

SIGNALS

THOMAS EDISON STATE

WINTER 2010

EDITION

STATE

COLLEGE

VOL. 11 NO. 5

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To access LearningExpress Library, simply log into myEdison® and click on the "Services" tab. Once in Services, click on "Educational Resources" and then select the "LearningExpress Library" link.

Instructions for new users:

- Click the "Register" button under the "New Users" section at the bottom of the page.

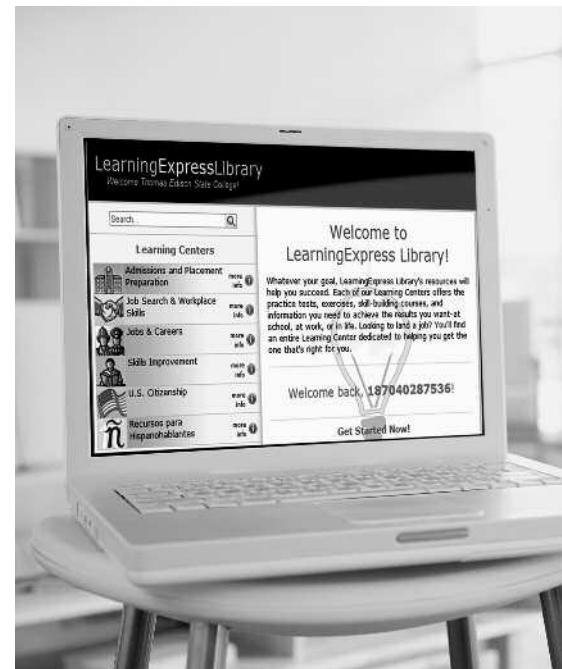
- Enter your username (18704 + your student ID number with no spaces/dashes). Note: the prefix, 18704, authenticates you as a user from Thomas Edison State College. Next, create a password, verify your password and then click on the "Register" button. Usernames and passwords must be a minimum of six characters and should not include spaces.

Returning users:

- Enter your username and password on the "Returning User Login" section at the bottom of the LearningExpress Library screen.

Once logged in, you can choose from any of the following "Learning Centers" on the left side of the screen:

The "Admissions and Placement Preparation" link can be utilized for CLEP test preparation, instantly-scored practice tests and interactive lessons. If your eye is on graduate school, you will find practice tests for the GMAT, GRE and LSAT. The "Job Search and Workplace Skills" tab will help you hone your business writing, resume writing and interviewing talent. The "Jobs and Careers" link features instantly-scored licensing, certification and scenario practice exams for areas ranging from ATC test preparation for air traffic controllers, electricians' license test preparation and Civil Service exams, to Praxis preparation for those entering the field of teaching. Under the



"Skills Improvement" tab, you will find exercises and practice tests to sharpen your math, reasoning, reading comprehension and writing skills. The "U.S. Citizenship" link will help those preparing for the U.S. Citizenship Exam.

"We are very excited to have a suite of resources available that students can use throughout their enrollment at the College," said Dr. Susan Davenport, dean of the Heavlin School of Arts and Sciences at Thomas Edison State College. "New students are encouraged to use the self-assessment tools to determine their readiness for college-level writing and math. Continuing students can begin to prepare for career changes, admission to advanced degrees and practice for credentialing exams. LearningExpress will benefit all of our students and help them to achieve the outcomes of their degrees." ■

Note: A complete listing of all undergraduate courses and their availability may be found on the College Web site. Go to www.tesc.edu/listall.php.

NEW ONLINE COURSES:

HEA-306 Men's Health

MAR-411 Marketing Research

NUC-303 Nuclear Physics for Technology

PSG-102 PSG Instrumentation Theory

LIT-111 and LIT-112
are being replaced with:

LIT-205 American Literature I

LIT-206 American Literature II

Education is a Family Affair

A NONTRADITIONAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION SPAWNS A NEW TRADITION FOR THE DRIGGERS FAMILY IN A PROCESSION OF BSBA DEGREES

When the Driggers family sets out to accomplish something, they usually do so together and it is always a success. The siblings began their educational journey home-schooled by their mother, who instilled in them a penchant for educational excellence and distinction.

When the time came for each to pursue higher education, Thomas Edison State College seemed like the logical progression.

Originally from Fort Worth, Texas, the Driggers were encouraged to continue their non-traditional educational trek by their mom, who stumbled across the book *Accelerated Distance Learning: The New Way to Earn Your College Degree in the Twenty-First Century* by Brad Voeller. Three of the siblings, Leah, Mark and Adam, have already graduated from Thomas Edison State College with Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) degrees and younger brother, Noah, is currently a student in the BSBA program.

"My general management courses gave me the tools to manage my businesses more efficiently and allowed me to take a more professional approach to the strategic decisions I make," said Mark Driggers, 25, of Benbrook, Texas, who was the first among his siblings to graduate from the College in 2004. A fire fighter for the Fort Worth Fire Department, Mark co-owns professional lawn care businesses with his brothers Adam and Noah. In his spare time, Mark is a runner who competes in marathons.

The oldest, Leah, Driggers-Spina, 29, who resides in North Richland Hills, Texas, was next to graduate. Leah, '08, explained that she and her brothers had contemplated a few other schools, but were drawn to the College because of its accreditation, its well-known name and the flexibility of its programs. "The best aspect about the siblings studying the same material was being able to ask each other questions about subject matter and to test each other in preparation," she said.

While earning her BSBA credits, Leah worked full-time at the Gladney Center for Adoption in Fort Worth, one of the largest adoption agencies in the U.S. As a childbirth coordinator and a houseparent for the residential program for mothers-to-be, Leah realized that she did not have time to sit in a classroom. "Thomas Edison State College was the perfect fit for me because it possessed the three main tenets that



Dalton Photography

(From left to right) siblings Mark Driggers, Leah Driggers-Spina and Adam Driggers are well prepared to help younger brother, Noah Driggers with his BSBA in general management course work, all three are alums of the program.

I wanted in a college: flexibility, cost effectiveness and the ability to work at my own pace." Recently married to David Spina, Leah currently works with her husband at a retail electric company, Ambit Energy.

Adam Driggers, 23, of Benbrook, graduated just three months after his big sister. Working full time while enrolled at Thomas Edison State College, Adam found it helpful to have a study partner in Leah. "Thomas Edison State College made the process of getting a college degree so much easier," Adam explained. "I found I could work full time while taking courses full time."

Noah, 20, the youngest, is following in his siblings' footsteps at Thomas Edison State College. "It is a perfect fit," he said. "Unlike a lot of other colleges, Thomas Edison State College will work with me so I can bring in credits from tests that I have already completed." Noah, who also works in the family business, enjoys restoring cars in his spare time.

"Students who choose the unique learning techniques at Thomas Edison State College, seem to achieve a lot more than students who go through a traditional college. I am certain that the alternate college route shows future employers how much self-discipline it takes to earn a degree without being taught in a traditional classroom," added Leah. When asked what the best part of Thomas Edison State College was, she enthused, "It allowed me to graduate at a fraction of the cost in under two years while working – what a blessing!" ■

See What You Are Getting Into

Course designers at Thomas Edison State College have revamped the Course Preview feature on the College's Web site, affording students a more comprehensive look at the unit descriptions, assignments, test options and project expectations for all online courses.

Formerly titled "Course Essentials," the new "Online Syllabus" section within each course is formatted to be more user-friendly and has been expanded to include a "Share" button for enrolled students which provides easier printing, e-mailing, and social bookmarking capability.

To view a list of the College's online course offerings and preview the syllabus for each, visit: www.tesc.edu/704.php and click on the "Browse all online courses" link at the bottom of the page. ■

Handling the Fear of Math

by Todd Siben
Senior Program Advisor
Liberal Arts and Sciences



CONCERNED ABOUT THE MATH REQUIREMENTS IN YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM? PERHAPS IT'S BEEN 20 YEARS, OR MORE, SINCE YOU STUDIED MATH. DEPENDING ON YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM, FULFILLING YOUR MATH REQUIREMENT MAY NOT BE AS DIFFICULT AS YOU THINK.

First, consider the degree you have chosen and the math requirement for that degree. Ask yourself, "Have I chosen a degree appropriate for my ability?" For example, since you haven't studied math in almost 20 years, your math skills may be rusty. Perhaps the last math you studied was algebra, and you passed, but barely. Now you've chosen a degree that requires Calculus I and II.

Taking that calculus course may require that you first refresh your algebra skills in order to be better prepared for the next logical sequence of courses.

Second, find your comfort level. According to our mentors, it is often better to start with a lower-level math course even if it doesn't fulfill your degree needs. Students who lack basics often do not succeed when taking a course above their level. Instead of dropping down to a lower-level course, they repeat the higher-level course again, unsuccessfully, wasting both their money and time.

Next, consider your assets. As a self-directed, mature student, perhaps you are better prepared to study math now than you were years ago. You are more analytical, more disciplined and more driven toward degree completion. So, why feel threatened by a math requirement?

Which math course is right for your degree?

Some institutions require algebra for all degrees. Thomas Edison State College offers alternatives. If you have selected a liberal arts or human services degree, the math requirement can usually be satisfied with an

entry level course such as Applied Liberal Arts Math (MAT-105). Although MAT-105 may be the most reasonable option, students often choose intermediate or college-level algebra because they've seen it so often in degree requirements. This fear-of-the-unknown can sometimes result in the incorrect choice.

Perhaps you are pursuing a business degree that requires Quantitative Business Analysis (MAT-119). If you wait until the last few courses to complete this requirement, and find you are unable to pass the course and switch to a liberal arts degree with a lower math requirement, you may find that you now need additional credits to earn the new degree. Often this situation can be avoided with a bit of advance planning.

As a self-directed, mature student, perhaps you are better prepared to study math now than you were years ago. You are more analytical, more disciplined and more driven toward degree completion.

Be sure to consider your options. Along with the assortment of online math courses we offer, Thomas Edison State College students may utilize exam programs such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and DANTEs Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs) that offer exams in math and statistics courses. Some students prefer to take math as a classroom-based course at a local community college whenever possible. Also consider that a statistics course can satisfy your math requirement for some degree programs.

An advisor can help

Feel free to discuss the options with your academic advisor. Current students can



access an advisor through the AppointmentDesk feature by logging into myEdison® at <http://myedison.tesc.edu> and by clicking on the "Advising Appointment" link located on the left of the opening screen, under "Tools." Once in the AppointmentDesk module, you will be prompted to select your degree program, an advisor; and the date, time and type of appointment desired.

Before making an appointment, please remember that the majority of students' concerns: (getting started, course approvals, the differences in the College's credit earning methods or changing your degree program) can usually be answered by accessing the Campus Help Desk feature by clicking the "Help" icon located in at the top of every myEdison® page. By utilizing the Campus Help Desk, you can access the knowledge base FAQ's or submit a ticket to the advisement office that is answered within 3 business days – many cases are resolved in the same day.

Siben recently celebrated his 21st year with Thomas Edison State College. He has served on the staff of Mercer County Community College, the University of Rhode Island, Northern Arizona State University, The University of Buffalo and Columbia University. He earned his Master of Arts degree at the Teachers College of Columbia University in adult and higher education. Siben has also been known to take online and PLA courses at Thomas Edison State College just to see things from a student's perspective. ■

Mentor Profile: William S. Howe III, PhD

As a recognized leader in higher education, there is not much that surprises Dr. William Howe about college students. That is, until now.

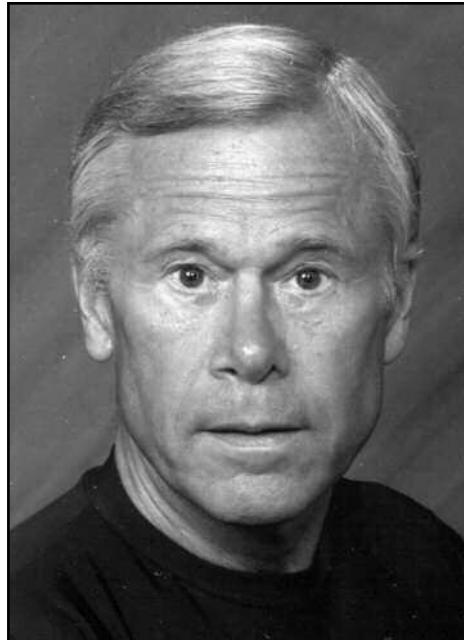
There were discoveries in store for Dr. William Howe as he embarked on his role as a Thomas Edison State College mentor — some more unexpected than others. The rich diversity of the students, the commitment to their course work, the collaborative spirit of the College's staff and fellow mentors, and the overarching connection that was taking place – not only between him and the students, but among the students themselves. In a recent interview we found out what continues to inspire him about the College and why he looks forward to each new term.

Q. WHAT ORIGINALLY ATTRACTED YOU TO THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE?

A. I was approached in 2007 by Dr. Joseph Santora, dean of the School of Business and Management. Joe, whom I've known for about 15 years, asked me to develop and mentor online undergraduate leadership courses for the new Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership degree. I was delighted to take on the challenge.

Q. WERE YOU SURPRISED BY THE PARAMETERS OF THE MENTOR POSITION AS IT UNFOLDED?

A. I was delightfully surprised in a number of ways. First, I had no idea that online mentoring could be such an enjoyable, rewarding experience. Secondly, I had no idea how diverse Thomas Edison State College students are, not only in their demographic makeup, but in the types of work they do, in their dispersed geographical locations – which span the globe, in their ages, their cultures and in their incredibly rich ways of thinking. Third, I had no idea I would receive the level of dedicated support from the College's staff in both the academic and administrative areas as well as from the instructional design team. Fourth, I had no idea I could establish such lasting relationships with many of the students – advising some on career choices, and providing resources for others in an ongoing basis. Also, I had no idea how close one could feel to the mentoring/learning experience that is conducted at a 'distance.' I reside in San Diego, Calif., and have interacted with students from all over the world.



William S. Howe III, PhD

Q. WHICH COURSES DO YOU MENTOR AT THE COLLEGE?

A. Currently I am mentoring two graduate courses: Leadership and Management (ORG-502) and Leading Change in Complex Organizations (LCO-610). I also mentor Prior Learning Assessment courses and recently completed mentoring in the Final Capstone Project (MLS-630) for graduate students completing the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program. I also mentored an undergraduate course, Foundations of Leadership (LDR-305), this past year.

Equally exciting has been the opportunity to design undergraduate and graduate courses with the instructional design staff and occasionally with fellow mentors. Those courses have included several undergraduate and graduate leadership courses as well as the graduate research and capstone courses. In addition to mentoring and developing courses, I also serve on the College's School of Business and Management Curriculum

Committee. In early June 2008, I was appointed as the associate editor of the College's recently launched *International Leadership Journal*.

Q. DO YOU FIND THE ATTITUDES OF OUR STUDENTS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN A CONVENTIONAL CLASSROOM?

A. I think that the online Discussion Board promotes interactive learning that often does not occur in conventional teacher-centered classrooms. Thomas Edison State College students are working adults who often have families, jobs, community commitments and other responsibilities. They share a common bond with each other that is often unequalled in conventional classrooms. That bond is augmented by the fact that many of them are returning to education after years of being away, and are extraordinarily supportive of each other in getting back to learning and in getting up to speed with the technology behind course delivery.

In addition, many Thomas Edison State College students are, or were, in

“Thomas Edison State College students, it seems to me, are hungry to learn – far hungrier than students I have known in the classroom-focused, private universities I attended and in which I served as a professor for many years.”

Student Profile: Debra Aikens, R.N., B.S.N

Mentor Profile: (continued)

William S. Howe III, PhD

the military. Their military experience often means that they understand much about leadership, about serving others and lending a helping hand, about disciplined endeavors, and about a commitment to ongoing learning and development.

Thomas Edison State College students, it seems to me, are hungry to learn – far hungrier than students I have known in the classroom-focused, private universities I attended and in which I served as a professor for many years. These are people who are grateful for the opportunity to learn and share with each other, and who prize the chance to enhance themselves and their work places, families and communities.

Q. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A POTENTIAL STUDENT WHO ASSUMES THAT NOT BEING FACE-TO-FACE WITH A MENTOR AND CLASSMATES MIGHT BE TOO MUCH OF A HURDLE FOR SUCCESSFUL COURSE COMPLETION?

A. I would tell that student that he or she will almost always get more support, encouragement and genuine caring in an online setting than in a face-to-face educational situation characterized by teacher-centered instruction, rows of desks and competition for grades. Online learning, as at Thomas Edison State College, tends to promote cooperation, collaboration, mutual assistance and shared experiences. I would also note that the College offers abundant technical support, that someone is almost always available for consultation and that students can learn as much from each other as they can from a mentor or instructor. In a sense, online learning offers the student as many mentors as there are students in the course.

Finally, I would tell the student that Thomas Edison State College online courses are well designed and are set up so that students are constantly monitored and always know what steps they must accomplish toward course completion.

Howe earned both a PhD in education and an MA in sociology from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. He also earned an EdM in education with a concentration on administration, planning and policy analysis from Harvard University, an MA in English from the University of Massachusetts, and a BA in English from Northwestern University.

Fueled by a succession of appointments – beginning with his days as a research assistant at Stanford University (feel free to ask him about linear particle accelerators); to his management of leadership institutes; role as a college counselor, professor, chair; and most recently, as the dean of academic programs at California International Business University in San Diego – Howe brings a wealth of experience in both organizational and educational contexts to his role at Thomas Edison State College. ■

FOR SCHOOL OF NURSING STUDENT DEBRA AIKENS, "LIFE HAPPENS," AND SHE WOULD NOT HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

Debra Aikens is one of a select group whose devotion to care extends well beyond her patients. As a student in the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) – Nurse Educator program, she is preparing fellow nurses who are newer to the field to become leaders themselves.

"I graduated from Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia in 1998 with an associate degree in nursing while also serving as a member of the U.S. Army Reserve. I completed my BSN program at Thomas Edison State College School of Nursing in 2003," noted Aikens, who utilized the College's Military Degree Completion Program to convert her military education to college credits.

The credit she received for her military training coupled with the program's structure, enabled her to complete her BSN degree requirements while working full time. At the conclusion of her undergraduate study, Aikens was inducted into the School's Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society.

In continuing her education, Aikens said she was attracted to the MSN program's efficiency in that it allowed her to apply 9 credits already earned in her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program toward her 36-credit MSN degree program, the requirements of which she intends to complete next year.

Aiken's enthusiasm is already paying off.

She recently began her position at Aria Health School of Nursing's Torresdale Campus (formerly Frankford Hospital) in Philadelphia, Pa., as a psychiatric nurse instructor for second-level nursing students in the school's diploma program.

"I was drawn to the online environment because it facilitates the type of learning that enables me to move through the program while maintaining a rigorous work schedule," she said. "The School of Nursing staff has been extremely understanding of the adult learner and the fact that for us, 'life happens.' As working students, our priorities not only shift from semester to semester but from day to day. I returned to complete my degree as a nurse educator because I would like to have a positive impact on the formative phase of other nursing students and convey to them the respect I have for my profession."

Aikens resides in Mays Landing, N.J., with Princess, her 5-year-old Chihuahua. "My sister, Elissa Harmon, also a nurse educator, has been the cornerstone of my support system," said Aikens. "Friends and other family members will continue to be at my side as I continue this exciting journey." ■



Debra Aikens

Academic Calendar	January 2010 Term	February 2010 Term	March 2010 Term
Registration Dates	Nov. 14 - Dec. 6, 2009	Dec. 12, 2009 - Jan. 10, 2010	Jan. 16 - Feb. 7, 2010
Late Registration	Dec. 7 - 11, 2009	Jan. 11 - Jan. 15, 2010	Feb. 8 - Feb. 12, 2010
Course Transfer Period	Nov. 14 - Dec. 31, 2009	Dec. 12, 2009 - Jan. 31, 2010	Jan. 16 - Feb. 28, 2010
Term Start Date	Jan. 1, 2010*	Feb. 1, 2010	March 1, 2010
Midterm Exam Week**	Feb. 15 - 21, 2010	March 15 - 21, 2010	April 12 - 18, 2010
Final Exam Week	March 22 - 27, 2010	April 19 - 24, 2010	May 17 - 22, 2010
Term Ends	March 27, 2010*	April 24, 2010	May 22, 2010

*Dates apply to both Graduate and Undergraduate courses.

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

The New Jersey State Library Just Made Searching Easier

Do you have a large research assignment ahead of you?

New Jersey State Library's Academic OneFile is here to help. Access to the online electronic database and many others is free to all Thomas Edison State College students who possess a New Jersey State Library (NJSL) card available online at www.njstatelib.org/sitemap or by calling (609) 278-2640, ext. 103. Academic OneFile enables you to search more than 4,000 of the world's leading journals, magazines, newspapers and reference books to zero in on the information you need.

The "Advanced Search" page allows you to search by many different options including keyword, author, title or subject, and you can refine your search to look for specific items such as a brief article, book review, cover story or column by using the "Narrow Results by document type" option. To access Academic OneFile file, visit: www.njstatelib.org/Electronic_Resources/title/index.php.

Other databases available on the site are First Research which provides industry profiles to help marketers, business owners, job seekers and researchers by covering the data and industry trends of multiple business sectors. Another resource, Hoover's Online, provides in depth company information, business search tools and real-time company information written by industry experts. You can also scour Ellis Island Passenger Records and access Britannica Online and many others without the customary subscription costs.

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