



SIGNALS



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Liberal Smarts

EVER WONDERED WHAT THE BUSINESS END OF A LIBERAL STUDIES COURSE FEELS LIKE? ASK AN ALUM.

Alums, students, mentors and national survey results alike are touting the relevance of a liberal arts education and its place in our increasingly competitive economy.

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) alum Kelli Sanders-Jennings, '11, can attest to the enduring value of her course work now that she has closed her textbooks because she applies what was learned in the program to her job as an events coordinator every day.

"The MALS program has not only provided me an opportunity for academic growth, but has expanded my personal and professional development," said Sanders-Jennings, an administrator at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, N.J. "The course work gave me the confidence to seek nontraditional solutions in the workplace and provided a broader perspective to the values and concerns of co-workers, students, faculty and the community mem-

bers that I serve on a daily basis."

Mohammadali Towhidlou, who recently concluded his Bachelor of Science degree requirements in the College's Learner-Designed Area of Study (LDAS) by completing a mandatory Liberal Arts Capstone course, said that the course was the most gratifying in that it fully engaged his analytic and comprehensive abilities.

"The Liberal Arts Capstone portion of my degree requirements helped me to become a much more rounded professional," said Towhidlou, an ACS Xerox employee whose undergraduate work consisted largely of computer science and math courses. "Blending those disciplines to encompass liberal studies strengthened my academic experience in that it required that I compose a research project in a professional, academic format and synthesize what I had learned in my previous studies. It's the type of culminating project that should be a 'must take' for all undergraduate students."

The results of a national survey commissioned by the Annapolis Group recently published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* indicate that students who graduated from liberal arts-focused programs reported higher levels of satisfaction with their undergraduate experience, were more likely to say that they were prepared for the workforce and were better equipped for life beyond their academic experience than students from non-liberal arts focused colleges.

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Pictured left to right are alums Mohammadali Towhidlou, Kelli Sanders-Jennings and liberal studies mentor Dr. Randall Otto.



COURSE NEWS

Note: A complete listing of all undergraduate and graduate courses and their availability may be found on the College website at www.tesc.edu/courses.

NEW UNDERGRADUATE-LEVEL ONLINE COURSES:

FIN-382-OL
Risk Management

MAT-301-OL
History of Mathematics

MAT-351-OL
Mathematical Modeling

CLASSROOM-BASED:

NUR-400-NU
Nursing Care Across the Life Span (Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program)

NEW GRADUATE-LEVEL ONLINE COURSES:

ACC-611-OL
Intermediate Accounting III

LDR-510-OL
Leadership Communication

MLP-580-OL
Public Services Leadership and Governance

MSP-531-OL
Environmental Justice Issues and Policy

NUR-722-OL
Nursing Administration: Seminar and Role Practicum

NUR-731-OL
Nursing Informatics: Seminar Practicum II

Inside the Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program

COMPLETING A NURSING DEGREE AT FULL THROTTLE

They came from all walks of life. Some, like Gerald Bertekap, were already familiar with the hustle associated with a hospital floor. Others, like Winnie Reeves, had completed courses related to the field.

Bertekap, Reeves and every other member of Thomas Edison State College's first class of the Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program enrolled to fulfill a lifelong passion – to become a registered nurse.



2nd Degree BSN student Gerald Bertekap

Among them are a former claims examiner, an addictions counselor, a teacher, a graphic artist and some who plied their trade in customer service, sales, insurance and the food service industries. Still others were recent graduates from non-nursing bachelor's degree programs.

Each followed a different path to a mutual destination – the Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program, a one year program designed for adults who completed a non-nursing bachelor's degree and are now interested in becoming registered nurses. The program's classroom-based component is a departure for the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing, whose RN-to-BSN students customarily complete their course work online.

"Prior to entering the program, I owned and operated retail card and gift stores for 22 years," said Bertekap, who is now five months into the program. "I began training as a paramedic toward the end of my retail career."

By the time he entered the program, Bertekap was working as a full-time paramedic for Raritan Bay Medical Center in New Jersey,

and part time as a patient care associate for Meridian Hospital's Riverview Medical Center in the post-anesthesia care and intensive care units.

Bertekap received his bachelor's degree in business administration from PACE University in New York, and, more recently, completed health science prerequisites at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, N.J.

He said that the program's short duration and lower cost are what attracted him. "I will earn my BSN degree within one year at the lowest tuition cost that I found among competitors," he noted.

Bertekap speaks from the perspective of an adult learner who cannot wait years to become an RN, but also cautions prospective students on the intensity of the program.

"The pace of learning is extremely fast with large amounts of information covered rapidly," he said. "Students need to be prepared to put their full effort and time into completing the program. My family encourages me constantly and has relieved me of many burdens so that I can concentrate on my course work. Student-colleagues are also incredibly important to my success with the program. Time management is the key to making your way through."

Reeves, a 2009 graduate of Cornell University, agreed with the level of immersion required.

"There's no doubt that you need to be dedicated, but I'm glad to be enrolled in a program that will enable me to earn my RN credentialing in one year's time," she said. It was during Reeves' Bachelor of Science in Human Development degree completion elsewhere that she became enamored with the field of nursing.

"I had already been exposed to courses connected to the field," she said. "My undergraduate course work at Cornell encompassed pathophysiology, human disease states and conditions and the field of nursing seemed like the right avenue for me. I was taking a microbiology course at a local community college campus recently when an instructor who knew that I had my eye on the field of nursing mentioned W.

Cary Edwards School of Nursing's one year program."

Reeves finds the clinical course component offered at Capital Health's campuses in Mercer County to be one of the best features of the program.

"I love the patient interaction as it solidifies what we learn in class," she said. "Melding my class work with one-to-one patient care has provided countless 'aha' moments for me. The exchanges I have with fellow students and the nurse educators in the program round out the experience."

Reeves said that she expects to gravitate to the area of OR nursing once she has completed the program. Bertekap is sizing up a couple of options. "I may continue to work in intensive care but OR nursing also appeals to me." Bertekap added that he plans to continue his education and eventually become a nurse practitioner.



2nd Degree BSN student Winnie Reeves

"This is not a group that is disadvantaged by arriving later to the field of nursing," said dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing Dr. Susan M. O'Brien. "On the contrary, their circuitous paths have made them critical thinkers with highly evolved interpersonal skills. They understand the seriousness of patient care as fully engaged, mature students who will contribute immensely to their profession."

Visit www.tesc.edu/nursing to find out more about the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. ■

Support Our Troops Project Making Special Deliveries to Deployed Military Students

COLLEGE STAFF SENDING CARE PACKAGES TO STUDENTS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN IN MEMORY OF FALLEN NEW JERSEY SOLDIER

Since April 2011, the staff at Thomas Edison State College has adopted several units in Iraq and Afghanistan where some of the College's active duty military students are deployed and is sending them care packages filled with items the service members have requested. To date, the Support Our Troops Project has sent more than 100 boxes to five different military units with items such as coffee, snack food, prepaid phone cards, magazines, DVDs and video games. Items are collected in Support Our Troops collection containers located throughout the College.

"The Support Our Troops Project means a great deal to our deployed students and their units," said Charlene Martucci, fiscal administrator in the College's Office of Military and Veteran Education, who is chairing the effort. "Our deployed students have told us that they look forward to receiving our boxes, and that knowing we support our troops and are thinking about them makes their deployments a little easier."

Martucci, who serves as president of the American Federation of Teachers Local 4277, was inspired to create the Support Our Troops Project after attending the funeral of U.S. Army Sgt. Keith Buzinsky, the son of a childhood friend who was killed in action in Afghanistan on April 7. Martucci is a resident of Hamilton, N.J., and Buzinsky grew up in Hamilton.



Dr. George A. Pruitt is presented with a flag from the College's deployed military students by Support Our Troops Project members (from left) staff Charlene Martucci, Diane Stratton, Kathleen Griffis and Jennifer Stark.

The day after Buzinsky's funeral, Martucci received an e-mail from Thomas Edison State College student Greg Schaefer, whose U.S. Navy unit is stationed in a remote area of Afghanistan. After speaking with Schaefer, Martucci decided to start the Support Our Troops Project in memory of Buzinsky.

Schaefer's unit was the first to be adopted.

To show their appreciation for the Support Our Troops Project, Schaefer and his unit flew a United States flag over their camp in the College's honor and sent the flag to the College. Martucci presented the flag to

Thomas Edison State College President Dr. George A. Pruitt on Nov. 17.

Approximately 8,800 active duty military personnel attend Thomas Edison State College, including thousands who are currently deployed in the Middle East.

"We are proud of our military and honored to serve their unique needs with our unique format," said Pruitt. "We are also proud of the excellent work that Charlene and our staff are doing to make the Support Our Troops Project such a success." ■

The Heavin School of Arts and Sciences Hosts Inaugural Educators' Roundtable

Members of the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences' Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) Honor Society in Education gathered for their inaugural Network Roundtable Luncheon in December at Freddie's Tavern, West Trenton, N.J.

The networking and professional development event hosted by Assistant Dean for Educational Leadership Dr. Adrian Zappala;

Master of Arts in Educational Leadership (MAEdL) mentor Dr. Nina Haydel; and MAEdL student and KDP chapter President Cheryl Zanone, invited honor society members, local mentors and students enrolled in the in the MAEdL program to the round table session. Discussion included current issues in educational leadership as well as networking among group members.

"This represents our first such formal event held by Heavin School of Arts and Sciences' KDP chapter and we look forward to future sessions," said Zappala. "Students and mentors who attended were enthused about building upon the professional relationships they have already developed online." ■

Our Programs Ranked "Best Buys" in Higher Education

THREE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE'S DEGREE PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN RANKED AMONG THE TOP BEST BUYS IN THE COUNTRY, ACCORDING TO NATIONAL SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY GETEDUCATED.COM

The College's Bachelor of Arts degree in Computer Science, Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership degrees were each ranked as one of the top three best buys in the country for online regionally accredited degree programs.

National surveys conducted by *GetEducated.com* examined publicly posted tuition and fee rates at dozens of regionally accredited institutions that offer online bachelor's degree programs. In the areas of computer science, criminal justice and management, Thomas Edison State College ranked third in the nation in terms of quality and affordability.

Dean Clemente, who completed his Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership degree in 2011, is a distribution manager with Ford Motor Company overseeing several facilities throughout the southwest U.S. He noted that his 15-year degree pursuit had been evolving at a lackluster pace until he discovered Thomas Edison State College.

"The Comprehensive Tuition Plan that I took advantage of enabled me to acquire 36 credits in one year for less than \$7,000," he said. "As an out-of-state student, I was pleasantly surprised to find that Thomas Edison State College was able to provide me with a greater value per credit than programs in my own state. Add to this the multiple mediums in which students can obtain credit at the College and the value becomes obvious."

According to the surveys:

The average cost of earning an online bachelor's degree in computer science from a regionally accredited institution is approximately \$46,758; the average cost to earn the degree at Thomas Edison State College is \$22,586 for New Jersey residents and \$33,280 for non-New Jersey residents.



The average cost of earning an online bachelor's degree in criminal justice from a regionally accredited institution is approximately \$44,799; the average cost to earn the degree at Thomas Edison State College is \$24,845 for New Jersey residents and \$36,166 for non-New Jersey residents.

The average cost of earning an online bachelor's degree in management from a regionally accredited institution is approximately \$48,709; the average cost to earn the degree at Thomas Edison State College is \$22,585 for New Jersey residents and \$33,280 for non-New Jersey residents.

Depending on several factors, including the number of credits a student transfers into a program and the type of tuition plan, the cost of earning a degree at Thomas Edison State College may be even lower.

The College has consistently been recognized as a top best buy in the country for several of its degree programs, including the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration; Bachelor of Science in Human Services and Bachelor of Arts degree programs in Psychology, Social Sciences, Sociology and Political Science as well as Master of Science in Management.

Visit *GetEducated.com* and click "Online College Rankings" to view a complete list of rankings. ■

New Certificates Launched

The John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies has recently launched two new noncredit certificates focusing on counterterrorism intelligence and cyber security built around the unique needs of adult learners.

► COUNTERTERRORISM INTELLIGENCE CERTIFICATE:

Designed for law enforcement, government and private security practitioners, the online program focuses on the nature of terrorism the fundamentals of the terrorist threat and the intelligence process, legal issues and constraints and critical thinking and decision making.

► CYBER SECURITY CERTIFICATE:

This certificate enables managers to gain information security competencies and enhance their ability to work with security analysts within their enterprise. This online program provides the fundamental building blocks to apply a standard security risk assessment methodology, including threat model development, vulnerability assessment and resulting security risk analysis.

Both programs are offered completely online. To learn more about these new certificates or to view all noncredit programs offered at Thomas Edison State College, visit www.tesc.edu/noncredit. ■



Meet a Mentor: Dr. John Damiano

DR. JOHN DAMIANO KNOWS A BODY IN MOTION STAYS IN MOTION.

The Heavin School of Arts and Sciences mentor may be 82 years of age, but to his bicycling buddies he's known as "the kid." That's because Dr. John Damiano is the youngest of a senior trio of friends that has been biking every week, twice a week, for more than 40 years.

Damiano and pals Mike Guerca, 85, and Joe Paoletti, 84, are the elder members of the Bicycling Enthusiasts of the Delaware Valley, which was founded in 1947. Every Wednesday and Saturday, weather permitting; they join a group of bicyclists that congregate at Frank's Auto Center on Route 73 and head out on a 50-mile round-trip journey through southern New Jersey. Traveling 25 miles to their destination, stopping for lunch and returning to Frank's in Palmyra Borough, approximately 10 to 15 cyclists, whose average age is 75, participate in the activity.

"I started riding years ago to help fight my high blood pressure," said Damiano, who mentors art courses for Thomas Edison State College. "On my 80th birthday, I rode nearly 3,700 miles cross-country from Oregon to New Hampshire and pedaled over the Rocky Mountains on that trip."

In addition to his birthday jaunt, Damiano has also biked throughout Europe, including Greece, Poland, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Italy and Austria. Damiano complements his vigorous choice of exercise with a vegetarian lifestyle, which he has been living for most of his adult life; he credits his eating and exercising habits to his good health and longevity.

Damiano's enthusiasm for cycling is matched only by his love of education and art.

A graduate of Combs-Harcum College of Music with a Doctor of Musical Arts, Damiano has taught at Burlington County College and spent many years in public education in Washington Township Schools in South Jersey.

Working at Thomas Edison State College for more than 20 years, Damiano mentors Introduction to Art and Western Art History I and II. He explained that online mentoring is a way of teaching to satisfy the current



Dr. John Damiano waves as he cycles on his way to LaCrosse, Wis., during his America By Bicycle cross-country trip to celebrate his 80th birthday. Photo courtesy of Mike Munk, *Bamacyclist* 2009.

needs of education and noted, "I have always been happy to be a part of it."

When students inquire about the effect of learning subject matter online, Damiano always tells them that "education is exposure to all aspects of man's great achievements and online learning is just another way to explore those accomplishments."

Currently, Damiano is lecturing in a Burlington County Life Center program called: "Biking for Health and Longevity" and touting the positive aspects of the vegetarian lifestyle. In addition to mentoring and lecturing, Damiano is a professional violinist and has performed with many artists, including Sammy Davis Jr., Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra. One of Damiano's

proudest moments was when he played solo violin for Sinatra at the crooner's birthday party in the early 1980s at the old Grand Casino in Atlantic City.

He is also proud of his role in promoting local musicians. Damiano, along with his cousin the late Peter De Angelis, a music writer, arranger and producer, were instrumental in bringing attention to the many singers from South Philadelphia such as Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydel, Fabian and Al Martino, to name a few.

Damiano, who lives in Delran, N.J., is already planning his next adventure: to cycle 2,600 miles from Saint Petersburg, Russia, to Istanbul, Turkey. ■

Enrollment Verification Made Easy

COLLEGE PARTNERS WITH NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE IN STREAMLINING ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION FOR STUDENTS

Thomas Edison State College has partnered with National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) a nonprofit organization that provides one-stop, on-demand enrollment information for students currently registered in online and Guided Study courses.

"The benefit to students is that they no longer have to contact the offices of the Registrar or Financial Aid, via e-mail, fax or phone and process paperwork in order to verify their enrollment to their lending institutions," said Alisha Pendleton, associate director, Office of Financial Aid. "Recipients of student loans such as Stafford, Perkins or private education loans previously had to act as an intermediary between the College and their lending institution or servicers to verify enrollment."

Having the NSC act as an authorized agent now eliminates the manual verifications, insures accurate prompt deferment reporting,

improves service to students and lenders, and decreases loan delinquency rates caused by administrative delays. NSC provides lenders direct access to student enrollment data on a FERPA-compliant platform, according to Pendleton.

The College currently reports enrollment data to NSC for students taking online and Guided Study courses, regardless of whether they are current or former federal loan recipients. Students requesting loan deferment or loan forbearance will now have their enrollment data automatically transmitted to the NSC within 15 business days of their term start date so that the data is accessible to lending institutions and government employment agencies.

The College is moving toward adding more self-service features through the NSC, including giving students and alumni the ability to print enrollment documentation,



Alisha Pendleton, Associate Director,
Office of Financial Aid

view their enrollment histories and process degree verifications online, 24 hours a day, free of charge.

Visit www.studentclearinghouse.org and click on "Students & Alumni" to find out more. ■

Liberal Smarts

» CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

The differences between the residential liberal arts colleges highlighted in the survey and Thomas Edison State College's academic model notwithstanding, clear parallels exist.

According to liberal studies mentor Dr. Randall Otto, graduates from the College's liberal studies-focused programs are well equipped for the shifting culture of the workplace.

"Employers know they can train specialized skills necessary for a candidate's position, but they can't train critical-thinking, problem-solving skills," he noted. "Companies are doing away with the isolation of the cubicle in favor of collaborative work environments, where exposure to the history of ideas and the development of analytic skills are of heightened importance. Liberal arts-focused study is by its nature interdisciplinary and connects well with this evolving scenario."

Otto added that the College's online platform,

popular with many students, may further optimize an already fruitful liberal studies experience.

"Our online course platform is a writing-intensive medium. It can be maintained that adult learners who undertake an online education in a liberal studies program are required to sharpen their writing abilities more than their on ground counterparts who are not required to write in all facets of their course work," he said.

Accordingly, it is a skill set that endures long after the course assignments end.

"Texts, e-mails, Web content, social networking and blogs are more often the ways in which people communicate," said Otto. "Students who are adept at communicating their ideas clearly and succinctly possess an advantage. The College's undergraduate Liberal Arts Capstone course in particular, while very

challenging to students in terms of the writing requirements, is of great worth to students seeking to become more competitive in the workplace or preparing to go on to graduate-level studies."

Comparisons aside, the true worth of a liberal studies education may extend well beyond its immediate applicability.

"It bears emphasis that college should be more than vocational training," said Otto. "Education should be consideration about life itself – what it means to live a good life and how to live – rather than what kind of job one may finally obtain upon graduation. In short, the liberal arts curriculum helps one not only to learn how to make a living, but how to live – by encouraging learning across the spectrum of historical understanding and engaging that knowledge critically in all facets of life." ■

2011 Student Communications Survey Results

WE ASKED. YOU ANSWERED.

More than 1,600 students responded to Thomas Edison State College's 2011 Student Communications Survey, which focused on electronic communications, online student services and social media.

"We are thrilled that so many students took the time to complete the survey," said Joe Guzzardo, communications director. "Hearing from our students about how we communicate with them gives us valuable insight about how to serve our students better."

Here is a summary of student responses from the survey:

Q: How satisfied are you with the College's Web-based student communications (including Web postings, Web-based publications, e-mails, e-newsletters, social media, etc.)?

Very satisfied: 34.1%
Satisfied: 42.6%
Somewhat satisfied: 15.6%
Somewhat dissatisfied: 4.5%
Not sure: 3.2%

Q: How well does the College website and the myEdison® student portal keep you informed?

Very well: 40.5%
Well: 38.2%
Fairly well: 16.7%
Not well: 4.6%

Q: Do you feel the College's Web-based student communications, including e-mails and Web postings, are done in a timely manner?

Yes: 88.3%
No: 11.7%

Q: How satisfied are you with the newly redesigned Online Student Services portal?

Very satisfied: 20.9%
Satisfied: 40.4%
Somewhat satisfied: 20.2%
Somewhat dissatisfied: 5.6%
Not satisfied: 4.8%
I have not used the Online Student Services Portal: 8.1%

Q: Do you have specific feedback or suggestions regarding the newly designed Online Student Services portal or other Web-based communications? *Note: this was an open-ended question. The following is a summary of the most frequent responses:*

- Would like single sign-on for Online Student Services and course spaces
- Opportunity for improved, more user-friendly navigation for Online Student Services
- Satisfied with Online Student Services and how it works
- No comment

Q: Would you like to receive course-related or program-related information from the College via text messages?

Yes: 23.5%
No: 76.5%

Q: What is your preferred method of receiving course-related or program-related information from the College?

E-mail: 93.5%
Text message: 1.5%
Web posting: 4.1%
Phone message: .8%
Social Media sites (Facebook, etc.): .1%

Q: Should Thomas Edison State College offer more video-based resources for students (such as guides to Prior Learning Assessment, registering for courses, navigating course spaces, etc.)?

Yes: 73.1%
No: 26.9%

Q: What social media sites do you use? *(Respondents were asked to select all that applied).*

Facebook: 62.7%
LinkedIn: 20.2%
Twitter: 10.2%
YouTube: 34.7%
I do not use social media sites: 27.4%



Q: Which of the College's social media sites have you visited? *(Respondents were asked to select all that applied).*

Facebook: 16.5%
LinkedIn: 4.5%
Twitter: 1.5%
YouTube: 9.2%
I have not visited any of the College's social media sites: 77.9%

Q: Are you satisfied with your experiences on the College's social media sites?

Yes: 18.6%
No: 2.1%
I have not visited any of the College's social media sites: 79.3%

Q: Would you like the option of being able to communicate with the College staff via Facebook and/or other social media platforms to answer course-related or program-related questions?

Yes: 32.8%
No: 40.1%
I do not use social media: 27.1%

Academic Calendar

	January 2012 Term	February 2012 Term	March 2012 Term
Registration Dates	Dec. 22, 2011 - Jan. 16, 2012	Jan. 22 - Feb. 14, 2012	Feb. 20 - March 16, 2012
Late Registration	Jan. 17 - Jan. 21, 2012	Feb. 16 - Feb. 19, 2012	March 17 - March 21, 2012
Course Transfer Period	Dec. 22, 2011 - Jan. 31, 2012	Jan. 22 - Feb. 29, 2012	Feb. 20 - March 31, 2012
Term Start Date	Feb. 1, 2012	March 1, 2012	April 1, 2012*
Midterm Exam Week**	March 19 - March 24, 2012	April 16 - April 21, 2012	May 14 - May 19, 2012
Final Exam Week**	April 23 - April 28, 2012	May 21 - May 26, 2012	June 18 - June 23, 2012
Term Ends	April 28, 2012	May 26, 2012	June 23, 2012

* Dates apply to both Graduate and Undergraduate courses

** Select courses have midterm examinations or online proctored midterm and final examinations, please refer to your course materials for details

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