



EYE ON ESSEX

MARCH/APRIL 2011

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

Celebrating Dr. Abdullah's First Year as Essex County College President

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YEAR ONE: MARK IT DONE!

Whew! I cannot believe it's already been a year since I first stepped foot on the campus of Essex County College. What a year it's been! This newsletter offers a brief overview of some of our accomplishments over the past year and highlights our successes and growth in this transitional year.

One of our many achievements was pulling together for our Middle States reaffirmation visit – the many commendations we received from the team were a direct result of the hard work we do every day here at ECC. My heart-felt appreciation goes out to our administration, faculty and staff that dedicated their time and energy to our Middle States preparation. While we still have more work to do in the process, we are proud of all of the good work we've done thus far.

Relax, happy reading, and join us in being a part of the future of Essex County College.

ECC HOSTS UNCF HBCU EMPOWER ME TOUR



Essex County College had the honor of serving as one of this year's United Negro College Fund's five city-tour stops along its popular *UNCF HBCU Empower Me Tour*. The free all-day event attracted more than 700 youth and their family members to the College's Newark campus on Saturday, April 30.

"We are so excited to have been selected as one of only two community colleges nationwide to host this prestigious event," said ECC President Edythe Abdullah. "Essex County College is proud to be a community partner with UNCF as this tour was created to motivate young people to academic

excellence and personal responsibility, which is what ECC strives to do every day."

Special guests included actress Tatyana Ali of *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, comedienne Kim Coles, Kita Williams and Monique Jackson of VH1's *The T.O. Show*, and Chef Darrell "Das" Smith. They greeted the attendees in the morning, and had meaningful dialogue during several panel discussions spanning the afternoon.

The day's schedule also included workshops on preparing for, getting into, and paying for college; social-

readiness panels; career-readiness workshops; and much more. The event, in its third year, is geared primarily toward students in seventh grade through high school and also for those in their first two years of college.

Visitors also had the chance to peruse information from some of the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), as well as from Essex County College.

A WARM WELCOME: ECC Trustee Calvin Souder, Esq. welcomed the attendees of the UNCF HBCU EMPOWER ME TOUR to campus on Saturday, April 30. Hundreds of area residents attended numerous motivational lectures and workshops throughout the day.



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR TO BE ECC'S 2011 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER



New Jersey Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno will serve as the College's keynote speaker

during the 42nd annual commencement to be held on May 20 at 10 a.m. at the Prudential Center in Newark.

Elected in 2009, she is the first Lieutenant Governor in New Jersey and also serves as Secretary of State. In her role as

Secretary of State, she chairs numerous commissions aimed at attracting new businesses to and retaining existing ones in the state.

Lieutenant Governor Guadagno has been working closely with an aviation degree and certificate program developed for Continental Airlines.

Prior to serving in her State office, Lt. Gov. Guadagno was the first female sheriff in Monmouth County following her election in 2007. A lawyer, she is a former federal prosecutor

and an Assistant United States Attorney. She earned her undergraduate degree from Ursinus College and her law degree from American University Washington College of Law.

ECC Mathematics Professor Susan Gaulden has been selected to serve as Grand Marshal to the Class of 2011. Dr. Gaulden chairs the college's Standards and Assessment Advisory Council and coordinates the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team (SLOAT).

ECC STUDENTS IN THE NEWS:



KUDOS À DEUX: ECC President Dr. Edythe Abdullah (center) congratulates Ashraf Amadou (left) and Koffi Trenou (right) on the national recognitions that each received from PTK and NASA, respectively.

TWO PTK STUDENTS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

A duo of Essex County College students were awarded top honors from two national organizations. Ashraf Amadou, the College's outgoing Student Government Association president, travelled to Seattle in April to accept Phi Theta Kappa's Guistwhite Scholarship. In May, Koffi Trenou is heading to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston to participate in a program from the National Community College Aerospace Scholars program.

One of only 20 awarded out of more than 1,200 applicants, Amadou was recog-

nized April 7 at the PTK annual convention in Seattle, where he received the Guistwhite Medallion. The scholarship is valued at \$5,000 and will be distributed on a pro-rated basis upon transfer to a four year institution.

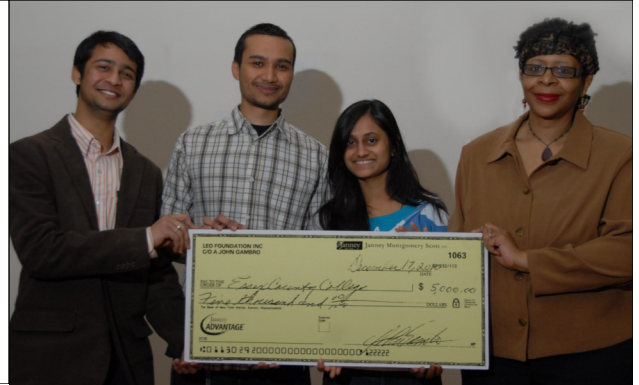
The 24-year-old from Hillside is a Biology/Pre-Medicine major with a 3.92 grade point average, and has his sights set on becoming a neurosurgeon. Amadou is looking to transfer this fall to Georgetown, Cornell or Amherst College.

President of ECC's Math Club, Koffi Trenou was selected as one of 80 two-year college students to participate in the National Community College Aerospace Scholars program on May 12-14, 2011. The Irvington resident carries a 3.9 grade point average and a double major of mechanical engineering and mathematics, and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa.

The program participants, including Koffi, was selected based on completion of web-based assignments during the academic year. Their mission in Houston will be to form fictitious companies pursuing Mars exploration. Koffi has been accepted at Rutgers University in New Brunswick and is waiting to hear from Georgia Tech and Stanford.

LEO FOUNDATION GRANTS FIVE STUDENTS SCHOLARSHIPS:

Five ECC students were recently awarded \$1,000 scholarship each from the Leo Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Cedar Grove. The recipients were (from left to right) Supritkumar Shah, Ajaykumar Patel, Megha Dhanani, and Robin Arubakrr. (Not pictured: Adewunmi Taiwo.) The winners were selected based on academic merit, having a declared major in science or mathematics, and continuation of their education in a baccalaureate institution upon completion of their associate degree.



ALL-STARS ON THE TRACK AND IN THE CLASSROOM:

Five members of the Lady Wolverine Track Team were honored at the March Board of Trustees meeting for achieving Academic All American status from the National Junior College Athletic Association. From left are freshman Adrian Smallwood, sophomore Teneisha Davis, freshman Renata Martin, freshman Alisa Ross and freshman Yanique Malcom. Martin and Malcom carry perfect 4.0 grade point averages.

ECC PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES "NO INCREASE"

The College will have a zero increase in tuition and fees for the 2011-2012 academic year following recent action by the Board of Trustees. The board on March 22 unanimously approved the recommendation of President Edythe M. Abdullah to hold the in-county tuition, exclusive of fees, at \$108.50 per credit hour for the second consecutive year.

"We've been looking for innovative ways to cut costs and

focus on efficiencies, while maintaining our academic rigor. The result was this very positive, student-focused balanced budget outcome that maintains services and courses, as well as provides for more faculty positions and online courses," said Dr. Abdullah.

"By not having a tuition increase this year, we affirm that we are truly committed to our mission of being an

open access community college, and ensuring that Essex County College remains affordable to our students and potential students," said Reverend Reginald T. Jackson, Chair of the Essex County College Board of Trustees.

The last increase in 2010-2011 was 4.8%, preceded by an 8.9% increase in 2009-2010. The new college budget year begins July 1, 2011.

"By not having a tuition increase this year...Essex County College remains affordable to our students and potential students."

*- Rev. Reginald T. Jackson, Chair
Essex County College Board of Trustees*

NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS EXTEND ECC'S REACH

Essex County College has always embraced the community it serves and this past year the outreach continued to expand. From partnerships around the block or half-way around the world, ECC networks with local, state, national and global communities as part of its underlying theme of changing lives and building futures.

Locally, ECC supported the overall efforts of PENewark. ECC's College YES program engaged with PENewark in all phases of activities, including coordinating students who conducted neighborhood surveys. ECC also hosted a public forum for educators on campus in December. The organization is creating a community-based dialogue about how the \$100 mil-

lion donation from Facebook Founder/CEO Mark Zuckerberg will be distributed.

When the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development and St. Matthew AMC Church of Orange joined together to hold a job and resource fair in March, ECC was the central and logical location to hold it. Hundreds of eager jobseekers attended, with many of them acquiring employment soon after visiting the event.

ECC's Child Development Center supported the NEA's national Read Across America Day on March 2. Dr. Abdullah kicked off the morning

program. College personnel and community leaders — who were joined by Ruppert, mascot of the Newark Bears — read to the children who filled the rooms with laughter, curiosity and a growing love of learning.

The College showed it's a viable global citizen in January when it hosted a delegation visit of 35 Turkish district governors. The visitors participated in panel discussions on a wide range of topics, including healthcare, law enforcement, government and education. They even got to meet Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno during a visit to Trenton.



ECC SUPPORTS LITERACY: Children from ECC's Child Development Center gather around Dr. Abdullah after she finished reading the childhood favorite: *Old Hat, New Hat*, for Read Across America Day on March 2. The event is held annually on the birthday of Dr. Suess, the beloved children's book author.

TECHNOLOGY NOW A DRIVER IN STUDENT SUCCESS

Our technology-savvy President is looking for ways to increase the use of technology for instructional purposes, and even for effective faculty-student communication tools. Under Dr. Abdullah's direction, ECC's Information Technology Department implemented a series of new initiatives over the past year designed to facilitate the progress of students throughout the college.

"These utilities are in line with our goal to enhance student success, and increase efficiency and effectiveness through the use of technology," said Mohamed Seddiki, ECC's Chief Information Officer.

Many of the concepts automate the process — and provide greater access to the student to complete tasks when and where they are, and at a time that is convenient for them. The series includes:

- **Online Course Withdrawal** eliminates the need to wait in line at the Enrollment Services Express Center. An automated system generates emails to instructors summarizing who has withdrawn from their courses.
- **"Early Alert" system** enables instructors to identify

and talk with a student who requires academic assistance and make recommendations that would assist the student in being successful in the course.

- **"What If Analysis"** allows students considering alternate curricula to get a "snapshot" of how far along they are toward matriculating in a chosen degree program. A report can be generated rather quickly detailing a student's current progress in any chosen program.

- **Faculty Technology Resource Center (FTRC):** Opened in Fall 2010, the Center supports video conferencing, web conferencing, video/audio digitizing and editing, web page design and layout, and much more. FTRC hosted regular workshops and an instructional trainer is available during all hours of operation.
- **FTRC/Hybrid and Online courses:** FTRC staff assists faculty with course content development, course design, and use of multimedia technology. Participating faculty receive state-of-the-art laptops and software for use in and outside the classroom.

FINANCIAL AID REFUNDS ARE A SNAP AT ECC!

A program launched last fall with Wells Fargo bank makes it much easier for financial aid students to get their refunds while cutting down on college paperwork. More than 1,000 students who receive financial aid have already signed up.

Instead of being issued paper checks, refunds can now be deposited directly in the student's bank account or loaded into a newly

issued Wells Fargo Stagecoach Prepaid Debit Card.

"There are so many benefits for students—availability of funds the next day; not having to pay for check cashing charges, and no chance of checks being lost or stolen," said Darlene Miller, Director of ECC's Bursar Office.

"There are not many two year colleges using this system.

It's nice to relieve this burden from our students," said Ms. Miller, adding President Edythe Abdullah has been an advocate of the program.

The debit cards can be used at numerous ATM machines, including those on campus. The program launched in conjunction with the Bursar's Office, Financial Aid and Information Technology.



NEW LOOK FOR ECC MASCOT: ECC's long-loved Wolverine mascot of ECC got a 'new look' as part of the new partnership with Wells Fargo Bank.

DISTANCE LEARNING DEMO PROMOTES HYBRID COURSES

As gas prices continue to rise, the word “hybrid” is getting more popular. Now, ECC students will be using the word “hybrid” in another way as the College expands its hybrid course offerings. Like hybrid cars—they save money on gas, too.

Business Professor Nathan Himelstein with his dedicated team of faculty and staff are actively promoting the hybrid course offerings. Hybrid courses combine traditional classroom instruction with online learning. Imagine home becoming a virtual classroom. The ECC plan calls for teaching 50% of the course in an on-campus computer lab and 50% online where students can log on from home or other off-campus locations.

Traditional face-to-face instruction is reduced, but is not eliminated. In Spring 2011 semester, about

30 hybrid classes were held, up from 15 held during its roll-out in Fall 2010.

“Since the early stages of this program, students have been embracing the idea,” said Professor Himelstein. “A number of four year schools have similar programs so our offerings will provide a good foundation for students who will transfer after earning their associate degrees.”

“These courses have been successful because there are so many benefits,” said Nessie Hill, Assistant Professor in Humanities. “Convenience, state-of-the-art resources, opportunities to expanded discussions, 24/7 access – and more importantly, students gaining the computer

skills that today’s work force is required to have.”

Recently, the team demonstrated how these innovative classes work during in-person registration, so students could get a better understanding of the discipline required to take a hybrid course, and could evaluate whether they have the computer skills necessary to take a hybrid course.

Hybrid courses offerings include math, history, English,



HYBRID COURSES GET FACULTY SUPPORT: Professor Nathan Himelstein (standing), and adjunct faculty Joseph Platt (left) and Assistant Professor Nessie Hill (right) check out the latest hybrid course offerings the College will offer both this summer and the Fall 2011 Semester.

economics and sociology. For an informational brochure or for more information on hybrid courses contact the FTRC at (973) 877-3463.

PRESIDENT RECOGNIZED BY COMMUNITY LEADERS

Dr. Edthye Abdullah wrapped up her first year with honors from a few notable community leaders and local non-profit organizations for her contributions to the educational climate of the region.

On March 26, the Newark Women’s Conference (founded by Newark Councilwoman Mildred Crump) presented Dr. Abdullah

with its *Trailblazer Award*. She was selected for her educational work in the community and for being the first female president of ECC. The program was held at Rutgers-Newark’s Paul Robeson Center.

Dr. Abdullah received the 2011 Shirley Chisholm

Award for Education on April 16 from State Assembly Speaker Sheila Y. Oliver. The award recognizes women who have made considerable achievements in their fields and who exemplify the spirit and innovation of the late Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman

elected to the U.S. Congress.

On May 13, Dr. Abdullah is set to receive the 2011 President’s Award from the Hispanic-American Chamber of Commerce Foundation of Essex County. This award is being presented to her for her efforts and passion in advocating and empowering the Latino youth in education. The event is being held at NJIT.

SLOAT: A NEW WORD IN ECC’S STUDENT SUCCESS PLANS



ASSESSMENT IS KEY TO STUDENT SUCCESS: Professor Susan Gaulden (center) reviews the Final Report for SLOAT for Fall 2010 with Instructor Carlos Castillo (left) of the Math & Physics division, and Instructor Margaret Botney (right) of Humanities.

Over the past year, the acronym SLOAT (Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team) is being heard more and more around campus. SLOAT’s primary goal is to ensure there are clear and measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) spread across the curriculum.

In fact, the outlines for a little over 460 courses (98 percent

of all ECC offerings) have been reviewed to include measurable SLOs.

The process of revising College’s course outlines so that they were uniform began last fall, when 105 faculty as well as some administrators and adjuncts were trained. The training is being expanded this year to also include additional part-time faculty and more adjuncts.

“The cross section of faculty up to the challenge in doing this important work is impressive,” said Mathematics

Professor Susan Gaulden, Coordinator of Planning for Institutional, Program, and Student Learning Assessments for the faculty-based SLOAT.

The full work of SLOAT is available at <http://sloat.mathography.org>. The site contains the outlines, by Division, of virtually all College courses. It also currently includes 24 courses which SLOAT reviewed the SLO and related data to determine how well students are mastering the content specified in the outlines. Ten courses will be added to the list online each semester, including the addition of the Spring 2011 classes by mid-June.

NEW DIRECTION LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES



FORESIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE: ECC President Dr. Edythe Abdullah lays out her "Actionable Foresights" during her first Convocation message in late August 2010 in the Mary Burch Theatre.

In her oral report on April 6, Middle States visiting team chair Dr. Carolane Williams commended President Edythe Abdullah and the college on the effective use of actionable foresights in planning.

The concept was first introduced by Dr. Abdullah at Convocation in August 2010. The President outlined four "Actionable Foresights" that are impacting the college: (1) the economy; (2) accreditation; (3) the cost burden on students; and (4) leadership and accountability.

Under each actionable foresight, the institutional goals coupled with strategic plan objectives and Middle States standards, are the guiding forces behind the progress and developments at the college over the last year.

Also, the College has initiated new "bottoms-up" approach to planning and budgeting.

Inversely, a new *Departmental Objective 2011* document has set forth departmental objectives from faculty, directors and chairpersons, with each objective tied to appropriate actionable foresights, strategic plan objectives, and Middle States Standards.

"The difference now is that planning is consistently from the faculty, chairpersons, and

directors - the people who are on the front line - rather than solely from the Cabinet level and from senior administrators," said Dr. Stephen Keister, Dean of Planning & Institutional Research.

ECC has advanced on various fronts with the new direction. Cost burdens on students have been eased through restructuring and through review and improvement of financial aid practices.

Tuition and fees have been frozen for the current academic year despite budgetary constraints. Restructuring of the College is currently underway for greater efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.

New directions to enhance student success include a growing number of distance learning courses, establishment of the Faculty Technology Resource Center, and implementation of efficient, technology driven methods of measuring student learning and performance outcomes.

"There's a lot of work that's been done in a year," continued Dr. Keister. "These actionable foresights have provided the direction to guide the College throughout the process."



CAUGHT IN THE AIR: An ECC cheerleader completes a challenging stunt while the Middle States (MS) Steering Committee looks on during MS Prep Rally in late March in the Mary Burch Theatre.

ECC PILOTS TWO INNOVATIVE WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

Essex County College's Educational Services division is working on two major projects to put the College's workforce development in the regional spotlight. The first project is based on a need at Newark airport, and the second stems from a unique partnership with a professor at Columbia University.

ECC is set to launch much-needed degree and certificate programs in Aviation Mechanics by early 2012, as long as some federal funding falls into place. The expertise and contacts of ECC President Dr. Abdullah from previously overseeing an identical program were vital in rapidly responding to the industry need, and in ECC's ability to quickly lay the ground work for the program.

Essex has applied for approximately \$4.8 million out of a much larger federal Department of Labor

grant to establish the program that would help support the workforce needs of Newark Liberty International Airport.

"We would be the first college in NJ to offer certificates and degrees in Airframe and powerplant mechanics and a certificate and degree program in Avionics," said Dr. Phil Linfante, Dean of Educational Services.

ECC would partner with Continental Airlines in developing the curriculum, which would help student pass appropriate FAA certifications and meet specific employer job requirements. Within two years, the program will be able to move into a spacious satellite campus at the Essex County Airport in Fairfield.

Educational Services also set the groundwork for the Workforce Opportunity Services (WOS). In this initiative, high potential, low-income youth have the opportunity to attain work experience, an education, and ultimately employment. Twenty WOS students registered for the initial class in Spring 2011.

WOS was created and founded five years ago by Professor Arthur Langer, on the faculty of Columbia University. Students take college-level courses at night and are placed in part-time jobs with participating employers. Those employers include Johnson & Johnson, Prudential, Medco Health, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

"We would be the first college in NJ to begin offering an Associate in Applied Science in Aviation Mechanics and certificates in Airframe Mechanics, Avionics and Power plant Mechanics."

- Dr. Phil Linfante, Dean of Educational Services



ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

WE ARE ESSEX:
CHANGING LIVES. BUILDING FUTURES.

EYE ON ESSEX

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ECC GRADUATION EVENTS

MAY 2011

Events are held at the Newark campus, unless noted:

May 10 **Dean of Student Affairs Awards Ceremony for Graduates**
6:00 p.m. Mary Burch Theatre

May 12 **Graduation Celebration & Alumni Reception**
6:00 p.m. J. Harry Smith Lecture Hall

May 13 **E.O.F. Graduation Gala**
5:30 p.m. Mediterranean Manor, Newark

May 17 **Nursing Pinning Ceremony**
6:00 p.m. Mary Burch Theatre

May 18 **West Essex Advisory Board Graduates' Reception**
5:00 p.m. Student Lounge, West Essex Campus

May 19 **Student Support Services Annual Awards Ceremony**
6:00 p.m. Main Dining Hall

May 20 **Commencement / Graduation**
10:00 a.m. The Prudential Center, Newark

(More events are listed on the "EVENTS" section on our website at essex.edu)



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: LINDA CARTER RECEIVES FOUNDER'S AWARD FROM BLACK WOMEN LAWYERS OF NJ

Linda McDonald Carter, Esq., ECC's Director of the Legal Assistant Studies Program, received the prestigious Founders' Awards from the Association Of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey, Inc. on April 30, 2011. The honor is given to an individual who best exemplifies the spirit of one of BWLNJ's founders. The 2011 award was given in

honor of the late founder, The Honorable Golden Elizabeth Johnson, whose career of public service helped to create a significant list of organizations for Black attorneys. Judge Johnson was quick to credit a deeply rooted sense of community and family, and a desire to fight for justice and the underdog. She recognized the power of the law both to change society, and to also change individual lives of people who she came in contact with on a daily basis. Dr. Carter, who has worked at Essex County College since 1989, was recognized for professional, political and social advancement on behalf of Black women at a brunch held in Iselin.

AFRICANA INSTITUTE CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Since 2001, the Africana Institute explores and critically examines the African global experience. The Institute produces a wide variety of academic, cultural and social programs, which emerge from the diverse experiences of people of African descent from Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean Islands and beyond.

The brain-child of long-time ECC President Dr. A. Zachary Yamba, the Institute provides research and resource opportunities for students and the community. ECC celebrates the Institute's 10th Anniversary on **May 12, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.** To support or attend the event, please contact the Africana Institute at 973-877-3140.

WEC AD'DRESS'ES PROMS

With high school prom season approaching, the West Essex campus of Essex County College sprang into action again this year to support the prom dreams of less fortunate girls as part of the Catherine's Closet program.

For the fourth year, WEC was an official drop-off location. More than 50 new or gently loved dresses were collected at West Essex where the clothing is soon to be distributed to needy local high school students wishing to attend their school prom.

"Since we started participating, we have collected about 500

dresses used by local high school girls at their proms," said Dennia Rentzis, coordinator of admissions at the campus, who volunteers to lead the Catherine's Closet project at West Essex.

Catherine's Closet was formed in 2002 in memory of Catherine



DRESSES THAT IMPRESS: Dennia Rentzis coordinator of admissions at ECC's West Essex campus stands next to a few of the more than 50 formal dresses collected for Catherine's Closet, a non-profit organization that has collected and distributed prom gowns since 2002.

Johnson, an East Orange high school student who was struck and killed by a stolen vehicle. The organization has collected over 6,000 dresses have been distributed since the program began.