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For Immediate Release to Secretary of Higher Education's Office

**Community College Delegates Join Governor Christie on
Trade Mission to Mexico**

Three New Jersey community college representatives joined Gov. 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.

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.

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Photo Caption:

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