

Capital Campus

DECEMBER 2016

Staff Graduates, Class of 2016

Thomas Edison State University celebrated its 44th Annual Commencement, its first as a university, on Saturday, Sept. 24, and hosted graduates from 33 states as well as Canada and Puerto Rico. The class of 2016 includes 3,059 graduates and approximately 555 of those graduates attended the ceremony at the Sun National Bank Center. Among those graduates were a number of University staff members who were recognized and awarded for their accomplishments.

We asked these staff members one simple question, "What does your degree mean to you?" Here is what they had to say:

Michelle Leonard, Senior Human Resources Operations Administrator, Office of Human Resources, Master of Science in Human Resources Management:

I am the first in my family to have gone to college, which I thought was a milestone in itself. To have the ability to then further my education with Thomas Edison State University and receive my graduate degree is an accomplishment I had only dreamed of. That dream became a reality! My degree has given me validation of my abilities and that the only limits I have are those that I place on myself. I hold my head high with this accomplishment and pride myself with the journey of the process.

August "Chip" Stoll, Associate Director, Management Information Systems, Master of Business Administration:

Earning my degree means quite a bit to me. I always believed that learning should be a lifelong endeavor, and I finally took the opportunity to practice what I preached. I set



Pictured are staff graduates August "Chip" Stoll, associate director, Management Information Systems, MBA; Jennifer Stark, associate registrar and director of Academic Records, Office of the Registrar, MSM; Diana Addesa, senior clerk, Office of the Registrar, BSBA; Michelle Leonard, senior human resources operations administrator, Office of Human Resources, MSHRM; and Graham MacRitchie, education technology specialist, Management Information Systems, BSAST.

a good example for my daughter by starting, and finishing, something important to me. Plus, it gave me an excellent opportunity to learn more about MoodleRooms and our online learning environment, and test new technologies before we rolled them out.

Jennifer Stark, Associate Registrar and Director of Academic Records, Office of the Registrar, Master of Science in Management:

Earning my master's degree helps me inspire my sons to be lifelong learners and to always pursue their educational goals and gives me a feeling of accomplishment. My colleagues in the Office of the Registrar have been a big inspiration. I couldn't have done it without the support of my family and my TESU family,

so it means a lot to have earned my master's degree after starting back in 2002.

Diana Addesa, Senior Clerk, Office of the Registrar, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration:

Earning my BSBA degree in Human Resources Management/Organizational Management means that I have accomplished one of my main educational goals in life. My degree is valuable to me because I have gained many skills and attributes that are significant to me throughout my career. I have proven to myself that with hard work and dedication, I am capable of achieving anything that I put my mind to.

Focus On: Gillian Wyckoff

Everyone has heard of ComicCon, but did you know there is also a BroadwayCon? And its enthusiasts are clearly as dedicated; just ask **Gillian Wyckoff**, director of the Learner Support Center (LSC), who attended its first convention and has already signed up for next year's event.

"I am a huge Broadway fan," Wyckoff enthused. "I attended the first-ever BroadwayCon – think ComicCon for Broadway nerds – in January of this year, and I've already signed up for next year. I was extremely fortunate to have seen *Hamilton* this summer with my mom, and it was amazing."

Wyckoff brings that same passion to her work.

"I enjoy the ability to work with the various offices at the University," said Wyckoff, who has been with the University for nearly eight years. "The LSC is at the center of it all, so being the hub of so much information never gets dull. I also love being able to grow a great team; so many of our LSC reps have gone on to other offices and careers within the University, and I find that a great source of pride. I enjoy seeing my people succeed, and if I can help them in any way, I try."

Wyckoff oversees the LSC, which is the first point of contact most of TESU's

admitted and enrolled students have with the University – whether they reach out via phone or email. She noted that the LSC team is an extremely dedicated and intelligent group of people who constantly need to be 'in the know' of the newest offerings and policy enhancements from the University. "The team learns new information on a daily basis so we can ensure we're giving the most current and relevant information to our students. If there is an issue that we cannot handle within our office, we will either reach out to another office on the student's behalf or connect the student with a person who can assist them."

Holding a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Hood College in Frederick, Md., Wyckoff was also a summer fellow at the Peabody Institute at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., a few years ago.

When she first arrived at the University, Wyckoff was an account manager in the Office of Strategic Partnerships. She moved to the Office of Admissions as its first associate director and, ultimately, moved to the Learner Support Center at its inception as its associate director before assuming her current role.



Gillian Wyckoff, director of the Learner Support Center (LSC)

"I come from an educational background having been a teacher, and also worked in educational publishing for many years," she explained. "I was familiar with the University's mission being geared toward adults, so working here seemed a natural fit."

Wyckoff lives in Newtown, Pa., with her husband of 11 years, Don, and their 10-year-old son, Toby. Off the clock, she enjoys cooking, reading, going to the various sporting events for her son each weekend and visiting her "favorite place on earth – the beach; specifically, LBI (Long Beach Island, N.J.). We spend two weeks there every summer, and it's my happy place."

WPN Hosts Founder of The Body Project

The Women's Professional Network (WPN) hosted Lindsay Vastola, founder of The Body Project, for a Story of Success event on Oct. 18. Vastola's message to the audience was to not forget about yourself – determine the non-negotiables in your life and accomplish those, and then you can help others since you have already taken care of yourself first.

Join WPN the third Thursday of each month for the Walking Club at 12:30 p.m. (no December walk) and on Jan. 11 for a General Membership Meeting. To join the WPN or for more information, please email tesuacenet@tesu.edu. Members are also encouraged to dialogue via the group's LinkedIn page where the December topic will be "Networking."

Halloween Haunt



Thomas Edison State University staff had a ghoulishly good time at the Halloween Party held at the Kuser Mansion on Oct. 31.

Staff Activities

Matthew Brown, systems coordinator, Office of Management Information Systems, presented as a panelist for the American Council on Education (ACE) in September. The webinar was titled "Building the Case for Credit for Prior Learning (CPL): Using Data as the Architectural Framework."

Marc Singer, vice provost, Center for the Assessment of Learning, was interviewed about the University's participation in the EQUIP (Educational Quality through Innovation Partnerships) program with the U.S. Department of Education by Larry Mendte of *Jersey Matters* in September.

Mildy Akumu-Taylor, program coordinator, Office of Strategic Partnerships and Outreach, attended two EdAssist webinars in September. "Program Tune Up" focused on optimizing tuition program and policy based on the latest practices, standards and education trends. "Adapting Education Assistance to Meet New Business Demands" focused on ways of adapting a tuition reimbursement program into a set of education benefits with diverse employee appeal and strong business impact.

Dr. Joseph Youngblood II, vice provost and dean, John S. Watson School for Public Service and Continuing Studies, and **Dr. Michael Williams**, dean, School of Business and Management, presented "Social Entrepreneurship: The Business of Transformative Change" at the 2016 Academy of Business Journal Conference in Atlantic City, N.J., in September. Williams also presented "Graduate Business Degree Preparatory Programs: A Pathway for Non-Traditional Student Career Success" at the 2016 ACBSP Eastern Region1 Annual Conference in New York City in October.

Matthew Cooper, associate provost, Center for Learning and Technology, presented at the WCET 28th Annual Meeting in October. The session was titled "How Open Educational Resources are Being Used and Implemented."

Kelli Parlante-Givas, director, Strategic Partnership Management, initiated a pilot program with UPS customer service in San Antonio, Texas, where TESU is taking 42 students from application to graduation. The office is taking the TESU/UPS partnership even further, expanding to the freight side, by providing webinars and visiting 21 sites in North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Washington State. Parlante-Givas and **Don Cucuzzella**, assistant director, School of Applied Science and Technology, are expanding the University's aviation partners acquiring new partnerships with American Flight Academy, Tailwheels Flight School, AirMods Flight Academy and Teterboro School of Aeronautics. The Strategic Partnerships and Outreach team, with support from Cucuzzella and the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing staff, participated in EdAssist's 2016 Virtual Education Fair in October.

Christopher J. Schultz, assistant dean and director, Continuing Studies, attended the N.J. Civil Service Commission and Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration 2016 Certified Public Manager Alumni Program "Staying Connected" as a facilitator for the breakout session entitled "Promoting Good Governance with Limited Resources" at Rutgers Cook Campus Student Center in October.

The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy staff **Barbara George Johnson**, executive director; **Ishiya A. Hayes**, associate fellow; **Shoshanna Page**, project specialist/fellow; **Dr. Nicky Sheats**, senior fellow/director, the Center for the Urban Environment; and **Scheryl Gant**, manager/associate fellow, represented TESU at the NJ Spotlight On Cities conference in Newark, N.J., in October. George Johnson served as the moderator for the panel titled, "Gentrification: Urban to Urbane" and Sheats presented on the panel, "Environmental Justice: Creating Healthy Urban Areas." The Watson Institute's other contributions to the conference included five members of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association presenting on various panels throughout the event. This conference was sponsored in part by the University; additional staff in attendance included **Robin Walton**, vice president of Community and Government Affairs; **John Thurber**, vice

president of Public Affairs; and **Dr. Joseph Youngblood II**, vice provost and dean of the John S. Watson School for Public Service and Continuing Studies.

Vanessa Meredith, associate director of Admissions, presented at Middle States Association of Collegiate Registrars and Officers of Admission (MSACROA) conference in King of Prussia, Pa., in November. She co-presented, "FERPA Case Studies." Meredith also gave a presentation on "Inter-Departmental Collaboration for Maximum Recruiting," discussing the collaboration with schools and departments within the University to provide optimal recruiting opportunities.

Juliette Punchello, director of Admissions and Enrollment Services, presented, "Filling Your Funnel: Ensuring Blue Ribbon Success in Your Student Mix" at American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) 26th SEM (Strategic Enrollment Management) Conference, in San Antonio, Texas, in November.

Dr. Mary Ellen Caro, vice president, Enrollment Management and Learner Services, and Capt. Bart Roberts, vice president, Flight Operations and JetBlue Foundation Board member, were interviewed by NJN's Steve Adubato about the JetBlue Scholars Program in October.

The pair discussed the University's partnership with JetBlue and the JetBlue Foundation grant in support of STEM programs, which will be used in further development of TESU's aviation programs. Caro and **Sylvia G. Hamilton**, associate vice president, Enrollment Management, Planning and Assessment, presented, "Move Over Baby Boomers! – The Millennials Are Here: Implications For An Adult-Serving Institution" at the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) Accelerate Conference in November. The presentation focused on the servicing, marketing and recruiting implications for TESU and other adult-serving institutions. Caro was also appointed to a two-year term as part of Capital Philharmonic of New Jersey's Board of Trustees.

Welcome New Staff



Dr. Amjad Ali has been appointed associate dean in the School of Applied Science and Technology. Ali is located on the 2nd floor of the Townhouses and may be reached at extension 3197.



Dylan Brining has been appointed clerk typist in the Office of the Registrar. Brining is located on the 2nd floor of Hanover Hall and may be reached at extension 3120.

Lunch and Learn Educates Staff



Members of the OMVE team, pictured from the left, front row: Annie Born, VA compliance officer; Charlene Martucci, fiscal administrator; Terri Tallon, director of Military Student Services; and Wendy Lang, director, OCP; middle row: Robert J. Burton, assistant director, Veterans Affairs; Craig Smith, director, Veterans Affairs; Mona Spera, administrative staff; and Trokon Fiawoo, project assistant; back row: Yesu Guadarrama, VA certifying official; Louis Martini, associate vice president of Military and Veteran Education; Ed Gall, SOC program coordinator; and Willie Choice, VA work study.

University Celebrates First 50 Graduates of JetBlue Scholars

Thomas Edison State University staff celebrated the graduation of 50 JetBlue Scholars at a ceremony in Orlando, Fla., on Sept. 15. Provost and Vice President **William J. Seaton** congratulated the JetBlue scholars by presenting the first graduating class with their diplomas. Also in attendance was **Marc P. Singer**, vice provost, Center for the Assessment of Learning; **Dr. John O. Aje**, dean, School of Applied Science and Technology; **Janet Eickhoff**, associate vice president of Strategic Partnerships; **Kelli Parlante-Givas**, director, Strategic Partnership Management; and **Mary E. Lynch**, assistant registrar, Evaluations and Records, Office of the Registrar.

"Thomas Edison State University's mission and core work aligns so well with the JetBlue Scholars program, especially our ability to assess college-level knowledge that has been acquired outside the traditional classroom," said **Dr. Mary Ellen Caro**, vice president of Enrollment Management and Learner Services at Thomas Edison State University. "It is an honor to partner with JetBlue to help its crewmembers achieve their goals, and we are very proud of the progress that so many crewmembers have made to earn their degrees."

The Office of Military and Veteran Education presented its model of outreach and student services at September's University Lunch and Learn. The model, which specifically addresses "high touch" methods in engaging with students, has received positive reviews from both military and veteran students. Operation College Promise (OCP) rounded out the presentation detailing what OCP trainings provide to the higher education industry, and discussed noneducational services that are available to our military and veteran student population that may struggle with reintegration and challenging life experiences.

Foundation Gala



University staff volunteers at the 25th Annual Thomas Edison State University Foundation Gala on Saturday, Oct. 8, at the Trenton War Memorial. Their time and hard work contributed to the success of the event that would not have been possible without them.