
New Jersey Commission on Higher Education

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**Higher Education in the New Economy:
Governor Announces Increases and New Initiatives**

Highlighting the prominent role colleges and universities play in New Jersey's high-tech economy, Governor Whitman in January announced several new higher education initiatives, as well as funding increases in key areas.

The proposed initiatives to strengthen programs related to high-tech workforce development, promote university research, and expand the number of campus-linked business incubators are part of a \$165 million economic package the Governor announced in her January 11 State of the State address.

A key component of the Governor's New Jersey Jobs for the New Economy package is a \$15 million investment to help colleges and universities develop nationally recognized programs in computer science and information technology; physical, life, and health sciences; engineering and engineering technology; and teacher education in science and math. The competitive grant program will help institutions achieve

excellence in these key areas to ensure the well-educated and highly prepared workforce New Jersey needs to attract and retain high-tech jobs.

The program grew out of a recommendation in the 1999 update of New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education. Institutions will submit proposals to further strengthen high-quality science and technology programs at all levels, in order to gain regional, national, and global recognition and enhance the state's high-tech workforce.

Highlights of FY 2001 Budget Proposal

- **\$8.4 million to increase TAG awards**
- **\$1.5 million to increase EOF student grants**
- **\$1.2 million to implement ARTSYS**
- **Increases for special needs and language minority student grant programs**
- **Commitment to renew equipment leasing fund**
- **\$350,000 for statewide higher education network**

The Governor also proposed providing \$10 million in state matching funds to help research universities attract new federal grants for biomedical and other high-tech research. The concept of matching funds for research was originally recommended in New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education. The Governor's proposal targets the state's six public and independent research universities – NJIT, Princeton University, Rutgers University, Seton Hall University, Stevens Institute of Technology, and UMDNJ.

Governor Whitman also proposed investing \$5 million to expand the highly successful business incubator program, which provides high-tech start-up firms with low-cost office, light manufacturing, or laboratory space on or near college and university campuses.

In addition to these new initiatives, the Governor's proposed budget for FY 2001 provides an increase in operating aid to the senior public institutions and maintains the four-year commitment to boost state funding for community colleges. The proposed increases for public institutions include up to 1% in performance-based increases. The budget includes an additional \$1 million for independent colleges and universities.

The budget continues to focus on affordability, seeking increases in Tuition Aid Grants and EOF student awards. It also provides substantial increases for the special needs and language minority student grant programs.

The budget also calls for \$1.2 million for ARTSYS, an electronic system that will smooth student transfer and articulation and \$350,000 to assist in managing the proposed statewide higher education network. The Governor also committed to renewal of the \$100 million Equipment Leasing Fund, which helps institutions meet the recurring costs of regularly upgrading equipment.

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Rutgers Website Brings Civic Groups Into Cyber Era

New Jersey's civic sector has entered the cyber era, thanks to a new website created by the Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) Program at Rutgers University.

The website, njserves.org, is a comprehensive source of information about civic and service organizations throughout New Jersey. It provides a searchable directory of over 40,000 civic organizations, online matching of volunteers and opportunities, a digital warehouse of donated goods and services, and information about upcoming events and ongoing projects.

For example, someone seeking services for an elderly parent could search the database to find local adult day care providers. Or, a corporation seeking to donate office equipment might use the site to identify organizations with matching needs.

In addition, njserves.org facilitates communication and collaboration within the civic sector. The website helps organizations exchange information about best practices, identify partnership opportunities, and search for new funding sources.

The website provides extensive linkages to schools, museums, houses of worship, United Way organizations, ethnic associations, human service organizations, foundations, local and state government agencies, and many others. Even organizations without their own websites can be included in the database, giving them an initial presence on the web.



The website is staffed almost entirely by Rutgers students. A team of 16 developed the initial database and website design and continues to maintain the extensive site and develop new features, such as planned policy forums and an online newspaper.

Although njserves.org will not be formally launched until February 29, it has been online since the fall and "community response has been tremendous," said D. Michael Shafer, director of the CASE program, which each year matches about 2,000 service learning students with 400 community organizations.

He explained that njserves.org was conceived to address the organizations' concerns about being left out of the digital revolution.

"As far as we can make out, no one else in the country is doing anything near as ambitious as this," said Dr. Shafer. The online initiative was developed with

financial support from PSE&G and Novartis. Other corporate sponsors include Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, the NJ Nets, and Prudential. Rutgers contributed the computer hardware and continues to supply connectivity.

Dr. Shafer believes serving community needs is an important part of higher education's mission, and colleges and universities must make their "human capital" available to the public. He and his team are reaching out to other campuses in New Jersey, asking them to become part of njserver.org by including their community services in the database and posting notices of campus events on the calendar.

The njserver.org team is also encouraging web-savvy students to help local organizations develop their online presence and asking colleges and universities to offer space on their web servers to civic organizations.

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150 Attend Summit on High School to College Transitions

Over 150 leaders and practitioners from schools and colleges throughout the state attended the December 7 joint summit on high school to college transitions hosted by the Commission and the State Board of Education.

Although the two state bodies have been working closely in recent months, the summit was the first large-scale effort to involve school districts, colleges and universities, and others with a stake in education.

Following a panel discussion, participants broke into groups to explore three key issues: academic preparation, admissions policies, and support and guidance for students and parents. A summary of specific issues addressed at the summit will be shared with participants and the broad education community in the near future. The State Board, Commission, individual school districts, and higher education institutions will continue deliberations in an effort to identify specific steps to make students' transition from high school to college smoother and more successful.

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Commission Awards Three Urban Revitalization Grants

The Commission in January awarded grants totaling \$553,000 to three institutions for urban revitalization projects in Paterson, Trenton, and Jersey City.

Passaic County Community College, New Jersey City University, and Thomas Edison State College each will lead a collaborative that includes local government, business, and community organizations. Two projects involve multiple higher education institutions. Each collaborative will provide matching funds.

"These exciting projects demonstrate higher education's enormous potential to stimulate urban rebirth and community revitalization," said Commission Chairman Alfred J. Cade. "The funded projects are consistent with the strengths of the lead

institutions and with ongoing revitalization efforts in the community.”

The Urban Revitalization Grant Program was created in response to a recommendation in New Jersey’s Plan for Higher Education. In 1998, 12 urban institutions were awarded planning grants to forge local partnerships and develop plans to address urban problems in their locales. Individual or multiple institutions from seven of the eight eligible locales submitted implementation proposals.

URBAN REVITALIZATION GRANT AWARDS

(lead institution denoted in bold type)

Passaic County Community College \$184,425

Project Director: Thomas Lancaster, (973) 684-6565

Paterson Community Technology Center will provide technology training and access to community residents and local businesses to bridge the “digital divide.”

Partners include city government, Paterson Urban Enterprise Zone, PSE&G, and Hispanic Multipurpose Center, Eva’s Village, Greater Paterson OIC, Paterson Small Business Development Center.

New Jersey City University \$184,285

Hudson County Community College

St. Peter’s College

Stevens Institute of Technology

Project Director: Jill Lewis, (201) 200-2308

Institute for the Advancement of Community Leadership and Service Learning will expand higher education’s involvement in the civic life of Jersey City and Hudson County.

Partners include city and county government, Jersey City Housing Authority, Hudson County Chamber of Commerce, Hudson County Coalition of Nonprofit Organizations.

Thomas Edison State College \$184,285

Mercer County Community College

Project Director: William A. Watson, (609) 777-4351

Collaboration for Trenton’s Heritage Tourism Initiative will spur the economic revitalization of Trenton by creating an infrastructure to promote tourism linking visitation, the arts, culture, and entertainment.

Partners include city, county, and state government; Trenton School District, Mercer County Chamber of Commerce, Trenton Convention & Visitors Bureau, Trenton Downtown Association,

North 25 Corporation, Isles, Inc.

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Executive Director Sees System Strengths and Needs

Midway through his first year, Executive Director James E. Sulton, Jr. offered the Commission his observations about New Jersey higher education and its future, saying a tighter focus on key student needs will propel the system toward excellence and national prominence.

While his nine months on the job have been enlightening and exhilarating, Dr. Sulton said his one frustration is that the higher education system's many strengths remain a well-kept secret. The Commission intends to tackle this problem by increasing awareness of New Jersey higher education and its vital contributions.

At the Commission's December meeting Dr. Sulton said, "For me, students are at the heart of the higher education enterprise, and decisions at all levels should consider their needs. Student transfer and articulation is perhaps the boldest expression of a genuinely learner-centered approach to higher education."

While institutions are trying to address the transfer issue, Dr. Sulton said New Jersey needs a seamless statewide process that recognizes varying student needs and differences among each institution's courses and programs. He called for statewide implementation of ARTSYS, an online transfer system that allows students to evaluate transcripts, determine course equivalencies, and assess their prospects for transfer.

Pointing to campus diversity as another area that requires a student-centered approach, Dr. Sulton said that given New Jersey's diverse enrollment and supportive climate, the state has a unique opportunity to demonstrate national leadership.

"Governing boards and institutions must capitalize on diversity — a strength of our higher education system — through conscious efforts to weave diversity and multiculturalism into the fabric that unites each campus community," said Dr. Sulton. Noting that a diverse campus community benefits all students, he called on each institution that has not already done so to develop a comprehensive diversity plan that addresses recruitment of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff; campus climate and intergroup relations; new approaches to curriculum and teaching; and accountability.

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Two New Members Join Commission

The Commission on Higher Education welcomed two new members in January.

Cecile Feldman, D.M.D., is the acting dean of the New Jersey Dental School of UMDNJ. Governor Whitman appointed her to a one-year term as the Commission's first faculty representative. Legislation enacted in April 1999 added a faculty member to the Commission's membership; the appointment will rotate annually among the

various higher education sectors. In addition to her dental degree, Dr. Feldman holds an M.B.A. and a bachelor's degree in economics, all from the University of Pennsylvania.

Amy Handlin, Ph.D., a member of the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders since 1989, was recommended by the President of the Senate for appointment to a six-year term as a public member of the Commission. Dr. Handlin is also an assistant professor of marketing at Monmouth University and a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of Public Issues. She earned her undergraduate degree from Harvard University, an M.B.A. from Columbia University, and her Ph.D. from New York University.

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Students Now Voting Members

Governor Whitman signed legislation granting voting status to the Commission on Higher Education's two student members on January 6.

The Commission had long supported giving its student members the vote and actively sought passage of the legislation sponsored by the late Senator Wynona Lipman and Assemblyman Craig Stanley. The Student College Coalition also worked hard to generate support for the bill.

"Our student members contribute significantly to the Commission's work, and we feel strongly that the entire higher education system will benefit from granting them voting privileges," said Commission Chairman Alfred J. Cade.

Student members Heidi White and Wilma Velazquez cast their first votes as Commission members at the January 28 meeting.

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