

# OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE

## AT THE HELM:

LEADING PEOPLE TO A BETTER LIFE





# Ocean County College at the Helm: LEADING PEOPLE TO A BETTER LIFE

## Strategic Plan 2021-2026

### Contents

Message from the President .....	3
About Ocean County College .....	5
Ocean County College at the Helm: Leading People to a Better Life .....	6
The Planning Process .....	7
Mission and Vision .....	8
Guiding Principles .....	9
Strategic Goals and Objectives .....	10
Strategic Goals and Objectives .....	11
Core Planning Team and Goal Implementation Teams .....	12



## Message from the President

*Ocean County College at the Helm* is the culmination of the efforts of many members of the Ocean County College community. This document articulates the ongoing evolution of Ocean County College's mission and goals as it serves the citizens of Ocean County and beyond. Our vision describes a vibrant institution focusing on student success by providing and brokering a full spectrum of learning programs and services. Through aggressive partnerships and collaborations, we are reaching out to serve global audiences and bringing the best the world has to offer to Ocean County.

*Jon H. Larson*

Jon H. Larson, Ph.D.  
President  
Ocean County College

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*\*at the time of publication*





# About Ocean County College

For more than 50 years, Ocean County College has provided area residents with the opportunity to benefit from higher education. A public two-year community college sponsored by Ocean County, the State of New Jersey, and the students of Ocean County College, OCC is located on 275 picturesque acres in the beautiful county seat of Toms River, NJ. A comprehensive, open admissions institution, Ocean County College is committed to providing high quality, postsecondary associate degree and certificate programs and other learning opportunities on its Main Campus in Toms River, at the Southern Education Center in Manahawkin, at other off-campus sites located throughout Ocean County, and through distance learning. Ocean County College provides opportunities prior to and after the associate degree through its strategic partnering. The presence of the Performing Arts Academy allows students to become immersed in the college experience while still in high school. In addition, the Kean-Ocean partnership affords students the opportunity for baccalaureate and beyond without having to leave the campus.



# Ocean County College at the Helm: Leading People to a Better Life

Ocean County College recognizes that people come from different backgrounds with their own goals in mind when entering or returning to higher education. Some come to Ocean County College to earn an associate degree and transfer on to a four-year institution, others attend to take one or two courses to brush up on skills, some come having earned a degree wishing to change careers, and others come to learn the English language. While not a comprehensive list, the College strives to help all students attain their goals and provide them with a pathway to achieve success.

In understanding the varied needs of students, Ocean County College has also acknowledged the clear disruption that has been facing higher education. In addition to an ever-present national focus on affordability, accountability, and student achievement, colleges have been faced with declining enrollment and decreased state funding. These challenges, along with the impending impact of technology, require colleges to be agile and look towards innovative programs, partnerships, practices, and processes. The College will build on its successes over the past five years, recognize national and international trends, and prioritize entrepreneurship and innovation as it continues to address higher education challenges and lead people to a better life.





## The Planning Process

The planning process began in September 2019 with Strategic Consultants from Ellucian, Dr. Tim Coley and Dr. Jennifer Latino, working alongside Executive Director Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth to gather relevant reports and studies for the development of a meaningful planning process for the College. A twelve-member Core Planning Team, composed of a diverse mix of College employees, was charged in October 2019 with leading the College's strategic planning efforts. The Core Planning Team met extensively from October through January to develop a plan that expands on the success achieved by the College under its current plan and recognizes the need to address future trends.

A series of focus groups, open forums, and colloquium sessions have informed the work of the Core Planning Team through a collaborative process of planning. Over 70 campus constituents, including faculty, staff, students, and Board members, participated. Based on the work of the

team and input from these events, revised Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principle statements were developed. Four themes emerged that formed the foundation of the College's Goals:

- Students
- Enrollment
- Organizational Effectiveness
- External Stakeholder Relations

Over 30 campus representatives are participating on Goal Implementation Teams, which were established for each of the above themes to develop objectives and key initiatives as well as to identify measures for tracking progress. The result is a well-informed plan that will guide the College through the disruptive waters of higher education, placing Ocean County College at the Helm as it innovates for the future.



## Mission

**Ocean County College, an innovative academic leader, provides affordable, student-centered, high-quality educational experiences that empower diverse learners to succeed.**

To achieve its mission, OCC invests in and fosters academic, economic, and cultural excellence and ensures financial strength by generating multiple revenue streams, engaging in national and international university and corporate partnerships, and cultivating a technologically progressive and entrepreneurial spirit.

## Vision

Ocean County College will be the boldest, most innovative and entrepreneurial student-centered college in the nation, will promote exemplary learning experiences, and will advance community college education internationally.







## Guiding Principles

**Student-Centered:** We empower our students to learn and succeed through distinctive, high-quality learning opportunities.

**Accessible:** We welcome all people to the Ocean County College community by providing affordable, flexible, and barrier-free educational opportunities.

**Innovative:** We proactively seek opportunities to improve through ingenuity and strategic partnerships.

**Collaborative:** We practice teamwork and open communication within a culture of civility and mutual respect.

**Courageous:** We act with determination to serve our students and achieve our goals.

**Trustworthy:** We exercise integrity, transparency, and data-informed decision-making.



# Strategic Goal 1: Empower students to learn, engage, and achieve

- OBJECTIVE 1.1** Enhance student learning.
- OBJECTIVE 1.2** Engage students in co-curricular activities.
- OBJECTIVE 1.3** Improve student persistence, completion, and career attainment.

# Strategic Goal 2: Optimize and expand enrollment of all learners

- OBJECTIVE 2.1** Promote our value and identity.
- OBJECTIVE 2.2** Achieve sustained growth in enrollment.
- OBJECTIVE 2.3** Provide relevant programs to foster workforce development.



## Strategic Goal 3: Elevate organizational effectiveness

- OBJECTIVE 3.1** Create and sustain a highly effective work environment.
- OBJECTIVE 3.2** Advance our use of technology and information.
- OBJECTIVE 3.3** Optimize the use of our campus facilities.
- OBJECTIVE 3.4** Implement effective policies and practices.

## Strategic Goal 4: Expand relationships with external stakeholders

- OBJECTIVE 4.1** Collaborate across the College to promote positive stakeholder communication and cultivation.
- OBJECTIVE 4.2** Connect with local and extended community supporters.
- OBJECTIVE 4.3** Explore new and innovative partnerships.



# Core Planning Team and Goal Implementation Teams

## Strategic Consultants

Tim Coley  
Jennifer Latino

## Core Planning Team Project Manager:

Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Executive Director of Institutional Planning, Effectiveness, and Compliance

Hatem Akl, Associate Vice President of International Programs-Operations

Tracey Donaldson, Associate Vice President of Human Resources

Matthew Kennedy, Associate Vice President of Facilities Management and Construction

Joseph Konopka, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Kenneth Malagiere, Executive Director of the OCC Foundation

Linda Novak, Vice Chair of the OCC Board of Trustees

Gerald Racioppi, Vice President of Student Affairs

Heather Sciarappa, College Lecturer II in English

Maria Steblyanko, College Lecturer II in Chemistry

Mary Troy, Director of Institutional Research

Sara Winchester, Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration



Student Goal Team

Hatem Akl  
 Shirley Baker  
 Rosann Bar  
 Alexa Beshara-Blauth\*  
 Kaitlin Everett  
 Eileen Garcia  
 Jennifer Fazio  
 Joseph Konopka\*  
 Gerald Racioppi  
 Anna Regan  
 Sylvia Riviello  
 Heather Sciarappa\*  
 Heidi Sheridan  
 James Siegel  
 Maria Steblyanko\*  
 Mary Troy  
 Teresa Walsh

Enrollment Goal Team

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 Eileen Garcia  
 Sheenah Hartigan  
 Joseph Konopka  
 Jan Kirsten  
 Gerald Racioppi\*  
 Mary Troy  
 Anthony Trump

Organizational Effectiveness Goal Team

Hatem Akl  
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 Joseph Konopka  
 Linda Novak\*  
 Sean O’Leary  
 JR Ross  
 Mary Troy  
 Sara Winchester\*

External Stakeholder Goal Team

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 Kayci Clayton  
 Kaitlin Everett  
 Eileen Garcia  
 Maysa Hayward  
 Jan Kirsten  
 Joseph Konopka  
 Kenneth Malagiere\*  
 Kimberly Malony  
 Mary Troy\*  
 Mark Wilson

*\*Indicates leaders for Goal Team*





*A public two-year community college sponsored by the County of Ocean and the State of New Jersey*  
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