

# OCCC

## magazine

2024 EDITION



# LEVEL UP: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES SHAPING OCC



ORANGE  
COAST  
COLLEGE

# Commencement

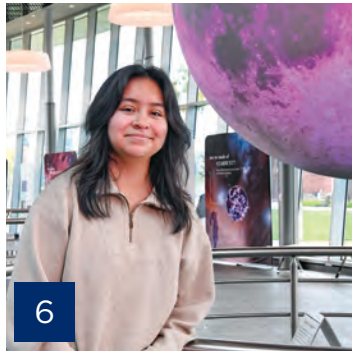


Orange Coast College's 76<sup>th</sup> commencement exercises featured pomp, pageantry and marked the culmination of the mission of the College to foster student success and

# ment 2024



and joyous celebration. The event  
and achievement.



6



12



14



35

**STUDENT-BUILT SUSTAINABLE HOME BRIGHTENS FUTURES ..... 2**  
 OCC partners with UC Irvine and places second in Orange County Sustainability Decathlon

**CLOSING THE GAP..... 6**  
 AJ is one of 10 students selected for prestigious research experience program at UC Berkeley

**A SIGHT TO BEHOLD ..... 9**  
 New telescope farm draws hundreds for solar eclipse viewing events

**FROM CAMPUS TO TABLE ..... 12**  
 OCC's Hot Food Team wins gold at regionals

**POWER UP: PETE THE PIRATE GETS PIXELATED..... 14**  
 A new video game featuring OCC's mascot will be available this fall

**SHAPING REALITIES..... 17**  
 Alumna returns to OCC to gain experience in emerging field - immersive media

**FIVE YEARS AT OCC.....22**  
 Fireside chat with President Suarez

**WAYFINDING WITH WIND, WAVES AND STARS ..... 30**  
 Coast Community learns about Polynesian wayfinding

**LEADING THE SCOREBOARD.....32**  
 OCC becomes the first community college in California to earn 100 athletic state championships

**NEW ERA IN SOFTBALL ..... 36**  
 OCC Softball makes waves with help of team, coaches and upgrades

**EXPLORE COAST .....38**  
 10 cool things at Coast that are open to the community

**BREAKING BARRIERS ..... 40**  
 OCC inducts civil rights activist Sylvia Mendez into its Alumni Hall of Fame

*Cover: Pictured on the cover is OCC alumna Melanie Zarzur with a video game avatar of Pete the Pirate on her shoulder.*



2

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 degrees and certificates in more than 150 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 800 international students representing more than 65 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)



Dear Orange Coast College colleagues and friends,

I am delighted to present the 2024 edition of the OCC Magazine. This issue features student stories of excellence and innovation.

As we eagerly anticipate the opening of the Chemistry Building in Spring 2025, this issue shines a spotlight on our commitment to STEM. You will be inspired by the stories of OCC students who collaborated with UC Irvine students to build a sustainable accessory dwelling unit for youth aged out of the foster care system. This is just one example of how our institution is making a tangible difference in the community. You also will learn about the accomplishments of our Hot Food Team, who won a regional competition by showcasing their "campus to table" menu, a testament to the resources available in our Aquaponics Lab.



With a focus on innovation, our faculty also are identifying opportunities to provide engaging, hands-on learning opportunities for students, like OCC faculty member Matt Newman, who designed a video game for the College with the intention of incorporating it into his curriculum.

Our students continue to shine, surpassing expectations and setting new standards of excellence. An example is AJ Juarez, one of 10 community college students conducting undergraduate research at UC Berkeley this summer. This achievement is a testament to the quality of education and opportunities for growth that OCC provides.

This year, we are honored to celebrate our 100 athletic state championships, the most of any community college in California. OCC has a storied history of athletic excellence, even competing and winning against four-year universities.

Notably, civil rights activist Sylvia Mendez was honored as the 2024 inductee to the Alumni Hall of Fame during our Commencement ceremony, where we conferred 5,505 associate degrees and certificates to some 2,666 graduates.

The success of our programs and, most importantly, our students and graduates can be attributed in no small part to OCC's extensive student support services and stellar academic programs.

We are thrilled to share these stories with you.

Sincerely,

Angelica L. Suarez, Ph.D.



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#### MISSION STATEMENT

Orange Coast College serves the educational needs of a diverse local and global community. The College empowers students to achieve their goals by providing high quality, culturally responsive, and innovative programs and services through pathways leading to degrees, transfers, certificates, foundational skills, workforce development, and lifelong learning. The College promotes student development, learning, and equitable outcomes by fostering a respectful, inclusive, and caring, and participatory campus climate of student engagement and academic inquiry.

#### FOLLOW US





# STUDENT-BUILT SUST HOME BRIGHTENS FU

*OCC partners with UC Irvine and places second in Orange County*

**B**uildings are currently responsible for nearly half of global energy-related carbon emissions.

That statistic alone was enough for Orange Coast College architecture student Georgie Ampudia to want to be part of the solution, not the problem.

During her design/build class, she learned that OCC was partnering with the University of California, Irvine, to design, engineer, and build an energy-efficient, solar-

powered home for the Orange County Sustainability Decathlon (OCSD). This competition challenged university teams to design and build model solar-powered homes that addressed climate change and housing needs. This was a significant opportunity for Ampudia and her fellow students to make a real impact in sustainable architecture.

She instantly signed up to get involved and became one of several students responsible for the home's construction.



# AINABLE TURES

## *Sustainability Decathlon*

While much work went into the planning, the real work of constructing the house began in the summer of 2023 with a rigorous timeline to meet the competition's deadline. Building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) quickly was no easy task, but several OCC students were up for the challenge. They were excited to have the opportunity to work on a project of this caliber.

## The Students

OCC architecture student Diana DePedro was one of those students. She was ecstatic to work with a team of mostly females in a male-dominated field. A mom with two kids, she felt it was time to return to college and change careers.

"Coming from a managerial position and coming into this, it was great to see young adults putting in the hours and working overtime to meet our deadlines," said DePedro. "The fact that we could build it on our own gave us a lot of empowerment."

For OCC architecture student Yuka Suzuki, the experience led her to create an inseparable bond and friendship with fellow architecture student Ampudia. Before this project, they had yet to cross paths with each other on campus, but the build helped foster deep connections with their professors and fellow students.

"For this project, you're working with professors and OCC students from other interdisciplinary fields, including UCI students," explained Suzuki. "You were exposed to many people from different majors, and everyone came together very effortlessly."

Michelle Alcantara started at OCC studying interior design. It wasn't until she decided to take an architecture course to complete an elective requirement that her passion for architecture ignited. Alcantara joined the build team and used her interior design knowledge to support the project.

"After I fabricated a physical model, I decided to do a side project for fun and created an interior design board," said Alcantara. "I shared the board with my professor and it got printed out and added to the project. From there, I became the lead interior designer for the project."

## A Greater Purpose

These four students, along with several others, joined the construction process for the house during the peak of summer. Even though the heat was at times unbearable, students and faculty persevered because they knew this house would be used by someone in need.

Before construction, faculty involved in the planning process already had a client in mind: the Homeless Intervention Services of Orange County in Placentia, where the house would serve as transitional housing for eight young men overcoming trauma and homelessness.



**Michelle Alcantara**



**Georgie Ampudia**



**Yuka Suzuki**



**Diana DePedro**

This became the North Star and guided students and faculty in their planning decisions.

“From the beginning, we had intention and purpose,” explains Ampudia. “It didn’t feel like something only to put in a portfolio. We were proving it could be built sustainably. We were also putting intention into it and giving it to someone in need.”

The students studied natural shapes and chose a turtle shell for the building’s facade, inspired by its ability to provide shelter and protection, aligning with their client’s story. Additionally, the butterfly roof used signified metamorphosis and being able to change within the home

because it was a transitory period in their client’s life. The house’s high ceilings and windows let in as much sunlight as possible, making the home feel light and airy.

TeamMADE - OCC and UCI’s team name for the competition - was one of the few competitors with a client. This presented additional work because they had to design the house to accommodate the current space of HIS-OC’s backyard lot. It was time-consuming to incorporate the necessary changes to the house, including its size, floor plan, and design to fit particular needs. However, the changes would allow their client to add eight additional beds.





“This program is for 18-to-24-year-old men my age,” said Ampudia. “You’re building it for people in a different socioeconomic situation than you. It was more eye-opening when you’re building it for people your age. So, it makes you see the whole project differently. That made the project feel like it had more purpose because you were building it for actual people.”

## The Competition

OCC entered the competition partnered with UC Irvine, making Coast the only community college competing. UCI provided more engineering support for the build, while OCC provided more architecture support. This collaboration was key to their success, as it allowed them to leverage the strengths of both institutions and create an innovative and sustainable home.

The luminOCity home, as it was named, had a floor plan of 750 square feet with the capability to go off the grid. The home was equipped with state-of-the-art engineering and control systems, home automation, and water and energy conservation.

OCC’s FrameCAD machine was a real game changer because it dramatically sped up the process of the house build. FrameCAD is a sustainable, resilient, and adaptable/flexible cold-formed steel framing system that enables students with little to no construction experience to build structures.

“Once the parts come out of the FrameCAD machine, it’s pretty easy to assemble,” explained DePedro. “It’s like assembling LEGOs or IKEA furniture. They each come



**Building photos courtesy of Applied Photography LLC**

numbered, so you know exactly where each part should go.”

The team’s hard work paid off. TeamMADE scored second place overall and placed first in engineering and construction, market potential, and energy efficiency. They even beat out stiff competitor Cal Poly Pomona.

“It was insane because people from OCC transferred to Pomona for architecture,” said Ampudia. “It was wild to us that we’d beaten a school known for architecture in California.”

Suzuki and Ampudia are still processing the whole experience, and they are thankful for the collaborative relationships with their professors and UCI students.

“I saw myself as one of those students where I came in not knowing anything about architecture,” said Ampudia. “Now, I feel so different. You view things differently after building a home.”



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*AJ is one of 10 students selected for the prestigious research experience program at UC Berkeley*

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**F**rom a young age, AJ's fascination with the stars was undeniable. They spent nights with their brother, defying bedtimes to witness meteor showers. The stars, a source of tranquility and delight, were more than a hobby for AJ; they were a gateway to a world of possibilities. They never imagined they could actually make a career from it.

It wasn't until AJ enrolled at Orange Coast College that the possibility became a reality.

AJ started at OCC as a journalism major in Fall 2022. To complete a general education requirement, they decided to enroll in an astronomy course, which forever changed the course of their academic journey.

Taking Astronomy 100 reignited a childhood passion and



# CLOSING THE GAP

brought joy and nostalgia. Not only did OCC have its own Planetarium, but the College was also getting ready to debut its telescope farm.

Excited about the endless possibilities and opportunities, AJ decided to change their major from journalism to physics.

“There are many more opportunities here than I expected when I first started,” said AJ.

Soon, AJ began working at the Planetarium as a student assistant presenting shows to various audiences, including K-12 and four-year university students. Being a presenter exposed them to the unique nuances of working at

a planetarium and deepened their understanding of astronomy.

First, they had to explain complex astronomy concepts to young schoolchildren. At the other extreme, they also had to explain these concepts to people much older than them. This often brought up thoughts of imposter syndrome.

Ultimately, AJ knew they were knowledgeable and could present to an audience of any age. The greatest joy of working at the Planetarium was seeing a spark of interest light up in children’s eyes. That’s when they knew they had made an impact.

“The best part is seeing a kid come in with a passion for



# “Attending OCC was one of the greatest decisions I could have made for myself.”

astronomy and leave more excited. Or, seeing a kid come in who didn't care about STEM, and leave asking questions about space,” says AJ.

## Golden Opportunity

Working at the OCC Planetarium gave AJ some unique opportunities to explore, as OCC Planetarium Interim Manager Jessica Artinger always shared research opportunities and more with her students.

“Mentoring students like AJ has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my role at the Planetarium,” explained Artinger. “Seeing them grow, gain confidence, and believe in their potential is inspiring. AJ’s dedication and passion for astronomy have been evident from the start. I wanted to continue fueling that passion for them by sharing opportunities to challenge them to grow further in their knowledge.”

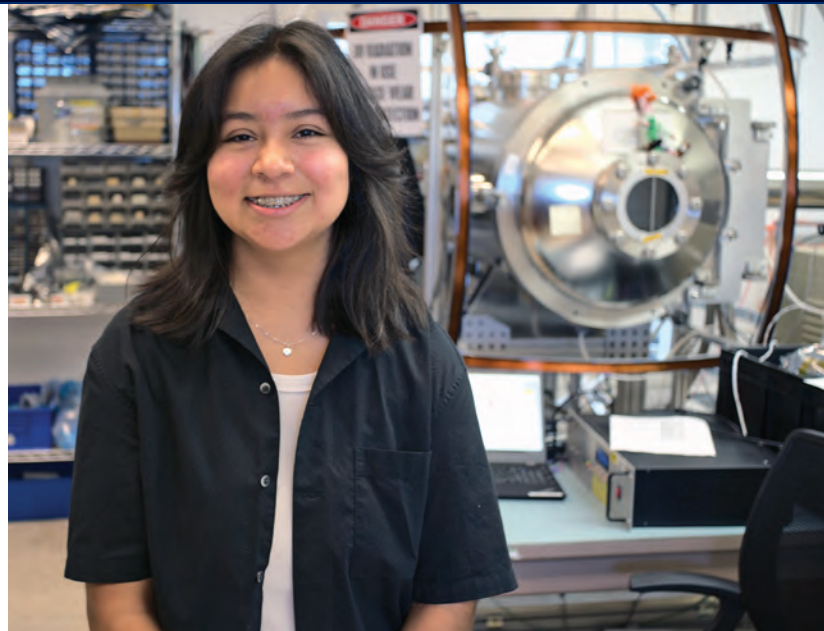
When AJ saw the listing for the Advancing Space Science through Undergraduate Research Experience (ASSURE) program at the University of California, Berkeley, they thought it was out of their league. However, after some encouragement from their professors and Artinger, AJ applied for the opportunity. After all, it didn't hurt to try.

“Jessica was mainly the one who gave me that push and confidence that I could do it,” explains AJ.

In late March, AJ received notification that they had been accepted to the ASSURE program. This was a significant moment for AJ, as it not only validated their passion for astronomy and physics but also opened doors to a world of research and learning. AJ was one of 10 students statewide admitted to the prestigious program.

ASSURE is an NSF-funded research experience for undergraduates program run by the Space Sciences Laboratory (SSL) at UC Berkeley, a nationally-renowned lab created to expand scientific knowledge of Earth’s space environment, our Solar System, and the broader cosmos.

During the summer, AJ will partner with a mentor to conduct their own research project in space sciences at UC Berkeley for 10 weeks.



“I’m thrilled about the opportunity to gain undergraduate research experience,” AJ exclaimed. “This is a crucial step in my academic journey, one that will pave the way for my future in astrophysics. My ultimate goal is to obtain my Ph.D. and become an astronomy professor and science communicator.”

## Changing the Narrative

AJ is fully aware that only a small percentage of astronomers and physicists are Hispanic, that number of now stands at 6.64%.

They want to change that narrative.

AJ wants to become an educator so that more people see themselves in this career.

“My goal is to transform academia into a space that embraces diversity and inclusion,” AJ asserts. “Through my work at the Planetarium, I’ve had teachers and parents approach me, expressing their appreciation for seeing someone who looks like their child presenting and teaching science. This is a rarity, and I want to change that. I want to inspire others to believe in their potential.”

For now, AJ will continue working at the Planetarium and complete their associate degree in physics, astronomy, and mathematics, with the goal of transferring to a four-year university.

“Attending OCC was one of the greatest decisions I could have made for myself,” says AJ. “I’ve met some of my best friends here, and I’ve gotten to know some wonderful faculty members who have facilitated my astronomy journey.”



# A SIGHT TO BEHOLD

## *New Telescope Farm Draws Hundreds for Solar Eclipse Viewing Events*

**A**s a dense, heavy marine layer blanketed Orange Coast College's campus, hundreds descended to peer through solar telescopes to catch a brief glimpse of the "ring of fire" solar eclipse. People of all ages arrived for an opportunity to marvel and experience the last annular solar eclipse that will be visible from the United States until June 21, 2039.

The annular solar eclipse crossed North, Central, and South America and was visible to millions in the Western Hemisphere on October 14, 2023. OCC's Planetarium hosted a viewing event for the public to experience this partial solar eclipse, debuting their telescope farm for this highly anticipated event.

"We set up a 230 mm solar telescope outside for the annular solar eclipse event," OCC Planetarium Manager Jessica Artinger said. "This telescope is pretty rare for a community college to have. We can look at the sun and see it close up."

OCC began construction on a telescope farm in September 2022. The telescope farm - funded by a \$1 million grant from an anonymous donor - includes eight telescopes that students and the public can use for nighttime viewing of the stars and solar observation. The telescope grant also funded other astronomy-related projects, including OCC's Astronomy House, student field trips to the Planetarium, and various telescopes used by the College's astronomy department. All of the telescopes have electrical power and data connections.

In April 2024, OCC's Planetarium hosted another solar eclipse viewing event for the campus and surrounding community.



### Give to OCC

**L**ike the telescope farm has supported OCC Astronomy students, your gift can continue to support student success at the College. Scan the QR code to make a gift to OCC.



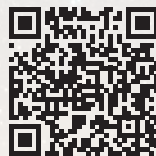
# WE ARE REACHING FOR THE STARS

Orange Coast College

## PLANETARIUM

Open Weekends

Visit galaxies near and far at Orange Coast College's Planetarium. In addition to providing space for college-level courses, the Planetarium will be accessible to the local community with shows, lectures and K-12 field trips throughout the year. Take in a show in the state-of-the-art, 125-seat dome theater, or witness the rotation of the earth with Orange County's first Foucault Pendulum. Weather buffs won't want to miss the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Science on a Sphere exhibit, capable of showing weather patterns on Earth in real-time. Find out more at [www.orangecoastcollege.edu/occplanetarium](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/occplanetarium)



The Orange Coast College Planetarium hosted members of the public on April 8 to experience a partial solar eclipse. Guests were welcomed to observe this cosmic event which saw the moon cover approximately 57% of the sun's diameter through the College's solar telescopes.





# FROM CAMPUS TO TABLE

*Hot Food Team Wins Gold at Regionals*





On select Fridays, Orange Coast College culinary arts students are seen traversing the campus with a rolling cart. Their destination: the Aquaponics Lab at OCC.

With the establishment of the Aquaponics Lab in 2022, the culinary arts department has worked closely with the horticulture department to harvest produce grown in the lab, initiating their unique “campus to table” concept. Their goal is to reduce the College’s carbon footprint and promote sustainable practices. The aquaponics cycle utilizes 90% less water and can create almost 400 heads of lettuce.

Not only do the culinary arts students who make up the College’s Hot Food Team harvest produce, but they also utilize tilapia harvested in the lab.

When the team learned they were heading to regionals, they decided to lean on their strength and feature the “campus to table” concept. They incorporated harvested tilapia and lettuces from the Aquaponics Lab in their competition menu, effectively completing the sustainability loop by conscientiously preparing food grown on campus.

OCC’s Hot Food Team – the first team to compete for OCC since 2018 – is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the culinary arts students. Team members are selected through a rigorous application process and enroll in the Culinary Team Competition course. They then participate in weekly and bi-weekly practice sessions, honing their skills and perfecting their techniques. Their ultimate goal is to compete in the American Culinary Federation’s Student Team Competition, a platform that recognizes and celebrates culinary excellence.

“OCC has a long tradition of success with the student hot food team competitions,” said OCC culinary arts instructor Chef Davina Dunner. “We are so proud and excited for our students, who are continuing a legacy started in 1996.”

The competing five-member team consists of Team Captain Claire Arredondo, Blanca Granados, Morgan Downie, Genisis Mascareno, and Monique Robinson, with three additional support team members – Joseph Serrato, Khoa To, and Frida Ramos-Nunez. The team’s coach is

culinary arts instructor, Chef April Thompson, who is no stranger to ACF’s Western Regional Student Team Competition, having competed in 2018 for OCC when they won a regional title.

For Team Captain Claire Arredondo, the regional competition is more than just a thrilling event. Arredondo is a second-year culinary student with a passion for cooking that extends far beyond the kitchen. Her journey has been marked by resilience and strength, as she battled stage II lymphoma during her first year of school. Now cancer-free, Arredondo continues to

face adversity with grace and determination, never wavering in her pursuit of culinary excellence. Dedicated to blending her culinary talents with a spirit of resilience, she hopes to create a unique narrative that inspires others to follow their passions and never give up hope.

Witnessing the team cook in the kitchen is truly that-inspiring. The students execute the intricacy and complexity of fine-dining cooking techniques flawlessly. Their four-course menu highlighted techniques, such as fish and poultry fabrication, Mousseline and country-style forcemeats, Lavash rings, Shaped Tuille, and Entremet Cake layering.

On March 12, the Hot Food Team clinched first place at the 2024 American Culinary Federation’s

Western Regional Student Team Competition in Overland Park, Kansas, bringing immense pride to Orange Coast College.

“This accomplishment was truly a collaborative effort,” says Dunner. “The team was supported by so many OCC faculty and staff, including alumni who guided them through the sharp learning curve of a culinary competition.”

The team will travel to Phoenix over the summer to compete in the National Student Team Championships, facing off against four other regional teams. The last time the Pirates won the national title was in 2005.

“I am incredibly proud of all the team members who have worked tirelessly for this competition throughout the school year,” says Thompson. “Through their adversities, they have demonstrated strong resilience to push ahead and win the top prize.”





OCC FEATURE

# POWER UP:



# ADVENTURE

CLICK T



# PETE THE PIRATE GETS PIXELATED

*OCC to launch video game featuring College's mascot*

**P**ete the Pirate has entered an alternate dimension.

A video game dimension, that is. Conceptualized by Orange Coast College faculty member Matt Newman, the game offers a virtual tour of the campus from a gaming perspective. This innovative approach allows students to navigate the campus in a fun and interactive way as they explore Coast as Pete the Pirate, OCC's mascot.

ORANGE  
COAST  
COLLEGE

VIRTUAL



PIRATES



ORANGE  
COAST  
COLLEGE

TO BEGIN



"We originally developed the OCC video game not just as a showcase, but as a unique learning tool," said Newman. "It's a way for students to apply their knowledge in a practical, fun and interactive setting."

Newman worked throughout the spring semester to prepare a design-build to showcase in Fall 2024. In the initial version, players can explore OCC's Main Quad and complete three quests. During each quest, players navigate the campus to complete a challenge, whether it's saving OCC from kraken that have taken over the campus or collecting as many coins as possible to add to Pete's treasure.

Ultimately, Newman wants to integrate the video game into his curriculum.

"My vision for the video game is to transform our game development class into a studio environment," said Newman. "Students would work on specific updates for the video game. For example, we would work on expanding the video game each semester. Each student would have specific tasks. Some are 3D modelers, some are coders, and all students would work together to get studio experience and prepare them to enter the industry."

Titled "Orange Coast College Adventures," the video game is designed with different portals that will not be active when the game launches. These portals will provide students with opportunities to develop new lands within OCC's campus and create additional quests for players to complete. Students can propose their ideas, work on the design and implementation, and see their creations come to life in the game.

Better yet, players will soon be able to compete for "real-life" prizes instead of just virtual ones.

"What's great about the video game is that there's just so many possibilities and opportunities to expand

this campuswide," said Newman. "The game could potentially include more interactive features, additional quests, and even virtual representations of real-life campus events. It's an innovative way for students to learn about campus while having fun simultaneously."

For now, students and visitors can test their skills by completing quests and pretending to be Pete the Pirate. "Orange Coast College Adventures" will be available to play at upcoming OCC events in Fall 2024. Locations for a future permanent gaming hub are being explored in Film and TV and the College Center.

## The Pirate Quests

### Quest 1: The Mighty Kraken

OCC President Suarez needs your help rescuing Coast from the kraken that have taken over the campus. Vanquish all the kraken to restore peace to the campus.

### Quest 2: The Great Pirate's Treasure

Gold has befallen OCC! Collect as many gold coins as possible to add to Pete the Pirate's treasure.

### Quest 3: The Coast Voyage

Ohh no! The Coast sign is missing from the Main Quad. Scour the campus to locate and return the missing letters.



# SHAPING REALITIES

## *Alumna returns to OCC to gain experience in emerging field – immersive media*

**A** global pandemic shook the lives of many, but Orange Coast College alumna Melanie Zarzur faced it with unwavering resilience.

As an international student from Brazil, graduating from a four-year university was her main priority and goal. After two years at OCC, she transferred to her dream school, the University of Southern California. There, she studied civil engineering, bringing her one step closer to achieving her goal. Melanie successfully graduated from USC in 2020, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Amidst an uncertain economy, Melanie decided to return to OCC, the place that fueled her passion.

OCC offered Melanie a place of comfort and solace. She was proud to earn her bachelor's degree from one of the best schools in the nation, but she knew OCC offered something many schools didn't: the time to explore passions without racking up debt.

"Orange Coast College provided me with the foundation I needed to succeed in life, not once but twice," Melanie reflects. "It was a place where I could explore my interests and gain practical skills."

In 2020, Melanie enrolled in computer science classes and came across *Intro to Game Development*, one of the courses offered through the Immersive Media program.

The course piqued Melanie's interest, and she enrolled in more immersive media courses. The more she learned about immersive media, the more she knew she wanted to work in this industry.

"With mixed reality and immersive media, we are slowly transitioning into the era of spatial computing," explains Melanie. "I do enjoy working in that space. It's the next step in technology."

Now, Melanie is shaping realities as a Product Coordinator at Magnopus, a role that allows her to apply her knowledge of immersive media and technology in a professional setting.

At Magnopus, Melanie unites the physical and digital worlds with immersive experiences. As a content-focused technology studio, Magnopus creates work in VR / AR / Metaverse and virtual production for people looking to develop ambitious, world-first immersive experiences.

Today, Melanie finds herself at the intersection of the film and tech industry, shaping the future of immersive experiences. Her enthusiasm is palpable as she describes her work, "We're getting more familiar with the digital world immersed in the physical world. Our physical world is quickly becoming a canvas for 3D content. I like where I am today."





**4 miles** to the closest beach

# Coast

**#1**

**top transfer college**

for combined transfers to CSU/UC schools in Orange County



**1,505**

students transferred to four-year universities (2022-23)

**CSU**  
875

**UC**  
426

**ISP/OOS\***  
204

\*In-state private/out-of-state

**\$9.1 million**

given by donors to OCC Foundation (2023-24)



**\$801,177.88**

awarded in student scholarships by OCC Foundation (2023-24)



**\$36,461,590**

provided in Financial Aid (2022-23)



**AA= 1,061**  
(includes AAT)

**AS= 1,266**  
(includes AST)



**2,803**

Total number of students who received Associate in Arts, Associate in Science degrees or Certificates of Completion (2023-24)\*: 5,130

\*As of 7/12/2024



First Community College in Southern California to offer on-campus

**student housing**

## Most Popular Majors (2023-24)

1. Business Administration
2. Liberal Arts
3. Computer Science
4. Psychology
5. Biology

# Facts



**72°**  
is the average  
daytime temperature

**\$46/unit**

**4,605** first-generation  
college students (2022-23)

**851** International Students  
(2022-23)



**100** state athletic team  
championships, most of  
any community college  
in California



Median earnings change

**18%** for students who  
complete Career Technical  
Education coursework  
with no degree awarded  
(CCCCO Launchboard, 2020-21)



Only public community college  
with a **Professional  
Mariner Program  
and Sailing Center**

**Pete the Pirate**  
is Orange Coast College's  
mascot since 1947. Go Pirates!



**23:1**

The average  
student to  
teacher ratio  
(2023-24)



## Opening Spring 2025

**W**hen complete, the Chemistry Building will serve multiple programs and feature updated instructional technology and infrastructure systems. The two-story building will feature state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories with increased lab capacities and individual student workstations. The 43,786-square-foot project will include lecture halls, faculty offices, a resource library and additional meeting spaces.







# 5 YEARS AT OCC

## *Fireside chat with President Suarez*

**Dr.** Angelica Suarez has proudly served Orange Coast College for the last five years, starting her presidency in July 2019. During her tenure, President Suarez successfully navigated the College through a global pandemic, and has continued to lead with inclusivity, optimism and care, all while maintaining OCC's standard of educational excellence.

Notably, President Suarez earned a national recognition this year, becoming the first California Community College system president to earn the President's Award from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

We chat with President Suarez to see what the future holds for Orange Coast College under her leadership.

**Q** Reflecting on your five years as OCC's president, what do you consider your most significant accomplishments at the College?

**A** During my tenure as OCC President, I'm proudest of continuing to focus on our vision of transforming lives through education by creating an environment where our faculty, classified professionals and administrators can be creative, innovative, and student-centered in their design and delivery of educational programs and services. Toward that goal, we've launched and bolstered several programs, including Aquaponics, Immersive Media, Professional Mariner Training Program, Aviation, and many more.

It is a source of great pride that OCC maintains its top ranking as one of the best community colleges regionally, nationally, and globally, and a top transfer institution in Orange County. This achievement is a testament to the quality of education at OCC and the dedication of our classified professionals, faculty, and students.

Our goal is to foster a climate of inclusive excellence in all aspects of the college, where every student feels valued and supported so they can dream, learn and thrive. It's incredibly inspiring to hear from graduates who excitedly share how positively their academic journey was impacted at OCC. This success is a result of the culture we've fostered, which



combines academic excellence with strong student support. It's a culture that unleashes the potential of every student, and I'm honored to be a part of it.

**Q** How has OCC evolved under your leadership, and what changes are you most proud of implementing?

**A** During my first college address in 2019, I shared with the college community one of my favorite quotes by President Roosevelt, "Nobody cares how much you know, until they know you care." What this meant for me was spending time getting to know the college community - what made them proud to be at OCC and what could we do better in service to our students and community. This informed my shared vision for OCC - a vision that builds on a long and rich history of excellence and success.

Throughout these five years, I am most proud of working with the extraordinary people that represent the heart of OCC. Together, we have successfully navigated a global pandemic, transformed the



campus landscape with world class facilities, implemented technological enhancements that increase student access to education, bolstered our financial support for students through the OCC Foundation, developed new programs that uplift our most vulnerable student communities, such as the HUB (one-stop student support space), Pirates' Cove Food Pantry, Student Housing Complex, and comprehensive student health services.

Of special distinction, we are formally designated a Caring Campus by the Institute for Evidence Based Change. These few examples serve to illuminate the deep commitment that Orange Coast College has to its community of students.

**Q Can you share some specific initiatives or programs that have positively impacted students and the local community during your tenure?**

**A** We've focused on some exciting initiatives, like working closely with our community partners in education, business and community-based organizations. We're dedicated to serving our students and have created pathway programs through dual enrollment with our local unified school districts, such as Newport-Mesa, Garden Grove, and Huntington Beach. Additionally, we've been strengthening our partnerships with our transfer partners — CSU, UC, and private universities — through transfer agreements, and intersegmental projects.

In terms of industry partnerships, we have made some exceptional connections with the maritime industry through OCC's Waterfront Campus, such as teaming up with the U.S. Coast Guard. We have a strong commitment to our local community to meet workforce demands through our career education programs, such as allied health, culinary arts, immersive media, construction, welding, aviation and many more.

We've also been supporting our local community through the Adult Education program. Whether it's assisting individuals in learning English or equipping them with job-ready skills, we have an unwavering commitment to empower our community.

You can hear the excitement in my voice as I share the many things we have been able to accomplish together as a college community. On campus, we have created spaces of connection, engagement and learning for our students through the construction of several new buildings (e.g., Student Union, Language,

Literature & Social and Behavioral Sciences, College Center, Student Housing, Avery Professional Mariner Training Center). In Spring 2025, we are slated to open a new Chemistry Building, providing students with the latest technology, equipment and laboratory spaces. It's all pretty exciting!

**Q What steps has OCC taken to adapt to the changing landscape of higher education, particularly in terms of technology and online learning?**

**A** At OCC, forward-thinking is very much part of our DNA, and it creates a culture where people can have conversations about the future. This mindset is reflected in the College's Educational Master Plan — which guides our path ahead. We pride ourselves in creating an environment that promotes creativity, innovation, and curiosity in our students, and this requires adaptability and forward-thinking by our college community. This has been the story of OCC for the past 75 years, and it has impacted the lives of countless students and generations. As we thoughtfully navigated the global pandemic, the College emerged with renewed possibilities. Examples of some of this creativity have included our increased virtual support for students, online learning footprint, a focus on the role of generative artificial intelligence in teaching/learning, and academic programs utilizing advanced simulation technologies and immersive media.

**Q How do you envision the future of OCC, and what are your key priorities for the next five years?**

**A** There are several areas of focus that we have collectively identified as a campus, including a) identifying new areas of educational need in our community, supporting new areas of workforce training and economic development; b) harnessing new technologies that enhance the student experience in the classroom and beyond; c) establishing new partnerships that allow us to support our students' basic needs in housing, transportation, technology and food; d) building upon our strong culture of belonging and inclusion on campus that results in equitable student outcomes; e) expanding pathways for students by partnering with our educational partners (school districts and transfer institutions) and maintaining our ranking as the top transfer community college in Orange County; and f) creating a sustainable budget that supports our culture of innovation and creativity.



# PRESIDENT ANGELICA SUAREZ EARNS NATIONAL HONOR

*Dr. Suarez is the first CA community college president to be honored with prestigious award*

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) recognized Orange Coast College president, Dr. Angelica Suarez, as the recipient of its 2024 National President’s Award — the first California community college president to be honored with this prestigious award. The award is the highest honor NASPA bestows on a college or university president or chancellor.

“I am honored and humbled to have been selected for NASPA’s National President’s Award,” said OCC President Angelica Suarez. “This recognition represents a life-long journey to positively impact the lives of students through education, thus changing the trajectory of families for future generations. As we know, the heart of an institution is its students, and this award reaffirms our collective purpose to create an environment where every student can thrive.”

Since Dr. Suarez began her presidency at OCC in 2019, she has emphasized a “Culture of Care,” which set the foundation for revising the Educational Master Plan in 2021 and the development of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Plan in 2022.

“As a college leader who inspires change and sets an example of care, Dr. Suarez serves as an excellent model of centering the needs of students and the work of student services professionals in the college experience and college strategic planning,” said Dr. Whitney Yamamura, Chancellor of the Coast Community College District.

NASPA’s National President’s Award is a special recognition given to a college or university president who has, over a sustained period, advanced the quality of student life on campus by supporting student affairs staff and programs.



**OCC President Angelica Suarez received the 2024 National President’s Award in Seattle in March.**

Previous award recipients include Janet Napolitano, former president of the University of California system.

NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of student experience on campus through their support of student affairs staff and programs.

Join us for the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual

# Orange Coast College Orange County Children's



## BOOK FESTIVAL

Sunday  
SEPTEMBER  
**22**  
- 2024 -

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Orange Coast College  
2701 Fairview Road  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
**ALL AGES WELCOME!**



Scan for more info about the festival.  
Questions? Please email us at [occbf@ccd.edu](mailto:occbf@ccd.edu)





# OCC NEWS

## OCC MARKETING AND PR AREA EARN NATIONAL AND STATE HONORS

Orange Coast College's marketing and public relations department won a Silver Paragon Award at the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations conference and awards ceremony in March in Seattle. Coast was honored in the Special Event or Fundraising Campaign category for its 75th anniversary promotion. More than 250 colleges submitted entries to the contest.

NCMPR Paragon Awards honor excellence and recognize outstanding achievement in design and communication at community and technical colleges from marketing and PR professionals at two-year colleges. The organization has more than 1,700 members from more than 550 colleges in the United States and Canada.

OCC also received five Community College Public Relations Organization awards Thursday, April 11, in Santa Cruz. Coast was recognized with two gold, one silver, and two bronze awards for creative work produced during the academic year. CCPRO serves California's 116 community



colleges and public and governmental relations, marketing, and design professionals.

### Gold

- College Website: Specialty Page
- Promotional Item

### Silver

- Photography: Mobile Device

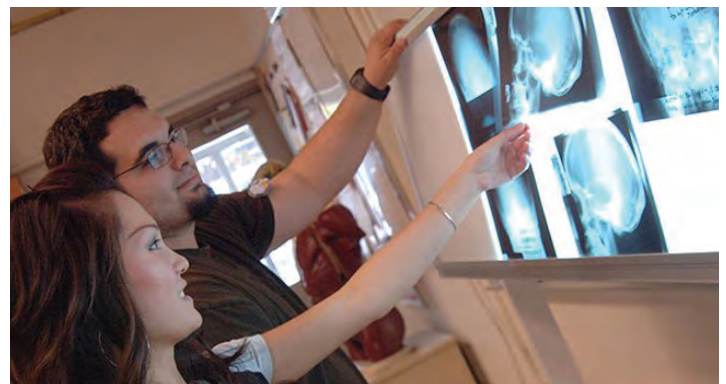
### Bronze

- College Website: Specialty Page
- College Promotional Video- Short Format

## OCC RECEIVES OVER \$2 MILLION TO EXPAND K-12 PATHWAY FOR RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

On Thursday, April 4, 2024, the CalOptima Health Board of Directors approved a grant of \$2,040,000 through its Provider Workforce Development Initiative to the Coast Community College District to expand the Running Start to Nursing pathway at Golden West College and develop a K-12 pathway to the Radiologic Technology Certificate program at Orange Coast College. The Coast District is matching the grant with \$2,710,000 in statewide Strong Workforce grant funds, for a combined \$4.75 million.

Using the dual enrollment model, OCC will expand its existing Radiologic Technology and Diagnostic Imaging pathways through a partnership with Santa Ana Unified and Newport Mesa Unified School Districts. This collaboration, in addition to support from CalOptima Health, ensures that students have additional resources for learning, practice, and timely completion of a degree or certificate. This will help students start their careers sooner



at a significantly reduced cost as community colleges continue to be the most affordable higher education option with most students qualifying for College Promise fee waivers and other forms of non-loan financial aid.

A major selling point of health programs at Orange Coast College are the strong starting salaries and career earnings in those fields. Radiologic Technologists earn a median of more than \$42/hour, beating the Orange County average by nearly 50 percent.



“The health programs at Golden West College and Orange Coast College are exemplars of the persistent innovation we strive for in the Coast District,” said Dr. Whitney Yamamura, Chancellor. “The colleges are in the community,

actively identifying our most pressing health workforce needs, and then bringing together the resources of multiple partner agencies to find solutions.”

## OCC'S STUDENT HEALTH CENTER ADDS 24/7 MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE

OCC's Student Health Center has expanded its mental health services for students by partnering with Protocol Services to provide 24/7 access to a crisis counselor.

Known as the OCC After Hours Crisis Line, students can call the Student Health Center at (714) 714-7715 and press 9 to be connected to a crisis counselor. This service is available to all current OCC students Monday through Friday from 5 p.m. until 9 a.m. and all day Saturday and Sunday. OCC students can also access this service on holidays and breaks.

“As mental health becomes increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of academic success, our commitment to providing 24/7 support reflects our dedication to nurturing not just the minds but the holistic well-being of our students,” says Mental Health Services Director Larry Valentine. “With our new crisis line, we aim to offer an unwavering lifeline, ensuring no student feels alone in their darkest moments.”

OCC's mental health services also include short-term and group therapy. Students have access to a team of pre-licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associates and Trainees who work under the supervision of Licensed



MFTs. Counseling sessions with licensed therapists are available to help students with academic pressure, cultural adjustment, depression, stress, anxiety, and much more. Depending on the level of mental health support, a student's need might exceed the capacity of the Student Health Center, and they will be provided with community resources that can handle acute or long-term mental health problems.

“We recognize that the need for support knows no schedule,” says Larry Valentine. “Providing 24/7 mental health support at OCC ensures that our students have a lifeline, fostering resilience and empowerment on their journey toward wellness.”

## U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION REDESIGNATES OCC WATERFRONT CAMPUS 2024 “CENTER OF EXCELLENCE”

Orange Coast College has been named one of 32 Centers of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education (CoE) for 2024 by the United States Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD). OCC is one of three institutions in California to receive this designation in 2024 and was one of MARAD's inaugural CoE in 2021.

“These programs continue to be the standard of excellence in maritime training and education,” says OCC President Angelica Suarez. “The CoE redesignation recognizes the tremendous value OCC provides in preparing students for careers in the nation's vital maritime industry.”



MARAD grants institutions that receive the CoE designation permission to identify as recipients. Designees may state that MARAD has determined their institution



and their maritime training programs meet the qualifying standards as stated in 46 US Code § 54102, approved by the U.S. Congress in 2018.

CoE designations assist the maritime industry in obtaining and maintaining the highest quality workforce. The designation recognizes and promotes support for post-secondary maritime training programs that prepare students for careers in the marine industry.

“We’re looking forward to this continued partnership with MARAD,” says OCC Waterfront Campus Manager Greg

Wisener. “OCC’s professional mariner program continues to grow and evolve with enhanced facilities to prepare students for successful private or commercial vessel operations careers.”

As a CoE designation, OCC will receive support from MARAD for maritime workforce training and education, including efforts to help advance the recruitment of students and faculty, expand facilities, create new maritime pathways, and award students credit for prior experience, including military service.

### ORANGE COAST COLLEGE AND U.S. COAST GUARD FORGE PARTNERSHIP TO BOOST STUDENTS’ CAREER PROSPECTS

The Coast Community College District Board of Trustees signed a partnership between Orange Coast College and the United States Coast Guard on May 15 to develop a recruitment pathway and a Direct Enlistment Lateral Entry Program. This program will pave the way for OCC graduates to embark on rewarding careers with a higher starting pay salary and greater responsibility.

OCC’s partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard marks a significant step in bridging the gap between education and career readiness.

“We are thrilled to partner with the U.S. Coast Guard to offer our students unparalleled opportunities for success,” says OCC President Angelica Suarez. “This collaboration recognizes the tremendous value OCC provides in preparing students for rewarding careers. Together, we will equip the leaders of tomorrow to make a positive impact on our nation.”

OCC students who complete an associate degree in the Professional Mariner Program (Boatswain’s Mate) or an



associate degree in Culinary Arts (Culinary Specialist) will be eligible for direct enlistment in the Coast Guard as a Petty Officer Third Class (E-4) or Petty Officer Second Class (E-5), based on final determination by the Coast Guard.

Through this partnership, the Coast Guard can develop qualified personnel through OCC programs. Students enrolling from OCC will have their coursework pre-approved by the Coast Guard, allowing them to enter at a higher pay grade. One of the key highlights of this partnership is the promise of greater responsibility and a higher starting pay salary for OCC students who choose to pursue careers in the Coast Guard.

### OCC’S FIRST GRADUATING COHORT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS EQUIPPED FOR EQUITABLE CARE

Orange Coast College conferred certificates to the inaugural cohort of 18 students who completed the Community Health Worker program on May 17.

Generously funded by the Samueli Foundation, Orange Coast College has developed a program that addresses the urgent need for certificated community health workers in







the health and nonprofit sectors. These workers are crucial in filling service gaps for at-risk individuals and connecting those underserved by the traditional healthcare system with culturally competent health and social services. They are the vital link that overcomes cultural and linguistic barriers, ensuring equal access to healthcare for all communities.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for community health workers is set to surge by 14 percent from 2022 to 2032, a growth rate significantly higher than the average for all occupations.

“Inside of the classroom and with the right direction, we were able to bring and reflect on our personal qualities and attributes,” says OCC graduate Ronnie Perez. “After being introduced to the roles and competencies of the CHW, we were allowed to collectively define empathy and formulate how to function as a frontline public health worker.”

## OCC HONORS STUDENT THU PHUNG AWARDED NATIONAL TRANSFER SCHOLARSHIP

**T**hu Phung, an honors student at Orange Coast College, is one of 60 high-achieving community college students selected to receive the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation’s Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. The highly competitive national scholarship can provide Phung with as much as \$55,000 a year to complete a bachelor’s degree.

Phung was announced as the 2024 Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholar during the College’s annual Honors Night ceremony on May 8.

“We are immensely proud of Thu Phung for being one of only 60 students selected nationwide to receive this prestigious transfer scholarship,” says OCC President Angelica Suarez. “Her dedication, intellect, and commitment to excellence serve as a testament to the quality of education and opportunities available at OCC.”

A Garden Grove resident, Phung began attending OCC in Fall 2021. Phung, a first-generation college student, juggles her schooling and many commitments to her local community, including being a Vietnamese language tutor at her church. She’s an active member of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society and the STEM and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) clubs at OCC, where she holds active leadership positions.

Phung’s personal college experience has underscored the significance of mental health, prompting her to take

The first cohort began in Fall 2023 and completed three noncredit courses and an internship to earn their certificate.

OCC students enrolled in the Community Health Worker program develop the education and skills needed to become community health workers, including health promotion education, culturally based mindful communication, social support and mentoring, and resource management.

Courses are noncredit and tuition-free. Students should have an intermediate level of English and need a high school diploma or GED by program completion. The coursework will take approximately two semesters to complete, and most courses are offered in a hybrid modality.



a proactive role as the secretary of the NAMI Club. In this capacity, she co-hosts meetings to raise awareness about mental health maintenance among college students and provides resources for those in need of additional support.

A mathematics major with a 3.89 GPA, Phung plans to transfer to the University of California, Los Angeles in Fall 2024 to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering.



# WAYFINDING WITH WIND, WAVES AND STARS

*Coast Community Learns About Polynesian Wayfinding with Visit from Iconic Polynesian Vessel Hōkūle'a*



**W**ith nothing but the wind, waves and stars to guide them, the Hōkūle'a crew navigates the ocean by traditional Polynesian wayfinding, a method that relies on celestial navigation, observation of natural phenomena, and the knowledge of the ocean's currents and waves. The legendary Hawaiian canoe, built in 1975, is commended for resurrecting the lost art of Polynesian voyaging and navigation.

Last fall, Orange Coast College had the privilege to learn about this ancient technique of voyaging when the iconic

Polynesian vessel stopped in Newport Beach on its trans-Pacific journey.

The traditional double-hulled canoe set sail in June 2023 from Southeast Alaska down the Pacific Coast when the Polynesian Voyaging Society launched the Moananuiākea Voyage. This four-year circumnavigation of the Pacific speaks to the Polynesian Voyaging Society's commitment to preserving and promoting the traditional Polynesian wayfinding. The voyage aims to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable practices and cultural exchange



in the Pacific region.

The last time the Hōkūle'a sailed down the coast of California was 28 years ago in 1995.

Luckily for OCC, the Hōkūle'a made several stops in California as part of this historic journey, including Newport Beach.

The stop in Newport Beach was a profound and enriching experience for both OCC and the Hōkūle'a crew, as they engaged in a deep and meaningful exchange of their respective maritime experiences.

"The local heritage of sailing and canoe paddling enriched our interactions, allowing us to exchange our mutual passion for the sea in a very intimate manner," said crew member Jordan Jacobson.

During the six-day stop, the Hōkūle'a crew hosted four days of public events, including presentations and canoe tours. The two presentations were hosted at OCC facilities, including the Planetarium and the Waterfront Campus.

In Costa Mesa, the Planetarium's presentation was led by a Hōkūle'a crew member, who shared their experience and the sailing history of Pacific Islanders. Attendees, including many from the campus community, had the opportunity to learn about the canoe's storied history and the environmental and cultural mission of the voyage.

At the Waterfront Campus, OCC students, classified professionals, and faculty were given a unique and privileged opportunity to tour the iconic voyaging canoe, further enriching their understanding of maritime heritage and traditional Polynesian wayfinding.



"Our experience with the crew of Hōkūle'a refreshed my belief that our global ocean is a rich source of shared experience," explained OCC Waterfront Campus Manager Greg Wisener. "Ocean voyaging connects all mariners across our blue planet. By moving slowly over thousands of sea miles, we experience each coastal community with a deeper sense of place and culture. We delight in finding differences in the way people interact with the sea and discover

kinship through the love and respect coastal people share regarding the watery parts of our ocean world."

The Coast community wasn't the only one to enjoy a tour. The Waterfront Campus extended an invitation to the Hōkūle'a crew to tour OCC's Professional Mariner Training Center. The tour included usage of the Full Mission Bridge Simulator, as the crew experienced taking the helm of several different ships.

Crew member Solomon Kaupu enjoyed the experience,

expressing "training centers such as this one are vital in creating the next generation of mariners, providing a positive base for sailors to leave a positive impact on our oceans."

OCC's Professional Mariner Program aims to do just that as it prepares students to be competent and skilled mariners. Students can enroll in 8-to-16-week classes that earn credit towards an associate degree and educational certificates, providing U. S. Coast Guard-approved courses for endorsements to Merchant Mariner Credentials.

"Ocean voyaging is an important part of our shared heritage and essential to a bright future for people, the planet, and sustainable use of ocean resources," said Wisener. "OCC students gain the skills, knowledge, and credentials needed to go to sea in support of oceanographic research, sustainable fisheries, the global marine transportation system, eco-tourism, and more."

## Explore The Seas



Located in Newport Beach, OCC's Waterfront Campus is a state-of-the-art maritime training and waterfront facility, recognized by the U. S. Maritime Administration as a designated Center of Excellence. It is home to programs including OCC's nationally recognized intercollegiate Crew teams, one of the largest public boating education programs in the nation, the Professional Mariner Academic Program, and continuing education for career advancement and maritime workforce development. Through a partnership with the U. S. Coast Guard, academic program graduates benefit from a direct enlistment program allowing them to start with a guaranteed specialty at a higher pay grade.

The Waterfront Campus offers tours throughout the year for visitors to learn more about its programs and participate in a Full Mission Bridge Simulator demonstration.

<https://waterfront.orangecoastcollege.edu>



# 100

## LEADING THE SCOREBOARD





OCC's athletic program began with a modest seven athletic teams, including baseball, basketball, football, golf, tennis, track, and wrestling. The first year resulted in three Eastern Conference crowns, in golf, wrestling, and baseball, and was evidence that the Pirates were a force to be reckoned with. OCC earned its first state championship in 1956 for men's baseball. Over the decades, the College has evolved into a powerhouse, fostering a culture of hard work, teamwork, and relentless pursuit of excellence.

The journey to 100 state championships has been marked by memorable moments, legendary coaches, and student-athletes who have left an indelible mark on the College's history. Overall, 10 men's sports and eight women's sports make up the total for the 100 wins, in addition to three state titles from surfing.

"Being the first community college to 100 team championships is just remarkable, especially when you consider some of the storied programs that have been around for longer," said OCC Athletic Director Jason Kehler. "To have the sustained success that we've shown since our first championship in 1956 is a testament to the tradition that was established by the coaches and administrators in Coast's early days."

Among the storied teams, men's volleyball holds the most state titles for a men's sport, while women's swimming holds the most state titles with an impressive 21 state championship wins, having won their last title in 2022.

Additionally, the Pirates have won the Orange Empire Conference Supremacy Award 30 times in the past 35 years. OCC is one of three schools to win the National Alliance of Two Year College Athletic Administrators (NATYCAA) Cup for athletic excellence at the statewide level twice since the award began 17 years ago.

OCC's 100<sup>th</sup> championship is more than just a number; it represents the legacy of an institution that values sportsmanship, discipline, and the holistic development of students.

Student-athletes have the option to compete in 13 different sports. Additionally, they have access to the P.R.E.S.S. program designed to support their academic goals at Coast by connecting them to the resources needed for academic success. The program is committed to supporting and equipping them with the skills necessary to be successful in the classroom, on the field or court, and in the workplace.

"Now that we've hit this milestone, we're focused on not only celebrating the first 100 team championships but also preserving the opportunity for our next 100 team championships," continued Kehler. "We know what so many of these championships have meant for our student-athletes that we want to ensure that future Pirates have the same opportunity."

## And to top it all off...

Crew, Cheer and Dance boast several national titles.



### Crew

Crew was added as a sport in 1953, and since then has competed against several four-year universities. OCC has the only community college crew program in the nation. OCC's Crew has earned the nickname the "Giant Killers" for its reputation of competing and winning against some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. and worldwide. OCC crew teams have raced at the prestigious Henley Royal Regatta in England multiple times, and the program was the first to sweep All Elite events at the Dublin Regatta in Ireland in 1971. Coast Crew also was the first U.S. crew team invited to race in the People's Republic of China in 1985. OCC crew teams consistently win and medal at the American Collegiate Rowing Association National Championship, competing against some of the fastest four-year programs in the country.



### Cheer & Dance

Cheer earned its first national championship in 1996, notching a total of 11 wins to date. Dance earned its first national championship in 1997, with a total of 17 wins to date.



# BACK-TO-BACK STATE CHAMPS

*Women's basketball team earns third California championship*

**T**he Orange Coast College women's basketball team won the California Community College Athletic Association Women's Basketball State Championship for the second straight year with a 71-60 victory over Glendale Community College during the championship final in Walnut.

It was the first successful championship defense since Mt. San Antonio won back-to-back titles in 2016 and 2017. The win marks the third women's basketball state championship in OCC history.

"I challenged this team early on in the year to write their own story," OCC Head Coach Sammy Doucette said. "Find their own identity. Early on, they kept trying to be last year's team. They were so hard on themselves for not being perfect in preseason. They weren't going to be perfect. It's impossible. So they started to write their own story, a different story, but same result, I guess!"

Tournament MVP Bridgette McIntyre followed in the footsteps of her sister and last year's State Tourney MVP, Meghan McIntyre, scoring 18 points with four rebounds, three assists, and three steals for the Pirates, who ended the season on a 20-game win streak.

"This team and the coaching staff are truly special, and I'm so grateful to be a part of this family here at OCC," McIntyre said. "I definitely knew that I had big shoes to fill upon coming here, but my sister being my inspiration just fueled me every day to be better, just like her. Ever since I got here, I have been instantly comfortable due to the fact that everyone is confident in me."

In addition to her State Tourney MVP honors, McIntyre finished her OCC career with a staggering 120 made 3-pointers this season, shattering the previous record of 98 and even topping the men's single-season record of 111, set by former Pirate and current Irvine Valley College women's head coach, Jason Garey.

The Pirates won 62 games and lost just four over the past two years. This year's group - an entirely different group (excluding Emmeline Law) - won 30 games, went undefeated through the always-tough Orange Empire Conference (14-0), and ended the 2024 season with a 20-game win streak.

"This year was everything I have always wanted," McIntyre said. "I am so proud to be a part of this team."



# MEN'S VOLLEYBALL CAPTURES THIRD STRAIGHT STATE TITLE

*Championship win captures 100 state titles for Coast*

The crowd erupted into cheers and applause as the Orange Coast College men's volleyball team won the California Community College Athletic Association Men's Volleyball State Championship on April 27, 2024, for the third time in a row. The championship win is the 10th in program history.

The Pirates swept past San Diego Mesa College, 25-22, 25-13, and 25-23.

"Passing and serving really was the difference in this match for us," OCC Head Coach Travis Turner said. "Mesa is a really good team, but we've been here all year. It's been such a good year for us. I can't believe we did it."

The Pirates (20-0) found their main successes in the middle of the floor, where Andrew Robbins (10 kills on 12 attempts with four blocks) and Tourney MVP Jacob Surrette (8 kills, one error, two aces) proved to be significant contributors in the biggest match of the season.

With the unwavering determination of a two-time state champion, the Pirates maintained their lead, refusing to succumb to any crucial mistakes that could have given the

Olympians an opportunity to catch up or surpass them.

"We definitely peaked when we needed to," Setter Landon Seymour said. "I don't know what to say except that the second set was really the icing on the cake. That second set really got us that match."

The championship win also cemented the College's legacy as a leader in athletic competitions, having earned Coast 100 state championships. It's something Turner doesn't take for granted. In addition to winning his four state titles as a head coach for the Pirates, Turner also played on two state titles (1989, 1991) as a player.

"You think it means something to me?" said an emotional Turner when asked about being the 100th state title team. "It means a lot. I love this place. I love this school. I love everything about this school. This place meant the world to me growing up, and now, as the coach, I hope I can give that same experience back to these kids as well."



# NEW ERA IN OCC SOFTBALL

**M**irroring the rise in popularity of women's sports in today's culture, Orange Coast College's 2023-2024 Softball program has found the winning recipe for success — stepping into its own to establish a legacy for teams to come and transforming its little corner of the campus to make it their home base.

While the team fell just two games short of heading into the state championships, they showed up with "Moxie" wearing orange on orange. The elevated look and play announced to the competition — that's Orange Coast College Softball!

"This particular team had something to prove this year," Head Coach Jodie Legaspi-Kiaha says. "They had to make some noise for people to pay attention to them. We'll turn some heads and get some support for you, and they just ran with it." The team of

young women had the mindset, "We're going to need to make a little noise for people to pay attention to us."

Legaspi-Kiaha is a champion in her own right — hailing from a family legacy of barrier-breaking, history-making baseball players; she also garnered her illustrious career while attending UCLA. Of OCC, she says she knew it was her place to transition from traveling with her growing family to settling and planting roots when she witnessed

"the students who came here, were here because they were seeking a direction, a motivation. They needed something, and I fell in love with that exchange." From there, her coaching became, "I'm going to match your energy. If you're coming and showing up, give me 100% of what you've got."

Beyond the strong coaching and hard work of the team, OCC's Softball Program also saw a physical makeover

## "Dream Big-go and get it."





this year to match the winning mentality. A \$55,000 contribution from former Athletic Director Jane Hilgendorf's trust drew momentum from other donors and departments on campus to show their support for the growing team. It turned the project into almost \$100,000.

"We just needed to up our game a little bit," Executive Director of the OCC Foundation Doug Bennett says. "They had a great season this year, which helped bring them together on the backend and create more of a sense of identity."

The list of improvements includes a new equipment shed, fresh painting, and updating the field. Thankful for the gracious new additions, the Foundation's wish list includes restroom facilities and permanent seating that they are looking for passionate supporters of women's sports to sponsor.

But adding a dedicated team room featuring team-branded individual lockers and new flooring has helped shift the team's spirit.

"We just created so many memories in that team room," Sophomore Utility Pitcher Izzie McElroy says. "We have a room to hang out, to change, to listen to music, to get hyped before a game. We are thankful to those sponsors and everyone who contributed to our new assets for our

complex. All of these things make our home so much better and ultimately add to our chemistry and make us bond closer."

McElroy, who will join UC Riverside in the Fall, also pinpoints the differences from last year to this as the team's connection on and off the field. They tried to include and support each other- even now as they move on to their new ventures in the Fall.

To her team, she says, "I've loved every single second that I've been with them on and off the field. This bond is something that not everyone gets to experience, and it is so unforgettable. Dream Big- go and get it!"

To her coach, she says, "She is the reason why I'm playing softball at the next level. You made me love softball all over again."

To the incoming bandits, she says, "Build chemistry from day one. Take on leadership roles, be a good teammate, and get the job done."

As the recruits meet with Coach Jodie this summer, she prioritizes positioning them for transfer. "It's much more about the wins outside the white lines." By teaching them culture, how to be great teammates, to work hard, and giving them what they need to be good students in the classroom - it frees the space to coach them up to produce a winning culture.

"We have established culture; we've established our staff. We are a premier landing spot," Legaspi-Kiaha says.

"This team not only made history here at Orange Coast College, but they trailblazed for future teams that are coming into our program. This is Orange Coast College softball moving forward."

# Explore Coast



## ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

**O**range Coast College is your local home for the arts! Did you know OCC offers a full season of performing arts on our three stages every year? Join us for dazzling modern, classical, and world dance performances. Hear thrilling music from our symphony, wind ensemble, guitar ensemble, and award-winning

choirs. Enjoy an exciting season of plays including classics, new drama, comedy, musicals, and original student works.

Stay close to home with OCC Performing Arts, where we have new events every month, with low ticket prices.



**Did you know you don't have to be a student to enjoy what Orange Coast College offers? From engaging art and science exhibits to entertainment and culinary experiences, OCC has something for everyone!**

**SEE THE STARS**

Visit a galaxy far, far away at OCC's **Planetarium!** Catch a show in the Planetarium's state-of-the-art immersion theatre, or witness the earth's rotation with OCC's Foucault Pendulum, the only one of its kind in Orange County!

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/ocplanetarium](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/ocplanetarium)

**BARGAIN HUNT**

As one of the best deals in town, OCC's **Swap Meet** is a hidden gem in Orange County. To find your way there, go to the northern corner of Orange Coast College's campus, just off Adams and Fairview, on any Saturday or Sunday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/swapmeet](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/swapmeet)

**CATCH A PERFORMANCE**

Music and theater lovers will find their fix at OCC's **Robert B. Moore Theatre or Drama Lab Studios.** OCC's theatre program offers multiple performances each academic year.

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/onstage](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/onstage)

**BRANCH OUT**

OCC's not-so-secret **Horticulture Garden** is truly a wonder to behold. Plant enthusiasts will delight in seeing a wide variety of native and exotic plants in a beautiful and serene garden space that offers plenty of shady spots

for relaxing. Visitors can also stop by the Aquaponics Lab to learn how OCC is producing 300 heads of lettuce with only 2 gallons of water a day, saving roughly 90% of water in the process.

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/horticulture](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/horticulture)

**GET YOUR COFFEE FIX**

If you can't function without your morning cup of brew, then you're in luck - there's a **Starbucks Coffee** shop located conveniently on campus!

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/occstarbucks](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/occstarbucks)

**DIVE UNDERWATER**

The only student-run public aquarium in the United States, OCC's **Dennis Kelly Aquarium** is a must-see stop when visiting campus. Here you'll see learning in action, as marine science students care for rainbow-hued, sharks, leopard eels, seahorses and, of course, fish!

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/aquarium](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/aquarium)

**APPRECIATE ART**

From airplanes made entirely of cardboard to installations of shattered glass representing the cosmos, OCC's **Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion ("The Doyle")** invites visitors to stretch their curious minds and embrace new and different ideas, people and places.

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/doylearts](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/doylearts)

**GRAB A BITE**

Gourmet Foodie Alert! OCC's **Captain's Table** offers a four-course gourmet dining experience for a fraction of the cost of fine-dining restaurants. The Captain's Table is a learning lab staffed by OCC's culinary and hospitality students, with servings for lunch and dinner on select Thursdays during the academic school year. Reservations fill up fast, so make yours at the beginning of each semester by calling (714) 432-5876, ext. 22.

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/thecaptainstable](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/thecaptainstable)

**SAVE THE PLANET**

Sustainability at OCC began with the first Earth Day in 1970, spawning a small-scale, student-led recycling effort. Today a state-of-the-art three-acre **recycling center** facility boasts the title of the only recycling center in Costa Mesa. Proceeds go directly to fund student resources.

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/recycling](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/recycling)

**CELEBRATE THE CHAMPS**

The championship tradition of OCC **athletics** has been etched by past athletes and carried on by future athletes. With over 100 state and national championships, OCC continues its journey towards its eighth decade; the Pirate athletic program is bigger and better than ever. Catch a game and cheer the Pirates on to victory!

[www.occpirateathletics.com](http://www.occpirateathletics.com)





# BREAKING BARRIERS

## *OCC Inducts Civil Rights Activist Sylvia Mendez into its Alumni Hall of Fame*

A wave of excitement swept through the Pacific Amphitheatre as the entire audience rose to cheer for civil rights activist Sylvia Mendez.

Every year Orange Coast College inducts a member of the Pirate alumni family to its prestigious Alumni Hall of Fame. This year, Sylvia Mendez was selected as the 2024 inductee and was formally inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame during the College’s Commencement ceremony on May 24.

“We are honored to bestow this recognition to OCC alumna Sylvia Mendez,” says OCC President Angelica Suarez. “Her lifelong dedication to civil rights and ongoing commitment to social justice align directly with the values of our College.”

Before OCC’s Commencement ceremony, Mendez added a plaque bearing her resemblance to the OCC Alumni Hall of Fame wall on the second floor of the College Center.

“What an honor it is to be here and to receive this award,” said Sylvia Mendez as she addressed the graduating class of 2024. “I remember when I was here before and it was faculty from this college who made my dream come true.”

Mendez earned an associate degree in nursing from Orange Coast College in 1964 and a bachelor’s degree in nursing from California State University, Los Angeles. She retired as a nurse after working more than thirty years in the field.

Notably, Mendez played an instrumental role in the groundbreaking Mendez, et al. v. Westminster case. This case, which was a triumph against racial segregation in California schools, was a pivotal moment in the fight for civil rights.

The success of the Mendez, et al. v. Westminster case made California the first state in the nation to end segregation in schools, setting the stage for the historic Brown v. Board of Education ruling, which found that racial segregation in schools is unconstitutional.



In recognition of her extraordinary contributions, Mendez was bestowed with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011, the highest civilian honor in the United States, by President Barack Obama.

Mendez concluded with some inspiring remarks for the class of 2024.

“Today, you are the ones who are making your dreams come true. But you have to continue to succeed and don’t let anybody stop you, because no matter what, there’s nothing that you can’t do. You will succeed.”



# THE CAMPUS CREATIVE

*The 2024 OCC Magazine is dedicated to Coast graphic designer and adjunct faculty member Chauncey Bayes.*

Orange Coast College's picturesque campus combines state-of-the-art facilities, Instagrammable wall graphics, and thoughtful signage to feel like you've stepped onto a four-year university campus.

Full-time graphic designer Chauncey Bayes is partly responsible for that atmosphere. As an OCC graduate and faculty member, Bayes wears many hats. His connection to the campus as an alumnus, classified professional, and adjunct faculty member contributes to his wealth of institutional knowledge.

For those who have had the privilege of interacting with Bayes, without a doubt, you were more than likely greeted with an infectious smile, a pun-filled joke, followed by a gregarious laugh. Ever one to exude care in every interaction, Bayes has a saying that he practices daily: "Caring is who you are...not just something you do."

Bayes fully embodies this saying, always being there for his students and colleagues whenever they have questions or need a joke to brighten their day.

A classified professional and adjunct faculty member for more than 25 years, Bayes has inspired countless students to pursue their dreams and aspirations. As a Costa Mesa

local and resident, Bayes often encounters former students and colleagues who always praise their beloved former instructor and colleague.

This year marks the end of a chapter for Bayes, as he retires as the lead and only full-time graphic designer for the College. His unique designs and artwork, a testament to his creativity and dedication, have significantly contributed to OCC's strong and consistent branding. His work, which you've likely seen across campus, has not gone unnoticed, earning him multiple state and national marketing awards. For instance, the OCC Magazine was produced during his tenure, and various OCC program logos, including the Aquarium and Planetarium, bear his creative touch.

Bayes has undeniably left his mark on OCC, not just with his designs, but also with his infectious spirit and dedication. Every spirit flag, logo and artwork he created over the 25 years of his storied career is a reflection of his passion and talent.

He will be greatly missed at Coast, but luckily for OCC, Bayes will continue teaching photography classes, inspiring the next generation of creatives.



## ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

# FOREVER



# PIRATES

**T**he classes that transformed your journey. The faculty and staff who impacted your life. The students who became life-long friends.

The Orange Coast College Alumni & Friends Association connects alumni to the College, to the community and to one another. The best part? It's easy to join! You are eligible to join the Alumni and Friends if you ever took a single class at OCC. Membership is a great way to keep in touch with OCC and fellow Pirates. Alumni Association members not only receive great resources, they also support current students through the annual Alumni and Friends Scholarship.

Annual memberships are FREE! Sign up to stay updated on the latest news from OCC. Plus, for a limited time, Pirate alumni who sign up and share their story will receive an exclusive 'Forever Pirates' decal.

**Share Your Story & Sign Up Today!**

[www.orangecoastcollege.edu/alumni](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/alumni)