



\$900,000 Philanthropic Investment will Kickstart New Air Traffic Control Program for OCC Students

An Orange Coast College Foundation donor has made a strategic philanthropic investment of \$900,000 in Orange County's workforce to kickstart a new Air Traffic Control (ATC) program. The program will create a direct, local educational pathway into one of the nation's most critical and in-demand aviation professions.

The generous gift will fund specialized facilities, state-of-the-art air traffic control simulation equipment, classroom renovations, curriculum development, and instructional technology needed to launch the program. Introductory ATC courses will begin this fall, with the full curriculum available in Fall 2027.

"Orange Coast College has long been committed to preparing students for the careers that will shape the future of our region and beyond," said Dr. Angelica Suarez, president of Orange Coast College. "This extraordinary gift allows us to expand while creating new opportunities for students to enter one of the nation's most essential professions."

Foster Stanback, the donor, has been a longtime champion of OCC's aviation and aerospace initiatives, previously providing generous support for aviation education and student rocketry programs.

"I am honored to help create new opportunities for students to pursue careers in aviation and aerospace," said Stanback. "Orange Coast College's outstanding Aviation and Aerospace Sciences program is uniquely positioned to expand its leadership by adding an Air Traffic Control program to its exceptional offerings and attract more students to careers in aviation science and rocketry."

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 2,200 air traffic controller openings are projected each year over the next decade, while the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) continues to expand hiring to address workforce shortages. OCC expects the program to become a significant workforce pipeline for Southern California, serving hundreds of students during its first five years and helping meet the nation's growing demand for qualified controllers.

"The most meaningful philanthropy begins with a vision for what is possible, and Foster has such a vision for the future of aviation and aerospace and for OCC students," noted Patricia Falzon, Executive Director of Advancement for the OCC Foundation.

"His passion and generosity are creating new pathways for students to discover and step into the careers of the future. We are honored to partner with him and are deeply grateful for his generosity, leadership, and confidence in OCC."

The program is designed to position OCC to pursue designation as a FAA Enhanced Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative institution. Once approved, qualified graduates who meet FAA hiring requirements will be able to move directly into facility-specific training rather than first attending the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, creating a clear, affordable, and highly specialized pathway into air traffic control careers. The ATC expansion builds upon OCC's established Aviation Science program, its recent FAA Part 141 designation, and the College's expanding aerospace initiatives, including its new Rocketry Science program. Together, these programs position OCC to become a regional hub for aviation and aerospace education.

Led by Aviation Science faculty Dr. Stanley Harriman, with curriculum development support from Joel Weiler, the program will feature FAA-aligned curriculum, advanced tower and radar simulation technology, and hands-on instruction designed to prepare students for successful careers in aviation.

Orange Coast College Selects Stephanie Slagan as Vice President of Administrative Services

Orange Coast College has named Stephanie Slagan as its next Vice President of Administrative Services.

A seasoned community college leader with nearly 20 years of experience, Slagan brings extensive expertise in finance, technology, facilities, operations, college advancement, and strategic planning. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to fiscal stewardship, operational excellence, and student success.



"Stephanie's professional journey reflects the transformative power of our community colleges. She began as a community college student, launched her career as a classified professional, advanced into finance leadership, and now serves in executive leadership," Suarez said. "Her career reflects not only deep expertise in community college finance and operations, but also a collaborative approach to leadership."

Slagan last served as Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Administrative Services and College Advancement at Palo Verde Community College District, where she provided executive leadership for a broad range of administrative functions and institutional initiatives. Her leadership has helped strengthen organizational infrastructure, advance strategic priorities, and support the district's long-term financial sustainability.

"I am proud to join Orange Coast College and become part of a community dedicated to student success, innovation, and excellence," Slagan said. "I look forward to working alongside our faculty, classified professionals, students, managers, and community partners to advance opportunities that empower students to achieve their goals."

Slagan succeeds Dr. Rich Pagel, who retired following many years of service to Orange Coast College and the Coast Community College District.

OCC Announces New Instructional Leadership Team to Support Student Success

Orange Coast College has announced three new academic deans as part of a strategic reorganization of its instructional divisions. The restructure is designed to respond to workforce needs and better align the college's academic programs with students' educational and career goals.

Kelly Clark-Holt, Ed.D., will serve as Dean of Health Sciences; Wendi Dykes McGehee, Ph.D., as Dean of Business and Consumer Sciences; and Agnes J. Eguaras as Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Together, these appointments complete a significant restructuring of Orange Coast College's instructional leadership team.

The new division structure reflects the college's commitment to preparing students for high-demand careers while maintaining excellence in the foundational transfer disciplines that serve the largest number of students.

"Community colleges today must do both exceptionally well," said Dr. Tara Giblin, instructional vice president at Orange Coast College. "We must prepare students for immediate entry into high-demand careers while also providing outstanding transfer education. Our new instructional structure recognizes the importance of both missions. By creating divisions that better align related disciplines, we can strengthen collaboration, respond more quickly to workforce needs, and provide an even better experience for our students."

The reorganization places OCC's rapidly growing healthcare programs into a dedicated Health Sciences Division, recognizing the increasing demand for healthcare professionals throughout Southern California. Business, hospitality, culinary arts, fashion, interior design, and other industry-focused disciplines are brought together within the Business and Consumer Sciences Division, strengthening partnerships with employers and supporting innovation across workforce education. The Social and Behavioral Sciences Division brings together many of the college's largest transfer disciplines, with the Library, supporting student success.

Each of the new deans brings extensive experience aligned with the mission of their division.

Kelly Clark-Holt has served OCC since 2012 as a faculty member, clinical coordinator, instructional leader, and most recently Interim Dean of Consumer and Health Sciences. A nationally recognized expert in radiologic technology, she brings more than two decades of experience in healthcare, higher education, accreditation, and workforce preparation.

Wendi Dykes McGehee joins Coast after serving in executive leadership roles at Indiana Wesleyan University and Azusa Pacific University, where she led innovation in business education, organizational development, executive leadership, AI initiatives, and industry partnerships. Her experience spans higher education, workforce development, and organizational transformation, making her uniquely positioned to lead career-focused academic programs.

Agnes J. Eguaras comes to OCC from Glendale Community College, where she served as Dean of Instructional Services overseeing multiple instructional divisions and strategic enrollment initiatives. Her career includes extensive leadership in curriculum development, student success, enrollment management, instructional planning, grants, and faculty support across California community colleges.

The appointments become effective as OCC begins implementing its new instructional division structure for the 2026-27 academic year.