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OCC Selects Michelle Grimes Hillman as New Vice President of Instruction

The Coast Community College District Board of Trustees approved Michelle Grimes-Hillman as the new Vice President of Instruction at Orange Coast College at its meeting of Dec. 9, 2020. Grimes-Hillman was selected following an extensive nationwide search, and will begin her new role on January 11, 2021. She replaces Kevin Ballinger, who retired in June.

“We are thrilled to welcome Michelle Grimes-Hillman to Orange Coast College,” says President Angelica Suarez. “Michelle brings a wealth of experience as an equity-minded instructional leader both at the local and statewide level. Her deep roots as a former faculty member, faculty leader and instructional administrator provide her with a strong foundation to advance OCC’s mission of academic excellence and student success.”

Grimes-Hillman had dedicated her professional life to serving students in the California Community Colleges. As a former first-generation community college student, she has made it her life’s mission to champion academic opportunities that transform the educational experiences of students inside and outside the classroom.

Grimes-Hillman brings to Orange Coast College nearly 20 years of teaching and faculty leadership experience, and more than eight years of administrative experience in the California community colleges, statewide organizations, and private industry. She comes to OCC from Long Beach City College (LBCC), where she has served as Dean of Academic Affairs, overseeing a number of programs including curriculum, adult education, dual enrollment, guided pathways, and enrollment management, as well as, serving on the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Institutional Effectiveness Partner Resource Teams supporting other colleges in their operational effectiveness.

Prior to her work at LBCC, Grimes-Hillman was a tenured classroom faculty at Mt. San Antonio College where she served as a local senate president and curriculum chair. Her experience also includes being elected to the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges as a member of the Executive Committee where she led efforts with accreditation, guided pathways, and served in a number of leadership positions including co-chair of the System Advisory Committee on Curriculum.

“I have always appreciated Orange Coast College as the premier educational beacon in Orange County,” says Grimes-Hillman. “I’m excited to continue the great work of OCC and work with faculty to promote equitable outcomes for all student groups.”

Grimes-Hillman earned a Bachelor’s Degree in General Psychology and a Master’s Degree in Experimental Psychology from California State University, Fullerton, and was honored as the CSUF Psychology Department’s Alumna of the year in 2004. She also received the prestigious John & Susanne Roueche Excellence Award from the League of Innovation in 2018.



Student Athletes Receive COVID-19 Tests Through Partnership with Orange County Health

Orange Coast College's Student Health Center has partnered with the Orange County Health Care Agency to administer tests for COVID-19 on campus through the College's Student Health Center. The testing will take place on Tuesdays and Fridays, starting Jan. 5, with a goal of administering at least 165 tests per day.

The first group of students who will be tested are student athletes, many of whom have continued to train for months in anticipation of a Spring 2021 athletic season. Many sports with seasons that typically take place in the fall have been delayed until the spring, due to safety concerns about the novel coronavirus.

Eventually, OCC hopes to open the testing to all students as the College begins to prepare for an eventual return to campus in the coming months.

OCC Foundation Raises More than 150k on Giving Tuesday

The Orange Coast College Foundation raised \$158,295 during its 2020 Giving Tuesday Campaign on Dec. 1. Of that amount, \$52,465 will be directed toward a wide range of scholarships, with the rest going toward various campus programs, teams and activities.

An anonymous donor generously offered to match gifts up to \$1,000 by donating \$.50 on the dollar, resulting in a matched donation amount of \$39,223.

OCC's men's crew program led the fundraising, receiving a total of \$34,425 in gifts, including two \$10,000 donations from grateful alumni. The Doyle Arts Pavilion received \$2,600 and the Coast men's volleyball program received \$6,300 in gifts.

"We have found Giving Tuesday to be a good venue to solicit year-end annual gifts from a wide range of donors," says Foundation Executive Director Doug Bennett. "The information we send out about Giving Tuesday is a good reminder to our donors that it is time to make an annual gift."

Giving Tuesday is an international effort to inspire personal philanthropy and charitable giving during the holiday season. Largely fueled by social media, the event takes place on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving and widely recognized retail events like Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Giving Tuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many people participate in end-of-year giving.

Professor Emeritus & Photography Icon John Upton Passes Away

Orange Coast College Professor Emeritus John Upton passed away on Dec. 7 from complications related to lung cancer. He was 88.

Upton was one of the founders of OCC's renowned photography program, starting as a faculty member at the College in 1960. He retired in 1999 but continued to teach part time. "In many ways John was the 'father' of the Orange Coast College photography program," says Photography Department Chair Blade Gillissen. "He was a great photographer and teacher ... and an even better friend and mentor. He will be greatly missed."

The Doyle Arts Pavilion hosted a survey exhibition of Upton's work this past January titled "Right Place, Right Time: A Survey of John Upton's Photographs." The survey presented selections from four main bodies of work: Early Work, "Japanalia," "Jungle Road," and the more recent "Petaluma." The exhibition was curated by Tyler Stallings, director/senior curator at The Doyle.

In the early 1950s Upton studied with Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, Minor White, Dorothea Lange, and Edward Weston while attending the California School of Fine Arts. In 1955 he was the first resident student of Minor White in Rochester, N.Y. and took courses in the history of photography from famed photo art historian, Beaumont Newhall. He became chair of the photography department at OCC in the late 1960s, and in 1976, he co-authored, with Barbara London, the seminal college textbook "Photography," which is now in its 12th edition with more than 1.5 million copies in print.

Upton is survived by his daughters, Sean and Erica, his sons-in-law, and granddaughters.

