



Staff Newsletter of Thomas Edison State College • October 2011

Strengthening Staff Engagement

Employee Contributions Help the College Continue to Expand its Commitment to Excellence



Jennifer Montone

"I am proud to say that I give...I do my part to support the mission of Thomas Edison State College — my place of employment and my alma mater!"

~ Jennifer Montone
Assistant Director of Purchasing

The Thomas Edison State College Employee Campaign is underway and **Jennifer Montone**, assistant director of Purchasing, will be the first to tell you why giving back to the College is so important.

"I believe in the mission of the College," affirmed Montone, who earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2005 and a Master of Science in Management degree and Graduate Certificate in Organizational Leadership in 2010.

"As both an employee and an alumna, I see the value in the programs we offer. Although our programs are top notch, they cannot remain static over time. The world changes rapidly and we must change with it to keep our students happy and successful. The funds that are gained through the employee appeal go toward enhancing and expanding the academic programs offered to our students. These programs allow adult learners to reach the same goals that I had before I found the College," she said.

Montone noted that she was drawn to Thomas Edison State College as a student before she became an employee.

"The flexibility of the program that the College offered and the willingness to accept all of the credits I had earned at

the community college level was almost too good to be true," she said. "As a wife and the mother of an infant, at the time, flexibility was a necessity in order for me to earn my degree. I would not have been able to accomplish both of my degrees if I was forced to attend a traditional college. I knew from the start that Thomas Edison State College was the right place for me and I am proud to be both an employee and an alumna!"

An employee of the College for more than nine years, Montone noted that it is so very important for staff to consider giving back to the institution.

"As an alumna that has successfully completed my degree programs at Thomas Edison State College, I am 100 percent confident that the money that I have taken out of my paycheck each week to support the Foundation is well worth it. I may not be able to give thousands of dollars per year like some other folks or organizations, but I am proud to say that I give. As such, I do my part to support the mission of Thomas Edison State College — my place of employment and my alma mater!"

Misty Isak, director of Development, noted that staff should remember that as employees of Thomas Edison State College, the

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Focus On: Tricia Graff

Bursar Student Account Representative **Tricia Graff** will tell you that three years ago she was in the right place at the right time. "As luck would have it, I was temping as a clerk typist in the Office of the Bursar at the College when my current position was created."

Being hired into that position was more likely a case of preparation meeting opportunity. Graff already possessed a degree in business and accounting and had a strong customer service background in the food service and banking industries when she became a candidate for her current role.

Today, Graff's daily routine revolves around assisting students with the financial aspects of their degree pursuit. "I spend a good part of the day corresponding with our students via phone and e-mail and in collaboration with fellow staff in the Office of the Bursar on student billing, payments, refunds and military benefits," she said. "In addition, I work with the Office of Admissions staff on enrollment issues; the Office of the Registrar on course registration issues, withdrawals and course extensions; the Office of Financial Aid with student scholarship awards and grants; and the Office of Test Administration on registrations and payments." Though her analytical skills are undeniable, Graff is quick to show her effusive side when discussing the opportunities the College has offered her.

"I always say there is something new to learn every day and I firmly believe that. Thomas Edison State College has given me an opportunity that will last a lifetime! I have a great relationship with my supervisors and colleagues and feel I have formed

not just acquaintances, but solid friendships in the time I've been here. I truly love what I do for the students and find it very rewarding when I can help them in their unique circumstances. For me, the journey is just beginning and I look forward to being

here for many years and becoming a graduate student in the future." Graff is an eager participant of the College's Neighborhood Give Back days, Commencement ceremonies and as a new member on one of the College's employee search committees.

"Tricia brings a tremendous amount of positive energy to her role as in the Office of the Bursar," said Administrator of Student Fees and Revenues **Philip Sanders**. "She works very hard for the students and her customer-focused approach has garnered her many compliments."

Graff earned a BS degree in accounting from East Stroudsburg University and resides in Bensalem, Pa. "I live in Bensalem, where I was born, raised, left for college and moved back. I have been married to my very supportive and loving husband, Walt, for 10 years and have three wonderful, beautiful and energetic children: Erin, age 8, Walt, age 6, and Nick, age 3. I started here just three weeks after Nicholas was born, so I always know exactly how long I have been here!" With a sizeable immediate and extended family, Graff and her husband spend most free time involved in family functions and activities. She also serves as a secretary for her children's Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) program in addition to helping run their school's soccer clinic. Recently, for their 10-year anniversary, her husband presented her with a new piano. "I am not a concert pianist, but I love to play and very much look forward to refining my skill," she said.



Tricia Graff
Bursar Student Account Representative

Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program Launched

This fall marked new beginnings at Thomas Edison State College with the launch of its first campus-based program in Trenton, the Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) Program which requires students to attend classes on campus.

At the July Lunch and Learn, hosted by **Susan O'Brien**, EdD, RN, dean, and **Phyllis Marshall**, EdD, RN, associate dean for undergraduate programs, the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing's new Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN

Program was introduced. This one-year program, led by Marshall, allows students who have already earned a bachelor's degree in a differ-



2011 Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program Students

ent subject area, the opportunity to receive an additional bachelor's degree in nursing. Students have relocated from other states to attend this rigorous pro-

gram in hopes of changing careers and becoming nurses. The College has expanded its existing collaboration with Capital Health to create the program that will educate and prepare new nurses for a challenging and rewarding career in the nursing profession. The College has hired an assistant dean, **Julie Kulak**, RN, MSN, as support for the accelerated students as well as contracted three Capital Health nursing educators, Regina Kukulski, RN, MSN, ACNS, BC; Vera Kunte, MSN, RN, BC; and Lynne Capik, MSN, RN, APN, C, to lead the program's clinical and classroom courses. Today, nurses are increasingly required to earn a BSN. In October 2010, the Institute of Medicine released its landmark report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading*

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Accelerated 2nd Degree

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Change, Advancing Health, initiated by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which called for increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in the workforce to 80 percent by 2020. With an increasingly aging population, the demand for nurses continues to grow. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2009), to meet healthcare demands, the U.S. must add more than 580,000 registered nurse jobs by 2018.

"We are proud to offer the Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program at Thomas Edison State College. This is both timely and prudent, because better educated nurses positively impact on better patient outcomes. BSN graduates consistently demonstrate increased ability to critically think and problem solve, which will improve patient care overall," said Marshall.

The one-year program is offered in four 12-week terms and students will participate in online classes as well as classroom courses. These classroom courses will be held in the College's Townhouse Complex, with the clinical component being offered at Capital Health facilities. The program is unique to the other nursing programs offered at the College because, in addition to its on-campus course requirements, it is the first nursing program that does not require a student to already have an RN license.

The competitive application process requires that prospective applicants have an in-person interview. Students must complete a total of 120 credits in order to graduate; 60 general education credits earned prior to admission and 60 nursing credits earned through classroom-based courses, including clinical experiences at Capital Health as well as online nursing courses through Thomas Edison State College. This intensive program is created for a full-time student, and employment is not recommended while enrolled. Students who successfully complete the program will be eligible to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN).

With 20 students for the first year of the program and more than 100 prospects vying for a slot next year, the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and its entire staff are excited and confident that the Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program will be successful.

Staff Activities

Dr. Henry van Zyl, vice provost for the Center for Directed Independent Adult Learning (DIAL), was tri-chair for the 2011 National University Technology Network (NUTN) conference held in Fort Worth, Texas, Sept. 25-28. Recently re-elected as member of the executive committee of NUTN, Van Zyl is serving his second term as the finance committee chair. While in Fort Worth, Van Zyl attended the annual advisory board meeting. Van Zyl also accepted the 2011 Distance Education Innovation Award, recognizing the FlashTrack® project. This year's field of candidates was exceptionally competitive, according to Dr. Mel Muchnik, chair of the awards committee of NUTN.



Dr. Henry van Zyl

Dr. Susan Cobb, RN, undergraduate nursing program advisor, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing, has been appointed as a reviewer for the international peer-reviewed journal *Computers & Education*.



John P. Thurber

John P. Thurber, vice president for Public Affairs, recently participated in an event sponsored by the New Jersey Alliance for Action at which the Mercer County Improvement Authority (MCIA) was honored for its contribution to the economic development and growth of the Mercer County region. Thurber serves as chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the MCIA.

Todd Siben, senior program advisor, attended the "Workshop for Team Chairs and Evaluators" for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in Philadelphia on Oct. 4. The one-day workshop was offered as training for those who serve on evaluation teams such as the team that will come to Thomas Edison State College for its accreditation visit in 2012. Siben attended as part of the team that evaluates Excelsior College in March 2012.

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work they do contributes to the success of the College every day.

"You have dedicated your time and knowledge to help the College advance its mission," Isak said. "It is the combination of all your support that provides additional funds to our departments and helps support our students. Alumni, friends, corporations and foundations take note when our employees – those who know the institution best – choose to endorse and support the College with their own contributions. If you have not had an opportunity to sign up for the campaign, please consider joining your colleagues in supporting the College. Your support and participation is needed now more than ever!"

Participating in the Employee Campaign is easy. First choose how you would like to designate your gift and how often you would like to donate. Then use the payroll deduction form to make your gift on a biweekly basis, make a one-time contribution by writing a check payable to the Thomas Edison State College Foundation or donate via the secure website. If you have questions about making a gift or payroll deduction, contact the Office of Development at development@tesc.edu. Last year, 32 percent of employees participated and raised more than \$21,000. Regardless of the method or amount you choose, your gift will help the College continue to expand its commitment to excellence.

Welcome New Staff



Teshia Bowser has been appointed customer service representative in the Office of Financial Aid Office. Bowser is located on the 2nd floor of the Academic Center and may be reached at extension 3406.



Deborah Chianese has been appointed clerk typist in the Office of Admissions. Chianese is located on the 1st floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 3015.



Chrystal Guadarrama has been appointed clerk typist in the Office of the Controller. Guadarrama is located on the 3rd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 2378.



Amanda Piccolini has been appointed acting technology coordinator in the Center for Directed Independent Adult Learning. Piccolini is located on the 3rd floor of the Townhouses and may be reached at extension 2295.



Dr. Regina Riccioni has been appointed director of the Center for Academic Program Reviews, Collegiate Credit Assessment Center. Riccioni is located on the 3rd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 3250.

Congratulations

Michael J. Scheiring, vice president and treasurer, became a grandpa for the fourth time on Sept. 22. His daughter and her husband, Lauren and Mike Wexler, welcomed their second child, Tyler Michael, who weighed just less than 7 pounds and was 20 inches long. Tyler joins 20-month-old brother, Julian James.

Kristin Gonzalez, confidential assistant to the director of Community Affairs and Government Relations, and Christopher Greene, are the proud parents of Layne Gonzalez-Greene. Born Sept. 30, Layne weighed 6 pounds, 9 ounces and was 19 inches.

Kudos Graduates!



Photo courtesy of Legacy Photographics

College staff graduates, from the left, are **Donna Higgins**, professional services specialist, Office of Admissions (BA); **Stephanie Abrams**, military base manager, Office of Military and Veteran Education, (AAS, BSAST); and **Melissa Van Aken**, clerk typist, Office of Human Resources (BA). Not pictured, **Maria Marte**, military base manager (MSHRM), Office of Military and Veteran Education.

Operations Review of DIAL and Related Programs

In June, an operations review was conducted with the consultants from The Lucas Group for the **Center for Directed Independent Adult Learning (DIAL)** and **Collegiate Credit Assessment Center (CCAC)**. One of the key elements for this engagement was facilitated sessions with the office staff



DIAL's Instructional Designer Aaron Appelstein (center) and other staff participants reviewed information gathered during one of the Operations Review sessions conducted by The Lucas Group.

members; the teams spent several days outlining all of their key processes. The teams first had to brainstorm to ensure that each of their processes was included in the effort. Then they carefully laid out each step of the work involved in each individual process. The purpose of the sessions was to help the teams better understand what they do on a day-to-day basis in order to improve communication and efficiency.