



Staff Newsletter of Thomas Edison State College • April 2010



Lisa Whitfield-Harris

*"Our ability to leverage online education has helped to increase the exposure of aspiring nurse professionals to minority faculty as well as an increasingly diverse pool of fellow students."*

~ Lisa Whitfield-Harris  
Diversity Coordinator  
School of Nursing

## Diversity Program Celebrates Fifth Year

### *National Lectureship Focuses on Successes and Challenges Facing Minority Nurse Educators*

The School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College sponsored its Fifth Annual Distinguished Lectureship on Diversity in Nursing in March, focusing on the achievements and challenges experienced by today's nurse educators. The 2010 lectureship emphasized nurse educators' roles as mentors and leaders in reconciling traditional nursing education with the needs of a new and eclectic generation of students.

*Journey Toward Leadership: Successes & Challenges of Minority Nurse Educators* attracted more than 40 nurse educators to New Jersey Hospital Association's Conference Center in Princeton, N.J., for the one-day event.

The lectureship, which promotes collaboration and provides networking opportunities for nurse educators, featured a progress report of the College's Minority Nurse Educator program that was established in 2005 with a \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.

"Since its inception five years ago, our Minority Nurse Educator program has been thriving," said **Lisa Whitfield-Harris**, MSN, MBA, RN, diversity coordinator at the School of Nursing. "The program has educated highly talented nursing educators from many ethnic backgrounds and geographical locations. The number of

educators who have expressed interest in participating in the program has increased and we now have a waitlist of applicants. Many of our grant participants have already applied what they have learned in their own institutions and have been invited to participate in the diversity committee at their home institutions. We continue to receive requests from our graduates to become mentors for the School of Nursing."

The curriculum, which includes a 20-week Certificate in Distance Education Program and a 12-week mentored online nursing experience under the guidance of an nurse educator, provides experienced minority nursing faculty with the opportunity to enhance their pedagogical skills, expand their expertise and prepare them for online teaching. Since 2005, more than 60 minority nurse educators have completed the program.

In January 2010, the School of Nursing launched an online database to be utilized by deans across the nation to search for new minority faculty for their home institutions.

"Our ability to leverage online education has helped to increase the exposure of aspiring nurse professionals to minority faculty as well as an increasingly diverse pool of fellow students," noted Whitfield-Harris.

## Brightest Light



**Andrea Johnson**, senior clerk typist, Center for Academic Program Reviews, is the April 2010 Brightest Light. Johnson was recognized for her pleasant attitude and her professional dedication.

## College Aids PA with PLA Development Program

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell asked the PA Department of Education, recently, to coordinate the development and implementation of prior learning assessment (PLA) programs at the 14 Pennsylvania state colleges and universities throughout the Commonwealth.

As a first step, the Bureau of Postsecondary Education at the PA Department of Education invited Thomas Edison State College to participate in this initiative. A team, consisting of **Dr. Henry van Zyl**, vice provost of Directed Independent Adult Learning (DIAL), **Carleen Baily**, Prior Learning Assessment specialist, **Dan Negrón**, director for Academic Program Reviews, **Debra Terry**, director of Instructional Services/PLA, **Emily Carone**, assistant director of Learning Assessment, and **Matthew Brown**, administrative assistant for DIAL, developed a comprehensive presentation.

A live Webinar was broadcast from the Dixon University Center in Harrisburg, Pa., on March 4, to all colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. The Webinar participants discussed PLA policies and procedures as practiced at Thomas Edison State College as well as best practices in the field of PLA. The presentations were made by van Zyl, Baily and Negrón. In addition, van Zyl participated in a panel discussion with representatives from area colleges.

## Focus On: Estelle Wells

**E**stelle Wells knows an opportunity when she sees one.

Before 1999, when Wells was sitting in traffic on Route 1 and keeping erratic hours for her Princeton employer, she longed for a position closer to home that would afford her a better opportunity for professional growth.

"I was beginning to burn out and determined to find a position closer to home," said Wells. "I decided to improve my quality of life and look for an opening where there were better professional opportunities."

In 1999, that break came in the form of a temporary position in the College's then Corporate-Higher Education Programs office.

Soon after, she was hired as a clerk typist for Ron Sukovich the College's associate dean of business degrees.

Today, as an administrative assistant in the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences, Wells works alongside **Dr. Susan Davenport**, dean of the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences, and assistant deans **Cindy Strain**, **Jim McCarty** and **Adrian Zappala**. Any of her days can be filled with addressing student issues, curriculum management concerns, learning outcomes, budget discussions, travel and meeting arrangements, and undergraduate and graduate capstone processing.

"It's a balancing act to remain on top of everything and requires good time management and prioritizing skills," she said. "In the middle of it all, Dr. Davenport and I manage a good laugh at some point every day. I have a quirky sense of humor that flares up frequently for all of Heavin to enjoy. I can truly say I love my job and coming to work each day."

Wells' perspective on student support comes from a personal place. As an adult learner herself, she earned her Associate

in Applied Science and a BA degree in psychology at the College in rapid succession and understands the sacrifice involved. Her career aspirations now include teaching computer courses to high school students. "Eventually, I would like to run my own temporary agency. In the midst of pursuing this, I plan on enrolling in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program here at the College."



*Estelle Wells  
Administrative Assistant in the  
Heavin School of Arts and Sciences*

For Wells, the MALS program's appeal lies in its solid liberal and sociological base that will allow her to complete the Online Learning and Teaching Certificate program. She urges others who are considering continuing their education to get started right away.

"I am a certified administrative professional as recognized by the International Association of Administrative Professionals and am

very proud of the degrees I've earned at the College. The hardest part was just getting started! If you are motivated about furthering your education, you can see it through to graduation."

Wells encourages her colleagues to take full advantage of the accessibility of the College's programs and to reach out to her if they need advice or just moral support.

"I feel very fortunate to have Estelle as part of the Heavin team," noted Davenport, "her ability to balance her duties with ease while always putting our students first is an inspiration to me."

Wells and husband Antonio reside in the Hiltonia section of Trenton, the city's mini suburb, with their two cats Midnight and Simba. She enjoys bowling, karaoke, writing poetry and short stories, cooking and entertaining. "I'm looking forward to trying my hand at gardening and household projects," she said. "I'm a big HGTV and DIY network fan. Hmmm, now if I can just locate the hammers my husband hid from me, I can knock down a wall to expand my home office into his..."

## Congratulations

**Li-yun Young**, program assistant, Office of Alumni Affairs, and husband Josh, welcomed their first child, Luke Joshua Young, on Feb. 16. Luke weighed 7.5 pounds and was 21 1/4 inches.

## On the Road to Middle States



*Assistant Vice Provost Dave Anderson and  
Director of Learner Services Dr. Garry Keel*

Executive Vice Provost **Dr. Mary Ellen Caro**, Dean of the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences **Dr. Susan Davenport**, Director of Learner Services **Dr. Garry Keel** and Assistant Vice Provost of Learner Services **Dave Anderson** played to a packed house in Prudence Hall on Feb. 17, during the second Institutional Lunch and Learn on the subject of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) accreditation process.

The progress of the College's respective work teams was summarized for staff. Currently, there are six working groups, covering the 14 MSCHE standards in preparation for the accreditation visit taking place through May 2012.

Davenport represented working group #5 the members of which are responsible for standards 11 and 12, and Keel and Anderson represented working group #3 comprising standards 8 and 9. MSCHE self study presentations to date along with a full description on standards can be accessed on myEdison® by clicking on the "TESC Employees" link under the "Community" tab and then choosing "Reports."

## Staff Activities

**Dr. Mary Ellen Caro**, executive vice provost, and **Sylvia G. Hamilton**, vice provost for Strategic Partnerships, published "Choosing Your Strategic Academic Partner" in the Dec. 2009, issue of *Training Magazine*. In February 2010, Hamilton made a presentation titled "Enhancing Training Through Academic Partnerships" at the Training 2010 Conference & Expo held in San Diego, Calif. Caro presented "Leveraging Strategic Academic Partnerships to Strengthen Your Tuition Assistance Programs" at the 2010 Corporate Tuition Symposium held in Tucson, Ariz., on Feb. 11.

**Dr. Catherine N. Kotecki**, associate dean, School of Nursing, did a research presentation, "Getting to the Heart of the Matter with Grounded Theory Research," at the First Annual Research Day at Capital Health in Trenton on March 12.



*Catherine Kotecki*

**Dr. Susan M. O'Brien**, dean, School of Nursing, was recently named to serve on the Holy Family University's newly-formed Nursing Advisory Council. The council was formed to advise the nursing administration on current educational and clinical trends, standards of practice, and future needs for undergraduate and graduate nursing education. O'Brien, **Louise Riley**, assistant dean, School of Nursing, and Maureen Clark-Gallagher, mentor and divisional director of Clinical Education/School of Nursing Magnet Project director at Capital Health, presented "Health Systems and Schools of Nursing Partnering to Develop a 21st Century Workforce through Online Education" at the Rutgers 28th Annual International Nursing and Technology Conference in Baltimore, Md., on March 20.



*David Hoffiezer*

**David Hoffiezer**, director of Admissions, recently conducted a Web conference titled "PLA as a Recruiting Tool for Adults and Veterans." Designed for marketing and recruiting professionals who work primarily with adult students and veterans, the Webinar emphasized using an institution's existing prior learning assessment policy to attract students.

**John Thurber**, vice president for Public Affairs, has been elected to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of the Wachovia Regional Foundation, a private foundation that aims to improve the quality of life for children and families living in low-income neighborhoods in New Jersey, Delaware and eastern Pennsylvania. The foundation concentrates its resources on the creation and implementation of resident-driven neighborhood plans.

**Dr. Joseph Youngblood II**, dean, John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies, and **Barbara George Johnson**, executive director, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, were among the team of people who shepherded three bills through the legislature that will reform New Jersey's criminal justice system. The bills promote needed change for the people inside the prisons, their families and those returning from incarceration to general population.

## Welcome New Staff



Amy E. Andrianantoandro has been appointed Learner Support representative, Office of Admissions. She is located on the 1st floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 3035.



Kathleen Capstack has been appointed student account specialist, Office of the Controller. Capstack is located on the 2nd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 2467.



Tricia Graff has been appointed bursar student services representative, Office of the Controller. Graff is located on the 2nd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 2447.



Jennifer Guerrero has been appointed associate director of the Annual Fund & Donor Relations, Office of Development. She is located on the 5th floor of the Kelsey Building and may be reached at extension 2083.



Phyllis Marshall has been appointed associate dean of Graduate Nursing Programs, School of Nursing. She is located on the 3rd floor of the Townhouses and may be reached at extension 3273.



Susanne McCartney has been appointed admissions counselor, Office of Admissions. McCartney is located on the 2nd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 3030.



Kim Scott has been appointed military base manager, West Coast, Office of Military & Veteran Education. Scott is located in Malta, N.Y., and may be reached at (518) 441-5678.

## Learner Services Training



**Learner Services** professionals attended a presentation by clinical psychologist Dr. Craig Weiss PhD, who delved into the psychology of the adult learner and suggested ways for staff to defuse stressful or emotional exchanges.

## College Garners Recognition for Innovations

Thomas Edison State College has been a pioneer in adult higher education since it was founded in 1972. The College continues to lead the way in providing flexible, high-quality collegiate learning opportunities for self-directed adults by developing unique online programs and was recently recognized for two of its Web-based innovations.

The College's **Mobile Learning Initiative**, which makes online courses and materials remotely available to students who have intermittent or limited Internet access, was recognized by *NJBIZ* as a finalist in its Nonprofit Innovations Awards in the Programs (medium-large organizations) category. The inaugural *NJBIZ* awards program, which uses the aphorism: "Celebrating bright ideas for better communities," was created to honor New Jersey organizations, executives and volunteers that demonstrate innovations in their daily operations.

Thomas Edison State College was also a winner in the 25th Annual Education Advertising Awards sponsored by the Higher Education Marketing Report. The College was awarded the Bronze in the category of New Media for its **Web Tool Marketing**, designed with Lipman Hearne: "Is TESC Right for Me?" This tool is available to any visitor on the home page of the College Web site.



*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.