

## 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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#### **Gov. Whitman Visits Trenton Campus, Highlights Role of Community Colleges in Training Workforce**

Gov. Christie Whitman today highlighted her commitment to higher education and recognized the important role that the state's community colleges play in shaping New Jersey's workforce when she helped Mercer County Community College dedicate its newly renovated James Kerney Campus in Trenton.

"Because learning is such an integral part of our society, we must foster it in every way we can. This year I reaffirmed the state's strong support for our community colleges by committing an additional \$12 million toward these vital institutions of higher learning," said Gov. Whitman. "And I'm delighted that the colleges have responded to our commitment by pledging to freeze tuition."

"The opening of this facility today marks yet another proud milestone for our community colleges. These institutions play an essential role in the state's world class higher education network and in preparing our high school graduates for success," said the Governor.

During her second Inaugural Address in January, Gov. Whitman pledged an additional \$12 million in the FY 1999 budget for an increase in operational aid to New Jersey's 19 community colleges. The Governor also committed to increase operation aid to the colleges by at least \$12 million each year for the remainder of her term, for a four year total of at least \$48 million.

In making her commitment, the Governor agreed to work toward fulfilling the state's portion of the 1/3 state, 1/3 county, 1/3 tuition funding plan for community colleges recommended by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education in its 1995 report on tuition and funding.

Earlier this year, Gov. Whitman enacted the County Colleges Capital Projects Act, which is providing \$7 million in debt service to the state's county colleges. This funding is helping county colleges meet their capital construction needs and update their campuses for state-of-the-art learning.