

Capital Campus

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University Partners with JetBlue Airways on Degree Completion

JetBlue Scholars program offers crewmembers the opportunity to earn a college degree

Thomas Edison State University recently partnered with JetBlue Airways Corporation to provide educational opportunities for the airline's employees.

JetBlue Scholars is an innovative new program that offers crewmembers an opportunity to earn a fully accredited degree from the University, with JetBlue covering most of the cost.

The program takes an unconventional approach to employer-sponsored education by providing alternative college credit options for crewmembers, going well beyond standard tuition reimbursement and providing college advisement and resources to address the needs of those working full time.

"We are honored to be the higher educational institution of choice for JetBlue Airways' JetBlue Scholars program," said **Janet Eickhoff**, associate vice president, Office of Strategic Partnerships and Outreach. "The ability for the University to be the institution that allows JetBlue crewmembers and Scholar program participants to complete their degrees is a testament to the high-quality, flexible academics that make degree completion possible."

The University worked with JetBlue to create alternative credit pathways to several of its degree programs that utilize online courses evaluated by the American Council on Education, select JetBlue training programs and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certifications evaluated by the University, credit-by-exam programs and open courses.

Traditional paths to higher education can be overwhelming. Through a pioneering partnership model, JetBlue has unbundled the higher education system, step by step, to make it easier for crewmembers who have some previous college credit, but do not know how to move forward to complete their degree.

JetBlue Scholars provides a clear path to convert aviation and military training and other professional certificates into college credit.

"There are so many high-quality, low-cost, flexible alternative pathways available for students, and JetBlue Scholars has made the most of these options in developing this program," said **Marc Singer**, vice provost, Center for the Assessment of Learning. "Programs like StraighterLine and Study.com provide some of the course work via their online platforms, but students also can take advantage of the University's own flexible options such as the TECEP® program and training and certifications that we have reviewed for college equivalency. It was the availability of these options that led JetBlue to Thomas Edison State University in the first place."

JetBlue is also developing new courses internally utilizing open source material from providers such as *Saylor.org* and *OpenStaxCollege.org*, which will prepare



crewmembers to earn credit through college-level exams provided by the College Board and the University.

"It actually dawned on me when I started getting my transcripts, that I had a lot of credits. I had never seen my military transcript either. I was surprised to see how close I was to getting my bachelor's degree. I want to finish what I started and I'm doing it through JetBlue Scholars," said Roxanne Hawkins-Marshall, dispatcher with JetBlue and current JetBlue Scholar.

As part of the initial launch, more than 400 JetBlue crewmembers are currently working toward earning their bachelor's degrees.

The program's first graduation ceremony is scheduled to take place this September with more than 50 crewmembers slated to receive their degrees.

Focus On: Dave Schwager

Dave Schwager, director of Assessment Development in the Center for Learning and Technology, has had a fulfilling 16 years working at Thomas Edison State University (TESU); however, he has another tenure of which he is equally proud – 30 years of coaching.

"I love to coach," Schwager enthused. "I was a coach for my daughter's fastpitch softball teams for 13 years until she graduated from her league two years ago. I was very involved in the softball league, serving in many administrative roles and also on the executive board. I have also coached my sons for the past seven years with their baseball teams. I started coaching my younger brothers' teams with my father while I was still in high school, so my coaching career now spans nearly 30 years."

Being helpful and supportive comes naturally to Schwager, who finds his duties at TESU both rewarding and inspiring.

"What I like the most about working at the University is having the opportunity to build valid, reliable and fair assessments that measure students' mastery of a subject as they work toward their goal of a degree. Taking an exam is hard enough – trying to remember everything you've learned during half a course; we don't want to inadvertently confuse students or use 'trick' questions that make the test-taking experience even harder."

Before coming to TESU, Schwager worked in statistical analysis at Educational Testing

Service (ETS) for seven years. After ETS, he worked in Institutional Research at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ).

"All of the projects I worked on at ETS dealt with assessment of adult learning; mostly in the areas of licensure and certification. After some time, I had the opportunity to work on both the CLEP and DSST programs, which allowed me to work more closely with the test developers and to see firsthand how wording and language changes can affect the performance of a test question. This piqued my interest in the construction of the questions. While working on these credit-by-exam programs, I noted a shift in my interest of the types of test takers I wanted to serve.

"What attracted me to the University was the opportunity to combine everything that I had learned in my previous career stops," he explained. "Thomas Edison allowed me to bring together all of the following into a higher education environment: my statistical analysis and educational measurement education, my operations/project-based work experience, my interest in test development and computer-based testing, and my training in assessment of adult learning."

In addition to the satisfying opportunities afforded to him at TESU, Schwager noted another reason for his longevity at the University.

"The people I work with everyday are truly exceptional," said Schwager, who holds a BA in psychology from Trenton State



Dave Schwager, director of Assessment Development, Center for Learning and Technology

College, now TCNJ. "They are innovative and hard-working professionals that truly believe in the mission of the University. My colleagues make it a joy to come to work every day."

Schwager lives in Hamilton Square, N.J., with wife Christy, daughter Kelly, 19, and sons Ryan, 16, and Dylan, 9. The newest addition to their family is a 3-month-old Lab/Golden mix named Harper. Spare time activities include vacations in Disney or at the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Reflecting on that storied coaching career, Schwager noted, "I've been fortunate to coach a lot of great kids, some of whom went on to play, and even star, in college. I love it when a former player comes up to me and says, 'Hey Coach Dave! Remember that game when...' and we get to relive some great memories together. Now that I am not coaching my daughter anymore, I have some time to play in a men's softball league with my brother, who I coached 30 years ago when he was a little kid."

University's Operation College Promise Helps Get "VETS To WERC"

New public awareness campaign shows how hiring military veterans is good for business

Industry pundits predict that at least 270,000 supply chain-related jobs will need to be filled each year as a wave of Baby Boomers hits retirement age. To help resolve the shortfall, Thomas Edison State University's Operation College Promise (OCP) is collaborating with Legacy Supply Chain Services, publisher DC Velocity and the Warehousing Education and Research Council (WERC) – founders and sponsors of the "VETS To WERC," public awareness campaign – to attract military veterans to the industry.

"The U.S. military wrote the book on supply chain management," said **Wendy Lang**, director of OCP at the University. "So the alignment of available jobs in this industry to the skillset of many of our veteran service members is central to this campaign." The "VETS To WERC" campaign was showcased to 450 companies during WERC's 39th Annual Industry Conference at the Rhode Island Convention center in May.



Wendy Lang, director of Operation College Promise at the University

University Picnic



More than 220 staff, family and friends enjoyed a fun day at the Thomas Edison State University Picnic at Rosedale Park on June 24. Pictured from the left are **Ed Gall**, coordinator, SOC Program, Office of Military and Veteran Education, **Rob Burton**, assistant director and VA certifying official, Office of Military and Veteran Education, and **Todd Siben**, assistant director, Portfolio Assessment, the "Grill Team" that made sure there were plenty of burgers and dogs at the event.

Golf Classic



Kevin Streckewald (left) is greeted by Thomas Edison State University staff volunteers at registration for the 22nd Annual Thomas C. Streckewald Memorial Golf Classic at The Ridge at Back Brook, Ringoes, N.J., in May.

Staff Activities

Todd Siben, assistant director, Portfolio Assessment, presented, "Earning college credit for foreign language competencies as well as other opportunities for earning credit for prior learning," to the 2016 Reunion of the New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Summer Institute and Mentoring Program in Paterson, N.J. Siben also presented, "What Do Mayors Know," which highlighted the opportunities for earning credit through exam and portfolio assessment, to the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association meeting held at the University in May. In addition, Siben returned to his elementary school PS208 in Brooklyn, N.Y., to mark the 50th anniversary of the 6th grade class of 1966 in June. During the celebration, Siben played the piano for students and staff, and talked to them about what it was like being a student there in the '60s.

Laura Brenner-Scotti, ADA and Student Support Services coordinator, recently completed six weeks of training and was sworn in at Mercer County Courthouse by the Hon. Judge Corson as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). CASAs provide a voice for abused and neglected children by empowering a statewide network of county-based CASA programs.

Academic Program Advisors **Rhonda Beckett** and **Don Stoltz** attended the New Jersey NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) Drive-In Conference "Planting the Seeds: Fresh Advising Ideas from the Garden State" at Rowan University in June. The event is a one-day conference that allows higher education professionals to network with colleagues from other institutions and provides the opportunity to learn about important issues and the newest trends in academic advising.

Christopher J. Schultz, assistant dean and director, Continuing Studies, attended the N.J. Division of Fire Safety's 13th Annual Homeland Security and Fire Safety Conference at Kean University in June. Schultz also attended FEMA's 18th Annual Emergency Management Higher Education Symposium "Whole of Community – Talking About My Generation" at the National Emergency Training Center located in Emmitsburg, Md., in June. This year's symposium focused on issues, successes and challenges related to emergency management higher education delivery, which included a panel on generational perspectives in emergency management between Generation X, Generation Y and Baby Boomers.

Jeanine Nagrod, director, Office for Assessment of Professional and Workplace Learning, had a watercolor painting exhibition "Near and Far" of her work at the Turner House Gallery in Ocean, N.J., in June.

Ana I. Berdecia, senior fellow/director of the Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children, has been appointed to the Princeton Area Community Foundation Board of Trustees for a three year term. The Princeton Area Community Foundation promotes philanthropy and builds community across Mercer County and central New Jersey.



Todd Siben



Laura Brenner-Scotti



Rhonda Beckett



Don Stoltz



Christopher J. Schultz



Jeanine Nagrod



Ana I. Berdecia

Women's Professional Network Gets Creative



In honor of Women's History Month, the Women's Professional Network (WPN) of Thomas Edison State University gathered to explore how art and artists have enabled women to explore their strength, imagination and collegiality by creating a piece of art work in March. WPN members thanked **Antoinette Lewis** (bottom row, right), prior learning assessment specialist, Office of Portfolio Assessment, Center for the Assessment of Learning, and WPN member, for leading the program.

Literacy Kit Project



Thomas Edison State University and New Jersey State Library staff participated in the Literacy Kit Project organized by the University's Community Service Committee in cooperation with the United Way of Greater Mercer to benefit the children of the Trenton YMCA preschool program.

Never Forget a Password Again

Keeper, the world's leading password manager and digital vault, is now available at TESU

In this digital age, password protection is the key to securing personal and business information. But the number of sites that may only be accessed using passwords and various password requirements can make remembering login information a challenge. Thomas Edison State University's Office of Management Information Systems (MIS) has the solution – Password Keeper.

This software will allow staff to save and store all of their passwords from both web sites and applications. This service is also available across all devices (tablet, phone and computers).

Recently, staff should have received an email from Keeper Security with "Keeper Invitation" in the subject line. After signing in and creating an account, staff will be able to access Password Keeper from anywhere. Once a password is updated on one device, it will filter down to all devices a staff member allows that are accessed on the software.

MIS suggests that staff remember to use strong passwords for both web sites and applications. The following are some of the guidelines for creating strong passwords:

Passwords must meet the following minimum requirements:

- ▶ Not contain the user's account name or parts of the user's full name
- ▶ Be at least six (6) characters in length
- ▶ Contain characters from three of the following four categories:
 - ▶ Base 10 digits (0 through 9)
 - ▶ Nonalphanumeric characters (for example (!, \$, #, ?))
 - ▶ English uppercase characters (A through Z)
 - ▶ English lowercase characters (a through z)

The full TESU Password Policy can be found on the TESU portal site.

For questions or more information about how to use Password Keeper, contact **David Schumaker**, security systems coordinator, Office of Management Information Systems (MIS) at dschumaker@tesu.edu.