

# OCC magazine

2021 EDITION

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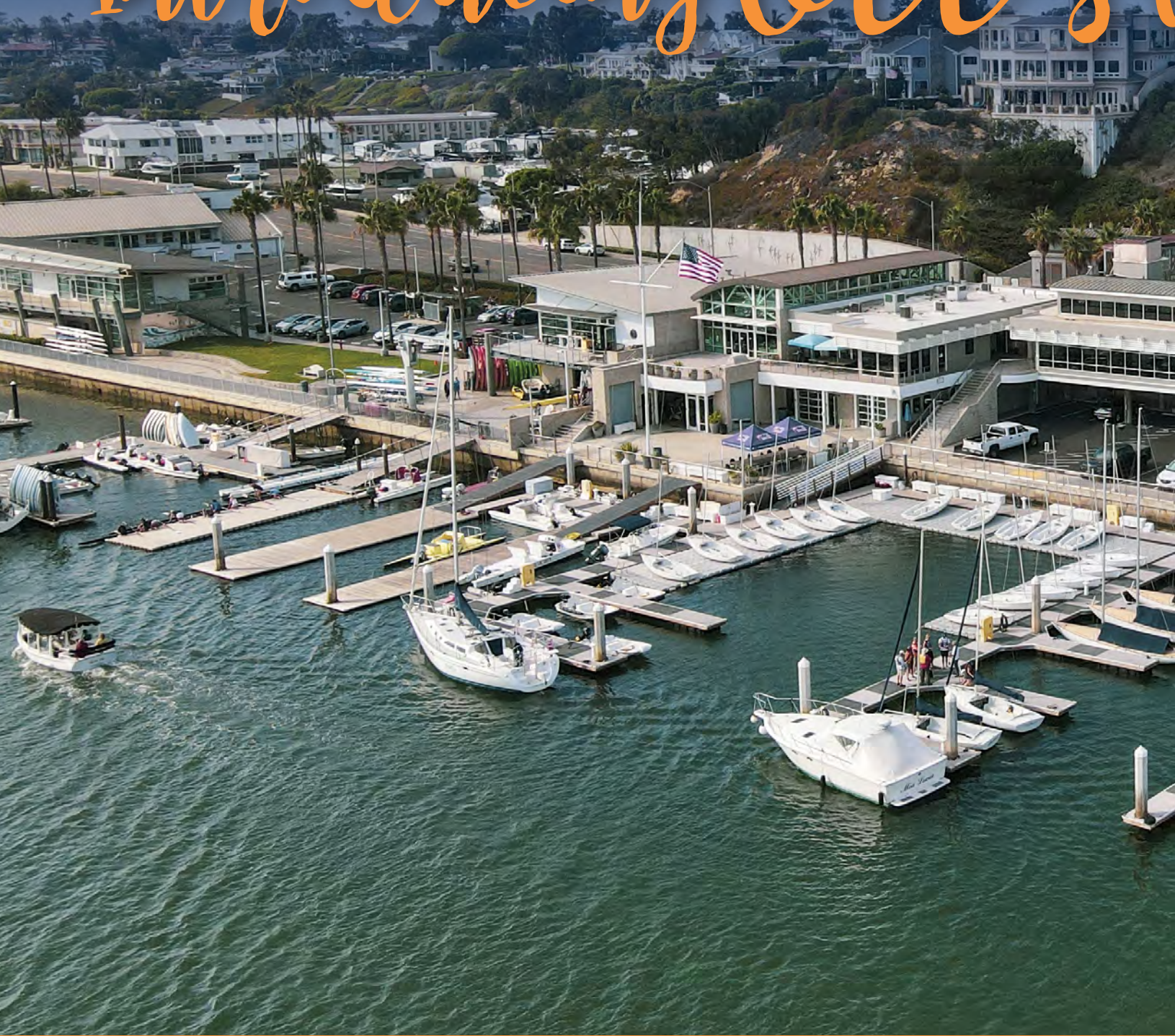
## Outta This World *Alex Coultrup's Trip to Mars*



ORANGE  
COAST  
COLLEGE



# Introducing OCC's



**T**his fall, as Orange Coast College officially opens the doors of its new \$22 million Professional Mariner Training Center, visitors will notice another change to the College's Newport Harbor Facility: a new name.

OCC's Waterfront Campus includes the College's sailing and rowing hub on the ocean-side of Pacific Coast Highway in Newport Beach, connected to the maritime training center across the busy highway via a skyway bridge.

The 12,000-square-foot maritime center will be the new home for OCC's Professional Mariner Program, which is dedicated to students who are pursuing careers in boating and maritime-related fields. The building is two-stories



# Waterfront Campus



high, with the ground floor serving as a parking structure, and will include classroom and lab space, a radar training room, conference room, student lounge and a Full Mission Bridge Simulator, valued at approximately half a million dollars.

Recently designated a "Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education" (CoE) for 2021 by the United States Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration, OCC's Waterfront Campus is poised to become the premier destination for maritime training and studies in Southern California.



PLAY VIDEO



Dear Friends,

I always remember the day I became a community college student. As a high school senior with no expectation of continuing my studies after graduation, my life's path took an unexpected turn when a teacher encouraged me to attend a community college outreach event at my high school. Before I knew it, I had submitted an application and I was given a student ID — I was officially a college student! I could hardly believe it.

My journey from community college student to president of one of the top community colleges in the nation is just one example of many that reinforces an undeniable truth: community colleges transform lives. I have witnessed this repeatedly throughout my time in higher education.



In this issue of OCC Magazine, you will read about how Orange Coast College has transformed students' lives, as well as how they are using the knowledge and skills gained at Coast to change the world. For example, you can read on page 18 about how OCC alumni Alexandra Coultrup spent two weeks on a simulated Mars mission in order to advance research that will one day make space travel safer and more efficient. On page 2, you can learn about the incredible story of Joseph Valadez, who found redemption through education after a lifetime spent in and out of prison. Valadez is currently working towards earning a master's degree in social work, and plans to eventually find a position with a nonprofit supporting at-risk youth.

As OCC continues to transform the lives of students through education, we also recognize the importance of modernizing our campus with facilities to support that vision. On page 12 you can learn about the history behind OCC's new Professional Mariner Training Center, located at the College's Waterfront Campus in Newport Beach. Designated a "Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education" by the United States Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration, OCC's Waterfront Campus represents our commitment to build innovative, state-of-the-art facilities to meet the needs of the next generation of students at Coast.

This commitment to innovation is not limited to brick-and-mortar buildings. As we prepare to return to campus after nearly 18 months of learning and working from home, we are taking what we've learned from the pandemic to explore new modes of instruction to best serve all of our students. For example, on page 6 you can read about how OCC is expanding its offerings of "Zero Textbook Cost" courses in order to make education at Coast affordable and accessible for everyone.

This is, without a doubt, a transformative moment in OCC's history, with changes yet to come still on the horizon. However, one thing remains the same — no matter the changing tide, we are committed to providing the highest quality education to all students who enroll at OCC, regardless of their circumstances. That is our mission, and with your partnership we will continue to change the world, one student at a time.

Angélica L. Suarez, Ph.D.



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#### MISSION STATEMENT

Orange Coast College serves the educational needs of its diverse local and global community.

The College empowers students to achieve their educational goals by providing high quality and innovative programs and services leading to academic degrees, college transfer, certificates in career and technical education, basic skills and workforce development to enable lifelong learning.

The College promotes student learning and development through fostering a respectful, supportive, participatory, and equitable campus climate of student engagement and academic inquiry.

#### FOLLOW US







2



9



12



28

contents

2021 EDITION

features

From Prison to the President's List.....2  
 OCC alumni Joseph Valadez proves it's never too late.

Upcycled Fashion.....5  
 OCC student Loren Blackwood takes second place in a Huntington Beach Art Center competition.

Equity at OCC.....6  
 How Open Education Resources level the playing field for students at Coast.

Passing the Baton .....9  
 Carlos Johnson and Enzo Cantarero share a dream, and passion for giving back.

OCC's Transfer Opportunity Program Turns 30!.....11  
 The College's Transfer Center has hit a milestone - 30 years since the TOP program welcomed its first cohort of students.

OCC's Shipmaster .....12  
 Brad Avery leaves a lasting legacy at Coast.

Mission to Mars .....18  
 OCC alum Alexandra Coultrup joins a crew of six on a simulated trip to the Red Planet.

OCC News .....21  
 Catch up on the latest news at Coast.

Coaches Corner .....24  
 Head Baseball Coach Nate Johnson talks about the 15 days that forever changed the world of baseball at Coast.

Forever Pirates .....28  
 Anmarie Moreno explains how OCC helped her re-discover a love for soccer.

Pirate Pride .....30  
 OCC teams dominate in conference play!

Construction Update .....32  
 OCC's new Literature, Social Science building opens in time for Fall 2021 semester.

Turning Cartoons into a Career ..... 33  
 Get to know OCC Narrative Illustration alum Stephanie Rizo!



18

COVER

On the cover is OCC alumni Alexandra Coultrup who spent two weeks on a simulated space mission at the Mars Desert Research Station near Hanksville, Utah.

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 in Arts degrees, Associate in Science degrees and 145 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 1,000 international students representing more than 56 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)

Orange Coast Junior College district was established in 1947, with classes beginning in 1948. For more than 70 years, OCC has been a leader in higher education in Costa Mesa and its surrounding communities.







# FROM PRISON TO THE PRESIDENT'S HONOR LIST: OCC ALUM PROVES IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

*Seven years ago, Joseph Valadez was finishing up a year living at the Salvation Army, where he was putting in the hard work of getting and staying sober. He had been in and out of prison for almost all of his adult life, with most of the crimes related to his addiction to drugs and alcohol, and he only had one strike left before the state of California locked him up and threw away the key. In order to keep his housing, he could get a job in construction or enroll in college. He chose to enroll at Orange Coast College.*

“I started doing drugs from a young age, and at 18 I began using barbiturates and shooting heroin. I continued using drugs for over 30 years,” says Joseph Valadez, an Orange County native and United States Army veteran.

In 2013, three months shy of his 55th birthday, a childhood friend Valadez had been living with kicked him out and told him to get help. He found himself homeless and with very few options. What’s more, Valadez had accumulated a long rap sheet, doing time in prison for burglary, possession and selling drugs. He already had two strikes under the “Three Strikes” law in California, and he knew that one more conviction would put him away for at least 25 years. “I just got tired of it all,” he says.

With no insurance, Valadez struggled to find a rehab facility that would accept him. He finally made his way to the Salvation Army’s Adult Rehabilitation Center in Anaheim, where he began the arduous process of getting sober. “I’m a product of the Salvation Army,” he says. “Something magical happens when you surrender to that place.”

After living at the Salvation Army for nine months, Valadez’s counselor told him that he found more

permanent housing through a homeless veterans housing program, with the rent covered for two years, but there was a catch: get a job or enroll in college. At first, Valadez said he would get a job in construction, an industry he had previously worked in. “You’re too old,” his counselor told him. “Have you thought about going to school?” The counselor, an Orange Coast College alumni himself, advised Valadez to check out the Costa Mesa campus.

That’s how, in the Summer of 2014, Joseph Valadez found himself enrolled at OCC as a first-time college student who hadn’t worn a backpack filled with school books and supplies since 1976. There was a steep learning curve that first summer, but once the fall started, Valadez got into the swing of things. “I loved going back to school,” he says. “Once the full semester started I thought ‘I got this.’”

## Finding Support at OCC

If there was one area of academia that tested Valadez’s resolve to get his degree, it was math. After scoring low on his math placement test, he was put in the lowest level of remedial math at OCC, and spent an extra three semesters at the College finishing his math requirement. “I was determined to get that damn degree,” he says cheerfully.



“There were times I was frustrated and I really wanted to quit. But I had such a good support system.”

Much of that support came from student services programs at OCC, like the Student Success Center, which offers free tutoring to all students in English and math, and the Extended Opportunities Programs and Resources (EOPS) office, a catch-all program that supports low-income students by connecting them to resources to help them with basic needs.

Valadez also found a steady support system in the Veterans Resource Center and through his academic counselor, who specialized in guidance for veterans. “I was proactive in my education. I tell people that’s the secret,” he says. “I spent a lot of hours in the writing center, double that in the math center.”

Finally, there were three employees at OCC, in particular, who made all the difference between success and failure. “Jaki [Kamphuis] in the Math Center, and professors Jamie Blair and Rachel Ridnor — they all went above and beyond in helping me along in my journey,” he says. “I wouldn’t be where I’m at without those three ladies.”

When Valadez graduated from OCC in 2019, he had two associate’s degrees, in history and sociology, under his belt, as well as a 3.1 GPA. He was accepted to California State University, Long Beach, to study sociology.

## Going Viral

At CSULB, Valadez found the same supportive learning environment that he had experienced at Coast. “Cal State Long Beach is a lot like OCC, but on a bigger scale,” he says.

In January 2021, Valadez, at 62 years old, completed his studies at CSULB, not only earning a bachelor’s degree in sociology, but also making the “President’s Honor List” for achieving straight A’s during his last two semesters.

A few months later Valadez posted graduation photos on his social media account wearing his cap and gown, and the images quickly went viral, eventually capturing the attention of media outlets across the country. “I think my story resonates because I hit so many different demographics: age, veteran status, ethnicity, and recovery from addiction,” he says. “People have reached out to tell me ‘your story has inspired my dad to go to rehab’ or ‘I’m going back to school.’”

More than anything, Valadez is hoping that his story inspires people to give formerly incarcerated individuals a chance. “Society pins labels on certain segments of our population, and people who have been incarcerated are often labeled as ‘losers.’ I’d like to break that stigma that’s been attached to us,” he says. “All my life, everything that I’ve done, I’ve copped to. I have faced the music. But I paid my debt, and I’m trying to be a productive member of society.”

In May 2021, Valadez received word that he had been accepted into CSULB’s master’s program for social work. After finishing the two-year program, he hopes to begin a career specializing in helping at-risk youth. He’s already been offered jobs at nonprofits working with at-risk youth in Los Angeles. But at 63 years old, Valadez is acutely aware that the clock is ticking. “I’m no spring chicken,” he says, laughing. “I hope God gives me enough time to make a difference.”





# UPCYCLED FASHION: OCC STUDENT TAKES SECOND PLACE IN HUNTINGTON BEACH ART CENTER DESIGN COMPETITION

It's a familiar story: As the Huntington Beach Art Center was gearing up to celebrate its 25th Anniversary with a yearlong slate of exhibits and special events, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, causing the Center to close its doors and cancel everything.

One of those cancelled exhibits was a design contest hosted by artist and designer Judith Hendler. Meant to showcase designs by local community college students, Hendler created a contest challenging participants to create garments made from recycled materials. The

event, held virtually in June 2020, was such a success that Hendler brought it back for a second time in 2021, this time requiring that students use a "Cocoon Cloak" pattern she created to make cloaks from recycled material.

According to Hendler, the pandemic created fertile ground for inspiring art and fashion using materials that were already on hand. "It's opened a whole new world of what I can do with what's around me," she says.

For Orange Coast College fashion student Loren Blackwood, the contest was a perfect combination of two areas she is passionate about — sustainability and fashion. She submitted pieces for both contests, earning an Honorable Mention in 2020, and a second-place prize in 2021 for her Cocoon Cloak titled "Myanmar Rose."

"One of my classmates [at OCC] was speaking about her experience in Myanmar one day. She was born in that country, and she told us about the civil unrest," Blackwood explains. "What she said affected me so much, and I felt

so moved in my heart by her words, that I was inspired to create my cloak. I wanted to amplify her story to educate people about what's happening in Myanmar."

The cloak design was inspired by a photograph of her classmate wearing a red traditional dress from Myanmar. She used king-size linen pillow cases dyed in different shades of red, and pieced the fabric together in a patchwork style she has often used in her original designs. For the exhibit, Blackwood included her classmate's photograph alongside her cloak.



Blackwood, who enrolled at OCC after earning a bachelor's degree in Art History from UCI, recently completed her associate's degree in the College's fashion program. She was awarded second place and a cash prize for the Cocoon Cloak contest.



# EQUITY at OCC



HOW OPEN  
EDUCATION  
RESOURCES  
LEVEL THE  
PLAYING  
FIELD



Last year, as Orange Coast College made the difficult decision to close its campus and transition almost all classes online, a separate conversation was unfolding in a less visible part of the College — should OCC continue with its efforts to increase the number of classes offered in a “Zero Textbook Cost” format?

With the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed like poor timing to ask faculty to make yet another change. But, on the other hand, students who overwhelmingly bore the economic brunt of COVID-19 lockdowns needed a zero-cost-textbook (ZTC) option more than ever. The College, with the approval of the Coast Community College District, decided to proceed.

OCC’s Open Education Resources (OER) Coordinator Melissa Archibald, who started in her position in the Spring of 2020 after the College made the decision to close campus and move online, knew she had an uphill climb ahead of her. “It’s always a challenge when faculty are adjusting the courses they teach — that takes up a lot of time and energy, especially when it involves something like a textbook,” Archibald explains. “A lot of faculty find a textbook they like, and they want to stick with it.”

Even so, over the past 18 months Archibald has managed to dramatically increase the number of classes in which students pay nothing for textbooks or course materials, instead utilizing what are called “Open Education Resources.”

The numbers speak for themselves: in the Fall of 2020, ZTC courses at OCC increased by 4.5 percent from 2019. By the Spring of 2021, the number of ZTC courses compared to the previous year increased by 10 percent. Calculated in hard dollars, these numbers represent more than \$800,000 in textbook cost savings for students for the Spring 2021 semester alone.

## What is OER?

One of the biggest misconceptions about Open Education Resources is that the available learning material is hard to find, or limiting in some way. Archibald explains that OER can actually come in many forms. “Open Educational Resources are basically any teaching materials that are open licensed,” she explains. “Oftentimes when we talk about OER, we’re mainly talking about textbooks, but it can include things like PowerPoint slides, videos, or any materials that you might use to teach students.”

With the high cost of textbooks frequently cited as a barrier for community college students hoping to enroll in classes, OER is viewed as a crucial piece of the equity puzzle that most institutions of higher education face: how to level the playing field to make education accessible and affordable for everyone. “There are a few different studies showing that low-income students are more likely to not buy the textbook, and they often try to struggle through the course without it,” Archibald says.

As Orange Coast College continues to work toward providing students with the support they need to reach their academic goals, zero-cost learning materials are being added to a comprehensive overall equity strategy that includes two years of free tuition, laptop loans, mentorship, and basic needs resources such as the Pirates’ Cove Food Pantry.

## Getting Faculty Buy-In

When starting a conversation with faculty who are open to converting their college courses to a ZTC format, it’s important that the messenger be a trusted source who can offer a personal take. “Having a colleague faculty member act as the OER coordinator makes it easier for faculty to recognize the benefits and the ease of adoption of a zero cost textbook curriculum,” Archibald says.

Her own journey in adopting OER came from a belief that students shouldn’t have to pay to take exams or do their homework. “I thought ‘you know what? I have the summer off, I’m going to be adopting a new textbook anyway, let me look at all the different options,’” Archibald says. “After looking at the open educational resources that are available, I discovered that these textbooks are comparable and, in many ways, they’re superior.”

In fact, recent studies have confirmed that not only do faculty perceive OER to be as good, if not better, than traditional learning materials, but students also generally perform better when using OER compared to commercial textbooks.

“I found that a lot of my students were pleasantly surprised the first day of class when I told them ‘You’re not going to have to order an expensive textbook, you won’t miss assignments while waiting for it to ship to you. Everything you need is accessible right now,’” says Archibald. “They were very happy that I wasn’t forcing them to go out and buy a textbook. A textbook, I might add, that they’re not going to need in a few years.”



Another benefit of OER? Textbooks and other learning material can be edited in a timely manner, ensuring that they are completely up to date. “If a publisher is going to edit a book, they want to do that with a big batch of edits. It doesn’t make sense to reprint a whole new batch of textbooks every year just to change one word,” Archibald explains. “But with online resources, you can do that. You can go in and edit the webpage. That’s one thing that I really like — because it’s online, OER gets updated more often and therefore it reflects more recent changes in scholarship.”

## What’s Next

While Archibald has plans to keep building on her momentum, and hopes to eventually have 30 percent of all courses at the College qualify as ZTC, she’s also looking at potential funding for faculty at Coast to develop their own learning materials that can be offered as OER. This is especially important in specialized areas of the College that currently lack a wide array of traditional textbooks.

“An example is a welding course. Welding might have a textbook but there’s not necessarily an abundance of OER welding material that’s out there,” says Archibald. “So when you have courses that are more specialized or advanced, a lot of instructors have to rely on costly textbooks because the free option doesn’t exist.”

Archibald hopes to change all of that by connecting faculty with funding to create their own learning material, a push that she says is supported by various nonprofits and state agencies, including the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, which is offering \$30,000 grants to California community college faculty who are interested in creating OER.

This funding is important when considering how to shift from a traditional model that involves faculty writing and distributing textbooks through a publishing company. “The thing is that while OER is free for students and faculty to use, there are still costs involved. It’s not free to create,” explains Archibald. “I understand that faculty would want to be compensated for their labor. And that’s kind of where grant proposals come into play.”

State elected officials in California have also recognized the benefit of increasing OER resources for community college students, with the legislature recently approving Governor

Gavin Newsom’s \$115 million proposal for a Zero-Textbook Cost degree program. Such programs would essentially allow students to complete entire degree or certificate programs without paying anything for costly textbooks and other instructional materials.

“Currently at OCC, our Architecture program is the only one that offers a ZTC certificate, but I think other departments could do this as well,” says Archibald. “There’s a lot of untapped potential for OER at our College, and I’m excited to see what we can accomplish in the next few years.”

## OCC ONE OF 12 COLLEGES ACCEPTED INTO OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCES PARTNERSHIP

Orange Coast College recently announced that it is one of 12 schools selected to participate in the 2021-2022 OpenStax Institutional Partnership program at Rice University. As a participant in the network’s first-year program, OCC will work to actively build and execute a strategy that will encourage greater use of free, flexible textbooks among its faculty and students.

“OCC was chosen to participate in this strategic partnership with OpenStax by demonstrating an eagerness to drive adoption of open educational resources (OER),” says OCC OER Coordinator and history instructor Melissa Archibald.

Participants in the OpenStax Institutional Partner Program will receive individualized consulting from OpenStax and join a cohort of colleges and universities advocating widespread use of OER at their schools. On average, the institutions who join the network increase the number of students impacted by OER by 158 percent after completing the first year. To date, the program has resulted in more than 20 million dollars of additional savings for students from OER.

“Many of our faculty have embraced OER over the past few years, but this partnership with OpenStax represents a campus-wide effort to improve equity,” says Archibald. “Through OER adoption, we can eliminate financial and accessibility barriers and improve student success at OCC. I am thrilled to be a part of this mission and look forward to the transformations that are sure to take place on campus.”



# PASSING THE BATON:

## CARLOS JOHNSON AND ENZZO CANTARERO SHARE A DREAM, AND A PASSION FOR GIVING BACK

### From Mentee to Mentor

A year ago, Orange Coast College biochemistry major Carlos Johnson knew that the only way he was going to make it in college was if he took advantage of every resource available. Coming off a failed stint at a four-year university, Johnson was determined to turn things around and take his education seriously.

“My first time around [in college] what hindered me, to be frank, was a substance abuse issue,” Johnson explains. “That, combined with hanging around the wrong crowd and not being very mature, really held me back.”

So when he saw an email advertising OCC’s STEM Academy, Johnson didn’t think twice before signing up. That single decision changed his trajectory almost immediately.

Paired up with mentor Enzzo Cantarero, Johnson instantly had someone to hold him accountable, and offer support when needed. “Enzzo was great. He stayed on top of my schedule, provided me with resources, talked me through study strategies, texted me before exams to make sure I was awake and make sure I was ready. ... he was really helpful. And it was nice to have someone my age, a peer on a similar path, who was really accessible to me.”

OCC’s STEM Academy offers specialized support and resources for students in science, technology, engineering and math majors at the College. The program offers STEM counseling, research opportunities, free tutoring and a peer mentorship program that is part of a larger support network. Students who join the STEM Academy must maintain a 3.0 GPA, meet with a STEM counselor, and attend



Cantarero (left) and Johnson (right) were paired through OCC’s STEM Academy mentorship program



at least two STEM workshops per semester, among other requirements.

Both Johnson and Cantarero hope to someday become doctors, a shared dream that not only gave them something to bond over, but also provided Johnson with a positive role model to look up to. “I identify as a recovering addict, and I try to keep a strict program to keep the rest of my life on track,” he explains. “Surrounding myself with successful people, people who I want to emulate, is essential to my recovery and to being a better person in general.”

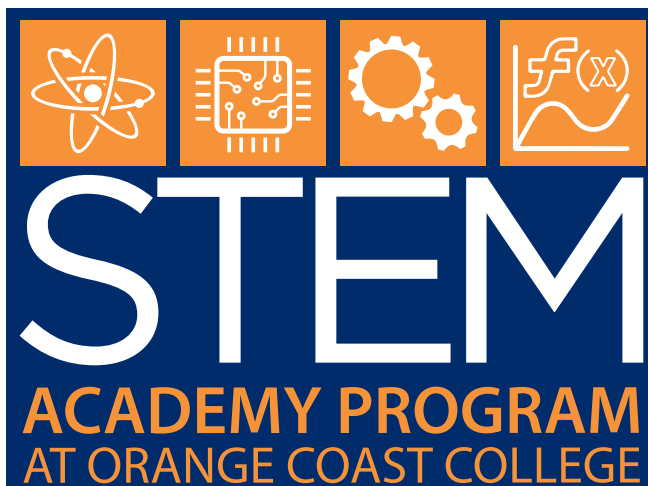
After two semesters as a mentee within the STEM Academy, Johnson felt compelled to sign up to be a mentor. For him, it’s an opportunity to say “thank you” to a program, and a mentor, who gave so much to him. “I really love the program,” he shares. “I want to give back and be a mentor so that I can help the next class of students the way that Enzzo helped me.”

## “The Best Community College”

Going to a community college was never supposed to be in the cards for Enzzo Cantarero. Growing up in Texas, Cantarero was a high achieving student raised in an environment where community colleges were looked down on. When he realized his best option was to attend a community college in order to pursue his goal of going to college in California, Cantarero resolved to finish his general education requirements and transfer to a four-year university as soon as possible.

But first, he had to find a community college to attend. And not just any college — the BEST community college. “I ended up at OCC after literally Googling ‘Best Community College in California,’” Cantarero explains. “That one Google search dictated the next few years of my life and led to me starting my higher education journey at Coast.”

It wasn’t long before Cantarero began to struggle with balancing 20-plus units a semester, in addition to working part time and participating in extracurricular activities. He received support from OCC’s Transfer Opportunity



Program (see story pg. 11), as well as from his professors, but it wasn’t until he was offered a position as a mentor in OCC’s first-ever cohort of STEM Academy student mentors that he found the perfect fit for his needs.

“From the beginning the mission of the STEM Academy was clear and that was to support, motivate, and empower STEM students,” he explains. “Even though I never

had the chance to be a mentee, the STEM academy staff and advisors served as my mentors throughout my time in the program. They held me accountable to my established goals, and provided me with a place to openly share my concerns, struggles and challenges.”

Cantarero soon found that serving as a mentor came naturally, and helping other students navigate their academic journeys was incredibly fulfilling. “To say my role as a student mentor was gratifying is an understatement,” he says. “Through the STEM Academy, and being a student mentor, I fortified my values and personal mission to empower and serve others.”

After two years as a student mentor, including one year as a lead mentor, Cantarero graduated from OCC with three associate’s degrees in biology, chemistry and natural sciences. He has been accepted at University of California, Berkeley, where he will major in biochemistry and molecular biology with the hopes of someday attending medical school. Like Johnson, his mentee, Cantarero is deeply grateful to OCC’s STEM Academy for providing a supportive space to help facilitate his goals.

“The communities, social networks, and relationships that were fostered during my time as a mentor continue to have an impact in both my personal and academic life,” Cantarero shares. “Throughout my time at OCC I’ve grown and developed so much and I am now a passionate advocate for the community college system. I have never once regretted my decision to attend OCC; the community and unequivocal support the campus has given me is unique and one that I wouldn’t have received otherwise.”

*The STEM Academy Program is fully funded by OCC’s \$2.7 million Title V Hispanic-Serving Institution grant (#P031S180011)*



# OCC'S TRANSFER OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM TURNS 30

*Orange Coast College's Transfer Center has hit a milestone — thirty years since the Center's Transfer Opportunity Program (TOP) welcomed its first cohort of students.*



OCC's TOP program, housed within the College's Transfer Center, was originally designed for students coming from historically underrepresented groups, including African-American, Latino, Native American, disabled and low-income populations. The program provides specialized resources and support for cohorts of between 90 and 100 incoming high school students each year, including counseling, course offerings focused on teaching students how to be successful in college, and events specifically tailored for parents, guardians and supporters.

"The state of California began to offer funding for transfer center pilot programs in the mid-1980s," says OCC TOP Coordinator Linda Bagatourian. "OCC wasn't part of that initial pilot program, but it did use College funds to start a small transfer program. The piloted programs were so effective, that the state eventually provided funding for ALL California community colleges, with a focus on helping students who were coming from underrepresented student populations. This is how OCC's TOP program was formed."

While OCC's TOP program is open to all eligible students, the Transfer Center makes an effort to tailor the program's services for underrepresented student populations. "Many of these students have additional barriers they face compared to their peers, including life circumstances that affect their educational goals," says Bagatourian. "We want students to know that we are looking holistically at the whole student, to provide support. We're with you until the end [of your time at OCC]."

The TOP program has been so successful over the past 30 years that staff often see multiple members of the same family coming into the program's pipeline. "That's always a nice affirmation that tells us we're doing something right," says Bagatourian.

Orange Coast College has a strong reputation for transferring students to four-year universities. For the second year in a row, OCC is the top community college in Orange County for combined transfers to the California State University and University of California public systems. "Being the top school in Orange County for transfer is clearly an effort that involves all parts of campus — faculty, staff, administrators ... everyone is involved in this effort," says Bagatourian.

As the College celebrates 30 years of helping students continue on their educational journeys, the Transfer Center will celebrate with a virtual event in early October to kick off the beginning of the transfer application season. Staff from OCC's Transfer Center will be on hand to highlight their resources and services and provide individualized counseling for different student populations. Representatives from OCC's Financial Wellness program also will be on hand to answer students' questions about financing their education.

For more information visit [www.orangecoastcollege.edu/transfer](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/transfer)



# OCC'S SHIPMASTER: BRAD AVERY LEAVES A LASTING LEGACY AT COAST



**A**fter more than 40 years of negotiating and advocating on behalf of Orange Coast College's sailing program, Brad Avery is watching a longtime dream become a reality — a premiere waterfront facility that offers both community sailing programs in addition to professional mariner training. Even though he retired in June 2020, Avery is still a Pirate through and through, and he has continued to broker deals and represent OCC as a consultant. Here, he offers the history behind OCC's Waterfront Campus, set to open its doors this fall.

**Q:** *This fall, OCC will debut its newly rebranded Waterfront Campus that includes an existing sailing center connected to a new professional mariner training center via a bridge. Can you provide a little background history on OCC's sailing hub in Newport Beach?*

**A:** When I started working at OCC in 1978 as a part-time sailing instructor, the [College's] sailing center was much smaller — there was storage for the rowing shells for the crew program, and there were docks and sail boats. There were probably two or three dozen sail boats,





all dinghies and small boats. But there was no classroom to teach in so we would teach on the lawn.

When California Proposition 13 passed in 1978, OCC was hit hard, and they told me that we were going to have to shut down sailing. All “nonessential courses” were going to be cut — I thought sailing was essential but no one else did! So, I thought “well, the boats aren’t used on the weekends because sailing courses are taught during the week as regular P.E. credit courses. Let’s start offering the courses on the weekends and charge fees,” ... basically we started a community education program in sailing.

And it took off. Before we knew it, the threat from Prop 13 had passed and we were two-tracking, with credit courses during the week and non-credit courses taught on the weekend as part of a community ed program. Classes were absolutely jammed all the time — we’d have a fully enrolled beginning sailing class with 40 people lined up outside, waiting to see who would drop out.

We realized we needed classrooms. Fortunately, I knew Dick and Betty Steele, who helped fund the building of OCC’s Harry & Grace Steele Children’s Center. They agreed to underwrite the majority of the initial sailing center project in 1988, which included two classrooms and an office on top of the crew buildings. Then in 1998 we worked with architect Keenan Smith to produce a design concept for a nautical library and more offices and classrooms, and we built that over the parking lot. When the second building was completed in 2000, we needed to come up with a new name. So, we branded the entire sailing facility the “Orange Coast College School of Sailing and Seamanship.”

**Q:** *OCC’s Waterfront Campus is located on what is considered prime oceanfront real estate in Newport Beach, including a more recent addition of land across the street from the original sailing center. How was that land acquired?*

**A:** In the early 2000s we were rolling along and things were going very well because the addition of the buildings really helped us professionalize the whole operation. At the same time, we were getting newer boats and making other improvements — in my mind, the reason for our success is that [the School of Sailing and Seamanship] was basically a public/private partnership. On the public side, we had the Coast Community College District helping to support the facility with accounting, risk management, and other soft costs. We also had a lot of private giving from the public, both in cash donations and boat donations. These revenue streams have been really important to the growth of the program.

A year after we officially opened the School of Sailing and Seamanship, I looked out my window and saw a sign saying that six lots were for sale across the street. I knew if we didn’t buy those lots, we were not going to be able to



grow further. We weren't going to ever be able to buy the Balboa Bay Club [to our south] or the Sea Scout Base [to our north].

So, we put in an offer to the owner of the land that was part cash, part donation. They turned down our offer and while we didn't give up, we pulled in our horns. And then one day the Orange County Sanitation District called us because they needed to build a new pump station near us, and wanted to place it underneath our facility. I said, "Well, what's in it for us?" and they replied, "Oh, we'll pay you for it. We'll give you something for the land."

I told them I didn't think the [Coast Community College] District would go for it. I said "You should really look at those lots across the street." Turns out, they already had, but they didn't need six lots, they only needed one. So, I told them "Why don't we form a partnership? You buy the lots, keep one, and we'll buy the others from you and build our facility." They said they'd think about it, because they were open to helping another public agency find a solution to a problem that would benefit the community.

From there the Coast District developed a Memorandum of Understanding basically outlining the agreement with the

OC Sanitation District. The expectation was that this would take many years, because [the Sanitation District] wanted to control the land while they were planning and building their project. This worked out to our benefit because we didn't really have the money to build at the time.

**Q:** *It's a pretty bold move to make a deal without knowing how you were going to fund it! How did OCC raise the money to eventually fund the construction of a new Professional Mariner Training Center?*

**A:** I knew the only way we were ever going to be able to [expand our current facility] was with a bond issue. We got lucky in that conditions in the state for bond issues changed dramatically around that same time, and in our favor. The Coast District first brought forward Measure C, which voters approved in 2002, and then Measure M, which passed in 2012. Again, we certainly would not have been successful in this endeavor without the horsepower of the District, and the administrators at OCC, including [Vice President of Administrative Services Rich Page] as well as the eight or nine presidents that I worked with. Everybody has always supported the sailing and professional mariner program, and that has made all the difference.





**Q:** *So the stars all aligned, and OCC had the land and the funding to expand its sailing hub. How was the idea of a professional mariner training center first conceived? Was there a demand for a facility like this in the community?*

**A:** At the time that all these pieces were falling into place I was focused on capturing the land, but I didn't know exactly what we wanted to do. I did know, however, that we needed another track of our program for students that wanted a career in the maritime industry because several owners of large yachts in Newport Beach had approached me over the years looking for deckhands and ship mechanics ... basically a crew. We would recommend kids out of our program and that worked out really well. I thought how great it would be for a college kid interested in sailing, or a maritime career, to enroll in a program that would give them a comprehensive maritime education. Very quickly, what we could do came into view.

We already had this niche because we had infrastructure to teach seamanship. We teach the theory in the classroom and then say "okay, now let's go down to the boats and practice what we've been talking about, and get on the boats." That connectivity is really important for students to learn and be inspired.

**Q:** *One of the most visible changes to the area of Pacific Coast Highway where OCC's Waterfront Campus is located is the addition of a skyway bridge connecting the original sailing hub to the new Professional Mariner Training Center. Was it difficult to get the approvals needed to build a bridge across such a busy highway?*

**A:** Well, I thought it was going to be. My original thought was we could never get a bridge approved. I called Don Webb, a city council member at the time and the former director of public works for the city of Newport Beach. He came out and we stood in the driveway to our facility on Pacific Coast Highway, with cars whizzing by. I said, "We think we've got this potential expansion of our facility across the street. But we would need a signal from the city to get students back and forth." And he goes, "Well, we'd never give you a signal. But you could build a bridge." He explained that as long as we built to California Department of Transportation specifications, it wouldn't be too big of a hurdle to get a bridge connecting our two facilities. And of course, he was right.

That really lit me up — I never liked the idea of a crosswalk, even with a signal, because it's too dangerous for students to be going back and forth.

**Q:** *Even though OCC's main campus and its Waterfront Campus are only a few miles away from each other, there are challenges to being geographically dispersed. Do you think the addition of a Professional Mariner Training Center helps bring the Waterfront Campus into the fold of the campus at large?*

**A:** Absolutely. And I credit [OCC President Angelica Suarez] for leading the charge on a rebrand [of the School of Sailing and Seamanship.] It's really important because we are ready to take this next step in creating a maritime campus. It's a small maritime campus, but it's a campus nonetheless. We talked about having student services right there, so that when someone walks in, we'll have the information and resources they need. We'll have a navigation center for them so that when they say "I want to be a boat captain," or "I want to work on a tugboat, how do I get there" we can help them. Someday it's going to end up being a small, unique campus within the Coast Community College District..

**Q:** *How do you think OCC's Waterfront Campus benefits the local community in Newport Beach? And vice versa?*

**A:** We are the sole source of nonprofit community boating in Newport Beach. We provide low fees and accessible sailing. You can sign up for sailing lessons at a private club and spend a lot of money. Or you can come to OCC's Waterfront Campus and get the same thing at a significantly reduced cost. That accessibility component plays a big part in our success. For many of our biggest donors, the idea of making boating education accessible for everyone is compelling. We have a lot of talented instructors and we've got great facilities. During the summer, we're getting children on the water ages seven and up through our sailing camps.

Occasionally, people will ask me "how do we start a sailing center like yours?" and I respond "I don't know." It's like, how did the earth get to be perfect in the solar system where it sustains life? We are fortunate to be in a great city where people love what we do. Many Newport Beach residents love boating. We have 1,200 homes on the water and every one of them has a boat, and every one of them

thinks we are great because we taught their kids to sail or they came over and learned navigation from us. There's a lot of power in that. People give to programs that they are interested in and that inspire students.

**Q:** *You retired in June 2020, after 42 years at OCC and during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Was it hard to leave this place where you've spent so much of your life? In what ways do you stay connected to OCC's sailing and boating program?*

**A:** Part of my decision to retire was that I knew there was a chance I was going to become the Mayor of Newport Beach [after being elected to city council in 2016.] I had a great career [at OCC] and so I set a retirement date of June 30, 2020.

When June 30 rolled around, I stayed late one night and cleaned out my office, taking about three hours to load up my pickup truck. That was hard to do. I had wrapped up my identity in this place, and made so many connections over the years. But my father always told me, "The institution doesn't care about you and it can't afford to." And that makes sense intellectually. Institutions need to survive, they've got their policies and their rules, and it just keeps running. But, it's hard to leave when you've invested so much.

For most of my career, I was really concerned with bringing in money because I knew if we couldn't pay our bills and our salaries, we'd be toast. And, in Orange County, there was no reason why we couldn't be successful if we're

doing our job. So, in addition to managing the program, my job as director of OCC's sailing program became about 50 percent handling boat donations and talking to yacht brokers. I would also act as the agent for the Foundation, with any offers going through that office and the Foundation's Board of Directors. All of the money that we make from boat donations goes right back into the program and its endowment. After I retired, the Foundation hired me back as a consultant, and now I'm only focused on the boat donations side of things.

**Q:** *In many ways, OCC's Waterfront Campus is your legacy at Coast. Do you feel a sense of satisfaction as you watch this 20-year project come to fruition? And as you close out your 40-plus year career at the College?*

**A:** OCC is very special. When I first enrolled as a student at the College in 1973, it looked a lot different. It's been great to see all the diversity on campus and see it change over the years. We're giving students opportunities and we're absolutely making lives better. We're giving people skills to have a professional niche in life.

I also feel lucky that the program was so supported through the decades. Coast is a special place and I know it's been really hard the last couple of years for everybody, but there's a culture here that's hard to describe. Working at the College is like being part of a family. Plus, it was a beautiful place to work. If you can't be happy working at Orange Coast College, where can you be happy?



## WATERFRONT CAMPUS

**T**he Orange Coast College Waterfront Campus is one of a kind, boasting a state-of-the-art maritime training facility and a waterfront facility with boats ranging from 9-92 feet. The Waterfront Campus is home to programs including OCC's nationally recognized intercollegiate Crew teams, the School of Sailing and Seamanship — one of the largest community boating programs in the nation, an accredited certificate and associate's degree program for Professional Mariners, and continuing education opportunities for career mariners. For more information visit [waterfront.orangecoastcollege.edu/programs/learning.html](http://waterfront.orangecoastcollege.edu/programs/learning.html)





## OCC Conductor, Dr. Mathew Ward

# ORANGE COAST COLLEGE SYMPHONY CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF PERFORMING, WELCOMES NEW CONDUCTOR



**T**he Orange Coast College Symphony announced it will have a new conductor at the helm as the College embarks on a phased return to campus in Fall 2021.

OCC has hired Dr. Mathew Ward to lead its prestigious community performing group, which has been part of the Costa Mesa campus for 60 years.

Dr. Ward is a Southern California native who earned degrees in violin and conducting from the Longy School of Music in Boston and Louisiana State University. He previously has performed as a violinist with organizations such as the Boston Civic Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic and the San Diego City Ballet Symphony. In 2010 he toured with La Primavera Symphony throughout Italy as concertmaster, and participated in the Australian International Music Festival, where the orchestra was awarded a silver medal for a performance in the Sydney Opera House.

In addition to leading the OCC Symphony, Dr. Ward will concurrently serve as the director of the Symphonia and Strings Program at the California School of the Arts, and interim music director for Saddleback College's orchestra in Spring 2022.

"We recognized immediately that Dr. Ward would be a kindred spirit who shared our passion for community music-making, and we're thrilled to welcome him to the

OCC Music family," says Music Department Chair Eliza Rubenstein.

Orange Coast College's Symphony is composed of students, community members, and professional musicians who typically perform between four and six times per year. The Symphony paused in-person performances due to the global pandemic caused by COVID-19, but has continued to perform in a virtual format, offering its first concert online during the 2020-2021 academic year. The OCC Symphony plans to resume in-person rehearsals and performances for the 2021-2022 school year.

"As a young musician, the community colleges in Southern California served as a springboard for my professional trajectory that was unbeknownst to me at the time," says Dr. Ward. "It is particularly meaningful to join the accomplished faculty at OCC who continue to nourish the arts in our community."

Currently, the OCC Symphony is seeking instrumentalists of all ages to audition for its upcoming 60th season. Musicians who are interested in auditioning can find more info on the OCC Music department's website at [www.orangecoastcollege.edu/music](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/music)

# MISSION TO MARS

## *OCC Alum Alexandra Coultrup Joins a Crew of Six on a Simulated Trip to the Red Planet*



Orange Coast College alumni Alexandra Coultrup did not, as a little girl, find herself drawn to the stars. She did not gaze at the Milky Way, imagining that someday she would journey to distant planets. And yet outer space, and more specifically, the highly complex systems and technology that make human spaceflight possible, has captured Coultrup's attention, igniting a passion that has led her down an unexpected career path, and a gratifying personal journey.

When Coultrup began her higher education at Coast in 2012, she chose aviation science as her major, hoping to someday become a commercial airline pilot. One class changed her plans. "One of the classes I took at OCC was called 'Introduction to Human Factors and Crew Resource Management.' The professor was an adjunct at the time, and he was also a professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University," she explains. "It was during that class that I realized maybe I don't need to be the pilot ... maybe I want to be the person who designs systems to keep the pilots safe."

Designing systems with the goal of promoting safety and ease of use within engineered structures is more broadly referred to as "human factors and ergonomics," a scientific discipline that combines many different disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, industrial design, user

experience, and more. The goal? To optimize both human well being and overall system performance in any number of industries, including those in transportation, medicine, agriculture, technology, and consumer product design.

"In the modern world, we're so surrounded by devices and tools we can use that really separate us from our physical surroundings in many ways, and it's easy for us to be like, 'It's all invented. The problems are all solved,'" Coultrup explains. "But I learned from that class at OCC that the problems are not all solved, and we still have many weaknesses and limitations as human beings. I got excited about human factors because I realized that it was a way to help people."

The decision to switch her career plans led Coultrup to apply for transfer to Florida Institute of Technology, where she received a partial scholarship to row for women's crew, and where she completed a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication and Journalism and, later, a master's of science degree in Aviation Human Factors. From there, it was an easy jump to switch her focus from traditional aviation to commercial space travel.

"Florida Tech is located on what is commonly referred to as the 'Space Coast.' By the time I started my master's program, all of my friends were working in the space



exploration industry. They're working at NASA and at commercial space companies, building rockets and cutting-edge space hardware. And I get to step out onto my driveway and watch the rocket launches whenever I want," she says. "I started thinking to myself, 'I'm sure astronauts have needs and requirements in human factors. And I'm sure there's many technological and psychological requirements for the design of the space station and for future space missions.'"

## Mars Research Station

After graduating with her master's degree in 2019 from Florida Tech — as well as completing certificates in Aeronautical Space Engineering and Global Commercial Space Programs from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and International Space University — Coultrup moved to Washington D.C. to work for Nanoracks, a private aerospace company that has the distinction of being the first company to commercialize the International Space Station and currently is working toward creating privately owned commercial space stations.

But her interests in human factors, and a desire to someday apply for a doctoral program in human factors with an emphasis in space psychology, spurred Coultrup last year to apply to be part of an analog mission with a team of her peers at the Mars Desert Research Station (MDRS) in Utah, which is owned and operated by the nonprofit The Mars Society. "There's a handful of these analog stations at different places around the world. The goal of an analog mission is to be analogous to the experience of living in space," she says. "Obviously, we cannot perfectly replicate it here on earth, but each analog research station has a different level of realism to it, different levels of fidelity."

While the MDRS is a relatively low fidelity station, perfect for first timers, it does offer the type of isolation and geography ideal for simulating a Martian environment. Coultrup was part of a crew of six, officially titled "Crew 245" but also self-dubbed "Team Patamars" after a type

of historical sailing vessel once used for long voyages. The crew included a mix of graduate students and young professionals with diverse backgrounds. "We had three aerospace engineers, a biologist, a geologist, and myself with a human factors and journalism background. It was a really healthy mix."

The team conducted several experiments over the course of their two-week stay at MDRS, making sure to closely follow protocols that would replicate real space practices as closely as possible. "A lot of the rigor that comes from pretending you're on Mars, and really feeling like you're actually immersed in a real space mission, we had to intentionally build into our processes," Coultrup explains. "For example, we had our simulated space suits, so we would not go outdoors without suiting up. And we would pause for 30 or 40 minutes for our 'decompression time' for the change in atmospheric pressure. There were all of these rules that we had to abide by."

Coultrup's own research focused on her crewmates' daily routines and preferences for leadership styles. She also assisted other crew members with their research, including geo-mapping rock formations, soil sampling and hydroponic gardening. Much of this research was done while using heavy extravehicular activity (EVA) space suits, adding an element of realism that is crucial to replicating the challenges that may face future space travelers. "For me, studying human factors, I took notes about range of motion and how challenging it was to sit down and stand up when sampling the soil. I ended up providing recommendations for perhaps a different tool that we might use for reaching down to the soil if our suits were to be even bulkier with a full life support system," she says.

For Coultrup, one of the bigger surprises was how physically taxing it was to maneuver while wearing an EVA suit. "I was going on a two- or three-hour hike carrying 35 to 40 pounds of gear. It was a lot. The suit had a whole fan and air circulation system built into it, in addition to its structure, which was pretty heavy," she explains. "I thought 'Okay, well, it's just a pretend mission. How tired will I be?' I

was genuinely surprised by how physically exhausting it was.”

As for her own research, Coultrup learned that the crew’s routines were significantly altered in an analog environment. “I basically learned that people predicted they would keep their schedules on Earth pretty well on the station, and we definitely didn’t,” she says.

## Future Missions

Coultrup hopes to apply for future research missions with the same crew, possibly for longer periods of time and in even more remote locations. “Other stations around the world are completely enclosed, completely airtight, even such that there are no windows to the outside lighting from the sun. Instead, artificial lighting sets crews on the cycle of a Mars day rather than the 24-hour Earth day” she says. “There are two stations in Antarctica — Concordia Station and McMurdo Station — they’re isolated and small. People go there for a long duration and it is an extreme environment. And there’s one on a mountaintop in Hawaii, where the rough terrain simulates what scientists

hypothesize some geologic features on Mars would look like.”

For now, Coultrup is happy to have been given the opportunity to further her research interests, and to be a small, but important, part of the efforts that will someday send human beings on missions to Mars and beyond. “If I can do scientific research that might one day help someone have a happier day when they’re out in space, or that might one day help someone complete a physically challenging task in a way that doesn’t hurt themselves or others, and doesn’t result in a multi-billion dollar accident, then I will have accomplished my goals,” she says.

As for one day traveling to space for real? Coultrup hasn’t ruled it out. “My answer to that question changes every day,” she says. “One to two hundred years from now, people are going to be living on Mars permanently, intending to live out their natural lives there. They will have their own whole new culture that’s separate from the culture of Earth. For now, though, going into space is very dangerous. So I don’t know if I would want to go into space for a long duration. But, I might want to go for a short time ... probably.”





## OCC News

### OCC STUDENTS PARTNER WITH LOCAL NONPROFIT TO BUILDING HOMES FOR ARMENIAN EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

Students enrolled in Orange Coast College's Architecture A158 BIM Project Integration course this past summer gained valuable hands-on experience while helping families half a world away who are still suffering more than 30 years after a devastating earthquake in Armenia.

In December 1988 the Spitak earthquake killed approximately 50,000 Armenians and left more than half a million without homes. Governments around the world quickly rallied to offer assistance to the battered USSR nation, which was in the middle of a freezing winter. Shipping containers filled with rescue equipment, food and water, and other aid items arrived in the country and were quickly repurposed into temporary housing units for families who had nowhere to go. Today, more than 4,000 families remain in these temporary housing containers (Domiks), including some 2,400 children.



Orange Coast College's architecture program partnered with the Armenian Relief and Development Association (ARDA) as well as architecture firm Form Found Design, Walter P. Moore Engineering, and Piur Panels to provide

a solution to the temporary housing crisis in Armenia. Utilizing a recently acquired FrameCad Machine — which forms, punches, labels, and cuts custom, steel studs for rapid manufacturing of homes — students enrolled in the College's BIM Project Integration course worked to create cost effective, efficient and dignified housing structures for Armenian families in need.

"The class was structured more like a research seminar than a traditional community college class, and was built around the FrameCad machine," says instructor Joseph Sarafian. "The students developed the construction details for the home and began construction of the prototype. Eventually, the home will be manufactured and assembled locally in Los Angeles, then shipped in panels to Armenia."

## OCC News

### OCC STUDENT THIEN NGUYEN SELECTED AS JACK KENT COOKE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

This year's crop of exceptional college students selected as Jack Kent Cooke Scholars includes Orange Coast College transfer student Thien Nguyen. Nguyen, who was notified in early May that she had been selected as a recipient of the prestigious Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship for 2021, acknowledges that the award is personally life-changing. "Without a JKC scholarship, I cannot go to the



school of my choice," says Nguyen.

A total of 72 scholarship recipients were chosen by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation from more than 1,300 applicants representing 370 community colleges

across the United States. The highly competitive national transfer scholarship provides selected students with up to \$40,000 a year to complete their bachelor's degrees, as well as additional funds for graduate school. Scholarship

recipients are selected based on their academic ability and achievement, financial need, persistence, and leadership.

“OCC typically has a few finalists in any year when our students apply to the JKCF Scholarships, but we’ve only had about a dozen actually win the awards,” says Honors Program Coordinator Teresa Scarbrough. “Every one of our winners has been a Phi Theta Kappa member and most have been enrolled in our Honors Program as well.”

Nguyen majored in biochemistry at OCC, and was accepted to several prestigious schools such as University of California, Berkeley and UC Irvine. She will attend UCLA in the fall, and major in Biochemistry, with the eventual goal of becoming a physician scientist, specializing in cancer research. “Thien impressed me from the first moment we met. She’s incredibly sharp, a risk-taker, and isn’t afraid to speak up,” says Scarbrough.

During the Spring 2021 semester, Nguyen, along with three classmates, participated in OCC’s Giles T. Brown

Research Symposium with a presentation titled “Factors in Preventing ADHD in Offspring.” Her research cohort also was given the chance to present at the 21st Annual UCI Community College Honors Research Conference in March.

As a Jack Kent Cooke Scholar, Nguyen will have access to comprehensive educational advising to help guide her through the process of transitioning to a four-year college and preparing for her future career. She also will receive opportunities for internships, study abroad, and graduate school funding, as well as connection to a network of Cooke Scholars and Alumni.

“For me, it’s important to belong to a community where I can learn, grow, and surround myself with highly motivated, hard-working students who have the same vision as me: excelling in whatever they are trying to do and using their ability to address pressing social needs,” says Nguyen. “I believe JKC will help maximize my potential, so I can contribute more to society in the future.”

## OCC News ORANGE COAST COLLEGE PROFESSOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDED GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIP

Orange Coast College photography professor Richard Kraft has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for film/video. Kraft is the only full-time community college professor to be awarded the prestigious fellowship in 2021, which offers financial support to artists and scholars from a wide range of backgrounds and fields of study.

Guggenheim Fellowships are awarded annually through the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, to support “exceptional individuals in pursuit of scholarship in any field of knowledge and creation in any art form, under the freest possible conditions,” according to the foundation’s website. Fellows are chosen through a rigorous peer-review process.

“For artists, a Guggenheim Fellowship is an extraordinary

endorsement,” says Kraft. “In addition to the substantial financial support that comes with the fellowship, it is a recognition for work already made and, crucially, what is still to come.”



The 184 Fellows for 2021 include professors from 73 institutions of higher education, including Ivy League behemoths Yale, Dartmouth, Columbia and Princeton, as well as top-rated research institutions such as a University of Chicago, Stanford and University of California, Berkeley. This year’s Fellows range in age from 31-85, and nearly one third are independent

working artists with no full-time college or university affiliation.

“A Guggenheim Fellowship has always been meaningful, but this year we know it will be a lifeline for many of the



new Fellows at a time of great hardship, a survival tool as well as a creative one,” said Edward Hirsch, president of the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Kraft is a British born artist whose multidisciplinary works engage many spheres of inquiry (language, literature, history, and popular culture) and incorporate a variety of media (film, collage, photography, drawing, and performance). This diversity of interests and methods is united in acts of alteration and transformation of the

everyday world, and in the exploration of simultaneity, multiplicity and indeterminacy.

Kraft’s work has been widely exhibited at museums, galleries, and university spaces. He is the author of several artist’s books and chapbooks, and the co-editor of “John Cage’s Diary: How to Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse),” “Marcel Broodthaers: My Ogre Book, Shadow Theater, Midnight,” and “Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Photostats.

**OCC News**

## OCC PHI THETA KAPPA CHAPTER RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD

Orange Coast College’s Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) honor society chapter received several recognition awards at the organization’s annual convention in April, and was recognized as one of the organization’s “Top 100 Chapters” among nearly 1,300 chapters internationally.

OCC’s Beta Mu Alpha chapter also took home several Hallmark Awards, including a Distinguished Honors In Action Project award and a Distinguished Officer Team award.



“I’m so proud of our PTK chapter this year that I can’t put into words what I’m feeling. Our chapter is among the best in the world this year,” says Academic Honors Office Coordinator Teresa Scarbrough.

Acceptance to PTK membership requires a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher and at least 12 units of college coursework completed at the associate level. After joining, the member is required to maintain a GPA at or above 3.0 and to uphold the society’s ethical standards.

PTK chapters across the globe are invited to apply for Hallmark Awards annually, and the criteria for each award is rigorous. This year, more than 1,900 applications were submitted for Hallmark awards.

“We have been a five-star chapter for the past three years. Five-Star Chapter status is the highest achievement for a chapter’s overall performance over the course of the preceding year,” explains Scarbrough. “To reach this status, we have to meet requirements that include

holding regular chapter meetings, making an effort to recruit new members, engaging in collaborative activities with other chapters in our region, attending conferences and conventions, submitting applications for at least

three Hallmark Awards, and participating in both major PTK programs: Honors in Action and the College Project.”

Members of PTK chapters are recognized for their collective

scholarly research, as well as their efforts to give back to their campus community. Scarbrough emphasizes how much planning and effort goes into the volunteer work of PTK members each year. “When students write their transfer application essays, they might say, ‘I participated in a car wash with my PTK chapter’ — that doesn’t say much and it can sound trivial. But when their essay explains that they were responsible for the training, scheduling, and safety of 15 volunteers who worked together to raise over \$3,000 for scholarship awards — now that’s something quite different.”

Membership in PTK and other honor societies at OCC not only help students in their transfer application process, but also to learn and build upon many valuable skills. “Being recognized is certainly beneficial to members who actively participate in award-winning work,” says Scarbrough. “However, they also acquire leadership and organizational skills, an awareness of the complexities involved in planning and executing events, an appreciation for the kinds of legal issues can arise from activities.



# COACHES CORNER:

## HEAD BASEBALL COACH NATE JOHNSON TALKS ABOUT THE 15 DAYS THAT FOREVER CHANGED THE WORLD OF BASEBALL AT COAST *By Tony Altobelli*

**T**here was sadness, there was anger, there was confusion ... and yes, there was even a remarkable glimpse of human spirit and kindness thrown into the hearts of the Pirate Baseball family following the loss of longtime head coach John Altobelli, who died on Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020 in a helicopter crash, along with his wife, Keri, daughter Alyssa, and six others, including Los Angeles Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant.

While the world was turned upside down for everyone involved, there were still several unanswered questions that needed to be answered moments following the tragedy. And, thrown into the mix was a then-29-year-old assistant coach who quickly had to become the new face of his team and OCC's baseball community, as well as the leader of a team grieving and emotionally shattered.

Here is a candid, one-on-one interview with new OCC head baseball coach Nate Johnson, who talks about those two weeks that no one will ever forget.

**SATURDAY, JAN. 25, 2020** — *It was the final preparation for the upcoming 2020 season for the defending state-champion Pirates, who brought back many key players and brought in several standout newcomers in the hopes of returning to the State Final Four for the fourth time in seven seasons.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — We had the parents out and played in our final intersquad before starting the season up. It was our last calm weekend before the start of the semester and the start of the season. I got to the field that morning around 7 a.m. and of course, Alto was there ahead of me. We talked about the lineups for both teams and who we wanted to see do something impactful that day ... then we talked about our Sunday plans. I told him I didn't have any major plans and he talked about going with Alyssa to Calabasas for a basketball tournament, and he was excited about going with Kobe on a helicopter to the tournament. We also talked about a potential internship for [his older daughter] Lexi with Scott Boras and he thought that was going to happen, so he was really excited about that.



It was already “Opening Weekend” for most teams so the day before, we went to Golden West and saw them play, and talked to [soon-to-be-retired head coach Bert Villareal]. Alto told him how jealous he was that he was going to retire after the season. From there, I went to check out the Cypress/Long Beach game and I texted Alto about that game and about our intersquad. His last text to me was about a home run that Garret Barto hit, and how nice it was to see that! I told him to have a great time with Kobe and have fun on the helicopter.

**SUNDAY, JAN. 26** — *The calm before the storm for every coach at this level. It was the final Sunday before the start of the baseball season and the final Sunday before the start of the school year. A nice, relaxing, peaceful Sunday ... until it wasn't.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — I really didn't have any plans that Sunday. [Coach Johnson's wife] Jonai and I got up that morning and didn't do a whole lot. It was a very gloomy day and we were just making breakfast and hanging out. I received a text from one of my friends and it said, “Did you see what happened with Kobe?? His helicopter crashed.” Right then, my heart sunk because I kind of knew what that meant, so I quickly tried to find it on the news and I tried to call Alto like 5-6 times, but they all went to voicemail. My first hope was that my calls were going to voicemail because everyone was trying to reach him and his line was busy. Then, players started texting me and I began to get calls from coaches Tim Matz and Jeff Piaskowski. All I wanted was my mind to wrap around what was going on. I tried to call Lexi and she didn't pick up. I then called [Coach Altobelli's son] J.J. and he kind of confirmed it when he said, “They're all gone.” At first, I wasn't sure what “All” meant?? Was everyone on that helicopter? Then he told me it was Alto, K and Alyssa.

From there, it was a bit of a blur, but I wanted to get everyone together so I called team captain Michael Ryhlick and had him reach out to all the players and get them to the field. I just wanted to open the field up and get the guys there and just try and figure things out. Word started getting out to the alumni and to the rest of the campus, and by the time I got there, a good chunk of the team was already there. By the time I arrived, I probably had 15-20 more texts from others reaching out to me. Within 30 minutes to an hour, everyone was

there, and with parents and alumni and others there were probably 300 people at the field. If I could describe the mood, it would be confusion and devastation.

When I got there and saw everyone for the first time, that's when it really hit me ... holy [expletive] ... I'm now the head coach. I needed to gather my thoughts and I went from worrying about me to worrying about everyone else. Before, I was the guy NEXT to Alto ... now I've got 40 guys looking at me. Pretty soon I saw reporters coming and they were starting to talk to the players and I didn't want that so I told them to talk to me. I told the reporters that the person I'd admired and everyone admired had passed away with Kobe. I wanted to make sure everyone knew there were others on that chopper. Every interview I did, somehow, I didn't cry.

By the time I left the field, it was dark. I drove home, picked up some food and it really hadn't hit me fully yet. I just sat around and answered as many texts as I could. There were so many messages and voicemails that I received while I was at the field, but I just kept my phone in my pocket to take care of my guys. There were already several media requests from TV stations, radio stations and newspapers. It was nonstop.

**MONDAY, JAN. 27** — *The entire world had heard about Sunday's tragedy and dozens of media outlets made their way to OCC to get comments from anyone who would talk. In addition to that firestorm ... it was also the first day of school with over 20,000 students on campus, trying to figure out where to go, where to park, etc. It was a firestorm and Johnson was right in the middle of things.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — There were so many things coming at me at once. I was trying to prepare for the season opener, I was trying to get the players back to a place mentally where they could even play. They were grieving, I was grieving, our coaches were grieving, people at school were grieving ... oh and it's also the first day of school!

Monday was definitely the hardest day for all of us. I didn't sleep much the night before and as soon as I woke up, it all hit me again. I was up at 4 a.m. and I knew I had a meeting with [OCC Dean of Kinesiology/Athletics] Michael Sutliff and [Athletic Director] Jason Kehler that morning. I just laid in bed and cried. As I was walking to

the baseball office, it REALLY hit me ... Alto wasn't gonna be there. He always greeted us with something other than just "hello" ... usually it was some smartass-type of greeting. I cried again when I got to the office. I got there early to gather myself as much as possible because there were so many unknowns at that point. I went to the meeting and asked what classes of Alto's I would be taking over and they told me to just worry about the baseball team. They would get them covered and I should just focus on the team. I got through the meeting and went back to the office ... now what? Media people were calling me left and right ... I should have been working out a practice plan for the day, then, someone else would call or text me. Monday was absolutely a cluster. We had some media people come out to practice and I know we did some hitting, but other than that, I don't remember too much. This definitely wasn't the situation I had hoped for when I dreamed about becoming a head coach.

**TUESDAY, JAN. 28** — *Season Opener. Full-fledged media storm throughout that entire morning and an anticipated crowd of several thousand people in attendance for the 2020 opener against Southwestern College.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — I was nervous beyond belief. Again, I was up at 4 a.m. I had to do a morning interview with CNN and I was at the office by around 5 a.m. ... way earlier than I wanted to be. I went home and hung out before going back to the office at 7 a.m. I had to prioritize the morning. I made sure I had a lineup, I jotted down a few ideas and I began to get the flags up around the field. Alto was definitely a "flag guy" and he used to joke with me, "As soon as you take over, I know you won't be doing all these flags" but I got them all up. It took me FOREVER as far as getting the separation of each one just right. John would usually get them up on Saturday and that was never my job. Getting them to all fly right — that took the biggest chunk of my morning!

Then people from OCC came by to ask me what they could do as far as where we were putting Alto's family, where to put the media, etc. Then, the eligibility stuff came in and [Athletic Compliance Specialist] Ashley Rippeon came in and worked her magic to get that done. The morning moved by so fast, but I really didn't get a lot done with all of the requests. The flags and lineup were just about it!

Once the players got there, I really wanted it to feel as "normal" as possible, which was impossible with all of the cameras around. I'm not even sure if I saw batting practice or not. Southwestern showed up and they were all very compassionate and sympathetic to what we were all dealing with. Lexi and J.J. showed up around batting practice time and we made sure to move the cameras away and I let them in the office so they could just cry. I gave J.J. one of Alto's old jerseys and gave Lexi her old bat-girl jersey. Then, they saw the memorial area behind the press box for the first time. I just let them do their thing and we put jerseys and flowers down over where K and Alyssa would normally sit.

From there, we just tried to get in a baseball game. I remember giving my speech before the game, but I have no idea what I said. The game started and for the first 4-5 innings, it was a total whirlwind. Fortunately, I knew there wouldn't be too much strategy in those first few innings so that was good. For the first time, I felt like I could take a breath and just coach a baseball game. The alumni were coming into the dugout and giving me hugs and I'd run down and hug Lexi over and over so I wasn't really doing a whole lot of coaching early on. You could tell we were tight and our guys were trying to do too much. I remember telling them all to relax and go have some fun, "Nothing is going to get accomplished if you're uptight. Make routine plays and hit the ball hard all over the field." As the game went on, we all relaxed a bit and started playing much better and we got back into the game. It was getting dark and I didn't want to suspend the game ... I just wanted the first game to end. But we all decided to hold the game in the ninth and finish it down at SWC. The finality of that first game without John hit me as we were saying goodbye to their coaches after the game. I was mentally and physically exhausted.

**WEDNESDAY, JAN. 29** — *OCC at Long Beach. Life had to go on for Johnson and the Pirates as they quickly regrouped from the exhausting opening day with a road game at Long Beach City College.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — When we got to Long Beach, our players were in great spirits. They were laughing and loose and ready to go. Then, Long Beach had a pregame ceremony honoring Alto. It was a nice gesture and we were all appreciative of the thoughts, but for our guys, it was like getting a Band-Aid ripped off of a painful scab



and with each road game we had, the Band-Aid kept getting ripped off over and over again. We didn't play well and lost 14-5. Lexi pointed out to me afterwards that both of those numbers were Alto's number and Alyssa's number which made the loss a little less painful. The media continued to ask for requests and all I wanted to do was spend more time in the office, helping our team get better.

**THURSDAY/FRIDAY, JAN. 30/31** — *Fortunately for the Pirates, there were no games scheduled those two days, but the gas tanks were empty for everyone involved ... from the players, to the coaches and the administrators ... but especially Johnson.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — I was so tired by then ... I had no emotion left. I was just trying to make it through each day. It would take me three hours to make a practice plan because I was so distracted. To be honest, I have no idea what we even did during those two off-days. I know we practiced, but on what, I'm not sure. It was all about just trying to make it through the week.

**SATURDAY, FEB. 1** — *OCC at Mt. San Antonio — Another road game ... another nice, but draining special ceremony.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — I remember when we got to our dugout at Mt. SAC, there was a signed jersey from their team hanging there, which was a very kind gesture. I was really hoping that was going to be it, but they wanted to say a few words before the game and do a moment of silence. I'm sure our players were completely worn out by all of this by then.

We just wanted to get that first "W" out of the way and we really played a much better game overall, but we just came up a little bit short and lost 5-3. When I got home from that game, I FINALLY crashed and refused to look at my phone for the rest of the night. Best night of sleep I'd had all week.

**TUESDAY, FEB. 4** — Palomar at OCC. It was the first home game since the season opener and the Pirates made sure to have as "normal" of a game as they could. The media had moved on for the most part and it was just a nice, regular non-conference baseball game in front of a regular-sized crowd.

**COACH JOHNSON** — We still hadn't won yet and I really wanted to get a win for our guys. As the new head coach, I felt like it rested on my shoulders and the wins and losses were starting to get in my head. If I kept losing, I could actually picture Alto and K yelling at me! It was close until late in the game and when we finally had that big inning that we'd all been looking for, I could feel ALL of us finally exhale and relax a little bit. We just kept that inning going and the hits just kept coming (an 11-2 win over the Comets). I think the stars lined up for us because Jason [Kehler] got us a special "W" flag with Alto's number on it and it didn't arrive until earlier that day, so I guess we had to wait until that day to get our first win.

**MONDAY, FEB. 10** — *Anaheim Stadium hosted a public memorial service for Alto, Keri, and Alyssa in front of over 8,000 people. It was one final, beautiful chapter to this two-week journey.*

**COACH JOHNSON** — This was going to be the closing chapter to all of this. Don't get me wrong ... we will NEVER forget, but at least for the guys, those first two weeks were done. From there, we respectfully asked the remaining road teams for no more pregame ceremonies or moments of silence. It's a nice gesture and we know you care ... but no thanks. We needed closure ... our guys needed closure. Before that memorial service, we had practice that morning and once that was over, we saw the Altobelli family having a lunch at the field and the rest of the day, I was more of a host than a coach. Alumni came out to the field before the service and I was there to make sure they were doing OK.

For me, the service was a total blur ... there were so many people. You could hear everyone talking about Alto/K/Alyssa and it was such an overwhelming event. But for me, it was a time to breathe and remember and grieve for myself too.



On Aug. 4, 2021 the Coast Community College Board of Trustees approved a resolution to rename OCC's "Pirate Park" baseball stadium to "John Altobelli Park in honor and celebration of the lives of John Altobelli, Keri Altobelli, and Alyssa Altobelli."

# FOREVER PIRATES:

## ALUMNI ANMARIE MORENO EXPLAINS HOW ORANGE COAST COLLEGE HELPED HER RE-DISCOVER A LOVE OF SOCCER

*By Anmarie Moreno*

**T**he decision to attend Orange Coast College was without a doubt one of the most pivotal points in my life. As a fresh high school graduate who was supposed to be living in Hawaii, attending the University of Manoa, I ended up returning home before the semester started and found myself at Orange Coast College. I played soccer my entire life and to be honest, 90 percent of the reason I even tried in school was a mix between knowing I needed to get a degree and never wanting my grades to keep me from an opportunity to play the sport I love. Luckily, I got into several schools because of those grades, but the soccer career didn't pan out as I had hoped. [When I first arrived at OCC I had] a heavy sense of uncertainty; I had no idea what I was going to do with my life.

Fearful of paying large sums of money to settle on a major I wasn't passionate about, I floated around OCC until one day, a former club teammate of mine happened to find me there. She was a goalie and I played center-back, so it goes without saying we spent a lot of time together manning the back line of our defense. I had already been at OCC for about two years, working and taking classes. I changed my major three times trying to figure out where to go. She told me that she was going to be playing soccer for the school during the upcoming season and that I should consider trying out. At that point, I hadn't so much as touched a soccer ball in years. After high school, I became so upset thinking about the amount of blood sweat and tears I had put into the sport [with disappointing results], that the idea of kicking a ball around only made me feel heavy and sad. However, my friend persuaded me. Despite my hesitation, the idea of being able to be a competitive athlete re-lit a fire inside of me that had been missing.

### Becoming a Student-Athlete

My experience as a student athlete at OCC was incredible and I know many other athletes would agree in saying

that a lot of us wished it was a four-year school. There was a great sense of community between various athletic teams. Head soccer coach Kevin Smith was an awesome coach who had the perfect combination "laid back" and "get to work" type of attitude that allowed the team to enjoy the game of soccer. Don't get me wrong ... we were serious about bringing our best every year, but it never was overwhelming.

I wasn't sure what would come of me playing again, but I was fortunate enough to earn a starting position and, over the course of the first season, I slowly began to fall in love with the sport again. We made playoff runs each year and always came up short to Santiago Canyon. It was bittersweet every time, but we always left it all on the field.

I eventually became the captain of our team and earned the Orange Empire Conference's MVP award as a defensive player. I also was awarded OCC's Female Athlete of the Year designation and received a scholarship to continue playing at Concordia University in Irvine. However, one of the craziest things that came out of playing soccer at OCC was [being featured in a marketing campaign and] having my face on the side of the Fitness Complex for about five years! I never quite got over that one — it was pretty cool to have my little claim to fame.

### Discovering a Career Path

In addition to rediscovering my love for the game, playing soccer at OCC led me to my profession, something that I am grateful to do every day — athletic training. I had never even heard of an athletic trainer until one came out to work with [my team at OCC] at our first home game. After struggling for many years to decide what I wanted to do with my life, I knew that this was the perfect job for me. It was an opportunity to be around sports, help take care of athletes through their careers and be a part of something that was bigger than myself.





Luckily, Concordia has a program that allows students-athletes to take part in their athletic training education program at the same time. All the teachers within OCC's kinesiology program were great, and I will always be grateful for the standard my anatomy and physiology teachers held me to. They expected students to know their stuff and once I got into higher-level classes that seriously came in handy.

## “Forever Grateful”

I am now a graduate of Concordia University, a certified Athletic Trainer working in baseball at the collegiate level, I went on to get my Master of Science in Exercise Science and am continuing to grow in my skills and profession to provide athletes with the best care I am capable of. Without the opportunity to play soccer and the amazing

people who surrounded me at OCC, I'm not sure if I would be where I am today.

I know that not every athlete is as fortunate as I have been. Some athletes have the life and love of their sport sucked out of them because of tough circumstances, difficult coaches and poor environments. No program is perfect, but I wish everyone could have the experience that I did. I hope that for some, my story helps athletes to see that there are good programs out there. That there are coaches who don't give up on you, who give you a chance to compete despite being out of the game for a while, and who care about your dreams. There are coaches and people who believe in bringing the best out of you, for you. I'm forever grateful to have been around such amazing coaches and people who work to foster their athletes not only in sports, but in life. Thank you to OCC for helping to lead me down my path.





# Pirate Pride: OCC Teams Dominate in Conference Play



## Pirates Rule the Track in 2021, Capture Both Conference Titles!

It was a long and crazy season for everyone, and Orange Coast College men's and women's track teams were no exception. Battling a pandemic and season uncertainty, the Pirates remained focused and ended the 2021 season as Orange Empire Conference champions.

With a combined 25 individual and relay conference gold medals between the two squads at the OEC Championships, the Pirates put an exclamation point on an already impressive 2021 campaign. The OCC men rolled to the team title with 337 points, followed by Golden West (97), Saddleback (87) and Fullerton (5), while on

the women's side, Coast lapped the field with 241 points, followed by GWC (120), Saddleback (12) and Fullerton (12).

"This team had to overcome so much this year," OCC head coach Jennifer Williams said. "I am tremendously proud of the hard work and dedication they put into this season. They knew we had a short season, but I have seen so much growth in them as a team. We will be moving five incredible sophomores, which will leave a hole in our team. But, with the great recruits coming in as well as the solid group of returners, I'm looking forward to a successful 2022 season."



## Pirate Baseball Dreams Big, Captures OEC Crown for 2021

The Orange Coast College baseball team made the most of their 2021 opportunities and successfully defended its Orange Empire Conference crown for the fourth consecutive season.

On May 21, Coast rolled past Cypress, 9-1, to earn at least a share of the OEC crown and a few days later, thanks to a 9-5 win by Golden West over the Chargers, the Pirates held sole possession of the OEC championship the rest of the way, in spite of falling to Santa Ana, 8-3 in a series opener at Mt. Sac.

In a year where there will be no Southern California Regional playoffs or State Final Four, the OEC crown will have to do for the Pirates.

OCC's win on May 21, paired with SAC's loss to Saddleback, sent the Pirates into a postgame frenzy after being told of the OEC title, a title well deserved after overcoming not only the global pandemic and uncertainty of the 2021 season, but also the loss of their head coach, John Altobelli, back in January 2020.

"It's hard to put into words what [the championship win] meant," said new OCC head coach Nate Johnson after earning his first-ever OEC title as Pirate skipper. "Simply put, it meant the world to me. It put an exclamation point on the end of a really terrible year and a half. Finally being able to say we did it, we won for Alto, we won for Keri and we won for Alyssa is a really emotional thing for me, my coaches and our players. We all wish we could have had a chance at a state championship, but we did all we could given the restrictions of this year and I couldn't be prouder of this group.

"In December, we had no idea if we'd be able to actually even play this year. To be able to play and have such a great year and win our fourth consecutive OEC championship just speaks volumes of my coaches and our guys. It's been an absolute roller coaster for them. They've had to deal with so much adversity for this past year and a half and finally, they have something to show for it."

## Pirates Tennis Duo Help Women's Tennis Wrap Up Perfect Season

It was a fitting conclusion for the Orange Coast College women's tennis duo of Shayee Sherif and Nicole Knickerbocker as the twosome helped the Pirates wrap up a perfect 2021 season with a 7-0 win over Mt. San Antonio.

The victory ends the Pirates' season with an unbeaten 12-0 record. Coast won 98 total matches in 2021, while the opposition could only muster eight.

Leading that onslaught for Coast was the 1-2 punch of Sherif and Knickerbocker, who each won 6-0, 6-0 in their singles matches on May 25 against Mt. San Antonio, then, each collected 8-2 wins in doubles. Other singles scores from that day include victories from OCC's Jocelynn

Timmer (3-6, 7-6, 10-6), Madeleine Veltri (6-2, 6-1) and Faith Moreno (6-1, 6-1). Ventri joined Knickerbocker in doubles to win, 8-2, while Moreno joined Sherif for their 8-2 win.

"I have to give a lot of credit to these women as they have continued to work hard and perform so well through such a challenging season," OCC head coach Chris Ketcham said. "They have persevered and worked through the many difficulties this season has presented and have been able to compete and play such a high level of tennis. We have been fortunate to have such a talented and athletic group of women who are great to work with and coach."



# NEW **LITERATURE, SOCIAL SCIENCE BUILDING** OPENS IN TIME FOR FALL 2021 SEMESTER

**T**he second part of a planned multi-million dollar instructional facilities project, OCC's Literature and Languages/Social and Behavioral Science (LLSS) building will open this fall as students officially return to campus for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020.

The new LLSS building is the second phase of a multi-building complex that already includes OCC's Math, Business and Computing Center. The two buildings, which are connected via a bridge on the second floor, are funded through Measure M, a \$698 million bond measure passed by voters in 2012.

"The Literature and Languages and Social Behavioral Sciences building represents not only the highest standards in innovative learning facilities, but also the investment and trust that our community has in the mission of Orange Coast College," says President Angelica Suarez. "We are grateful to our local community and to the Coast Community College District Board of Trustees for their

support as we continue to modernize our campus for the next generation of students at Coast."

In addition to housing the division offices for both the Literature and Languages and Social and Behavioral Science divisions, the LLSS building also will house classrooms, laboratory space such as an archaeology room with an outdoor dig area, and a state-of-the-art newsroom for OCC's award-winning student-run newspaper "The Coast Report."

The 100,000-square-foot, three-story instructional facility will replace two separate buildings on campus that are 50 and 60 years old.

"We are thrilled to be moving to our new LLSS building," says Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences Kevin Henson. "The new building will allow our faculty to be housed together in one space, and will provide a home base for some of OCC's most impacted areas of study, with room to grow. We know the space will serve faculty and students well into the future."



# TURNING CARTOONS INTO A CAREER: OCC NARRATIVE ILLUSTRATION ALUMNA STEPHANIE RIZO

**S**tephanie Rizo had good reason to enroll at Orange Coast College. She was looking to pass her GED exam, earn a degree or certificate, and transfer to an art school or university. “It was also right next door and I didn’t have to take on any debt,” she says.

It was a life-changing decision. Thanks to the skills she learned through Orange Coast College’s Narrative Illustration certificate program, Rizo has settled into a career as a storyboard artist at Sony Pictures Animation.

“Originally, my thought was to stay at OCC to get my general education classes out of the way and transfer to a university,” says the 29-year-old Burbank resident.

“But the more I learned about the classes they offered, the more I learned about the staff they had, and the more sense it made to stay at OCC and keep taking more art classes.”

Why animation? “It was something that just made me so happy and excited,” Rizo says. “I liked to draw, read how-to-draw books and watch cartoons. The more I drew the more I wanted to do it every day. Then I discovered that you could have a job in animation. After high school, I made it my goal to learn as much as I could about character design, illustration and animation, and start building a career.”

Her dedication left an impression with her professors. Among them: Chris Kerins, an OCC commercial art instructor and program coordinator in the College’s Visual and Performing Arts Division.

“Stephanie didn’t settle for just doing class assignments,” Kerins explains. “She set out to develop her portfolio through



a personal visual development project, which she showed here in the OCC student gallery. She also went above and beyond in the annual ‘Inktober’ daily drawing prompts where she created original characters for stories that were appealing and entertaining. I’m proud of Stephanie’s success and hope the initiative she showed in and out of the classroom inspires our current students.”

[OCC’s] Narrative Illustration program is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in traditional and digital art before progressing to advanced media skills and more focused classes in illustration and professional studies. Electives include cartooning, character design, life painting, watercolor, and more. The aim: prepare students to start a freelance career or be accepted into an illustration degree program.

Rizo began building her portfolio while at OCC and began landing steady freelance work as a character designer for DreamWorks Animation, Nickelodeon, Netflix, and Warner Bros. Entertainment. She was hired at Sony Pictures Animation about two and a half years ago.

“[OCC is] a fantastic community college,” Rizo says. “I met some of my closest friends there. We all met from the art classes and had the same goal: to work in the animation industry. We hyped each other up and helped one another to push ourselves to do our best. To this day, I’m still in contact with them and all of us have reached our goals of getting jobs where we wanted to work.”

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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! Once you sign up you will start to receive exclusive Alumni & Friends benefits, including access to OCC's brand new computer lab, Library privileges, invitations to special events on campus, discounted movie tickets, and access to OCC's Career Center.

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