

## Planetarium fundraising effort starting

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TOMS RIVER — Funding for the endangered planetarium and a way to enroll students more quickly were on the agenda for yesterday's meeting of the Ocean County College Board of Trustees.

A fundraising effort to benefit the Robert J. Novins Planetarium will officially kick off on May 4, OCC President Jon Larson said. The goal of the campaign, called "Reach for the Stars," is to raise the \$1.5 million required to reopen the planetarium, renovate the entire facility and update planetarium facilities.

"This shows our commitment to this project," Larson said. "By raising the funds needed to replace outdated equipment with the newest digital equipment will provide the best astronomical, scientific and cultural learning opportunities to our students and the public."

Mary Lee Keller, director of Academic Planning, offered the board a PowerPoint presentation on the newest online enrollment tool, WebAdvisor.

"This new tool empowers students," Keller said. "And it allows them to access the Internet any time of the day or night. Before WebAdvisor, we sometimes had registration lines out the door of our offices. This is a real time saver and it gives students the responsibility of making choices in their academic careers."

Larson agreed that the addition of WebAdvisor had significantly streamlined the registration process.

"We've added the human element to the technology that's been put into place," Larson said. "The integration of existing resources with new online programs allows students to assume more responsibility for their educational planning in an atmosphere of support and encouragement."

In other news, the board recognized the members of OCC's Tau Iota Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, which, for the first time in the college's history, became the recipient of a Distinguished Chapter Award. The honor is traditionally presented to only 25 of the 1,200-plus member chapters located in all 50 states, U.S. territories, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Germany, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, the United Arab Emirates and Palau, prompting OCC President, Jon H. Larson, to commend members and advisors on an extraordinary accomplishment.

Larson announced that the week of April 15-21 was proclaimed National Volunteer Week, with the theme, "Inspire by Example" reflecting the power of the individual to encourage those they help as well as those they serve.

"I respectfully request that the Board adopt a resolution to proclaim the month of April as National Volunteer Month at Ocean County College in recognition of the exceptional support provided by volunteers in many areas of the college."

Larson also unveiled the dates for the college's 40th Annual Commencement Week Activities: The Nursing Pinning Ceremony is set to take place at 7:30 p.m. May 22 in the Fine Arts Theatre, with the Awards Ceremony following at 7 p.m. May 23.

OCC's general outdoor commencement ceremony will take place at 6 p.m. May 24, weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather that evening, the ceremony will be moved to the Ritacco Center in Toms River.

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