with RWJBarnabas Health and Mid-Atlantic Arts, the Grunin Center welcomed Bindlestiff Family Circus. After the show, 50 lucky children were able to participate in a workshop with members of the circus. It included feather balancing, ball and scarf juggling, and other circus activities.
- On March 22, 2026, Adam Moezinia performed at the first Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon series of the Spring semester.
- Executive and Artistic Director Heidi Sheridan and Assistant Director of Education and Community Engagement Jaclyn Woods attended the state championships for Poetry Out Loud at the Count Basie Theater. They are pleased to report that our Regional 3 winners won first place and runner up, Joy Ogunsakin from Trinity Hall and Evelyann Knox from Henry Hudson Regional School, respectively. These students will go on to Washington, D.C. to compete for the National Championship.
- In collaboration with the School of Arts and Humanities, the Ocean County College Repertory Theatre Company opened its run of *Dancing at Lughnasa* on March 13, 2026; it ran until March 22, 2026.
- On March 17 and 18, 2026, the Grunin Center hosted the Ocean County Teen Arts Festival. This year, 11 Ocean County High Schools participated in Visual and Performing Arts adjudications and workshops. Many OCC faculty, staff, and adjuncts participated, including Brian Gilmore, Keith Spradlin, George Vanderbilt, Robert Martino, Catherine Mancuso, Jee Sun Lee, Adam Hutcheson, Ralph Bertini, Terri O'Neill, Kristina Terwilliger, and Nat Bard. This event is made possible by the support of the Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission and the OCC Foundation.
- The Planetarium is rocketing through Spring field trip season, navigating over 1,200, K-12 students through earth and space science experiences this past month. In addition, staff hosted a Cosmic Crafts for Kids St. Patrick's Day Event: "the Science of Rainbows," and celebrated Irish Pride with a Celtic Mythology sky talk along with Laser U2. They worked with the Jersey Shore Girl Scout Council to host a NASA FOCUS: Exploring Beyond Earth event as a lead up to the Artemis II launch this Spring. Staff offered Planetarium shows in conjunction with OCC's Easter Egg hunt and attended the Veteran's Memorial Middle School STEM event to publicize the upcoming NASA FOCUS: Earth Day event in April.

Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant (SCC5)

SCC5 Health First New Jersey Business and Industry Leadership Team (BILT) convening on March 17, 2026, bringing together 37 stakeholders, including 12 healthcare employers, 6 community organizations and nonprofits, a workforce development board representative from Ocean County, and higher education partners, demonstrating strong regional engagement across the healthcare workforce ecosystem.

The employer panel, featuring leaders from Bright Harbor Healthcare, Hackensack Meridian Health, RWJBarnabas Health, and Southern Ocean Medical Center, highlighted persistent workforce shortages in

key roles such as patient care technicians, medical assistants, and behavioral health professionals, along with ongoing challenges related to retention and turnover.

Employers emphasized the need for stronger work-readiness skills in addition to technical training, reinforced the value of short-term, industry-recognized credentials and stackable pathways, and called for deeper collaboration with community colleges through clinical placements, curriculum co-development, and direct hiring pipelines. A strong focus was also placed on expanding access for non-traditional and underserved populations with appropriate support systems.

A key outcome of the convening was the launch of three employer-engaged committees—Curriculum and Competencies, Partnerships, and Emerging Trends—which will meet quarterly beginning May 2026 to ensure sustained employer input and alignment with workforce needs, further positioning SCC5 as a catalyst for advancing employer-driven, responsive healthcare workforce pathways aligned with Ocean County College’s Strategic Plan Goal 2.

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 February 21, 2026, through March 20, 2026.

Ocean County College’s TRIO Student Support Services (SSS)
Annual Performance Report (APR) for 2024-25

2024-25 Summary Results for the Standard Objectives (P042A200683)						
Criteria	Maximum Points Allowed	Approved Rate	Actual Attained Rate		Points Earned	
Persistence	4	75%	90%		4	
Good Academic Standing	4	90%	92%		4	
Associate’s Degree or Certificate	2	39%	42%		2	
Associate’s Degree or Certificate and Transfer to a 4-Year Institution	2	25%	35%		2	
Funded Number	3		Number of Participants Funded to Serve	Number of Participants Served	Percent Served	3
			140	157	112%	
A project that served less than 90 percent of the number of students the project was funded to serve in 2024-25 is not eligible to earn points for any of the criteria in this assessment year.						
Total Points	15				15	

REQUIRED REPORTING STATISTICS

Board of Trustees Meeting: Thurs, March 26, 2026

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 2/21/26 – 3/20/26.

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: 3/1/26 Reported: 3/1/26	Liquor Law Violation	Intoxicated person	Closed Arrest
Occurred: 3/4/26 Reported: 3/4/26	Vandalism	Graffiti	Referred to Student Conduct
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