



Staff Newsletter of Thomas Edison State College • December 2008



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*~ Caroline Tompkins
Admissions Counselor*

Caroline P. Tompkins Endowed Scholarship

*Supporting education through
service and subvention*

Admissions Counselor **Caroline Tompkins** spends much of her day assisting adult learners. Now she wants to do the same for her colleagues. Recently, she established the Caroline P. Tompkins Endowed Scholarship to help defray expenses for employees of the College enrolled in its undergraduate programs.

"Having worked for Thomas Edison State College for eight years this January, I have come to know some extraordinary people who are working hard toward the mission of the College, while at the same time supporting a family or dealing with other extenuating circumstances," said Tompkins. "What they lack in formal education, they make up for in strength of character and a strong desire to get ahead in life. This scholarship will help College staff begin or complete a degree."

According to Tompkins, the scholarship also allows fellow employees to support their colleagues by contributing to the endowment as well as alumni who want to show their gratitude to College employees by assisting them in achieving their own academic goals. "From childhood, I have been encouraged and taught that to whom much is given, much is expected (Luke 12:48)," she added, "and I embrace this philosophy of 'giving back' seriously."

Tompkins earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in French from Hollins College, Roanoke, Va., and a Master of Arts degree in education from Rider University. She also holds a certificate in nonprofit management from Mercer County Community College.

In addition to being a Leadership Trenton Fellow Class of
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Congratulations

Dr. Susan C. Cobb, RN, program advisor, School of Nursing, received the Mary Anne Rooney Essence of Nursing Leadership Award from the New Jersey Consortium of Sigma Theta Tau International. The award was presented at the annual Founders Day educational program and dinner meeting held on Oct. 14, at The Rutgers Club in New Brunswick, N.J. Pictured (left to right) seated are **Jovita Solomon-Duarte**, diversity coordinator, Thomas Edison State College, Cobb, and Joan Howlett, RN; standing are Cynthia Mattia, BSN, RN, and

Catherine N. Kotecki, associate dean, Thomas Edison State College.

Ana I. Berdecia, senior fellow/director, Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, was recently honored with the Alumni Leaders Award from Mercer County Community College.



Ana Berdecia



Focus On Celeste Wynn

The moment you meet **Celeste Wynn**, you sense the unshakable connection she has to the College's mission and her part in it. The Bachelor of Arts program advisor has a rich history of student interaction but continues to find each new exposure to adult learners unique and rewarding.

Wynn, who has been with Thomas Edison State College more than 20 years, brought to her position a wealth of formative experience. Prior to coming to the College, she taught humanities for Geneva College in Philadelphia, Pa. Later, she became its prior learning assessment director and began serving as a liaison between Geneva's Center for Urban Theological Studies and Thomas Edison State College.

"In those days PLA programs were groundbreaking. We had missionary fervor and were part of a bold enterprise. Thomas Edison State College became a beacon among a consortium of schools trying to find a better way to educate working adults. The experience provided a good framework for my career."

Wynn also found herself becoming increasingly enamored with her future employer.

"When I first came to Thomas Edison State College, making education more accessible to working adults and spreading the word required a lot of physical travel. It was a venture on a national scale to teach people from other institutions how to assess and quantify experiential learning. Today, our PLA programs attract some of the most interesting people in the world. One student, for instance, wrote an exhaustive account of all the vampire legends known to man and then went on to document the hierarchy of all angels in Judaic, Islamic and Christian traditions – it resulted in a huge body of work and a lot of angels!"

Wynn's workday can be as varied as the objectives of the adult learners she advises. "Overall I help students mesh their academic goals and career goals," she noted, "but their motivations can vary. Some are here under pressure because they need a degree – either in conjunction with a promotion or an anticipated career change. Others enroll for self-improvement. For many, a degree has always been just out of reach. For most, it is a dream deferred. A number have said 'Celeste, I'm this old or that old and maybe it's not the right time.' I tell them that they could not have chosen a better time."

For the College, Wynn could not be here at a better time. "Celeste has a compassionate, can-do demeanor when advising students in starting, staying with and, ultimately, completing their academic goals, noted Director of Advisement **Dr. Garry Keel**. "She is the consummate advisor; guiding, encouraging and supporting them all the way from beginning to the end."

Wynn earned a BA at Temple University and her MEd from Cheney University of Pennsylvania. She has also taken courses toward a doctoral degree at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Md. "I have also been pursuing religious studies through various institutions," added Wynn.

An avid reader, Wynn also loves visiting museums and belongs to several professional and religious organizations. She teaches at her church and volunteers in preparing meals for in families need. She also serves as a church elder and her husband as a pastor. "I still teach humanities adult evening courses. I also teach remedial writing, composition and a myth and culture course. I love people, and believe that my greatest gift to them is the gift of warmth, empathy, understanding and enlightenment. That's why I continue to teach on a part-time basis and will continue until I am unable to do so. I love to watch the light go on when I look into the faces of those I counsel or teach – it means the world to me."

Scholarship

(continued from Page 1)

2007, Tompkins currently serves on the board of directors of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Mercer, whose mission is to help families and individuals coping with mental illness, and the board of managers of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the state of New Jersey, whose mission is historic preservation, patriotic service and educational projects. Furthermore, she serves in a volunteer capacity as the marketing and public relations liaison for Princeton Community Works and UIH (United Industrial Home Association) Family Partners in Trenton. Tompkins is also a sustaining member of the Junior League of Greater Princeton.

Additional criteria for the endowed scholarship include: applicants must be new or continuing students pursuing a minimum of 6 credits in an undergraduate degree program at Thomas Edison State College; and funds received can be applied to textbooks, fees, course materials, computers or related equipment required to complete a degree at the College.

For more information, visit www.tesc.edu/scholarships

Staff Activities

During the Thomas Edison State College State of the College address at the New Jersey Museum Auditorium on Sept. 16, 39 staff were honored for service to the College. Recently, **Dr. George A. Pruitt** congratulated (l. to r.) **Michael Scheiring**, **Debbie Lutz**, **Linda Vasbinder**, and **James T. Brossoie** for 25 years of service at a gathering in his office.



Dr. Henry van Zyl

Dr. Henry van Zyl, vice provost for DIAL, and **Esther H. Paist**, executive assistant to the president, presented a paper at the international Ed-Media conference held in July 2008 in Vienna Austria. The paper, entitled "How Do We Know Our Students Are Who They Say They Are?," dealt with ways in which Thomas Edison State College is working to meet the challenge of student authentication in an online environment. The College is doing pioneering work in this area, which is becoming more and more important to accreditors and others interested in maintaining academic quality and integrity.

Dr. Joseph Santora, dean, School of Business and Management, presented a workshop entitled "Managing and leading a business organization: Is there a difference?" during the Trenton Small Business Week 2008 conference held at the College on Oct. 20.

Todd Siben, senior program advisor, Liberal Arts Programs, presented a roundtable discussion at the CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) Conference in Philadelphia on Nov. 14. The session was called "Portfolio Assessment: Benefits to Student, Institution and Employer."

The **Office of Military Education** hosted its regional military base counselors for training in October. The counselors are the College's "connection" to new and current students throughout the United States and the rest of the world. To acknowledge the team's great work, the office hosted a "Meet & Greet" reception while they were here in Trenton. Pictured (l. to r.) are (back row): **Sharon Rainford** (secretary), **David Shelley** (Florida), **Gary Campbell** (South Carolina), **Allison Chambers** (Texas), **Michael Sheridan** (McGuire AFB), **Yesu Guadarrama** (military agreements processing), **Ed Gall** (SOC coordinator), **Louis Martini** (director); (middle row): **Valerie Preston** (program assistant), **Laura Brenner-Scotti** (assistant director), **Maria Marte** (Hawaii), **Katrina Oakes** (Virginia), **Alison Hansen** (New England), **Catherine Davis** (California), **Vicki McGinnis** (South Carolina); (front row): **Eileen Nims** (Hawaii), **George Berko** (Northwest), **Ellen Coleman** (Virginia), **Misty Isak** (associate director).



College Launches International Leadership Journal

Dr. Joseph Santora, dean, School of Business and Management, and his team, recently launched Thomas Edison State College's first academic publication: the *International Leadership Journal*. "The publication of this journal represents another stage in the development of the College and reflects the College's commitment to being a leader in areas germane to our students," noted Vice President and Provost **William J. Seaton**. "Leadership issues will play an ever increasing role in our society and throughout the world as we all journey toward the future. I am very pleased that Thomas Edison State College will be contributing to this leadership discussion." The *International Leadership Journal* is a peer-reviewed, online publication devoted to leadership, including theory and research, education and development, practice and application, and to all organizational phenomena that may affect or be affected by leadership. To access the *International Leadership Journal*, please visit the College Web site at <http://www.tesc.edu/5947.php>.



Pictured from the left are International Leadership Journal team members **Cynthia Mooney**, **Cynthia MacMillan**, **Dr. Joseph Santora** and **Susan Fischer**. Not picture is team member **Terri Tallon Hammill**.

New Staff



Lisa Fiorello has been appointed professional services specialist IV in the Office of Marketing. Fiorello is located on the 3rd floor of the Kelsey Building and may be reached at ext. 2075.



Maisha Howard has been appointed admissions counselor in the Office of Admissions. Howard is located on the 1st floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at ext. 3020.



Lorilyn Lewis has been appointed admissions counselor in the Office of Admissions. Lewis is located on the 1st floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at ext. 3033.



Bryan Mazzilli has been appointed admissions counselor in the Office of Admissions. Mazzilli is located on the 1st floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at ext. 3057.



Henry Rose has been appointed associate fellow with The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy. Rose is located on the 2nd floor of the Kuser Mansion and may be reached at ext. 4254.

School of Nursing Receives Grant Renewal for Diversity Program

At its third annual Distinguished Lectureship on Diversity in Nursing, Thomas Edison State College's School of Nursing announced that its three-year pilot program to recruit and train minority nurse faculty has been extended. The U.S. Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) renewed the School's grant with another \$711,046 to further develop the educational initiative.

"Three years ago, our challenge was to locate and recruit minority nursing faculty across the country for the online program," said **Dr. Susan M. O'Brien**, dean of the School of Nursing, who noted that according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) fewer than 10 percent of nurse educators comprise minority groups.

Developed in 2005, the pilot program prepared minority nurse educators with online pedagogical skills and used online methodology to teach minority faculty how to engage students. Since its inception, 52 minority nurse educators have been prepared to introduce and expand online education at their local institutions. During the next three years, the School hopes to recruit and prepare an additional 45 nurse educators to teach online courses.

"This program is about the inclusion of minorities into nursing education," said **Jovita Solomon-Duarte**, diversity coordinator. "One of the unique values of the program is its attempt to grow a cadre of minority nursing professionals to meet the needs of the growing diverse population and help quell the nursing shortage." Careful guidance of the mentors in the program and attention to its momentum continues to be a collaborative effort. "It is essential that educators adapt to the online environment in order to engage the millennial student," said **Louise Riley**, assistant dean for distance learning, who co-authored of the grant application with O'Brien, the principal investigator and project director.



School of Nursing staff during a break from the Lecturship are (top row, from left) **Catherine N. Kotecki**, **Jessica A. Dougherty**, **Susan C. Cobb** and **Louise Riley**, and (front row, from left) **Kathleen E. Griffis**, **Jovita Solomon-Duarte** and **Susan McMullen O'Brien**.



'Brightest Light' is one for the Books

Ruth Pallante, administrative assistant at the New Jersey State Library, was honored as the "Brightest Lights" employee. Pallante was recognized by the committee recently with the acknowledgement that she creates a pleasant environment for co-workers and all who encounter her. Pallante's pleasant attitude and willingness to go above and beyond the duties of her job makes her a Bright Light at the New Jersey State Library.



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.