Orange Coast College
UPDATE

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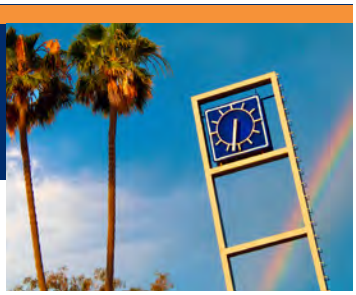

OCC Set to Award More than 5,000 Degrees, Certificates at Virtual Commencement

Orange Coast College will hand out 2,531 degrees and 2,677 certificates at its virtual commencement ceremony for graduates on June 6 at 1 p.m. All eligible Summer 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020 graduates received an invitation to participate in the ceremony, which will include personalized slides and a LiveChat feature that will allow students to cheer on their classmates.

"We recognize the impact that this pandemic has had on our students who have worked hard to achieve their educational goals, and who will miss out on the meaningful experience of walking across a physical stage in front of their friends and families," says OCC President Angelica Suarez. "However, our commitment to celebrating this momentous occasion for our graduates and their families remains unchanged. We are very proud of OCC's Class of 2020, and we're looking forward to honoring their achievements."

The ceremony, which will be hosted on YouTube Premiere, will include a message from President Suarez, District Chancellor John Weispfenning, and distinguished faculty, as well as messages from special guests.

Students who wish to participate in the ceremony must RSVP, and the event will only be accessible via a private link that can be shared with family and friends. In addition, graduates who want to participate in an in-person ceremony will be allowed to take part in the Spring 2021 Commencement ceremony.

ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

FOREVER PIRATES

Forever Pirates: OCC Launches New Alumni Outreach Campaign

The Orange Coast College Alumni & Friends website has been re-vamped in an effort to bring alumni outreach under one umbrella at the College. A new campaign, titled "Forever Pirates," is featured prominently in the new design, which includes alumni testimonials, as well as links to events, news and lifelong learning opportunities.

The "Forever Pirates" campaign was developed in partnership with OCC's Athletics department, who began using the phrase "Forever a Pirate" following the death of student and baseball player Jordan Watanabe in 2009. The late OCC Head Baseball Coach John Altobelli coined the phrase in an effort to keep Watanabe's memory alive within his program. After Altobelli's tragic passing earlier this year, the phrase took on new meaning, with OCC alumni from all over the world identifying themselves with the hashtag #ForeverAPirate.

The Alumni & Friends is housed under the OCC Foundation, and any student who has ever taken a single class at the College is eligible to join. OCC alums who visit the website and decide to join the Alumni & Friends will receive a free gift of their choice, branded with a new Forever Pirates logo. Gifts include a coffee mug, face mask, sticker, and license plate holder.

For more information, or to view the new website, visit www.orangecoastcollege.edu/alumni

Orange Coast College Receives CARES Act Funds, Announces Plans for Distribution

Orange Coast College has received $9.2 million in emergency funding as a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress in March. Half of the total amount, or approximately $4.5 million, will go directly to aiding students affected by the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the novel coronavirus.

OCC has already begun distributing the money to students, with amounts determined based on financial aid status and the number of units a student is enrolled in at the College. Students who are enrolled in 12 or more units, and who have the highest financial need receive $1,000 via direct deposit through the College's digital banking service, Bank Mobile. Students enrolled in six to 12 units, with the highest financial need, receive $750, also via Bank Mobile.

Other full-time students whose financial circumstances have changed due to the pandemic, can receive $500 either through Bank Mobile or via check, and those who have not already filled out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application will be provided with an opportunity to complete the application.

Students in the noted categories will be asked to complete a form explaining how COVID-19 has affected their financial or personal situation. Funding through the College's Student Equity program is available to help students who do not qualify for aid under the CARES Act, including undocumented students attending OCC through the California Dream Act.

"We know that many of our students have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are looking forward to providing some relief as quickly as we can," says OCC President Angelica Suarez. "At Orange Coast College, providing all of our students access to a high-quality education is our top priority. We are grateful for this federal funding that will support our students in continuing their educational goals."

The remaining half of the CARES Act funding received by OCC will be used to help offset costs incurred due to the pandemic. The College's summer session will take place mostly online, with the possibility of some in-person lab classes scheduled for later in the summer, depending on guidance from the state.

OCC also qualifies for additional emergency relief funding from the U.S. Department of Education due to its status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). The College will receive an additional $734,000 in emergency relief funding to be used toward helping students navigate the crisis caused by COVID-19.

In order to receive HSI designation, an institution must have

enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students. To receive AANAPISI designation, the institution must have enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 10 percent Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students.

Limited Number of Students Return to OCC's Campus to Complete Allied Health Coursework

OCC allowed a limited number of students to return to campus to complete coursework in some Allied Health programs that are considered essential and critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students in their last semester of study in OCC's Respiratory Therapy, Radiologic Technology, Emergency Medical Tech, Medical Assisting and Cardiovascular Tech programs were given the option to return to campus in April to complete necessary in-person coursework with strict safety guidelines to limit the spread of illness, such as temperature taking, distancing, and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

"In total we had about 120 students across five different Allied Health programs who were able to complete coursework to graduate, and about another 100 who were able to maintain or complete licensure requirements by documented skill from clinical training and with a virtual or remote format," says Vice President of Instruction Kevin Ballinger. "All of these individuals are needed in the community right now. There are only two radiologic technology programs in Orange County, and Orange Coast College has the only local respiratory therapy and cardiovascular tech programs. EMT's are also very much needed right now."

Students who were allowed to return to campus were required to abide by strict distancing guidelines and wear full PPE. Students also had their temperature taken before entering classrooms, and classrooms were disinfected daily. Working with the Coast Community College District Risk Services department, the College consulted with both the Orange County Department of Health and the Orange County Department of Education before making the decision to allow a limited number of students to return to campus.

"Our graduates are front-line providers of diagnostic information," says Radiologic Technology Program Coordinator Loren Sachs. "While Radiologic Technologists are not part of the therapeutic process, we are integral to determining the severity of the disease and to providing evidence of patient improvement. When you look at the typical in-patient hospital setting, it's not uncommon for patients with respiratory issues to get daily chest x-rays to monitor their clinical process."

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, OCC's Allied Health programs shifted gears quickly in order to put as many graduates into the workforce as possible. Initially, without knowing how quickly the virus would spread, faculty hoped for the best, but prepared for the worst.

"In California, we were lucky that our hospitals did not get overwhelmed," says Rad Tech professor Kelly Holt. "Our initial thinking was that the students who returned might have been a second line of hospital workers if the Radiographers in the field got sick."

However, with no vaccine and a second spike of infections possible in the fall, the College is committed to doing its part to continue to train and prepare frontline healthcare providers.

"Unfortunately, it's taken a pandemic to shine a bright spotlight on the specialty of Respiratory Care and highlight the unique skill set respiratory therapists possess that make us essential to patient care," says Respiratory Care program Director Alison Riggio. "We are an invaluable part of the healthcare team and OCC can be proud that we are graduating competent individuals prepared and excited to begin professional practice and provide critical service to the community."

The School of Allied Health at OCC offers a robust and comprehensive curriculum in medical and dental professions that provide necessary knowledge and skills for careers in professional healthcare. Critical thinking, assessment, creativity, and professionalism are emphasized across the school's 12 health programs, most of which are accredited by specialized accrediting bodies recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Pirates Name Dan Matulis as New Water Polo Coach

Orange Coast College is pleased to announce the hiring of Dan Matulis as the College's new men's and women's water polo coach, according to Athletic Director Jason Kehler. The hiring follows a nationwide search that began in December of 2019 when OCC began accepting applications for a full-time Kinesiology instructor/head water polo coach.

"Dan brings so much to the campus beyond his playing and coaching experience that it makes this a very exciting time for Coast water polo and the Kinesiology and Athletics Division," Kehler says. "We are confident that Dan will continue to build on the traditions of both our men's and women's water polo programs as not only strong contenders in the pool, but in the classroom and community as well."

Matulis comes to OCC after very successful stints as an assistant coach, both at Golden West College (2016-20) and at his alma mater, Long Beach State (2019-20). Prior to his coaching career, Matulis was a standout player at Long Beach State for four years. Matulis was a two-time All-American for the 49ers, scoring 148 career goals (13th-best all time in school history), including 69 goals as a junior before suffering the first of two major shoulder injuries.

After spending time with the US National Team, a second shoulder injury essentially ended Matulis' water polo career, and he began his teaching and coaching careers, and life outside of the water. As an assistant coach at Golden West, he helped the Rustler men's water polo program go 88-1 with three consecutive state championships from 2016-18. In addition to his duties with the men's and women's programs at GWC, Matulis also helped create student-athlete success programs, similar to OCC's PRESS Program. In addition to his duties with the Rustlers, Matulis was also putting in coaching and teaching duties at Long Beach State as well as Vanguard University, further accumulating knowledge on both sides of the sport.

It is an entirely new chapter for OCC Water Polo. In addition to Matulis joining the Pirates, he will have the opportunity to practice and compete in the school's brand-new Aquatics Pavilion, giving Coast another state-of-the-art athletics facility on its campus.

"I'm so excited to be a part of this college," Matulis says. "We are all excited about the new pool, but all in all, OCC's campus has so many different classes and programs to choose from, and I'm excited to be able to share with student-athletes everything that OCC has to offer."

Dan and his wife Danica welcomed their first child, Paxton, into the world on May 14. "Yes, it's been a very exciting month for me and my family, that's for sure," Matulis says.