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News Release

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For Immediate Release

Assembly Higher Education Committee Chairman Patrick Diegnan Honored with Community College Legislative Excellence Award

TRENTON, N.J. — On June 16, as part of its annual Trustee Conference at the Trenton Marriott at Lafayette Yard, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges presented its 2008 Legislative Excellence Award to Assembly Higher Education Committee Chairman Patrick Diegnan for his exemplary support of the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Rewards Scholarship (NJ STARS) and NJ STARS II programs.

“The New Jersey Council of County Colleges’ Legislative Excellence Award is an honor bestowed each year on a selected legislator who has served as an exceptional advocate for the state’s 19 community colleges,” said Council Chairman Dr. Richard Wellbrock. “We truly appreciate Chairman Diegnan’s passion and commitment to the NJ STARS scholarship, our community colleges and our students.”

NJ STARS is the first state-sponsored, merit-based scholarship program in the country that covers community college tuition and approved fees for students who graduate in the top 20 percent of their high school class.

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NJ STARS II covers tuition and approved fees at any New Jersey public four-year college or university for community college NJ STARS students who have earned their associate degrees with 3.0 grade point averages or better and are transferring to earn their bachelor's degrees.

Diegnan, the author of 35 pieces of legislation signed into law, serves the 18th New Jersey legislative district. In addition to chairing the Higher Education Committee, he serves on several committees and boards. Among them are: the Assembly Education Committee, the Regulated Professions and Independent Authorities Committee, the Assembly Task Force on Vocational and Technical Education, the Commission on Business Efficiency in the Public Schools, the New Jersey Commission on Programs for Gifted Children, and the Joint Committee on the Public Schools.

He is also a member of the National Conference of State Legislatures Education Committee and the association's Redistricting and Elections Committee.

Diegnan has received many honors and awards throughout his career, including the South Plainfield High School Hall of Fame, the Middlesex County Jewish Community Center Honoree, the Displaced Homemakers Network of New Jersey Outstanding Legislator Award, and the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Irishman of the Year Award.

Diegnan is an attorney in private practice and is a member of the New Jersey State Bar Association. He earned his juris doctorate and bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University.

Diegnan is married to his wife of 31 years, Anita. They have two daughters.

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The New Jersey Council of County Colleges is the state association representing New Jersey's 19 community colleges. As an independent, trustee-headed organization that joins the leadership of trustees and presidents, the Council is the voice of the community college sector before the state legislature and other branches of government.