

- Building Opportunity •
- Strengthening Community •

OCC STRATEGIC PLAN

• 2025 - 2030 •



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Building Opportunity | Strengthening Community” is a strategic plan that boldly proclaims that Ocean County College changes lives and communities. Four small words capture the heart of this bedrock institution for Ocean County. This strategic plan prepares us individually and collectively for the challenging work ahead by grounding this work in our tradition as a catalyst for positive change. The yoking of opportunity and community reminds us that our individual endeavors and successes have a collective value, too.

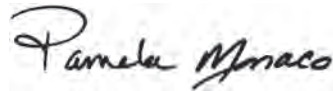
This plan, built upon our new mission, vision, and values, is a testament to the future we can create together. It was crafted through the engagement with both our internal and external communities. The drafts went through many iterations based on feedback from faculty and staff, students, alumni, advisory boards, and community partners and stakeholders. The plan is focused on the concepts of empowerment, a focus on the future, connections, and sustainability. These four goals are interdependent and require all of us to support these goals through action and care. Our success requires us to embrace new ways of thinking and doing. The plan is ambitious but doable, with objectives and strategies that guide our actions and decisions. In these uncertain times, this blueprint for institutional, student, and community success reminds us of the essential work of the college and its people and how we can collectively impact lives and communities.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all those who volunteered their time, insight, and energy to the Strategic Planning Taskforce. Your dedication has shaped a bold, actionable plan that will guide Ocean County College into the future.

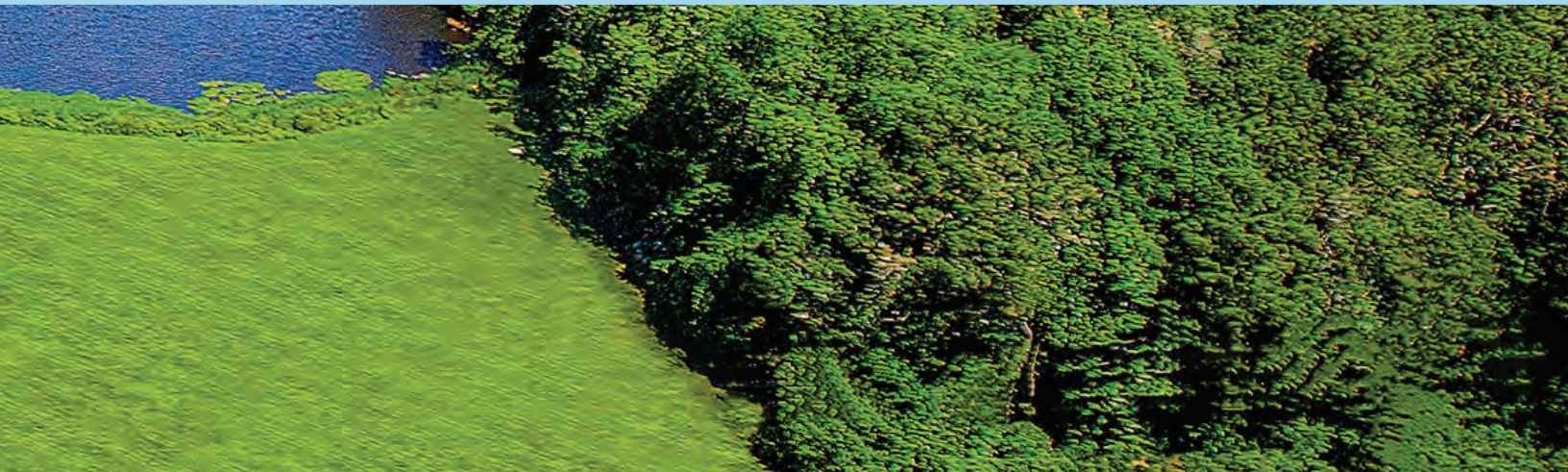


Ocean County College remains steadfast in our commitment to being of and for the communities we serve.

With warm regards,



Pamela Monaco, Ph.D.
President, Ocean County College



BUILDING ON OUR LEGACY

THEN

Founded in 1964 as New Jersey's first county college, Ocean County College was established with a clear vision: to provide OCC access to affordable, high-quality education for residents of Ocean County. What began with 979 students in its first semester quickly evolved into a trusted academic institution serving a growing population of traditional students, working adults, and lifelong learners. As public higher education expanded throughout the state, OCC emerged as a leader in open admissions, community engagement, and innovation — building strong roots in Toms River and laying the foundation for an enduring impact on the region.

Even in its earliest decades, OCC embodied the spirit of building opportunity — opening doors for students who might not otherwise have had access to college. By focusing on associate degrees and career pathways, the college empowered learners to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce with confidence. At the same time, OCC helped strengthen the local community by preparing skilled graduates and acting as a cultural and educational anchor for the region. That commitment to equity, responsiveness, and service remains woven into the college's identity.



NOW

Ocean County College today is a comprehensive, student-centered institution that serves over 7,000 students each fall and more than 12,500 unique credit students annually. With a main campus in Toms River, 16 additional locations including Manahawkin, and a strong online presence, OCC is embedded throughout Ocean County, not only as a place of learning, but as a vital partner in the life of the community. The College offers 21 associate degree programs spanning liberal arts, STEM, health sciences, and technical fields, as well as workforce development credentials aligned to local employer needs.

Through initiatives like dual enrollment and early college, OCC builds opportunity for high school students seeking a head start on their college attainment. Its Kean Ocean partnership allows seamless progression to bachelor's and master's degrees

on site. The College's new and renovated facilities, including the Student Enrollment Building, H. Hovnanian Health Sciences Building, the Library, the Grunin Performing Arts Academy and the Grunin Center, reflect a learning environment that is modern, inclusive, and future-ready. The beautiful, park-like campus enhances this setting, providing a serene and inspiring atmosphere that supports student focus, wellness, and connection. In addition to its educational offerings, OCC strengthens the community through its performing arts, science education, and public events, enriching the region culturally and civically. OCC remains known for its affordability, innovation, and commitment to serving students of all backgrounds. Like many colleges, it must face the changing demands of society and students: more career programs, greater student support services, and proof that a college education brings positive change to individuals and communities.

FUTURE

Ocean County College's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan was developed through extensive engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, local industries, foundation supporters, and community members. With this plan, we aim to present a vision that is both aspirational and attainable: one that focuses on expanding opportunities for students and strengthening the communities we serve.

The OCC strategic plan is a high-level roadmap centered on a set of goals that are critical to fulfilling the College's mission: to *"empower diverse learners to achieve their goals while enriching the communities we serve."* By achieving these goals, OCC will ensure that more students from **all** backgrounds will persist, graduate, and realize their personal and academic aspirations, supported by personalized services, targeted outreach, and an inclusive campus environment. Looking ahead, Ocean County College will continue to lead in student retention and completion. Equity gaps in outcomes will narrow, affirming OCC as a college where every learner can thrive. More students will complete high-quality credentials, participate in work-based learning experiences, and graduate ready to contribute meaningfully to the workforce or pursue further education.

Through strategic program development, OCC will expand its short-term and stackable credential offerings, strengthen alignment with employer and community needs, and establish clearer pathways between non-credit and credit programs. Students will move seamlessly from skills training to degrees, from education to employment, building opportunity at every stage.

Internally, a more collaborative and supportive workplace will take shape. Enhanced communication, recognition, and professional development will drive employee satisfaction and retention. At the same time, the College will grow its grant portfolio, improve operational efficiency, and engage in focused outreach to increase enrollment and extend its impact.

OCC's connection to the broader community will deepen through expanded partnerships, shared initiatives, and an elevated role as a regional leader.

This future is not abstract; it is the result of deliberate, data-driven, and values-guided action. It reflects our pride in both who we are and who we are becoming. By implementing this Strategic Plan, Ocean County College will remain a place where opportunity is built, communities are strengthened, and every learner is empowered to succeed.

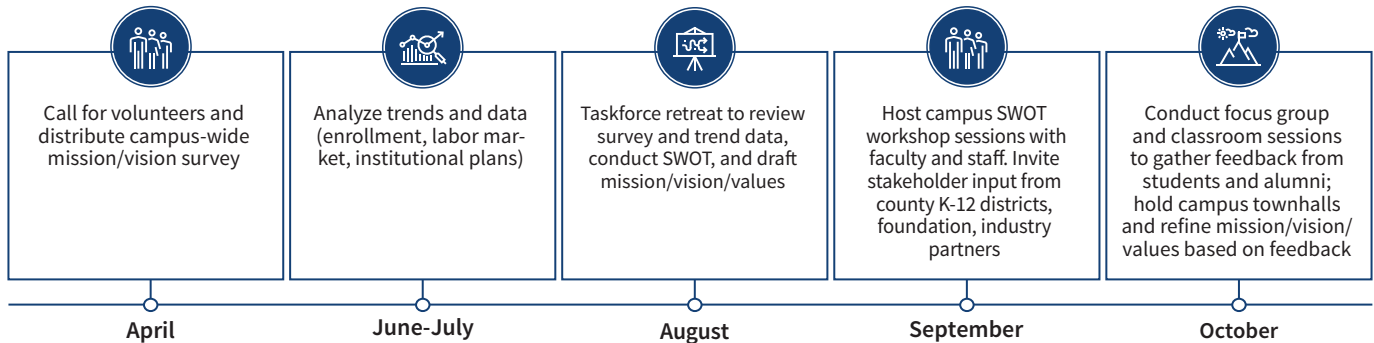
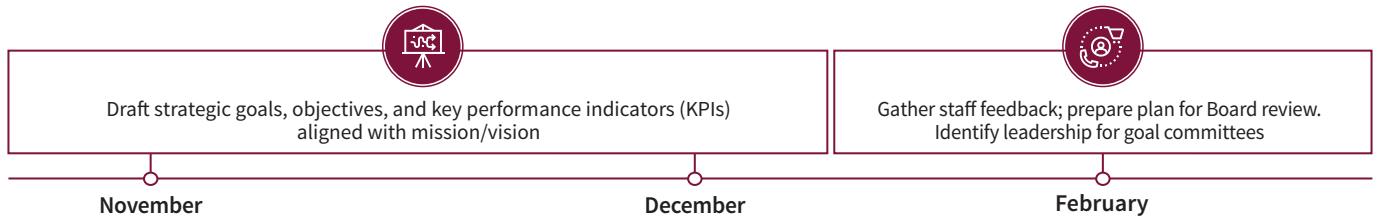
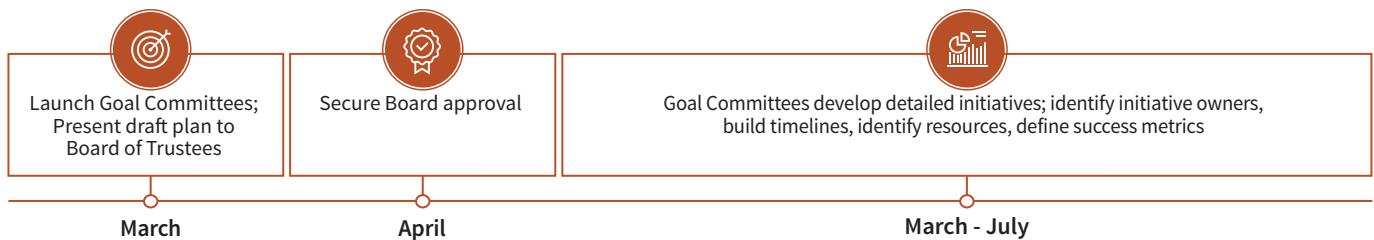
OUR PLANNING PROCESS

Ocean County College's strategic planning process was rooted in collaboration and inclusivity, engaging over 180 unique voices across our campus and broader community. The process was driven by a 20-member Strategic Planning Taskforce, representing each division of the College and co-led by the Executive Director of Institutional Planning, Effectiveness, and Compliance and the Associate Director of Institutional Effectiveness. It began with a campus-wide call for volunteers, resulting in more than 25 self-nominations and the formation of a cross-functional team dedicated to shaping OCC's future.

Over the course of 17 months, more than 120 campus employees contributed through surveys, SWOT sessions, and town halls. Nearly 50 students and alumni participated in focus groups and provided feedback on the draft mission, vision, and values. These engagement efforts, particularly the campus-wide SWOT analysis, employee survey, and student/alumni focus groups, revealed strong, recurring priorities that shaped the foundation of the strategic planning framework. External stakeholders also played a valuable role, including industry representatives, K-12 school district partners, and OCC donors, whose input informed the College's direction. Drafts of the plan were shared openly at key milestone moments, with intentional revisions made based on community feedback. The College's new OCEAN values acronym is a direct outcome of this inclusive process.

Titled *Building Opportunity, Strengthening Community*, the strategic plan is designed to be both focused and agile. Four Goal Teams, each aligned with one of the plan's strategic goals, will meet regularly to drive progress on key initiatives. Goal Leaders and representatives from each team will also serve on a newly formed Institutional Effectiveness Committee, which will meet throughout each year of the five-year plan to monitor progress, assess outcomes, address challenges, and recommend adjustments as needed. This structure ensures the plan remains responsive and actionable, anchored in broad input and designed to evolve with the needs of the College and its community.



PHASE 1: Discovery and Foundation Building APRIL – OCTOBER 2024: Broad engagement. Data-driven insight. Shared vision.**PHASE 2: Designing the Strategic Framework NOVEMBER 2024 – FEBRUARY 2025:** From insights to impact.**PHASE 3: Validation and Launch Planning MARCH – JULY 2025:** Preparing to act with clarity and collaboration.**PHASE 4: Activation and Monitoring SEPTEMBER 2025 – AUGUST 2030:** Bringing the plan to life.

OUR GUIDING FRAMEWORK

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: WE ARE **O.C.E.A.N.**



Opportunity-Focused:

We place students at the heart of everything we do, providing transformative academic and career pathways and practical skills to help learners achieve their educational, personal, and professional goals.



Collaborative:

We embrace a culture of teamwork, integrity, and mutual respect, encouraging open communication and partnerships within our college and with the broader community.



Ethical:

We hold ourselves accountable, maintaining integrity, transparency, and responsibility in all our actions.



Accessible:

We prioritize open education and actively promote inclusivity, equity, and belonging, continually learning and adapting to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.



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.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

To guide implementation of the five-year Building Opportunity, Strengthening Community strategic plan, initiatives are organized into three categories based on their scope, timeline, and impact. These categories reflect the natural progression of our work: establishing a strong foundation, strategically expanding opportunity, and ultimately creating a lasting, transformative impact that strengthens the OCC community.

Foundational Wins (6–12 months): Early-stage initiatives that lay the groundwork for future efforts. These may involve developing new processes, expanding existing programs, or conducting research and outreach. Whether building on what exists or creating something new, Foundational Wins focus on establishing a strong starting point.

Strategic (1–3 years): Initiatives that require more time and coordination to implement. These efforts drive meaningful change and are focused on expanding opportunity for students, employees, and the OCC community.

Transformative (3–5 years): Long-term initiatives that build upon earlier efforts or require extensive planning and innovation. Designed to create lasting impact, these initiatives aim to strengthen the OCC community as a whole—students, employees, and the broader public we serve.



OVERSIGHT AND ACTION TEAMS

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

Alexa Beshara-Blauth
Alyssa Tipton
Christina Matuszewski
Eileen Garcia
Gay Huggins-Dickey

Gerald Racioppi
James Marshall
Joseph Konopka
Kayci Clayton
Laura Paolillo

Lisa Daly
Michele Connolly
Michelle Youngs
Pamela Monaco
Ryan Ward

Samantha Glassford
Sara Winchester
Timothy Landers
Vandana Saini

GOAL COMMITTEES

GOAL 1:

Gerald Racioppi,
Goal Leader
Vandana Saini,
Goal Leader
Debra Lee-Vasquez
Jennifer Dellner
Sheenah Hartigan
Kate Mohr
Nancy Rizzuto
Samantha Glassford
Shawn Zakar
Vivian Lynn
Krystle Wilmot

GOAL 2:

Eileen Garcia,
Goal Leader
Joseph Konopka,
Goal Leader
Jacquelyn Daugherty
Jonathan Molinaro
Nanci Carmody
Tracy Walsh
Biz Metzger
James Marshall
Gay Huggins-Dickey
Janine Emma

GOAL 3:

Christina Matuszewski,
Goal Leader
Ryan Ward,
Goal Leader
Michelle Youngs
Madison Caldwell
Kim Dippolito
Catherine Mancuso
Alyssa Tipton
Brianna Cardinale
Justin Pfeifer

GOAL 4:

Timothy Landers,
Goal Leader
Sara Winchester,
Goal Leader
Ann Feneis
Donna Carbone
Melanie Parker
Kate Mohr
Kayci Clayton
Laura Paolillo
Craig Santicola



GOAL 1

EMPOWER

CREATE AND SUSTAIN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVES EQUITABLE STUDENT ACCESS, RETENTION, AND SUCCESS

- OBJECTIVE 1.1 Expand support services for underrepresented learners.
- OBJECTIVE 1.2 Advance equity in student retention.
- OBJECTIVE 1.3 Augment outreach to underrepresented populations.
- OBJECTIVE 1.4 Promote instructional practices that support and advance student success.
- OBJECTIVE 1.5 Ensure a sense of belonging is central to the campus experience.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Enrollment of New Majority (Age 25+) Students
- Enrollment of Underrepresented Students
- Retention Equity Gap for New Majority Students
- Retention Equity Gap for Underrepresented Students



GOAL 1 INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS:

Foundational Wins (6–12 months):

Establish a student mentorship program:

Expand 1st Gen mentorship program to include all credit students and mentors from across the college.
A program that targets all students will benefit underrepresented learners.

Survey current OCC new majority learners about their experience and needs:

Identify survey that is designed to assess the academic experience of adult learners and deliver it at a time when it is likely to get a good response rate.

Strategic Wins (1–3 years):

Alternate forms of assessment:

This initiative will begin with a community of practice during summer 2025. Faculty will meet regularly to discuss alternative assessment innovations and ideas based on data and research.

Develop a policy/procedure for extenuating circumstances for students

Revise policy/procedure 5163 to include a provision for students to document extenuating circumstances to allow for grace to be given in cases where absence or time prevents their timely completion of coursework or assessments.

Transformative Wins (3–5 years):

Explore basic needs grants:

Find new resources to replace the FIPSE Grant when the grant term ends.

Develop a DL ESL course and offer it free to ELL/ESL students:

Develop a self-paced English e-learning course to support English Language Learner (ELL) students in college-level English courses. By offering this course free of charge, we aim to boost the retention rates of ELL students.

GOAL 2

FUTURE-FOCUSED

DESIGN AND DELIVER PROGRAMS THAT RESPOND TO EVOLVING COMMUNITY AND WORKFORCE NEEDS

- OBJECTIVE 2.1 Build partnerships with employers to offer experiential learning opportunities.
- OBJECTIVE 2.2 Diversify options for stackable credentials and short-term certifications.
- OBJECTIVE 2.3 Develop programs that align with current labor market needs.
- OBJECTIVE 2.4 Provide career readiness supports and embed career competencies across the curriculum.
- OBJECTIVE 2.5 Broaden non-credit to credit pathways.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Enrollment in Career and Technical Education Programs

Non-Credit Workforce Programs Net Revenue

Experiential Learning Student Participation

Percentage of Courses that Offer Experiential Learning Opportunities





GOAL 2 INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS:

Foundational Wins (6–12 months):

Increase employer participation in experiential learning:

Actively recruit new employers to provide internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning experiences. Use data to identify industries with low engagement and target outreach efforts accordingly.

Embedded Certificate Tracks:

Redesign select degrees to include short-term certificate milestones that can be earned along the way.

Create Consistent Process for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA):

Redesign a consistent process for students to apply previous learning experience to courses and programs at the college.

Strategic Wins (1–3 years):

Regional Industry Listening Series:

Host biannual sector-based roundtables with employers to gather insights on emerging needs, skill gaps, and partnership opportunities.

Increase awareness for prior learning assessment:

Develop an awareness program to promote prior learning assessment at the college.

Dual Credit Credentialing:

Create pathways for high school students in CTE programs to earn short-term certificates that stack into associate degrees.

GOAL 3

CONNECT

CULTIVATE A POSITIVE AND COLLABORATIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE

- OBJECTIVE 3.1 Strengthen internal communication and structures of engagement.
- OBJECTIVE 3.2 Increase recognition and celebrate employee excellence.
- OBJECTIVE 3.3 Assess and implement strategies to improve employee retention and role fulfillment.
- OBJECTIVE 3.4 Promote ongoing professional growth and development of employee.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Employee Turnover

Professional Development Participation



GOAL 3 INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS:

Foundational Wins (6–12 months):

Increase availability of HR tools and information:

Launch a redesigned HR website by July 1, 2026, providing employees with easy access to essential HR information and direct contact with HR representatives.

Create the OCC Employee Recognition Program:

This program will recognize employees who go above and beyond by actively participating in campus events, with recognition offered through pins or similar rewards.

Update orientation:

Enhance orientation to include institution knowledge.

Strategic Wins (1–3 years):

Streamline Onboarding for Consistency:

Create streamlined onboarding process for a consistent experience for new hires.

Transformative Wins (3–5 years):

Increase employee engagement opportunities:

Organize employee engagement events by August 2030, including team-building activities, pop-up lunches, spirit days, a benefit fair, a family picnic or mixers, ensuring events are allergy-conscious and accessible.

Integrated Accessibility Training:

Create accessibility-focused trainings, including incorporating with orientation, annual compliance and additional trainings.

GOAL 4

SUSTAIN

OPTIMIZE INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES AND STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL STABILITY

- OBJECTIVE 4.1 Expand and sustain grant funding.
- OBJECTIVE 4.2 Maximize the use of physical plant resources.
- OBJECTIVE 4.3 Leverage existing technology and infrastructure to improve operational efficiency and enrich academic offerings.
- OBJECTIVE 4.4 Develop targeted marketing campaigns to grow enrollment.
- OBJECTIVE 4.5 Strengthen OCC's impact and standing within the community.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Grant Funding as a Percent of Operating Budget

Divisional Share of Total Grant Funding

Variance from Balanced Budget



GOAL 4 INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS:

Foundational Wins (6–12 months):

Expand Campus Marketing Resources:

Develop and distribute Media Tool Kit, including brand and editorial guidelines, rules of the road, key words, image usage, templates, links, etc.

Partnership Governance Committee:

Establish (designate) a Partnership Governance Committee tasked with defining annual strategic goals.

Strategic Wins (1–3 years):

Grant Development Training Program:

Develop a grant funding training and development program to strengthen grant culture.

Optimize Software Expenditures:

Optimize annual software expenditures, representing the College's most significant technology-related cost.

Collegewide CRM Development:

Define and develop a robust collegewide customer relationship management practice (CRP).

Transformative Wins (3–5 years):

Energy Conservation and Cost Reduction:

Maintain a strong focus on reducing energy usage and operational costs through targeted efficiency upgrades and sustainable practices.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE MEMBERS

Alexa Beshara-Blauth.....	Executive Director of Institutional Planning, Effectiveness and Compliance
Erich Carstens.....	Director, IT Support Services
Lisa Daly.....	Associate Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Jennifer Dellner.....	Professor of English and Literature
Eileen Garcia.....	Vice President of Academic Affairs
Samantha Glassford.....	Assistant Dean, Arts and Humanities
Christine Healey.....	Executive Director of Procurement and Compliance
Joseph Konopka.....	Vice President of Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships
Timothy Landers.....	Adjunct Assistant Professor, Business and Social Sciences
Kenneth Malagiere.....	Executive Director of Ocean County College Foundation
James Marshall.....	Executive Director of Curriculum and Academic Assessment
Christina Matuszewski.....	Assistant Director, Benefits Administration
Jenna McAteer.....	Academic Advisor
Pamela Monaco.....	College President
Gerald Racioppi.....	Vice President of Student Affairs
Vandana Saini.....	Dean, School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
Ryan Ward.....	Director of Capital Projects
Sara Winchester.....	Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration
Harry Young.....	Veterans Benefits and Financial Aid Coordinator
Shawn Zakar.....	Executive Director of Workforce Education



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*at the time of publication





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