

Meet Marty

New Olympic College President, Dr. Marty Cavalluzzi, is on a mission to help students achieve their dreams.

As an undergrad at Orange Coast College, a community college in Costa Mesa California, Marty Cavalluzzi was unsure of what the future had in store for him, although he did know where he was heading.

"I was going nowhere and I was going there pretty quickly," he said.

That is until professors at the college began encouraging him to pursue math and science in his education. To this day, Marty distinctly remembers those instructors and the advice that propelled him on a life-altering journey leading to his employment as the president of Olympic College.

Marty told himself if he landed the job at OC, he would make a donation to the Orange Coast Foundation and thank his professors for the impact they, and others who mentored him along the way, had on his life. His experiences and their words of wisdom had a tremendous effect on Marty, and continue to serve as a guiding force in his philosophy as president of OC.

"I try to give back every single day because I think back to how many people took me under their wing, seeing something in me that I never saw in myself," he said.

A career administrator

After completing his education, which includes a doctorate and master's degree in marine science from the College of William and Mary in Virginia, Marty found work as a faculty research associate at Oregon State University. While there, yet another mentor intervened, recommending he consider a career as a college administrator.

He soon landed a position with Northwest Indian College on the Lummi Island Indian Reservation, near Bellingham, Washington. Within two weeks of starting, he fell in love with the job. For Marty, part of the allure of working as a community college administrator are the many unanticipated challenges that arise.

"Literally everyday something happens that is new and unexpected," he says. "So if you are looking for a job where every day is calm and predictable, administration may not be for you."

From there, Marty embraced his newfound passion and continued to pursue positions with increasing responsibility. From 2001 to 2006 he served as the Dean of Science and Math at Seattle Central College. In 2006, Edmonds Community College hired Marty as the Executive Vice President for Instruction and Chief Academic Officer. In 2013, he accepted a position as the President of Pierce College Puyallup until taking on his new role at OC in December 2017.

Modernizing an outdated system

From his perspective, there is much to love about community colleges, such as the open access mission. Unlike universities, which selectively admit the most qualified students, community colleges like OC are open access, meaning anyone from the community can attend.

Although anyone in the community may attend OC, not all that do graduate. Of those who attend OC, 93% say they intend to pursue a degree or certificate, yet less than one-third of full-time students actually graduate within 3 years of starting.

Adding to the challenge are the complex admissions, registration and financial aid forms students must complete. For many students, it can feel like they have to jump through numerous hoops before being welcomed into the college community.

He looks to the airline and healthcare industries for inspiration. Their websites and apps often add value to the customer experience, offering information and services tailored to each customer's specific needs. Marty hopes to leverage technology in a similar way at OC, making it easier for students to track their progress through the college via the OC website or an app.

Achieving the Dream

To help overcome these and other challenges, OC is looking to Achieving the Dream, a national network of more than 220 community colleges dedicated to improving outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on low-income students, first-generation students and students of color, groups that have been traditionally underserved at all colleges. Achieving the Dream is a transformational framework with a laser focus on helping more students achieve their goals.



OC President Marty Cavalluzzi meets with Mehki Hughes on the mezzanine of the College Instruction Center.

For years, community colleges focused on enrollment as a key indicator of success. Today, the emphasis has shifted to program completion. Through Achieving the Dream, OC will take a holistic approach, analyzing the entire student experience from K-12 to enrollment at OC, degree completion, and the transition to a university or the workplace. OC will have access to assessment tools that will improve the availability and use of data to develop programs that increase the graduation rates of all students.

One such aspect of this work is Guided Pathways, a research-based approach that simplifies choices for students. Courses are grouped together to form clear paths through college and into careers, allowing students to complete programs without accruing unnecessary credits and student loan debt along the way.

"Students don't easily understand how to access the college and they don't see a clear path through it," he said. "We're going to make it clear for students to see their way through the college. Let's help them get to where they are going more quickly."

His favorite day of the year

As the 2017-18 academic year nears its end, Marty is excited for his favorite day of the year... graduation. He is already looking forward to leading commencement on June 17 at the Kitsap Sun Pavilion.

"This is my first graduation ceremony at OC, but I am sure I will get teared up seeing students walk across the stage," Marty says. "Out in the audience will be their kids, parents, spouses and family members. To play a part in that, we are literally changing the world, one student at a time."

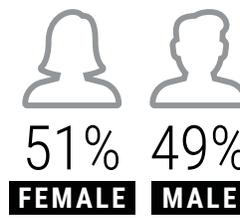
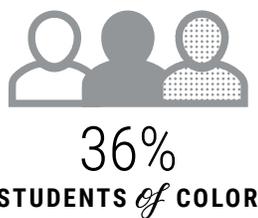
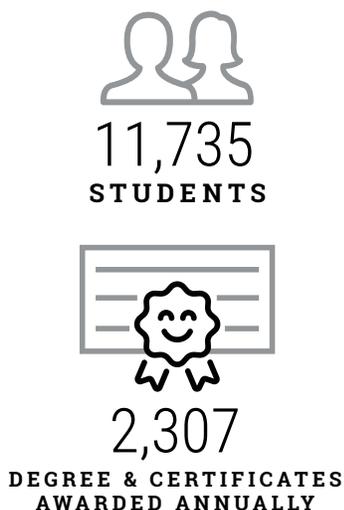
On the Cover: Marty chats with OC students Dleshante Isaiah Miller, McKenna Kendall, Sydney Garrett.

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ON THE COVER



By the Numbers



2016-17 data