

GENERAL INFORMATION



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• Mission Statement

The mission of Okaloosa-Walton College is to provide quality educational programs and services which enable students to achieve their goals and which enhance the community through academic, vocational, cultural, economic, and personal development opportunities.

• Goals

- To provide an environment that promotes equity and access to college programs for all members of the community.
- To provide student services and activities that enhance student success.
- To provide courses leading to approved associate and baccalaureate degrees.
- To provide certificate and degree programs that prepare students for employment and careers in the public and private sectors.
- To provide leadership and support for the economic and workforce development of Okaloosa and Walton counties.
- To provide college preparatory and basic skills instruction, literacy programs, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), adult secondary education and vocational preparatory instruction.
- To provide social, cultural and co-curricular opportunities in Okaloosa and Walton counties.
- To provide a variety of continuing education and distance learning opportunities.
- To promote understanding, application, and use of technology.

• Background

Located in the coastal heart of Northwest Florida, Okaloosa-Walton College has earned a reputation for educational excellence and community involvement. Part of Florida's network of 28 public community colleges, OWC is one of several community colleges in the state authorized to offer bachelor's degree programs. The college offers post-secondary

education opportunities within reach of every Okaloosa and Walton County citizen. The college's two-county service district stretches from the Gulf of Mexico to the Alabama state line and encompasses a population in excess of 200,000 permanent residents.

In addition to a 264 acre campus in Niceville, OWC operates a joint campus with the University of West Florida in Fort Walton Beach, the Chautauqua Center in DeFuniak Springs, the Robert L.F. Sikes Education Center in Crestview and full-time centers at Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field.

When its doors first opened in August of 1964 in a temporary campus of vacant buildings in Valparaiso, OWC had a faculty of ten instructors, three support personnel and five administrators for the 309 full-time and 458 part-time students on hand. Now, over forty years later, approximately 90 full-time and 164 part-time instructors, as well as 239 support staff and 12 administrators serve more than 15,000 students annually at the college's six campuses and centers. Since its inception, more than 200,000 persons have been served by Okaloosa-Walton College.

Originally named Okaloosa-Walton Junior College, the college remained at the temporary Valparaiso Campus until December 1968 when the college moved to the permanent Niceville Campus. Located between State Roads 85 and 285, the 264 beautifully wooded acres of the Niceville Campus were transferred to the college from the Eglin Air Force Reservation by an act of Congress in January 1966. OWJC changed its name to Okaloosa-Walton Community College in 1988 in order to more accurately reflect the college's scope and mission in the local community. In December 2003, OWCC was accredited as a bachelor's degree granting institution and in May 2004, the Florida Legislature officially changed the college name to Okaloosa-Walton College.

A unique "2+2" program was established with the University of West Florida in 1982, and an act of Congress designated a permanent site for the OWC/UWF Fort Walton Beach

Campus in 1989. The 156 acre Fort Walton Beach Campus now boasts a fully combined program from the freshman year through graduate school and annually serves a combined enrollment of approximately 7,500 students.

Throughout the college's history, OWC has maintained a consistent record of educational excellence. The median grade point average for OWC students who transfer to the state university system consistently ranks among the top five in the state. OWC instructors have been recognized with numerous state and national level awards for instructional excellence. The college's Forensics Debate team has achieved numerous state and national championships. OWC students and student athletes are also consistently named to the All-Florida Academic Teams.

In addition to a record of regional and national accolades, OWC offers state-of-the-art student computer labs, a top-rated sports complex and a full program of intercollegiate and intramural sports, an ROTC program, a child development center, and a criminal justice training center. A 120,000 square foot fine and performing arts center on the Niceville Campus provides students the finest in instructional facilities for dance, music, theater, the visual arts and the humanities.

• Facilities

The Niceville Campus of Okaloosa-Walton College (OWC) is located between State Roads 85 and 285 on 264 beautifully wooded acres. Baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, adult basic education, technical certificates, college and vocational preparatory programs, GED preparation and testing, and continuing education programs are offered in both day and evening classes. The Niceville Campus includes the following permanent facilities:

Administration (A): houses the executive and administrative offices, including instructional services, administrative and financial services, marketing/community relations, the college foundation and the OWC Alumni Association.

• Facilities (continued)

Technical Laboratories (B): contains drafting and design, laboratories for computer-assisted drafting and computer-aided manufacturing, computer engineering technology, Prometric Testing, the local Cisco Academy and the Women's Educational Resource Center.

Student Services Center (C-1): houses admissions, registration, counseling, financial aid, advisement services, and Veteran's Affairs.

Business and Student Support Services (C-2): provides facilities for instructional programs in business education, business administration, computer science, and mid-management. Testing services and the Career Resource Center are also housed in this location.

Collegiate High School (D): houses the OWC Collegiate High School offices, classrooms and labs.

Learning Resources Center (LRC): contains a collection of more than 100,000 items. There are 90,000 books, 11,000 audiovisual items, 400 magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and 400 electronic databases and web sites with over 5,000 online full-text periodicals. A statewide network provides access to the holdings of all 11 state university libraries and 28 community college learning resources centers, numerous electronic databases and worldwide information sources through the Internet. The LRC also contains conference room facilities and the college's Learning Technologies offices.

Classroom Building (E): contains the Donald Gallimore Nursing and Allied Health Facilities and a variety of other OWC instructional programs. Located on the upper north mezzanine levels is the Academic Success Center, three computer labs/classrooms and the Division of Communications and Social Sciences office. The first floor level contains faculty offices, a computer lab, and classrooms. The college's Nursing and Allied Health programs in registered nursing, surgical technology, radiography, paramedic and dental assisting are located in center core of this building. The Graphics Technology instructional program and the Adult General Education classes are located on the lower level.

Athletics and Physical Education (F): contains offices, classrooms, and storage facilities for the Division of Athletics and Physical Education, and houses the Wellness Center.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) (F-1): contains ROTC offices and classrooms.

Public Safety Firing Range: is located behind building (M) on the northeast corner of the Niceville campus.

Public Safety Driving Range: is located north of the softball field.

Utilities, Maintenance, and Receiving (G) and (G-1): houses the air conditioning and heating equipment, central services, maintenance, custodial, grounds functions and security office.

Gymnasium (H): a multi-purpose facility used to house all indoor physical education activities and indoor sports events.

Mattie Kelly Fine and Performing Arts Center (J): consists of two theaters, two art galleries, a dance studio, recital hall, and choral and musical studios. An amphitheater is located adjacent to the center's Visual Arts Building.

Visual Arts (J): a unique circular building in the Mattie Kelly Arts Center complex that houses instructional art programs in pottery, drawing and painting.

College Mall (K): contains the Student Activities offices including Student Government, food services, the College Store, lounges, meeting rooms, recreational areas, and houses the Continuing Education Department.

Mathematics (L): provides offices, classrooms, and specialized laboratories for the mathematics department.

Child Development & Education Center (M): contains the Mary Lou O'Connor Child Development Education Center.

Classroom Building (P): currently under renovation.

Graphic Services and Public Safety (Q): houses Graphic Services and the facilities, offices, classrooms, and specialized laboratories for programs offered by the Florida Criminal Justice Training Center No. 21 and the college's Public Safety Division.

Computer Services (R): provides laboratories and related instructional facilities for the computer science program. The college's Information Technology staff is located in this facility.

Robert E. Greene Science Building (S): is comprised of classrooms and laboratory facilities for programs in biology, physics, physical sciences, chemistry, and the offices of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA).

Observatory (S-2): located on the northwest corner of the Niceville Campus, the Observatory houses an 18" automated reflective telescope, complete with a CCD camera and software to allow the location and recording of events in the sky and a classroom for Astronomy classes.

The Sports Complex: is located west of the Niceville Campus and contains a golf course, field houses for men's and women's baseball and softball, two diamonds, bleachers, and a Strength Training Center.

OWC operates instructional sites throughout the two county area, making the programs and services of the college easily accessible to the entire community.

The Okaloosa-Walton College and the University of West Florida Fort Walton Beach Campus is a fully combined joint campus which provides higher education opportunities ranging from Associate to Doctoral degree programs, as well as non-credit and adult basic education programs. In addition, the campus houses OWC's various economic development programs including: the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County, the Technology Coast Manufacturing & Engineering Network, the Quality Institute, the Northwest Florida Manufacturing Technology Center and the OWC Corporate Training Center. The OWC/UWF campus is located on a 156-acre wooded site on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, and includes the following permanent facilities:

Administration (1): houses administrative offices and the business and registration offices of both institutions, a large community meeting room, and two conference rooms.

Student Services (2): contains the campus College Store, student center and student government offices.

Classroom Building (3): houses classrooms.

Classroom Building (4): comprised of faculty offices, classrooms, a reading improvement laboratory, some tutoring services and the OWC academic counseling/advising office.

Utilities and Maintenance Building (5): houses the air conditioning and heating equipment, central services, maintenance, and custodial/grounds functions for the campus.

Science Building (6): contains science laboratory facilities for programs in earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics.

• **Facilities (continued)**

Computer Labs (7): houses computer laboratories, the Math Lab, classrooms, and OWC's various Economic Development programs.

Library, Fitness Center, Auditorium (8): contains a 14,391 volume graduate level library operated by the University of West Florida, a fitness center, and a 230 seat lecture auditorium.

The OWC Chautauqua Center (N): located on 90 wooded acres along Highway 90 West in DeFuniak Springs, offers a full range of college services and programs. Diversified college credit and non-credit programs including Associate degrees, adult education/GED preparation, college preparatory, and recreational/leisure courses are offered in day and evening classes. The center provides admissions/registration, financial aid information, placement testing and academic counseling services. The center houses two computer labs, a career center, small conferencing facilities and a child care center.

The Robert L.F. Sikes Education Center (I): in Crestview is located on Highway 90 East. The full-service center offers college credit, adult basic education and other courses and provides placement testing, advising and program planning, registration, and financial aid services. The center houses two computer labs, classrooms, and administrative/student services space.

OWC Eglin Air Force Base and OWC Hurlburt Field Centers: offer college credit and noncredit programs for military and civil service personnel. Both centers provide admissions/registration, financial aid information, placement testing and advising services. Also offered are courses specifically geared toward the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) studies and other courses designed to meet the needs of individual military units, base contractors, and individuals who are retiring from the military.

• **OWC Foundation**

The Okaloosa-Walton College Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization which seeks tax deductible contributions to help OWC promote academic excellence through scholarships, instructional improvements, and educational equipment acquisition.

The OWC Foundation was established in 1988 to give individuals, organizations and businesses the opportunity to directly invest in the educational mission of OWC.

As an IRS 501 (c) (3) organization, donations to the OWC Foundation are tax deductible and may be eligible for matching funds. The Dr. Philip Benjamin Matching Grant Program matches private contributions to community colleges for endowments on a \$3 to \$2 ratio for programs and equipment and \$1 to \$1 ratio for scholarships. The OWC Foundation has a 23 member Board of Directors comprised of business and community leaders in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

The OWC Foundation is vitally important to the quality and diversity of higher education in our community. The foundation operates under the philosophy of building principal and using the interest to support various college endeavors. To further the mission of the college, no donations to the OWC Foundation are used for the foundation's operating expenses. Annual pledges of \$50 to the Foundation President's Club help underwrite these operational expenses. For information, contact the OWC Foundation office at (850) 729-5357 or visit www.owcfoundation.org.

• **OWC Alumni Association**

The Okaloosa-Walton College Alumni Association provides all former students and graduates with an organization to promote the interests of OWC. Alumni help support causes which enhance educational opportunities and perpetuate the friendships made while attending OWC.

Membership in the OWC Alumni Association is open to all graduates of the college and to any student who has attended OWC.

The Alumni Association, in cooperation with the college, participates in various activities and sponsors events. It encourages creation of OWC Alumni chapters at senior institutions. The association attempts to provide resources to help in scholarships and other program support beneficial to OWC.

For additional information about the OWC Alumni Association contact the OWC Foundation and Alumni office at (850) 729-5357.

• **OWC Mattie Kelly Cultural and Environmental Institute**

The Mattie Kelly Cultural and Environmental Institute at OWC was established in 1997. The institute is a partnership of OWC, the OWC Foundation, Inc., and the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance of OWC, dedicated to the cultural,

environmental, historical and instructional goals set forth for the institute by the late Mattie M. Kelly of Destin. The objectives of the institute are: biology and marine science studies associated with Choctaw Bay and the Gulf of Mexico; display of the cultural heritage of NW Florida; instruction in the Fine & Performing Arts and Environmental Sciences; to provide a location for fine arts groups and performing groups; and to provide a location for conferences and seminars offered through OWC. For information, contact (850) 729-5357 or email KellyInstitute@owc.edu.

• **Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA)**

The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA), under the auspices of Okaloosa-Walton College, is an organization committed to sustaining and providing optimum utilization of the Choctawhatchee Basin watershed. CBA provides opportunities for citizens, educators, and technical experts to promote the health of the Choctawhatchee Basin watershed. For more information on CBA visit www.basinalliance.org or call (850) 729-6456.

• **Year-Round Opportunity**

The college's programs of continuing study vary considerably in their timing. Enrichment programs, workshops, institutes, and numerous community services and certificate programs are offered on demand as sufficient requests occur. Special programs are announced as they are developed. The public is especially invited to request short or extended offerings in areas of need or interest.

• **Composition of Student Body**

Okaloosa-Walton College is a coeducational institution serving approximately 15,000 students annually. Students age 16 to 24 comprise 57 percent of the student body. Students age 25 to 34 comprise 22 percent and students 35 to 49 comprise 18 percent. Other age students comprise the remainder of the student population.

• **Accreditation**

Okaloosa-Walton College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor and associate degrees, certificates and diplomas. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools may be contacted at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097. Telephone number (404) 679-4501, web site: www.sacscoc.org.

• Equal Rights

Okaloosa-Walton College is dedicated to the concepts of equity and equal opportunity. It is the specific intention of the college not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, handicap, marital status, national origin, race, religion, or sex in its employment practices or in the admission and treatment of students.

The OWC Equity Coordinator may be contacted through the Office of the Director of Human Resources, Niceville Campus, extension 6365. The coordinator is designated to coordinate compliance with the Florida Educational Equity Act and information about the availability of the OWC Grievance Procedure. The Equity Coordinator is also Coordinator of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

• Student Records and Transcripts

Student Records

The Office of Enrollment Services oversees both admissions and registration at Okaloosa-Walton College. All permanent, official, and final records of students who have attended the college are housed in and released by this office located on the Niceville Campus. A student who submits an application for admission and official transcripts to the college yet fails to enroll within one year must re-submit original documents upon re-entry to the college. Information is released only upon the written request of the student in accordance with Federal laws.

Additional information on student records, the procedures for accessing records, appealing record contents, receiving restricted records, and other rights of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 are available from the Office of Enrollment Services.

Student Transcripts

A transcript of a student's academic record is kept in electronic files, filed in a permanent record folder or housed on an archival record medium in the Office of Enrollment Services. Transcripts that are being sent directly to another educational institution may be requested by submitting written request to the Office of Enrollment Services, an e-mail to transcript@owc.edu or at www.owc.edu. Students requiring a personal copy of their transcript, or a copy for a third party other than an educational institution, must submit their request in writing by completing the Transcript Request Form or by submitting a signed statement to the Office of Enrollment Services in person, via U.S. Mail or by fax.

Transcripts and other official student information will not be released if the student has an outstanding obligation to the college (financial obligation or an incomplete admission file). Under most circumstances, transcript requests are processed within 24 hours after the request. However, transcripts will be sent within seven (7) working days of the request.

Release of Student Information

Although the following directory information may be released at the discretion of the college, the college does not routinely release such information to third parties: name, address, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photographs, dates of attendance, enrollment status, degrees and awards received, and the most previous education agency or institution attended. In addition to directory information, the college is required by law to release to the United States Armed Forces student recruiting information which may include the student's name, address, phone number, date and place of birth, level of education, most recent previous institution attended, major field of study, and degrees received.

Access & Review of Records

A student or parent* will be accorded access to the student's record within a reasonable time after the submission of a written request to the custodian of that record. Suitable arrangements will be made to permit the record to be reviewed in the presence of a representative of the custodian of the record.

*Rights of parents: Once a student reaches the age of eighteen, or is enrolled in a post-secondary program, parents no longer have any rights under the Privacy Act unless:

- The student gives written consent to release the information to the student's parents, or
- The parents provide evidence that the student is a dependent of the parents as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or
- The student is a high school student enrolled in an accelerated program, such as dual enrollment, early admissions or concurrent enrollment.

A student has the right to request the amendment of their educational record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. The student should

write to the College Registrar, clearly identify the part of the record he or she wants changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

A student has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the offices that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Protection of Privacy

Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (Public Law 93-380) students may request that no information, including "Directory Information", be released except as required by law, by obtaining a Notification to Deny Disclosure of Directory Information Form from the Dean of Students. This form must be signed and submitted to the Dean. Note: A student's request to prevent the release of any informational items may result in preventing the publication of all items including graduation, honors, and awards. Students are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students or the Associate Dean, Student Services/Registrar with any concerns about confidentiality of records and release of information. The custodian of student records may release information from these records to others only upon authorization in writing from the student or upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction except as required by the President in the discharge of his duties as authorized by law, the state, and the board.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position; a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the District Board of Trustees or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in

• Student Records and Transcripts (continued)

performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Enrollment and Degree Verification

Okaloosa-Walton College has authorized the National Student Clearinghouse to provide enrollment and degree verifications for the purposes of employment or background screening. The National Student Clearinghouse can be contacted at:

Web: www.degreeverify.com

Phone: (703) 742-4239

E-mail: degreeverify@studentclearinghouse.org

Free student self-service enrollment verification is provided by the National Student Clearinghouse. Students can print enrollment verification certificates, including enrollment dates and target graduation dates for use in obtaining military ID cards, health insurance and other items. To access enrollment verification log onto the RaiderNet at www.owc.edu.

The college utilizes the services of the National Student Loan Clearinghouse to automatically process enrollment verifications for student loans.

Address Change

It is the student's responsibility to keep information current by officially notifying the college. The student's signature is required to make such changes in person, or students may make changes electronically by using the OWC RaiderNet system and a PIN (personal ID number). Forms to change residence, mailing address, telephone number, etc. are available from the Office of Enrollment Services, (850) 729-5374.

• College Web Site

The OWC web site (www.owc.edu) supports the mission of the college by providing worldwide access to college information, registration, financial aid, student services, distance learning instruction and support, academic resources, and more. The OWC web site is the gateway to subordinate web sites affiliated with the college such as those maintained by individual college instructors or organizations. The privacy of users is upheld through the standards in force for public institutions in Florida, and privacy policies are posted on the site.

• RaiderNet

RaiderNet is the OWC student on-line information and registration system.

This computer based system provides students on-line access to register for classes, view their term grade report, unofficial student transcript, enrollment verification, view financial information such as payment due dates and fees owed, financial aid status, and allows students to update directory information such as a change of address. RaiderNet provides access via a personal identification number (PIN) that ensures that the student alone will have access to his or her own student information. The system is available via the Internet worldwide through the OWC internet site at www.owc.edu. Questions regarding RaiderNet should be referred to (850) 729-6922.

• Student E-Mail Accounts

Students are assigned an OWC e-mail account when they apply for admission. In order to stay informed and aware, students are encouraged to activate and check their account on a regular basis. Students may choose to forward their OWC assigned e-mail account. For more information on student e-mail accounts at OWC log onto the college internet site at www.owc.edu or contact the student e-mail/IT helpdesk, during regular business hours, at (850) 729- 5396.

• FACTS

FACTS, the Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students system, allows access to student services and resources for Florida public community colleges and universities, and many private institutions. OWC students may apply for admission, register for classes, apply for transient status, view their student transcripts, run a degree audit or track progress toward graduation. FACTS can be accessed either through the college internet site or directly through the FACTS web site at www.facts.org.

• Solicitation/Promotions

Agencies or organizations that request permission to display, distribute, or present programs that are not within the educational mission of the college must submit a request in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed activity. This request shall contain the name of the organization, the proposed time, date, and location, and the topic of the items to be displayed or distributed. The agency or organization must complete an Events Proposal form which will be routed for review and approval to the Vice President of Administration for final approval by the college president or his designee. The college reserves the right to determine the time, place, and manner of the presentation.

• Drug-Free Workplace

Okaloosa-Walton College is firmly committed to maintaining a drug-free workplace. Employees and consultants are prohibited from engaging in unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the workplace while officially representing the college. Violation of this policy will subject the employee or consultant to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Violators may also be required to participate in an approved drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program. Compliance with this policy statement is a condition of employment with Okaloosa-Walton College as an organization receiving federal grants and contracts.

• College Name Usage

The name of the college and the names/titles of the college's recognized student and other organizations are owned by the college. Students or others shall not organize independent groups of the same name nor function as a group independent of the college utilizing the name of OWC or of an OWC organization. The official college seal, college logo, and the logos of OWC organizations are also restricted and may only be used with permission.

• Copyright Statement for College Publications

College policy (Policy No. 6Hx17-9.03) states that employees and students will comply with the U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code, Section 101). Employees and students may use, perform, or reproduce copyrighted works when authorized by (1) licenses or written permission from copyright owner; (2) the fair-use guidelines (available from the OWC Learning Resources Center); (3) the principle of fair use; (4) specific documented exemptions in the copyright law. Copyright items include print, video, electronic data, performances, music, and computer software.

Employees and students who willfully disregard this policy or the specific provisions set forth in the College Copyright Manual (available in the OWC Learning Resources Center) are subject to state and federal penalties as well as college disciplinary action. The college will refuse to grant a request to copy material if fulfillment of the request might lead to a violation of the copyright law. Further information is available from the Office of the Director of Learning Resources, (850) 729-5392.