

# Capital Campus

DECEMBER 2015

## Staff Graduates, Class of 2015

**O**n Saturday, Sept. 26, the College awarded degrees to approximately 570 graduates who attended the Commencement ceremony. Among those graduates were a number of the College's 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?" This is what they had to say:

**Susan Fischer, Administrative Assistant 3, School of Business and Management:**

A goal achieved is a gift of a lifetime. My journey began in 1983 with a few higher education credits earned after high school. Thirty-two years later I am proud to say that I am a college graduate from Thomas Edison State College. The joyful emotions felt were overwhelming. Like so many of my classmates, my prior knowledge came from employer training. Each course mastered became a critical benefit in growing personally and professionally. Additionally, the course material with feedback enhanced my employee worthiness. Earning a degree opened my mind to possibilities. The confidence gained put the ball in my court. Thank you to everyone that supported me along the way and continuously stood by my side.

**Tanisha Hill, Senior Learner Support Representative, Learner Support Center:**

My degree means open doors and endless opportunities. This was something that I wanted to accomplish for myself for as long as I can remember. One day I decided to begin writing down my goals and it was the best decision I could have made for myself. Actually seeing my long- and short-term goals on paper on a daily basis motivated me more than



*Pictured are staff graduates Tanisha Hill (AA), senior Learner Support representative, Learner Support Center, and Susan Fischer (AA), administrative assistant 3, School of Business and Management. Not pictured are Linda Meehan (MSM), chief of staff, Office of the President; Patti Hunt (MALS), associate director (North Central Region), Office of Military and Veteran Education; Allison Chambers (BA), associate director (South Central Region), Office of Military and Veteran Education; Kristin Gonzalez (BA), associate director, Division of Community and Government Affairs; and James Jesson (BA), program assistant, Instructional Services, Center for Learning and Technology.*

ever to accomplish them. Graduation was one of the most exciting and rewarding days of my life. My degree is my "Emmy award" and a constant reminder that I can accomplish anything through hard work and dedication.

**James Jesson, Program Assistant, Instructional Services:**

Since Thomas Edison has given its employees the opportunity to obtain their degree, I felt that it was important to take advantage of it. I have always enjoyed learning and wanted to show my children that learning as an adult never stops. I wanted to be an example to them so if they decide to pursue their degree after high school that it can be done. With hard work and perseverance they can do anything. I would like to thank Dr. Pruitt, Todd Siben and the Board of Trustees for the opportunity as well as the guidance that was given to me on my journey.

**Linda Meehan, Chief of Staff, Office of the President:**

Completing my MSM degree was the realization of a lifelong dream fueled by desire and determination to better myself both personally and professionally. The starting point of all achievement is desire, and determination really sets in when we experience a bump in the road. While I had planned to complete my MSM sooner than 2015, like many of our students, I experienced a temporary setback that delayed my progress. Nicholas Butler [American philosopher, diplomat and educator] once said, "Optimism is essential to achievement and it is also the foundation of courage and true progress." I am an optimist. I always finish what I start, even if it takes a bit longer than I originally anticipate. My degree is a not only a great source of pride and accomplishment, but represents perseverance, determination and a renewed sense of self in having accomplished something I once thought was unattainable.



# Focus On: Jaime Helmuth

When she was five years old, **Jaime Helmuth** took up dancing, following in older sister Michelle's footsteps. "I had to do everything she did," Helmuth began. "Before I knew it, here I am with 25 years of dance experience under my belt."

Over the years, Helmuth dabbled in almost every style of dance there is: ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, with tap being her unequivocal favorite. However, in recent years, Helmuth has put dancing on hold.

She found herself at Thomas Edison State College (TESC) by way of a temporary job opening in Office of Administrative Services (now Office of Facilities and Operations) in December 2007. "I owned a tanning salon at the time and was getting ready to close. I wasn't sure what I was going to do next when an opportunity arose with the College and I got the job." Admittedly, Helmuth wasn't sure what to expect, but notes, "it was one of the best decisions I ever made."

Seven and a half years later, now the program assistant in the Office of the Controller, she has risen through the ranks on the financial side of the institution having served as a clerk typist, senior clerk typist, principal clerk typist and secretarial assistant 3. "The controller's office is a great office. The people I work with are what I enjoy the most about my position; they make coming to work easy every morning."

Helmuth's duties range from reviewing and inputting all new vendors, checking the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) website to be sure accurate information is retained, to opening and distributing all mail and correspondence for the office. "I void and reissue all outstanding checks, prepare tax exempt and W-9 forms for anyone across the College that requests them, and further submit W-9's to Pay Mode, the College's accounting software system, when vendors sign on for direct deposit."

Scholastically, Helmuth is currently in pursuit of her TESC Associate in Science in Business Administration degree, with five courses remaining; she plans to move on to earn her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree almost immediately afterward.

"I think it's great that we can work at the College and continue to pursue our education. I couldn't afford to put myself through college so I was never able to obtain my degree; now, working here, I am able to do that."

When she's not hitting the books, Helmuth makes time to stay involved in the world of dance. She volunteers with the Glen Roc Dance Shoppe in Ewing, assisting with two classes with dancers that range in age from 3 to 5 years old. "I make sure all their costumes are on correctly and that their



Jaime Helmuth, program assistant, Office of the Controller

hair and makeup are done the proper way." Additionally, she brings them on stage and places them into their assigned spots in time for their dance to begin. "When their dance is over, I make sure they're back in their dressing rooms and stay with them for the whole show. It's important to keep them entertained."

While Helmuth has taken a hiatus from dancing, there's no guarantee she won't return to the studio. "While I don't dance any longer, I may take classes again in the next few years. I would love to go back for the exercise and love of dancing."

Helmuth and her fiancé, Jim, live in Ewing Township, with their 1-year-old son, Anthony, and part time with Jim's two sons, Jimmy, 10, and Kyle, 5.

## BAKE SALE



**Debbie Lutz**, secretarial assistant, Office of the Provost and Vice President, enjoys some sweet treats during the College Bake Sale on Sept. 28. The many bakers who volunteered brought an assortment of goodies including cakes, cookies, cupcakes, candied apples and more, to the Office of Human Resources sponsored event, which raised approximately \$200 for use toward the cost of this year's holiday party.

## HALLOWEEN FUN



The Office of Human Resources celebrated their annual College Halloween Party at the Kuser Mansion on Oct. 30. Complete with tricks and treats, the HR staff came dressed as the Care Bears. Pictured are (from left, back) **Andrea Johnson**, **Melissa Van Aken**, **Brenda Law** and **Heather Brooks**; (front) **Michelle Leonard**, **Randi Miller**, **Thomas Phillips** and **Tammy Conley**.

# Staff Activities



Dr. Mary Ellen Caro

**Dr. Mary Ellen Caro**, vice president for Enrollment Management and Learner Services, and **Sylvia G. Hamilton**, associate vice president, Enrollment Management Planning and Assessment, presented "Creating a Strategic Enrollment Management Culture in an Distance Learning Adult-Focused Institution," at the 21st Annual Online Learning Consortium International Conference in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., in October.



Sylvia G. Hamilton

**Robert Devine** and **Sean Reilly**, academic evaluators, presented, "Past, Present and Future: The Evolution of Technology and its Impact on the Academic Evaluation Process" at the 2015 American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Technology & Transfer Conference in Austin, Texas, in July.



Juliette Punchello

**Juliette Punchello**, director, Enrollment Operations Management and Strategy, attended the 21st Annual Online Learning Consortium International Conference in Orlando, Fla., in October. **Catharine Punchello-Cobos**, registrar, and Juliette Punchello, presented, "Using Technology & Team Work to Effectively Guide Adult Transfer Students at a Distance" at the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Strategic Enrollment Management Conference, 25th SEM (Strategic Enrollment Management) in Hollywood, Fla., in November.



Catharine Punchello-Cobos

**Dr. Dennis Devery**, vice president for Planning and Research, has been highlighted in an 'Alumni Profile' on the website of New Jersey Association of State Colleges and University (NJASCU), a leading voice for public higher education in New Jersey. Devery completed his doctorate in educational leadership from Rowan University in September.



Dr. Dennis Devery

**Vanessa Meredith**, associate director, Office of Admissions, attended Academic Impression's conference, "Advanced Leadership Development in Higher Education," in Toronto, Canada, in October. This conference concentrated on four areas of leadership experience: personal, interpersonal, team and systems. Learning was achieved using interactive and experiential methods.



Vanessa Meredith

**Sherwood Brown**, senior program advisor, attended Parafest 2015 Reno held in Reno, Nev., in October.



Sherwood Brown

**Donna Keehbler**, senior program advisor, attended the 2015 National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Annual Conference, "What Happens in Advising Stays with Students" held in Las Vegas, Nev., in October.



Dr. Denise Tate

**Carla Colburn**, acting associate director, **Andrea Mirsky** and **Doris Simmons**, senior program advisors, attended the New Jersey Conference for Women, "A Network Can Change Your World," held in Princeton in October.

**Dr. Denise Tate**, associate dean for Undergraduate Programs, **Julie Kulak**, assistant dean for Undergraduate Programs, and **Lisa Harris**, nursing advisor, represented the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at the Robert Wood Johnson's New Careers in Nursing Grand Finale Summit in Washington, D.C., in September. Additionally, Harris presented "Workplace Environment of African American Faculty in Predominately White Institutions" at the Association of Black Nursing Faculty, Inc.'s annual conference in New York, N.Y., in June. Tate and Vicki Brzoza, nurse educator, presented "Addressing the Challenges of the Changing Healthcare Landscape: Are Accelerated BSN Prepared Nurses the Answer," at the New Jersey State Nurse Association's Annual Nursing Convention in Atlantic City in October.



Julie Kulak



Lisa Harris

## Foundation's Chili Cook-Off Crowns Champion



**Jennifer Stark**, associate registrar and director of Academic Records, Office of the Registrar, and **Dr. Jerry Thomas**, assistant vice president, Office of Student Affairs, sample offerings at Thomas Edison State College Foundation's Employee Chili Cook-Off while **Jeff Lushbaugh**, director of Website and Multimedia Production, Office of Communications, prepares samples of his third-generation family recipe. Attended by nearly 100 staff who savored samples from 12 chili chefs, the Chili Cook-Off launched the 2015 Employee Fundraising Campaign.

Lushbaugh, who won the competition, was awarded the title of 2015 Cook-Off Champion.



# Welcome New Staff



**Kimberlee Marsden** has been appointed Learner Support representative in the Learner Support Center. Marsden is located on the 1st floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 3055.



**Lyrisa Meizanis** has been appointed Learner Support representative in the Learner Support Center. Meizanis is located on the 2nd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 3030.



**Alain Tschanz** has been appointed SharePoint specialist in the Office of Management Information Systems. Tschanz is located on the 2nd floor of the Canal Banks Building and may be reached at extension 2478.



**Kerry Stuhlmuller** has been appointed Student Special Services coordinator in the Office of Student Special Services. Stuhlmuller is located on the 2nd floor of the Academic Center and may be reached at extension 3360.

## Operation College Promise Hosts New Jersey Student Veterans Conference

Operation College Promise (OCP) of the Office of Military and Veteran Education hosted the 2nd annual New Jersey Student Veterans Conference at Seaview Country Club and Resort on Sept. 17. The event, which was held in partnership with Stockton University, brought more than 50 veterans from approximately 20 institutions of higher learning to discuss issues pertinent to student veterans as they make the transition from military service to civilian life and pursue a college education. The daylong event featured remarks by Assemblyman Vincent Mazzeo as well as presentations from representatives from the Pentagon, Soldier for Life and a variety of local veterans' service providers.

## Women's Professional Network Hosts Amy B. Mansue, president and CEO of Children's Specialized Hospital



Women's Professional Network (WPN) of Thomas Edison State College presented a "Story of Success Event" featuring Amy B. Mansue, president and CEO of Children's Specialized Hospital. Pictured (from the left) are WPN board members **Sylvia Hamilton, Meg Frantz, Kristin Gonzalez, Robin Walton**, guest speaker Mansue, **Linda Meehan, Cathy Punchello, Karen Hume, Sheri Shafer** and **Jaclyn Joworisak**.

## Happy 240th Birthday U.S. Marine Corps!



Staff celebrated military service among their own ranks in November. (From left to right) **Dave Anderson** (colonel, USMC-retired) guest of honor **Dr. Jerry Thomas** (sergeant, U.S. Army Reserve-veteran) and **Dr. Ray Young** (lieutenant colonel, USMC-retired).

*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.