

Orange Coast College

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACCOLADES

2024-2025



ORANGE
COAST
COLLEGE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

"This past year at Orange Coast College has been a testament to the power of innovation, collaboration, and community. From record-breaking philanthropy and student achievements to impactful community engagement and national recognition, our college continues to lead with purpose and pride. I'm honored to share these highlights that reflect the dedication of our students, faculty, classified professionals, administrative team, and supporters."

Dr. Angelica L. Suarez,
President, Orange Coast College

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- Over \$920,000 in scholarships awarded at the 67th Honors Night on May 14.
- Speech, Debate, and Theater Team won its 18th State Championship and the Gold Sweepstakes Award at Phi Rho Pi Nationals.
- Culinary Arts students captured the 2025 ACF Western Regional Student Team Competition title in Las Vegas.
- Honors student Abner Molina was accepted to the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Abner is among nearly two dozen transfer students admitted to MIT this year, where the transfer acceptance rate typically hovers between just 1-3%.
- OCC ranked among the Top 10 community colleges in California by WalletHub.
- More than 5,000 degrees and certificates awarded in the 2024-25 academic year (5,253 total).
- OCC's Ninth Annual Giles T. Brown Student Project and Research Symposium hosted more than 100 OCC students to present their research projects through oral demonstrations, performances, and poster sessions.
- Women's Track & Field athlete Liberty Miller won the State Championship in both the 5,000 Meter and 1,500 Meter races.

INNOVATION & LEARNING IN ACTION

- Launched Travel OCC, a student-run travel agency staffed entirely by student interns from the Hospitality, Travel, and Tourism program.
- Partnered with MM-SEAS, a leading provider of U.S. Coast Guard licensing software, to provide enhanced support for maritime students at the Waterfront Campus.
- OCC filmmakers debuted original short films at the Newport Beach Film Festival in October as part of the "OCC Shorts" showcase.
- Completed and celebrated the opening of the new Chemistry Building, with a signature feature of an interactive table of elements, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 20.
- Secured a \$1.7 million grant to expand career academies in Allied Health, Maritime, and Industrial Technology.
- Approximately 200 OCC Career and Technical Education (CTE) students in Architecture, Aviation Maintenance, Construction, Automation Electronics, HVAC/R, Manufacturing, and Welding attended the second annual Industrial Technology Career Showcase on March 3.
- The Radiologic Technology program celebrated its 70th anniversary at OCC — the first community college-based radiologic technology program in the United States.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Hosted the 25th Annual Community Science Night, welcoming thousands of K-8 students to campus.
- Held a lunar eclipse watch party at the Planetarium using OCC telescopes on March 13, engaging the community in STEM exploration.
- Co-hosted RE/GENERATION: A Celebration of Art and Fashion in partnership with The Salvation Army, promoting sustainability in the Fashion Department.
- In response to the L.A. wildfires in January, OCC and Abound Food Care prepared and distributed thousands of relief meals to impacted residents.
- Received the Excellence in Energy and Sustainability – Faculty/Student Initiative Award from the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, recognizing multidisciplinary collaboration in marine science, horticulture, and culinary arts.
- OCC created and enhanced a number of dedicated spaces to support student communities, including the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Student Center, Rainbow Cove, Equity Center, Basic Needs Center, and UMOJA.
- In partnership with the City of Costa Mesa, Pine Creek and Adams bike lane improvements were completed.

RECOGNITION & DISTINCTION

- Received a \$9.44 million gift, the largest in college history and the fourth largest ever to a California community college, from an anonymous alumnus to establish the OCC Endowment for the Arts, benefiting Visual & Performing Arts students.
- The Marketing & Public Relations Department earned 12 NCMPR Medallion Awards and three national Paragon Awards.
- Dr. Derek Vergara, Dean of Students, was named a 2025 NASPA Pillar of the Profession, one of only 20 individuals selected nationwide.
- Zachary Groenewold, part-time Dance faculty, was named First Runner-Up at the 2024 Palm Desert Choreography Festival, selected from over 100 applicants.
- Sylvia Mendez, OCC alumna and civil rights activist, received the 2024 CCLC Alumni Equity Champion Award, was inducted into the Orange County Hall of Fame on December 10, and earned national recognition with the 2025 AACC Outstanding Alumni Award.
- OCC honored 25 retirees representing over 500 years of service and recognized outstanding employees including Richard Pozak as Part-Time Faculty Member of the Year, Anna Hanlon as Faculty Member of the Year, Roxann Griffin as Classified Professional of the Year, and Shannon Quihuiz as Manager of the Year.
- OCC Architecture Club won the Best Construction Award at the annual Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Design Village 2025.



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2701 Fairview Road
Costa Mesa, California 92626
www.orangecoastcollege.edu