

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 797

JC 030 680

TITLE New Jersey's Community Colleges: A Collection of Best Practices. Presentation Summaries from the 2002 New Jersey Council of County Colleges Best Practices Conference (2nd, North Branch, New Jersey, April 12, 2002).

INSTITUTION New Jersey State Dept. of Higher Education, Trenton. Office of Community Coll. Programs.

PUB DATE 2002-00-00

NOTE 24p.

PUB TYPE Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Community Colleges; Conference Proceedings; *Conferences; Continuing Education; Institutes (Training Programs); Meetings; Organizations (Groups); Teleconferencing; Two Year Colleges; Workshops

IDENTIFIERS *New Jersey

ABSTRACT

This report is a presentation of summaries from the 2002 New Jersey Council of County Colleges Best Practices Conference. The conference features 75 presenters from each of New Jersey's 19 community colleges. The 2002 conference was a large success with 250 members from New Jersey's Community College family attending the event. The goal of the conference is to share the most valuable innovations and other ideas for community college instruction, administration, and general "best practices." The following are those "best practices" discussed in the report: (1) Abbot District + Collaboration = Comprehensive Child Care Training; (2) adding value to online course; (3) armed and "centered" for the future; (4) conceptual approaches to the use of statistics in higher education; (5) doubling your employees' tax deferred options--instituting a section 475 (B) plan; (6) honors study; (7) innovations in faculty development; (8) leadership shore; (9) partnering at its best; (10) saving money through cooperation--opportunities with the joint purchasing consortium; (11) strategies for successful workplace literacy programs; (12) student leadership development; and (13) technology grant program--project and benefits. Each of the "best practices" is discussed in detail in an individual section and most sections contain a contact person that will provide more information regarding programs. (MZ)

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New Jersey's Community Colleges:

A
Collection
OF
Best Practices

Presentation Summaries from the 2002
New Jersey Council of County Colleges
Best Practices Conference

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A Collection of Best Practices

On Friday, April 12, 2002, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges hosted its second annual Best Practices Conference at Raritan Valley Community College. Featuring over 75 presenters from each of New Jersey's 19 community colleges, the conference was designed to share the most valuable innovations and other ideas for community college instruction, administration and general "best practices."

This year's conference was an unprecedented success, with a capacity crowd of nearly 250 members of New Jersey's community college family attending. In only its second year, this conference has become an important annual event that allows educators, administrators and other employees to benefit from the collective knowledge of New Jersey's community colleges.

What follows are several presentation summaries from the 2002 Best Practices Conference.

Dr. Lawrence Nespoli
President

Abbott District + Collaboration = Comprehensive Child Care Training

Asbury Park and Neptune in Monmouth County, NJ, are two Abbott urban school districts. Recently rendered NJ court decisions require specific education and training for teachers in child care centers that contract with Abbott districts. Regardless of whether new or not, degreed teachers in Abbott contracted classrooms must have a pre-kindergarten through third grade certification by June 2005. Existing teachers without any degrees must have a BA degree as well as their certification by June 2007.

Brookdale Community College working with local social agencies, the two Abbott school districts, child care center directors and New Jersey City University (NJCU) collaboratively planned, established and conducted in Fall 2000 a responsive, community based comprehensive credit and non-credit program to meet the immediate needs of Abbott contracted child care professionals. The program is an example of an innovative solution to help fulfill newly mandated needs of a profession as well as an example of a collaborative response to the education and training needs of two urban communities. The program is coordinated by a College-community council, which has continually met bi-monthly since August 2000.

The following is the pilot program implemented at Brookdale's Asbury Park Education Resource Center in the Fall of 2000. Courses in the evening after 6:00 pm and on Saturdays were the norm.

Career Orientation/Preparation Program

Conducted a basic career orientation/preparation program to any one interested in the child care profession as well as to current practitioners. Administered a literacy test afterwards that was used to assist in a person's proper placement in courses and within the career field and held an on-site registration for those desiring to immediately enroll in a credit course or courses.

Credit Courses

Offered Brookdale credit courses in Education as well as Early Childhood Education at the Asbury Park Center that enabled students to gain continuing education units toward professional certifications or college credit toward a two- or four-year education degree. In addition, partnered with New Jersey City University and it offered upper-credit courses at the Center that enabled students to complete a four-year degree in education or gain a pre-kindergarten through 3 certification.

Units of Study (non-credit)

Offered units of study at the Asbury Center for those interested in working toward their non-credit Child Development Associate certification or Certified Childcare Professional certification.

Forty-four students, all childcare professionals, enrolled in the Fall 2000 education courses offered, and 10 enrolled in the non-credit programs, an enrollment that has been sustained to date.

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Adding Value to Online Courses

Instruction delivered over the Internet has enjoyed a place of prominence in innovation in college teaching in recent years. However, the allure of anytime-anyplace instruction is often tarnished by the lack of communication with a “live” instructor and interaction with other students. At County College of Morris we have developed a hybrid course in the Java programming language that combines both classroom and Internet instruction. Students alternate weekly between coming to campus and studying online, thus having the best of both worlds.

For each week of the semester, the course Web site provides an online lecture of the current Java topic, related study and reading assignments, a laboratory assignment, and list of tutorials addressing the use of the computing environment. Both the lecture and the tutorials are linked extensively for easy access.

During campus meetings, the instructor lectures, guides the students through the tutorials, and presents an overview of the next week’s instruction. The following week the students work online through a similar series of instructional resources. The course has been structured so that the “heavier” subject matter is covered in the weeks with the campus meetings.

In addition to these materials, the students also have access to a bulletin board that serves to meld a community of learners. Students can post information about their computer careers, ask for help on the current laboratory assignment, give information on additional Web sites that they have found useful, or express other concerns in computing. The bulletin board is a popular tool; threaded discussions often occur among three or four participants.

Students also submit their solutions to weekly laboratory assignments. The labs are programming exercises that reflect the lecture topics for that week. They encourage the students to keep current and, since they are graded, provide feedback as to how well the student understands

the work. (It is important that students stay current because the material presented in a programming language is cumulative.)

Students communicate with the professor easily through their online private mailboxes. It is through the mailbox that students send their laboratory assignments and receive the professor’s comments. Students are also able to keep track of their grades through a private viewing area.

In addition to the laboratory assignments, students are also graded on two short quizzes and a final presentation. The quizzes are given during the campus sessions to ensure validity. They are given online and have a multiple-choice, short answer, and true-false format. The quizzes are scored automatically as soon as the student submits the answers, thus providing immediate feedback.

A final presentation requires the student to research some topic on Java not covered in the lectures. The student writes a small description of the topic and illustrates it with a working Java programming example. The presentation is then posted so that the other students have access to more examples and coding styles.

The course has enjoyed quite a bit of success, having now been offered for four semesters on Monday evenings. In a survey administered last semester, almost all students indicated that they would definitely take a hybrid course again.

The hybrid course is a successful example of using computer technology in education. It adds value to education by giving the student both access to traditional teaching and some flexibility in time and place.



Adding Value to Online Courses (continued)

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Armed and “Centered” for the Future

The Center for Teaching Excellence at County College of Morris was established in 1988 to assist faculty and staff in achieving academic excellence. Its principal staff consists of a director, typically a member of the faculty with full released time, who is advised by a steering committee comprised of professionals from all sectors of the college.

Since its inception, the Center has developed a broad array of programs for faculty and staff to improve both teaching skills and performance of support services. The college believes that both streams affect the quality of teaching and services provided to its students. Throughout its existence, the Center has been charged with administering and coordinating programs that offer opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Among its centerpiece programs are the Faculty Development Summer Institutes wherein full-time and adjunct faculty can avail themselves of training to enable them to incorporate technology into existing courses and develop new online courses. Equally popular are the Learning Workshops offered during the fall and spring semesters, usually one hour in length, focusing on specific, task-related applications.

The Center coordinates two additional means of faculty development: awarding of grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,500 for faculty and staff to undertake special projects to strengthen academic and administrative services; and acclimating new faculty and professional staff with a multi-session orientation program. The Center also publishes the CTE UPDATE, wherein colleagues may describe their research, sabbaticals, and relevant professional activities. Finally, the Center is privileged to process the recommendations of distinguished faculty, upon their retirement, for designation of rank as Faculty Emeritus.

Particularly interesting for the professionals on campus are three annual meetings featuring speakers on timely

topics of common interest.

The Center is supported directly by the college and also by the college’s foundation. Additional funding for important priorities has been sought and granted. For example, this year the Center premiered the CCM Peace Prize, to be given annually to a student, mentored by a faculty member, who produces a refereed project on the theme of world peace.

For such a Center as this to prosper, it is vital that it have strong institutional support, in resources, facilities, and assistance from colleagues. The continuing strength of the Center at County College of Morris has been rooted in this commitment. Many times during its 13-year existence, the Center could have been abolished for financial reasons. To its credit, the college continues to recognize its important role in faculty and staff development.

Obviously, there are many avenues colleges can travel to reach a desired destination. But here at County College of Morris, the Center for Teaching Excellence has worked well and promises to do so in the future.

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Conceptual Approaches to the use of Statistics in Higher Education

The statistical concepts explained in this session are statistical significance, p-values, analysis of variance, analysis of covariance, correlation and regression.

Statistical significance indicates whether the extent of difference obtained between two or more values is greater than one would expect by chance alone.

Statistical significance is influenced by a number of factors including the variance of the values of each group or, for the combined group, sample size and how much error one is willing to risk in claiming the values are significantly different. If little error is risked, statistical significance will be more difficult to achieve.

P-values occur in journals and quantitative research studies next to values representing t or F statistical test results. They indicate the probability that some observed difference likely occurs by chance alone. In this way, p-values can also be used to test statistical significance. P-values can be expressed as an exact value such as $p = .043$ or as an inequality such as $p < .05$. Both of these values show that the probability of the difference occurring by chance alone is small.

T-tests are used to determine if the difference between the averages for two groups is statistically significant. Suppose two groups of students take the same course: one group is taught with regular classroom instruction and the other group is taught with online instruction. Assuming all other things are equal including the abilities of the students, the t-test can provide a decision as to whether online instruction is more effective than regular classroom instruction. To form groups that are as similar in composition as possible, it is best to randomly assign students to one or another type of instructional method. However, since classes are already formed in schools, this is impractical. Instead, to control for the effect of pre-existing individual differences without disturbing class selection differences, one must decide on what variables to use as covariate(s) in performing analysis of covariance. In this example, one could control for grade point average and/or grade in the last English class in an

attempt to achieve an “even playing field” on which to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction type. However, there is no guarantee since many covariates must be used. The best possible procedure would be to use analysis of covariance in combination with random assignment. Without random assignment and no covariate, the groups are only comparison groups used in an *ex post facto* (after the fact) fashion.

Now, suppose one is interested in knowing whether some significant difference in performance exists for groups taking online instruction, regular classroom instruction or telecourses. There is a general rule in statistics that one should not compare three groups using three separate t-tests. Since three comparisons would be made instead of one, a greater risk of making an error exists. To avoid this problem, one should use analysis of variance, using an F statistic. By testing all three groups simultaneously, the analysis of variance controls for the potential large magnitude of error.

If the observations in each of the three groups were not a product of random assignment, then covariates could be used with analysis of covariance. However, a test for the homogeneity of regression slopes needs to be conducted first. Slopes are obtained from the relationship between the scores in each group and the covariate for each level of the independent variable. If the slopes are found to be homogeneous, then one could proceed with analysis of covariance. A test for the homogeneity of regression slopes would also be required when the analysis of covariance with two groups is being applied.

To illustrate another statistical concept using our online instruction example, suppose we are now interested in the relationship or correlation between the “number of items students read” and the final grade in the course. To obtain this desired relationship, one would calculate a correlation coefficient denoted by “r.” The correlation ranges from -1.0 to $+1.0$ and can be significant or non-significant. Furthermore, correlations do not imply causation.

Conceptual Approaches to the use of Statistics in Higher Education (continued)

Finally, in regression and multiple regression, an attempt is made to explain or predict a dependent variable by knowing the value(s) of other variables called independent variables. In our present example, the number of “hits,” the “number of items read” and “number of articles posted” all contribute to some degree in predicting a student’s final grade.

The above concepts should serve as either a refresher or an introduction to statistical methodology. A number of assumptions exist for these methods that were excluded in explaining differences between groups because of space limitations and the complexity of some of the topics. It is our hope, however, that this presentation will enable roundtable participants to better understand higher education journal articles and research studies.

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Doubling Your Employees' Tax Deferral Options: Instituting a Section 457(B) Plan

There are several changes in the "Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001" that impact the tax treatment of college pensions and other retirement accounts: (1) the limits on plan contributions are increased and (2) colleges are permitted to establish additional deferred income plans. The Act's clear emphasis is to increase tax incentives for individuals to increase their retirement savings.

Currently, New Jersey county college employees participate in state-mandated pension plans: the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) as a defined benefit plan or the Alternate Benefit Plan (ABP) as a defined contribution plan.

Additionally, by virtue of a college's status as a public educational institution, most colleges offer employees the opportunity to contribute to a voluntary 403(b) plan. Generally, contributions to a 403(b) plan are tax-deferred to the employee. Many of the colleges' full- and part-time eligible employees are currently deferring some portion of their compensation into a 403(b) retirement account and have reached or are nearing the maximum contribution. It is likely that these employees would be interested in an additional vehicle for salary deferral. Some employees may also wish to participate in deferred income programs with different investment options or separation rules.

One such option is the creation of a new section 457(b) plan. Colleges and universities have always been able to create 457(b) plans for their employees for deferred compensation arrangements. However, changes in the "Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001" eliminating the coordination of contributions with section 403(b) plans, now make a 457(b) plan a more viable option. Generally, a 457(b) plan works like a 401(k) plan in private industry. It would meet the needs of employees desiring to set aside earnings for retirement.

In establishing a section 457(b) plan, a college needs to complete the following steps:

- Approve the creation of a plan, making a number of decisions regarding the plan's structure including participant eligibility, available investment vehicles, contribution limits, and determination of the college official responsible for plan administration.
- Solicit proposals and select a mutual fund company or investment company to administer the plan. Camden County College focused its RFP on breadth and performance of investment options, fees to participants, and administrative support of the plan.
- Introduce the plan to college employees through various means.

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Honors Study

Honors Study was developed by the County College of Morris to offer qualified individuals the opportunity to enroll in specially designed honors courses and pursue an honors degree in their majors or programs of study. Talented incoming freshmen as well as continuing students, both full- and part-time, may take selected classes in subjects for which they show an exceptional aptitude. The innovative structure of Honors Study (it is not a program or an option with a curriculum code) demanded that the college establish original guidelines, courses, and scholarship opportunities. Although our brochure specifies the parameters listed below, our recruitment process is a bit more flexible because we are looking for students who excel in all general academic areas as well as individuals who are gifted in specific subjects.

High school graduates may enroll in honors study with the following qualifications: minimum scores of 1100 on the SAT or ACT equivalent; or the top 20 percent ranking in the graduating class; or recommendation of a counselor or teacher; and formal permission of the honors coordinator. Currently enrolled students at the college must hold a 3.4 GPA or better; or be recommended by a professor for admission to a specific honors course; and formal permission of the honors coordinator.

Those who wish to fulfill the requirements for the degree must take a specific number of courses from across the curriculum. To earn the Honors Degree, students enrolled in Associate in Applied Science programs must complete 16 credits of honors courses distributed among the areas of communications, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and science. Students enrolled in Associate in Arts, Associate in Fine Arts, and Associate in Science programs must complete 21 credits distributed among the same disciplines.

Honors courses are presently offered in the more general academic areas that are requirements for most majors. Qualified students who do not wish to seek the degree are thus able to enroll in honors courses in subjects for

which they demonstrate superior ability. Special recognition of honors study is indicated on student transcripts. Our honors course classes have their regular counterparts, but they are organizationally unique and intensive, and they tend to be smaller groups. They are designed to help superior students develop their special talents, interact with other individuals of similar abilities, and enjoy a stimulating learning atmosphere.

Both Honors Degree candidates and those students who decide to take selected honors courses meet regularly with the honors coordinator, become part of a small community of scholars engaged in sophisticated levels of inquiry, and can apply for honors scholarships set aside for academic excellence.

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Innovations in Faculty Development

The Center for the Advancement of Innovative Teaching and Learning (CAITL) at Raritan Valley Community College has as its mission: To promote research, support innovative practice, and thus advance excellence in teaching and learning. Within CAITL reside the Faculty Fellows Program, Faculty Development and Technology Training Programs, mentoring for new faculty, and an annual Summer Leadership Institute. CAITL is rapidly becoming the umbrella for a diverse collection of professional development initiatives primarily for faculty. In adopting the Learning College model, in which all employees of the institution are valued for their role in enhancing student learning, programming in which there are commonalities among faculty and staff are also supported by CAITL.

The administrative structure for CAITL has been evolving since its inception approximately three years ago. It is currently under the direction of a Coordinator, a full-time faculty member with complete release time for a two-year period who reports to the vice president for learning and technology services. A steering committee provides oversight and is chaired by the CAITL coordinator who also serves as the chair of the faculty development committee. The membership of the steering committee includes the senior vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for learning and technology services, and nine faculty members including the chair of the college forum and past and present faculty fellowship recipients. An advisory committee comprised of members of the external community as well as members of the steering committee is being developed.

The faculty development committee, a standing committee of the college forum, continues its responsibility for planning bi-monthly programming for on-campus workshops of interest to faculty. In 2001-2002, workshops have focused on faculty perceptions of professional development needs, The Learning College, the Baldrige assessment process, the newly revised faculty evaluation process, a videoconference on assessment and the first

year experience, students with learning disabilities, and discussions based on Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach*. The committee is reviewing existing programs, including the Partners Program and the Mentoring Program for new faculty, and has drafted proposals for a revised travel policy and a new mini-grant program.

Two of the more innovative programs, the CAITL Faculty Fellows Program and the Summer Leadership Institute, will be the focus of this presentation. In Spring 2001, CAITL instituted the Faculty Fellows Program, a unique professional development opportunity that provides significant release time, including an "in-house" sabbatical, for faculty fellows to produce educational research that promotes and supports innovative teaching and learning. The criteria, application and selection processes, and examples of projects undertaken can be accessed through CAITL at www.raritanval.edu/rvcc/frameset/facultyresources.html. Fellowships have recently been awarded for academic year 2002-2003.

In the summer of 2001, the first annual Summer Leadership Institute brought together faculty, staff, administrators, and students in a collaborative framework to develop institutional leadership and leadership skills college-wide. This three-week program began as a clinic considering issues of leadership, identifying problems to be addressed, and forming teams that crossed traditional faculty/administrator/staff boundaries. Each team was assigned a champion from the executive staff to ensure that proposed solutions to identified challenges would be realistic, and that outcomes would result.

In 2002, the Leadership Institute will focus on management and leadership skills for middle managers, an area identified during the strategic planning process as needing attention. The three-day program will combine for the first two days with the Chair Academy's, again

Innovations in Faculty Development (continued)

acknowledging and enhancing the commonality of interests and responsibilities in diverse roles within the college. We anticipate a different target population and a different structure, tailored to meet identified needs and responsibilities in diverse roles within the college.

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Leadership Shore

If a community is to grow and prosper, it needs an ever-increasing number of individuals who are willing to confront the challenges and provide direction for the future. In 1996, Leadership Shore was founded to tap the tremendous local leadership potential in our area in order to develop and nurture civic and board leadership. The result was a program that linked the College to corporate and small businesses, public and private agencies and civic organizations in an ongoing relationship with a common goal.

It took nine long months to get this program running. We first met with local agencies who had expressed interest in issues of leadership, talked to business representatives at President Burnham's roundtable breakfasts, and met with a group of people who had gone through the Leadership New Jersey program. This last group was asked to serve as the initial advisory board to the program and were invited to share their experiences and help us choose topics and a format that would be challenging to participants.

We identified many regional leadership programs throughout the country and found that most were sponsored by local chambers of commerce. We knew this would be unlikely in Monmouth County since there is not one large chamber but several smaller, more localized chambers in the area.

The cooperating partnership established with the Monmouth/Ocean Development Council was a more "natural" fit for this venture. This arrangement enabled us to connect with their business and nonprofit membership through meetings, newsletters and personal contact. Since MODC serves two counties, it was decided to expand the program to serve both Monmouth and Ocean counties.

President Burnham spearheaded recruitment for the initial class. A letter under his signature asked CEO's and executive directors to recommend candidates for the first

year's program. Seventeen people formed the first class, Leadership Shore 1996.

Tuition and Administration:

The program is funded through tuition and some corporate donations. The College handles the administration of the program, collecting tuition and absorbing all of the costs. MODC actively markets the program to its membership, who receive a limited amount of scholarship funding.

Participants:

Program participants come from the corporate, government, not-for-profit, education and business communities. Most are identified and supported by their employers; others are self-nominated.

Those who apply must be willing to make the time commitment to give up one day a month for a 10-month period and attend the overnight retreat.

Program:

The Leadership Shore program consists of ten monthly sessions, each devoted to a different issue affecting Monmouth and Ocean counties. The themes of the sessions are: health & human services, government, education, tourism, economic development, environment, media relations, and juvenile justice.

The program begins with a day-and-a-half overnight team building retreat held at a local hotel. On Friday, the class works with a professional facilitator who, through discussion and exercises, leads participants to recognize their individual personality styles and how that affects their leadership roles. After a social dinner together, they then create individual "life maps" to share with the class the following morning in 10-minute presentations.

Leadership Shore (continued)

The class also spends Saturday morning brainstorming a class project, which they may undertake as an entire group or in smaller groups. Previous group projects have addressed issues of domestic violence, the environment, at-risk children, community development and others. Meeting time for project work is incorporated into each monthly session.

The primary focus of the program is the monthly sessions, where the class becomes more familiar with community issues and key decision-makers. It is difficult to include every aspect of each issue in a one-day program, so we try to give a “big picture” overview of the issue and then a close-up “snapshot” of one piece. An example: the tourism/arts session will begin with a site visit to the Strand Theatre in Lakewood and a conversation with the executive director of the Monmouth County Arts Council. We then travel to the JCP&L Stadium, home of the Lakewood Blue Claws (new minor league baseball team) for lunch and a tour. Also included will be a presentation by Dr. Harold Nolan, Georgian Court College professor whose specialty is tourism, speaking about global trends in that industry, followed by presentations from tourism representatives of Monmouth and Ocean counties including case studies for discussion. The program agendas are adjusted each year depending upon the evaluations of the participants.

After completing the Leadership Shore program, learning about the shore community’s challenges and opportunities, and enhancing their own leadership skills, participants are better equipped to serve on non-profit and public service boards, influencing the important decisions affecting the future of this region.

Impact

The trend of the business community in recent years, particularly in the central and southern part of the state, has been one of transition from a sales culture to one of service and relationships. With little exception, business

people are confronted with the philosophy that they must learn to “do business with other people, not with other businesses.” Additionally, many corporate “commuters” are now dealing with the issue of whether they must continue to travel outside of our region to do business, or might they begin to develop relationships on a more local level and continue to prosper.

With those thoughts in mind, it becomes clear that, in order to achieve those goals, individuals must have a good sense of understanding of what is going on in their communities, allowing them the opportunity to begin that development process by working with, and for, their peers and others.

Moving up the local leadership ladder is essential to obtaining many of these goals. The quality of our local business leaders relates directly to the overall quality of life we all enjoy here in New Jersey. The Leadership Shore program is designed to tap those resources and the potential that currently exists in our communities by bringing together people with a wide array of backgrounds and experiences from various sectors of the public and private community.

The intimate working relationships developed from participation become lasting relationships, far beyond the completion of the program. And each segment of the program is designed to provide participants with a thorough understanding of the issues that are impacting the local communities, both business and private. As a business person who relocated to the Monmouth & Ocean county region from northern New Jersey over 15 years ago, I have experienced this scenario first hand.

In order to do business in our environment, community relationships become an almost compulsory part of how you reach your potential clients. Giving back to the community, in some way or other, seems to breed a more benevolent acceptance of people doing business in our area. Leadership Shore is the perfect outlet for imparting



Leadership Shore (continued)

those efforts and energies on the local community, while gaining an in-depth understanding of the issues that will allow participants to have a positive impact on the quality of life we enjoy. And as the reputation of Leadership Shore continues to grow, we anticipate that we will be viewed as the launching pad for future leaders of New Jersey who chose to continue on to statewide and national leadership opportunities.

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Partnering at its Best

The P.A.N.T.H.E.R. (Paterson and NASA Together for High Expectations and Results) Academy was established through a grant from NASA and is a partnership with Passaic County Community College and the Paterson School District. The academy includes grades 9 through 12. While in the eighth grade, the students attend classes at PCCC on Saturdays in our College Bound Program where they study Web design, algebra and astronomy. At the completion of the eighth grade, the students apply for admission to the academy. Admittance to the academy is made through a formal application and teacher/supervisor recommendation.

The partnership allows for specific roles for PCCC and the Paterson School District. The college administers the grant, serves as liaison to NASA, ensures that project activities are achieved, provides for project activities and aligns resources of the College Bound program with the proposed activities – Saturday Academy, Summer Institute, and the Project for Parents. The Paterson School District collaborates with PCCC faculty and College Bound staff to plan and implement activities, ensure that the project activities are consistent with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content and Workplace Readiness Standards, write curriculum for the Space Academy, provide student recruitment, ensure parent participation and arrange for teacher participation. For the 2002-2003 school year, we expect to involve our science faculty to a greater extent in developing curriculum material.

Students are provided with a curriculum that is mathematics and science intensive, but also receive instruction in all required high school subjects. Students are selected to attend Space Camp and Advanced Space Camp. Those students enrolled in Advanced Space Camp receive one credit from the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Trips include the Buehler – Challenger Center that provides an exceptional experience in simulated space travel. A summer program is provided on the PCCC campus as an extension of the regular school year where students receive additional work in technology.

Students were selected to participate in the first robotics competition and performed very well. This year the Paterson School District has established a robotics competition of its own with several schools from Bergen and Passaic Counties participating. The competition consists of students working as a team to build a robot that can accomplish predefined tasks.

Students currently attend classes at the PCCC Wanaque Campus and will do so until their new facility in Paterson is complete. When they move to their new facility, they will attend classes there and at PCCC. Students are provided with many social experiences. For many these trips provide experiences in flying, staying at major hotels and interacting with parts of society that they have not had the opportunity to see.

Students' parents are involved in the academy through the "Project for Parents" component. They are offered classes in CPR training, word processing, nutrition and managing household finances. Information nights provide information on costs of college, how to apply for financial aid and what to look for in a college.

We expect that programs such as P.A.N.T.H.E.R. will provide students with the training needed to enter the technical work force. Currently we are inundated with requests to enroll students for the 2002 - 2003 school year. This Academy has become very popular mainly through word of mouth.

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Saving Money Through Cooperation: Opportunities With the Joint Purchasing Consortium

There are two county college consortia that are designed to save money: the County College Joint Purchasing Consortium and the County College Worker's Compensation Insurance Pool.

The Joint Purchasing Consortium was established in 1999 as a way for colleges to use their collective purchasing power to garner discounts from vendors. The consortium's efforts have, thus far, been focused on the purchase of energy (electricity and natural gas) and computer equipment.

All of the county colleges operate under the same statutory framework for purchasing. The consortium selects one of its members to serve as the "purchasing agent" for each bid or RFP. After the consortium approves the bid or RFP specifications, the lead college advertises the bid, publicly opens the responses and prepares the analysis for the members. Based on the members' input, the lead college's board of trustees takes action to award the bid to the lowest responsible bidder. Each college's board then takes action if it wishes to participate in the collective pricing.

In its first effort, the consortium sought competitive bids for electricity as a result of New Jersey's deregulation of the electric industry. Five colleges chose to participate in the collective pricing, saving in excess of \$300,000 in a single year.

In its second effort, the consortium sought and received preferred pricing on Gateway and Dell computers for its members colleges.

Currently, the consortium is negotiating a contract for bulk purchases of natural gas.

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Strategies for Successful Workplace Literacy Programs

Workplace literacy is a primary concern for businesses and organizations in New Jersey, especially. It is a primary focus of the Institute for Management and Technical Development at Middlesex County College. One of the best practices at the Institute is the responsive quality delivery of basic literacy programs to Middlesex County businesses and organizations, many in collaboration with the Department of Labor through its Literacy Grants Funding Program. While many colleges and training providers offer similar programs, the Institute stands as the benchmark for delivery performance.

The staff at the Institute manages the entire process for its clients. This process includes understanding client objectives, from customized program development, delivery of service, evaluation, performance measurement and graduation involvement when appropriate. The Institute staff also writes the grant application when the client requests Department of Labor funding.

The Institute has served over 30 organizations – providing quality instruction to over 300 participants. Its success is recognized by the human resource professionals with whom it works, but most importantly by the students it serves.

Literacy instruction has been offered in ESL, basic mathematics that applies to production, warehousing and service industries, and basic computer skills. Each of the programs is designed to fit the unique needs of each client.

The programs are administered in a three step process:

- We first visit the organization to determine preliminary needs and perform a general assessment. We schedule assessments for those employees identified by the company to take part in the program. For the ESL classes, this is performed by an administrator and instructor, to determine the level of oral comprehension, conversational ability, and reading and writing ability. The

results are used to determine the levels of instruction and selection of appropriate material.

- Second is program delivery. Typically the ESL and math classes are scheduled to be 36 to 40 hours in length, with the first class used as a formal pre-assessment, and the last class a post-assessment. Materials are chosen in cooperation with the company, and often include company work orders, documents and forms. Assessments for the computer literacy programs are judged by instructors measuring the skill of the participants.
- Third is measurement and analysis. By analyzing the pre- and post-assessments, we determine the success of the employee and the capability of proceeding to the next level. Most employees qualify to go to the next level.

The result is a win-win situation. The employees develop skills that help them maintain and advance in their jobs, and the company wins by having their employees taught skills by the professional staff from the Institute. If the program is under the State grant program, the company has the added benefit of Department of Labor funding.

Training results other than skill development have also been identified. Companies that have participated in the program attest to the added benefits of such a training program, including lower absenteeism, lower turnover, higher morale and a more dedicated workforce. Clearly a corollary benefit is that employees who know their company is investing in them reciprocates with loyalty, quality work and higher self-esteem.

In the labor-intensive manufacturing, production, distribution and service areas where employee literacy is a concern, this is truly a program that benefits the employees and the employers.



Strategies for Successful Workplace Literacy Programs (continued)

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Student Leadership Development

On Your Mark – Analyzing the Need for Leadership Training

The Student Leadership Development program at Essex County College under the Office of Student Life and Activities was implemented in fall 1999. The department recognized the importance and need for leadership training. Before designing a planned, comprehensive leadership training program, we had to look at the “big picture.” Our leadership training program had to address the philosophy and benefits of leadership training education, the individual leadership programs and a comprehensive leadership program design and steps in implementation.

The Theoretical Principle: based on the purpose of the college union, the primary goal is the personal growth and group effectiveness of the student leader. The following statement serves as the foundation and guiding principle of our leadership development program.

“The Union is part of the educational program of the college. As the center of the college community life, it serves as the laboratory in citizenship, training students in social responsibility and for leadership in our democracy...” (Role of The College Union, 1989)

Get Set – Planning and Coordinating the Program

In developing our leadership program, we had to access our student body including our student leaders from over thirty (30) student clubs and organizations. To get the program started the department had to ask the following questions:

1. What are the leadership needs of the student population at both campuses?
 2. What are the issues that need to be targeted?
 3. How can the program integrate the importance of community/volunteer service?
 4. How will this new program incorporate other leadership organizations and other colleges and universities into the program?
5. How can we obtain faculty and staff to promote and encourage their students who aren’t involved in clubs and organizations to get involved in leadership development training?

Answering these questions helped the department establish a foundation for developing a solid and credible leadership development program.

Ready – Creating the Elements and Design of the Program

Over the past two years our leadership development program has grown tremendously. The following is a partial listing of our leadership activities and programs throughout the semester.

1. Selecting a theme for the year. A theme is selected for the year that is used for all seminars and workshops. Some of our past themes were:
 - A. Dare to Lead
 - B. T.E.A.M - Together Everyone Achieves More
 - C. Leadership in the 21st Century
 - D. Moving the Leadership Cheese
2. Two major weekend leadership retreats are held throughout the academic year – fall and spring. Each major retreat is followed by a series of seminars and workshops. The fall weekend leadership retreat is held off campus and for the past two years has been held at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in Princess Anne, Maryland. This retreat is an intensive weekend of leadership training with various representatives from the clubs and organizations, incorporating team building activities, program planning, conflict resolutions, diversity training and staff-student relationships. The retreat also gives students the opportunity to experience another college life setting, with hopes of promoting the opportunity for transferring upon graduation.

Student Leadership Development (continued)

In the spring semester a similar retreat is held. The spring retreat is held on campus with over 60 student leaders. Faculty advisors assist in facilitating some of the workshops and sessions.

3. Other Leadership Development programs include:
 - A series of workshops, seminars and leadership socials
 - A one-day leadership exchange program with neighboring colleges and universities
 - Special program collaboration among the various student groups
 - Student leaders participate in the annual Association of College Unions International (ACUI) regional and international conferences
 - Student Leaders Community Volunteer Day in November. Student leaders volunteer hours of service in the community at shelters, soup kitchens, churches, etc.
 - The annual Friendship Games – a week of recreational tournaments where the clubs and organizations compete against each other in friendly volleyball, basketball, bowling etc. matches.
 - Annual Clubs and Organizations Exposition. The Expo gives the clubs and organizations an opportunity to display their talents and creativity through visual and performing arts, cultural displays, and hands-on activities.

4. Another interesting amenity to our leadership development program is the leadership development course taught by the assistant dean of student life and activities. The leadership class focuses on the observation and study of great leaders. Students learn by studying the classics in humanities, literature, history and philosophy. The course is a basic college class called “Leadership Development Through the Humanities,” in which students (primarily student leaders who are actively involved on campus) must do assigned reading, writing assignments or oral presentations, exams, etc. The course not only teaches an

understanding of past leaders but also introduces a personal philosophy of leadership, from articulating a vision to initiating change and managing conflict.

Go! – The Success of the Program and Evaluation Process

The success of our leadership development program is largely attributed to our knowledge that effective leadership ultimately depends on the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. Furthermore, our goal is to expose the student leader to “theory of action” and “technique of practice.” The college union can play a unique role in providing a place for such a balance to occur.

The Leadership Development program is evaluated at the end of each school year. Both graduating and returning students are surveyed. According to the survey, students who are actively involved in extra-curricular activities perform exceptionally well in their academic course work. The most recent dean’s list published shows that 70 percent of the students on the list are members in campus clubs and organizations.

Many of our student leaders have received outstanding awards and accolades for their leadership and volunteer services on both local and international levels.

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Technology Grant Program: Projects and Benefits

Since 1998, Brookdale Community College has sponsored a “Technology Mini-Grant” program to help college employees adapt technology to student needs. The program is run under the auspices of Brookdale’s Professional Development Committee.

The program has awarded funds to employees to integrate technology into their curriculum (credit and non-credit), receive advanced technology training, attend technology conferences, and further develop their technological competencies in other manners. The types of projects completed have been diverse. Examples of funded projects have included establishing department Web pages, designing online courses, and facilitating the use of existing hardware and software.

The program has led to approximately \$40,000 being awarded for 30 projects from 1999 through 2001. Funding sources have included Brookdale’s human resources office, professional development committee, and the president’s office. The number of awards and the amounts awarded have consistently risen each year since the first year of the program.

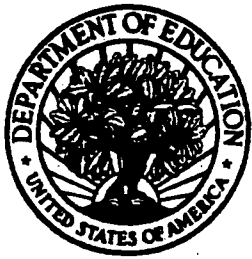
The departments and offices of past grant recipients have been diverse. Recipients have come from such college divisions as business, humanities, math/science, social sciences, technologies, and the library. Recipients have also included those in such offices as the articulation office and the child care center.

The benefits of this program have also been extremely diverse. Recipients of program benefits include students, faculty, staff, administration, and the external community of Monmouth County. One example of how many have benefited is through the development of online courses funded through the program. Funded online courses have enhanced the flexibility of students seeking to complete course activities at times and locations conducive to their busy schedules.

A second example of how people have benefited from the program is that the curriculum of existing course sections has been improved. To illustrate, a mini-grant project completed by the Brookdale mathematics department increased knowledge of and access to computer-based support materials (such as CDs and Web sites) among faculty, staff and students.

A third example of diverse benefits from the Technology Mini-Grant program is shown in the impact of a Web site developed with mini-grant funding. The Web site was constructed for Brookdale’s Environmental Field Station on Sandy Hook. The site serves many groups. These include students that regularly visit Sandy Hook through Brookdale programs, students visiting Sandy Hook via facilitators like the National Park Service, scout groups and students in remote locations who can obtain information about ocean life and weather conditions via the site without leaving classrooms.

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