



ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

Office of the President
Dennis R. Harkins, Ph.D.

September 12, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

After nine remarkable years leading Orange Coast College as President, I will be retiring at the end of the Fall 2018 semester. This is a bittersweet decision for me, as OCC has become my home over the past decade. From the very first day of my tenure at Coast, the campus community has been welcoming and supportive of myself and my family. When I first arrived at Coast, the College was recovering from two significant setbacks—the Great Recession and an accreditation warning in 2008. It was a tumultuous time, to say the least, but it was also an opportunity to position Orange Coast College for even greater future success. Our campus and district communities have worked hard to strengthen our processes and, when necessary, invest in new areas of the College.

OCC's 70th anniversary celebration has given us the opportunity to celebrate our rich history and past accomplishments while looking to the future with promise and innovation. I have been proud to see the maturation of OCC's institutional research function transition from one of basic information to a comprehensive institutional effectiveness division that serves as the center of integrated planning on campus. I am also proud of the significant gains we have made in participatory governance at the College, as documented in our Decision Making document, and I am grateful to the strong leadership of both the Academic and Classified Senates for working closely with OCC's administration to take the College to the next level.

Student success remains the central focus for OCC as well as our commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment where each student can reach their goals. OCC is a high performing institution, evidently named a 2018 Champion for Higher Education in awarding Associate Degrees for Transfer by The Campaign for College Opportunity. The new Multicultural Center, the Arts, Student Government, and Athletics celebrate our continued commitment to serving our students and community.

I have been fortunate to witness the College undergo a tremendous transformation during my time at the helm, including the passage of bond Measure M which, together with its preceding bond, Measure C, represents an investment of nearly \$1 billion in Orange Coast College by the community. That investment has allowed for the completion of significant construction projects in my nine years at OCC, including the Allied Health Sciences, Biological Sciences and Consumer Sciences and Design Complex, Math, Business and Computing Center, the Recycling Center, and the highly-anticipated Planetarium. Other projects including the Adapted PE Facility, the Swimming Complex, the Literature Languages and Social Science Building, the College Center, Student Life Building, the expansion of the Maritime Academy, and Student Housing will all break ground in the near future. These projects were possible due to the visionary and courageous leadership of our Board, former and current Chancellors, Vice Chancellors, and the support of our community.



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I have been heartened to experience first-hand the support for our students at OCC, the leadership of the Foundation Board, a generous community, and internal support from our past and present colleagues. In my time at the College, the OCC Foundation has raised more than \$44 million dollars for student scholarships, resources and facility augmentation. This tremendous investment in the mission of OCC is a validation of what we do to promote student success.

Being the President of Orange Coast College has been a privilege over the past nine years as I have had the opportunity to collaborate with people who have become more than colleagues, and who work assiduously together every day to ensure that students are supported in reaching their full potential not simply as students, but as people.

Last but not least, I simply cannot prosper without the endless support of OCC's faculty, staff, and managers. My Cabinet members have been and continue to be the strength behind my success in these past nine years along with my Executive Assistants who inspire me daily.

My wife Kim and I are excited to enter this new chapter in our lives spending time at our home in Alligator Point, more traveling, pursuing our common love for photography, and enjoying the fruits of careers spent doing what we love by helping students achieve their goals.

I am deeply grateful for the experience of leading this outstanding College, and have full confidence that Orange Coast College will continue to reach even greater heights of excellence in the years to come.

I thank you all!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dennis R. Harkins'.

Dennis R. Harkins