

TrusteeNews

PUBLICATION OF THE NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF COUNTY COLLEGES

Community Colleges Launch NJ Center for Student Success



Members of the New Jersey Assembly Higher Education Committee presented a legislative resolution to the New Jersey Center for Student Success during the Nov. 13th kick-off event. Pictured, from left: Center Assistant Director Louis Venturelli, Camden County College President Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi, Center Executive Director Dr. Yesenia Madas, NJ Council of County Colleges Executive Committee Member Bakari G. Lee, Esq., Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, Assembly Higher Education Committee Chair Celeste Riley, Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove, Assemblyman John DiMaio, and NJ Council of County Colleges President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli.

On Thursday, Nov. 13, during a special kick-off event at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Trenton, New Jersey's 19 community colleges and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges officially introduced the New Jersey Center for Student Success to the state.

The New Jersey Center for Student Success works with New Jersey's 19 community colleges to more effectively assist students in achieving degree and/or certificate completion. The Center supports the community colleges through data-driven research so that campus administrators, faculty and staff are making the most informed decisions. In addition, the Center for Student Success is addressing complementary student services initiatives that will lead to a comprehensive statewide student success agenda.

New Jersey's Center is now part of a national network of community college Student Success Centers. New Jersey's Center has received several grants to support its operations including a \$500,000 competitive grant from the Kresge Foundation in the Spring of 2014. New Jersey was one of three states to receive a Kresge grant this year, the others being California and Connecticut. These grants build on investments the Kresge Foundation has made in recent years to create Student Success Centers in Arkansas, Michigan, Ohio, and Texas.

"New Jersey's community college trustees and presidents have been leading our statewide efforts to improve student completion since 2009 as part of our Big Ideas Project," said NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence A. Nespoli. "We have worked collaboratively as 19 community colleges to transform our colleges from access institutions to access to student success institutions. With the Kresge Foundation's support, our 19 community colleges can do even more to develop and implement programs that enable students to achieve their goals and realize their dreams."

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF
County Colleges

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From the Chair's Desk

Helen Albright
NJCCC Chair

I am honored to have been elected Chair of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges for the 2014-2015 academic year. I very much appreciate your trust in me to lead this organization, and I am most grateful for your support.

It is not easy to follow in the footsteps of our previous Chair, Bakari Lee. Bakari led this organization to new heights as he championed student success. We are all so proud of Bakari and his recent election as Vice Chair of the Association of Community College Trustees' Board of Directors, putting him in line to become national ACCT Chair in two years. We thank Bakari for his service and dedication as Chair of this organization for the last three years and his unwavering commitment to our 19 community colleges and our students.

We recently conducted some interviews with trustees throughout the state to learn how the Council can better serve you. One thing many of you asked for is regional seminars for trustees. Starting in the spring 2015 semester, we will begin holding regional Trustee Education Seminars to better accommodate all of you. It is our hope that by holding these seminars regionally, it will make it more convenient for you to attend and learn about the latest statewide and national issues facing our community colleges and our students. You will also hear what NJCCC is doing at the legislative level in support of our colleges. These Trustee Education Seminars offer terrific wisdom and best practices to help you perform your duties as trustees, and we certainly hope you are able to join us. Watch for more information about locations, dates and times coming soon from the Council office.

I am very excited that we officially launched the New Jersey Center for Student Success last month. The Center's staff will be traveling to all 19 community colleges on a listening tour to learn what innovative programs our colleges are implementing to improve student success. What is also impressive is that the Center for Student Success created an Advisory Board made up of trustees, presidents, policy makers, faculty, staff, and students. The Board held its first meeting recently, and it was quite impressive to see all of the members have such a passion and vested interest in the success of our students.

As I begin my term as Chair, I look forward to working with Dr. Nespoli, the Council staff and all of you, the Council members, to better serve our present and future community college students as they work to realize their hopes and dreams.

In closing, I wish all of you the happiest of holidays!

Helen Albright
NJCCC Chair

TrusteeNews

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.

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF
County Colleges

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Community College Delegates Join Governor Christie on Trade Mission to Mexico

Three New Jersey community college representatives joined Gov. Chris Christie on his recent trade mission to Mexico City, Mexico. During the trip, Gov. Christie pledged the support of New Jersey's community colleges in aiding the growth of Mexican businesses in New Jersey.

Speaking in front of members of the American Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Mexican Chamber of Commerce, Gov. Christie spoke of the already strong bond that exists between New Jersey and Mexico, saying, "Today we are making a choice to build on this already strong partnership by investing in the area of workforce alignment and cooperation in the fields of education and research."

The Governor went on to mention New Jersey's community colleges and the role they will play in the new agreement. "As part of this agreement, New Jersey's 19 community colleges are also pledging their statewide commitment to guarantee Mexican business leaders that they will have the trained workers they need to do business in New Jersey."

Many four-year colleges and universities throughout New Jersey are already working with Mexican universities, and the inclusion of community colleges only serves to bolster what is an already strong relationship. "This is good for the people of New Jersey and Mexico, their families, for private sector growth and our long term economies," Gov. Christie said.

The Governor was joined on the trip by, among others, Dr. Patricia Donohue, president of Mercer County Community College, Dr. Lawrence Nespoli, president of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, and Sivaraman Anbarasan, executive director of the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development. Dr. Donohue was the only college or university president to attend.

"Through New Jersey's Community College Workforce Consortium, these community colleges can deliver any training businesses will need to ensure their workforce is productive. In many cases, customized training grants from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development are available so that this kind of training can be provided without cost to the business," Gov. Christie said.

The New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development brings together the vast resources of the 19 New Jersey community colleges for New Jersey companies and organizations to access, develop and receive workforce education and training for their current and emerging workforce statewide.



Gov. Christie with Mercer County Community College President Dr. Patricia Donohue during the Mexico Trade Mission.

New Jersey's community colleges also offer opportunities for Mexican students seeking a more "traditional" college experience.

Programs community colleges can offer include:

- **English Language Enrichment Programs –**

Puebla Governor Moreno Valle asked Governor Christie about implementing a program to send Puebla teachers and others to New Jersey to learn English. New Jersey's 19 community colleges offer English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Working together, they can quickly put together a uniform statewide program that could be delivered in every part of our state.

- **Cultural Immersion Programs –**

Many Mexican students interested in enrolling in bachelor's degree programs at New Jersey's universities would be well served by first enrolling in a cultural immersion program offered by the state's community colleges in the summer prior to their first semester at the university. These students would benefit from smaller classes and orientation programs designed to introduce them to a new culture (and new language), thereby increasing their chances of success at the university. And again, working together, New Jersey's community colleges can develop and deliver a common cultural immersion program to be delivered anywhere in our state.

- **Community College Associate Degrees –**

The Mexican Ministry of Education recently partnered with the American Association of Community Colleges to send 300 students from bilingual universidades tecnologicas in Mexico to community colleges in several Southwestern states. New Jersey's 19 community colleges could expand those efforts into the Northeast.

- **Online and Hybrid Programs –**

Several NJ community colleges, in partnership with Pearson Learning Solutions, are exploring an opportunity with a technical university system in Mexico to bring thousands of Mexican students to the United States. To keep the program more affordable to more Mexican students, the first two years will be offered either fully or partially online at the community college tuition level. Upon completion of the first two years, students will then complete their bachelor's degrees at partner universities in New Jersey.

"The future is about connecting students with skill sets that will help them be engaged members of the workforce over time. And at the same time connecting these people to the jobs that are fueling and growing our economies," Gov. Christie said. ■

Trustee Ambassador Spotlight: Calvin Souder

By: Daniel Sexton, *Fall 2014 Communications Intern*

When it comes to his role as a Trustee Ambassador, Calvin Souder says it is all about “being active, vocal and visible.” This is a belief he applies not only to his role with New Jersey’s community colleges, but also to the many other organizations he is involved with. Calvin currently sits on the corporate advisory board for the Boys and Girls Club of New Jersey, as well as the Board of Trustees for the Mental Health Association of New Jersey. In addition, Calvin sits on the Board of Trustees for Adopt One Village, which does missionary work in one of the poorest regions in Ghana. He also sits on the corporate advisory board for the New Jersey Law and Education Empowerment Project (NJ LEEP).



A lawyer by trade, Calvin has always tried to lend his time to valuable causes he believes in, especially New Jersey’s community colleges. “My involvement with county colleges came from a sincere desire to give back to my community in some way.” As the Trustee Ambassador for Essex County College, Calvin’s responsibility is to share information regarding statewide initiatives with his college. He also encourages his fellow Board members to get involved and take part in these statewide efforts, saying, “we really need to be active and be visible in the various causes because each one of us, at the end of the day, helps to educate more students.”

A 2002 graduate of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., Calvin went on to Seton Hall Law School, where he graduated in 2007 and was the recipient of the Scholarship in Leadership Award. Calvin continued on to be a 2011 fellow of Leadership New Jersey and a 2012 fellow of the Master’s Series of Distinguished Leaders out of Washington, D.C.

Calvin recognizes the people that have contributed to his success, and is thankful for the opportunity to continue working with motivated individuals. “The most rewarding part of working with New Jersey’s community colleges is being able to work with other trustees and presidents from across the state and try to fulfill the overall mission of community colleges—which is to educate and put folks to work.” He also understands the importance of having guidance, saying, “I’ve been fortunate in the sense that in every area of my life or every stage, I’ve had a wealth of mentors.” Calvin names Bakari Lee—former chairman of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC)—as one individual who has kept him motivated. “Bakari has been a great influence on me.” He also credits Rev. William Coleman, who serves on the Board of Trustees at Mercer County Community College, as a mentor that has had a significant impact on his life. “Rev. Coleman has really been helpful to me and a resource for me to utilize.” He also credits them as being “ambassadors within the ambassadorship to increase diversity at the trustee level,” something he likes to think he also contributes to.

Calvin believes the future of New Jersey’s community colleges is bright. He encourages individuals involved with community colleges to “step out and redefine the community college space given what the world has given us now.” He feels as if the opportunity to grow and develop community colleges is here, saying, “this recent recession has shown us the weaknesses in our economy and our workforce, and we have the chance to really hold a banner for community colleges and say, ‘We have a very valuable place in our society.’” Calvin also believes this is an important time for community colleges “due to the president we have and the funding that has been set aside for community colleges.” ■

The NJ Council of



On Nov. 17, the NJ Council of County Colleges honored former Bergen Community College Vice Chairman Cid Wilson for his service to the Council. He served as the Bergen trustee representative and Trustee Ambassador from 2005 to 2014. Wilson was recently named the President and CEO of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility in Washington, D.C. Pictured, from left: NJCCC Executive Committee Member Bakari G. Lee, Esq., Mr. Wilson, NJCCC Chair Helen Albright, and NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli.

New Jersey Presidents Attend White House Summit



On Thursday, Dec. 4, Camden County College President Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi and Essex County College President Dr. Gale Gibson joined President Obama,

Vice President Biden, the First Lady and other college presidents and education leaders from around the nation at the second White House College Opportunity Day of Action, where organizations shared over 600 new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

Expanding opportunity for more students to enroll and succeed in college, especially low-income and underrepresented students, is vital to building a strong economy and a strong middle class. President Obama believes that the United States should lead the world in college attainment, as it did a generation ago. Because completing college is key to strengthening the middle class and should not be a luxury for the few, the President has increased Pell Grants by \$1,000 a year, created the new American Opportunity Tax Credit worth up to \$10,000 over four years of college, capped student loan payments to 10 percent of monthly income, and laid out an ambitious agenda to reduce college costs and promote innovation and competition in higher education. ■

County Colleges Honors....



On Nov. 17, the NJ Council of County Colleges honored former Brookdale Community College Trustee Lucille Jones for her service to the Council. She served as the Brookdale trustee representative and Trustee Ambassador from 2007 to 2014. Pictured, from left: NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli, Union County College President Dr. Margaret McMenamin, Brookdale Trustee Tracey Abbey-White, Brookdale President Dr. Maureen Murphy, Ms. Jones, NJCCC Executive Committee Member Bakari G. Lee, Esq., Brookdale Trustee Joseph Passiment, NJCCC Chair Helen Albright, and former Brookdale Executive Vice President Lou Goetting.



On Nov. 17, the NJ Council of County Colleges honored outgoing Chairman Bakari G. Lee, Esq., for his three years of service. The NJCCC gave Lee a framed resolution, a framed community college lapel pin set and a copy of New Jersey: Setting the Pace for the 21st Century, signed by all in attendance. Lee was recently elected Vice Chair of the Association of Community College Trustees' Board of Directors. He is in line to become national chair in two years. Pictured, from left: Mercer County Community College President Dr. Patricia Donohue, NJCCC Chair Helen Albright, Mr. Lee, and NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli.



On Nov. 17, the NJ Council of County Colleges honored Mercer County Community College President Dr. Patricia Donohue for her leadership as Chair of the NJ Community College Presidents in 2013-2014. Pictured, from left: Brookdale Community College President Dr. Maureen Murphy, Dr. Donohue, former NJCCC Chairman Bakari G. Lee, Esq., and NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli.

New Jersey Community Colleges

RECEIVE \$10 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT TO AID LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

NJ Labor Department Adds \$2 Million to Effort

In October, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges and its New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development received a \$10 million United States Department of Labor grant to aid the long-term unemployed in the state.

New Jersey, one of 20 states to receive one of 23 grants, will use the grant over the next four years to assist about 510 long-term unemployed return to the workforce using the Workforce Consortium's training-on-demand model that has been in use with the advanced manufacturing sector and supported by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

In addition, the NJ Labor Department will provide \$2 million to assist in this effort, bringing the total funds for this project to \$12 million, which will allow an additional 400 unemployed people to receive training.

"This combined funding will enable us to follow a highly successful model already being used in our New Jersey Manufacturing Training Initiative, through which my department, the NJCCC and the New Jersey Business and Industry Association have successfully placed trainees into jobs after graduation. The model brings in employers to identify the skills that unemployed people need to get hired, and then we get a commitment from those employers to hire people after we train them with the proper skills," said Commissioner Harold J. Wirths of the New Jersey Labor Department.

Key industries that will be involved in the initiative include information technology, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing. Positions available will include middle- and entry-level jobs with career pathways for advancement.

"In addition to the US and NJ Departments of Labor and the state's 19 community colleges, we are partnering with the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, BioNJ, the New Jersey Technology Council, the National Cloud Technologists Association, and the Interactive Advertising Bureau to help recruit employers to participate in this program. In addition, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, Stevens Institute of Technology, and Rowan University are educational partners," Workforce Consortium Executive Director Sivaraman Anbarasan said.

"About 50 percent of the grant will be dedicated to salary reimbursement to employers hiring long-term unemployed," Anbarasan added. "Other employment related services the program will include are assessment, job coaching, training, employer outreach, and job development."

All 19 New Jersey community colleges will provide employment-related services as applicable per job demand and availability. ■



Pilot Program Improves College Readiness by Nearly 50%

Thanks to a \$620,000 grant provided to New Jersey's 19 community colleges by New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks, the colleges implemented the College Readiness Now initiative, which has resulted in 48% of students previously considered not ready for college-level work now prepared to begin their postsecondary education.

The initiative focused on students who were not yet considered to be college-ready in English and mathematics. Rather than having these students begin their postsecondary education with remedial courses in the subjects, the College Readiness Now initiative allowed New Jersey's 19 community colleges to offer programs to these students while they were still enrolled in high school. After testing over 1,800 high school juniors and seniors, New Jersey community colleges enrolled more than 900 students in spring and summer programs, and nearly 450 of the enrolled students achieved college-ready status in English and/or mathematics.

The grant is funded through the Federal College Access Challenge Grant program, which aims to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and philanthropic organizations. These partnerships are designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

While nearly 450 of the enrolled students achieved the college ready status in English or math, the additional students greatly decreased their need for remedial education and many find themselves needing just one remedial course to be considered college ready. This allows students to complete their degrees more quickly and save their families hundreds of dollars on the cost of developmental courses.



In addition to being enrolled in the programs, students who took part in the initiative were also given an opportunity to interact with college faculty for the first time and navigate the college admission process. This aspect of the initiative shares goals with the New Jersey Center for Student Success, an organization within the NJCCC designed to work with all community colleges across the state to more effectively assist students in achieving degree or certificate completion. Both the College Readiness Now initiative and the New Jersey Center for Student Success aim to put students in touch with administrators and faculty at community colleges in order to promote degree completion and aid students throughout their academic careers. ■

Community Colleges, Business Leaders and Policy Makers Celebrate Community College Workforce Consortium 10th Anniversary



In August, business, college and political leaders gathered at Camden County College to celebrate the work of the NJ Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development in bridging the skills

gap for New Jersey employers since its founding 10 years ago.

Since 2004, more than 100,000 employees at over 5,400 businesses have received training through the Consortium's workforce training programs. The Consortium brings the vast training resources of the state's 19 community colleges under one roof for the benefit of businesses and other organizations.

The Consortium plans to widen the reach of its manufacturing training programs with the addition of two new mobile manufacturing training classrooms. The first Mobile Learning Lab is already in use, and the second mobile lab was unveiled on August 19. The labs will provide training in production technology, CNC metal fabrication and mechatronics to manufacturers throughout the state.

In addition, Camden County Deputy Freeholder Director Ed McDonnell, New Jersey Council of County Colleges President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli, and the Consortium's Founding Executive Director Dr. Robert Bowman were honored for their roles in creating the Workforce Consortium.



The New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development unveiled its new Mobile Learning Lab as part of its 10th Anniversary Celebration. Pictured, Camden County College Professor Kevin Schmidt demonstrates the Mechatronics Learning System by Amatrol.

Others who attended included: state labor and workforce development Deputy Commissioner Aaron Fichtner, Senator Donald Norcross, Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt, Assemblyman Gilbert Wilson, New Jersey Civil Service Commission Deputy Chief Executive Officer Grace Kelly, New Jersey Business & Industry Association Vice President Melanie Willoughby, and National Manufacturing Co. Inc. President Robert Staudinger. Consortium executive director Sivaraman Anbarasan and Camden County College President Raymond Yannuzzi addressed the 100-plus business leaders and policymakers in attendance. ■

Second Annual Community College Completion Challenge Helps Students Finish College



Students at Union County College sign the Completion Banner during NJC4 week.

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges' (NJCCC) Center for Student Success partnered with the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) for the second consecutive year for New Jersey's statewide Phi Theta Kappa Community College Completion Challenge (NJC4), a statewide effort to increase awareness about the importance of completing associate degrees and certificates.

All 19 community colleges across the state hosted over 100 campus-based college completion activities during the week of Oct. 27 to 31. The second annual NJC4 initiative culminated at the Phi Theta Kappa Middle States Region Honors in Action Conference at Bergen Community College in Lyndhurst on Nov. 1.

The NJC4 initiative is an effort to increase the number of community college students completing their associate degrees and certificates so that they have the credentials they need to successfully transfer to four-year colleges and universities to earn their bachelor's degrees and enter careers that provide family-sustaining wages.

As a result of last year's inaugural NJC4 statewide event, 11,525 students signed pledges to commit to complete their degrees and certificates, and 5,679 faculty and staff members signed pledges to serve as completion champions for students. This year's event incorporated CollegeFish.org, a website designed to help students transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

NJEA provided \$500 grants to each community college Phi Theta Kappa chapter to help offset the cost of NJC4 activities.

"The NJEA is proud to once again partner with New Jersey's 19 community colleges to support this statewide initiative that aims to encourage students to persevere, succeed and ultimately earn the credentials they need to succeed in New Jersey's workforce," said NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer.

In addition, the Center produced highlight videos from the week that can be viewed on the NJCCC YouTube channel, www.YouTube.com/NJCommColleges. You can also view photos and social media posts from the 19 participating colleges on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using #NJC4. ■

Senator Diane Allen Honored with Community College Legislative Excellence Award



On Nov. 17, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges presented its 2014 Legislative Excellence Award to Senator Diane Allen for her work to improve the NJ STARS program. Pictured, from left: NJCCC Executive Committee Member Bakari G. Lee, Esq., Burlington County College Trustee Kate Gibbs, Senator Allen, NJCCC Chair Helen Albright, BCC Interim President Dr. David Spang, and NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli.

On November 17, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges presented its 2014 Legislative Excellence Award to Senator Diane Allen for her outstanding support of New Jersey's 19 community colleges.

"This award is an honor given each year to a selected legislator who has demonstrated extraordinary service directed towards helping New Jersey's 19 community colleges," said NJCCC Chairman Bakari Lee, Esq. "Senator Allen has displayed a tremendous commitment to the state's community colleges, and her work deserves to be recognized."

Of the many pieces of legislation she sponsored, the latest is S-1985—legislation that changed eligibility for the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Rewards Scholarship (NJ STARS). Now, NJ STARS eligibility is based on class rank at the completion of students' junior year or senior year of high school. Previously, students were eligible for NJ STARS if they, among other things, were ranked within the top 15% of their graduating high school class.

"We are very thankful to Senator Allen for her advocacy and support of community college students throughout the state," said NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli. "Her work on NJ STARS ensures that high school students and their families will be able to make informed decisions regarding where to attend college."

Senator Allen remarked on the occasion of her receiving the award; "Community colleges are the backbone of higher education in New Jersey. With 400,000 residents currently enrolled, it is clear that these schools make a huge difference in so many lives. I am honored to support our 19 community colleges, and am delighted the Council has chosen me for this prestigious award."

NJ STARS is a scholarship program exclusively for New Jersey residents that covers the cost of tuition at New Jersey's 19 community colleges. Now, thanks to the Senator's legislation, students who rank in the top 15 percent of their high school class at the end of either junior or senior year may be eligible.

Senator Allen was elected in the New Jersey State Senate in November of 1997 and began a four-year term in January of 1998. In 2003, Senator Allen served in the Senate leadership as Republican Conference leader, and is currently Deputy Minority Leader and serves as a member of the Senate Health, Human Services & Senior Citizens, the Senate Education and the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committees. Senator Allen also serves on the Joint Committee on the Public Schools, the Council on Armed Forces and Veterans' Affairs and the Martin Luther King Commission. ■

Community College Presidents Elect Dr. Yannuzzi as Chairman



Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi

Camden County College President Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi was recently elected Chairman of the New Jersey Community College Presidents for the 2014-2015 academic year. In this capacity he will also serve on the New Jersey Council of County Colleges' Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is the leadership team of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. The Chair of the Executive Committee, and Chair of the Council, is Helen Albright of the Camden County College Board of Trustees. Thomas Tighe of the Middlesex County College Board of Trustees serves as the Council's Vice Chair, Dr. Catherine McVicker of Raritan Valley Community College and Bakari G. Lee, Esq. of Hudson County Community College serve on the Executive Committee along with presidents Dr. Thomas Isekenegebe of Cumberland County College and Dr. Margaret McMenamin of Union County College. ■

(Continued from page 1) **Launch NJC4**

Several legislators, policymakers, community college trustees, presidents, faculty, staff, and students attended the event. One attendee, Paige Bodnar, a Mercer County Community College student, told the crowd about her success, and the importance of being part of Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for community colleges.

"When I joined Phi Theta Kappa, I became a member of a community instead of an individual in a crowd," Paige said.

Other partners of the New Jersey Center for Student Success include The Fund for New Jersey, Jobs for the Future, the New Jersey Education Association, the Office of the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education, the PSE&G Foundation, and the State Street Foundation. ■

Dr. Yesenia Madas Named Executive Director of New Jersey Center for Student Success



Dr. Yesenia Madas

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges has named Dr. Yesenia Madas, of Brick, executive director of the New Jersey Center for Student Success.

"We are very excited to have Dr. Madas join our team. Her work at Brookdale Community College and knowledge of community colleges throughout New Jersey lend her instant credibility with our community college faculty and staff members engaged in student success initiatives, and will make her a tremendous asset to our collective statewide efforts," NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespola said.

The New Jersey Center for Student Success aims to foster a collaborative process in which students, faculty members, administrators, and staff members work together to develop a culture of academic and personal success for community college students across the state. Consistent with the mission of New Jersey's 19 community colleges, the Center aims to promote a community in which students are encouraged to succeed and excel as they work towards achieving their goals of degree and certificate completion. The Center has offices in Trenton at the NJCCC and at Middlesex County College in Edison.

"I am looking forward to working with the New Jersey Center for Student Success. I believe there is a lot of potential for us to make a difference in the lives of community college students throughout New Jersey," Madas said.

Madas' hiring is made possible by a \$500,000 grant provided by the Kresge Foundation, a \$3 billion private national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities. New Jersey now joins Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Michigan, Ohio, and Texas as part of the national network of Student Success Centers. Other partners of the New Jersey Center for Student Success include The Fund for New Jersey, Jobs for the Future, the New Jersey Education Association, the Office of the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education, the PSE&G Foundation, the State Street Foundation, and New Jersey's 19 community colleges.

Prior to joining the New Jersey Center for Student Success, Madas served as an associate professor at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft. She was an academic advisor at Mercy College before joining Brookdale. A graduate of Mercy College with a bachelor's in psychology, Madas went on to receive her master of science in counseling from Mercy as well, before receiving her doctoral degree in educational leadership from Rowan University.

A first-generation college student herself, Madas is passionate about education and is well aware of its importance in today's society. For the past 10 years, she has been actively involved with the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program, which provides financial assistance and support services to students from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds who attend colleges and universities in New Jersey. ■