



# Capital Campus

Staff Newsletter of Thomas Edison State College • June 2008



Heather Brooks

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*- Heather Brooks  
Associate Director of Human Resources*

## College Launches “Brightest Lights” Employee Recognition Program

*Spotlight of Recognition Aimed at Employee Standouts*

**S**hine on Thomas Edison State College employees! The College is establishing the “Brightest Lights” employee recognition program to identify and formally recognize College and New Jersey State Library employees who demonstrate exceptional performance. The intent of the program is to increase morale and recognize non-management staff for going above and beyond their normal job requirements.

“We currently do not offer an avenue for recognizing employees publicly across the College and the Library, for a job well done,” said **Heather Brooks**, associate director, Office of Human Resources. “We anticipate this program will provide an effective means of recognizing and rewarding non-managerial staff whose dedication, imagination and professional skills improve the services provided by the College and the Library.

“These programs have proven to increase employee job satisfaction and foster positive employee relations. I love that the committee is comprised of non-managerial volunteers so that the recipients can be selected by their colleagues. I am anxiously looking forward to the committee’s first meeting this month and the first winner, who will be announced in July.”

The program is open to full-time and permanent part-time College and Library non-management staff, who have been employed for at least 12 months. Any full-time or permanent part-time employee may submit a nomination for a fellow employee.

Nomination forms and procedures can be obtained from the Office of Human Resources. An employee who has received the “Brightest Lights” award is ineligible to win

## Understanding the Differences



College staff from the offices of Admissions, Registrar, Learner Services and Advisement explored some of the underlying cultural dynamics that shape the way they communicate with students and colleagues during a May 14 workshop facilitated by Vince Haas. Haas is an adjunct professor of communications at La Salle University and principal of InterComm Solutions, a consulting firm. Haas' presentation helped staff to demystify variations in communication styles and increase their awareness of differing communication styles in various cultures.

Pictured from the left are **Sharon Smith**, registrar; Haas; **David Hoftiezer**, director of Admissions; and **David Anderson**, assistant vice provost for Learner Support.



## Focus On Tammy Conley

The staff in Human Resources knows that first impressions count – which explains **Tammy Conley's** place in their scheme.

Since December 2003, Conley has been assisting new College employees with the orientation procedure and shepherding them through the mass of paperwork surrounding benefits, payroll, insurance and employment processing. The human resources specialist continues to bear this torch throughout employees' careers by fielding questions and offering guidance – often the moment it is needed.

It takes someone with extraordinary composure to understand the New Jersey state benefits system and continuously interpret policy for staff; but by all accounts, Conley seems up for the challenge. "Tammy has a solid foundation and dedication to her job," said **Heather Brooks**, associate director of Human Resources. "Tammy has shown eagerness, inspiration and commitment, all while continually increasing the breadth of her responsibilities at the College. Her command of HR policies and procedures, and exemplary customer service is of enormous value to us."

Benefits and payroll may be as close as Conley normally gets to a plan.

"I'll begin my day by saying 'I'm going to tackle A, B and C when I get to work; but more often than not, I have to give up my agenda,'" admitted Conley. "Employees' needs take precedence. Most days it involves gathering paperwork and information on new hires' medical, disability, pensions; change of address, inputting payroll changes, fielding phone calls and following up, so my schedule can be completely unpredictable. Currently our team is collaborating with the Office of the Controller in upgrading our payroll system, which will involve much administrative preparation before we can go live with the new system."

Conley, a Medford, N.J., native, has spent 20 years in the field of human resources, first at the CVS Distribution Center in Lumberton, and more recently for Merck-Medco in Willingboro. She currently lives in Eastampton, N.J. "I enjoy spending time with my nephew and godson, Ryan, a great little guy who loves being outside. He is 15 months old and definitely keeps me active!"

The outdoors, sand, sun and salt air is where Conley retreats to clear her head. "I enjoy going to Long Beach Island in the summer, gardening and riding my bike. I am also an avid concertgoer and enjoy attending shows. An ideal vacation for me is spent on an island or aboard a cruise ship."

Conley feels completely at home in her department too. "I enjoy working at Thomas Edison State College very much. I love working with the team in HR and find it very gratifying anytime I can help fellow employees."

## Brightest Lights

continued from page 1

again during the following 12-month period. There is no limit to the number of times an employee may be nominated for the "Brightest Lights" award; however, employees must submit a new nomination form for each new selection process.

The selection committee will be comprised of staff from various divisions of Thomas Edison State College and the New Jersey State Library.

The committee will establish criteria for the award during its inaugural meeting in June. The award, which will be finalized by the committee at its first meeting, will include celebratory gifts.

The award winners will be acknowledged in future issues of Thomas Edison State College's staff newsletter, **Capital Campus**.

## Staff Activities

**Kaizer Bemah**, clerk, Office of Learner Services attended "The Outstanding Receptionist" seminar, sponsored by Fred Pryor Career Track in Princeton on April 9. The half-day seminar covered topics including telephone protocol, time management, managing multiple tasks and putting your best foot forward while being the front face of the College.

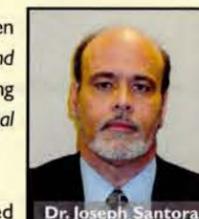


Sylvia G. Hamilton

**Sylvia G. Hamilton**, vice provost for Strategic Partnerships, and **Dr. David Grossman**, vice provost and dean, School of Professional and Continuing Studies, recently presented a program, *Two Innovative Initiatives for Degree Completion Programs: the UPS/ITESC Partnership and Graduate! Philadelphia* during the UCEA (University Continuing Education Association) Annual Conference on Inspiration, Creativity and Innovation in New Orleans.

**Antoinette Lewis**, Prior Learning Assessment specialist assistant, Office of Prior Learning Assessment, recently received a Master of Arts degree in education/curriculum & instruction from the University of Phoenix.

**Dr. Joseph C. Santora**, dean, School of Business and Management has been appointed to the editorial board of the *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship* (JAME). Additionally, Santora has co-authored an article defining and measuring servant leadership behavior in organizations published in the *Journal of Management Studies*, one of the leading management journals in the world.



Dr. Joseph Santora

**Todd Siben**, senior program advisor, Office of Learner Services, attended the NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) Mid Atlantic Regional conference in Pittsburgh, April 16-18. He presented a session entitled *Challenges faced by adult students returning to school, and how to effectively navigate degree completion, distance education and credit for 'life experience*. Attended by 28 people, Siben noted that judging by the e-mails he has received, the session was very well received. He presented the same session on May 9 at the New Jersey State NACADA conference held at William Paterson University.



Cynthia Ventura

**Cynthia C. Ventura**, program advisor, Office of Learner Services, received a master's degree in counseling from Philadelphia Biblical University in Langhorne, Pa. Her thesis was on the *Establishment and Facilitation of a Perinatal Grief and Bereavement Therapy Group*.

The **Office of Academic Advisement** hosted Shelly Dixon-Williams, a doctoral student at the University of Albany on April 3-4, as she interviewed Thomas Edison State College advisors as a part of her doctoral research entitled *A Cross-Case Comparison of Two Adult-Focused, Undergraduate Institutions*. The results will be shared with the College.

The Office of Corporate-Higher Education Programs is now the **Center for Academic Program Reviews (CAPR)**. CAPR was established to coordinate the academic review of specific courses, licenses, certificates and examinations to determine college-level merit. At this time, CAPR and the deans are working to create a priority list of licenses, certificates and courses that are candidates for an updated academic review by the College. A master schedule will be developed to cover a five-year period. An Academic Program Review (APR) can result in an award of college credit for training/education courses, certifications, licenses or registries.

Thus far, CAPR has evaluated four organizations: National Kitchen & Bath Association, New Jersey Council for the Humanities, PC AGE, and The American College. It is noteworthy to mention that New Jersey Council for the Humanities and PC AGE (former ACE participating organizations) are among a number of former ACE clients that have expressed an interest in joining the College's APR review. Organizations that undergo an APR review have the opportunity to establish a partnership with the College.

Please Turn to Page 4

# New Staff



**Laura Brenner-Scotti** has been appointed acting assistant director in the Office of Military Education. Brenner-Scotti is located on the 2nd floor of the Academic Center and may be reached at extension 2193.



**Louis Green** has been appointed systems coordinator, Office of Management Information Systems (MIS). Green is located on the 2nd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 2565.



**Yolanda Hernandez** has been appointed assistant director in the Office of Marketing. Hernandez is located on the 3rd floor of the Kelsey Building and may be reached at extension 2060.



**Andrea O. Mirsky** has been appointed program advisor in the Office of Learner Services. Mirsky is located on the 2nd floor of the Academic Center and may be reached at extension 3315.



**Gillian B. Wyckoff** has been appointed acting account executive in the Office of Strategic Partnerships. Wyckoff is located on the 1st floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 3479.

## Staff Activities

(CAPR News continued from Page 3)

**Dan Negrón**, director, who has been at the College since May 1986, feels that he has the best job at the College because in meeting with different organizations he finds each has a unique commitment to education. Prior to joining Thomas Edison State College, Negrón worked with the City Colleges of Chicago.

**Peggy Allan**, program assistant, has worked at the College since 1989. Prior to coming to the College, she worked in various peace and social justice movements. At the College, she has worked with organizations in various depart-



Up close with The Center for Academic Program Reviews team (left to right) **Andrea Johnson**, **Dan Negrón** and **Peggy Allan**.

mental incarnations from the Center for Corporate & Public Partnerships in 1989 to the new Center for Academic Program Reviews.

**Andrea Johnson**, senior clerk typist, has been at the College since June 2004. She is the first person that people encounter when they enter the 3rd floor of the Canal Banks Building where CAPR is located. Before coming to the College, Johnson worked with the non-profit organization Metropolitan Trenton African American Chamber of Commerce.



## College Staff Bring Kids to Work

The sons and daughters of Thomas Edison State College staff shared their vision on careers and the future of the workplace with **Ann Prime-Monaghan**, assistant vice provost for General Education and Learning Outcomes, during 'Take Your Child to Work Day' events at the College on April 24.

"It gets better and better each year thanks to the efforts of the Office of Human Resources staff," said **Todd Siben**, senior program advisor in the Office of Learner Services.



Capital Campus is produced by the Office of Communications at Thomas Edison State College. To submit a story idea for the newsletter or for more information, please contact Linda Soltis at extension 2065.