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All-Employee Virtual State of the College Event Celebrates OCC 2020 Success and Looks at 2021 and Beyond

OAKLAND COUNTY, Michigan – November 1, 2020 – “Together, we got this.” Those words from OCC Chancellor Peter Provenzano captured the message and spirit from the all-employee virtual events, “Building the Future: A State of the College,” hosted October 16 and 28. The webinar event featured operational and strategic plan updates from Provenzano, Bobby Remias, Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, Steven Simpson, Chief Strategy Officer and a Q&A moderated by Daniel Jenuwine, Vice Chancellor for Advancement.

Provenzano said that even though COVID created great uncertainty and challenges, he praised OCC faculty and staff for their quick response.

“This talented team completely conceptualized a new way to deliver education and support services, which positively impacted our Fall semester enrollment and credit hour numbers,” Provenzano said.

Provenzano indicated that while OCC student headcount for Fall 2020 decreased 6.5% compared to Fall 2019 and just 2.6% of credit hours, the best fall enrollment numbers of any community college in Southeast Michigan. He added that it was even more impressive that OCC actually increased average registered credit 4.5%.

“We were able to move 1500 classes to a remote format, along with all student services, library resources, tutoring, counseling and the ASC. It was a Herculean effort, and it was a true success story,” he said. “When my colleagues ask me how we did it, I tell them without question that our secret sauce is the people of OCC. And for that, I thank you.”

Provenzano said that Winter 2021 will remain mostly remote and the College has some opportunities to keep enrollment numbers stable, including the state’s Future for Frontliners program that provides free tuition to frontline workers; an increase in online courses; and targeting guest students from four-year institutions who may prefer taking online courses at OCC rather than at their more expensive college or university.

“The pandemic has changed us as consumers, and it has changed how people relate to and consume education,” said Provenzano. “I’m proud to say that OCC has weathered this disruption better than almost every community college across Michigan.”

Remias detailed OCC’s strong financial position, something she credits to the College’s rigorous five-year planning.



“Our current financial position is good, which is an amazing accomplishment considering the myriad of ways COVID-19 forced us to adapt,” said Remias. “We will face headwinds as there is an element of uncertainty for Winter semester regarding enrollment. However, thanks to taxpayers and our ‘four-legged stool’ strategy, we are in a stable fiscally and well positioned to manage and control our future.”

Remias said the four-legged revenue stool includes property taxes, tuition/fees, state appropriations and other revenue.

One of the other revenue sources that OCC received was a \$7.5 million CARES Act grant from the Federal government, which Remias said funded laptop computers for 2100 students, faculty training and institutional support, PPE and financial support to 3000 students.

“The CARES Act provided welcome relief during this difficult time, and we worked to allocate the funds in the most beneficial ways possible,” said Remias. “We are cautiously, positively, optimistic about OCC’s fiscal stability during these challenging times.”

Remias said employees could review OCC’s financial documents on the website under the [Transparency Reporting](#) icon.

Simpson discussed the two signposts of OCC strategic direction -- optimizing educational offerings and opportunities to meet the needs of the community, and improving institutional culture and climate – and the objectives and actions supporting each. He also provided an update on OCC’s continuing effort and “intentional commitment to create a community of equity, social justice and diversity.”

Simpson thanked the more than 150 people currently serving on the various strategic planning committees and the Faculty Senate, and encourage others to get involved.

“We each have the opportunity to put a fingerprint on OCC’s success,” said Simpson. “Together, we can improve operations across OCC, advance our culture and continue to ensure we achieve our commitment to students, the community we serve, and each other.”

About OCC

Offering nearly 100 degrees and certificates, OCC is Michigan’s largest multi-campus community college and No. 1 transfer institution in the state. The College provides academic, career training and enriching experiences, designed to empower students to reach their potential and enhance our community. More than 1 million students have enrolled in the College since it opened in 1965. A seven-person Board of Trustees governs OCC. Board members are elected on a non-partisan, at-large basis, serve as volunteers and are not paid. Mission statement: OCC is committed to empowering our students to succeed and advancing our community. Learn more at oaklandcc.edu.

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