

# History of the College

The history of technical education in Orangeburg and Calhoun counties began years before Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College opened in 1968. Prior to that, many citizens were concerned about the future of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties and felt the need to take action to ensure their growth.

At the time, the two principal economies in the state were textiles and agriculture, both of which were having problems. South Carolina was losing its most valuable resource – young people, who were taking jobs out of state.

Then-Gov. Ernest F. Hollings signed legislation in 1961 creating the technical education system. Its purpose was to help encourage economic growth in South Carolina by attracting more industries to the state and provide job training for South Carolinians who would be employed by those industries.

The South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation in May 1966 creating the Orangeburg- Calhoun Area Commission for Technical Education. This commission was charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing an adequate training program at the post- secondary level. On Oct. 25, 1967, state officials – all of whom had a hand in making the new technical education center a reality – participated in officially breaking ground for the facility, which today is known as Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College.

On Sept. 16, 1968, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical Education Center registered its first students, becoming the 11th South Carolina center in operation. During the official dedication ceremony held May 16, 1969, the late Sen. Marshall B. Williams stated that this new education facility "represents the dreams and work of many people in the area."

An important milestone in the development of how the college is recognized today was marked on Dec. 2, 1970, when Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical Education Center Director Charles P. Weber announced that the institution had become fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Upon recommendation by the Orangeburg-Calhoun Area Technical Education Commission and approval by the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, the center's name was changed in May 1974 to Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College. The purpose of this change was to more accurately reflect the college's post-secondary education mission. The director's title changed to that of president at the same time.

The campus, built on land that had previously been a dairy farm, included 84,232 square feet of classrooms, labs and administrative offices. In early 1974, an expansion program – estimated to add 140,000 square feet of usable space – began. The new additions housed administrative offices, student personnel services and a learning resource center. These buildings were dedicated in 1978 to two men recognized for the vital roles they played in the success of technical education. The Gressette Learning Resource Center was named in honor of Sen. L. Marion Gressette of St. Matthews, and the Williams Administration Building in honor of Sen. Marshall B. Williams of Orangeburg.

Since its inception, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College has continued to seek new avenues for growth both academically and technically. The college marked its 20th anniversary with the opening of the Health Sciences Building in 1988. After 11 years of planning, this 32,430-square- foot, \$3.3 million symbol of continuous commitment to quality healthcare training held its first classes in September 1988.

In January 1993, the college dedicated buildings to its three OCtech Area Commission charter members. In a ceremony marking the occasion, the Industrial/Technology, Business/Computer Technology and Faculty Administration buildings were named in honor of Joe K. Fairey II, John O. Wesner Jr. and Ben R. Wetenhall, respectively.

The Distance Learning Center brought video conferencing capabilities to the OCtech campus in 1996. This interactive center connected all 16 colleges in the South Carolina Technical Education System, giving them the technological ability to work with one another by providing additional services and educational programs previously unavailable to their respective communities. By 1998, OCtech began optimizing use of its new technology by pioneering a program that offered college credit courses on the internet. In taking this bold new step, OCtech opened up limitless educational opportunities to the community.

In 2001, the college developed a comprehensive five-year strategic plan to continue to move forward in educating and training the community. This plan was reviewed and updated yearly. The second five-year plan was developed in 2007 through a cooperative effort of faculty, staff, students and the community. The third five-year strategic plan was developed for 2012-2017. The fourth plan lasted only four years from 2017 - 2021. In 2021, administration began working on a two-year cycle with annual updates to be more responsive to the needs of students, faculty, and the community. The fifth and sixth strategic plans were developed and approved for 2021-2023 and 2023-2025.

OCtech broke ground for its 37,000-square-foot, \$5.2 million Student and Community Life Center in 2002 and cut the ribbon in 2003. Student Services, Development and Marketing, and the President's Office are housed in this building. In 2012, OCtech renamed the building Patrick Student Services to honor Larry W. Patrick, who served on the college's governing board for more than 40 years.

Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College completed extensive renovations to both the Gressette and Williams buildings in 2004. The Math and Science Center formally opened in December 2006 with needed laboratories, classrooms, lecture halls and a 400-seat auditorium.

OCtech reached another milestone in August 2009 by enrolling a record 3,252 students for the fall semester.

The Anne S. Crook Transportation and Logistics Center, named in honor of the former president, opened on May 10, 2010. This state-of-the-art 25,000-square-foot building houses the Corporate Training and Economic Development offices, as well as classroom and laboratory space for welding, truck driver training and logistics programs.

In late summer 2017, the college broke ground on a new \$12.5 million Nursing building. This 32,822-square-foot facility will be a driving force in the continued economic development of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties. The building officially opened for classes in spring 2020. In May 2021, the Area Commission voted to name the building for Frank and Pearl Tourville. The late Frank Tourville is the founder of Zeus Industrial Products.

The college celebrated its 50th anniversary during the 2018-2019 academic year. Special events were held throughout the year to commemorate a half-century of transforming the lives of students and their families.

Located strategically in the Global Logistics Triangle of I-26, I-95 and U.S. 301, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College is moving forward to provide leadership and training in advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics. The college continues to strive to fulfill its mission by providing opportunities and services for the citizens of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties.