

# OCCC

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## magazine

2020 EDITION

# The New Face of OCCC

How Orange Coast College  
adapted to COVID-19



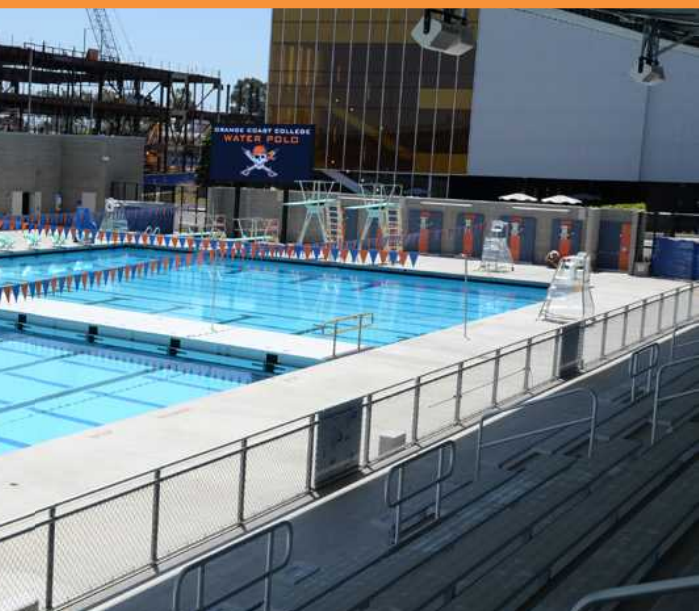


# Just Keep S

**S**tanding alongside the crystal clear waters of OCC's new 65-metre competition-size pool, you can almost hear the cheering crowds the stadium is meant to hold. For now, the College's state-of-the-art Kinesiology and Athletic Facility is quiet, its promise shining as brightly as the orange and blue pennant flags strung from one end of the stadium to the other. With fall sports, including men's and women's water polo, postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, student athletes and Coast coaches excitedly await the day they can once again make waves at the pool.









Dear Friends,

It goes without saying that this year has been unlike any other we've experienced in our lifetimes. As this Magazine goes to print, we are approaching the sixth month of a global pandemic that has required Orange Coast College, like many colleges and universities across the nation, to transition most of its instruction and student services online. For those of us at OCC, a college campus well-known for its vibrancy and tight-knit community, this has been devastating for students, faculty and staff alike.

Yet, I have been amazed and inspired to see the ways in which our students and employees have quickly turned that devastation into determination to meet the challenges before us. As the French writer Voltaire once wrote: 'Life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget to sing in the lifeboats.' At OCC, we have continued to *sing* with and for our students.

This issue of the *OCC Magazine* is a testament to that resilience. We have highlighted the stories of our faculty who have risen to meet the needs of a community suffering from food insecurity (page 3), students who have taken the disruption to their educational plan in stride (pages 16, 24 and 27), and faculty and administrators who have heeded the call to help the state of California address a shortage of ventilators (page 18).

On page 33 you can also read about the loss of one of our most esteemed alumni, Dr. James Goodrich, who passed away from COVID-19 in late March. During his life, Dr. Goodrich made a tremendous impact not just in his field of pediatric neurology, but also in the lives of his many patients and their families, whose circumstances were vastly improved by his talent and dedication.

You also will be introduced to some new members of the OCC Family in this issue, including Journalism professor Jeremy Shermak who shares his thoughts on taking over as the faculty advisor for the College's student-run newspaper, *The Coast Report* (page 8), as well as OCC's newest baseball "skipper" Nate Johnson, who shares his vision for a championship program still reeling from the loss of head coach John Altobelli in January (page 32).

These are extraordinary times. At Orange Coast College, we see ourselves as a critical component in the effort to build a stronger, safer and more equitable community. While the future remains uncertain, and we will surely be faced with unforeseen challenges in the coming months, we are fully committed to doing our part to make sure our students continue to have access to a high quality, rigorous and enriching education.

Be well,



Angélica L. Suarez, Ph.D.



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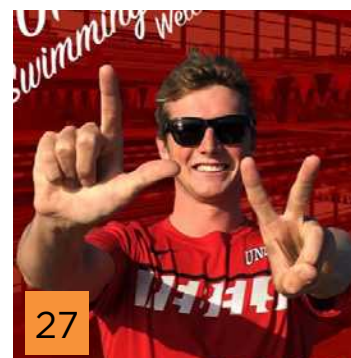
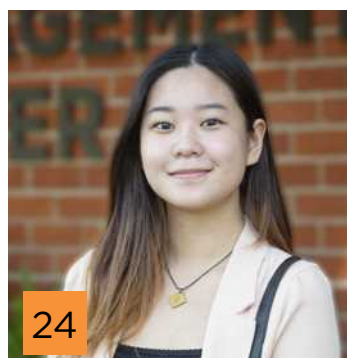
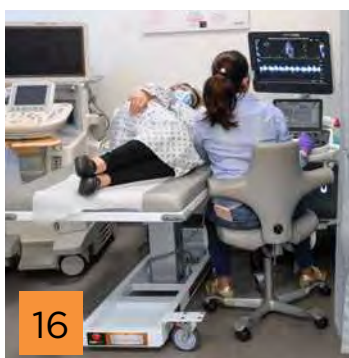
#### MISSION STATEMENT

Orange Coast College serves the educational needs of its diverse local and global community. The College empowers students to achieve their educational goals by providing high quality and innovative programs and services leading to academic degrees, college transfer, certificates in career and technical education, basic skills and workforce development to enable lifelong learning. The College promotes student learning and development through fostering a respectful, supportive, participatory, and equitable campus climate of student engagement and academic inquiry.

#### FOLLOW US







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2020 EDITION

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Orange Coast College, founded in 1947, is one of the nation's top transfer schools. With a student population of 22,000, OCC provides exemplary programs leading to Associate in Arts degrees, Associate in Science degrees and 145 career programs. As a multicultural and multinational institution, OCC is a qualifying Hispanic Serving Institution and an Asian American Native American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution, and serves more than 1,000 international students representing more than 56 countries. The College's 164-acre campus is located in the heart of Costa Mesa, just minutes from Southern California's beautiful beaches. For complete details about OCC, visit [www.orangecoastcollege.edu](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu).

## cover

Pictured on the cover is Noah Rangno, son of OCC English professor Erik Rangno and marketing specialist Andrea Rangno, wearing a custom OCC mask.

Orange Coast Junior College district was established in 1947, with classes beginning in 1948. For more than 70 years, OCC has been a leader in higher education in Costa Mesa and its surrounding communities.









# ERATION FEED OC:

## How OCC's campus shutdown spurred a local food recovery movement

**W**hen Orange Coast College announced on March 16 that its physical campus would be closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, faculty and staff working in the College's culinary arts and food services programs were left wondering what they would do with more than 1,800 lbs of unused food that would normally be used for on-campus dining facilities and culinary arts instruction.

Luckily, Food Service Management instructor Alexandra Yates and a team of volunteers had the perfect solution already in place: The OCC Food Recovery Kitchen. Created more than a year ago as part of the College's Food Services program, the Recovery Kitchen was initially started with the goal of reducing food insecurity among OCC's student population. "Our





The OCC Food Recovery Team from left: Steve Parker, Eric Cohen, Alex Yates, Amy Murray Wilson, Tyler Parker, and Richard Espinachio

main purpose is to lower our campus's food waste and food insecurity among our students," says Yates. "We partner with Pirate's Cove [food pantry] on campus, along with the support from the Culinary Arts Program, Cafeteria Services, Nutrition and Dietetics, Horticulture and other programs."

Since mid-March, Yates and her team of volunteers have packaged more than 30,000 meals using more than 200,000 lbs of donated food to be distributed to local families in need, as well as Costa Mesa homeless shelters and assisted living facilities. When OCC's campus closed and classes transitioned online, the team moved to kitchen facilities at the Marconi Automotive Museum in Tustin. When the Museum re-opened as part of California's Phase 3 re-opening in June, the team moved to Katella Grill, whose owner serves as the Executive Director of Waste Not OC.

Yates has also teamed up with local food banks and nonprofits to distribute food to families in need all over Orange County, including the OC Food Bank and Goodwill of Orange County. "Our main partnerships have been with Waste Not OC, the OC Food Bank and The Marconi Automotive Museum. When Goodwill was closed their drivers helped the food bank out with deliveries," says Yates.

The Waste Not OC Coalition works collaboratively with hospitals, food banks, municipalities, and the local food and waste hauling industries to reduce hunger and food waste by safely and cost effectively recovering unwanted wholesome food for distribution to local pantries serving those in the community facing food insecurity. Yates serves

on Waste Not's advisory board and works closely with the organization.

"OC Food Bank is where we get about 90 percent of our recovered food. The other 10 percent comes directly from restaurants and farms," she explains. "We currently hold four food distribution events every week, in San Juan Capistrano, Garden Grove, Laguna Hills and Lake Forest."

Another collaboration Yates has pursued has been with OCC's Horticulture program, which has several greenhouses and planting beds full of fruits and vegetables that would normally be harvested by students. "[Horticulture faculty and staff] contacted me letting me know that there was a lot of produce that needed to get harvested or it would go to waste. I had previously been working with them because I am starting a new program on campus called sustainable food systems and we will be using one of the garden plots in the community gardens," Yates explains.

Yates and her team have even caught the attention of Hollywood, with producers of two different documentaries focused on food recovery and finding solutions to food insecurity reaching out to highlight her efforts. In late May a crew from Warner Bros. showed up at the Marconi Museum to film a segment for the film, which is set to air in the coming months. "Both documentaries were already going to be filmed before Covid happened, and the motivation for both is the same: they both focus on food waste, food insecurity, food recovery and how collaboration between our communities can change the world," says Yates.



# DANCE, REIMAGINED THROUGH COVID-19

**E**arlier this year, Orange Coast College Dance program chair Rachel Berman never could have imagined teaching her students via a computer screen. But that very much became her reality as OCC closed its physical campus and transitioned classes online in March.

Berman was left with a choice: cancel classes or power through. She made the decision to find a way to continue so that her students would not have to forfeit the time and effort they had already invested. The challenge was daunting — not meeting in person meant that students would not be able to perform at the end of the spring semester, a typical marker that allows instructors to assess their learning. Transitioning to a virtual learning format also meant that students would be forced to practice in isolation, away from the professional studios they are accustomed to training in.

“This is not the way we should be teaching dance. Dance involves not only moving through space, but physically manipulating bodies. It’s an exchange of energy that is best done in person,” Berman notes. “But, our students need us and even though it’s not perfect, we’re doing what we can. There are silver linings in all of this.”

One of those silver linings is the opportunity to be more creative in booking guest lecturers from across the country. Another is access to recorded performances that many dance companies all over the world have begun to offer for viewing, free of charge.

“Every company under the sun is allowing virtual access to their performances, which is something they have never done before,” Berman explains. “Before COVID-19, [dance companies] were very protective of their content and intellectual property. The Internet is culturally rich right now.”

Another silver lining? Students are getting more creative with their work. Berman notes that some students are pre-recording their movement studies at home and sharing it with their classmates for feedback. The program’s spring repertoire course resulted in a collaborative dance film rather than a performance, and dance and Pilates



Berman sets up a makeshift dance studio in her living room to teach via Zoom.

instructor interns used the transition to online learning as an opportunity to try their hand at teaching ... with faculty guidance of course.

“Everyone is getting really creative and making it work,” Berman says. “Throughout the spring it was amazing to see our students keep showing up. And we were so happy to be able to see each other and check in on a regular basis.”

For now, as OCC’s dance faculty continue to teach virtually during the Fall 2020 semester, Berman and her colleagues are focused on staying positive and looking for opportunities where dance and technology might intersect, such as a chance to learn more about screen dance/ dance for the camera and film editing techniques.

Even through her optimism, however, Berman acknowledges the struggle that the COVID-19 pandemic poses for the arts community as a whole. “My heart is heavy for the dance community — and all the arts — who are suffering now with theaters closed and concerts cancelled. Creativity is certainly not stopping, but nothing beats a live experience. We need the arts to survive! We need the arts for our humanity.”



# MAKING HISTORY...

## COMMENCEMENT 2020

**F**or the first time in its 72-year history, Orange Coast College hosted its annual Commencement ceremony in a virtual format on June 6, awarding more than 5,000 degrees and certificates to graduates who tuned in via YouTube Live. The ceremony featured pre-recorded speeches and graduates were able to customize individual slides with photos, videos, and quotes. The ceremony also included a LiveChat where grads and their families could cheer one another on, send well wishes, and say their goodbyes to faculty and staff.

## HONORS NIGHT

**A** global pandemic couldn't keep OCC faculty and staff from celebrating the many accomplishments of students at the College's 62nd Annual Honors Night virtual celebration on June 3. Students who achieved top honors in academics during the 2019-20 school year, as well as performed service and leadership to the College and community, gathered during a virtual watch party on YouTube Premiere, where more than \$460,000 was awarded in scholarships.

Welcome to the 72nd Annual Commencement







# CHARTER DONATES \$50,000 TO OCC FOR NEWSROOM AS NEW BUILDING TAKES SHAPE

In early May, the Orange Coast College Foundation received a donation of \$50,000 from Charter Communications to be used to fund equipment such as computers and video screens in a new journalism lab currently under construction.

“We were already excited to build this newsroom for our journalism students and now we’re even more excited,” says Dean of Literature and Languages Michael Mandelkern. “To me, this newsroom is going to send the message to our students that we are committed to the field of journalism at a time when the industry is under attack.”

OCC’s new student newsroom will be located on the first floor of the College’s Literature & Languages, Social & Behavioral Sciences building, which is expected to open in Fall 2021. The 100,000-square-foot, three-story building will replace 50- and 60-year-old buildings on campus,

and will connect to a recently built Math, Business and Computing Center via a skyway bridge.

The newsroom will be the home to OCC’s student-run newspaper, The Coast Report, which publishes a bi-weekly edition during the academic semester. The Coast Report is staffed by students enrolled in Journalism 115, giving them an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in journalism and newspaper publishing.

“The newsroom will include large television screens showing news programs from all over the world. This donation will help offset the cost of that equipment,” says Mandelkern.

Charter, which owns Spectrum News, made the donation using money that was unused after public television station California Channel ceased operations in October 2019.



# Hot Off the P

## OCC'S NEWEST JOURNALISM PROFESSOR JEREMY SHERMAK SHARES HIS VISION FOR STUDENT JOURNALISM AT COAST AN



*Welcome to OCC! As the College's new journalism professor and advisor for our student-run newspaper, The Coast Report, you have a big job ahead of you. Can you tell us a little bit about your background in journalism, and what experience you're bringing with you to share with OCC's students?*

Sure! I've always had a passion for journalism and news — I've kind of been a news junkie my entire life. I started off my career as a newspaper reporter, working at a small newspaper near my hometown in Michigan. Because it was a small paper with a small staff, we did a little bit of everything ... I was even a photographer. Eventually, I was hired at a midsize newspaper in South Bend, Indiana, where I covered sports and general news.

Altogether, I have probably about seven or eight years of experience as a working journalist. But I also have studied journalism a great deal. I went to Indiana University for my undergrad where I majored in information technology and journalism; it's kind of a hybrid degree there. I went on to get my master's degree in writing at DePaul University in Chicago, and then I decided to go for another master's at the University of Missouri, in journalism. And because that wasn't enough school, I decided to go back and get my doctorate in journalism at the University of Texas at Austin.

I've had the chance to not only practice journalism and work professionally as a journalist, but also research it and, of course, teach it. And I've had a lot of stops in between all that schooling. I was an English and journalism instructor at

a community college just outside of Chicago for eight years before I decided to return to school to earn my doctorate.

A year ago I was offered a full-time position teaching journalism at Cal State Fullerton, and I'll be leaving Fullerton to join OCC. Coming to OCC is — for me — a return to the community college environment that I really love. I was a community college student myself, my first year of college. I'm a first-generation student, and I feel at home in the community college environment.



*Community colleges aren't really known for research, however many of your students will be looking to transfer to four-year universities and possibly continue their post-graduate education. In all of your studies, were there any specific areas that you focused your research on? Any aspects of journalism that you are passionate about?*

I did a lot of research about journalistic practices — how the news is made, the ethical choices that journalists face. I also looked at how journalists correspond or interact with the public on social media. My dissertation was on broadcast meteorologists and how they interact on social media. In addition to being a news junkie, I've always been kind of a weather nerd, too. I chose the topic because I've always been really interested in science communication, which is fascinating now, given what's happening with the pandemic and questions about masks, etc. For my dissertation, I interviewed 29 meteorologists, and I analyzed approximately 5,000 social media posts. And, in some ways, I could see [the response to the COVID-19 pandemic] coming. Many



# ress:

# SOR ON FOR D BEYOND



people think that meteorologists are politically driven and these conspiracy theories about the weather; that somehow journalists and even meteorologists have some ulterior motives when they do something as seemingly mundane as forecasting the weather. It's really wild.

The polarization in this country, and the anti-science bias of many citizens, has been challenging for the science and journalism communities alike. I've been very fortunate not only to practice journalism and be a journalist, but also to conduct research because it has allowed me to look at the theory and talk to journalists to get their ideas about what it's like to really be in this position.

***You mentioned that you really like the community college atmosphere. Can you talk a little about what appeals to you about this type of educational setting?***

Community Colleges are very unique and, not to sound cheesy, but I really like the community aspect of it. I feel like it's a closer, tighter-knit community. Even though journalism is part of a huge department at OCC, I think I'll have more opportunity to interact with my colleagues. But,

the main reason I came back is because the primary focus at community colleges is the teaching and the pedagogy, and I love teaching and working with students. I'm looking forward to having an opportunity to make a difference and work on curriculum. Sometimes at a four-year [university] that stuff kind of escapes you and is a little bit out of your grasp.

***Orange Coast College has a long and storied history of exceptional student journalism. Currently, OCC is investing in building a contemporary newsroom that will open next year, and you will be leading the charge in preparing our students for a rapidly evolving industry. What are your thoughts on that?***

My thoughts are: I really couldn't be coming into a better situation. You mentioned the new building, which, to me, is much more than this amazing, dynamic space. It is a physical representation of the College's and the District's investment in journalism. Because once that building is done, I can't imagine there being a better community college newsroom in this country. It's going to be the nicest, most state-of-the-art, beautiful newsroom in the country.



While it's a tremendous honor to be able to come in and continue the College's tradition of turning out good journalism that is some of the best in the country, it can't just be the bells and whistles and the nice new building — we've got to make good journalism in that room.

*This is an interesting year to start a new position leading student journalists at OCC, because not only are we dealing with the effects of COVID-19, it's an election year! Some might even say that you're getting thrown into the deep end of this pool. How do you plan to prepare your students to hit the ground running when school starts this fall and the election is only two months away?*

I don't think it's a stretch to say that this is the most consequential election of our lifetimes. And I mean that speaking for myself, and I'm 41. But, I also think that's very true for the students. So one of the things that I want to do immediately, day one, is say, 'Look, our attention from this point forward until election day and thereafter, of course, is going to be talking about the election.'

All eyes are going to be on the presidential election, but because I consider the newspaper, our newspaper, to be a local news source, I want to focus on the local issues too. We'll have coverage of the presidential election, to be sure, but my take will be, people aren't going to come to *The Coast Report* to get the results of the presidential election. I really want to have my students get the experience of covering local politics, because it's a different beast. And, we can try to fill in some of the gaps we might have in our community by covering these very local elections.

*That's a very worthy goal, especially in Orange County, where we have seen so many small local papers struggle, and close, in recent years. Oftentimes, we see Orange County getting news coverage from Los Angeles media sources, even though we could not be more different! How do you think OCC can best prepare students who want to stay local to be journalists in a place like Orange County?*



Before coming to OCC, Shermak taught journalism for a year at California State University, Fullerton.

I think number one is understanding the community of Orange County. This would be true of any student journalist anywhere, but it is absolutely critical that our students become experts on their community. That means really, really learning the community and learning who the players are in the community, introducing themselves to people and talking to people.

Orange County has 3 million residents and yet it has become a bit of a news desert, and that's sad. But I think it's also a moment for us, for OCC's student journalists, to have some exclusivity, to have an opportunity to tell the story of our area. I want students to look at their job at the *Coast Report* as not just covering our campus — which we will, front to back — but also going out and reporting news in the community. Because what happens in the community has an effect on our College and our students, and I think sometimes students don't see this. For example, we're getting these awesome new buildings because our community voted for that, right? The community is so vital to the success of a place like OCC.

*Let's talk technology, because you do have a background in IT and digital media, which is a great experience to share with your students. As more and more journalism goes digital, we have to prepare our students for careers that are becoming more technical and technology-driven. What do you see in terms of future opportunities for the *Coast Report* to explore different digital platforms?*

Something that I've researched and studied a lot, is actually the evolution of the New York Times. And when I say that, people might think that I'm going back to the late 1800s, but I'm actually going back to 2009; there were people who strongly believed in 2009 that there wouldn't be a *New York Times* in five or six years. It forced the NYT to undergo this complete digital renovation. They kind of looked at themselves as, 'we're a digital content producer that, oh by the way, happens to make a newspaper.' And I kind of see *The Coast Report* going in that direction. In other words: I think that we're going to be able to produce good journalistic content, it all starts there. If the reporting and the writing isn't good, you're not going to have much, that's where we have to start. But through that, I'd love to see us produce more multimedia, do more video. I'd love to see us do some podcasting, whether that's more long-form storytelling, or just something like *The Daily*, or a news report, or both.

***With the College being mostly online in Fall 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, going digital will become more of a necessity. Is there a sense you have that this could ultimately be a good thing for the Coast Report? How might the students benefit from being forced to publish a 100 percent digital paper?***

This semester is going to be unique ...I mean, that's the understatement of the year, right? We won't have a printed paper and that's going to change the dynamic of our news operations pretty drastically. But quite honestly, I am really excited about it. I love newspapers — I have a coffee mug that says, 'I love the smell of newsprint in the morning.' But, I think that this is a moment where, maybe, we get away from the pressure of the print and focus our energy entirely on the digital. This moment with the pandemic and being online will give us an opportunity to see what it's like, to be a digital-only outfit, and how that makes us feel, and how the students adapt to it.



***It seems like a community college is an ideal place to explore newer technology, because our ultimate goal is to prepare students for their future careers. At the same time, we want students to have a solid educational foundation in journalistic practices, so they can responsibly contribute to the field. How do you balance those two objectives?***

It's a tremendous challenge and I'm not going to sit here and say that I have perfected the way to do that. But I think one thing that I'm going to emphasize and something that I will tell my students is, it used to be in traditional journalism, whatever that may be, that someone would come in and they'd say 'I'm a columnist, I write opinion.' Or they'd come

in and say, 'I cover lifestyle' or, 'I cover politics.' And it just isn't that way anymore. The industry financially doesn't really allow for that anymore.

Everyone in journalism has to wear multiple hats. But the good part about that is the evolution of the technology has made it much easier for journalists to pick up multiple skills. The way I describe it to my students is: 'Think about your skills almost like the letter T, where across the top you have writing, maybe photography, something multimedia, design, whatever. And then take one of those and form the vertical part of the T and really go deep into that.

If you want to be a writer, get really good at writing, but have some of those other skills that you can use.'

And the same is true for students looking to transfer to a four-year university — they'll have clips and experience, and they'll be able to hit the ground running at a four-year newspaper. Training students to work is one of the reasons I came back to a community college. I want my students to be like the Swiss army knife of reporters, where they will have so many different skill sets they'll be able to find a job instantly.

This moment with the pandemic ... will give us an opportunity to see what it's like to be a digital-only outfit.



# A New



## COLLEGE CENTER

**C**onstruction of OCC's new 119,00-square-foot College Center wrapped up over the summer, marking a new phase in the College's 72-year history. The modern, state-of-the-art building will house administrative offices, dining facilities, the Bursar's Office, instructional culinary and hospitality classrooms and labs, and an 8,000-square-foot ballroom with capacity for 1,100 people. OCC expects to officially open the College Center with a limited employee capacity at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, which will take place mostly online with some in-person instruction.



# Era...



## STUDENT UNION

**A**djacent to the College Center, OCC's newly built 40,000-square-foot Student Union also is set to open its doors in Fall 2020, in a limited capacity in order to promote social distancing. Serving as the new home for the Associated Students of Orange Coast College, Veterans Resource Center and College Outreach, the Student Union will allow each of the programs the opportunity to serve more students and is a physical representation of OCC's commitment to student access, equity and inclusion.



# OCC RESPONSE

(By the Numbers)



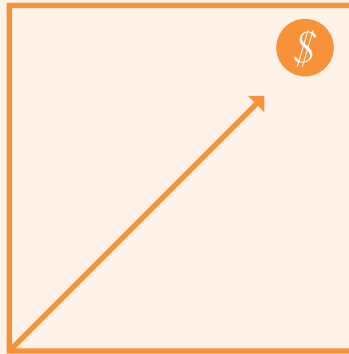
2,400

Classes transitioned to  
online instruction



1,800

Pounds of food donated  
to local shelters & senior  
living facilities



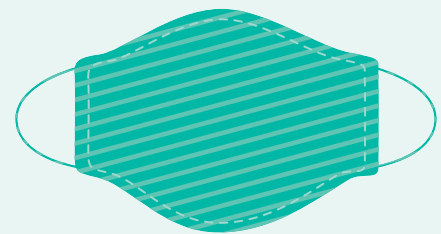
\$17,000

raised for vulnerable students



\$465,739

scholarships awarded at virtual Honors Night



600

masks made by OCC Makerspace

# TO COVID-19



*\$9.2  
Million*

in CARES Act Funding



*120*

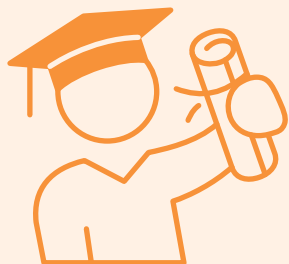
Allied Health 2020 graduates  
in frontline healthcare fields



*16*

Ventilators loaned to  
local hospitals

Degrees & Certificates awarded at Virtual Commencement:



*2,531*

**Degrees**



*2,677*

**Certificates**





# LIMITED NUMBER OF STUDENTS RETURN TO OCC'S CAMPUS TO COMPLETE ALLIED HEALTH COURSEWORK

In mid-April, Orange Coast College allowed a limited number of students to return to campus to complete coursework in some Allied Health programs that are considered essential and critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students in their last semester of study in OCC's Respiratory Therapy, Radiologic Technology, Emergency Medical Tech, Medical Assisting and Cardiovascular Tech programs were given the option to return to campus to complete necessary in-person coursework with strict

safety guidelines to limit the spread of illness, such as temperature taking, distancing, and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

"In total we had about 120 students across five different Allied Health programs who were able to complete coursework to graduate, and about another 100 who were able to maintain or complete licensure requirements by documented skill from clinical training and with a virtual or remote format," said then-Vice President of Instruction Kevin Ballinger. "All of these individuals are needed in the

community immediately. There are only two radiologic technology programs in Orange County, and Orange Coast College has the only local respiratory therapy and cardiovascular tech programs. EMT's are also in very high demand."

Students who were allowed to return to campus were required to abide by strict distancing guidelines and wear full PPE. Students also had their temperature taken before entering classrooms, and classrooms were disinfected daily. Working with the Coast Community College District Risk Services department, the College consulted with both the Orange County Department of Health and the Orange County Department of Education before making the decision to allow a limited number of students to return to campus.

"Our graduates are front-line providers of diagnostic information," says Radiologic Technology Program Coordinator Loren Sachs. "While Radiologic Technologists are not part of the therapeutic process, we are integral to determining the severity of the disease and to providing evidence of patient improvement. When you look at the typical in-patient hospital setting, it's not uncommon for

patients with respiratory issues to get daily chest x-rays to monitor their clinical process."

As the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded, OCC's Allied Health programs have shifted gears quickly in order to put as many graduates into the workforce as possible. Initially, without knowing how quickly the virus would spread, faculty hoped for the best, but prepared for the worst.

With no vaccine and a second spike of infections starting, the College is committed to doing its part to continue to train and prepare frontline healthcare providers. "Our initial thinking was that the students who returned might have been a second line of hospital workers if the Radiographers in the field got sick" says Rad Tech professor Kelly Holt.

"Unfortunately, it's taken a pandemic to shine a bright spotlight on the specialty of Respiratory Care and highlight the unique skill set respiratory therapists possess that make us essential to patient care," says Respiratory Care program Director Alison Riggio. "We are an invaluable part of the healthcare team and OCC can be proud that we are graduating competent individuals prepared and excited to begin professional practice and provide critical service to the community."

## Coast Faculty: Dedicated to Students

The Cardiovascular Technology students graduate to become essential workforce for the healthcare industry. Our students need to enter the field with the ability to demonstrate entry-level competency skill sets to obtain employment. It is critical for the students to have instructed, hands-on labs in order to obtain and build their scanning skills for their potential career.

**- Kristy Norfolk**, *Instructor, Cardiovascular Technology & Diagnostic Medical Sonography*





# ALL IN THIS TOGETHER: OCC LOANS VENTILATORS TO HOSPITALS, STATE REPOSITORY

**W**hen Daryl Weber, the manager of Respiratory Care Services at Saddleback Memorial, reached out to Orange Coast College's Respiratory Care program director Alison Riggio to ask if she would consider loaning the College's ventilators to the hospital to prepare for an influx of COVID-19 patients, the timing could not have been better.

OCC ended up loaning Saddleback Memorial three of its newest ventilators, and when, a week later, the College received word that Governor Gavin Newsom was requesting all available ventilators be donated to a central state repository, then-Vice President of Instruction Kevin Ballinger personally delivered OCC's 13 remaining machines to the repository at Santa Monica City College.



Recently retired Vice President of Instruction Kevin Ballinger personally delivered 13 ventilators to a state repository at Santa Monica College.

OCC had just announced that all in-person classes were suspended until March 30, and that a transition to online for most classes was probable after that. The ventilators in OCC's Respiratory Care program would likely sit un-used for months.

"The timing worked out, as weird as that sounds because with the campus shut down the ventilators aren't being used and the primary course for incorporating these machines is [not scheduled until] the fall," explains Riggio.

OCC's Allied Health administrators agreed that it would be a tremendous opportunity to be able to give back to the College's supportive hospital community, many of which serve as clinical sites for Coast students earning their certificates and licenses to practice as both frontline health care providers and diagnostic specialists. In fact, Saddleback's Weber sits on OCC's Respiratory Care Advisory Committee, and worked with Riggio at Hoag Hospital for many years.

"We were pleased to lend our support to Saddleback Memorial and other local California hospitals, whose healthcare professionals have worked tirelessly to save lives during this pandemic," says OCC President Angelica Suarez. "More importantly, we at OCC recognize

that we must all do our part to keep our communities safe and well during this time."

OCC's Respiratory Care program is a two-year program that prepares students with the knowledge, skills and behaviors of respiratory care practice as performed by a Registered Respiratory Therapist. Students who complete the program are the healthcare professionals that evaluate, treat, and manage patients of all ages with respiratory illnesses and other cardiopulmonary disorders. One of the main responsibilities of OCC's respiratory care graduates in the care of the critically ill patient is management of the ventilator (breathing machine).

# FROM OCC TO STANFORD:

## AUSTIN SALCEDO FINDS A LIFELINE THROUGH EDUCATION

Once upon a time Austin Salcedo hated school. Like... REALLY hated school.

"I whole-heartedly despised school – much more than any average kid," he says. "I failed English and Biology in my freshman year of high school without remorse, and I (barely) graduated with a 2.6 GPA."

After high school, Salcedo decided to follow in his father's footsteps and join the Marine Corps, but he struggled with depression, and even found himself contemplating suicide at one point. "The only reason I didn't go through with it was the thought of what it would do to my parents. Knowing I couldn't pull the trigger, I decided that I needed to actively change my mentality in order to find happiness," he says. "By the end of my deployment, I made a promise to myself: I would start college as soon as I returned to the States, and put forth maximum effort so that I could earn a degree from the best university that I possibly could – I wanted to make up for lost time."

Salcedo found his passion in the field of psychology and neuroscience, and devoured books on both subjects as he finished his time in the military. He took online college courses while serving in the Middle East - one class at a time - and with each "A" his self-confidence grew. It was lucky happenstance that brought Salcedo to





Orange Coast College once he separated from the Marine Corps — and he could not be happier.

“My girlfriend was moving to Costa Mesa around that time, so I decided to move near her. OCC just so happened to be the closest college, and that was that!” he says. “Being a first-generation college student, I simply had no idea what to look for in a college, but I am eternally grateful for stumbling upon such an incredible institution.”

Salcedo found the support he needed at OCC, from the professors who went the extra mile to help him succeed to the tutoring center that became a second home, it wasn't long before he became an honors student with a 4.0 GPA ... something he never could have imagined was possible. “‘Teenage Austin’ is the absolute polar opposite of ‘Today Austin.’ I am just very proud of who I've become, and where I am going,” he says.

Participating in veterans programs on campus also offered Salcedo a lifeline, and he eventually became president of the Student Veterans of America (SVA) at OCC and the SALUTE National Veterans Honor Society. But his proudest accomplishment, hands down, has been founding OCC's first ever Research Journal Club, which allows students who are interested in pursuing advanced degrees to gain experience studying and analyzing research from academic journals.

“The purpose of the RJC is to begin developing research skills in community college students to prepare them for their research careers in the future,” he explains. “It helps develop critical thinking skills, reading efficiency, communication skills, presentation skills, and more.”

With so much uncertainty due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, Salcedo has decided to defer his enrollment at Stanford for one year, and will pursue research positions in his hometown of Miami while he waits for the crisis to pass. But after that, he has big plans.

“In 5 years, I should be working on my PhD ... maybe at Harvard? Overseas? Who knows,” he says. “After I finish my PhD, I will most likely continue working in academia as a cognitive neuroscience researcher. I hope to be an active contributor to my community and to help others in need.”

One thing Salcedo knows for sure: he wouldn't be where he is today if fate hadn't brought him to Coast. “I'd just like to say one more thank you to the staff and faculty, and the OCC community in general. I am very happy with where I am currently at in life, and I don't think that would have been possible without spending these past three years at OCC. I am eternally grateful.”

## OCC: A Leader in Transfers...

If it wasn't for OCC and their passionate professors, dedicated staff and amazing resources, I never would have completed my education. Programs like Student Equity, Financial Aid and the Garrison Honors Center helped me become the first in my family to get a college degree and get accepted into my dream school, Chapman University, with scholarships!

I had an amazing opportunity to join eight different honor societies during my time as a student, and I graduated with honors. It's things like this that make OCC an amazing place to be.

– **Carmen Chavez**, *Class of 2020*

# OCC NEWS

## FOUNDER OF KWANZAA GIVES TALK AT OCC TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Orange Coast College's Global Engagement Center, UMOJA and EOPS programs, as well as its International Multicultural Center, teamed up to organize a special event featuring activist and scholar Dr. Maulana Karenga on Feb. 26 at the OCC Planetarium.

Dr. Karenga is the creator of Kwanzaa and the writer of the Nguzo Saba (the Seven Principles), and currently is a professor and chair of the Department of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach. His talk, titled "Living the Legacy of Black History: Remembrance, Reflection, Resistance and Remaking the World" was part of OCC's celebration of Black History Month, which takes place during February.

Kwanzaa is a weeklong secular holiday that celebrates African heritage and identity, and is observed by millions

of individuals all over the world. Dr. Karenga is the author of authoritative books on the subject, including *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture*, and he has received numerous awards for this work, which has spanned more than five decades.

He holds two doctorate degrees, one in political science (United States International University) and another in social ethics (University of Southern California), as well as an honorary doctorate from the University of Durban, South Africa.



## FIRST SURVEY OF JOHN UPTON'S PHOTOGRAPHS PREMIERES AT THE DOYLE

Influential photography educator John Upton presented his first survey of fine art photography at Orange Coast College's Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion in late January. The exhibit, titled "Right Place, Right Time: A Survey of John Upton's Photographs," examined a decades-long commitment to exploring urban and natural landscapes in transition.

The exhibition was curated by The Doyle's director Tyler Stallings, and presented selections from four main bodies of work: Early Work, "Japanalia," "Jungle Road," and recent work, "Petaluma."

"The breadth of the exhibition examined John Upton's early days at the California School of Fine Arts in the 1950s, his special mentorship from, and friendship with, noted photographer Minor White, and Upton's impact in photographic education in Southern California while teaching at Orange Coast College for more than 30 years and nationally, as co-author of the seminal textbook, 'Photography,'" said Stallings.

Upton studied with Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, Minor White, Dorothea Lange, and Edward Weston at the

California School of Fine Arts in the early 1950s. In 1955 he was the first resident student of Minor White in Rochester, N.Y. and took courses in the history of photography from famed photo art historian, Beaumont Newhall. In the late 1960s he became Chair of the Photography department at OCC, retiring in 1999. In 1976, he coauthored, with Barbara London, the seminal college textbook *Photography* now in its 12th edition with more than 1.5 million copies in print. In essence, Upton has been in the right place at the right time in the history of twentieth century photography.





## OCC UNVEILS FIRST INTEGRATIVE HEALTH COACH PROGRAM AT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Orange Coast College is launching a first-of-its-kind Integrative Health Coach program this fall that will train students on how to blend traditional medical treatment with alternative and complementary therapies, such as health eating, naturopathic medicine, acupuncture and yoga, through health coaching.

A donation from Susan and Henry Samueli allowed for the development of this groundbreaking program, which is the first in California at a community college and will standardize training and certification in an emerging profession. Integrative health coaches partner with healthcare providers in clinics, hospitals and community-based agencies to offer care and support to patients suffering from chronic illnesses.

“The idea of an integrative health coach is a critical component to helping the average person navigate their health and wellness needs,” says Gerald Solomon, Executive Director of the Samueli Foundation. “A health coach serves as not just a navigator, but someone who can be a guide and a mentor with skill and knowledge to be able to help the average person make decisions.”

## OCC PRESIDENT ANGÉLICA SUAREZ NAMED ORANGE COUNTY HISPANIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) - Santa Ana Council #147 recognized Orange Coast College president, Dr. Angelica Suarez, as one of its 2020 Hispanic Women of the Year awardees on Feb. 22.

Dr. Suarez was recognized alongside nine other women of Latin descent whose accomplishments and meaningful voluntary contributions to their overall communities make them positive role models for a younger generation of leaders. The cornerstone of the LULAC national and local organization is education, and all proceeds from the awards banquet will go toward continued support of students in need of financial assistance with their post-secondary education costs.

OCC’s 11th president is the second woman and the first Latina to hold the position. Dr. Suarez’ personal narrative

OCC’s program will specifically focus on teaching students how to conduct

motivational interviewing, and will have two tracks: a two-year Associate degree that aligns closely with other Allied Health programs at the College, and a shorter certificate that can be an addendum to another degree, or serve as additional training for those already working in the medical field. “A big part of the program is focused on helping people learn how to change in an empowering way,” says program coordinator Sharyn Konick. “We will be teaching our students how to help patients set and reach goals, and stay on track.”

Once they complete the program, graduates will be well-positioned to work in health clinics in Orange County and beyond, partnering with doctors and nurses to provide a link between patients and their healthcare providers.



as an immigrant and first-generation college student connects her very directly to the shared experiences of California community college students.

LULAC advances the economic development, educational advancement, public policy outcomes, housing opportunities, health awareness and general civil rights protection of Latinos in the United States and Puerto Rico through community-based programs and services through more than 700 local LULAC councils nationwide.



# STUDENT SERVICES CONNECTS STUDENTS TO TECHNOLOGY, SUPPORT NEEDED TO STAY IN SCHOOL

**D**uring the Spring 2020 semester, as the COVID-19 global pandemic unfolded and classes at OCC were transitioned online, the College's Student Services Division created various programs in order to support students in need.

One such program — OCC's laptop loan program — is a game-changer for many students who struggle to access the technology they need for online coursework. By July, OCC had handed out 110 Chromebooks and 13 iPads, and the College was planning to also offer Samsung Galaxy tablets which, like the iPads on loan, come with a built in wifi hotspot for students who lack reliable internet access.

"We are committed to doing the best we can to remove barriers for our students," says Vice President of Student Services Madjid Niroumand. "As we have moved to remote delivery of instruction and services, we want to make sure we do not limit our students' access to education because of lack of technology."

In addition to loaning out computer devices, OCC's Student Equity Program launched an effort to contact more than 3,400 students who were at risk of dropping out of school, in order to identify their needs and provide them with timely support.

During the spring semester, the Student Equity program contacted students who dropped their courses in order to offer assistance and conduct wellness checks. During the summer, as OCC geared up for a fall semester that would take place mostly online, this team of mostly reassigned staff ramped up their efforts to connect with students and inform them about resources that might help them.

"Initially, it was strictly wellness and assistance with transitioning to online learning environments, but after the



Vice President of Student Services Madjid Niroumand wears full PPE when distributing laptops to students in need.

spring we expanded our messaging to include registration reminders, funding reminders, etc.," says Student Programs Project Coordinator Erin Fitzgerald. "We also collaborated with the Instructional wing and Retention team to contact students who were referred to us by faculty members."

Student needs are identified and addressed on a case-by-case basis, with many students' needs changing rapidly as a result of the pandemic. "We have found that things are changing so quickly with the pandemic that what students need day to day changes, too," explains Fitzgerald. "For example, some students lost their jobs and then their computer died. We trust our students, and decided early on that if a student is requesting assistance, it was because it was needed."



# A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: YUNA WATANABE DESCRIBES THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International student Yuna Watanabe didn't expect her first year at OCC to end the way it did: halting all in-person classes and finishing the semester online.

"It was very rough at first," says Watanabe, who majors in communications. "It was hard to keep up with all of the messages coming in at once from professors."

Watanabe is from Japan but lived most of her life in Hong Kong, which is about an eight-hour flight from Wuhan, China where COVID-19 reportedly originated. She has lived in the United States for less than a year, and has chosen to remain here for the time being. The arduous process of getting back into the country is one reason that she does not want to go back to Hong Kong.

"Upon your arrival in Hong Kong, it is required for everyone to get tested for COVID-19, and wear a specific GPS bracelet — given by the government — that will ensure you do not leave your house or hotel for two weeks just in case you develop any symptoms of COVID-19."

Watanabe found OCC thanks to an international admissions recruiter Kris Toribio who visited her high school (see story, page 25). She liked the idea of being able to get a more affordable education compared to other universities, and this helped her make the decision to pursue higher education in the U.S.

OCC enrolls approximately 1,393 international students each year representing more than 76 countries from around the world. As COVID-19 began to spread and forced classes at OCC to move online in early March, everyone had to make adjustments.

"Socially, not being able to see my fellow [Associated Students of Orange Coast College] officers, my advisors and my friends was a challenge," says Watanabe.



"Academically, not being able to see my professor in-person, or be in a physical classroom, made me feel lost about the learning material. Mentally, I kept dissociating a lot; I couldn't focus academically but a counselor at the OCC student health center helped me through it."

In fact, OCC's Global Engagement Center offers many services to international students in order to help them with their educational endeavors. These services continued to be available online when the campus transitioned to virtual classes.

"The GEC quickly moved our services online — from online advising to Virtual Town Hall meetings, the GEC has been available to help," says Program Facilitator Gladys Calderon. "Additionally, we send regular updates about regulatory requirements and travel advisories, and we have been able to provide technology support to students who did not have the equipment necessary to move their learning online."

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITING COORDINATOR RECEIVES **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

**O**range Coast College's International Student Recruiting Coordinator Kris Toribio sees himself as a storyteller, not a recruiter.

The story he's telling is simple: international students looking for a university experience in the United States can find it at OCC, for a fraction of the university price.

In July, Toribio's passion for ethical recruiting focused on finding the right fit led his peers within the International Association for College Admission Counseling (ACAC) to award him this year's Distinguished Service Award. He is the first community college representative, and the second person of color, to receive the award from the regional affiliate of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC), which currently counts universities like Harvard and Stanford among its approximately 3,000 members representing more than 90 countries worldwide.

"I'm very happy to have had an opportunity to represent OCC, and to demonstrate that our community college is more than just a place for transfer," says Toribio of the honor. "My platform has always been to make sure international students at community colleges have a space [within organizations like International ACAC] and that they know choosing OCC will give them a university experience at a more affordable price."

Typically, Toribio travels all over the world to participate in recruiting events and he often serves as a liaison between the College and international education officials. Two years ago he was instrumental in arranging for OCC to become the first college accredited by the ministry of education in Brunei, and his efforts resulted in six Bruneian students attending OCC in Fall 2019.

Toribio also is passionate about combating elitism and racism within the college recruiting world, and organized a panel at this year's virtual conference titled "International ACAC: Unfiltered" where recruiting officials could share their experiences of racism on the road.



Toribio is the first community college representative to receive International ACAC's Distinguished Service Award

"I've been mistaken for the driver while on recruiting trips, and I've been subjected to second searches at the airport on multiple occasions," he shares. "I've even been told that I'm the wrong ethnicity to represent the U.S. while on recruiting trips. It's important to combat those stereotypes in any way I can."

Currently, Toribio is managing OCC's International Student social media accounts, and is hosting regular recruiting and transfer live sessions on Instagram, where he can connect with students from all over the world who are interested in attending OCC.





# OCC MAKERSPACE GETS TO WORK MAKING MASKS, TOUCHLESS KEYS FOR CAMPUS

**O**range Coast College's Makerspace is back up and running with a critical task: produce enough masks and touchless keys to be ready for when campus re-opens.

The College's Makerspace is uniquely suited for the job. With laser cutting machines, industrial sewing machines, and 3D printers at their disposal, so far architecture professor and Makerspace Co-Founder, Steve Fuchs and Makerspace Coordinator Garret Hill have completed more than 600 masks and almost 700 "No Touch" key fobs.

The masks, made with upcycled t-shirts left over from various events such as last fall's Science Night event, were laser cut four at a time using a pattern perfected by Hill from many maker community suggestions to maximize efficiency. "A pattern from SUAYLA [wholesale sewing shop] was used to sew our initial mask design. What we liked about this design was that it incorporated an inner sleeve, which allows the user to insert or replace a separate filter material to further combat virus and bacteria," explains Hill. "The pattern and production techniques were [then] simplified and further unified into one OCC mask design." The process for assembling OCC's masks has been whittled down to nine steps, allowing Hill to increase production output.

As supplies of t-shirt material ran low, the Makerspace was able to collaborate with OCC's Fashion department, which donated fabric and elastic in addition to offering tips on the design of the masks and the best material to use. "We are so grateful to be a part of such a motivated and selfless campus community of designers and makers, and are appreciative of these fantastic donations," says Fuchs.

Hill and Fuchs have additionally been tasked by the College's leadership with creating "No Touch" COVID key fobs made from a strong plastic material that will limit employees' contact with high-touch surfaces. Made from a new "Tough PLA" material, the keys are able to withstand wear and tear, according to Fuchs. "It's even able to open doors," he explains.

OCC's Makerspace was created in 2017 with a grant from the California Community College State Chancellor's office. The laboratory space, originally dubbed the "Co-Lab", is located in the College's Technology Center and is outfitted with state-of-the-art machines and tools, with a focus on creativity, innovation and collaboration. The Makerspace is open to all OCC students, faculty and staff, and allows the College to build maker culture into STEM, STEAM, and all curriculum.

# HEMMENS HEADING TO UNLV FOLLOWING SHORTENED COAST CAREER



*It's been a challenging time for all spring sports at OCC. The defending state champion baseball team and women's tennis team were not able to defend their titles. The men's volleyball team, fresh off a 22-1 season from a year ago, was not able to return to the State Final Four. Several members of the OCC track and field teams will have to wait until next year to show what they can do. Men's and women's crew, who had a historic race set up with Oxford University this year, had to dock up their boats for the remainder of 2020. Here, standout swimmer Reece Hemmens shares how the COVID-19 global pandemic disrupted his plans for 2020, and maps out his next move.*

**T**his was the year Reece Hemmens had prepared nearly two years for. He, and his Orange Coast College swimming teammates were going to be one of the top teams in the state and compete for numerous individual state titles as well as the CCCAA team state championship.

“Coach Anthony (Iacopetti) brought us into a meeting and asked if we really wanted to compete for a state



championship and if we were ready to put that kind of work into going for something like that,” Hemmens says. “He knew we had the talent to be a state championship team and on an individual level, I was so ready to compete and go after state records and state championships.

“But it just wasn’t meant to be, I guess.”

Hemmens is just one of several Pirate student-athletes who entered the 2020 spring sports season full of hope and optimism, only to be silenced due to the worldwide COVID-19 global pandemic. After trying to wait out the situation, the California Community College Athletics Association decided to shut down all spring sports for the 2020 season.

While the NCAA and CCCAA have given the spring student-athletes this year of eligibility back, one thing the governing bodies can NOT give back is the moment — the opportunity that was presented in front of these athletes for the 2020 season. In the case for Hemmens, an opportunity to rewrite the OCC record book ... an opportunity to create a legacy that would last for years to come.

### *Lost Opportunities*

But Hemmens, who had already committed to swim at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) prior to the season shutting down, had an even more painfully accurate assessment of what this closure will do to his Pirate teammates.

“Sure I’m disappointed that I didn’t get a chance to compete this year, but I was already set and ready to go to UNLV in the fall so this didn’t destroy me,” Hemmens says. “We had guys on our team that were going to use this season to show Division I programs that they were good enough to swim at that level.

These guys needed this season for exposure and now that opportunity is gone. That’s what’s most disappointing.”

Hemmens, a standout athlete at Newport Harbor High School, came to OCC following his brother Hayden to the Pirate pool in 2018. “[Hayden] transferred to OCC from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, so I joined him at Coast. Competing



Reece Hemmens will join his brother Hayden at UNLV for the 2020-21 school year.

against him my freshman year was something I'll never forget," he said. "I was lucky enough to be a part of a state championship and swam on some state champion relay teams, but the thing that'll stay with me was when I broke my brother's school record time in the 100-yard freestyle two weeks before state. That memory will stay with me forever."

After taking a semester away from the pool, Hemmens joined the Pirates and saw what type of opportunities were in front of him. Under the guidance of coach Iacopetti, Hemmens helped the Pirates to three state relay titles and helped guide OCC to the state swim championship in 2018, narrowly defeating Sierra College.

"I'm going to a quality Division I swim program and I'll be interested to see how they can possibly top the program I'm coming from at OCC," Hemmens said. "Anthony and Coach Adam (Lee) really make this program special. They take care of everyone and really help each swimmer in all facets of life ... swimming, school and life.

Anthony creates the path for us and if you're willing to put in the work and follow that path, you can be successful, like I was.

"I remember my freshman year, I was struggling in a math class and Adam pulled me aside and just told me to grind through it, just like in swimming and I did and got an A in the class. He didn't mess around with his message ... hard work, dedication and consistency."

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We had guys on our team that were going to use this season to show Division I programs they were good enough to swim at that level. Now that opportunity is gone.

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## *Next Steps*

After Hayden Hemmens moved on to UNLV in 2019, Reece stayed at OCC and redshirted last year as he prepared for going for it all in 2020. "Me and my teammates worked so hard all of last year and I know I was ready to go so

much faster than I went in 2018," Hemmens says. "But now, after two years of not competing, I'll be ready to get after it at UNLV next year. With my (athletic competition) clock going, I need to talk with UNLV and the NCAA to figure out just how many years I still have. This is new territory for everyone."

While OCC's Athletic program figures out what comes next, and exactly what upcoming seasons will look like, coaches and staff have focused on keeping student athletes' spirits up, and moving into new facilities.

"It was tough hearing that the spring season was canceled,

but we knew it had to be done for the health of our athletes, families and community," OCC athletic director Jason Kehler said. "Now we're just focused on helping our students transition to remote learning while also figuring out what's next.

"But we are extremely excited to get back after it once it's safe for everyone. We have a lot to look forward to with the completion of several construction projects, bringing our facilities up to the level of our championship-caliber programs."





# TONY ALTABELLI RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR PROFESSIONALISM DURING A TRAGEDY

**D**uring the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) weeklong announcement of the 2020 Special Awards, Orange Coast College's Tony Altobelli was recognized for his courage while performing under a most difficult situation as he was awarded the Bud Nangle Award.

The award, which has only been given to three other sports information professionals, is presented to a member of

CoSIDA or to an individual outside of CoSIDA who shows ethics, integrity and bravery under unusual or stressful situations while carrying out their job duties.

Altobelli is in his 14th year as Sports Information Director at Orange Coast College. He is a one-man office, handling all SID and game operation duties for 24 teams and is the longest-tenured sports information director in Coast's 72-year history. Prior to serving as the sports information



director, Altobelli spent 15 years as a sportswriter, working for numerous newspapers in Southern California and some others in central Texas.

Yet nothing in his experience could have prepared him for the tragedies of Jan. 26, 2020 and their aftermath. That was the fateful day of the helicopter crash that took the lives of nine individuals — the lives of three of Altobelli's family members and six others, including NBA superstar Kobe Bryant. Altobelli lost his brother, nationally-recognized Orange County baseball coach

John Altobelli, and John's wife and daughter — Tony's sister-in-law Keri and niece Alyssa.

As spokesperson for the OCC athletic program, Altobelli immediately began performing his job in the crisis with bravery, courage and determination. In the early aftermath of the tragedy, Tony handled an enormous amount of international, national and local media demands, coordinating all publicity for the accident, putting together the school's official statement about the deaths of John, Keri and Alyssa, and meeting with staff, coaches and families of the baseball student-athletes. Two days after the crash, he prepared and coordinated a Jan. 28 public service and remembrance of Coach Altobelli on opening day of the Orange Coast College baseball season, attended by a huge media contingent and over 2,000 fans, 40 times the typical attendance. Altobelli served as the emcee and public address announcer as well.

"To watch what Tony did in person was simply awe inspiring," said Jason Kehler, Orange Coast College Athletics Director. "We tried to get him some help so he wouldn't have to worry about the sports information side of things, but he insisted that he keep working. The level of professionalism he displayed during those first two weeks especially were second to none. It was amazing."

While serving as the crisis communications spokesman and in the midst of the media crush, Tony also penned an emotional, poignant and humorous tribute to his brother entitled: Dear John ... Thank you ... Love, Toad.

Through it all, Tony did not halt his in-game SID duties, serving as the public address announcer, official scorer and scoreboard operator for each baseball game and at other OCC events, until the campus was closed on March 16 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Altobelli and the Orange Coast College community continue to daily face the aftermath of the crash and the loss of their head baseball coach in their new reality.

In early April, Altobelli was honored with the Brass Top Award from the California Community College Sports Information Association (CCCSIA), given to an SID at the community college level, or someone working closely with members of the CCCSIA, to recognize outstanding service and accomplishments. He served as President of the association from 2009-11.



Tony Altobelli was awarded the Bud Nangle Award for performing under the most difficult situation after losing his brother, sister-in-law and niece in a helicopter crash on Jan. 26.





# A NEW SKIPPER: PIRATES NAME NATE JOHNSON AS HEAD BASEBALL COACH

**T**he keys to “The House That Alto Built” have officially been turned over.

After an extensive search, Orange Coast College named Nate Johnson as the new head baseball coach in July, making him just the seventh OCC skipper in the 72-year history of the Pirate program.

The hiring comes just six months following the tragic loss of longtime head coach John Altobelli, who died in late January alongside his wife, Keri, daughter Alyssa, and six others in a helicopter crash. While it’s been a roller coaster of emotions ever since, Johnson, who became close to Altobelli during the seven years he served as an assistant coach, is excited to follow in his mentor’s footsteps.

“[Coach Alto] has set the standards high with this program and I’m going to do my best to not only maintain the success he brought, but also maintain his legacy,” he says.

Johnson was selected as the Pirates’ head coach following a two-month hiring process that saw more than 70 applicants vie for one of the top community college baseball head coaching positions in the state. He never took for granted that the competition for a chance to lead the championship program would be fierce, and he was overcome with gratitude when he got the call that he had been selected.

“This was a very coveted job opportunity ... no doubt about it,” Johnson said. “I remember receiving the call when I got offered the job; my wife, Jonai, ran out and gave me a big hug ... there were some tears shed, that’s for sure.”

Johnson takes over a Pirate baseball program rich in tradition, with a record of dominating the sport. Orange Empire Conference champions over the past three seasons (excluding the 2020 season canceled due to COVID-19), the Pirates have won four state baseball championships since 2009 and seven titles in school history. During that time, Altobelli took Johnson under his wing, teaching him



the ins and outs of coaching and grooming him to be a head coach someday.

“Alto definitely taught me so many different aspects about the game ... things I didn’t even realize were there,” Johnson says. “I came to OCC as a kid, and he really took me in. I wanted to learn everything I possibly could from him and I managed to work my way up the ranks. He named me the Associate Head Coach for 2020 in the hopes of giving me the experience I would need to have a chance to take over the program once he retired, but unfortunately, everything changed.”

After Altobelli’s death, the shell shocked players and coaches were surrounded by a community that rallied in support of the program, giving Johnson a glimpse of how strong bonds that tie the “Pirate Family” together really are. “The thing I remember the most from Alto’s death was the love and support our team received from everyone involved with our school ... other coaches, administrators, former Pirate players ... it was incredible. As the head coach, I want to be able to return that same support to the rest of our teams and to our College. The term ‘Pirate Family’ is used a lot, but it’s real and I’m excited to be a part of it.”



# OCC ALUMNI HALL OF FAME

## RECIPIENT PASSES AWAY FROM COVID-19

**O**n March 30,, Orange Coast College's 1984 Alumni Hall of Fame recipient, Dr. James Goodrich, passed away from complications related to COVID-19. He was 73 years old.

Considered the leading expert in complex craniofacial anomalies in the world, in 2016 Dr. Goodrich performed his seventh craniopagus surgery — a 27-hour feat documented by CNN. The surgery was a success, and conjoined twins Jadon and Anais McDonald both survived.

Goodrich first came to OCC in 1968, after serving in the Marine Corps in Vietnam. A less-than-stellar high school student, he found a second chance at Coast and graduated with honors as OCC's valedictorian in 1972. He went on to earn his bachelor's degree from UC Irvine, a master's and doctorate degree from Columbia University, and an M.D. from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Inducted into OCC's Alumni Hall of Fame in 1984, Goodrich pioneered new techniques in conjoined craniofacial separation surgery over the course of his career, including separating the procedure into shorter, multi-step stages, and building 3D models of the brain in order to assist with navigating interwoven blood vessels and brain tissue. None of Goodrich's conjoined twin patients ever died during the separation operation.

In 1992, he received the "Distinguished Community College Alumni Award," presented by the Community College League of California, and in 2006 he received the Marine Corps University Foundation's Major General John H. Russell Leadership Award. The author of several books, Goodrich spent more than 30 years at Montefiore Einstein Hospital in The Bronx, N.Y., and was the director of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Montefiore and a professor of clinical neurological surgery, pediatrics, plastic and reconstructive surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is survived by his wife and three sisters.



## ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

# FOREVER



# PIRATES

**T**he “Forever Pirates” campaign was developed in partnership with OCC’s Athletics department, who began using the phrase “Forever a Pirate” following the death of student and baseball player Jordan Watanabe in 2009. Late OCC Head Baseball Coach John Altobelli coined the phrase in an effort to keep Watanabe’s memory alive within his program. After Altobelli’s tragic passing in January 2020, the phrase took on new meaning, with OCC alumni from all over the world identifying themselves with the hashtag #ForeverAPirate.

The Alumni & Friends is housed under the OCC Foundation, and any student who has ever taken a single class at the College is eligible to join. OCC alums who join Alumni & Friends will receive a free gift of their choice, branded with a new Forever Pirates logo. Gifts include a coffee mug, face mask, sticker, and license plate holder.

**Sign up Today:**  
[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/alumni](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/alumni)