

Capital Campus

FEBRUARY 2016

From College to University

In December, New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks granted university status to Thomas Edison State College. At its December board meeting, the College's Board of Trustees approved a resolution authorizing the institution to change its name to Thomas Edison State University.

Also in December, the Thomas Edison State College Foundation Board of Directors voted to change the organization's name to the Thomas Edison State University Foundation.

The action comes approximately one year after the school began the process to secure state approval for gaining university status.

"We have evolved into a large, comprehensive institution with diverse academic offerings that serve a wide range of students and organizations – here in New Jersey, throughout the country and around the world," said **Dr. George A. Pruitt**, president.

New state regulations governing higher education in New Jersey, which took effect Dec. 21, and a unanimous decision in November by the New Jersey Presidents' Council recommending the name change, helped pave the way for the College to gain university status.

"For us, being known as a university is important because it more accurately articulates the type of institution we have become," said Pruitt. "It also better reflects the success we have had expanding our graduate programs and our plans to develop new programs at the doctoral level."

"We really invented what has come to be known as the portfolio process as a way of examining prior learning and determining if it is equivalent to what is learned in a college course," said **William J. Seaton**, provost and vice president. "Once we opened that window, it became a game changer."

Seaton has played a pivotal role in the institution's academic evolution since his arrival in 1981. He led the development of the school's first courses, which were introduced as independent study classes in 1982.

"We were the first in the country to offer an entire degree program online and really are pioneers in developing and delivering online courses," recalled Seaton. "Leveraging technology and refining how students interact with each other and their mentors has become a hallmark of our work."

In 2004, the institution implemented a major restructuring of its academic division and established schools, which now oversee the academic enterprise.

"We have grown our graduate programs significantly over the past decade – and, from my perspective, that is one of the main things that distinguish a college from a university," said Seaton.

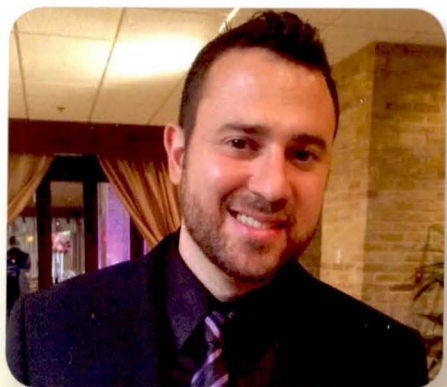


Artist rendering of the new University arch to be erected outside the Kelsey/Townhouse complex facing West State Street.

Today, the University serves more than 18,600 students from all 50 states and internationally who are enrolled in degree programs in more than 100 areas of study. The University is home to one of New Jersey's largest nursing schools and remains one of the country's largest providers of academic programs to the U.S. military and the nuclear industry.

"When I started here, we had a little more than 2,000 students," said Seaton. "To think about where we are today and how we have expanded in such a short amount of time, it has been a miraculous transformation."

To commemorate the change from college to university, the institution plans to erect a stone archway over the main entrance of the Kelsey/Townhouse complex that will feature "Thomas Edison State University" and enhance the presence of the institution on West State Street.



Steve Weinblatt, assistant director of Graduate Programs, Office of Graduate Programs

Steve Weinblatt is helping to carve a new path at the University. As the institution continues to expand its offerings in graduate education, Weinblatt, assistant director of Graduate Programs, has been at the forefront of overseeing the Office of Graduate Programs.

Weinblatt began at the University in May 2012 as a temporary program assistant for the Accelerated 2nd Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program in the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. In July, he moved to a position as a temporary

Focus On: Steve Weinblatt

professional services specialist in Academic Affairs before transitioning to full-time employment in August in the same role.

Weinblatt served in this capacity until June 2015 when he was named to his current position.

"My desire to work in education and to work with students is truly what attracted me to the University," Weinblatt explained.

On a day-to-day basis, he administers the University's anti-plagiarism service, Turnitin, working with both mentors and students. Weinblatt also conducts at-risk reports, to assure mentors remain active and are grading student assignments on time.

"I coordinate activities of Graduate Programs with other offices as they pertain to graduate student affairs. As the University continues to expand graduate education, we are also responsible for the newly formed Graduate Council," Weinblatt said.

"The office is still in its early stages and our responsibilities are evolving as the University does," explained Weinblatt. "I do it all because I love helping students – being able to facilitate their academic progress indirectly and/or directly. My experiences with other colleagues have all been positive, which result in a great working environment."

Weinblatt holds a BA in psychology from Rowan University and a MSeD in school counseling from Monmouth University.

In his spare time, Weinblatt enjoys poker, and following extreme weather (snowstorms in particular). You can also find him cheering the New York Mets and Giants to victory.

Having grown up in Ocean Township, N.J., Weinblatt moved to Hamilton in November 2014. He and fiancée, Nikki, are set to marry in May.

Lunch and Learn



Pictured (from the left) are Dave Anderson, associate vice president for Enrollment Operations; Vanessa Meredith, associate director of Admissions; Juliette Punchello, director of Enrollment Operations Management and Strategy; and Joe Guzzardo, associate vice president for Marketing and Communications.

At November's Lunch and Learn, **Joe Guzzardo**, associate vice president for Marketing and Communications, identified the four primary audiences the University has and continues to engage with: prospective students, engaged internal contacts, disengaged internal contacts and the general public.

Each of these populations requires a specialized approach. This communication is accomplished through a number of integrated recruitment marketing channels that include advertising, lead generation and nurturing, special events, and media and targeted outreach.

New Admissions applications were presented in a live demonstration by **Dave Anderson**, associate vice president for Enrollment Operations. These applications for first-time, previously admitted and nondegree/noncredit students have been pared down to about 25 questions from roughly 70 fields previously required to be able to submit an application.

"By simply creating an initial account, some fields will auto-populate when a student begins their application, saving them additional time. The new

application, from start to finish, should only take between 2-3 minutes to complete," Anderson said.

Along with the new application, **Vanessa Meredith**, associate director of Admissions, cited additional improvement and processes being implemented to assure applicants to the University are transitioned seamlessly. These include the ability for applicants to make their online application payment at the point of submission and the integration of the online course test-drive for new, current and prospective students.

Juliette Punchello, director of Enrollment Operations Management and Strategy, highlighted the team's student outreach initiatives. Punchello explained that these plans focus on three main areas: personalized relationship building, enhanced outreach models and supporting steps, all which have been employed in offices across the University.

This outreach includes phone calls, personalized emails and follow-up, to hit touch points along the way to transition each of these groups into enrolled students who become successful graduates.

Staff Activities

Maggie Ciocco, nursing program advisor, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing, had her latest work, "Fast Facts for the Nurse Preceptor: Keys to Providing a Successful Preceptorship in a Nutshell," published through Springer Publishing Company in September.

Dr. Elizabeth Gehrig, senior assessment development specialist, Center for Learning and Technology, presented "Big Questions in Test Development: Validity, Test Design, and Item Writing" to graduate students in Temple University's Counseling Psychology MEd program in November.

Jeanine Nagrod, director, Office for Assessment of Professional and Workplace Learning, presented "Emerging Directions in PLA: A New Cooperative Model for Adult-Centered Institutions" at the CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) conference along with other members of the Consortium for Assessment of College Equivalency (CACE) in Baltimore, Md., in November.

The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy staff **Barbara George Johnson**, executive director, **Ishiya Hayes**, associate fellow, and **Ana I. Berdecia**, senior fellow/director, Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children, attended the 45th annual conference of the National Black Child Development Institute in Washington, D.C., in October. Berdecia and WIPP consultant Kamili Leath trained 36 TEACH recipients (early childhood professionals) on cultural competency and English language learners at a workshop, and did a presentation on the NJ Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Summer Institute and Mentoring Program model. Berdecia received the Guiding Light Award from Children's Futures at the Trenton Wyndham in December. George Johnson was named as one of the most influential women in New Jersey by State Senator Loretta Weinberg in November.

Dr. Dennis Devery, vice president for Planning and Research, presented "Planning and Resource Allocation Informed by Assessment and Information Triangulation" at the Middle States Commission on Higher Education annual conference in Washington, D.C., in December.

Division of Institutional Planning and Research Associate Vice President **Dr. Ann Marie Senior** and Senior Research Analyst **Dr. Deborah Duffy** presented, "Synthesizing Results to Make Survey Data More Meaningful" at the Northeast Association of Institutional Research Conference (NEAIR) in Burlington, Vt., in November. During the NEAIR conference, Senior, who was recently elected as president-elect, facilitated a special interest group for colleges that enroll primarily adults and/or online students.



Maggie Ciocco



Dr. Elizabeth Gehrig



Barbara George Johnson



Ishiya Hayes



Dr. Dennis Devery



Dr. Ann Marie Senior



Dr. Deborah Duffy

IT Corner

No matter what time of year you find yourself on the go, keeping your technology safe has never been more important.

Here are some tips to keep in mind to keep you and your technology safe:

► Unless you can verify the legitimacy of a public Wi-Fi network, like that of your local Starbucks, for example, never connect. It is always best to connect to networks that are password-protected.

► Be sure that all of your software is up to date. This includes antivirus, spyware and encryption software as well as your firewall.

► Tethering your computer to your smartphone's data signal. "Tethering" means that you're using your cell phone's data signal (3G, LTE, etc.) as a

personal Wi-Fi signal. If your phone is one that supports tethering, you have a Wi-Fi connection right in your pocket.

► Avoid using a public computer, such as those found at libraries and hotels. It is difficult to determine whether a previous user has infected the machine with spyware, malware or keylogger software, which can capture the keystrokes of information you provide while using it.

► Invest in an external hard drive. Nothing is worse than losing all your family vacation photos or sightseeing shots because your computer is fried. Once you download your photos on to your computer, immediately back them (and any other important files) up on to an external hard drive for safe keeping.

Trenton Half Marathon



David P. Hoftiezer (center), director of Admissions, and his sons, **Joshua** (right), program advisor, Office of Learner Services, and David, competed in the Thomas Edison State University sponsored Trenton Half Marathon in November. All three competed in the 10K with Joshua finishing in 3rd place for his age group (males ages of 30-34). Not pictured are TESU participants **Kristin Gonzalez Woolston**, **Tricia Graff**, **Jaclyn Joworisak**, **Nykea Ali** and **Jaime Helmuth**, and their families.

The University also sponsored the Trenton YMCA Annual Y5K in October. TESU participants included Gonzalez Woolston, Graff and their families.

Welcome *New Staff*



Samantha Rhein has been appointed program assistant in the Office of Mentor Administration. Rhein is located on the 1st floor of the Academic Center and may be reached at extension 3405.



Aimee Santiago has been appointed clerk typist in the Office of the Registrar. Santiago is located on the 1st floor of the Academic Center and may be reached at extension 3120.



Christopher J. Schultz has been appointed assistant dean and director in the John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies. Schultz is located on the 2nd floor of the Kuser Mansion and may be reached at extension 4295.



William Watson has been appointed senior fellow in The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy. Watson is located on the 2nd floor of the Kuser Mansion and may be reached at extension 3209.

AFT Holiday Gift Drive

In keeping with the spirit of the season, Thomas Edison State University AFT Local 4277 organized a University- and New Jersey State Library-wide gift drive to collect items for the Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHS of NJ). The project was a tremendous success with staff fulfilling the wishes 50 children that were listed on paper mittens.

Capital Campus is produced by the Office of Communications at Thomas Edison State University.

To submit a story idea for the newsletter or for more information, please contact Linda Soltis at extension 2065.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Allison Chambers, associate director, Office of Military and Veteran Education, welcomed son Luca Wyatt on Oct. 10. Luca weighed 8 pounds, 7 ounces.

Alisha Miller, associate director, Office of Military and Veteran Education, welcomed daughter Ellie Grace on Nov. 20. Ellie weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces.

Yesuratnam "Yesu" Guadarrama, program assistant, Office of Military and Veteran Education, and his wife, Brenda, are the proud parents of Nathaniel who was born on Dec. 2. Nathaniel, who weighed 6 pounds, 10 ounces and was 19 ½ inches, joins big sister Sofia.

The Division of Community and Government Affairs organized University participation in the Rescue Mission of Trenton's successful attempt to set a Guinness World Record for largest single clothing donation.

Holiday Party



Pictured from left, **Annie Born**, veteran certifying official, Office of Military and Veteran Education, **Jaclyn Joworisak**, advancement and donor relations associate, Office of Development, and **Jarad Boisseau**, clerk driver, Office of Facilities and Operations, celebrated the holidays with colleagues at the University's annual party at Rho in Trenton on Dec. 17.

Foundation Gala

Staff volunteers, whose time and effort contributed to the successful 24th Annual Thomas Edison State University Foundation Gala at Greenacres Country Club on Oct. 24, are (pictured from left, first row) **Erica Spizzirri**, **Jennifer Guerrero**, **Beverly Dash** and **Roxanne Globis**; (second row) **Michelle Robinson**, **Misty Isak**, **Leanne Kochy** and **Jaclyn Joworisak**.

