

I. MAJOR RESEARCH AND PUBLIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Thomas Edison State College engages in public service activities through the Office of Community Affairs and Government Relations, Division of Planning and Research, and the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy. In addition, the State Library, an affiliate of Thomas Edison State College also contributes to the public service activities of the College (see section K). Highlights of some of the College's activities are provided below.

Economic Impact Study. The College, through the Office of Community Affairs and Government Relations was the lead facilitator and data collector for a study concerning the collective economic impact on Mercer County by its five institutions of higher education (Thomas Edison State College, Rider University, Princeton University, the College of New Jersey, and Mercer County Community College). The purpose of this study was to examine the quantifiable impacts of institutional spending in the local area as well as such qualitative effects as capital investment impacts, annual operating impacts, impact of students and visitors, and community impacts. Findings from the study, conducted by an external consultant, are summarized in the report, "The Mercer County Higher Education Institutions' Economic Impact Study", which will be released by the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce to the business community and state government in September 2007.

Future Business Leaders Council. The College, through the Division of Planning and Research, was one of four higher educational institutions in Mercer County that hosted seminars for the Future Business Leaders Council of the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce. Participants in this Council include future business leaders seeking to enhance their leadership skills, network with colleagues, and participate in competitive projects that will benefit them professionally, while at the same time positively impacting the Chamber of Commerce and business community. In addition to hosting several meetings, the College played a role in developing the curriculum and organizational structure.

John S. Watson Institute Activities

During FY 2007, the Watson Institute continued to provide practical research, technical assistance and expert advice to public decision-makers through its five centers. Highlights of some of the Institute's activities are presented below.

Urban Environment. Watson Institute staff from the Center for the Urban Environment continued to support New Jersey citizens concerned about the environment by hosting meetings of the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance and by making public presentations on environmental justice issues in general, and fine-particulate-matter air pollution in particular. Presentations were made to various organizations within the state as well as several colleges and universities.

Leadership Trenton. The 2007 Leadership Trenton Fellowship program, administered through the Center for Leadership Development, began in late September and concluded in June. The year was full of informative seminars, team building exercises and activities, group discussions, and site visits. The monthly seminars included a variety of topics (e.g., trust, gang awareness and awareness, local government and politics, race and diversity, importance of early childhood education). Site visits were varied and included such places

as the Princeton Institute for the Sciences and Technology of Materials, New Jersey Network Studios, Trenton City Hall, and the New Jersey State Prison. Approximately 40 Fellows were selected for the 2008 class which began in September 2007.

Play it Smart Program. The Center for Leadership Development staff worked with the Trenton Board of Education, the City of Trenton, and College Sports Television's Field of Dreams Program to offer academic support in the form of tutorials, study halls, and SAT preparation for approximately 250 student-athletes at Trenton Central High School. Outcomes from the Play it Smart Program were positive: 100 percent of the student-athlete seniors who participated in the program graduated in June; 78 percent enrolled in a two-year or four-year college, and 8 students signed national letters of intent to participate in athletics on the collegiate level. In addition, 15 student-athletes registered for the SAT exam, and 5 registered for ACT exam. There was also a decrease in the dropout rate and an increase in standardized test scores. The Play It Smart initiative was approved for a grant from the Mercer County One-Stop Career Center to offer additional resources for job readiness, continuing education, and leadership skill building.

Professional Development Sessions for Childcare Practitioners. Institute staff in the Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children delivered professional development sessions to childcare practitioners throughout New Jersey. Staff worked with early childhood teachers on issues of employment, obtaining credentials, and climbing the career ladder of the early childhood system through the Abbott Teacher Support Program. Staff also examined policy and provided information on scholarship funds available for non-Abbott teachers; reviewed and tracked the new regulations for all new child care centers to safeguard children from environmental hazards; and met with the New Jersey Secretary of Commerce and members of the New Jersey Child Care Economic Impact Council.

Through the leadership of the Institute's staff, the New Jersey Child Care Economic Impact Council is progressing in its second year of policy implementation. In addition, Institute staff engaged donors to support the concept of a "Cultural Competency Summer Institute" for early childhood teachers. Two planning grants were received to pilot the program in August 2007.

Project Administration Assistance. On behalf of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), the Center for Health Policy Development staff issued a project administration closeout letter on July 28, 2006, for the Quadra Med contract. This project has been successful in creating an electronic hospital inpatient/outpatient reporting system to provide accurate and timely data to both acute-care hospitals and DHSS. Institute staff completed project administration assistance to DHSS through a contract with APG for the implementation phase of the gap analysis, risk assessment, and education-for-compliance activities related to the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

Technical Assistance and Support Services. Institute staff and the Concerned Pastors Economic Development Corporation provided technical assistance to grantees assigned to them by the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives (OFBI). This year the Institute provided capacity building assistance to 12 OFBI grantees. A major focus has been on four

organizations in the southern part of New Jersey, with executive coaching and training for boards. In other activity, the Institute provided research and technical support to a group collaborating on the formation of the Capital City Community Foundation for the City of Trenton.

Institute staff also provided facilitation services to the Black Issues Conference, contributed to the development of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Childhood Obesity Program, and worked with the Capital Corridor Community Development Corporation on a youth leadership program using the Leadership Trenton model. Additionally, 28 agencies from the Urban Mayors' Association cities have benefited from technical assistance services offered by Institute staff. These services are similar in nature to the aforementioned capacity building efforts.