



OCC Awarded More Than 5,000 Degrees & Certificates at 77th Commencement Ceremony

Orange Coast College conferred approximately 5,600 associate degrees and certificates of achievement to 2,759 graduates at its 77th commencement ceremony on May 23.

Several thousand attended the program at the Pacific Amphitheatre in the OC Fair and Event Center.

Graduating with an associate degree in economics, student speaker Davan Luu shared his journey with the graduating class. Davan is a Florida native who spent much of his life surrounded by alligators before moving to Orange County. He plans on working for the Department of Transportation to solve traffic.

OCC's Class of 2025 is diverse, spanning a wide age range, from our youngest graduate, 17, to our oldest, 71. Additionally, OCC has 21 states represented in the graduating class and 132 international student graduates from 28 countries.

OCC Awarded Nearly \$1 Million in Scholarships at the 67th Honors Night

Orange Coast College celebrated students' remarkable success and academic achievements at the 67th Honors Night on May 14.

Honors Night activities began with a Service and Leadership Award ceremony. They concluded with the Scholarship Award ceremony, during which the OCC Foundation awarded more than \$900,000 in scholarships to over 400 outstanding students, breaking last year's award record.

Honors Night has been an Orange Coast College tradition for over six decades. The evening recognizes students who have achieved top honors in academics, service and leadership to the College and community. It also honors the generous community of donors who support OCC students' educational and personal growth.



OCC Student Abner Molina Among the 1% of Transfer Students Admitted to MIT



Orange Coast College honors student Abner Molina has been accepted into the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Abner is among nearly two dozen transfer students admitted to MIT this year, where the transfer acceptance rate is exceptionally low, generally hovering around 1-3%.

A lifelong dream of attending MIT led Abner to enroll at OCC after his initial application to the institution during high school was unsuccessful. He chose OCC specifically for its recognized engineering program and has thrived within its academic community. During his first semester in Fall 2022, Abner enrolled in the Honors Program, which he credits with significantly contributing to his academic success.

"Participating in the Honors Program was incredibly beneficial for me," says Abner. "I initially thought it would simply mean more homework, but in reality, the classes explored the course material in much greater depth. For instance, in my calculus math classes, we not only learned about limits but also how to prove what a limit is."

Abner's journey has not been without challenges. In his second year at OCC, he experienced severe chest pain and was hospitalized, where tests revealed a tumor the size of his heart. After a biopsy confirmed the tumor was cancerous, Abner faced the daunting prospect of chemotherapy treatment with a 50% chance of survival. Despite his health struggles, MIT remained a constant source of inspiration for him, and he dedicated his time during recovery to prepare for the SAT.

Fortune smiled upon Abner as he responded positively to chemotherapy and was able to have the tumor successfully removed. He returned to OCC in 2024 to continue his education, where he was actively involved in research opportunities thanks to his supportive professors.

"The professors here are very open to networking and providing opportunities," explains Abner. "Both Dr. Esposito and Dr. Guerra were excellent mentors who encouraged me to pursue research."

Throughout his time at OCC, Abner took advantage of every opportunity afforded to him by participating in the Giles T. Brown Student Project and Research Symposium and Pirate's Plank, where he pitched a business solution called Talyko to assist his mother's business with invoicing.

Abner has secured permanent memberships in the newly established computer science honor society, Iota Xi, and Phi Theta Kappa. At MIT, Abner will be focusing on Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and continue to pursue his entrepreneurship ambitions.

"I still want to continue down the path of creating tools for businesses," says Abner. "I became passionate about it during my time building Talyko. I really like the entrepreneurship route."

OCC's Katy Le Receives Congressional Proclamation for Community Advocacy

OCC AANHPI Coordinator Katy Le received a Congressional recognition from Congressman Derek Tran. She was awarded a Congressional Proclamation in a AANHPI Heritage event last month for her dedication to youth empowerment, cultural education and community advocacy.



Le began her role at OCC in October 2024 and has successfully developed and launched the first Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Student Achievement cohort for Spring 2025. In addition, she organized the College's month-long AANHPI Heritage Month celebration, featuring a series of events highlighting the rich diversity within OCC's AANHPI communities.

Currently, she is preparing for the official opening of the AANHPI Center, which is scheduled to open later this year. Once operational, the center will be available for all students. Students participating in the AANHPI Student Achievement Program will have access to dedicated community-building workshops, events and culturally responsive support services designed to foster both academic and personal growth.

"I am truly grateful to be part of a community where colleagues are committed to student success and always willing to offer their support," says Le. "It is a privilege to work alongside such passionate individuals toward a shared mission of equity and inclusion."

OCC Marketing & PR Area Earn Multiple State Honors

Orange Coast College marketing and public relations department won six Community College Public Relations Organization awards on April 10 in San Diego. Coast was recognized with two gold, one silver, and three bronze awards for creative work produced during the academic year.

OCC took home the top prize for its Follow Your Passion marketing campaign video and for a mobile device photo that was taken at the Umoja Pre-Kwanzaa Celebration. The College also earned a silver award for its "Coast to Coast" internal newsletter, and bronze awards for the 2024 OCC Foundation Annual Report, the 2024 OCC Magazine, and the Follow Your Passion campaign webpage.

CCPRO serves California's 116 community colleges and public and governmental relations, marketing, and design professionals. The annual conference allows marketing and public relations professionals to network with peers and share experiences, challenges, and advice.



Gold

- Video: Promotional, Short Format
- Photography: Mobile Device

Silver

- Email/Digital/Print Newsletter

Bronze

- Annual Report
- Magazine
- Website: Landing Page/Microsite

"We feel honored to receive this recognition from our marketing and PR peers around the country," said Director of Marketing and Public Relations Juan Gutierrez. "I could not be prouder of our marketing team and the quality of their work in promoting OCC's outstanding programs and services."

Orange Coast College Selects OCC Alumna Jessica Artinger as Planetarium Director



After an extensive search, Orange Coast College is pleased to announce the appointment of Jessica Artinger as the new Director of the OCC Planetarium. Artinger has been serving in a temporary capacity, leading programming at the Planetarium since the summer of 2023.

With valuable experience from the space industry, including her role as fabrication lead for the UCLA ELFIN CubeSat Mission, Artinger is well-equipped to oversee the integration of educational initiatives with community-based education and entertainment at the Planetarium. Her responsibilities will include developing and scheduling core educational programs, presentations, and events aimed at increasing public and campus engagement.

"We are thrilled to welcome Jessica Artinger as our new Planetarium Director," says Tara Giblin, Vice President of Instruction at Orange Coast College. "Her passion for education and the sciences, combined with her extensive experience, will undoubtedly enhance the educational offerings and community engagement at the Planetarium."

Artinger has been a passionate advocate for the OCC Planetarium for over a decade. In 2015, she voiced her support for the Planetarium's construction before the Board of Trustees. An accomplished alumna of OCC's Physics and Astronomy departments, she held various leadership roles while a student, including President of the Astronomy Club, President of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and Vice Chair of the Advocacy Committee, a branch of ASOCC. She is also a Garrison Honors Fellow, a Hites Scholar, recipient of the David Grant Prize, and was named the 2016 Sharon K. Donoff Student Leader of the Year.

"My roots at OCC and the Planetarium run deep, and I'm truly honored to continue leading this incredible space," says Artinger. "It's a place where people of all ages can come to imagine new possibilities, explore the universe, and be inspired by the wonders of science. I'm excited to keep building on that mission and expanding access to science education in our community."

After transferring to UCLA, Artinger earned her bachelor's degree in astrophysics with a minor in geophysics and planetary physics. While at UCLA, she played a key role in organizing the APS Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics, focusing on increasing participation of community college women. She later earned her master's degree in mechanical engineering, focusing on thermal and fluids engineering from Cal State Fullerton.

In her spare time, Artinger enjoys playing the French horn in community bands and orchestras throughout Orange County and Los Angeles.

OCC Partners with MM-SEAS to Enhance Maritime Professional Licensing Support for Students



Orange Coast College is proud to announce a new partnership with MM-SEAS, a leading provider of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) licensing software. This collaboration aims to enhance professional licensing support and tools for students enrolled in programs at the OCC Waterfront Campus, further demonstrating the College's commitment to preparing students for successful careers in the maritime industry.

As part of this partnership, all students enrolled in for-credit maritime programs at OCC, including degree and certificate programs, will receive a three-year membership to MM-SEAS PRO, a benefit valued at \$297. MM-SEAS PRO offers students unlimited email support and one-on-one virtual meetings with credentialing experts, as well as advanced software features to streamline the process of applying for, renewing, and upgrading U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credentials.

Students participating in noncredit and fee-based programs at the Waterfront Campus will receive a one-year MM-SEAS PRO membership, valued at \$99, which provides them with the same professional tools and personalized support.

"MM-SEAS simplifies the application process by offering a step-by-step, guided approach for obtaining and renewing Merchant Mariner Credentials," says Nate Gilman, co-founder of MM-SEAS.

Developed by mariners for mariners, the MM-SEAS platform helps users track progress, identify missing documentation, and avoid costly errors or delays in the credentialing process.

This partnership supports OCC's mission of delivering high-impact, real-world preparation for careers at sea and ashore, solidifying its position as a leader in maritime education on the West Coast.

"We're excited to bring this service to our students," says Justin Dion, Director of the OCC Waterfront Campus. "This partnership gives our students a head start in the credentialing process and empowers them to take the next step in their maritime careers with confidence."