



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO: Members, OCC Board of Trustees

FROM: Pamela Monaco, Ph.D.
President

SUBJECT: Items of Interest for the February 27, 2025, Board Meeting

DATE: February 21, 2025

Student Presentation

Phi Theta Kappa is on a mission to restore the campus arboretum. For the Honor's in Action project, OCC's Tau Iota Chapter chose the theme of preserving stories. The members discovered the story of the arboretum, a beautiful treasure hidden in the trails at OCC. It had once been a lively place with various animal and plant species indigenous to New Jersey, which Ocean County residents visited regularly. Students, staff, and county residents went there when they needed a break. It had an amphitheater where classes used to be held. Over time, nature has taken over, and it now lies overgrown and forgotten.

PTK has chosen to preserve the story of the arboretum and to encourage the College to restore it to what it once was. With Assistant Dean of STEM Carolyn Showalter and Professor of English Dr. Jennifer Dellner, PTK advisors, the President of Tau Iota, Areeba Zulkarnain, and her board members Nayeli Rojas, Karina Rivera, and Oluwatitomisin Sobayo began the project to raise awareness about the arboretum. Collaborating with WOCC Radio Club's board members, Chris Umerovski and Peter Tatro, they have created a video showing the arboretum's glory of the past, how it looks now, and the plans to restore it. They have also garnered support from Student Life, the Ocean County College Foundation, EOF, and Facilities. It has now become a widespread project across campus, gaining support from multiple departments and clubs.

Areeba, Nayeli, Karina, and Oluwatitomisin are excited to share their impressive work and video with you at Thursday's meeting.

Board of Trustees Professional Development

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges is offering a two-night Virtual Trustee Leadership Academy on Tuesday, March 25, and Thursday, March 27, 2025, from 6 to 8 p.m. each evening. Trustees who attend

both sessions will receive a certificate that confirms they have met the state's training requirements for new trustees. State law 18A:3B-6.3 requires that all trustees of higher education public institutions appointed on or after April 16, 2022, complete the training, which is also valuable for longer-serving community college trustees.

The Council has again partnered with ACCT to deliver the training. Mr. Ken Burke and Ms. Mary Spilde will facilitate the sessions. Mr. Burke served on the Board of Trustees of St. Petersburg College for thirteen years, and Ms. Spilde served as the president of Lane Community College in Oregon for sixteen years. Both served as facilitators for the Council's in-person academy in Fall 2022 and the subsequent virtual training.

The Council funds the training, with no cost to the colleges to participate. Trustees DiAnne Gove, Susan Naples, and Cheyenne Severin attended the training in October 2024. We encourage your attendance if you haven't participated in this valuable training. We will be happy to register you with the Council.

Faculty and Staff Honors and Awards

Ms. Jamie Prioli, Assistant Director of Disability Services, has been appointed an advisory member of the Vicinage Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (VAC DI&CE) in Ocean County, chaired by the Honorable Therese Cunningham. The committee works to enhance court outreach, promote equality, and eliminate bias in the judicial system.

Faculty and Staff Activities, Presentations, and Publications

Dr. Madison Peschock, College Lecturer II in English, has been asked by LP publishers to write a new chapter for a forthcoming book on Truman Capote and his book, *In Cold Blood*, for a collected edition titled *Children's Literature Review* to be published in 2026 by Gale Literature Center.

Student Successes, Awards, and Honors

- The New Jersey Southern Junior Science and Humanities Symposium was held on February 7, 2025. It is a regional competition sponsored by the Department of Defense, Army, Navy, and Air Force. Ocean County College hosted the event at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB-MDL). Five student research papers were selected to represent our region at the National Competition in Chantilly, Virginia, in April 2025.
- The Engineering and Industrial/Technical Studies program initiative, which works with OCC students to allow them to be published authors, was represented at the recent Research Networking Event. Since its inception in 2021, four OCC students have co-authored papers with Ms. Pamela Bogdan, College Lecturer II in Engineering. Most recently, two students also co-presented the papers at the professional conference.
- Ocean County College's 2024 Nursing licensure passing rate was 96.99%, with 133 sitting for the examination. Scores remain above the national passing rate for all Associate Degree Nursing programs (90.63%) and for all Nursing programs (91.16%). Currently, 316 students are enrolled in the Nursing program for the Spring 2025 semester.
- On January 29, 2025, College Lecturer II in Political Science Jason Ghibesi's Comparative Politics class participated in a virtual conversation sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations titled "Trump and the Future of American Statecraft" featuring Ms. Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, President of the

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Students enjoyed participating in a question-and-answer forum, enhancing the material covered in OCC's Comparative Politics curriculum.

- For the third consecutive year, OCC Computer Science students are working with personnel from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst on a software internship program. Students are collaborating with the JB-MDL team this year to build an Air Force technician training and tracking system. This student-led project provides participants with hands-on experience developing a software application—from the initial analysis stage to the final deployment. Currently, students are reviewing base requirements and designing the database engine, with the initial development phase targeted for completion between May and June 2025.
- As of February 5, 2025, the 12 students enrolled in SOWK202, Social Work Seminar and Practicum, have been matched with an internship across one of OCC's partnering organizations, including *Family Promise; Choose Love, Celebrate Life (CLCL); Bright Harbor; Ocean, Inc.; and OCC's Helping Hands*. Eleven of the 12 students are expected to graduate in May 2025 with an Associate in Science Degree in Social Work.
- Seventeen students from the Social Work program participated in the Mental Health First Aide training on February 20, 2025, hosted by the Counseling Center. The training certificate is a national effort to support students' skills and equip them to work as trauma-informed professionals.
- Ms. Charlotte Langeveld, College Lecturer II in Social Sciences, coordinated the second annual Trash to Treasure contest launch on February 20, 2025. Ms. Lynn Brotherson, founder of Stroke Your Eco, also led this project launch. Students learned about the contest and participation details, which turn waste into art, promoting recycling and sustainability. The event and contest will foster environmental responsibility, artistic innovation, and community engagement while empowering students to address sustainability creatively and connecting them with advocates.

Student Support Services

- Director of Transfer and Articulation Laura Wills and Senior Advising Technician Lisa Gilliar are providing OCC students with a robust transfer event schedule this Spring. Ms. Wills will host weekly or biweekly Transfer Information Sessions. These sessions provide students with the information needed to start the transfer planning process, such as NJ Transfer, selection of major, and utilization of transfer institution websites.
- Representatives from universities will be on campus this semester to speak with students about degrees, programs, and campus life. Participating universities include Felician, Georgian Court, Ramapo, Rowan, Southern New Hampshire, Stockton, and Thomas Edison.
- OCC students will also be able to attend Instant Decision Days. These events allow students to meet with an admissions representative and waive the application fee. Students almost always receive an offer of admission at the event. Participating institutions include: Stockton University, Rowan University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Monmouth University, Montclair University, Kean Ocean, NJIT, Drew University, Georgian Court University, Rutgers New Brunswick, The College of New Jersey, William Paterson University, and Seton Hall University.
- Students can also take advantage of Kean Ocean Dual Advising Days. Students can meet with OCC Advising and Kean Admissions representatives for a dual appointment and learn how their credits will transfer seamlessly.

Outreach to Students

- The Grunin Center hosted the New Jersey Poetry Out Loud Region 3 competition this month. Students from 12 high schools in Middlesex, Monmouth, and Ocean Counties competed in a poetry recitation contest that "lifts poetry off the page, creating community and connection." Two of the regional winners went on to become state champions.
- The Grunin Center is partnering with Student Affairs, Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships, and the Latino Institute to plan educational workshops for current ESL students, their families, and other students who might be interested.
- The Spring semester's Afternoon Recital Series, curated by Music College Lecturer II Brian Gilmore, kicked off with flutist Boemjae Kim on Friday, February 21, 2025. His solo work ranges from Baroque to modern styles. These performances often offer workshops for the Music Club students.
- Ms. Laura Wills, Director of Transfer and Articulation, collaborated with Academic Affairs/Honors by Contract, Student Life, EOF, the VMRC, the Success Team, and the Barnegat Bay Partnership to plan and execute a Research Networking Event for OCC students, which was held on February 5, 2025. Participating faculty were available to speak with students interested in learning more about research. The event exposed students to different majors/courses and worked with them to think about what research could be done in these areas. Approximately 16 students and 8 faculty attended the event.
- Advising will collaborate with Mr. Enrico DeRooy, Assistant Director of Admissions and Transfer Coordinator at Stockton University, to offer Stockton 3+1 Information Sessions in February and March. Students can attend these sessions to meet with Mr. DeRooy and Ms. Laura Wills to learn about the benefits of completing the junior year of a Stockton Business or Hospitality degree on the OCC campus.

Advising will be creating curriculum tracks (academic plans) for students entering a 3+1 program with Stockton University and the Social Work 2+2 program. Advisors will map out complete academic plans for students pursuing these degrees.

- Ms. Kristyn Stout, College Lecturer II in English, and Dr. Justin Pfeifer, College Lecturer II in History, have successfully registered 20 students for their study abroad trip to France in Summer 2025. Study Abroad is grateful to the OCC Foundation for its generous support in providing scholarships to eligible students.
- Mr. Eric Antonelli, Assistant Professor of Science, and Dr. Angel Camilo, College Lecturer II in Biology, recently installed a fossil display from their personal collections in the William T. Hering Science Building for student viewing.
- On February 8, 2025, OCC once again hosted the MATH COUNTS competition, which the New Jersey Engineering Society sponsors. The event has been at the college for over thirty years and brings middle school students from Ocean and Burlington Counties to our campus for the competition. The William Allen Middle School from Moorestown, New Jersey, and Burlington County Middle School participated, with students from William Allen winning to go on to the New Jersey State Competition in March 2025.

Student Enrollment and Retention

- On January 24, 2025, Enrollment Service advisors visited Southern Regional High School and, for the first time, delivered the College 101 presentation to approximately 50 high school seniors. Those in

attendance listened to an OCC student panel featuring Katie McCabe, Batool Abdelmalak, and Ema Croj and received assistance completing their Ocean County College applications.

- Early College representatives visited Brick Memorial and Brick Township high schools to assist with registration for the Spring semester. Between both schools, approximately 190 students attended to receive help completing their Spring schedules for dual enrollment. The team also assisted the Academy of Law and Public Safety with the registration process.
- The HUB team completed 1,985 in-person transactions in January 2025, an increase of 17%. The Success team spent approximately 187 hours on the phone and completed 1,855 outgoing calls, while the HUB team spent 210 hours on the phone, making 2,843 outgoing calls.
- Enrollment Services attended the Ocean County Vocational Technical School Open House events on February 6, 2025, at both the Toms River and Brick locations to strengthen the relationship between the vocational technical school and the college. Additional courses anticipated to be offered for students in the Fall semester include paralegal studies and criminal justice.
- Ms. Rachele Frable, Accessibility Specialist, organized two campus wellness events on February 11 and February 24, 2025, aimed at connecting students with the resources available through Disability Services and promoting overall well-being.
- Disability Services participated in the Student Transition Fair on February 6, 2025, at Toms River High School South, offering insight to graduating high school juniors and seniors about community resources available for students with disabilities.

Community Outreach

- The Grunin Center hosted local acting studio Moment to Moment Creative Collaborative's performance of *Dog Sees God: Confession of a Teenage Blockhead* in the Black Box Theatre from January 23 to January 26, 2025.
- The OCC Repertory Theatre put on two performances of *The Vagina Monologues*, a play by Eve Ensler (now V) that explores women's sexuality and the social stigma around rape and abuse. The play is based on interviews Ensler conducted with women, and each monologue is a character-driven piece that reveals a different woman's experience. The play has been performed in over 140 countries and published in over 48 languages.
- In addition to its regular public offerings, the Novins Planetarium provided holiday astronomy programming in a sold-out "A Valentine's Evening Under the Stars" and "Valentine Skies" for young children, as well as offered "Laser Love Songs."
- The Planetarium held 55 public and private shows for 1,900 people in February.
- The HUB social media accounts have drawn over 23,000 views on TikTok, almost 11,000 on Instagram in the past month, and over 1,200 likes and interactions.
- Enrollment Services assisted the Financial Aid team with several on-site FAFSA workshops at various high schools, including Lacey High School, Manchester High School, Toms River High School East, and Lakewood High School, where there were 300 attendees.

- Ms. Carolina Newman, Multilingual Language Navigator, completed two College 101 presentations in Spanish. One presentation was at Lakewood High School, and another was at the Ocean County Library, Lakewood location.
- Under the direction of Partnerships and Outreach Advisor Calleigh Kearns, Ocean County College representatives attended the graduation ceremony of 15 law officials at the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office on January 28, 2025. I had the opportunity to welcome the officers, and Ocean County Prosecutor Bradley Billhimer commended them for graduating with a certificate in Alcohol and Drug Counseling.
- The Recruitment team participated in numerous other community events in the past month, including a Connected to Wellness workshop for K-12 students on January 29, 2025; the Ocean County Mall Expo on February 8, 2025; the Girl Scouts event at the Toms River campus on February 8, 2025; Brick and Beyond College Fair on February 11, 2025; and the Causeway Cares Carnival in collaboration with the Ocean County Foundation in Manahawkin on February 16, 2025.
- The Athletics department recently held basketball and softball skills clinics hosted by student-athletes and coaches. These clinics provided an opportunity to engage with the local community and welcome future Vikings to campus for the first time. Additionally, the basketball clinic collected donations for Family Promise, a charity dedicated to supporting homeless families in Ocean County.
- The men's basketball team recently completed its regular season with an overall record of 16-8, winning 10 of their last 12 games, ranking the team ninth in the division. The Vikings earned their way to the postseason, and their first game was at home on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at noon against Atlantic Cape Community College, ranked eighth. The teams went into overtime when an OCC player shot a three-pointer to tie the game at 90-90. Unfortunately, OCC did not succeed in overtime; Atlantic won 93-90. It was a thrilling game.
- On February 3, 2025, the VITA Tax Center officially opened on campus. The VITA center is overseen by Ms. Stephanie Kroeger, College Lecturer II in Accounting, and is staffed by 20 volunteers. The volunteers mainly consist of business students at OCC and Kean-Ocean. During the first week, eight tax returns were prepared, filed, and accepted by the IRS. There are approximately 30 appointments available weekly, and the center is almost fully booked for February. The center provides valuable experiences for our business students while helping the community, and it also increases awareness about OCC.

The Center opening has been a team effort involving Facilities, College Relations, Human Resources, I.T., the Business Department, and more. The Center is open Monday through Thursday, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. until April 15, 2025. The Center is in the Hovnanian Health Sciences Building, Room #103.

- The annual OCC Engineering Technical Conference was held on February 7, 2025. Professionals, students, faculty, and OCC leadership enjoyed a day full of networking and presentations. This annual event continues to generate ever-growing funds for the Next Gen Engineering and Technology Building a Better World Scholarship Fund.

Professional Development

- The Advising Office will be offering training for all campus advisors this Spring. Advisors can attend workshops on Student Planning, including using Curriculum Tracks, to assist students in planning to complete their degree program.
- Advisors who assist Pre-Nursing students will have an opportunity to meet with Associate Director Michele Connolly to review Nursing requirements and best practices for advising students intending to pursue Nursing at OCC. Advisors for Pre-Nursing students are also able to attend Pre-Nursing Information Sessions and Nursing Transfer Sessions.
- Advising will also host the NJ Transfer staff for a campus-wide training on NJ Transfer. All faculty and staff will be invited to participate in this virtual training on March 14, 2025.
- In collaboration with Campus Safety and Security, the Office of Disability Services conducted four training sessions for officers on February 22 and 24, 2025. These sessions provided an overview of disruptive behavior disorders, focusing on autism-specific interventions and effective crisis de-escalation techniques.
- The NJ AI Hub, led by Princeton University, recently approached the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) for input regarding launching a task force on AI Education and Training. NJCCC nominated Mr. Kenneth Michalek, College Lecturer II in Computer Science, to serve on the task force due to his expertise and leadership of the Computer Science AI curriculum at Ocean County College.
- Early this year, Nursing College Lecturer IIs, Clinical Instructors, and staff attended a webinar required to maintain accreditation titled "Culture, Health, Nursing Education: The Changing Landscape." The program focused on strategies to enhance student understanding of the relationships between culture, health, and health equity.

Workforce Development and Strategic Partnerships

➤ **Workforce Education**

- On February 15, 2025, over 400 students completed Phase II of the ESL courses funded through the Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills Training Programs.
- Workforce Education is excited to introduce a new ESL Conversational Café course to help students improve their verbal English skills. This program will be available on campus this Spring semester.

➤ **Work Readiness Assistance Program**

- On January 27, 2025, 10 participants began the Exploration of Career Pathways and Entrepreneurship Training. Participants will welcome therapy dogs from Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc., throughout the month.
- An open-to-all Job and Resource Fair will be hosted with Waters & Sims Employment Services, Inc., on March 5, 2025, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Student Center.

➤ **Adult Education, Civic, and Workforce Preparation Program**

- Winter registration was held on January 10, 2025, at OCC's Toms River campus and January 13, 2025, at OCC's Manahawkin campus. The turnout was good.

High School Education – 96 registered and 55 attended; English as a Second Language (Toms River), 110 registered and 90 attended; and English as a Second Language (in Manahawkin), 38 registered and 22 attended.

- On January 27, 2025, winter term classes began, including 6 high school diploma courses, 12 English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, and 4 Civics/ESL courses.
- Twenty-nine students registered for the Integrated Education and Training (IET) classes, 9 in diploma preparation, and 20 in ESL. Both classes are working towards EKG Technician Certification.
- To date, 492 students have enrolled in adult basic education/high school diploma preparation courses (127) and English as a Second Language/Civics courses (365).

➤ **Adult Transition Center**

- The Adult Transition Advisory Committee is set to have its first meeting in February with 22 members from the community.
- Outreach has been conducted with Waters & Sims, Toms River High School, Brick High School, and Barnegat High School.
- Fourteen-week Career Exploration and Work Readiness training will begin on March 17, 2025.

Grants Administration

- The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) Grant is designed to help bridge gaps in funding for students. As a result, OCC's FIPSE Grant Student Financial Resource Center is tasked with providing short-term services that help students reach campus and community resources for long-term support.

- 110 students enrolled in at least one class in this Spring 2025 semester.
- 98 of 110 students (89%) persisted from Fall to Spring.
- As of Spring census data, 11 students graduated in Fall 2024.
- Since the last report in January:
- \$19,932.87 has been allocated to students.
 - \$5,532.87 in emergency funding.
 - \$14,400 in gift cards.
 - 227 cards awarded since January 22, 2025, to 33 unique students, all recorded in the first three days of Spring 2025; 100 were \$10 meal vouchers for the cafeteria
 - \$5,400 in Uber gift cards and \$3,800 in gas gift cards were distributed to help students get to class.
 - Housing budget:
 - 78.6% of grant funds were spent year-to-date, with seven months yet to go in the grant year.
 - Ten students were awarded funds for rent, mortgage, or emergency housing help.

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 January 18, 2024, through February 21, 2024.

REQUIRED REPORTING STATISTICS

Board of Trustees Meeting: Thurs, February 27, 2025

County College Board of Trustees, for its regular meeting. This report consists of all offenses defined as reportable crimes under the federal Jeanne Clery Act, fires, and other emergencies, which occurred on campus during the reporting period of 1/18/25-2/21/25.

1.) A count and classification of all criminal incidents (defined as reportable crimes under the federal Jeanne Clery Act) which occurred on campus and which were recorded by campus security, campus security authority (CSA) or local police departments.			
DATE	CRIME	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: 1/28/25 Reported: 1/28/25		Harassment	Referred to Student Conduct
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			
2.) A list of campus alerts, threats or emergencies which occurred on campus			
DATE	ALERT/THREAT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			
Occurred: Reported:			
3.) A count and classification of all fire incidents which occurred on campus and which were recorded by campus security and local fire departments.			
DATE	FIRE INCIDENT	SUMMARY	STATUS
Occurred: Reported:		Nothing to report	
Occurred: Reported:			

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Thomas DeSimone