



Dr. P. Henry van Zyl

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- Dr. P. Henry van Zyl, Vice Provost
Center for Directed Independent
Adult Learning (DIAL)

Courses in a Flash

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE INTRODUCES
A NEW COURSE FORMAT FOR STUDENTS

The array of course completion options currently available at Thomas Edison State College is about to include a small but mighty member.

Beginning in spring 2009, students can have entire courses delivered to them on a single flash drive. The device, called 'FlashTrack,' is smaller than a pack of gum but will contain the same structure and functionality of a typical Thomas Edison State College course, and will not require a constant online connection. "Students will still need the Internet to submit assignments, but not to receive or complete course assignments. It recreates the online experience in an offline setting," noted **Dr. P. Henry van Zyl**, vice provost, Center for Directed Independent Adult Learning (DIAL) at Thomas Edison State College.

"**Cynthia MacMillan**, director of Course Design and Development, and **Matthew Cooper**, instructional design technologist, did an extraordinary job of rapidly moving the College into this new era of course delivery. It was a team effort, and kudos to everyone in DIAL for helping to make this possible," said van Zyl. "Thanks also goes to the College's Foundation Board and to **Vice President John Thurber**, for sharing our vision and obtaining the financial resources to make these first steps possible. The new mobile learning platform will afford students even more flexibility

to do their course work while commuting, on military deployment, sitting on the beach or in any instance where Web connectivity is not convenient or readily available."

FlashTrack courses will be available to students through MBS Direct, the College's online book store. The 2GB flash drives will be mailed to students with everything pre-loaded to complete their courses including software necessary to accomplish their tasks: MS Office-compatible applications, including spreadsheet, antivirus protection, PDF, media player and photo-viewing software; along with an e-mail and Web utility for students to access the Internet when a connection becomes available.

"The flash drive acts in much the same way a computer hard drive does but it is portable, secure, reusable and completely self-contained," noted van Zyl. "The storage capacity of today's flash drives is tremendous."

Van Zyl said the portability and integrity of FlashTrack courses will be an attractive option to deployed military personnel, mass transit riders and busy adults who are mobile more often than they are at a stationary location. The devices are compatible with both PCs and MACs, so students using the new format can go from computer-to-computer, or device-to-

FlashTrack

(continued from page 1)

device, completing and saving their course work each time without leaving a digital footprint.

"The FlashTrack devices are completely secure," added van Zyl. "There's nothing left behind on the host computer – all personal and course information is isolated on the flash drive, which students take away with them. Students can then upload their completed assignments to their Blackboard/myEdison course space or e-mail assignments to their mentor from an Internet connected computer."

Initially, 14 Thomas Edison State College courses will be offered which utilize the flash drive technology. DIAL anticipates that the FlashTrack option will be available for all online courses in Spring 2009.

Students planning to enroll in Guided Study courses will soon see FlashTrack drives replace CD-ROMs currently in use.

Multiple Choices

A second prong of the College's mobile learning initiative will feature expanded course completion options for students with Web-enabled cell phones. This initiative is also expected to be implemented in spring 2009 and will allow students to utilize their smartphones to download multiple choice quizzes and midterm tests and submit their answers directly back to the College. Van Zyl anticipates that e-Pack® courses will be the first to leverage this technology.

"From an outreach standpoint, the College will also be able to transmit term calendar reminders, surveys, alerts, course news and updates to targeted student audiences instantly," noted van Zyl.



Focus On: Dr. Penelope S. Brouwer

When Vice President of Planning and Research **Dr. Penelope "Penny" Brouwer** proved that you really can come home again, it was a stroke of luck for the College.

Brouwer, who was an executive assistant for the president and directed Institutional Research, Planning and Outcomes Assessment from 1994 to 1998, left to follow her late husband's career in Boston. While there, she cultivated her own, first landing at Boston University Medical Center, where she served as a program director and

later, at Mount Ida College in Newton, Mass., where she worked as a school director, an assistant professor in the School of Business and chair for that college's strategic planning committee. She returned to Thomas Edison State College in 2005 where she and her staff are now responsible for guiding the College's Strategic Vision Plan.

"I met **Dr. Pruitt** through my work with Gov. [Thomas] Kean's Management Improvement Plan when we were both new to the state in 1982," Brouwer recalled. Their paths crossed frequently thereafter, through her work as deputy assistant chancellor for Planning and Research at the N.J. Department of Higher Education and the eventual deployment of the New Jersey Intercampus Network, a collaborative effort of New Jersey's colleges and universities. "I remain thoroughly impressed with his ability to manage and move the College forward. There is a wonderful culture that he has fostered. He has instilled in many of us his resolve that we can be the heart and soul of higher education; and, even though we deliver it differently doesn't mean we're not vested in its traditions. The unique ways we can be more nimble than most in reaction to market forces, fascinate me."

Just prior to her return to the College, in the midst of a busy career and raising children, Brouwer earned an Executive Doctor of Management (EDM) from the Weatherhead School at Case Western Reserve University in May 2004. Her dissertation, ironically

resonant today, was titled *The Tale of Two Colleges: The Fiscal Crisis of the 1990s – Strategies for Managing in Uncertainty*. Brouwer also holds an MPA from Suffolk University, Sawyer School of Management; and a BA in History, *cum laude* from the University of Virginia.

Today, Brouwer's determination to uphold the College's institutional objectives and expand programs – all while taking stock of our strengths and weaknesses along the way – make her a capable and unflinching accomplice in

the College's growth. "The Strategic Plan and supporting initiatives of customer service training, operations reviews and professional development give us an opportunity to assess where constructive change can take place. This is not because we need fixing, but because we can discover better ways to do things," she noted. "Attracting more students to the institution and providing them with a better experience than they would get elsewhere will make the College a stronger, more competitive and more enjoyable place to work."

The time that Brouwer enjoys away from work most often centers on her children. "I love to do things with the kids. I volunteer with them at various activities and cheer them on at their swimming, lacrosse, sailing and hockey events." As special interests, she helps raise awareness for a biomedical research facility in Boston, sits on a referendum committee charged with bonding new school projects in Hopewell Township and is active in her church. Brouwer is a current member of the Academy of Management, the Society for College and University Planning, and is an educational partner of the Future Business Leaders Council of the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce.

A resident of Titusville, N.J., she has three children: Julianna, who is a pre-med, major at Boston University; Kristen, who is a high school senior and a 2008 summer intern at the College and son, Alexander, who is in eighth grade.



Dr. Penelope S. Brouwer

Online Advisement Appointment Desk is Live

The Office of Learner Support recently implemented an automated program called 'AppointmentDesk' to provide enrolled students with the capability to make appointments with academic and nursing advisors. In the past, advising appointments were made primarily on the phone and only during working hours.

With *AppointmentDesk*, students can make an appointment online through *myEdison*, or by telephone with an Interactive Voice Response system, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Students receive a confirmation e-mail immediately and a reminder e-mail and phone call within 24 hours before the scheduled appointment. In addition to improving students' access to advising appointments, *AppointmentDesk* reduces the workload on the clerical staff in Academic Advising and provides a more efficient method of managing this important service to our students. For information about *AppointmentDesk*, please call the Office of Learner Support at extension 3045.



Congratulations

Admissions Counselor **Iris Lewin** and her husband, Mark, welcomed daughter Juliet Leigh Lewin on Oct. 26, 2008. Juliet Leigh, who weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces, joins big sister Amelia.

Staff Activities



Todd Siben, senior program advisor, Liberal Arts Programs, presented to the Men's Club of Congregation Beth Chaim of West Windsor, N.J., on the subject of adult and nontraditional education on Dec. 14. The session was entitled *Challenges Faced by Adult Students Returning to School: How to Effectively Navigate Degree Completion, Distance Education and Credit for Life Experience*.

Andrea O. Mirsky, program advisor, Office of Learner Services, and **Caroline P.**



Tompkins, admissions counselor, Office of Admissions, represented the College at a Career Advancement Fair in Philadelphia on Dec. 11. Co-sponsored by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, Graduate! Philadelphia, and AFSCME local councils, the fair was designed for city employees, and offered valuable information for adults who wanted to return to college or obtain a post-secondary education. More than 300 adults attended the fair, and Thomas Edison State College was one of 16 institutions in the area to participate.

School of Nursing staff **Susan McMullen O'Brien**, RN, EdD, dean; **Louise Riley**, RN, MS, BC, assistant dean for distance learning; and **Jovita Solomon-Duarte**, RN, MSN, CCRN, diversity coordinator; presented at the Sigma Theta Tau Nineteenth International Research Congress in Singapore in July. Their symposium, *Equipping Minority Nurse Educators with Online Pedagogical Skills: A Preliminary Report on Predictors of Success and Lessons Learned* was attended by nurses from all over the globe. The presentation reported the outcomes of the project funded by the Department of Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) from 2005 through 2008; and which has been re-funded through 2011.

School of Nursing Presents Lunch and Learn

900 students • 70 mentors • 30 new student enrollments per month • 25 years of distance education excellence for RNs • 10 national events and dozens of recruitment sessions annually . . . wallflowers need not apply

The School of Nursing's December Lunch and Learn featured 10 mini-presentations by the staff of the School of Nursing. Officiated by **Dr. Susan McMullen O'Brien**, dean, staff members each described their respective roles and showed that their formative training – in emergency rooms, operating rooms, critical care, oncology, healthcare staff development, management, recruitment, retention, education and customer service – was mere prologue for their current positions. They also discussed how their collective responsibility rests on the ever-shifting sands of the healthcare industry, regulatory bodies, technology and the expectations of the nursing profession at large.

In short, it is a tall order to run one of the most stalwart online RN to BSN programs in the state of New Jersey. "We survey our students on a continual basis, and the program and its outcomes are consistently given very high marks," said Dr. O'Brien, who views customer service as the lynchpin of their program. Associate Dean **Dr. Catherine Kotecki** noted, "What is so attractive about the School of Nursing is that it removes the barriers for our students. The School bolsters the mission of the College in that it works diligently in providing the access, flexibility and opportunity RNs need to achieve their academic and professional goals."



The School of Nursing staff assemble following the Lunch and Learn on Dec. 11

New Staff



Li-yun Young has been appointed acting program assistant for the Office of Alumni Affairs. Young is located on the 5th floor of the Kelsey Building and may be reached at extension 2089.



Richard Barry has been appointed instructional designer in the Center for Directed Independent Adult Learning. Barry is located on the 3rd floor of the Townhouses and may be reached at extension 2170.



Melissa Van Aken has been appointed clerk typist in the Office of Human Resources. Van Aken is located on the 1st floor of Kuser Mansion and may be reached at extension 4130.

Brightest Light



Debbie Lutz, secretarial assistant III, Office of Vice President and Provost, was honored as the "Brightest Lights" employee. Lutz was recognized by the committee recently with the acknowledgement that her "pleasant attitude and willingness to go above and beyond the duties of her job, make her a Bright Light at Thomas Edison State College."

Thomas Edison State College Shares Holiday Spirit



AFT members collected College Staff donations for The Children's Home Society

In lieu of gift-giving for the holidays, the **Office of the President**, the **Division of Planning and Research**, and the **Office of Admissions**, donated to *The Times* of Trenton Holiday Appeal. The **Heavin School of Arts and Sciences** donated to The Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton.

In keeping with the holiday spirit, **AFT Local 4277** spearheaded a College-wide drive to collect items for infants and mothers that were donated to The Children's Home Society of New Jersey, an organization that provides community/neighborhood-based services.

College staff celebrated in style at the annual **Holiday Party** at KatManDu on the Delaware River on Dec. 17. In the spirit of the season, staff participated in the donation drive giving generously to The Trenton Soup Kitchen and Angel Wings.

Staff Participates in Customer Service Training



Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College, set the stage for a comprehensive Customer Service Training program for all College employees during the program's kick off at the New Jersey Museum Auditorium on Jan. 9. Spearheaded by **Mindi Shalita**, director of Human Resources, this initiative to develop the College's human capital is a key component of Goal 7 of the *Strategic Vision Plan*. In January, consultants from Knowledge Solutions and The Point of Contact Group, developed and presented the first phase of the customized program to College employees in two half-day seminars.

Pictured at left, staff **Ying Jiang**, senior research analyst, **Robert C. Devine**, learner services evaluator, and **Mary Beth Lynch**, senior learner services representative, bring their communication skills training to life via role-playing and interaction during one of the Customer Service Training seminars last month.



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.