

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Julie Plocinik
609-777-2600

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MEDIA ADVISORY Governor's Weekly Radio Message Addresses the Importance of Community Colleges

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week the Governor discusses her support for community colleges. New Jersey's community college system not only empowers individuals to achieve greater potential, but also aids the state by preparing a highly skilled workforce for employment. New Jersey's community colleges are the largest provider of higher education in the state. Gov. Whitman has made a long-term commitment to these community colleges by providing a \$12 million increase in funding this year, and the same relief for the next three years.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend.

Governor's Weekly Radio Message March 20, 1998

Here in New Jersey, we're proud of our community colleges.

Our community college system was created to expand educational opportunity to all of our citizens and help provide a skilled workforce. It is the largest provider of higher education in our state.

Community colleges serve people who might not otherwise have the opportunity for higher education. Many community college students are attending college after a break in their educational career. Perhaps they've held jobs, raised children, or managed households.

I'm inspired by their determination to get an education.

What better example of the power of education than the single mother who works, cares for her children, and still manages to attend community college because she knows the road to a better life will be smoother because of it? Because she knows her kids will have a better role model as she completes her education and gets that better job.

Or the young man, ten-plus years out of high school, who decides that hitting the books can mean a better job and a brighter future?

Or the student, right out of high school, who decides that higher education really does mean higher earnings?

Today, New Jersey's community colleges boast an enrollment of more than 127,000 students - students just like those I described. Half of all our college freshmen are enrolled in New Jersey's community colleges.

And one independent report, entitled "The Baby Boom Echo," cites New Jersey as one of the states that should see a sharp increase in community college enrollment during the next decade.

Let's face it: as New Jersey continues to outpace its neighbors in creating new jobs, we'll rely on our community colleges more and more.

As the demand for high-skilled workers grows and education beyond high school becomes more essential, our community colleges will feel the impact.

Obviously, we must keep them strong.

We must keep college within everyone's reach by keeping New Jersey community colleges affordable for anyone who wants to attend.

Several weeks ago, in my Inaugural Address, I made a long-term commitment to our community colleges by fully funding the \$12 million increase that these institutions have asked for this year. I am also committing the state to providing the same relief for the next three years.

I am pleased that community colleges have responded by announcing a tuition freeze for the coming year.

Our students deserve this tuition break. And I'm confident that New Jersey will reap the benefits of an educated workforce.

The investments we make today in our community college system will help New Jersey's economy stay strong.

What's more, these investments will empower all of us as we strive to create a New Jersey in which every citizen can achieve to the best of his or her potential.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once wrote, "A mind that is stretched to a new idea never returns to its original dimension."

Our community colleges are helping to stretch the minds of so many of our fellow New Jerseyans -- and we're all the better for it.

Let's continue to give them our support as they help our students build a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities.