



Calendar

SEPT. 9

Pirate Involvement Fair,
11 a.m.-2 p.m., Main Quad

SEPT. 10

Galley Event, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.,
The Galley

SEPT. 13-15

Theatre Nouveau, 7:30 p.m., Drama
Lab Studio Theatre, Free admission,
Mature audiences

SEPT. 16

Genki Iwahashi Performance & Talk,
1 p.m., Main Quad

SEPT. 18

Career Center Open House,
11 a.m.-3 p.m., Career Center

SEPT. 23

**CLEEO Project 19.0 – Latinidades
and Philosophy: The Next 25 Years,**
3-4:30 p.m., CLEEO Project Center
(GEC 109)

SEPT. 24

**Banff Mountain Film Festival World
Tour,** 7 p.m., Robert B. Moore
Theatre

SEPT. 26

**Skylark Speaker Series with
Dr. Kyle Kremer,** 6 p.m.,
OCC Planetarium, Free admission,
Seating is limited

SEPT. 26

Free Public Telescope Star Party,
8:15 p.m., OCC Planetarium,
Weather permitting



OCC Culinary Team Wins Silver at National Championship

Orange Coast College culinary arts students won a silver medal at the 2025 American Culinary Federation (ACF)'s National Student Team Championships held in Las Vegas, Nevada, on July 29.

Representing the Western Region, OCC's Hot Food Team competed against four other top regional teams in a challenging culinary showdown. The five-member team successfully prepared a four-course meal in just 90 minutes, using only limited electric appliances and no gas.

The team, composed of Nykolas Peppers, Blanca Granados, Josias Rodriguez, Georgia Williams, and Khoa To, achieved an impressive score of 88.75 out of 100, narrowly missing a gold medal performance, which requires a score of 90 or higher.

"OCC's culinary student team demonstrated extraordinary talent, creativity, and composure at the American Culinary Federation National Championship in Las Vegas, Nevada," says OCC culinary arts instructor Chef Davina Dunner. "To earn a silver medal against the top five teams in the nation – and to do so with a menu as inspired and beautifully executed as 'Las Californias' – is an incredible achievement. From showcasing sustainable local seafood to weaving in the vibrant flavors of Mexican cuisine, these students cooked with both skill and heart, representing the OCC Culinary Program with an outstanding performance and score."

The judging process was rigorous, with ACF-certified judges evaluating teams on a 100-point scale across multiple categories, including taste, menu progression, sanitation and safe food handling, organization and teamwork, cooking technique, and timing. Each category held significant weight, ensuring that teams were recognized not only for flavor and creativity but also for technical skill, professionalism, and adherence to the highest culinary standards.

OCC's Hot Food Team is funded by donations and fundraising events, with support from industry donors, such as Ingardia Bros, Santa Monica Seafood, Braun Linen, and New Chef. The 2025 Chef Coaches for the team were Liz Mendoza, April Thompson, and Davina Dunner.

The ACF is the largest professional organization of chefs in North America. OCC's Hot Food Team has been competing with the ACF since 1996 and has earned several regional titles, as well as a national title in 2005.

OCC Ranked as a Top Ten Community College in California by WalletHub



Orange Coast College was ranked #10 in California in a list compiled by WalletHub of the best community colleges in the United States in 2025. OCC ranked #48 nationally.

The WalletHub list's rankings are determined from a sample of 653 community colleges that are part of the American Association of Community Colleges. WalletHub evaluated 18 key indicators in three dimensions: cost and financing, education outcomes and career outcomes.

WalletHub is a personal finance website based in Washington D.C. The website offers free consumer tools to help customers manage their finances. The company also offers credit reports and scores, as well as credit monitoring.

Orange Coast College Partners with ASU Online to Offer Special Tuition for Bachelor's Degrees

Orange Coast College students now have a new, more affordable path to earning bachelor's degrees online, supported by a new partnership with Arizona State University.

Beginning this fall, eligible students and alumni from OCC can save 22% on tuition when they transfer to ASU Online through the California Community College Achievement Plan.

This opportunity is part of the ASU's broader effort to increase access to higher education for students, including OCC. This seamless and affordable transfer pathway for California residents reduces financial barriers and supports students who need flexibility and options for an education that prepares them for the future. There are no income requirements to receive the special tuition.

"Through our partnership with ASU Online, we are expanding access to transfer opportunities for our students," says OCC President Angelica Suarez. "This special tuition lowers financial barriers and creates a pathway from community college to a university degree."

ASU Online reimagines learning by providing students with university resources and support from enrollment to graduation and beyond. Students can choose from over 180 undergraduate degrees – all taught by the same faculty using the same curriculum available on all campuses.

ASU Online and OCC serve thousands of California students and alumni, empowering them to succeed by preparing them to contribute to their local communities and the state's workforce and economy in fields such as business, psychology, communication, fashion, biological sciences, and computer science.

To learn more about the program and how to enroll, visit californiacc.asu.edu.



OCC Theatre Department Announces 2025-26 Nine-Show Season



Orange Coast College's Theatre Department has announced its 2025-26 season, featuring a total of nine productions, including faculty- and student-directed shows.

Kicking off the 2025-26 season, OCC Theatre will present "Theatre Nouveau," the first show from the OCC Repertory

The REP), the College's student-run theatre company. The REP's student-directed productions offer students the hands-on opportunity to direct, act, write and stage manage. Six REP productions in the Drama Lab Studio Theatre will round out this season, most with free admission, except for the traditional holiday production of "An Old Fashioned Christmas Melodrama and Ice Cream Social."

"Inherit the Wind" is the first faculty-directed mainstage production of the season. Directed by Wyn Moreno, this iconic 1955 play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee centers on two giants of the law who argue the merits of science, faith, education, and intellectual freedom in this compelling and classic courtroom drama. Faculty-directed productions in the Drama Lab Theatre are directed by recognized theatre professionals and educators, allowing students to develop and perfect their craft with the latest in contemporary theatre, musicals, and classical theatre.

Tickets for paid productions can be reserved and purchased on the OCC Tickets website. Please note that tickets are only available for purchase online. To view a complete list of all productions, please visit the OCC Theatre Productions webpage.

OCC Cares for Fall Flex Day

Orange Coast College's Fall 2025 Flex Day was a success, boasting over 70 sessions, including workshops, Lunch & Learn opportunities, and Flex-on-Demand Modules. Hundreds of employees were in attendance.



This year's Fall Flex Day was held on Aug. 22, the Friday before school began for the Fall 2025 semester and was centered around the theme of "Orange Coast College Cares." Flex Day sessions were held from 7:45 a.m. until 5 p.m., with a break for lunch at noon.

Session topics included "Favorite Things You Do in the Classroom," "Diving into Data with IE Office," and "International Student Resources: Learn about the Global Engagement Center."



Dr. Brad Phillips, President & CEO of the Institute for Evidence-Based Change, was the keynote speaker for the event. Dr. Phillips shared stories and practices from Caring Campus Initiatives that resonated with the values already present at OCC. His keynote and workshop offered practical approaches for deepening and expanding efforts that foster connection, belonging, and student success.



Theresa De Los Santos Honored as Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate

Theresa De Los Santos, Director of the Orange Coast College MESA Program, the Science and Engineering Tutoring Center (SETC) and the STEM Accelerator, has been selected as a recipient for the National Resource Center's Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates. De Los Santos is one of only two recipients in the two-year colleges category nationwide to be honored.

For several years, De Los Santos has been at the forefront of initiatives aimed at supporting first-year students and those navigating critical academic transitions in STEM disciplines.



Under her leadership, the programs she oversees have established a robust framework designed to facilitate success for students in STEM fields. This includes personalized academic counseling, tutoring, study groups, and peer mentorship programs aimed at equipping students with the necessary tools to thrive in college-level STEM coursework. With dedicated spaces on campus for both the MESA and STEM Accelerator programs, students have streamlined access to academic and social support services, fostering connections with peers in the STEM community. These environments help students build

confidence, develop effective study strategies, and cultivate a sense of belonging right from their first semester.

The MESA program and STEM Accelerator work in tandem to support a diverse range of low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students. MESA's equity-focused model facilitates pathways for first generation, calculus-based STEM students from community college into four-year universities, while the STEM Accelerator broadens these supports to include low-income STEM students who may not qualify for MESA. Combined with the SETC's robust tutoring and study group offerings, these programs connect students with hands-on learning experiences, field trips to four-year institutions, industry-aligned internship opportunities, university research opportunities, and professional conferences.

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, in collaboration with Penguin Random House Publishing, recognizes individuals on the nation's campuses who are Outstanding First-Year Student Advocates involved in high-impact practices for first-year student success.

De Los Santos will be honored at the 45th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, taking place from February 15-18, 2026, in Seattle, Washington. . . .

Orange Coast College is featured on ACCJC's homepage!