



# TRUSTEE

WINTER 2007 VOLUME 14, NUMBER 1

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF COUNTY COLLEGES

## College Presidents Support Transfer Agreement



*Governor Jon Corzine signed legislation in September that calls for a new statewide articulation transfer agreement for New Jersey's colleges and universities. Attendees of the bill signing ceremony included County College of Morris President Dr. Edward Yaw, Rowan University President Dr. Donald Farish, Assemblyman Craig Stanley, Camden County College President Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi and Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt.*

**I**n December, the New Jersey Presidents' Council, the 50-member board of New Jersey's public, private and community colleges and universities' presidents, endorsed a new statewide transfer articulation agreement.

The new agreement promotes the seamless transfer of academic credits from a completed New Jersey community college associate degree program to a baccalaureate degree program at New Jersey's public four-year colleges and universities.

The agreement now goes to the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, the state commission that provides coordination, planning, policy development, and advocacy for the state's higher education system, for final approval.

The agreement's core principle

promotes the associate degree counting toward half of a bachelor's degree.

The agreement outlines a 45-credit core block for general education courses, and will authorize community college credits in a student's major to transfer as lower-level courses for that major.

In addition, the statewide transfer agreement will establish an appeals process for community college students transferring from a community college to a New Jersey four-year college or university. That appeals process will be overseen by the New Jersey Presidents' Council and the CHE.

In September, Gov. Jon S. Corzine signed A3968/S2535 into law, legislation that gave New

[\(see Transfer on page 4\)](#)

## NJCCC TRUSTEE NEWS

is published as a membership service of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.

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. The Council is also the state coordinating organization for all community colleges in New Jersey.

### COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

**Dr. Richard Wellbrock**  
Raritan Valley Community College

### STAFF

**Dr. Lawrence A. Nespoli**  
President

**Ms. Linda E. Lam**  
Vice President/Policy Research Officer

**Mr. Jacob C. Farbman, M.A., APR**  
Director of Communications

**Ms. Deborah Threadgill**  
Executive Administrative Assistant

**Ms. Hansita Sethi**  
Administrative Assistant

**Ms. Barbara Kowalski**  
Special Projects Assistant

### NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF COUNTY COLLEGES

330 West State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08618  
Phone: (609) 392-3434  
Fax: (609) 392-8158  
www.njccc.org

Send suggestions, comments or announcements to Jacob Farbman at the Council offices. Publication decisions are at the discretion of the editorial board.

## From the Chairman's Desk

As we celebrate the holiday season, I express my sincere thanks to our community college Trustee Ambassadors, presidents and students who worked diligently to advocate for the transfer bill that Governor Corzine signed into law in September.

Our community colleges serve as a gateway to opportunity for our students. All of us working at our community colleges strive to redeem minds. Now, for our students who choose to transfer to a state public four-year college or university, those minds will be learning new subjects, earning new credits, instead of repeating the same college courses.

The New Jersey Presidents' Council has finalized the transfer articulation agreement. The agreement now goes to the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education for final approval.

This is a monumental achievement in which we should all take ownership. It was only a year ago that the Assembly Higher Education Committee held hearings on college transfer. Then, the assembly and senate approved a new transfer bill, which Governor Corzine signed into law in September.

The new statewide transfer articulation agreement will eliminate the course-to-course transfer system that caused some of our students to take and pay for the same courses twice.

The new agreement outlines a 45 credit core block for general education courses and allows for community college credits in a student's major to transfer as lower-level courses for that major. The agreement also creates an appeals process for students.

Most important, the new transfer agreement establishes a precedent on how our community colleges can serve as "feeder institutions" to our four-year colleges and universities who are dealing with capacity issues.

National research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education shows that students who first enroll at community colleges and then transfer do as well as native four-year college students in attaining their bachelor's degree.

National research also shows that using community colleges as feeder institutions is a very efficient approach to producing bachelor's degree graduates who will stay in New Jersey to start their careers and contribute to our state's economy.

This new transfer articulation agreement will contribute to increasing the number of college graduates while decreasing the cost to produce each graduate.

Thank you all once again for your efforts. The statewide transfer agreement creates a "money in the pocket" advantage for our students. What a wonderful conclusion to 2007! Happy holidays to all!



**Dr. Richard Wellbrock**  
Council Chairman

---

## NJ's Community Colleges Work Together to Save Money

**A**s New Jersey's 19 community colleges have grown to serve nearly 400,000 students throughout the state, so have their expenses.

But just as New Jersey's community colleges work together to meet the state's educational and workforce training needs, so do they work collaboratively to save money on major operational costs.

Formed in August 1999, the New Jersey Community College Joint Purchasing Consortium combines the member colleges' buying power to negotiate better prices on products and services. And the results of this consortium speak for themselves.

From 2005 to 2007, community colleges saved significant amounts of money on the joint purchase of electricity and natural gas, with one community college saving as much as \$500,000.

Other savings include an 8 percent discount on a statewide contract for Dell computers, a 10 percent discount on Gateway computers, and a 20 percent discount on ACCUPLACER

standardized testing materials from the CollegeBoard.

Another active joint venture is the community college workers compensation insurance pool. The pool's operation results in direct premium savings. For example, one college has saved over \$146,000 in one year.

"Our colleges have worked together for nearly 10 years now to maximize what we can get for our money," said Susan Perkins, vice president for finance and administration at Middlesex County College. "The cost savings from the Joint Purchasing Consortium have made a real difference for many of our community colleges."

Another consortium that has worked to save community colleges money is the New Jersey Virtual Community College Consortium, also created in 1999.

The NJVCCC began as a Web-based distance learning resource where community colleges could share their online courses. The partnership allowed students throughout the

state to enroll in online classes, regardless of their location.

As it evolved, the NJVCCC was the first to broker a statewide contract for WebCT software. Many of our community college faculty members use WebCT to teach online courses. Our colleges still benefit today from the discount on the WebCT software license.

The NJVCCC also worked to negotiate a statewide agreement with Smarthinking, which provides online tutoring support to students in Web-based distance learning classes.

In addition to brokering statewide software and support licenses, NJVCCC members hold instructional workshops and conferences, which allow faculty members to learn how to teach online classes.

"The NJVCCC opened the door to Web-based distance learning classes for many of our colleges," said Council President Dr. Larry Nespoli. "Now, our community colleges offer Web-based distance learning courses, thanks in large part to the NJVCCC."

---

## State Health Benefits Program Reform

**G**overnor Corzine recently signed into law Chapter 62, P.L. 2007, legislation that reforms the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP).

This legislation was a Council priority, as health insurance costs continue to increase by double digits each year.

The legislation permits

local employers that participate in the SHBP to negotiate employee contributions to health insurance costs.

As one example, State employees recently ratified new contracts that require all employees to pay 1.5 percent of their annual salaries for health care costs.

Community colleges would save over \$10 million annually,

if they achieved similar contract provisions,

The Council plans to convene a workshop in the spring to help community colleges participating in the SHBP implement the new changes.

For more information, please call Linda Lam in the Council office at (609) 392-3434.

## Presidents Finalize Transfer Agreement

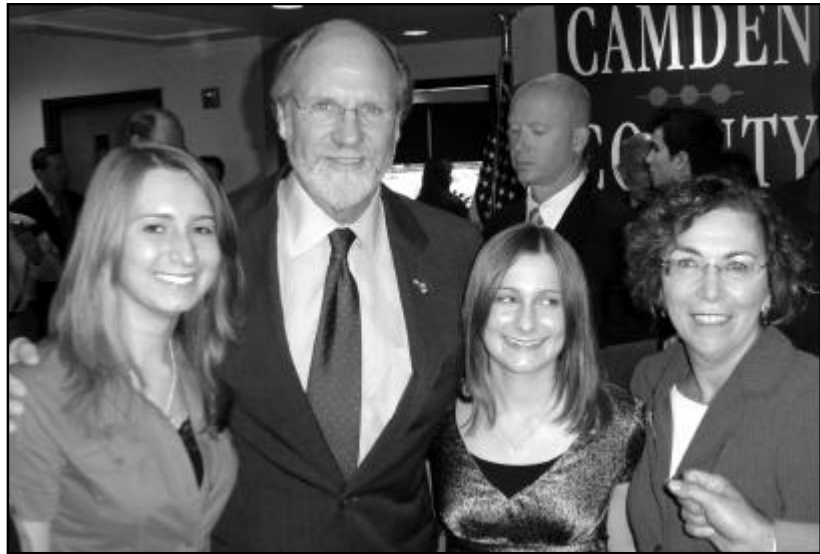
(Transfer from page 1)

Jersey's college presidents the wherewithal to create the transfer agreement.

"The legislation is a landmark achievement for higher education in New Jersey," said Council Chairman Dr. Richard Wellbrock. "It places a high value on an associate degree earned at the community college, and will be a huge benefit to students throughout the state."

Nearly 40 other states throughout the country have enacted some form of higher education transfer legislation. Prior to this legislation, community college students would transfer to four-year colleges and universities on a course by course basis.

One drawback of a course-to-course transfer system was that at times, some courses with the same curriculum – but different names – ended up transferring as free electives or not



*Middlesex County College NJ STARS student Meagan Plichta, her sister Lacey (a Middlesex NJ STARS graduate now at Rutgers as an NJ STARS II scholarship recipient) and Middlesex President Dr. Joann La Perla-Morales with Gov. Corzine during the transfer bill signing in September.*

transferring at all, and community college students were forced to take and pay for the same course twice.

State Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt and

Assemblymen Patrick Diegnan and Michael Doherty sponsored A3968. State Senators Ronald Rice and Joseph Doria sponsored S2535.

## NJ Community College Enrollment Sets New Record

Statewide full-time student enrollment at New Jersey's 19 community colleges has reached a new record high.

Total full-time credit enrollment at New Jersey's community colleges is up 4.6 percent from 77,392 in fall 2006 to 80,951 this year.

Part-time credit enrollment is up slightly by .7 percent, from 76,693 in fall 2006 to 77,201 this year. In total, 158,152 students are taking col-

lege-credit courses at New Jersey community colleges this fall – the largest credit enrollment ever at New Jersey's community colleges.

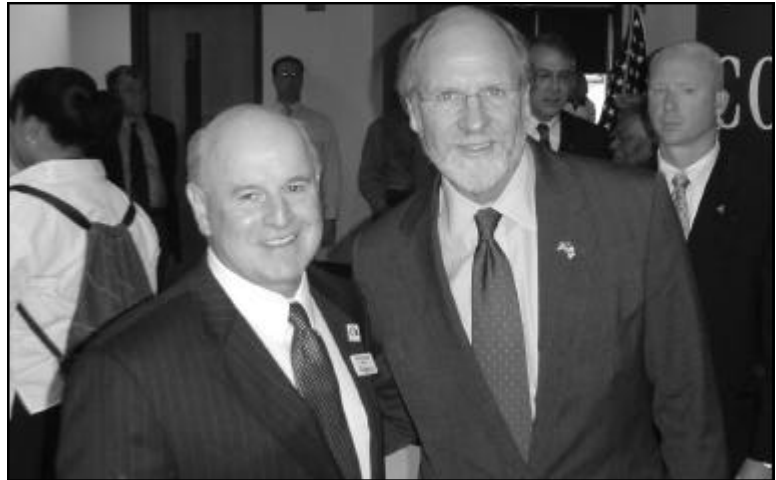
"New Jersey's community colleges have reached an all-time high in providing higher education to the residents of our state," said NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence A. Nespoli. "In addition to credit enrollments, community colleges enroll over 125,000 students in noncredit courses in professional and per-

sonal skills development each year. We are also working with over 500 businesses to provide customized training programs to over 55,000 members of New Jersey's workforce."

In addition to increased student enrollments, the number of credit hours students take is up 4 percent, from 1,508,689 in fall 2006 to 1,568,849 in fall 2007. A typical college class is three credit hours.

## Scenes from the Transfer Bill Signing

*Right: Atlantic Cape Community College President Dr. Peter Mora with Governor Corzine.*



*Left: Burlington County College student Laura Dyer, BCC President Dr. Robert Messina and BCC student Shanee Abbott with Governor Corzine.*

*Right: Governor Corzine with Salem Community College student Steven Meridan.*



## SCC President Honored with Community College Spirit Award

At its September meeting, the NJ Council of County Colleges presented the 2007 Community College Spirit Award to Salem Community College President Dr. Peter B. Contini for his exemplary service to New Jersey's community colleges.

"Since its inauguration in 1993, the Community College Spirit Award has been an honor bestowed to those who embody the community college spirit – perseverance, dedication and excellence," said Dr. Richard Wellbrock, Council chairman.

Contini was recognized for his leadership and service as a co-chairman of the New Jersey Presidents' Council's Transfer and Articulation Coordinating Committee.

"Dr. Contini's leadership was instrumental in creating the transfer legislation that Gov. Jon S. Corzine signed into law," Wellbrock said.

Gov. Corzine signed A3968/S2535 into law on Sept.



*Salem Community College Trustee Dr. David Klink joined Council Chairman Dr. Dick Wellbrock and Council President Dr. Larry Nespoli to present the 2007 Community College Spirit Award to Dr. Contini.*

13. The law promotes the seamless transfer of New Jersey community college associate degree graduates into baccalaureate degree programs at public four-year colleges and universities throughout the state. Under the new law, each public higher

education institution will enter into a collective statewide transfer agreement in consultation with the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and the New Jersey Presidents' Council.

## Community College Ambassador Day Coming in March 2008

by Carley Gibson, Fall 2007 Intern

In March 2008, NJ's community college Trustee Ambassadors, NJ STARS Student Ambassadors and presidents will gather at the Statehouse in Trenton to participate in Community College Ambassador Day.

This event gives our community colleges an opportunity to meet with members of the Assembly, Senate and members of the Governor's Office to discuss issues that are important to our institutions.

The event will start with a breakfast and an overview of

this year's legislative priorities. Trustees, presidents and students will then meet in the Senate and Assembly Chambers, and meet with representatives of the Governor's staff and legislators throughout the day.

"This year, we're calling our annual ambassador day 'Community College Ambassador Day' to better promote to legislators that trustees and NJ STARS students are involved," said Dr. Larry Nespoli, Council president.

The Community College

Trustee Ambassador Program was created as a network of community college trustees interested in becoming involved in community college advocacy issues at state and national levels.

The NJ STARS Student Ambassador program was created as a network of NJ STARS scholarship recipients who serve as statewide advocates for this important program.

We will let our Ambassadors know the actual event date once it is finalized.

## Rowan Launches Community College Doctorate Program

This fall semester, Rowan University formally launched a new doctorate program in community college educational leadership at Brookdale Community College's Western Monmouth Campus.

New Jersey's community college presidents worked closely with David Hespe, chairman of Rowan's educational leadership department to determine the program's curriculum. Many of the presidents will be teaching in the program and serving on dissertation committees.

"I enrolled in the program because it is directly relevant to the work that I am doing and it will better prepare me for other positions that I may hold in the future," said Elvy Vieira, associate dean, West Essex Campus, Essex County College. "I also looked forward to meeting and networking with other professionals who were dedicated to the same mission of helping students.

"As I complete this program, I hope to continue contributing to Essex's growth as we grapple with the challenges faced by our students' needs and also address looming financial cutbacks," Vieira said. "I believe that we must advocate for our students and also continue to provide services that benefit the various populations we serve. Community colleges are directly responsible for improving the lives of so many, helping people of all ages and from all backgrounds acquire the education and training that will enable them to lead productive and fulfilling lives."

Another student in the program, Paula Adelhoch, vice

president for student affairs, Hudson County Community College, said that doctoral work has always been a personal goal for her. However, as the years passed, and responsibilities increased, it never seemed to be the right time to get started.

---

***"I enrolled in the program because it is directly relevant to the work that I am doing and it will better prepare me for other positions that I may hold in the future."***

***Elvy Vieira  
Essex County College***

---

"Last spring, a good friend of mine said to me that if I waited to have enough time to get started, I would never get started at all," she said. "When I learned about the Rowan program, it appealed to me on many levels. What attracted me most was that the program was to recruit from, and focus on, community college leadership. The thought of studying what I love with peers from across the state really excited me. It was the right program, offered in the right place, at the right time."

Adelhoch hopes that the doctoral program in community college educational leadership will provide a greater depth of knowledge, self-awareness as a leader, and a stronger understanding of policy issues that will face community colleges in the future.

Stephen Nacco, Brookdale's executive director of marketing services, who already holds a

Ph.D. in English and American Literature, said that the program offers an ideal opportunity to learn about how to one day be a community college president.

"I'm participating to bolster my leadership skills so that I may indeed possess the requisite academic credentials to be a community college president," Nacco said.

Rowan University Professor Dr. Kathleen Sernak and Council President Dr. Larry Nespoli taught Educational Leadership Theory this semester, and covered the foundations of leadership theory and the challenges faced by community colleges. Brookdale Community College President Dr. Peter Burnham and New Jersey Commission on Higher Education Executive Director Jane Oates served as guest lecturers in the class early in the semester.

Rowan professors Dr. MaryBeth Walpole and Dr. Ted Ingram taught Introduction to Literature Analysis and Writing.

"Dr. Walpole structured the class in a way that by the time the course ended, I could see how much I had progressed in my understanding of the literature and in my writing," Vieira said. "Dr. Ingram was always willing to share his own experiences, which was very relevant since he had just completed the dissertation process."

The doctorate program in community college educational leadership will hold open houses throughout the state this spring semester for students interested in enrolling in the second class in Fall 2008.

## Eighth Annual Best Practices Conference Set for April 24 and 25

by Carley Gibson, Fall 2007 Intern

**T**he NJ Council of County Colleges Best Practices Conference has become the premier statewide professional development event among community college faculty, staff and administrators.

This year's event will be held at Ocean County College in Toms River on Thursday and Friday, April 24 and 25, 2008.

The Best Practices Conference provides networking opportunities and beneficial education, including topics that range from training new faculty to building new programs to insights from community college presidents.

After a series of mini-sessions to start the day, this year's conference will feature roughly 40 topics, engaging in virtually every area of community college administration, financial aid, management, academics, and more.

The success of the conference is primarily a result of a dedicated Steering Committee. The committee meets several times per year, in person and by conference calls, to make important decisions regarding content and structure of the event, including selecting the presentations and determining the registration cost.

The 2008 Best Practices Steering Committee members include:

- Ann Tickner Jankowski, Bruce Marich, Jim McCarthy, and Chic Raimondi from Brookdale Community College;
- William Mink from Camden County College;
- Diane Campbell, Mark McCormick and Lynn Coopersmith from Mercer County Community College;
- Virginia Reilly, Norma Betz and Frank Wetta from Ocean County College;
- Lisa Hiscano from Passaic County Community College; and
- Wallace Smith from Union County College.

We thank the Steering Committee for its efforts. Please encourage your college's faculty, staff and administrators to attend the event.

If you have any questions regarding the 2008 Best Practices Conference, please call Marsha Stoltman at (609) 588-8703, or send e-mail to [marsha@thestoltmangroup.com](mailto:marsha@thestoltmangroup.com).

## Consortium Develops NJEA Career Ladder

by Carley Gibson

**N**ew Jersey Education Association educational support professionals now can earn a Certificate of Competency in Education Support Services developed by NJEA and the NJ Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development.

Participants will receive 12 credits when they complete the certificate program after enrolling in one of three certificate and degree programs at New Jersey's 19 community colleges.

In order to earn the Certificate of Competency in Educational Support Services, ESP members must complete four modules, each 36 hours. The modules include: communications, cultural competence, child development, and student and staff school safety.

Upon completing all requirements, the Certificate of Competency in Education Support Services will be awarded and signed by the NJEA president and the community college president.

For more information, contact the Workforce Consortium at (609) 393-9000.

The NJ Council of County Colleges is accepting donations for the NJCCC Chair Scholarship, established by Richard and Ann Wellbrock of Watchung, NJ. To donate, call 1-800-334-NJCC.

For the latest news about New Jersey's community colleges, please visit [www.njccc.org](http://www.njccc.org).

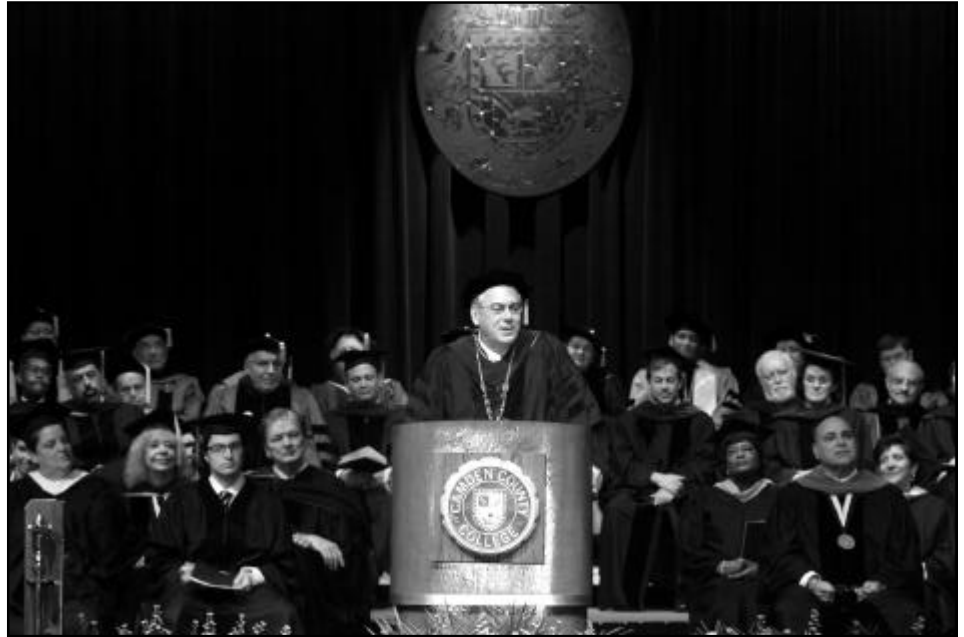


# TRUSTEE

WINTER 2007 SPECIAL EDITION

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF COUNTY COLLEGES

## Camden County College President Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi's Inaugural Address



*Recently, Camden County College inaugurated Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi (center) as its new president. We at Trustee News enjoyed Dr. Yannuzzi's inaugural address so much that we wanted to share it with you. We hope you find it as inspiring as we did!*

I am honored to be inaugurated as President of Camden County College, and I mean no disrespect for the solemnity of this occasion when I say that inauguration is “for the birds.” Let me explain what I mean. In planning my speech I was guided by my experiences as a Latin student and a reading teacher. When you’re trying to learn vocabulary and you really want to know the meaning of a word, you should look it up and see what the dictionary tells you about its roots.

Looking up “inauguration” I found that it truly was “for the birds,” going back to the origin of the word in Latin, where getting “in-augurated” was the ceremony that made a person an “augur” – a priest, senator, or Roman official, specially trained to read and interpret the signs from the gods. Augurs go back to Romulus

and Remus – the twin boys suckled by the she-wolf who founded Rome. When they grew up, they quarreled over who should be king, and they decided to settle the argument with an augury contest. Romulus interpreted 12 signs from the gods, and Remus could get only six. Romulus won the contest, killed Remus and became king. That’s why we talk about “Rome” and the “Romans” instead of “Reme” and the “Remans.” Through the centuries, it was the job of the Roman augurs to determine if the gods were pleased with a proposed course of action – going on a voyage, starting a battle, passing a law. The augurs interpreted the signs from the gods mostly by examining birds – what species were around at the time, or how they flew across the sky. Sometimes the augurs would listen to the birds’ song, or watch how

chickens ate grain off the ground.

It is customary for a college president upon taking office to lay out a vision, a set of goals, and a course of action for the years ahead, and I'll do that briefly today. But in the true spirit of inauguration, I want to do it with the help of the birds we have around this campus. I've been watching them and listening to them more closely in recent days, and the birds have been telling me a lot about the past and the future of Camden County College and all community colleges. So with my new powers as an augur, I want to interpret the signs from these birds.

---

***“As we expand our current programs and develop new ones in the years ahead, we do so with the mission to bring higher education to new groups of students who have not yet had the opportunity to go to college.”***

---

First, we have the geese. We've all seen the geese walking across campus, or we've seen evidence of where they've been even if we don't see them. Everyone who has come close to the geese knows you can't just stamp your foot and scare them away. And if you ever get between them and their babies, you know the geese are honking, tough, assertive birds, and they're here to stay. In ancient Rome, a flock of geese considered sacred to Juno was allowed to roam on the Capitoline Hill because in 390 B.C. they alerted the city to a sneak attack by Gauls – the geese honked, the guards woke up, and the city was saved. We don't have to worry about Gauls attacking Gloucester Township or Camden or Cherry Hill or anywhere in New Jersey, but we do have our permanent flock of geese at Camden County College, and every year we see a new crop of little geese walking behind them. These geese do tell us something about the presence of community colleges on the higher education scene – we're here, we're multiplying, and we're not going away. While we may be a bit louder and not quite as proper as some other sectors of higher education, we do look out for our young – and as we expand our current programs and develop new ones in the

years ahead, we do so with the mission to bring higher education to new groups of students who have not yet had the opportunity to go to college.

Many of us who teach and work at community colleges, like me, were the first members of our families to go to college, and first among the people I want to thank for helping me to stand here today are my parents Sam and Eleanor. I'm sure that on this All Saints Day, they are up there looking down, and I hope they're proud. My parents recognized the importance and value of education, and though they didn't have the opportunities themselves, they sacrificed so I could attend a Jesuit high school and set me on the path of education that has led me here today. Camden County College must continue to have that same kind of faith and trust in the value of higher education for everyone. That is the message the geese are telling me, and when we hear them honking, we need to take an “augury” from the geese never to forget the important “access” portion of the community college mission.

Then we have the turkeys. Some of you may not know that we have flocks of wild turkeys on campus. Now that I'm living on campus, I've often seen more than 20 at a time in the yard eating acorns and then scurrying back into the woods. Ben Franklin gave high praise to the turkey, saying that it should have been our national symbol instead of the eagle. He said a turkey is “a much more respectable bird, a true native of North America; and though he may look a little vain and silly, he is a bird of courage who would not hesitate to attack a member of the British guards who would invade his farm yard.” The Aztecs called the turkey the “bird of the earth” and believed turkeys helped create the world and taught humans how to raise corn. In Native American culture “turkey medicine” helped a person to transcend self, to share, and to act on behalf of others. I think “turkey medicine” carries a message about Camden County College and all community colleges – we are institutions committed to sharing knowledge with students to promote their personal development and to support the economic and civic development of the communities we serve. We teach students occupational and technical skills in an array of fields, but we also offer them opportunities to study the arts and sciences in an American educational blend of theory, history, and practice. In addition to offering degree and certificate programs, we are a vital

part of our local communities and play a key role in worker training, professional development and general interest courses for a wide range of citizens – from children in summer camps to senior adults.

I pledge to continue this commitment in the years ahead and to expand the college's mission of service. I want to thank someone who has exemplified for me the community college mission – my wife, Mary Ann. We've shared a commitment to community college students, as well as to each other and to our two children, for the past 37 years. She has provided understanding and support for me throughout my career – she's earned tenure as a faculty member in three places as we've moved over the years. Since I've worked in administrative roles, I've had less daily contact with students and sometimes feel less in touch with their needs. But I have only to come home and hear about Mary Ann's daily experiences as a teacher, advisor and dedicated life-long community college faculty member to be reminded of the reason that I do my job. I'm proud that over the past four decades we have developed a unique American form of higher education that has brought benefits to millions of students and to communities across the country. And I mean it with all the reverence the Aztecs and Ben Franklin would attach to that bird when I say that I'm proud to have been one of this bunch of turkeys.

---

***“The Greeks believed, and we believe it, too – though we may not always acknowledge it – that the pursuit of knowledge, the striving for academic excellence, the development of the intellectual capacity of each human being – each student we serve – is a sacred task, a critical activity that must be done if society is to survive.”***

---

A third bird that has appeared in great numbers recently on the Blackwood campus is the crow. Now I'm sure we've always had crows around, but in the past month or so they have taken to gathering by the hundreds at around 4 p.m. in the trees near Roosevelt Hall. They fly



*Camden County Assemblyman Louis Greenwald and Assemblywoman Pam Lampitt recognize Dr. Yannuzzi.*

around in circles and make a cawing noise until sunset. Maybe it's just a coincidence that they've started doing this around the time of my inauguration, but I've taken it as a sign that they're telling me something. So let me use my powers as an augur to interpret the crows.

Many of us associate the crows with Edgar Allan Poe's ominous, "Quoth the raven... nevermore," but crows have much nobler associations in many cultures around the world. To the Greeks, the crow was allied with Apollo, the god of the sun, light and knowledge, and Apollo often sent crows down to man as messengers to foretell the future. Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest revered the crow as their main divinity, who created the sun and taught man civilization and culture. The crows also have an important message for me on this day, one that shines a bright light on our reason for being here, why we wear these priestly robes in this solemn assembly, why we think the work of a college is so important that it requires ceremonies like this. The Greeks believed, and we believe it, too – though we may not always acknowledge it – that the pursuit of knowledge, the striving for academic excellence, the development of the intellectual capacity of each human being – each student we serve – is a sacred task, a critical activity that must be done if society is to survive.

We support our students' career goals, their social well-being, their recreational and aesthetic experiences. But what they can get only from college – whether they know it or not – and what we must help them to do – and this is not an easy task – is to develop their ability to think, to analyze, to evaluate, to understand across all the areas of knowledge and aspects of human experi-

ence that we call the subjects of the curriculum. Our faculty, and faculty of all community colleges, wrestles with the issue of “general education” all the time. We believe it’s important in a community college that all students – whether they’re here studying pre-law or earning certification in automotive technology – should have courses in English, math, natural science, social science, and history as vital components of their studies. We do this well, and we’ve been doing it well for years.

If Apollo sent the crows flying down to bring knowledge to man, then we, as a place devoted to excellence in the pursuit of knowledge, are reversing the favor as we send flocks and flocks of graduates out from our campus to the county, the state and the world, taking what they’ve learned here and bringing it to their jobs, families, and communities. Some of our birds fly back to the nest, and we’re proud of the number of alumni among our faculty and staff who have returned to help new student generations benefit from the education they received.

---

***“The most important thing we do takes place every day in the classroom and no matter how technology changes, we will still have spaces whether they’re real or virtual where teachers and students meet and interact in a special way that increases students’ knowledge.”***

---

If the crows we’ve been seeing and hearing of late are bringing us a prophecy for the future, let me use my augury skills to interpret what they’re saying. My career in community colleges has spanned 37 years, just about the same amount of time Camden County College and many other community colleges in New Jersey and across the country have been around. If we look 40 years into the future, what kind of place can we expect to see? I believe that the vision, values and mission that we have established for ourselves today hold the answer. I see that working with our area school districts, we will continue to develop pathways to careers and further educational opportunities that every student in our county can follow – some of them while still enrolled in high school,

many after graduation – but all students in our county need and can benefit from some educational program at Camden County College.

I see that by working with our partner higher education institutions that we will create seamless transitions that expand access to further studies and degrees for all of our students who want to pursue them. I see that by working with area companies and institutions we will develop new career programs for people in the workforce and new relationships between work and education so that the economic vitality of our county and state is enhanced as the knowledge and skills of those who work here are increased. And just as 40 years ago none of us could have imagined the ways that technology would change the ways we operate an institution and influence what happens in the classroom, I see that technology changes in the years ahead will continue to have an impact on teaching and learning.

But the crows are telling me that one value must and will remain constant – the value that we’ve continued to acknowledge for 900 years (that’s why we’re wearing these 12<sup>th</sup> century gowns, hoods, and hats) that the teaching and learning we’re engaged in at Camden County College and all community colleges is a special and yes, even sacred, mission. The most important thing we do, and will continue to do, takes place every day in the classroom and no matter how technology changes, we will still have “spaces” whether they’re real or virtual where teachers and students meet and interact in a special way that increases students’ knowledge of a subject and enhances students’ ability to use that knowledge to better their lives and their world.

And so as I stand here today, I promise to fulfill my responsibilities as president. I’ll develop strategic and annual plans, and manage with cost-based budgeting, and make decisions with data, and of course, assess institutional goals and student learning outcomes. But I also promise to keep in mind what the geese, the turkeys and the crows have told me. I promise to work to increase educational access for those who need the college, to expand services to our students and our community, and to keep academic excellence at the forefront as I lead the college in the years ahead. I am truly humbled and honored to have been given this opportunity, and I promise to work with our Board, faculty, staff, and our many friends and supporters in the community to make the augury of the birds a reality for the students and community of Camden County College. Thank you.