

OCEAN VIEWS

A Magazine for Ocean County College Alumni,
Our College Family and the Community
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CONTENTS

OCEAN NEWS

3 - 7

NJCCC Trustee Spotlight Award
Aspen Institute Recognizes OCC
Bubbakoo's Burritos Comes to Campus
New Conference Center

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

8 - 9

OCC Partners with Intel
New Artificial Intelligence Program

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

10 - 11

Later-in-Life Education
Enlightened This OCC Grad
Jim Kelly '18

OCC FOUNDATION

12 - 15

20th Annual Golf Classic
Foundation Board
Vice-Chair David Paulus Takes Helm in 2022
New Members Join Board of Trustees

GRUNIN CENTER

16 - 17

Dr. Sanjay Gupta
Chasing Life, Cheating Death
The TEN Tenors Perform
Love is in the Air
Grunin Center, Novins Planetarium
Welcome New Executive & Artistic Director

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

18 - 19

Student/Alumni Board Trustee
Embraces the College Experience
Josephine O'Grady '21

BARNEGAT BAY PARTNERSHIP

20 - 21

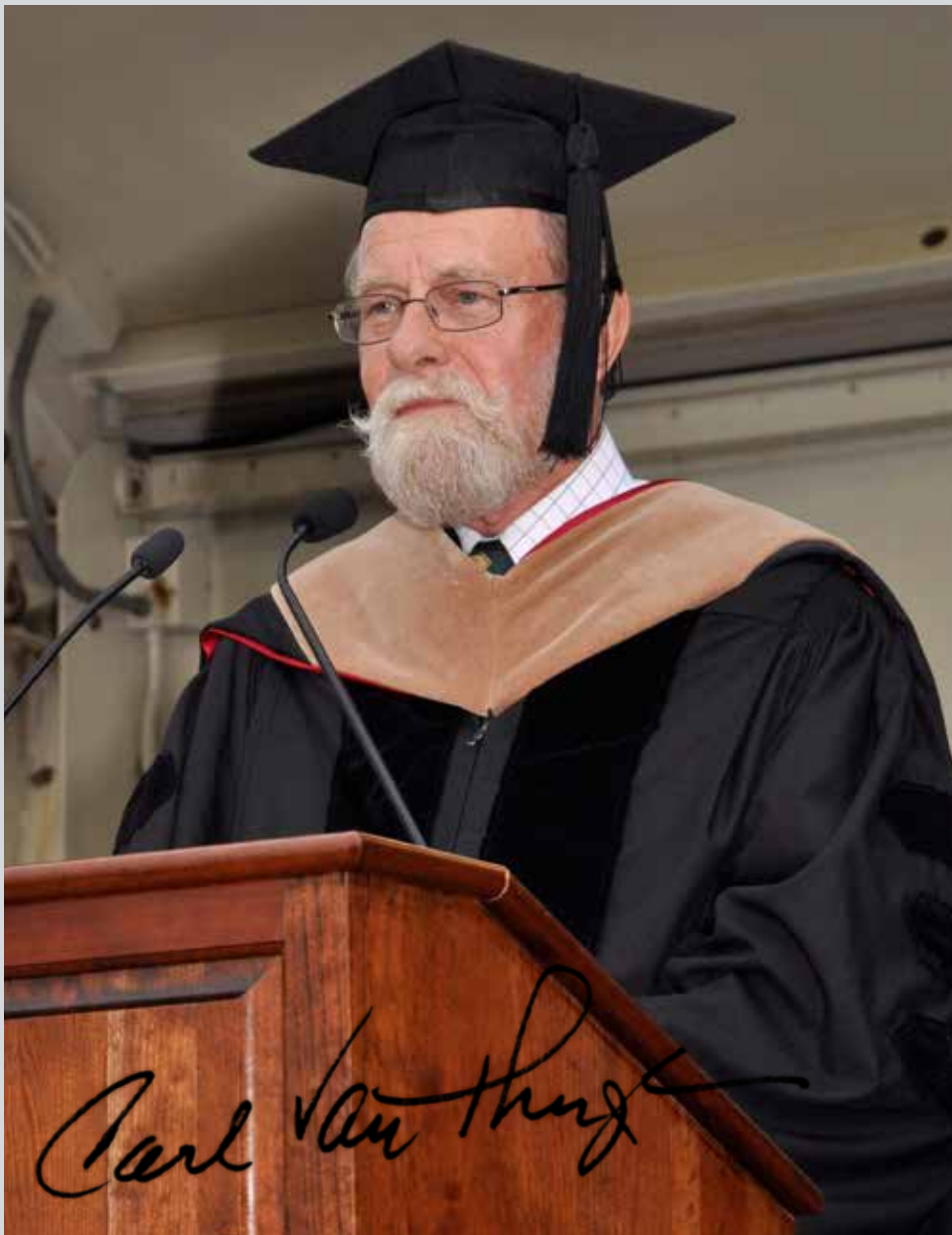
BBP Launches Revised Plan
to Protect Barnegat Bay
*The 2021 plan addresses challenges
such as climate change and sea level rise*

ATHLETICS

22 - 23

New Season, New Style





Board of Trustees’ Carl “Van” Thulin, Jr. Receives NJCCC Trustee Spotlight Award

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges has recognized OCC Board of Trustees member Carl “Van” Thulin, Jr. with the Trustee Spotlight award, which honors exemplary leaders who demonstrate a spirit of dedication and innovation in support of their institutions, and who have made outstanding contributions to advance the core missions of community colleges.

Thulin, a retired business owner and resident of Manahawkin, is one of the longest-serving trustees in OCC’s history. In fact, in 2022 – with 38 years of service under his belt – he will tie the record of one of the College’s charter board members, Dr. Solomon Soloff. Thulin chaired the board for 15 years, after serving as vice chair for four years and treasurer for 16 years.

As Chair of the OCC Board of Trustees, Thulin served as an ex-officio member on all committees. He was also a member of the OCC Board of School Estimate and Trustee Ambassador to the NJCCC.

Thulin is not only a stalwart supporter of OCC, but an integral part of a wonderful board filled with trustees of commitment and talent. Always a gentleman with a sharp wit and good humor, Thulin is admired and deeply respected by his fellow trustees and everyone at OCC.

“Congratulations to Mr. Thulin for this well-deserved recognition,” says Dr. Jon H. Larson.

“ Congratulations to Mr. Thulin for this well-deserved recognition. ”

- Dr. Jon H. Larson, president of Ocean County College

ON TOP
OF THE WORLD

aspeninstitute

Aspen Institute Recognizes OCC for Second Straight Time

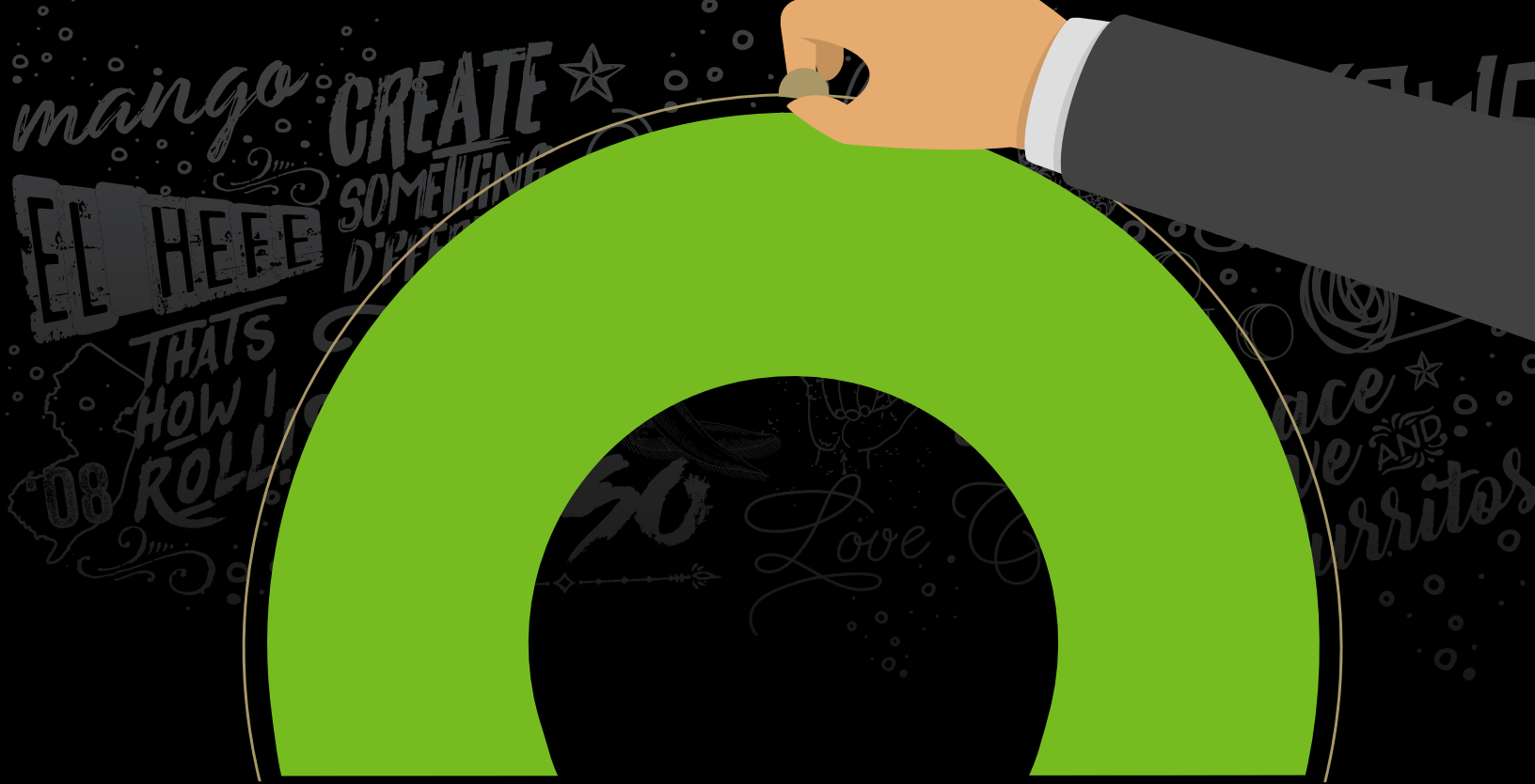
OCC is honored that the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program has again recognized us as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges, granting eligibility to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

Only 15% of community colleges across the country are invited, every other year, to apply for this award, which focuses singularly on student success, and bases its selections on community colleges' outstanding achievements in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high levels of access and success for students of color as well as low-income students.

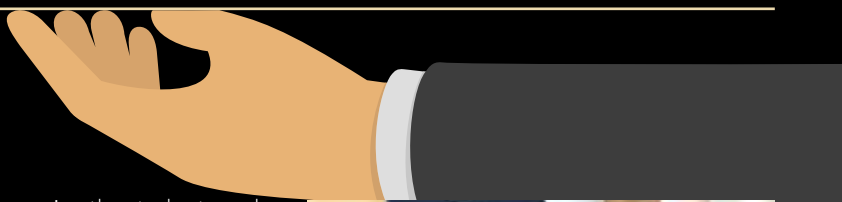
OCC continues to foster academic, economic, and cultural excellence; engage in national and global university and corporate partnerships; and cultivate a technologically progressive and entrepreneurial spirit.

As outlined in our Aspen application, the College's comprehensive and transformative strategic plan articulated the ongoing evolution of OCC's mission. Initiatives included, but were not limited to, enhanced student success and retention through improved academic advising, support services, and an early alert system; coaching for pre-nursing students and expanded degree offerings in the health sciences field; upgraded instruction through structured faculty development opportunities; a new Student Success Seminar; an overhaul of the College website for ease of information flow; and the introduction of an OCC app.

We are proud to receive these accolades from the Aspen Institute in recognition of our achievements in promoting exemplary learning experiences and advancing community college education internationally.



IF YOU BUILD THE BURRITO THEY WILL COME



OCC Welcomes Bubbakoo's Burritos to Campus

On September 7, Bubbakoo's Burritos – along with the Toss'em Wing Factory and Koo's Coffee Co. – opened on campus. Bubbakoo's provides affordable student specials to address food insecurity, and, in addition, the company has committed to partner with the College's Hospitality program to offer students opportunities to work within the organization.

Paul Altero, the co-founder and CEO of Bubbakoo's, is an OCC alumnus whose success has now led him back to the place that encouraged him to pursue his ambitions. The College, he explained, had encouraged his "maturity and academic acumen."

After earning an A.S. in Business Administration in 1993, Altero continued his education at the University of Delaware. He had enjoyed the business classes he took at OCC, and when he started his bachelor's degree program in hotel, restaurant, and institutional management, he felt prepared. "We're so excited to continue to cement our

Jersey Shore roots by serving the students and faculty at OCC," said Altero. "This school has done a lot for me personally and I couldn't be happier to give back."

In 2008, Altero and Bill Hart opened the very first Bubbakoo's Burritos in Point Pleasant. Now, their expanding business includes Altero's own alma mater.

CREATE SOMETHING DIFFERENT



the CONFE



RENCE

connection

New Conference Center Houses Barnegat Bay Partnership

The recent renovation of Building 10 on campus, an 11,000 sq. ft. structure previously home to the College Bookstore and other spaces, resulted in a new Conference Center composed of two meeting rooms, offices, and open seating areas for informal collaboration.

Upgrades such as the addition of an ADA bathroom, replacement of the HVAC system, and full lighting replacement were also completed, and state-of-the-art web A/V equipment was installed to enable meetings in the building to be broadcast via the web.

Barnegat Bay Partnership has moved its offices into the finished space, with wall displays illustrating the natural resources – land, water, and people – of Ocean County, along with information provoking individual actions to protect these resources. The BBP is one of 28 National Estuary Programs throughout the U.S., and works to restore and enhance the water quality and natural resources of the Barnegat Bay and its watershed.

Historical paintings inspired by the local estuary were professionally framed and hung in the lobby, which also features photos from the watershed. More elaborate digital displays, with interactive 3D, are planned for the future. The Conference Center coffee bar walls, meanwhile, include an aerial shot of the campus, inspirational quotes, and student artwork.





INTEL EXPANDS AI FOR WORKFORCE PROGRAM TO INCLUDE OCC

Technology industry leader Intel

is expanding its Artificial Intelligence for Workforce Program to help educate the next generation of U.S. technologists, and OCC is excited to be a part of it. Intel's program enables students to gain technical confidence in AI, enhances employability for AI-related jobs, and demonstrates how to apply the latest trends in AI to produce solutions to industrial and social issues.

OCC has worked closely with Intel to offer a new Associate in Computer Science degree, with a concentration in Artificial Intelligence; a Certificate of Completion in AI; and five new AI-based courses, which include machine learning, computer vision, and natural language processing. The AI programs and courses at OCC will be available for student enrollment starting with the Spring 2022 semester.

"We are excited to collaborate with Intel for an artificial intelligence certificate program here at Ocean County College, helping our students to prepare for top-level careers in rapidly growing fields," said OCC President Dr. Jon H. Larson. "Intel is committed to facilitating the expansion of AI access and expertise, and we're thrilled to develop a partnership to offer our students a foundation and a pathway to a vital and rewarding profession."

As Intel explained, "It is more important than ever to reskill Americans for future employment opportunities. In a 2021 co-branded Dell and Intel survey, AI and machine learning were the areas of study most anticipated to increase in demand over the next three years. According to the same survey, AI skills were assessed as the second most in-demand skill behind cybersecurity.

"Community colleges," the company added, "offer the opportunity to democratize AI technology since they attract a diverse array of students with various backgrounds and expertise. The expansion of the program will provide access and opportunities to a broad group of students in these fields, including those in underrepresented and underserved communities, and offer the technological skills needed for the job market. Students will learn traditional skills, such as data collection, AI model training and coding, and will explore the societal impact of AI technology."

Intel launched its AI for Workforce Program in 2020, and OCC signed on in 2021 — the second institution to do so.

Now, in addition to OCC, 17 other community colleges across the country, in 11 states, are taking part in the program, enabling hundreds of thousands of students to land careers in exciting fields: high-tech, health-care, automotive, industrial, aerospace and more.

“Intel has been an amazing partner to work with,” said Ken Michalek, a Lecturer II in OCC’s Computer Science Department. “They are deeply committed in helping us put together an exciting program in AI here at Ocean County College. They have provided us with faculty training, class material, lab support, and guidance for the program. It’s really an honor to be working with such a great team as Intel. They are extremely committed to OCC and our students in creating the future with AI.”

He added, “We are collaborating with Intel on the course materials that will be distributed to all community colleges that are going to offer an AI program based on Intel’s AI for Workforce program.” Intel asked Michalek to serve as a reviewer for the Intro to AI and Machine Learning courses, and every few weeks he and others on the team meet to review the materials and suggest modifications.

As Michalek pointed out, the first advisory board meeting for the AI degrees was held this fall. The board includes industry partners Gretchen Stewart, Chief Data Scientist at Intel Public Sector, and the Board Co-Chair; Habib Matar, Professor of AI at Maricopa

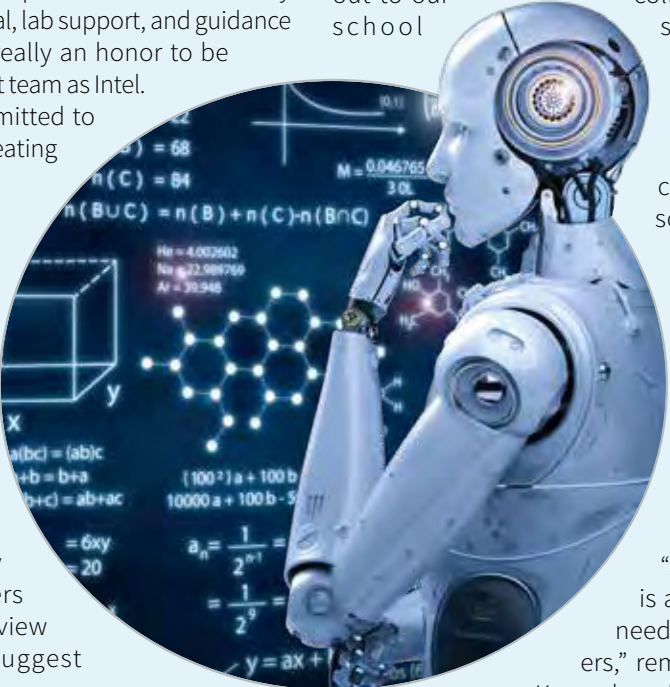
Community College, the first school to offer the AI program; and Mike Coss, Robotics and Media Processing Department Head at Nokia Bell Labs.

Michalek has been working “to get the word out to our school

college and high students in the area”; he gave presentations about the AI program at OCC’s summer cybersecurity camp for middle and high school students and at this past fall’s High School Guidance Counselors Breakfast. He also presented to the OCC Computer Science Club, the Spark Innovation Lab, the Lacey Township College Academy, and Student Affairs.

“Artificial technology is accelerating, as is the need for skilled AI workers,” remarked Dr. Joseph Konopka, vice president of Academic Affairs at OCC. “Our stu-

dents will now be able to join the AI fast track, as they acquire the tools and the vision to continue toward an occupation in a variety of fields, including aerospace, engineering, software development, business, architecture and much more.”



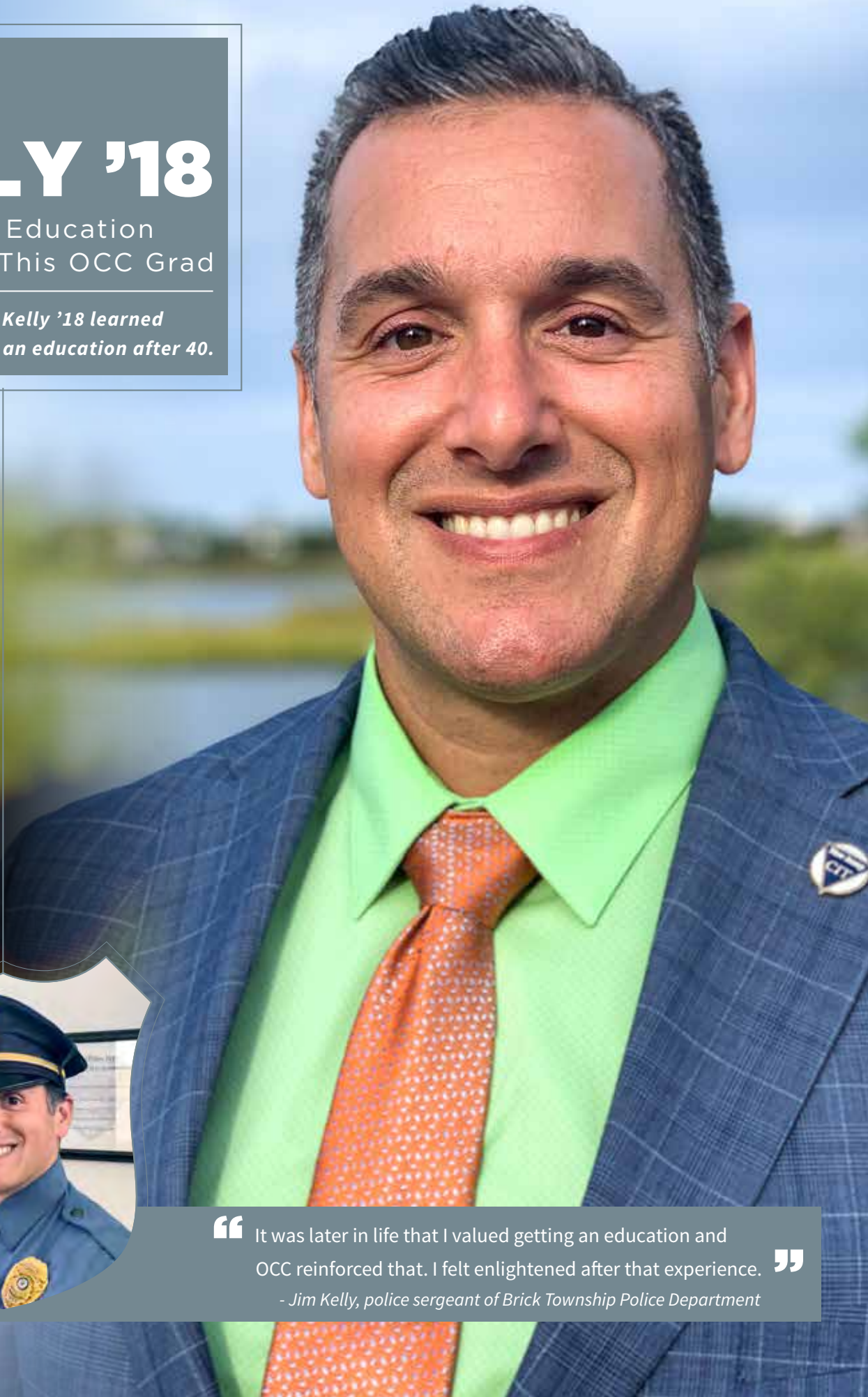
“ Our students will now be able to join the AI fast track ... including aerospace, engineering, software development, business, architecture and much more. ”

- Joseph Konopka, Ph.D., vice president of Academic Affairs

JIM KELLY '18

Later-in-Life Education
Enlightened This OCC Grad

*Police sergeant Jim Kelly '18 learned
the value of getting an education after 40.*



“ It was later in life that I valued getting an education and OCC reinforced that. I felt enlightened after that experience. ”
- Jim Kelly, police sergeant of Brick Township Police Department

For Jim Kelly '18, earning an associate degree in Liberal Arts at age 42 empowered him more than he could have imagined when he decided to enroll at OCC.

Not only did the married father of two graduate with a 4.0 GPA, but he was a member of Phi Theta Kappa and a nominee to the PTK All-American Academic Team. And he did it all while working full-time as a sergeant with the Brick Township Police Department.

"After high school, I was just stubborn — and didn't really think about college," Kelly explained. "I was a bass player and songwriter with the band Black Feet. We toured the east coast, put out a couple CDs, were on the radio and opened for some big acts. I chased that dream for six years."

After meeting and marrying Liza — to whom he has been married for more than 20 years — Kelly held a variety of jobs, including working for ShopRite and Coca-Cola, until he was hired as a police officer in 2006. While studying for the exam to be promoted to sergeant, he read a lot of case law and decided he wanted to go to law school.

"I was impressed with the writing, argument, persuasion, and more about the law," he said. "I Googled 'going to law school,' and discovered I would need an undergraduate degree first."

Although Kelly lived in Brick Township at the time, he had moved around a lot as a child, and wasn't that familiar with Ocean County College. When he began to explore education options, it just seemed natural to start with community college.

"I remember the first time I walked onto the campus. I fell in love with it and all the possibilities. As I learned more about learning, I became an OCC super fan," Kelly noted. "I kept asking, 'What's next?'"

"I'm beyond proud of myself for graduating from OCC. It was later in life that I valued getting an education and OCC reinforced that. I felt enlightened after that experience."

Now a senior in the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences Honors Program, Kelly will earn a bachelor's degree in Philosophy with a History minor. He continues to hold a 4.0 GPA and is a member of Phi Sigma Tau, the international honor society for Philosophy.

As an instructor at the Ocean County Police Academy, Kelly teaches several courses: The Principles of Arrest, Search and Seizure, Use of Force, and Cultural Diversity. He also created a curriculum with the Ocean County Health Department's County Alcohol and Drug Coordinator that teaches police recruits the tenets and best practices of responding to substance use disorder in their community. That curriculum is currently being taught to police recruits at the academy.

Kelly supervises the community policing function of his three-person unit and acts as the Public Information Officer. He also does public and community relations work with youth, seniors, the addictions and recovery community, mental health profes-

sionals, clergy, minority youth, and education professionals.

"I also participate in several projects that the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office oversees and administers, one of which includes my participation in the Michael Camillus Project, through which I study addictions and recovery to earn my Certificate of Completion in Alcohol and Drug Counseling from OCC," Kelly remarked.

"The College is so innovative with these programs, services, and partnerships. It's cutting-edge. And we need this in Ocean County, where there is not enough drug awareness and interdiction in the school districts."

He calls Ocean County College a "beacon" for shining a light on public health issues and for taking action to help deal with them.

SCHOLARSHIP HELP

Kelly will always be grateful for the scholarships he received while an OCC student. In addition to an Honors by Contract Scholarship and several general scholarships from the OCC Foundation, he also won the Carleen Sterling Orsi Memorial Renewal Award.

"These scholarships helped me tremendously," said Kelly. "First, although I have a steady and reliable income, paying for college on top of the costs of raising a family is a burden, and the scholarship money was a true relief."

The scholarships also acted as a catalyst to persevere, encouraging him to press on with his academic pursuits. "The awards told me that my grit was worth it and my efforts were recognized.

"Last but not least, the scholarships showed my two children that hard work and effort are worthy qualities. They saw me working hard and then they saw me rewarded for it and that's important," he added.

This is why Kelly has decided to work with OCC's *Why I Give* campaign to establish a named scholarship for graduating non-traditional students.

"I'm naming it the *Janet Thompson Memorial Award* after my mother, who was one of the smartest and hardest-working people I have known. I want those non-traditional students who work full-time to be recognized for their efforts to better themselves through education and for the dedication it takes to make that happen."

A self-proclaimed "problem student" growing up, Kelly said "something has to click in a person [to recognize why education is important], and I am thankful for the outstanding education and opportunities OCC gave me."

Kelly keeps his PTK stole and medal from the state competition framed with his graduation tassel near his desk. He maintains his grades and participation to ensure he is a "good law school applicant," as he looks ahead at the next step in his education.

PAR for the COLLEGE



On a beautiful October day, the OCC Foundation hosted a sold-out event where 120 golfers participated in the 20th Annual Ocean County College Foundation Golf Classic at Pine Barrens Golf Club in Jackson, raising over \$66,000. Event proceeds will benefit the mission of the OCC Foundation for scholarship support, global and domestic travel, early college jump start, and much more.

The Golf Classic featured a morning brunch, a round of golf, and a cocktail reception. More than 60 local businesses and

20TH ANNUAL
GOLF CLASSIC IS A HIT

**RAISING
OVER
\$66,000**

individuals sponsored this event. “Hosting events enriches the fabric of any impact organization, giving our stakeholders an

opportunity to reconnect (in-person) while raising funds and awareness of our mission. This always makes for a wonderful day!” said Sherri A. Bray, assistant director of Events and Advancement, OCC Foundation.

One of the highlights of this year’s outing was the “Beat the OCC Foundation Executive Director” contest. Stationed at the tee of a short par-3 hole, players had the chance to beat Kenneth J. Malagiere, Executive Director of the OCC Foundation — which most golfers did! “Win or lose, each challenge was a great

JRS

SAVE THE DATE!

BLAUVELT SPEAKER SERIES



PRESENTED BY
OCEAN
COUNTY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION



THE TEN TENORS
FRIDAY, APRIL 1
8:00 p.m. - IN-PERSON

Open your hearts to The TEN Tenors because Love Is in the Air! The TEN Tenors will be singing some of the most popular feel-good love songs and wedding first-dance songs of all time.

JOANN NOCERA

THURSDAY, APRIL 7
9:30 a.m. - IN-PERSON

An Educational Leader, Creativity Enthusiast, and Author with over two decades of experience helping children reach their highest learning potential and teaching parents strategies to assist in the process.



PHILIPPE COUSTEAU

THURSDAY, MAY 19
6:30 p.m. - IN-PERSON

Inspired by the legacy of his grandfather Jacques Cousteau, Philippe is a multiple Emmy-nominated TV host and producer as well as an author, speaker, and social entrepreneur.



ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION
FRIDAY, JUNE 24

opportunity to chat with the foursomes as they enjoyed the day of fresh air and fellowship," Malagiere remarked. "There is always an additional sense of gratitude to see the many faculty, administration, and support staff give of their own time and treasure to support the students of OCC."

"We are so grateful for the support of all of our sponsors, golfers, and volunteers," noted Michael B. York, Golf Classic Chair. "Without their continued support and generosity, we would not be able to raise the funds necessary to support the many programs and services our students rely on."

NEW BEGINNING

At the start of 2022, current OCC Foundation Board Vice Chair David Paulus assumed the role of Chair — and he's eager to embark on the new, but familiar, adventure. "I am excited to continue to work with our strong executive director and the entire Foundation team," said Paulus. "They know how to do it! I am also excited to help grow our Foundation to the next financial milestone and bring new ideas for development.

"We have a very active board and I am looking forward to working with them all," he added. "Community engagement is also one of my priorities. The more people who know we are here, and what we have here, the more successful we will be."

RAISED

Paulus — who grew up in East Brunswick and Sea Girt, and now lives in Toms River — attended Ocean County College from 1979-1981, and was the second-ever student representative for the OCC Board of Trustees. He earned his bachelor's degree from Monmouth University (then called Monmouth College) in 1983, then launched, with a partner, Twinn Cedars Landscape, Construction Group in Toms River, while also taking master's program courses.

SERVED

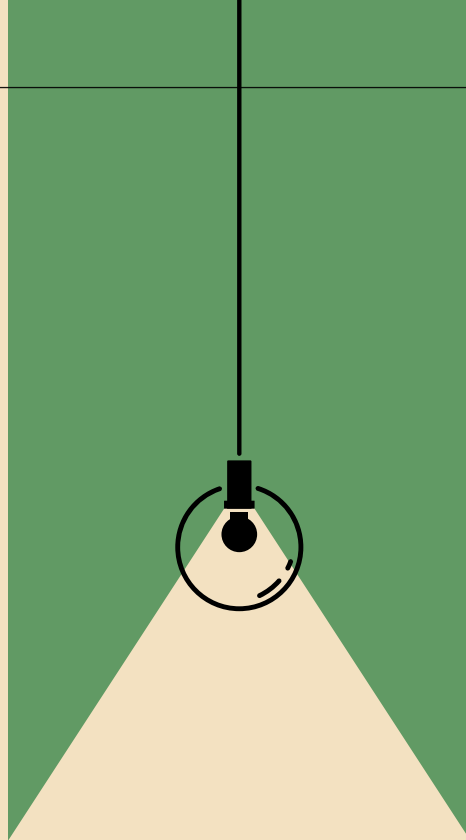
For a total of eight years through the 1980s and the early 1990s, Paulus served as President of the OCC Alumni Advisory Council, which raised scholarship money; contributed funding to build the campus library clock tower; started an alumni fund for academic excellence; and organized several engagement opportunities for students and alumni, including 5K runs, cocktail parties and get-togethers on campus. He remained a member of that group until the late '90s, when it disbanded.

Also during that time period — in 1986 — Paulus joined the OCC Foundation Board, further cementing his already strong bond with the College.

As he explained, "My mom was a professor here for about 27 years. She loved this place and instilled that in me. I am a graduate and I had a great experience. I believe in the 'community college concept."

CONTRIBUTED

"My first contribution to the College was in 1984," he added. "I donated \$500 for a memory typewriter for the Alumni Affairs office, where the part-time person was still writing her notes in a notebook. I did it because she needed it, but the



a moment with

DAVID PAULUS

taking the helm of the OCC Foundation Board



'thank you' response was what filled my heart." Fast forward nearly 40 years, and Paulus remarks: "My heart is still here! My daughter is a graduate and my son just completed a medical program for his next career move." What also keeps him so connected to OCC, he stated, is: "The faces of happy students walking across the campus or in the graduation procession. The conversations with students who didn't think college was possible, but it in fact changed their lives. Watching this campus grow and stay on the cutting edge. Ultimately, helping to provide a local education that helps our community." As a member of the OCC Foundation Board, Paulus has chaired scholarship and community outreach committees, supported numerous events, encouraged and guided hundreds of students in regard to scholarship opportunities, and spoken on many occasions about "what the Foundation is all about."

He served a four-year tenure as vice chair, and, prior to that, was on the executive committee as the Community Outreach chair. "The responsibilities of the vice chair start with the responsibilities of any board member," he stated, "to be committed to the mission and vision of the organization, by helping students receive a quality education on this amazing campus. Helping to guide the fundraising efforts and provide the College and its students with scholarships and also tangible items — the extras that the College needs but cannot get through its normal governmental support or student tuition — is so important."

Paulus also helped create the 200 Club of Ocean County scholarship, which has, so far, raised approximately \$300,000 for students related to police officers, firefighters, or EMS first responders to attend OCC. The 200 Club of Ocean County, of which Paulus is president, "is a widows' and orphans' support organization, for first responders and their families who are seriously injured or killed in the line of duty," he explained. "We help the families realize that although their family member may be gone, they are never forgotten."

ALUMNI

As a proud alumnus, and a longtime member of the Foundation Board, Paulus wants everyone to know:

"OCC can compete and beat most colleges and universities across the country for its quality of education. And when we educate students locally, they stay, which is truly an investment in the community."

SHEDDING LIGHT

on new student opportunities,
the Ocean County College Foundation welcomes

4 NEW MEMBERS

to the Board of Trustees

**Stacey Kavanagh, First Vice President,
Market Manager, Provident Bank**

“The reason I choose to support the College Foundation is to assist in collaboration with the administration of Ocean County College and the Board of Directors to secure resources to help the College fulfill its mission and help students benefit from the institution’s activities. My goal is to help increase financial resources to allow students, from all walks of life, opportunities that will help to achieve their academic and career goals.”



**Debra J. Morgan, Senior Vice President,
Market Manager, Lakeland Bank**

“The reason I wanted to serve on the OCC Foundation Board of Trustees is that I believe that education should be accessible and affordable to anyone who chooses to pursue higher education. Ocean County College provides the way forward to attaining education for so many deserving students in our community. I would love to be a part of the OCC Foundation as they continue to support the Ocean County College growth and development for the future.”



**Jessica Egger, Manager, Community Outreach,
Customer & Community Relations, New Jersey Natural Gas**

“I choose to support OCC and the work of the Foundation because I believe that every individual deserves a college education to pursue opportunities that a higher education provides. I’m also passionate about being involved and making a difference in the community where I grew up and still live.”



**Dr. Marilyn Kralik, Professor of Humanities,
Ocean County College**

“Serving on the OCC Foundation Board while still teaching in the classroom gives me the best of all possible worlds. I love working with students. Now, I also get to work with the larger OCC community to actively raise funds on the students’ behalf. I’m honored and proud to now be an OCC Foundation Board member, and I look forward to the challenge.”



GRUNIN CENTER EVENTS

the affable Dr. SANJAY GUPTA

The 2022 Blauvelt Speaker Series kicked off on February 2 with a visit from Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Emmy-winning journalist, neurosurgeon, and chief medical correspondent for CNN.

The highly-anticipated event began with a Q&A session with OCC nursing students, followed by a reception in the Novins Planetarium. Gupta's presentation on the Main Stage capped off the evening, which was presented by the OCC Foundation.

Excitement was palpable when Dr. Gupta met with students enrolled in the nursing program at OCC. Before taking questions, he thanked them for what they are doing and assured them that they are needed now more than ever.

Living better and longer was the topic of Gupta's presentation, which was also presented to a virtual audience. Until recently, scientists believed that the brain has a fixed number of neurons—brain cells—that deteriorate over time, and a decline in cognitive ability was inevitable as we grow old. Over the past decade or so, researchers have discovered that the brain can continue to grow throughout our lives. In fact, it can actually *get better* – learning to function more effectively.

For more information about upcoming presentations, visit go.ocean.edu/FoundationEvents.

The Blauvelt Speaker Series is funded in part by the generosity of the late Bradford Thomas & Eleanor G. Blauvelt and The Wintrode Family Foundation. This year's additional sponsors include Arlene and Frank Dupignac, Jr., the late Helen M. Earles, Ph.D., Judi and Stephan Leone, New Jersey Natural Gas, and Novins, York, Jacobus and Dooley.



The TEN Tenors

Benefit Concert at the Grunin Center
APRIL 1 · 8:00 p.m.



LOVE IS IN THE AIR

For tickets, visit grunincenter.org

'LOVE IS IN THE AIR' AS THE TEN TENORS PERFORM

Have a soft spot for a tender tune? Be sure not to miss the April 1 performance of the Australian music ensemble The TEN Tenors, and their signature 10-part harmonies, at the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts. The 8 p.m. show, titled "Love is in the Air," will benefit the OCC Foundation.

The TEN Tenors – currently comprised of Cameron Barclay, Daniel Belle, Michael Dimovski, Michael Edwards, Adrian Li Donni, Jarad Newell, Boyd Owen, JD Smith, Riley Sutton, and Sam Ward – will sing some of the most popular feel-good love songs and wedding first-dance songs of all time.

Since The TEN Tenors was first formed in 1995, the group has performed extensively in Australia as well as internationally and on television. They have headlined more than 2,000 concerts around the world, and released 15 albums. The ensemble is renowned for their dynamic, choreographed performances and skillful ability to seamlessly transition from operatic arias to soulful ballads to chart-topping rock songs.

They've shared the stage with artists such as Lionel Richie, Rod Stewart, Andrea Bocelli, Willie Nelson, Alanis Morissette and Christina Aguilera, and have appeared on *The Today Show*, *Oprah's Australian Adventure*, and *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

The TEN Tenors' April 1 concert is a benefit to support the students of OCC. As the OCC Foundation explains, "Despite the College's best efforts to contain costs and maintain an affordable education, many students still have a tremendous need

for financial assistance. Scholarships make a difference. Your support of this event can turn the dream of a college education into a reality for many Ocean County students!"

Show sponsors include: Carluccio, Leone, Dimon, Doyle & Sacks; the Grunin Foundation; the Citta Foundation; Novins, York, Jacobus & Dooley; 200 Club of Ocean County; Commissioner Virginia E. Haines; Investors Bank; Dr. Teri Kubiell and Brian S. Kubiell; New Jersey Natural Gas; OceanFirst Bank; Rotem Dental Care; and Vision Financial Services.

WELCOME NEW EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

After a lifetime and a career immersed in the arts in various forms, Shannon Mayers joined OCC last summer as Executive and Artistic Director, responsible for overseeing all activities for the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts and the Robert J. Novins Planetarium.

A year-long national search brought Mayers to the College, where one of her first priorities was to increase visibility and expand audience reach to new groups that may not have previously considered participating in the arts. Her overarching goal is to "entertain and engage audiences, inspire and enlighten the next generation of art enthusiasts, and champion the arts as vital to the soul of every community."

Mayers will lead the Grunin Center and the Novins Planetarium through a three-year strategic plan that will include several new exciting initiatives, including a summer outdoors concert series and a "Public Health and the Arts" program.



“It's clear how OCC values the arts — giving students the chance to learn by doing, and sharing what they learn ... and it's wonderful to see the College embracing that.”
- Shannon Mayers, executive and artistic director of the Grunin Center and Novins Planetarium

Josephine O'Grady '21

Made the Most of Her Time at OCC, Then Kean!

Student/alumni trustee Josephine O'Grady had her eye on Ocean County College for many years before she enrolled. "My parents are proud OCC alumni, and I've known since I was a kid that I would come here first before deciding what I wanted to do with my life," O'Grady, 19, explained. "I used to come to the campus all the time with my parents, and they would point out all the old buildings where they took classes."

The Bay Head resident was homeschooled; she earned her GED at 16 years old, then took two classes as a JumpStart student before transitioning to full-time at OCC at the age of 17.

As O'Grady stated, "OCC gave me a solid foundation, in that I had the time and flexibility to explore all my interests at a campus conveniently located close to home, without spending a ton of money. Further, the professors, faculty, and students that I've met here, as well as the campus activities I've pursued, have made me figure out my goals and aspirations."

THINK. WRITE. SPEAK.

There are many remarkable faculty members at OCC, said O'Grady, including two, in particular, that "made a significant difference in my academic career."

"Dr. Mark Westmoreland was my instructor for two semesters, for both Philosophy and Ethics, which I took as Honors by Contract courses," she noted. "Dr. Westmoreland's role as a teacher and mentor made an outstanding difference in my time at OCC. ... His input made me a better writer, speaker, critical thinker, and overall student. I see myself and others as having the potential to make more of a difference in this world than I ever would have believed before taking his classes."

She also mentioned Dr. Ameer Sohrawardy, her World Literature lecturer in her final year at OCC. "His support and guidance, both while I was taking his class and thereafter, have been instrumental in my continued ambitions as a writer," she remarked.

Who's that girl?

"During my time studying with him, I had takeaways from our class discussions that I've internalized and continue to use many months later. I'll always remember Dr. Sohrawardy's enthusiasm for literature and encouragement to consistently use literary takeaways for a higher level of understanding about the human condition."

PEN TO PAPER

O'Grady's writing talent was recognized when she was named a winner of the College's 9/11 prose contest in 2021. Her nonfiction piece, titled "Filling the Void in Manhattan: Reflecting on 9/11," "consisted of both a written interview, from a dear friend that had witnessed the attacks, and a reflective essay that gathers my thoughts from the interview. The interview was an amazing opportunity to understand the burden the 9/11 attacks continue to have on its physical witnesses. My piece is primarily about documenting my interviewee's experience of watching the towers fall from her apartment window, and the emotional recovery following the attacks. My essay speaks primarily about the need for personal resourcefulness and sense of community to emotionally progress through all kinds of tragedy."

O'Grady's interest in writing also led her to co-edit the Seascape literary magazine during her time at OCC (where her favorite building is, naturally, the library). In addition, she joined the Philosophy Club; was involved with the Music Department; and was a founding member of the College's chapter of Sigma Kappa Delta, the National English Honor Society for two-year colleges, for which she served on the executive board.

EXPERIENCE EXPLORATION

Outside of activities on campus, she was a student advisor for *Scholastic Choices* magazine; a camp counselor for PALS, a nonprofit that creates inclusive camp experiences for people with and without Down syndrome; and a server at an assisted living facility.



O'Grady earned her associate degree in Liberal Arts in May 2021, and was invited to serve as one of two student marshals at Commencement. "This role required me to lead and coordinate the lines of march during the ceremony," she explained. "The experience was amazing. My OCC graduation was the first major, in-person event post-lockdown for me, and the chance to participate in such an important role among my fellow graduates was very humbling."



Currently, O’Grady is in her senior year at Kean University, where she is a Public Health major. As she noted, “I took Kean classes while studying at OCC, as well as summer classes, so I could graduate with my bachelor’s degree sooner!” She was just accepted to University College London for graduate school – one of her top choices.

“My studies have pointed out new interests for me in social and developmental policy, so I am applying to several graduate programs in global policy, public policy, and international studies,” said O’Grady, who serves as vice president of the Kean-Ocean Office of Student Government.

LOVE WHAT YOU DO

“In terms of a career,” she added, “I would love to work for some sort of social research institute, nonprofit, or other non-governmental organization. College has given me an increased focus on social justice in my professional goals. I am currently interning at Unchained At Last, the only organization working to end child marriage in the United States. I love the work and I would like to continue working in the nonprofit sector to see where it takes me.”

In her free time, O’Grady heads outdoors – to surf, kayak, hike, and mountain bike – or opens a good book.

And, on the subject of time, O’Grady has this to say to current and future Vikings: “Use your time at OCC well. Take advantage of all the wonderful resources and opportunities on offer. The two years go by fast, yet they will determine what goals you can realistically set for yourself after you graduate.”

“ OCC gave me a solid foundation, in that I had the time and flexibility to explore all my interests. ”

- Josephine O’Grady

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



photo: Barnegat Bay - Little Egg Harbor Estuary ©Michael Leon

Barnegat Bay Partnership Launches Revised Plan for Protecting Barnegat Bay

The Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP), the National Estuary Program for the Barnegat Bay, has revised the plan for protecting and restoring clean water and healthy living resources in the bay and its watershed. The 2021 “Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Barnegat Bay – Little Egg Harbor Estuary” (CCMP) is a roadmap for the agencies, organizations, and local communities working collectively to improve the condition of this nationally significant estuary.

The Barnegat Bay is the jewel of the Jersey Shore. Formed by barrier islands, the estuary extends over 42 miles from the Point Pleasant Canal to the Little Egg Harbor Inlet. Its watershed is a land area of more than 660 square miles encompassing most of Ocean County and part of southern Monmouth County.

People who live, work, and play in the region rely on the estuary’s resources for food, jobs, and recreation. The Barnegat Bay is an economic powerhouse, supporting one of the most valuable economies of any estuary in the nation, contributing \$2-\$4 billion annually to New Jersey’s economy.

“Over the last 50 years, the watershed has experienced a

tremendous increase in population and development, leading to increased pollution loads, stressed water supplies, and loss of fish and wildlife habitat,” said Dr. Stan Hales, BBP Director. “These changes in the bay’s condition have environmental, cultural, and economic impacts to local communities and the entire region.”

The 2021 CCMP replaces the original plan, which guided the actions of the BBP and its partners since 2002. The newly revised document reflects an increase in scientific knowledge about the Barnegat Bay and addresses new challenges, such as climate change and sea level rise. It reviews the progress made over the past 19 years, reassesses priorities, and focuses the collective efforts of BBP partners over the next 10 years or more.

The revised plan establishes four main priority areas for action: water quality, water supply, living resources, and land use. It also sets eight ecosystem targets — specific environmental outcomes that combine actions across multiple priorities and can be monitored to measure progress (e.g., increasing the acreage of key habitats, such as submerged aquatic vegetation, and increasing the number of hard clams in Little Egg Harbor).



“Barnegat Bay is changing in many ways, but the public clearly remains committed to its protection and restoration. ... The CCMP makes clear that we need to work together if we want to secure our environmental and economic future!” - Dr. Stan Hales, director of Barnegat Bay Partnership

CCMP identifies action and strategies

Climate change and sea level rise are already impacting the bay and its watershed. The 2021 CCMP identifies the actions most vulnerable to climate change risks and the strategies for minimizing the impacts. Other important components of the plan are education and community participation in stewardship, which are critical to the plan's success.

"Barnegat Bay is changing in many ways, but the public clearly remains committed to its protection and restoration," Hales noted. "We received more than 900 comments as we developed the 2021 CCMP. We thank the public for sharing their concerns about the bay and our many federal, state, and local partners and other regional experts for their commitment and assistance in revising the plan. The CCMP makes clear that we need to work together if we want to secure our environmental and economic future!"

The Barnegat Bay Partnership holds CCMP signing ceremony

On October 26, 2021, the Barnegat Bay Partnership held a CCMP signing ceremony event at the new Conference Center on the campus of Ocean County College. During the ceremony, BBP partners re-affirmed their commitment to implementing the actions and achieving the goals of the revised plan. The event included an overview of the plan's priorities and remarks by members of the BBP's Policy Committee.

"Restoring and improving the health of the Barnegat Bay estuary and watershed is more important than ever given the threats that climate change poses to estuaries, and EPA remains committed to protecting this critical natural resource," said EPA Acting Regional Administrator Walter Mugdan. "A healthy Barnegat Bay is vital to sustaining water quality, aquatic life and habitat, and local communities, especially those facing environmental justice challenges. This revised Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan demonstrates a collective commitment to build on the progress of the Barnegat Bay Partnership and to further revitalize the health and vitality of this critical watershed."



photo: Barnegat Bay - Little Egg Harbor Estuary @Michael Leon

As Hales pointed out, the CCMP was the product of much hard work by the BBP and partners – such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the Ocean County Commissioners, the Ocean County Mayors Association, and citizen representatives – as well as local and regional experts and other stakeholders.

Barnegat Bay Partnership

Visit the BBP website to view and/or download the 2021 "Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Barnegat Bay – Little Egg Harbor Estuary." A link to a recording of the October 26 event will also be available on www.barnegatbaypartnership.org.



photo: Naturalists students visit Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center

For information on how you can be a part of maintaining the health and well-being of the Barnegat Bay watershed's water, plants and animals, visit www.barnegatbaypartnership.org and email Karen Walzer at kwalzer@ocean.edu with questions.



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GYM RENOVATION COMPLETE

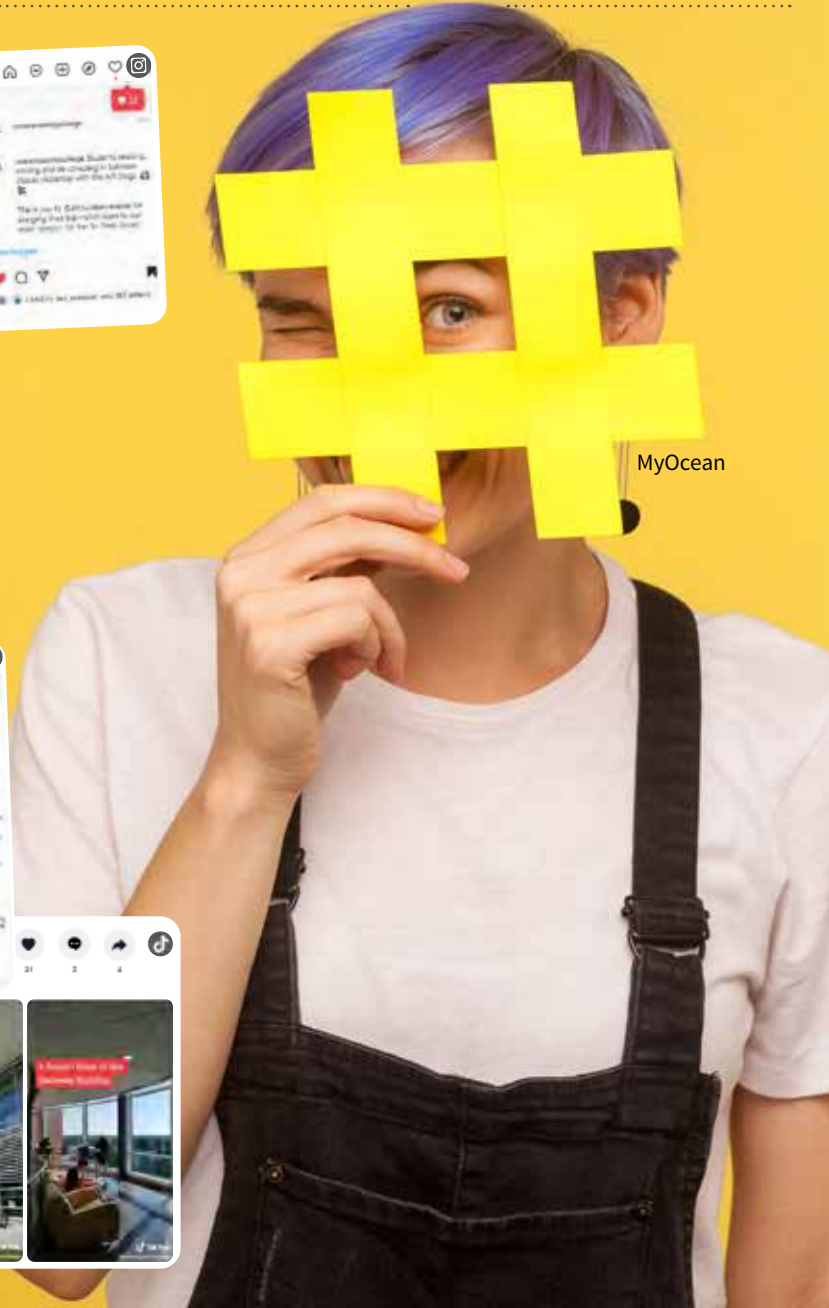
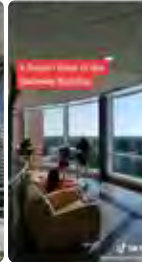
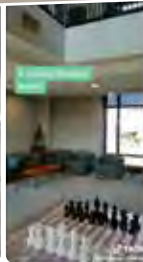
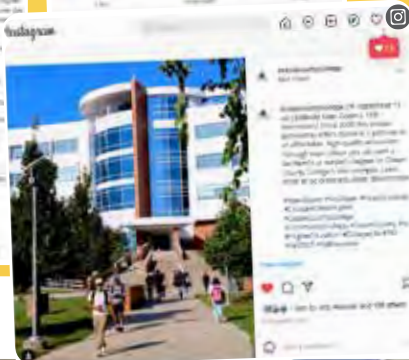
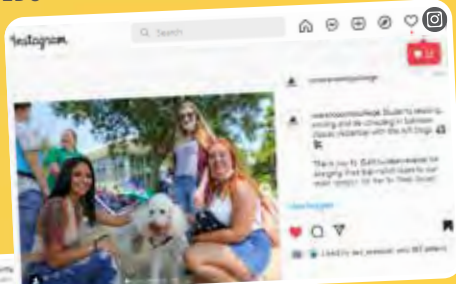
OCC's Health & Physical Education Center (HPEC) on campus underwent a renovation targeting a 10,473 GSF area, mostly on one floor of the structure. Additional renovations created a new ADA-accessible gymnasium space and a cafeteria eating area. As OCC Facilities explained, the project entailed creating a volleyball court, basketball courts, and the eating area; replacing the HVAC system for this section of the building; constructing new bathroom facilities; building a new, exterior entrance vestibule; and installing a new wet sprinkler fire protection system. OCC students, as well as high school students that attend the Grunin Performing Arts Academy of the Ocean County Vocational Technical School, are now utilizing this upgraded space.



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