

# HISTORY OF OXNARD COLLEGE

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The need for a community college serving the Oxnard Plain was recognized by the Oxnard, Camarillo and Port Hueneme communities and the Governing Board of the Ventura County Community College District when the District was initially founded in 1962. A 118-acre site of farmland located in south Oxnard was purchased in 1968, and by the next year classes were offered by the “Oxnard Center” at Ramona School in Oxnard. In 1969, the architectural firms of Fisher and Wilde of Ventura, and Austin, Field and Fry of Los Angeles were chosen to design the Oxnard College campus.

The Oxnard Center program expanded in the fall of 1973 with the Oxnard Education Center at Ninth and B streets in Oxnard. By February 1974, a Camarillo Center opened as a satellite of Moorpark College. With community support led by Ventura County Community College District Trustee Dr. William Simpson, and based on data from the “2000 A.D. Educational Master Plan” report, the Governing Board of the Ventura County Community College District voted on March 26, 1974, to build Oxnard College.

In April 1975, Dr. Arthur J. Schechter was named president. Oxnard College officially opened its doors in June 1975, utilizing the Oxnard and Camarillo centers for its first summer session. Classes were added at a variety of other sites throughout Oxnard, and by mid-Fall 1975, Oxnard College reported 4,400 students enrolled. During the spring semester, the number of student enrollments continued to climb, in all likelihood setting a record for first-year community colleges in California.

During its early years, Oxnard College classes operated out of borrowed facilities in churches, K-12 schools, military bases, firehouses, public athletic facilities, and two storefront centers. In 1976, the college’s first Child Care Center opened, and the Oxnard College seal – featuring a condor atop a stack of textbooks – was introduced with the words “Truth, Knowledge, Wisdom.” In June, the college’s first commencement exercises were held at the Oxnard Civic Auditorium, with student C.J. Wood receiving the first OC diploma. In September, the North Hall and South Hall modular buildings were moved to campus. In 1977, there was a ground-breaking for permanent classroom buildings, and later that year, administration offices moved onto campus.

In the fall of 1979, the first two permanent buildings were occupied on the Oxnard College campus: the Liberal Arts (LA) building housing 20 classrooms, including science and business laboratories and faculty office wings, and a Library/Learning Resource Center (now known as Condor Hall) that included the College Library, Learning Center, and general classrooms.

In 1986, the Occupational Education complex of buildings was completed, and classes were offered for computer information systems, air conditioning and refrigeration, culinary arts, and engineering technology programs.

A new Child Development Center opened in early 1992, and a new Physical Education Complex with basketball and racquetball courts, a dance studio, and weight training facilities officially opened in the fall of 1994. The new Letters and Science complex with labs, lecture halls, and faculty and administrative offices opened in 1997.

Additional programs established in 1997 were the Oxnard College Dental Hygiene program, with classroom and clinic facilities opened on

campus, and the Oxnard College Regional Firefighter Academy, which was established during the 1997-1998 academic year with portable classrooms and training facilities at the Camarillo Airport. Other campus buildings include an automotive technology shop and automotive painting booth, a center for the Associate Student Government and Student Lounge, and an off-campus Marine Education Center in the Channel Islands Harbor.

As a result of the passage of the Measure S bond in 2002, Oxnard College received \$129 million designated for new buildings and major renovation projects. The College opened the doors to a new Cafeteria, now known as the Condor Café, in 2009. In addition, we have held dedication ceremonies for the following new buildings on campus: a new Student Services building in 2009, a new Performing Arts building in Spring 2011, a new Library Learning Resource Center (LLRC) in June 2012, and a new Dental Hygiene building in 2016. At the District’s Camarillo Airport facility, a new Fire/Sheriff Training Academy (with shared use by the Oxnard College Fire Technology program/Firefighter Academy and the Ventura County Sheriff’s Academy) opened in June 2011.

Remodeling projects included the expansion of classrooms in the Child Development Center, as well as renovating and expanding athletic facilities, which included a new track/soccer stadium with bleacher seating for 2,500, a new softball field, and upgraded baseball facilities. In 2014, renovation and seismic retrofitting began on the old Learning Resource Center (LRC) building. The LRC building, now known as Condor Hall, was completed in 2017 and includes five additional classrooms as well as a conference room. Oxnard College is committed to maintaining a comprehensive educational experience with state-of-the-art facilities for the students in its service area.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, Oxnard College will boast a new Art+Design Complex, that will serve our Studio Arts and Digital Design programs, and will replace North and South Halls.

Oxnard College has recently received several honors, including the prestigious 2020 Bellwether College Consortium Award given to its Fire Academy; the Dental Hygiene Program was a finalist. Oxnard College has also been recognized among the Aspen Institute’s top 150 community colleges in the nation and named an Equity Champion by the Campaign for College Opportunity for its work supporting Latino student transfers. In 2022, the college was also named Ventura County’s only Top STEM School for Hispanics by The Hispanic Outlook in Education Magazine.