



Orange Coast College Student Housing Welcomes Residents on Sept. 25

The Harbour at OCC has officially opened, with nearly 400 student residents moving in on Thursday, Sept. 24 and Friday, Sept. 25. The opening of the Harbour makes Orange Coast College the first community college in Southern California to offer on-campus housing for students.

Construction of The Harbour totaled \$100 million, and the facility is funded through tax exempt bonds via a public/private partnership with National Campus and Community Development Corp. The property will be managed by The Scion Group, which is tasked with things like leasing units and managing a staff of resident advisors.

The Scion Group also has worked closely with OCC Student Services to develop safety protocols to keep residents safe and mitigate the spread of illness, including masks, cleaning supplies and signage that encourages social distancing.

With 800-plus beds available, The Harbour is around 50 percent occupied. The Scion Group is continuing to offer leasing agreements for one, two, and four bedroom apartments, as well as studios. Prices range from \$995 to \$2050, depending on occupancy.

“Move-in Day was an exceptionally exciting day for the college, administrators and campus leaders, our housing partners and our student leaders and residents,” says Housing Director Jamie Kammerman. “Residents and their families/supporters experienced a smooth and safe contactless check-in process. Residents and their guests were impressed with the quality of The Harbour facility and their new accommodations in the community. There were many smiles behind the masks and expressions of gratitude from residents and their families.”

OCC is #1 in Orange County For Combined Transfers to UC, CSU

Orange Coast College has once again pulled ahead of the pack with the highest number of combined University of California and California State University transfers in Orange County.

Data provided by both the UC and CSU systems shows that OCC had a combined total of 1,364 transfers to California's public university campuses in 2019, the most recent year that transfer numbers are available. OCC outpaced other local community colleges, including Fullerton College, with 1,259 combined transfers, and Irvine Valley College, with 1,220 combined transfers.

OCC Foundation Receives Gift of 225-Million-Year- Old Fossil

The Orange Coast College Foundation has added another petrified wood log to its collection, bringing the number of fossilized logs on campus to four.

At 4,800 pounds, the most recent petrified log is the largest OCC has ever received and is estimated to be around 225 million years old. The fossil comes from the estate of Marla Bird in Corona Del Mar, which previously gifted OCC three petrified logs in 2012 and generously offered to pay to have the most recent gift moved by crane to OCC's campus.

"These logs come from trees originally located in what is now Arizona, during the Triassic period," says Horticulture lab coordinator and instructor Joe Stead. "Petrified wood forms when downed trees are submerged in water, and later covered in volcanic ash. The result is that over hundreds of thousands of years, the silica from the ash turns the wood into stone, forming petrified wood."

Bird's husband, Ken, originally purchased the petrified logs at a museum auction in Oklahoma City, later shipping them to his home in Corona Del Mar where they were placed around his yard. Marla Bird's son, Kelly Christensen, first approached Stead about donating the logs after attending a lecture about the use of rocks in garden design in 2012. "This log, in addition to the previous three, is an extremely generous gift, and certainly will benefit students across many disciplines at OCC for many years to come," says Foundation Executive Director Doug Bennett.

All of the petrified logs at OCC are placed in the College's horticulture gardens, with the newest log placed just outside the garden's entrance.

Marla Bird passed away on July 24 of this year, at the age of 92. She was a passionate supporter of the local arts, serving as the President of the Laguna Art Museum for a number of years. She is survived by her four children, Kelly, Melissa, Kate and Dave, stepchildren Ellen, Pristen, Deborah, and Ann, as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



OCC Ranked as Top Ten Community College by WalletHub

Orange Coast College was ranked #10 in a list compiled by WalletHub of best community colleges in the United States in 2020. OCC also ranked #3 among California Community Colleges on the same list.

Rankings for the WalletHub list are determined from a sample of 698 colleges that are members of the American Association of Community Colleges. WalletHub looked at 18 key indicators of cost and quality, with a data set ranging from the cost of in-state tuition and fees to student-faculty ratio to graduation rate.

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





Q&A: OCC Director of Mental Health Services Discusses How Students Can Cope During COVID-19 Global Pandemic

Q: *In your experience, what are some of the challenges that students at OCC are facing right now as they navigate trying to continue their education during this pandemic?*

A: Well, overall, there are many issues, but the main one is probably dealing with expectations versus a very different reality. College is supposed to be a time when people get a chance to get out there and experience different things in a way that they hadn't before. Our students were looking forward to being able to make transitions that are both wonderful and scary all at the same time, and also looking forward to being able to make connections in their lives in a different way. This is part of becoming a young adult. The pandemic has changed the trajectory of that. It's made it more difficult to communicate with people, and more difficult to explore different parts of your life. It's also made it more difficult to be able to move toward life goals in the ways that our students expected to. At the Student Health Center, we've had students reporting lots of anxiety, lots of depression, lots of isolation... all sorts of things.

On the other side, young adults often feel like they are, if not invincible, at least that nothing bad will happen to them. So some of the normal things that they do, like connecting with people, having parties, hanging out with friends, etc ... now they're being judged for doing those things because they're not safe. For a lot of our students in that 18-to-25-year age range, the normal developmental things that they do are now have all these different meanings. It's difficult, and it's a really hard place for them.

Q: *Research has shown that there's already an epidemic of anxiety among college students. What are some coping mechanisms that students can employ when they're dealing with these huge changes and disruptions to their lives?*

A: First, I think finding some of those things that help with self-care is very important. Students should look for things that they enjoy doing alone. Even though many, of course, prefer to be with others, it's still important to be able to do some solo activities, whether that's going for a walk, meditation, watching TV, etc. Anything that helps bring some calm and self-care.

Another important aspect of self care that often gets overlooked is making sure to get plenty of rest, exercise and good nutrition, things that have become even harder to do right now. This is advice we would normally give people under normal circumstances, but it's become even more important now that we are in such isolation. Finding small places where they can self-care, small places where they do have control, is important for students because so much of this is out of their control right now.

A lack of control can be very difficult for anyone, and this is especially true for college students. On top of the fear of getting sick or worse, of not being able to be on campus where they want to be, and of not being able to be with their friends, there's this nagging thought of, "when is this going to end?" This is where, unfortunately, we see hopelessness creep in.

We've been talking a lot with our students about trying to find places where they do have control, where they do have power, even if it's very small. Finding those decision-making places where they can find some of their own agency is important, because that helps them get through this time when they are just unsure about what's going to happen next.

Another way for students to cope is by making connections where they can. Luckily, we do live in a world where a lot of our students are highly skilled at connecting to people in lots of different ways via technology. Staying connected to family, friends, and anyone who is supportive is very beneficial for young adults. Even if it can't be face-to-face, it's still helpful to maintain and create those virtual communities.

Q: *Many of our students have lost their jobs as businesses have shut down, and others have had to provide more support to their families while also dealing with disruption and change in their own lives. What advice do you have for students who have the added stress of lacking basic needs?*

A: The fear of "Am I going to be able to make my rent this month? Am I going to be able to buy food?" is very real for many of our students. I think finding places of support, where they can get help, is essential. But it's more complicated than that because of the isolation caused by this pandemic - it can be difficult for students to reach out when they don't have that regular connection, right? When normal relationships are not happening naturally, it's harder to ask for help.

This is where I think there's an opportunity for employees at OCC to not only encourage students to be proactive in finding support - because there is definitely support out there - but to also make sure they are giving the correct information to students.

Q: *That is a great transition into talking about what resources OCC offers through, for example, the OCC Student Health Center. The SHC offers counseling for students - can you elaborate on what services we provide in that arena?*

A: At the Student Health Center, we have a medical side and a mental health side. The medical side recently re-opened with limited hours for some in-person services.

For the mental health side, we're still primarily working through Zoom, but we do have 12 therapists who are available. We still have lots of appointments available to work with people to provide both telehealth and therapy services. We're still seeing a lot of people, which is good, but we're concerned that we're not seeing as many new people as we normally do, especially given the current climate.

Years ago we limited the number of sessions that students could access, but now that session limit is gone and students can see us as often as they need to. We still consider ourselves short-term therapy, but together with our student clients, we decide what that actually means and what is okay. Most people see us maybe four, six, eight times.

Right now we're focused on figuring out ways to reach out to and connect with people where they are. So we've been trying to do more outreach, like Zoom presentations for classes or athletics teams, with the goal of connecting with different parts of campus to try to let people know we're still here.

Q: *What does a therapy session look like? How long does it last? How can students make an appointment?*

A: I'm the person who facilitates making an appointment or, if a student wants to find out more information about therapy, I can call and just have a conversation about what therapy is like and what things we do at the health center and how we can be helpful. I'm happy to be that first point of contact to try to get people scheduled.

Once we do have somebody connected with one of our therapists, we do sessions that are 50 minutes long. They're usually once per week, but we also individualize that. If a student needs more, then we can work that out. We also try to give the support that people might need in-between their weekly sessions, whether that's through text, voicemail, or email.

We've got a great staff. I'm a licensed marriage and family therapist, and I have another licensed marriage and family therapist in addition to two associate MFTs. And then I've got eight interns that I supervise. It's a very, very good group, and it's worked well. We just want to be able to reach out and see more people.