



THOMAS EDISON
STATE UNIVERSITY

SIGNALS

S T U D E N T N E W S L E T T E R

From College to University

NEW STATUS ARTICULATES WHAT WE HAVE BECOME

Thomas Edison State College has become Thomas Edison State University (TESU).

In December, the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education granted university status to Thomas Edison State College. During its board meeting the same month, the College's Board of Trustees approved a resolution authorizing the institution to change its name to Thomas Edison State University.

The action comes approximately one year after the school began the process to secure state approval for gaining university status.

"We have evolved into a large, comprehensive institution with diverse academic offerings that serve a wide range of students and organizations – here in New Jersey, throughout the country and around the world," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president.

New state regulations governing higher education in New Jersey, which took effect Dec. 21, and a unanimous decision in November by the New Jersey Presidents' Council recommending the name change, helped pave the way for the College to gain university status.



Rendering of the new Thomas Edison State University arch to be erected at the main entrance of the Kelsey/Townhouse complex.

"For us, being known as a university is important because it more accurately articulates the type

of institution we have become," said Pruitt. "It also better reflects the success we have had expanding our graduate programs and our plans to develop new programs at the doctoral level."

To commemorate the change from college to university, the institution plans to erect a stone archway over the main entrance of the Kelsey-Townhouse complex that will feature "Thomas Edison State University" and enhance the presence of the institution on West State Street.

"WE HAVE EVOLVED INTO A LARGE, COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTION WITH DIVERSE ACADEMIC OFFERINGS THAT SERVE A WIDE RANGE OF STUDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS – HERE IN NEW JERSEY, THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD."

Dr. George A. Pruitt

It is a long way from July 1972, when the school was established as Edison College. The first class included 70 graduates who earned Associate in Arts degrees.

"We really invented what has come to be known as the portfolio process as a way of examining prior learning and determining if it is equivalent to what is learned in a college course," said William J. Seaton, provost and vice president. "Once we opened that window, it became a game changer."

Seaton has played a pivotal role in the institution's academic evolution since his arrival in 1981. He led the development of the school's first courses, which were introduced as independent study classes in 1982. Seaton also worked with New Jersey Network, New Jersey's Public Broadcasting System (PBS) affiliate, to use video from PBS programming as course materials.

In 1986, Seaton led the pioneering effort to create the institution's first online courses, which were launched in 1987.

"We were the first in the country to offer an entire degree program online and really are pioneers in developing and delivering online courses," recalled Seaton. "Leveraging technology and refining how students interact

with each other and their mentors has become a hallmark of our work."

Today, the University continues to break new ground enabling students to access courses using a variety of devices and platforms, regardless of their location.

In 2004, the institution implemented a major restructuring of its academic division and established schools, which now oversee the academic enterprise.

"We have grown our graduate programs significantly over the past decade – and, from my perspective, that is one of the main things that distinguish a college from a university," said Seaton.

The change to Thomas Edison State University marks only the third time in the institution's history that it has changed its official name. The first came in 1973, when College changed its name to Thomas A. Edison College. The second came in 1980, when it became known as Thomas A. Edison State College – the official name it has kept until now.

Today, the University serves more than 18,600 students from all 50 states and internationally who are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs in more than 100 areas of study. The University is home to one of New Jersey's largest nursing schools and remains one of the country's largest providers of academic programs to the U.S. military and the nuclear power industry.

"When I started here, we had a little more than 2,000 students," said Seaton. "To think about where we are today and how we have expanded in such a short amount of time, it has been a miraculous transformation." ■

Visit the Learner Support Center Online

ASSISTING AT EVERY TERM

Whether you are a recent applicant or counting your remaining credit requirements on one hand, the Learner Support Center (LSC) can assist at every stage of your academic journey.

LSC representatives recently expanded their 'welcome mat,' in an outreach initiative focused on assisting new applicants. We are also reaching out via phone and email to individuals who are reapplying to the University to assist them in reigniting their degree pursuit. If you were among those with whom we connected, welcome back.

Regardless of where you are in your degree journey, be sure to visit the Learner Support

Center online, accessible from the 'Current Students' dropdown on the University's homepage. There, you can meet the LSC team and find answers to frequently-asked questions pertaining to course registration, tuition, advising and program planning, financial aid, student course access, online services, testing, graduation transcripts, degree audits and more.

Have a question not listed on our Web page? Speak directly to a member of the LSC team today. LSC representative are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., ET, by calling (888) 442-8372. ■



Anna Krum, senior student affairs specialist at Thomas Edison State University.

First Doctoral Program Approved

FROM BSN TO MSN TO DNP

Thomas Edison State University's first doctoral program, an online Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), has been approved by the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education.

"We are thrilled to be able to introduce the DNP as the first doctoral program to be offered at the University," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. "The program will set high standards of excellence in nursing education as well as help to improve our healthcare community by advancing the knowledge obtained by our nurse leaders."

The program, which opened to applicants in January, is slated to launch in October 2016. The program is a post-master's doctorate with a specialty area in Systems-Level Leadership designed to prepare nurse leaders with competencies in advanced nursing practice, organizational leadership, economics and finance, healthcare policy and technology.

The 36-credit program is intended to be completed in 18 months. Graduates of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program may be able to apply up to 6 credits toward the DNP program. The program is also ideal for graduates of other MSN programs who are interested in pursuing an online doctoral degree.

The need for DNP programs is driven by the changing demands of the nation's complex healthcare environment, which requires nurses to possess increased levels of evidence-based knowledge and practice expertise to ensure safety and quality outcomes. The School plans to admit up to 10 applicants in its initial cohort in order to remain focused on intensive, doctoral-level education and assure that students meet the program's rigorous requirements.

Learn more at www.tesu.edu/dnp. ■



Kimberly Rindt, MSN '14

Graduate Degree Preparatory Program

A GATEWAY TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT MASTER'S DEGREES

The idea of earning an MBA degree was as attractive to Whitney Lewis as it is to most working professionals, but when she enrolled in the School of Business and Management to do just that, she anticipated some hurdles.

"I originally intended to earn my undergraduate degree in business administration, but struggled with the courses and later switched to another program," said Lewis, a marketing coordinator for New Jersey Business & Industry Association and a 2015 MBA degree recipient. "Later, when I transferred my undergraduate communications degree credits from another local college into the program at Thomas Edison State University, I was determined to enroll in a graduate-level business degree program, but worried I would be out of my depth."

In seeking ways to bridge the divide between her undergraduate experience and the demands of an MBA program, Lewis found a solution in the School of Business and Management's Graduate Business Degree Preparatory Program. The program is a series of online, noncredit courses that prepares professionals to enroll in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Science in International Business Finance (MSIBF) degree programs. It is

especially well-suited for those, like Lewis, who hold a nonbusiness undergraduate degree or those who just need graduate-level refresher courses in business fundamentals.

Considering the demands of her full-time career, Lewis was concerned the course work might be too much of a reach, but she said the curriculum helped her acclimate to the expectations and the pace.

"I strongly believe in the value of the preparatory program in that it satisfied the prerequisites for the MBA program, got me into the 'flow' for online course completion and set a positive tone for my degree journey," said Lewis. "Soon after I was accepted in the MBA degree program, I was taking two courses at a time — that significantly shortened my time to degree completion."

For more information on these and other programs offered through the School of Business and Management, visit www.tesu.edu/business or email the School of Business: sbm@tesu.edu. ■

The online **MBA PREPARATORY PROGRAM** features a customized curriculum in the following subject areas:

First Four Weeks
(both courses are taken simultaneously)

- > MBP-006 (four-week course)
Principles of Microeconomics
- > MBP-007 (four-week course)
Principles of Financial Accounting

Next Eight Weeks

- > MBP-008 (eight-week course)
Principles of Statistics

The online **MSIBF PREPARATORY PROGRAM** features a customized curriculum in the following subject areas:

First Four Weeks
(both courses taken simultaneously)

- > MBP-006 (four-week course)
Principles of Microeconomics
- > MBP-007 (four-week course)
Principles of Financial Accounting

Next Eight Weeks

- (both courses can be taken simultaneously)
- > MBP-008 (eight-week course)
Principles of Statistics
- > MBP-009 (four-week course)
Principles of Finance

COURSE NEWS

Note: A complete listing of all undergraduate and graduate courses and their availability may be found on our website at www.tesu.edu/courses.

NEW UNDERGRADUATE ONLINE COURSES:

AVT-301 *Airline Management*

COS-205 *Python Programming*

COS-206 *R Programming*

DSI-200 *Analyze This! Interpretive Data Analysis*

ENG-202 *Technical Communication*

RPT-495 *Radiation Protection/Health Physics Capstone*

NEW GRADUATE ONLINE COURSES:

DHM-610 *Digital Communication*

DHM-620 *Social Media and Social Change*



Whitney Lewis, MBA '15



Five Things You May Not Know About TECEP® Exams

IT IS ALL ABOUT SCORING, FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING, INSTANT RESULTS, SECOND CHANCES AND VALUE

1. SCORING – The score you receive on your exam doesn't affect your GPA. You can get the lowest possible score to pass and still earn credit.

2. SCHEDULE – You can schedule your test whenever you want online, 3 a.m. or the middle of the afternoon, any time that fits your schedule.

3. INSTANT RESULTS – You can obtain your TECEP® score immediately. If you're taking a TECEP® exam that is entirely multiple choice, your unofficial score will appear on screen as soon as you finish the test. Otherwise, you'll get your score as soon as your essays are graded, in about two weeks.

4. SECOND CHANCES – You can retake your TECEP® exam a second time if you fail the first time.

5. VALUE – There are plenty of free resources to help you prepare and many TECEP® exams. To find them, visit: <http://www.tesu.edu/academics/cal/Open-Education.cfm>. TECEP® exams are a cost effective alternative to traditional courses.

To learn more, visit www.tesu.edu/tecep.



Carol Wilson, BSBA '14

With Honors

MBA STUDENT RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

Carol Wilson, BSBA '14, was among 20 recipients of a 2015 Sigma Beta Delta International Honor Society Fellowship. Wilson serves as a client services manager for BAYADA Home Health Care and is an MBA student in the Bachelor's to Master's Program in the School of Business and Management.

"My BSBA and future MBA degree will be useful in allowing me to further my career," said Wilson. "Receiving the fellowship funding is significant because it acknowledges the determination it has taken to complete my degree – something

I never dreamed I would be doing at this point in my life. My employer has given me a very rewarding position, and I hope to use the knowledge I've gained from my course work to play a role in growing the company." Wilson used prior learning assessment (PLA), online courses, Guided Study courses and transfer credits to complete her BSBA degree requirements within two years.

Visit www.tesu.edu/academics to investigate the ways you can earn credit toward your degree program. ■

UNIVERSITY UNVEILS NEW SEAL

Thomas Edison State University has developed a new seal that reflects the uniqueness of the institution. The new seal was designed by Christopher J. Miller, art director at Thomas Edison State University, and replaces the former seal, which was based largely on the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey. The new seal was adopted by the Board of Trustees in December.

The seal's inner ring features "Thomas Edison State University" and the Latin words, "Eruditio, Perpetua, Vitae."

- > **ERUDITIO** (noun) means learning or instruction
- > **PERPETUA** (adjective) means perpetual or uninterrupted
- > **VITAE** (noun) means life or career

The seal's inner circle features the Roman numerals for 1972, signifying the year the institution was established. The numerals are located above a shield emblazoned with four icons.

The **HOURGLASS** represents the removal of time as a barrier and the institution's commitment to creating programs that work around the schedules of its students.



The **GLOBE** represents the removal of location as a barrier, the global reach of the institution and its expertise delivering programs wherever a student lives or works.

The **BOOK** represents academic integrity and the pursuit of knowledge.

The **TORCH** represents how graduates serve as a guiding light for others interested in achieving their educational goals.

The shield is encircled by **LAUREL**, which symbolizes that students and graduates are part of the institution's distinguished tradition.

Meet a Mentor: Alan Hunt, PhD A MAKER OF THINGS

After growing up in an environment conducive to creativity, it only seemed natural that Dr. Alan Hunt would pursue a career driven by ingenuity. He initially embarked on his higher education career as a fine arts student, influenced by his mother who he said was a gifted artist.

However, a conversation with his parents would soon alter his decision. "I had my portfolio prepared for art school submission when my parents asked: 'What will you do with your art degree?' I didn't have an answer, so I re-evaluated my strategy." Hunt went on to pursue his Bachelor of Science in Botany and Master of Natural Resources Management degrees from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg Manitoba, in his native Canada.

That journey, however, would not be without complications.

"My first year was pretty much a disaster," he explained. "I then began to feel a disconnect between my freshman and sophomore years and increasingly struggled with higher-level courses. I came to realize that I had a great

New Jersey community colleges, Thomas Edison State University and SUNY-Manhattan.

"My educational path directly aligns with those of our adult learners, and I am very familiar with what it feels like to be an adult who makes the decision to return to school midcareer," he said.

Since he began mentoring at TESU in 1997, Hunt has had his hand in nearly every method of course delivery the University offers. He has mentored online courses in Macroeconomics (ECO-111), Microeconomics (ECO-112) and Ethics and the Business Professional (PHI-384), revised a Federal Income Taxation (ACC-421) TECEP® exam and mentored that course's online and Guided Study formats. In addition, Hunt has reviewed several PLA portfolios related to economics, ethics and management.

Through his courses, he hopes that students learn to think differently and more critically about real issues, most notably those currently covered in the media. "The association I have with our students as well as their diversity and

"THE ASSOCIATION I HAVE WITH OUR STUDENTS AS WELL AS THEIR DIVERSITY AND TENACITY ARE TRAITS THAT CONSISTENTLY IMPRESS AND INSPIRE ME."

Alan Hunt, PhD

memory, but I couldn't write at a college level, couldn't spell and I had a problem with reading comprehension."

A friend of Hunt's offered a diagnosis that stunned him. A dyslexia sufferer herself, she suggested that he may be suffering from the same disorder. "And, she knew what I should do to mitigate the condition, since you can never truly 'cure' it," he said.

Hunt taught himself phonetics and focused on reading and writing, refusing to allow his condition to hinder his goals. Upon completion of his master's degree, Hunt spent the next 20 years working in various consulting roles that would later serve as inspiration for his doctoral thesis. When Hunt returned to school, he enrolled in a distance learning doctoral program at Union Institute and University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Upon completing his doctorate degree, he embarked on a teaching career that spanned

tenacity are traits that consistently impress and inspire me," he explained. "I don't treat mentoring as a job, but my vocation."

The most rewarding part for Hunt is the contact he has with students and their work. "With mentoring I have no preconception of what a student is capable of. The first assignment arrives and I start to discover who that student is and how they think and write. A whole universe of potential opens up – from helping the student to learn basic writing skills to inspiring the capable writers to hone their critical-thinking skills – and, with all students, to challenge their basic values and understandings."

When Hunt is not mentoring, evaluating or guiding, he and wife Christine are usually on the move. The two are relocating from their current residence in Nova Scotia, Canada, to their second residence in Nevada. The couple recently travelled on a ship's 'repositioning'



Alan Hunt, PhD

cruise as it relocated from Florida to San Francisco, Calif., which included passing through the Panama Canal.

Family members, according to Hunt, are scattered from coast to coast from Newark, N.J., to the Arctic, and he and his wife share a blended family of four children and four grandchildren. While Hunt keeps himself occupied with mentoring, woodworking and hosting art shows, he still finds enough time to hone his current craft, woodturning. He is regarded as a professional woodturner and a former professional potter. "I have always been a 'maker of things' and I see no end to that." ■



A turned wood container created by Alan Hunt.



Todd Siben, Assistant Director of Portfolio Assessment at Thomas Edison State University.

The Power of Portfolio Assessment

INFORMATION SESSION FOCUSES ON VALUABLE OPTION IN CREDIT COMPLETION

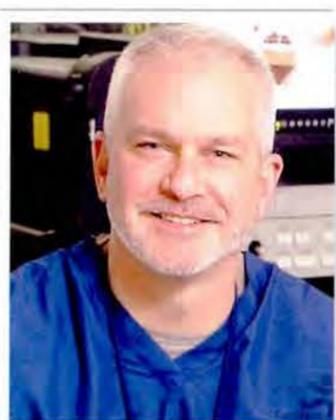
Todd Siben, assistant director of Portfolio Assessment at Thomas Edison State University, explained the power of portfolio assessment for attendees during an onsite information session in October. During the session, he discussed the number of credit-earning options available for students who wish to leverage the college-level knowledge they have acquired outside of the classroom. Attendees had an opportunity

to identify potential credits they can earn and gathered tips for successfully composing a portfolio for credit toward their degree program.

Visit www.tesu.edu/pla for more information and follow us on Facebook for announcements on upcoming prior learning assessment and portfolio assessment information sessions and webinars. ■

Powering Through

AN INTERVIEW WITH SCHOOL OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDENT CORY EHRNSTROM



Cory Ehrnstrom, BSAST-NEET Student

program awarded the optimum amount of credits for his military and professional training. He anticipates the degree will expand his prospects for lateral moves within his organization and strengthen his resume for future opportunities.

"I WAS SEARCHING FOR AN INSTITUTION THAT WOULD MAXIMIZE MY EXISTING CREDITS AND MINIMIZE THE NUMBER OF COURSES I WOULD NEED TO EARN MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE."

Cory Ehrnstrom

Ehrnstrom served in the United States Air Force through the 1980s as an electronic technician after attending basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, and later received his technical training at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., before being stationed at Avon Park Bombing Range in Avon Park, Fla.

"The College of the Air Force awarded credits for basic training and technical school, and I had also taken a few college courses along the way," said Ehrnstrom, who ultimately earned his associate degree at Ocean County College in New Jersey. "I took several College-Level Examination Program (CLEP®) exams, a classroom-based course and the balance of my associate degree courses online before transferring my credits to TESU."

The bachelor's degree in Nuclear Energy Engineering Technology program in

which Ehrnstrom is enrolled was awarded accreditation by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET in 2012. "The accreditation affirms that the program meets the stringent benchmarks set forth by ABET and benefits students, like Cory, who are interested in advancing in a field where quality postsecondary education is increasingly mandated," said Assistant Dean Dr. Richard Coe, who oversees the program.

The School of Applied Science and Technology was also recently awarded initial ABET accreditation for its bachelor's degree in Electronics Systems Engineering Technology program.



Online courses continue to be the best fit for Ehrnstrom who can expect to work 12- to 14-hour shifts and seven days a week to support multiple plants during Exelon's scheduled refueling outages throughout the year.

He is the father of four children aged 20 to 28 and helps wife Ines manage a small menagerie of pets including a Teacup Yorkie, a Shih Tzu, a Morkie (a Maltese-Yorkie mix) and two cats.

To learn more about the programs offered through the School of Applied Science and Technology, visit www.tesu.edu/ast. ■

Notes from the Field

NURSING STUDENTS ARE ALREADY LEADING THE MOVEMENT FOR IMPROVEMENT

You do not have to be a platoon leader to also be an effective RN, but Phillip Guest knows the experience does not hurt.

"With three generations of U.S. service members in my family, defending my country seemed like the right calling," said Guest, who started out as a light-wheel vehicle mechanic for the Army in 2000 and quickly developed a proclivity for military leadership and healthcare.

Guest later completed the U.S. Army Reserves Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pa., where he earned a BS degree in Health Services Administration with a focus on nursing. After graduation, he was placed in the Army's largest medical company in New Jersey, Company C, 250th Brigade Support Battalion, as a field medical officer and, later, appointed as an assistant platoon leader.

"I was eventually promoted to platoon leader in charge of 32 combat medics, a number of lab technicians, fellow nurses and a physician assistant as we ran medical combat support operations across the state," noted Guest. "I was aware of Thomas Edison State University's reputation long before I began researching the ways that the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing curriculum would fit into my life."

"THE EDUCATION I'VE RECEIVED HAS TAUGHT ME A PLETHORA OF SKILLS THAT IMPACT BOTH MY LEADERSHIP IN THE MILITARY AND THE CRITICAL NURSING SKILLS I NEED IN MY CIVILIAN LIFE."

Phillip Guest, BSN '15

Guest, now a registered nurse working for a large Philadelphia healthcare system and a National Guardsman, said he knew that as a consistently-voted 'military friendly' institution, TESU would provide the academic structure he needed to complete his Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Currently serving in the New Jersey Army National Guard's 1st Squadron, 102nd Cavalry Regiment in Westfield, N.J., as the squadron's chief medical officer, he is responsible for the planning and support of healthcare operations for 438 soldiers during training and live-fire operations.

"This places me in the unique position of being the main advisor to the squadron commander on all healthcare-related matters and lets me integrate my nursing course work in my career to ensure that I create a positive training environment that produces outstanding combat medics," he said.

"I chose TESU for the completion of my degree over others, because its online nursing program is formatted to create a well-rounded nurse professional who is equipped to tackle complex issues," said Guest, who completed his BSN degree requirements in December and is now enrolled in the School's Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. "The education I've received has taught me a plethora of skills that impact both my leadership in the military and the critical nursing skills I need in my civilian life. I have become more fluent in technology, disciplined in my work ethic and prepared to help lead the movement for improvements in my field. Specifically, I plan to leverage what I've learned through the program to help resolve lingering healthcare disparities in our communities."

Guest and his patients are already feeling the benefits.

"One of my most rewarding experiences as a nurse came recently as I was working with a young adult patient who suffered a stroke and lost the ability to walk, talk and dress himself. During the course of his treatment, he became bitter and depressed regarding his outlook and frequently took his frustrations out on those around him. I continued to work with him and put my best effort into encouraging him through his recovery. He gradually became stronger physically and emotionally until the day he walked out of our hospital unassisted. As a result of the bond we created, I was able to experience this patient's physical and emotional transformation, and I'm proud to say that we've remained good friends. Whether it's treating soldiers' wounds or holding a patient's hand during difficult time, nursing is what I was meant to do."

His dedication might also be traced to his family tree.

"I inherited my work ethic from my father, Sidney Guest, who is also a veteran of the United States Army, and my mother, Adelheid Guest, who has been a registered nurse for more than 30 years."

Guest lives outside of Philadelphia, Pa., with his two rescued cats, Luna and Nala, who he said alternately serve as study buddies and paperweights. ■



Phillip Guest, BSN '15

Academic Calendar

March 2016

April 2016

May 2016

Registration Dates

Jan. 22 - Feb. 20, 2016

Feb. 26 - March 15, 2016

March 21 - April 16, 2016

Late Registration

Feb. 21 - 25, 2016

March 16 - 20, 2016

April 17 - 21, 2016

Course Transfer Period

Jan. 22 - March 11, 2016

Feb. 26 - April 8, 2016

March 21 - May 6, 2016

Term Start Date

March 1, 2016

April 4, 2016*

May 2, 2016

Midterm Exam Week **

April 12 - 18, 2016

May 16 - 22, 2016

June 13 - 19, 2016

Final Exam Week**

May 18 - 24, 2016

June 20 - 26, 2016

July 28 - 24, 2016

Term Ends

May 22, 2016

June 26, 2016

July 24, 2016

*Term start date applies to both graduate and undergraduate courses.

**Select courses have midterm examinations or online proctored midterm and final examinations; please refer to your course materials for details.

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