



to celebrate this distinguished honor once again and look forward to celebrating the success of our College and its students.”

According to a press release from the Aspen Institute: “The Aspen Prize spotlights exemplary community colleges in order to elevate the sector, drive attention to colleges doing the best work, and discover and share highly effective student success and equity strategies. Since 2010, Aspen has chosen to focus intensively on community colleges because they are — as First Lady Dr. Jill Biden stated at the 2021 Aspen Prize ceremony — ‘a powerful engine of prosperity.’

OCC Named as One of 150 Colleges Eligible for Prestigious Aspen Prize

The Aspen Institute has named Orange Coast College as one of the 150 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation’s signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America’s community colleges. The colleges selected for this honor represent 15 percent of more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide, and are recognized as having high and improving levels of student success as well as equitable outcomes for Black and Hispanic students and those from lower-income backgrounds.

OCC has been invited to submit data and narratives as the next steps in an intensive data and practice review process, culminating in the announcement of the Aspen Prize winner in Spring 2023.

“We are honored to be recognized as a nationwide leader among two-year colleges,” said OCC President Angelica Suarez. “OCC would not receive such accolades without a tireless commitment to student success exemplified by our faculty, classified professionals and managers. We are thrilled

But student outcomes vary enormously among community colleges, and improving those outcomes is essential to securing our nation’s economic future, strengthening communities, and ensuring that diverse populations experience economic mobility and prosperity. With these goals in mind, the Aspen Prize honors colleges with outstanding achievement in five critical areas: teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, transfer and bachelor’s attainment, workforce success, and equity for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.”

The four previous winners of the Aspen Prize are Indian River State College (FL, 2019); Santa Fe College (FL, 2015); Santa Barbara City College (CA, 2013); and Valencia College (FL, 2011).

The first round of eligibility for the Prize is based on publicly available data. Eligible colleges must show strong and improving student outcomes in key areas such as retention, completion, transfer, and equity. The full list of 150 colleges that have been invited to apply can be accessed at www.highered.aspeninstitute.org/aspen-prize

Selection of the top 10 finalists by a panel of 15 experts in community colleges, higher education, and workforce training, will be announced in Spring/Summer 2022. The Aspen Prize will be announced in late Spring 2023.

OCC Marketing Dept. Wins 13 Regional Awards at Virtual Conference

Orange Coast College's marketing and public relations department won 13 Medallion Awards at the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations District 6 and 7 virtual conference and awards ceremony on Nov. 9.

Medallion Awards recognize outstanding achievement in communications at community and technical colleges throughout the U.S. OCC is part of the NCMPR's District 6, which includes Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah and areas around Guam.

Coast was recognized with gold awards for the OCC Instagram social media page, a large interior "selfie wall" display, an Honors Night website design, and for the electronic version of the 2020 OCC Annual Report. The College also nabbed silver awards for logo design, the printed version of both the 2020 OCC Annual Report and 2019/2020 OCC Magazine, and the College's Class Catalog design. OCC took home bronze awards in the "Wild Card," "Excellence in Writing," "Microsite," "E-Card" and "Electronic Newsletter" categories.

"Each year we gather at NCMPR's district 6 conference to join our peers from community colleges across the Western United States and engage in collaborative learning and recognition of successful marketing and public relations campaigns and projects," says Director of Marketing and Public Relations Juan Gutierrez. "OCC's marketing team is consistently recognized as one of the best in community college marketing and PR for their publications, video, graphic design and photography efforts, and this year was no exception."



Orange Coast College Recognized as "Equity Champion" for Latinx Students Looking to Transfer

The Campaign for College Opportunity has named Orange Coast College a 2021 "Equity Champion for Excellence in Transfer" for Latinx students. OCC will be recognized at the research and policy organization's annual "Champions of Higher education for Excellence in Transfer" virtual celebration on Nov. 16.

"We are proud to be included on the list of colleges and universities being recognized as leaders in the state for facilitating transfer for Latinx student populations to four-year programs of study," says OCC President Angelica Suarez. "OCC's commitment to equity and inclusion is a top priority, and that includes working to remove barriers for underserved student populations who are working toward a four-year degree."

Students who identify as Hispanic or Latino make up the largest student demographic at OCC. From 2009 to 2019 the percentage of Hispanic and Latinx students at Coast increased substantially, from 21.8 percent to 34.9 percent.

The College has many programs designed to support underserved student populations reach their goals, such as the Transfer Center/Transfer Opportunity Program. The Transfer Center's TOP program, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, provides specialized resources and support for cohorts of incoming high school students including counseling, course offerings teaching students how to be successful in college, and events specifically tailored for parents, guardians, and supporters. "Many of the students in OCC's TOP program have additional barriers that they face

compared to their peers, including life circumstances that affect their educational goals” says TOP program coordinator Linda Bagatourian.

Resources aimed at supporting underserved student populations, such as first-generation Hispanic and Latinx students, include OCC’s Pirates’ Promise program, which grants two years of free tuition to all first-time college students taking 12 units or more, and OCC’s Zero-Textbook-Cost initiative, which offers students the option of taking classes that have no materials costs, such as textbooks. OCC also provides basic needs support through its Pirates’ Cove Food Pantry and Laptop Loan program.

“Our goal is to create an environment of inclusion and belonging for all OCC students, faculty, staff and administrators, and to engage in our planning and processes through a racial justice and equity lens,” says President Suarez. “This is a holistic approach that starts with our Education Master Plan, and is guided by the work of OCC’s participatory governance committees, as well as our Equity and Inclusion Task Force.”

Orange Coast College is the top transfer community college in Orange County for combined transfers to the California State University and University of California systems. In 2019-2020, associate degrees for transfer made up approximately 21.6 percent of all degrees awarded at OCC.

The Champions of Higher Education and Equity Champions for Excellence in Transfer celebration honors California Community College and California State University campuses leading the state in Associate Degree for Transfer implementation. The event also will feature students, policymakers, and college leaders who will discuss the importance of continuing to strengthen and scale the Associate Degree for Transfer via faithful implementation of landmark legislation, AB 928.

The Campaign for College Opportunity is a nonprofit advocacy and policy organization focused on a single mission: Working to ensure all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college in order to build a vibrant workforce, economy and democracy. To learn more, visit <https://collegecampaign.org>

OCC Hosts Science Night in a Virtual Format for the First Time Ever

The College welcomed more than 200 virtual attendees at its first-ever virtual Science Night on Friday, Nov. 19.

Science Night (also sometimes referred to as “STEM Night”) at OCC is typically one of the College’s largest events of the year, with thousands of elementary aged children invited to campus to explore science and technology programs and facilities.

This year, OCC’s Math and Sciences and Technology divisions teamed up for a live two-hour event on YouTube that introduced attendees to various STEM majors at Coast, including a virtual tour of the OCC Planetarium and Lewis

Aquarium. Faculty representing Marine Science, Engineering, Biology, Allied Health, Chemistry, Welding, Geology and Astronomy gave presentations about their programs, and gave demonstrations.

“Due to COVID, we had to find a way to bring our classic Science Night demonstrations to a virtual format,” says OCC Planetarium Director and Science Night Coordinator Scott Mitchell. “We were able to do that with expert commentary from our faculty, who also found creative ways to introduce our budding STEM majors to the possibility of college and careers in Science, Engineering, Technology, and Math. Those who attended were able to tour the Dennis Kelly Aquarium, melt pumpkins with Thermite, and gaze through powerful telescopes ... all from the comfort of their home!”

To view a recording of OCC’s Virtual Science Night, visit <https://youtu.be/P3B3B5GfVXc>

Adopt-A-Family Fundraiser Runs Until Dec. 10

OCC’s Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) and Guardian Scholars programs have launched an Adopt-A-Family fundraising campaign to raise money for student

parents who need assistance for the holidays.

This year’s event will be entirely supported by monetary donations, with a goal of providing gift cards to the families currently being served through CARE, Guardian Scholars or CalWORKS.

“The College’s CARE and CalWORKS programs serve student parents who are on

government assistance. These student parents need your support in order to provide a positive holiday experience for their children,” says Director of EOPS Cecilia Alvarado. “For many of our student parents this event will be the only holiday treat that they will be able to provide for their children.”

The deadline to make a donation is Dec. 10. All monetary donations can be directed to the Orange Coast College Foundation at <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/occadoptfamily>

