



EYE ON ESSEX

MAY 2011

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

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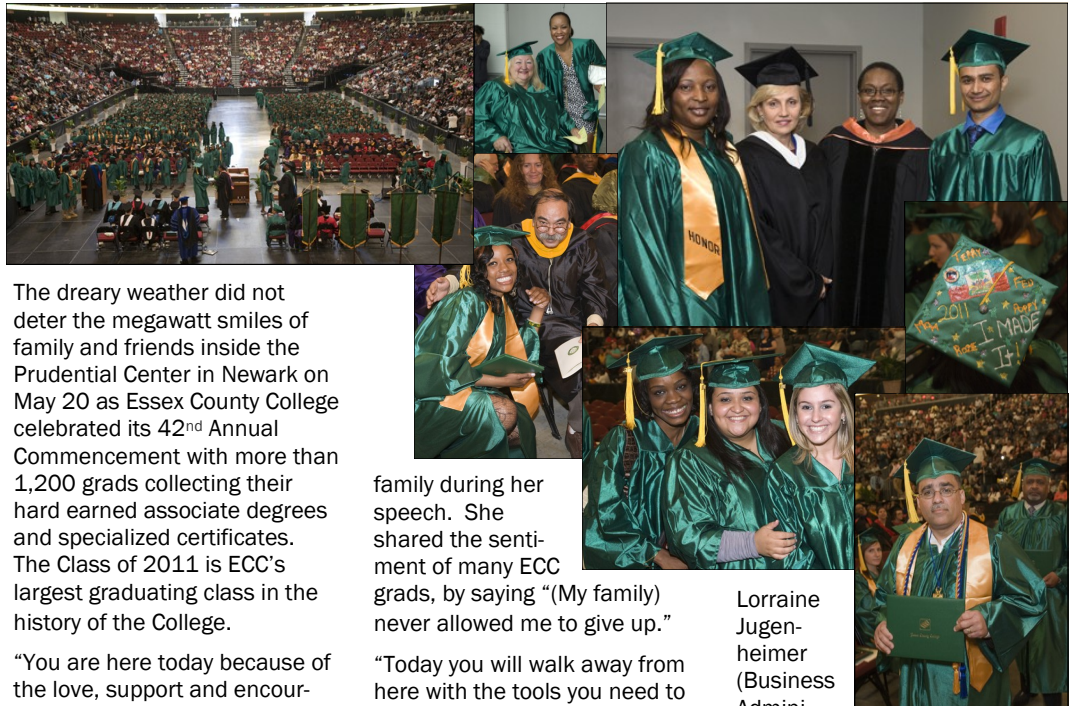
LARGEST CLASS GRADUATES FROM ECC

NEXT STEPS IN A LIFE-LONG JOURNEY

We celebrated our 42nd Annual Commencement in May. In this newsletter, we share some stories of Essex County College from our most recent graduates to alumni, some of whom graduated over a decade ago. As always, our graduates are ready to take the next step forward to realizing their dreams.

Each day, ECC looks for ways to continue to enhance services and instruction to benefit our students, whether it's increasing the use of technology to enhance instruction and efficiencies, or discussing ways to better serve the unique needs of our students.

We want to ensure that whether our students are going directly into the workforce, enhancing their skills, or continuing their education at a four-year institution, they have the skills they need to succeed – not only for the next step they take after leaving the Essex family, but also in the journey of life. **Congratulations to the Class of 2011!**



The dreary weather did not deter the megawatt smiles of family and friends inside the Prudential Center in Newark on May 20 as Essex County College celebrated its 42nd Annual Commencement with more than 1,200 grads collecting their hard earned associate degrees and specialized certificates. The Class of 2011 is ECC's largest graduating class in the history of the College.

"You are here today because of the love, support and encouragement from family, friends and the entire college community," said President Edythe M. Abdullah with the song "My Wish" by Rascal Flatts playing in the background. "Our wish for you is that each road leads you where you want to go, and that your dreams become your reality."

Valedictorian Aline Ngongang (General Science), who will attend Seton Hall this fall, frequently gestured toward her

family during her speech. She shared the sentiment of many ECC grads, by saying "(My family) never allowed me to give up."

"Today you will walk away from here with the tools you need to succeed in today's society," said New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno in her keynote Commencement speech to the graduates. "Be a risk taker, and learn from any of your mistakes or failures."

Mathematics Professor Susan Gauden served as Grand Marshal. Class of 2011 Salutatorian was Ajaykumar Patel (Computer Science); Camila G. Grillo (Civil Construction Engineering Technology) and

Lorraine Jugenheimer (Business Administration) were selected as Assistant Marshals.

This year marked the first time special red, white and blue cords were worn by veterans of the U.S. armed forces on the traditional ECC green graduation gown.

Dr. Abdullah closed the ceremony by asking graduates to stay in touch with the College, now as active alumni of their alma mater.



ECC STUDENTS IN THE NEWS:

FOUR ECC EOF STUDENTS SPEND SUMMER INTERNING

Four Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) students will have unique opportunities this summer, thanks to a pair of internship programs.

Paralegal Studies graduate Lynne Holley of East Orange, along with Nursing graduate Rehema Moke of Jersey City, will participate in the five week Seton Hall University Summer Institute of Pre-Legal Studies this summer. The skill-building program introduces participants to what they can expect to encounter in their first year of law school. Rehema is interested in law and nursing/medical issues. Both ladies are members of the Class of 2011.

Meanwhile, Biology major Chrystal Francis of Newark and Kathleen Beretta, a Liberal Arts major from Bloomingtondale, will participate in the Disney College Program from August through the fall semester. This unique program provides work experience at Disney World in Orlando, while providing the chance to earn college credits. The Disney corporation is lauded globally for the professional development of its staff, especially in the area of customer service.

HISPANIC COUNCIL AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP

ECC student Walter Sueldo, whose major is Architectural

Technology, received his \$3,000 scholarship just in time.

"This award will really help me continue my studies," said the 20-year-old of the grant he received from the Hispanic Business Council Scholarship Foundation of NJ on May 12.

Walter, who has a 3.9 grade point average and lives in West Orange, will be a sophomore this fall. He is involved with the College's Architectural Technology Club and began looking at colleges to which he hopes to transfer upon his ECC graduation. His short list includes Cooper Union, followed by NJIT.



A STATE HOUSE MEETING: Ashraf Amadou and Amanda Benjamin met 21st District State Assemblyman Jon Bramnick at the State House in Trenton during Phi Theta Kappa Day on May 5. The New Jersey Council of County Colleges event recognized all 36 members of the 2011 All NJ Academic Team. Both are members of the Class of 2011 who graduated with highest honors.

HOT 97 HOSTS MAYOR'S PUSH FOR PEACE AT ECC



Hot 97 Morning Host Lisa Evers

Mayor Cory Booker and HOT 97's host Lisa Evers hosted "Push For Peace" on May 14 in the Mary Burch Theater at Essex County College.

Rashawn Jackson of the NFL's Carolina Panthers and Nate Jones of the Denver Broncos along with G-Unit Recording Artist Tony Yayo appeared at the event. The afternoon began with an informational

fair from community, educational, and outreach organizations and sponsors. Afterward, aspiring MCs competed for prizes using only positive lyrics and messages.

The event's highlight was a taping of Ms. Evers' Hot 97 radio show *Street Soldiers* which was co-hosted by Mayor Booker. College President Dr. Edythe M. Abdullah kicked off the broadcast with a brief welcome before guests began their discussion.

Street Soldiers is a Sunday morning series aired by Hot 97 FM focusing on issues affecting the Hip Hop community in the city, throughout the tri-state area, and the country. The event was designed to address gang violence in the City of Newark and offered young people real alternatives and education options.

The "Push for Peace" event coincided with The Newark Peace Education Summit held in the city from May 13 through May 15.



REACHING THE SUMMIT: The Tibet House US based in New York City sponsored a delegation of ECC students to attend The Newark Peace Education Summit on May 13-15 at NJPAC. Pictured from left to right are: Inga Cameron, Tyree Davis, Kamika Bennett and Emanuel Martinez. The foursome was accompanied by Professor Margaret Stevens, Director of ECC's Urban Issues Institute who secured the grant for the delegation.

ECC JOINS OBAMA AND BOOKER CAMPAIGN: "LET'S MOVE! NEWARK"



Essex County College was on hand to show its support of the first **Let's Move! Newark** Day held

in conjunction with opening day of the Newark Bears 2011 season. Essex County Executive Joseph

DiVincenzo and Newark Mayor Cory Booker threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

Let's Move! is a comprehensive initiative, launched by First Lady Michelle Obama, dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation. **Let's Move! Newark** campaign promotes healthy

lifestyles, nutritious eating, and efforts to help obese people regain control of their health.

"Let's move by using our bodies...and our minds," encouraged ECC President Dr. Edythe Abdullah during the pre-game ceremonies.

"What's after 8th grade?"

she asked the estimated 3,000 youth in attendance. "High School!" the crowd shouted.

She then asked, "What's after 12th grade?" "College!" the crowd enthusiastically responded.

"That's absolutely right," she replied to the cheer of the crowd.

ALUMNI UPDATE: OUR POST-COMMENCEMENT TRADITION



CLASS OF '96 ALUMNA: 15 YEARS IN WORK-FORCE: Twenty years ago Eileen Enrico became widowed with four children. While researching career options, Eileen, now 59, discovered the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program at ECC.

"I was now the person to provide the financial support for the family and I had to act quickly," she recalls.

Eileen immersed herself in the program and she graduated in 1996 with not only a 4.0 average but also a job prospect at the First Cerebral Palsy Center of NJ (formerly Cerebral Palsy Center of Essex and West Hudson).

Through the years she has never forgotten her alma mater. She serves as a clinical instructor at the center for Essex's PTA students. Ms. Enrico also offered career and motivational advice as the keynote speaker at the PTA pinning ceremony on May 5.

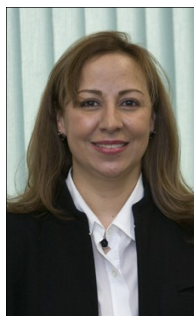


2005 ALUM TEACHES AT UCC: Michael Dillard of Newark fondly recalls his days attending Essex as a

Business Administration major and as a student in the Cooperative Education program.

"It was such a family environment at Essex, unlike any other I have experienced over the years," said Michael, who since his graduation in 2005, earned subsequent degrees from Ramapo College and Rutgers-Newark. He currently is working on his doctorate in Higher Education Administration at Rowan University.

An excellent time manager, the 28 year-old frequently speaks to students at his first alma mater between working at Emeritus Senior Living in West Orange and serving as an adjunct faculty member at Union County College.



2009 ECC GRAD RECONNECTS WITH ECC: Martha Scola is an ambassador for ECC. A 2009 graduate (3.86

grade point average) with associate degrees in Engineering and Mathematics, Martha just earned an engineering degree from NJIT.

Even with her intense coursework, she still finds time to tutor Essex students in ECC's MESA (Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement) Center and work as a teaching assistant.

"I've tried to do well to make my family proud," said Martha, a 42-year-old Belleville resident.

Martha also holds a certificate in Computer Aided Design Technology, and will continue on at NJIT for a master's degree. Her goal is to become a civil engineer.



UPDATE ON OUR 2010 VALEDICTORIAN: Abonghatou Che gave her valedictory address at last year's graduation ceremonies shortly after turning 19

years old.

This high achieving alumna continues on the fast track, just completing the Spring semester of her junior year at Rutgers-Newark (with a 3.91 average) and preparing for a six week research internship at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York.

A resident of East Orange, Abonghatou plans to become a physician and medical researcher.

"ECC definitely gave me the foundation to succeed at Rutgers and in life," noted Abonghatou.

MOTHER & DAUGHTER: IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR FOR THESE WEST ESSEX ALUMNI



GENERATION NEXT: Diane Wood (right) and Lori Montague (left) attended the 2011 West Essex Advisory Board Graduate Reception on May 18. Lori, as a 2011 graduate, and Diane as a proud mother who is also an alum of the Class of 2007.

When Lori Montague received her ECC associate degree in Education on May 20, she fully supported her mother Diane Wood's decision not to attend the ceremony.

That's because on May 20 at the same time the matriarch was receiving her Early Childhood Education bachelor's degree from Montclair State University.

Her mother, Diane Wood, graduated herself four years earlier from ECC's West Essex campus in West Caldwell. New ECC graduate, Lori, 43, will attend William Paterson

University this fall with plans to focus on elementary special education.

Meanwhile, her mom hopes to parlay her new degree to a full-time teaching job at East Orange's Althea Gibson Early Childhood Academy where she is a teaching assistant.

Diane, 65, lost her job 10 years ago when the economy soured on the family's catering business.

She began working as a teaching assistant after earning her Childhood Development Associate (CDA).



GRADUATION DAY: Graduates of the college's RN Nursing program take the Nightingale Pledge during the pinning ceremony in the Burch Theater on May 17. The nursing pins were awarded to 50 students who also received their associate degrees during Commencement on May 20.

Soon after, Lori who also worked for the family business followed suit, first earning her CDA certificate, and continued to complete her associate degree as well.

"I loved my time at ECC," said Diane, of Bloomfield. And, as expected, Lori agreed.



ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

WE ARE ESSEX:
CHANGING LIVES. BUILDING FUTURES.

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ON CAMPUS EVENTS

JUNE 2011

All programs are free and open to the public. Events are held at the Newark campus, unless noted:

June 18 Preserve Our Legacy “Got Bone Marrow” Event
Physical Education Building / Gym
10:00 AM–2:00 PM / Informational Session
3:00 PM–6:00 PM / Charity Basketball Game
(Purchase tickets through Preserve Our Legacy)

June 20 Last Day of Summer I Classes

June 27 Thru July 4 COLLEGE CLOSED

*Events are listed on the “EVENTS” section
on our website at essex.edu*

ECC'S AFRICANA INSTITUTE CELEBRATES 10TH YEAR



LET'S GET IT STARTED: ECC President Emeritus A. Zachary Yamba recalled the history of the Institute, from its grand opening in May of 2001 when King Otumfuo Osei Tutu II of Ghana participated in its dedication.

On May 12, the distant sound of drums got louder and louder as the Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble meandered its way up the stairs onto the 2nd level forum of the main campus en route to the Burch Theater. When the troupe arrived outside the theater, the Africana Institute's 10th anniversary celebration was officially underway.

President Edythe M. Abdullah took the occasion to praise the work that has been done by the Institute during the past 10 years, with current Director Akil

Khalfani receiving special recognition. Renowned Newark poet and social activist Amiri Baraka took the audience on a verbal tour of Newark from the 1960s to the present. He concluded by reading from one of his poems. Amid the entertainment, the Institute received proclamations and resolutions from the U.S. Congress, Essex County and the City of Newark.

“The program was a great reflection on the types of experiences we are creating for our students and the community at -large,” said Director Khalfani.



THE SOUND OF MUSIC: Lady Rose who hails from Newark performs during the anniversary celebration held in Burch Theater on May 12.



ECC'S SHANEKIA HALL CROWNED 100-METER HURDLE CHAMPION

Lady Wolverine Shanekia Hall wrapped up a brilliant two-year career at ECC with a dominating victory in the 100-meter hurdles at the 2011 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Outdoor Track and Field Championships held in Hutchinson, Kansas from May 19 to May 21.

She won the feat in a time of 13.50 and entered the finals with the fastest time after plac-

ing 1st in the preliminary round with a time of 13.56. Hall dominated the national final and finished well ahead of 2nd place.

“At nationals, Coach (Michael) Smart told me that as long as I applied myself and remained focused that no one should be able to beat me,” Shanekia recounted.

In the women's 400-meter dash, sophomore Kanika Beckles was 2nd in a personal best time of 53. Beckles was also 5th in the women's 200 meters. Sophomore Teneshia Davis was 2nd in the women's 800 meters in a time of 2:11.83. In the men's 110-meter hurdles, freshman Moussa Dembele was 2nd in a time of 13.84, recording the season's best.

This is Shanekia's final year competing for the Wolverines; she was the indoor champion in 2010 for the 60-meter hurdles and in 2011, for the 55-meter hurdles. She will be attending Louisiana State University in Fall 2011. Her teammate, Kanika Beckles, will continue as a student-athlete this fall at Texas A & M University.