**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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**Coast Colleges District Board of Trustees Approves New OCC President Angélica Suarez**

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**COSTA MESA, CA –** Following a national search, Angélica Suarez, Ph.D. has been selected to serve as the next president of Orange Coast College (OCC). Her contract was approved by the Coast Community College District Board of Trustees on April 17.

As an educational leader for more than 30 years, Dr. Suarez is committed to the transformational power of community colleges. Most recently, she served Southwestern College as acting superintendent/president and acting vice president for academic affairs. Prior to that, Dr. Suarez was vice president of student affairs for the Southwestern Community College District, where she was responsible for the leadership of student support services and programs that served approximately 20,000 students each semester in five locations.

Her past experience also includes serving in academic dean and faculty positions for Southwestern College and Wright College in Chicago.

“Dr. Suarez is recognized as a collaborative and inspiring leader who is focused on creating equitable and accessible pathways to higher education for all students,” said Coast Community College District Chancellor John Weispfenning, Ph.D. “She brings a depth and breadth of experience in student services and academic affairs to lead OCC into the future.”

Coast Board of Trustees President, Dr. Lorraine Prinsky, adds: “Dr. Suarez brings to OCC her great passion for the mission of community colleges and a wealth of experience as a dedicated leader at Southwestern College.  We are delighted to welcome her to OCC and to the Coast College District.”

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An immigrant and first-generation college student, Dr. Suarez relates directly to the shared experiences of California community college students.

“I am honored to be selected as the next president of Orange Coast College, as higher education has been a focal point of my life and career for many years,” she says. “As a former community college student, my experience serves as a true testament to the transformational power of the community college, and Orange Coast College has been transforming lives for more than 70 years.”

Dr. Suarez will take over for Interim OCC President Kevin Ballinger in July. Ballinger, who has served as the interim president during the search for a permanent president, will return to his role as vice president of instruction.

[*Orange Coast College*](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu)*, founded in 1947, is one of the nation's top transfer schools. With a student population of 25,000, OCC provides exemplary programs leading to Associate degrees and 130 career programs. The college's 164-acre campus is located in the heart of Costa Mesa.*