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State Supports Improved Teacher Quality and Boosts Capacity

Recognizing teacher preparation and development programs as a statewide priority, New Jersey recently made a significant investment to improve teacher quality, the single most important school-based factor in student achievement.

During the July meeting of the Commission on Higher Education, Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco announced \$10 million in grants to enhance the quality of New Jersey's teacher preparation programs, improve classroom teacher effectiveness, and increase capacity to prepare new teachers. In addition, the grants will address needs of disadvantaged school districts and statewide teacher shortages in areas including preschool, special education, science, mathematics, and world languages.

"New Jersey is already a nationally recognized leader in many areas related to education, but we must continually improve our efforts," said Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco. "The state's investment through these grants to colleges and universities will help teachers become the best educators they can be, for our children deserve no less."

With overall enrollment growth and increasing demands on higher education, the state is working in tandem with institutions to ensure that teacher quality is a priority. Each of the 21 public and private colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs received a share of \$7 million that will enhance education programs and expand capacity to produce an additional 1,000 new teachers annually.

The remaining \$3 million was distributed through a competitive Teacher Effectiveness Grant program to heighten educators' capabilities and improve student achievement by further elevating college programs renowned for improving teacher effectiveness. Five campuses received funding, including: Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Rutgers University (Camden), Rutgers (New Brunswick), and The College of New Jersey.

Commission staff, in consultation with the State Department of Education, developed and executed a process to award the grants, and a team of in- and out-of-state reviewers with expertise in teacher preparation and professional development evaluated the proposals. The winning proposals emerged from among 17 that were submitted. Descriptions of the winning proposals are available [HERE](#).

The state investment in teacher quality is consistent with [New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education: 1999 Update](#), which calls for improved and expanded teacher preparation and professional development programs.

"High-quality educators are among the state's most precious resources, and the investment in these initiatives will reap significant returns," said James E. Sulton, Jr., executive director of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education.

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Teacher Effectiveness Grants

Montclair State University: *The Urban Teaching Academy* - \$748,517

Expanding on collaborative work already underway with community colleges and Abbott school districts, the university will create an Urban Teaching Academy. The academy will recruit, prepare, and support transfer students for P-3 certification to teach in Abbott preschool centers; enhance academic support for P-3 certification students; and collaborate with urban teachers and administrators on curriculum, teaching, and mentoring for new urban teachers.

New Jersey City University: *Early Childhood Project Success* - \$669,001

NJCU will partner with Hudson County Community College, and the Jersey City Public Schools to address the unprecedented demand for highly effective preschool teachers. Funds will provide Jersey City Public Schools with standards-based professional development opportunities, better align teacher preparation curricula with state and national standards, and increase the number of minority teacher candidates who complete P-3 certification.

Rutgers University (New Brunswick): *Urban Science Education Collaborative for Teacher Effectiveness* - \$499,979

The grant will support implementation of a model science classroom at the Lincoln Professional Development School in New Brunswick and model preservice and inservice science professional development programs for teachers throughout the state. The project will create a pipeline for New Jersey science teachers of the future.

Rutgers University (Camden): *Institute for K-12 World Languages and Science* - \$306,002

Addressing the critical shortage of qualified teachers in the areas of world languages and the sciences, Rutgers-Camden will establish an Institute for K-12 World Languages and Science. The university will collaborate with urban school districts to develop, implement, and evaluate subject-specific practicum experiences for elementary and secondary teachers.

The College of New Jersey: Preparing Special and Elementary Educators to Use Inquiry- and Design-Based Problem-Solving Strategies to Include Students with Disabilities and Enhance All Students' Learning - \$749,333

The College of New Jersey will prepare K-12 teachers and special education teachers to develop and implement integrated math, science, and technology activities that utilize an inquiry- and design-based problem solving approach. This interdisciplinary initiative addresses the shortage of special education teachers in New Jersey, the fact that many elementary school teachers lack preparation to include students with disabilities, and the lack of teachers who are skilled in teaching project-based, math, science, and technology.

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Rutgers and Community Colleges Offer New Dual Degree Program

With the state's high school graduating classes on the rise and growing capacity issues at many of New Jersey's four-year colleges and universities, Rutgers, in partnership with all 19 of the state's community colleges, struck an innovative arrangement for guaranteed admission for students.

Through a new Dual Degree Program, Rutgers will offer any qualified, first-year student for whom space is unavailable an option to enroll at a community college of their choice with guaranteed entry to Rutgers upon completion of their associate degree. Participating students must achieve a 3.0 grade point average and be enrolled in a recommended transfer program.

"Students who would otherwise be rejected because of space limitations and the growing and increasingly competitive applicant pool will have a clear path for obtaining their goal of a Rutgers diploma," said Rutgers President Francis L. Lawrence. "These students now have the security of knowing that as long as they meet the program requirements, they are guaranteed admission to Rutgers for their junior year."

The Dual Degree Program, which is slated to begin in the fall of 2002, will simplify the transition process, making it easier, more affordable, and efficient for students to transfer from any New Jersey community college to an upper-level baccalaureate degree program at Rutgers. Over the past several years, approximately half of the transfer students entering Rutgers came from a New Jersey community college.

"This exciting partnership between the community colleges and Rutgers provides affordability, high quality, and access for students," said Jacob Farbman, spokesperson for the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. "We have 50 community college campuses statewide with at least one in each of the 21 counties."

Rutgers' Dual Degree Program builds upon existing joint admission and transfer articulation agreements provided by two- and four-year institutions throughout New Jersey. However, the state university is the first four-year school with such an arrangement with all 19 community colleges.

"Rutgers' dual degree program is a particularly innovative response to the need for institutional collaboration," said James E. Sulton, Jr., executive director of the New Jersey Commission on

Higher Education. "It promises improved higher education prospects for students throughout the state at a time when capacity at our colleges and universities is severely stretched and the student population is rapidly escalating."

New Jersey's long-range plan for higher education stresses the importance of improved articulation agreements that allow for a smooth, productive transfer of students from community colleges to senior institutions. Institutions across the state are increasing efforts to enhance articulation, which can affect cost, time to degree completion, and graduation rates.

For more information about Rutgers University's Dual Degree Program, visit the program's [Web site](#).

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New Jersey Invests in High-Tech Workforce

The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education awarded \$15 million in grants to eight New Jersey colleges and universities for the enhancement of successful technology-related programs to help satisfy burgeoning demand for qualified, high-tech workers.

For the second consecutive year, High-Tech Workforce Excellence Grants were awarded to outstanding programs at two- and four-year, public and private institutions with a focus on four key academic areas: Computer Science & Information Technology; Physical, Life & Health Sciences; Engineering & Engineering Technology; and Science & Mathematics Teacher Education.

"New Jersey is a national leader in high-tech firms and associated employment," said Commission Chairman Alfred C. Koeppel, who is President and Chief Operating Officer of Public Service Electric and Gas Co. "Through these grants we aim to strengthen academic programs, providing the human resources necessary to support these firms and their research and development needs."

The grants will propagate leading edge technological teaching and learning throughout the state's higher education system. Six of the winning proposals focus directly on developing skilled employees for the ever-expanding pharmaceutical, biotechnology, health care, and information technology industries. The remaining three grants prepare students with advanced math and science proficiencies to begin developing the pool of qualified high-tech workers for the future.

The nine awards were selected from 58 proposals submitted by colleges and universities in all sectors of the higher education system. Proposals were reviewed by two teams of reviewers from in and out of state. A listing of the winning proposals is provided [HERE](#).

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High-Tech Workforce Excellence Grants

Bergen Community College - High Technology Veterinary Technician Project, \$1,305,441

Through the Northern NJ Consortium for Veterinary Technician Education, the college will enhance its Associate in Applied Science Degree to meet workforce needs in the fields of biomedical/biotechnology research and veterinary health care.

Camden County College - *Fiber Optics Technology Workforce Excellence Project, \$775,556*

The grant will build on the Photonics Associate Degree Program, introducing a new, one-year concentrated certificate in fiber optics for the laser/telecommunications industry.

Essex County College - *Enhancing Network Certification Program, \$482,200*

The funding will enhance the college's Network Certification programs housed at their Center for Technology and will help increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the information technology field.

Montclair State University - *Middle Grade Mathematics Science Teacher Education Project, \$2,499,886*

The grant will enable the university to recruit, prepare, and support 60 new math and science teachers for public schools, and provide a content-based professional development program.

New Jersey Institute of Technology - *Pre-Engineering Instructional and Outreach Program, \$2,499,700*

The project will support implementation of pre-engineering education, grades 6-12, and will launch a comprehensive information campaign to significantly increase student interest in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology.

Rider University - *SELECT-VLC: High-Tech Support for a Continuum of Professional Development, \$1,804,50*

SELECT-VLC will infuse science, math, and pedagogy courses with technology to model how students will be expected to teach as practitioners and to facilitate preservice/ inservice teachers' use of inquiry-based teaching.

Rowan University - *Expanding the Educational Opportunities for Undergraduates in the Study of Advanced Materials for Commercial Applications, \$1,462,248*

The grant will support enhancement of the materials science program, which addresses needs in the areas of cellular communications, drug delivery, and information storage.

Rutgers University - *Nanomaterials Science and Engineering, \$2,500,000*

Rutgers will develop a state-of-the-art interdisciplinary undergraduate curriculum in nanomaterials science and engineering, complementing a major nanomaterials research thrust.

Rutgers University - *New Directions for the High-Tech Computer Science Workforce, \$1,640,000*

Through e-learning and traditional classroom teaching, this project will expand instruction in key computer science areas, including computer vision, animation, and graphics.

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Systemwide Capacity Subject of Fall Report

The Commission on Higher Education is undertaking a comprehensive capital planning initiative in collaboration with the Presidents' Council. A report and recommendations are anticipated by the end of October, providing a foundation on which to determine how the state will respond to heightened demands for higher education resulting from:

- An increasing number of high school graduates;
- A growing number of nontraditional students needing courses and degrees to satisfy

workforce requirements or career changes; and

- The need to extend higher education opportunities to underrepresented groups to narrow the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in today's knowledge-based economy.

The ongoing capital planning initiative will provide annually updated data on the physical plants of the state's two- and four-year public and independent colleges and universities, along with long-term capital needs and informed cost projections. An analysis of that information will form the basis of short- and long-term policy recommendations and funding mechanisms to meet state higher education needs.

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NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS

Three new members have been appointed to the Commission on Higher Education. Ms. M. Wilma Harris is the new chair of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, replacing former chair Warren Smith as the authority's representative on the Commission. This year's student members are Mr. LaSanta Horana, a student at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey; and Ms. Jacqueline Choi, a student at New Jersey Institute of Technology.

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