A Masterful Plan: College Unveils Educational Leadership Program

The Heavin School of Arts and Sciences recently launched the first online Master of Arts in Educational Leadership degree program in New Jersey. The program is designed to prepare teachers and administrators to become educational leaders serving in the increasingly complex environment of elementary and secondary education.

"The curriculum presents an opportunity to combine theory with practice as students apply the knowledge they gain from their courses to their school settings," said Dr. Susan Davenport, dean of the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences, who played a key role in the development of the program. "The use of technology is an integral part of the curriculum and enables students to collaborate on projects, discuss ideas and research, and share best practices, while they create an e-folio that will serve as an opportunity for reflection and as a compilation of their learning throughout the program."

The 36-credit program includes courses in effective leadership theories and practice; group problem solving; instructional leadership; educational program assessment; professional and bureaucratic conflict resolution; school law; human resources administration; instructional technology; budget forecasting and fiscal planning; developing school and community partnerships; and a field-based practicum.

Requirements include at least three years of teaching experience and a valid teacher's certification, a letter of recommendation from a building-level administrator, and having an onsite mentor to conduct site-based fieldwork and inquiry projects successful for each course. The program is designed to be completed in 18-months, and students can begin the program at four different times during the year.

To find out more, visit www.tesc.edu, click on "Heavin School of Arts and Sciences" on the lower right side of the screen, then "Master's Degree Programs" or call (888) 442-8372.
There are many reasons why Thomas Edison State College students delay pursing their college degrees; for Bernard Brown it was the limited educational opportunities at the South Pole.

"After graduating from Gwynn Park High School in Brandywine, Md., I joined the U.S. Navy to establish a career path," said Brown. "I was assigned to McMurdo Station in Antarctica, which consists of 98 percent thick continental ice sheet and has no indigenous inhabitants. Due to extremely limited educational opportunities in Antarctica and prior to the Internet, I was not provided the prospect to continue my education."

Upon completion of his four-year enlistment, Brown returned home to Southern Maryland and resumed his previous career in the arboriculture field, which he continued through 2006, when the family-owned company closed.

"After my enlistment and 20 years as a certified arborist and tree expert for the state of Maryland, I realized that I wanted to explore my other interests," Brown explained. "Without a degree, many employers were not interested in my knowledge or skills, thereby unwilling to provide me even an interview opportunity. After researching universities and colleges, I determined that Thomas Edison State College would best meet my needs as an adult learner and enabled me to complete courses at my desired pace. I chose to pursue both an associate degree and a bachelor’s degree with a concentration in criminal justice."

Within weeks of completing the requirements for his Associate in Arts degree in 2006, Brown obtained a criminal justice position working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in Washington, D.C. As a security analyst, Brown is responsible for the protection of the secretary of the DHS and for the validation all nongovernmental personnel seeking visitation to the Nebraska Area Complex (NAC). He is responsible for obtaining, analyzing and managing critical information acquired from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, National Crime Information Center computer system, and, after analysis, for determining if personnel are authorized to access the NAC.

"Pursuing my criminal justice degree with Thomas Edison State College was a primary factor in securing a security analyst position at DHS," Brown noted. "The program is highly respected by the criminal justice community and pursuing it has enabled me to qualify for such a desired position, even though at the time I had limited criminal justice experience."

Having served in the military, Brown said he appreciates that the College has a dedicated military education office providing specialized educational support and advisement to students.

"That kind of support helps since it is often intimidating to attend college as an adult. As an adult learner, I was especially impressed with the ability to gain college credit for my knowledge already obtained. I completed three Prior Learning Assessments pertaining to arboriculture, which I was able to apply toward my free electives in the program. And I obtained college credits for my U.S. Navy military training," noted Brown, who also completed several courses at the Bolling Air Force Base Central Texas College extension campus.

Residing in Waldorf, Md., Brown, and his new wife, Theresa Elliott-Brown, spend their leisure time "exploring new areas of the country together." Brown also enjoys riding his Harley Davidson FXDL Lowrider Motorcycle and playing golf.

Like many Thomas Edison State College graduates, Brown extolled the support of family. "After graduating high school and not pursuing school for 26 years, I was quite reluctant to return as an adult learner. My wife and in-laws, Linda and John Elliott, were instrumental in encouraging me to pursue higher education. I would not have been able to achieve my degree without their support."

With unlimited educational opportunities allowing for the pursuit of his next goal, Brown continues his studies with hopes of complete his Thomas Edison State College baccalaureate degree in criminal justice.
Dr. Catherine Kotecki has recently joined Thomas Edison State College as the associate dean of the School of Nursing.

Kotecki comes to the College with a wealth of experience in educational leadership, teaching and research. She holds a bachelor of science degree in nursing from William Paterson University; a master's degree in adult health nursing from the University of Arizona; and a doctorate in nursing science with a concentration on curriculum development from Widener University in Chester, Pa.

Most recently, Kotecki was the director of Clinical Education and Research at Virtua Health System in southern N.J. In this role, she was responsible for the education of 2,000 nurses and allied health professionals. As an educator, Catherine has been a member of the Master Educator’s Guild at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey. She has also published many professional articles, and is an award winning graduate-level instructor.

Kotecki and her husband, Rich, reside in Marlton, N.J. She has two sons (Peter, age 24 and Steven, age 28) and a cat named Felix. She can be reached at (609) 633-6460.
The School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College sponsored its Second Annual Distinguished Lectureship on Diversity in Nursing in October. The one-day event, Mentoring Through Cybergogy: Building a Diverse Workforce, promoted collaboration and provided networking opportunities for nurse educators and leaders. The lectureship was attended by nearly 70 nurses from various parts of the country. The College’s Minority Nurse Educator program was established in 2005 with a $600,000 grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. To date, 39 experienced minority nurse educators have completed the 32-week Certificate in Distance Education (CDE) course work; and 15 have completed the online mentored teaching component.

College Hosts Second Distinguished Lectureship on Diversity in Nursing

There are many things about U.S. culture that differ from Setsuko Tsuchiya’s own — none more obvious as the dining habits of the Americans she wrote about in her award-winning essay.

“Americans know how to enjoy a meal,” said the Thomas Edison State College BA in liberal studies student. “Japanese care more about etiquette and attitude. Enjoying dinner is often secondary.”

Japanese-born Tsuchiya received third place in the 2006 East Coast Writer’s Awards for her essay about her first experience in an American restaurant.

"Nowadays having fun is an American custom that I have adopted in my own life,” noted the contest winner.

Tsuchiya entered her essay while a student at Intercultural Communications College (ICC) in Honolulu, Hawaii, where she still resides. She is a homemaker and a licensed medical massage therapist as well as an award-winning dance sport competitor.

“It was my dream to go to college. Now, I’m living my dream by attending

For Thomas Edison State College Student, Reality Exceeds Expectation

Setsuko Tsuchiya with husband (and competition dance partner) Daniel S. Janik
Mentor Profile: Nora Carrol

Exposing Students to the Business of Communication

Nora Carrol’s students do not wonder what it is like in the post-degree business world; they are already in it.

They defend their theories on organizational development and interpersonal communications on their Blackboard course space and communicate in the online Discussion Boards, which serve as a managerial incubator. They also know that constructive change – the type that infuses an organization with purpose and vitality – begins on a personal level.

Carrol, a Managerial Communications mentor, came to the College in 1998 bringing with her an impressive stash of expertise. Already familiar in the ways of course development, adult education, distance learning vehicles and experiential portfolio review, she has contributed to numerous conferences, publications and journals on the subject. She is also a member of the College’s Academic Council.

“I already had experience in course development and serving adult learners as a course facilitator and Web course author,” said Carrol. As principal of CarrolCreative in Phoenix, Ariz., she provides creative writing services, training, interactive learning guidance and marketing advice for a number of individuals, businesses and start-ups.

As learning environments go, Carrol sees real advantages to teaching and learning in an online course space. “The online environment tends to level the participation field, especially if an individual is shy of physical communication and it may actually give a ‘voice’ to learners who normally wouldn’t be contributors in a physical classroom setting.”

For students who assume that online course completion may be the path of lesser resistance, Carrol offers a cautionary note. “Online learning does not lessen responsibility; on the contrary, it can require more time and better time management than face-to-face learning. Also, students should expect to do a fair amount of peripheral research using virtual libraries and other online tools. A challenge too is timing, as physical classmates are together, but virtual classmates may be scattered worldwide, all juggling multiple activities in different time zones.”

Carrol is also an adjunct professor at Colorado Technical University where she has been teaching business management courses since 2004. She holds a Master of Science degree in adult education/innovation management and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y. She has also served on the faculty of the University of Maryland University College in Adelphia, Md.; George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.; and as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada.

“When I came to the College eight years ago, Nora was among the first mentors with whom I worked. I’ve always been impressed by her dedication, creativity and responsiveness, and have learned a great deal from her through our collaboration on projects,” noted Thomas Edison State College Instructional Designer Aaron Appelstein.

An accomplished visual artist, Carrol’s work is represented by the Agora Gallery in New York City and the Caladan Gallery in Beverly, Ma.

Reality Exceeds Expectation (continued)

Tsuchiya is now waltzing toward her full potential.

“My ultimate goal is to be a dance therapist using partnered social dance as a medium for treatment. To me, winning the award and living here is a demonstration of the American dream that is held so tightly by many people throughout the world. Women have a privileged place in America that allows them to discover their true potential. In America, expectation is commonly exceeded by reality.”

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* Dates apply to both Graduate and Undergraduate courses

** Select courses have a midterm examination. Refer to your course materials for details