



Calendar

MAY 20

Spring Student Dance Showcase, 7 p.m., Robert B. Moore Theatre

MAY 22

OCC Commencement Ceremony, 5:30 p.m., Pacific Amphitheatre

MAY 24

OCC Guitar Ensemble Spring Recital, 3 p.m., Robert B. Moore Theatre

MAY 26

OCC Commercial Music Concert, 7:30 p.m., Robert B. Moore Theatre

Over \$1 Million in Scholarships Awarded at OCC Honors Night

Orange Coast College's 68th annual Honors Night celebrated the theme "Legacy of Giving," recognizing the special legacy created by OCC donors and the college community. More than \$1.3 million in scholarships were awarded to outstanding students on May 13 in the Robert B. Moore Theatre.

Honors Night activities began with a Service and Leadership Award Ceremony, followed by the Scholarship Award Ceremony, during which 663 scholarship awards, ranging from \$750 to \$15,000 each, were distributed to approximately 500 students.

Honors Night highlights the achievements of students who have excelled in academics, service, and leadership, and honors the generosity of donors who support OCC's mission. This event underscores the powerful impact that giving has had on the OCC community for nearly seven decades.

A Decade of Innovation: OCC Celebrates 10th Annual Student Research Symposium



Orange Coast College hosted the 10th annual Giles T. Brown Student Project and Research Symposium on May 1. The Symposium gave students a chance to present the work they do inside or outside the classroom and highlighted many different disciplines on campus in a single event.

Now in its tenth year, the Symposium has expanded significantly, growing from 30 student participants in its inaugural year to over 80 student participants representing 60 projects in 2026. The Symposium offers tremendous benefits to participating students. For many, being part of this event is a valuable addition to their resumes and enhances their applications for transfer to four-year universities. Additionally, several students have continued their research at four-year institutions, with some going on to earn master's degrees and Ph.D.'s in their fields; many credit the Symposium for inspiring their passion for research.

"They learned so much during this," says OCC Astronomy Department Head and Symposium Chair Jerome Fang. "They learn how to conduct independent work and develop the confidence to collaborate with faculty mentors. The challenge of developing and executing a project within a limited timeframe allows them to develop vital skills for oral presentations or poster displays. It's truly a powerful experience for the students involved. They often express how valuable it has been for their personal and academic growth."

Students presented their work in one of three ways: a poster session, which provides the opportunity to share work through a visual presentation and includes a question and answer period; an oral presentation (or paper session) which includes 15-minute oral presentations with 5 minutes of questions; and an Exhibition of Work or Performance, which includes creative works such as interpretive dance, sculptures, paintings, machined products, architectural design, ice sculptures, and musical performances.

"The Symposium brings the campus community together and makes the environment feel more personal, allowing students to interact with their peers in ways that typically don't happen in a classroom setting," says Fang. "They experience firsthand what it's like to conduct research. I often see students inspire each other, making it a unique experience that few community colleges offer."

Chief Dan Stefano Inducted into OCC Alumni Hall of Fame

The Orange Coast College Foundation formally inducted Chief Dan Stefano into the OCC Alumni Hall of Fame on May 14. Stefano was selected as the 2026 inductee because of his outstanding leadership, distinguished career in public service, and unwavering commitment to his community.

With a career spanning more than three decades, from reserve firefighter to Fire Chief, he credits his start at community college with providing him with a solid foundation. His dedication to the community was recognized this year when Chief Stefano was named a recipient of the 2025 California Community College Distinguished Alumni Award by the Community College League of California. The statewide honor recognizes former community college students who have achieved outstanding success in their

chosen fields while demonstrating exceptional service to their communities.

"Orange Coast College played a crucial role in my personal and professional journey, both academically and athletically," says Stefano. "It served as a vital launching pad for my career in service and my graduate studies at CSULB and USC. My approach has always been guided by a team and family environment, with faith at the core."

He earned an associate degree in general education from OCC and graduated from the fire academy at Santa Ana College with an associate degree in fire technology. He later graduated from California State University, Long Beach, and the University of Southern California, earning graduate degrees in public policy and administration and executive leadership. He is also a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program.



"As an alumnus, Dan continues to be a shining example of leadership and service – a true asset to the community whose commitment uplifts others and reflects the very best of what it means to give back with purpose and heart," says OCC Foundation Board Chair Jeff Hyder.

In December, Stefano retired as fire chief for the city of Costa Mesa after a distinguished 30-year fire service career. His hard work and legacy are what show that he embodies the values of humility, leadership and service that define the community college experience. He has earned distinction as one of the most respected leaders in public safety in California. He has served as president of the California Fire Chiefs Association, the Orange County Fire Chiefs Association and the League of California Cities Fire Chiefs Department. He is among only 32 individuals in California history to earn the Certified Fire Chief designation.

"Chief Stefano's story is a testament to the transformational impact of a community college education," says Dr. Angelica L. Suarez, President of Orange Coast College.

The Alumni Hall of Fame recognizes distinguished alumni for their dedication to the Pirate family and their communities and selects them annually through a nomination process.

OCC Marketing & PR Team Earn Top State Recognition



Orange Coast College's Marketing and Public Relations Department won six Community College Public Relations Organization (CCPRO) awards on April 9 in Paso Robles. Coast earned an impressive six awards – two gold and four bronze – recognizing outstanding creative work produced during the 2025 calendar year.

OCC captured gold for its vibrant Spring Plant Sale Flyer and for a dynamic photo of the OCC Softball Team celebrating a win. Bronze honors were awarded for a standout brochure, the weekly "Coast to Coast" internal newsletter, an engaging mobile device photo from an ASOCC event, and creative social media management of OCC's Instagram account.

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	
• Flyer	• Photography
Bronze	
• Brochure-Division B	• Photography: Mobile Device
• Email/Digital/Print Newsletter	• Social Media Management

"It's truly meaningful to be recognized by our marketing and public relations colleagues from across the state," said Director of Marketing and Public Relations Juan Gutierrez. "This honor reflects the creativity, dedication, and impact of our team, and I'm incredibly proud of the work they do every day to elevate and share the brand of OCC's programs and services."

OCC Celebrates Asian American, Native Hawaiian, & Pacific Islander Heritage Month



Orange Coast College hosted a series of planned events throughout May to celebrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month.

The events included a candle making workshop, cooking demonstrations, and a lunch learn session, among others. All activities and events were organized by the AANHPI Student Achievement Program.

The signature event was the AANHPI Heritage Month Celebration Fair, which included music and dance performances, a resource fair, and light refreshments.



The Doyle's Mass Appeal Student Exhibition Showcased Over 100 OCC Student Artists

The 2026 Mass Appeal Student Exhibition held a reception on May 7 at the Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, featuring artwork from more than 100 student artists across a wide range of mediums.



This annual juried exhibition offers OCC students the opportunity to display their work in a professional gallery setting. The show highlights a diverse array of student artwork, including painting, sculpture, photography, and more.

OCC Fashion's "Behind the Seams" Empowers the Next Generation of Fashion Innovators

The Orange Coast College Fashion Department recently hosted its "Behind the Seams" event, offering a raw, unfiltered look at the intersection of fashion, beauty, and digital entrepreneurship. The session featured a powerhouse panel of industry professionals who shared essential career insights and personal success stories with aspiring creatives. Entirely put on by the FASH 225: Media, Events and Promotions class, attendees will gain firsthand insights into building a personal brand, navigating the business of brand deals, and the realities of working in the fashion industry.



"Events like Behind the Seams give students and emerging creatives a rare opportunity to learn directly from professionals who have turned their passion into successful careers," says Michelle Craner, faculty member of the OCC Fashion Department. "Our goal is to empower the next generation with

practical advice, authentic stories, and the confidence to pursue their own paths in fashion, beauty, and content creation."

OCC Honors Coast Colleagues of the Year & Retirees



OCC's President's Office and the HR Professional Development Office honored employees and their exceptional service at the April Outstanding Coast Colleagues of the Year and Retiree Recognition Celebration. A cherished OCC

tradition since 1990, this celebratory event is a testament to the outstanding work and exceptional contributions of OCC's dedicated classified professionals, faculty, and administrators.

This year, four Coast Colleague of the Year winners were honored:

- **Classified Professional – Terry Scarbrough**, Student Services Specialist Senior, Library & Learning Support, Honors Program
- **Full-time Faculty – Karissa Lovero**, Instructor, Physiology, Math & Sciences Division
- **Part-time Faculty – Amy Wilson**, Food & Beverage Management, Consumer & Health Sciences Division
- **Manager – Nathan Jensen**, Associate Dean, Global Engagement Center



The Orange Coast College campus community participated in Denim Day by wearing their jeans with a purpose on April 29. The Denim Day campaign hopes to bring awareness to victim blaming and destructive myths that surround rape and sexual violence.