

February 21, 2024

MEETING EMPLOYER NEEDS AND PROVIDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

The Mission of Middlesex College includes a focus on “strengthen[ing] the economic, social, and cultural life of the community.”

The staff of the College’s Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning (WDLL) Division has cultivated and nurtured partnerships with area employers to identify the employers’ needs for training incumbent workers and develop a pipeline of new workers. The WDLL team also reaches out to the community to offer training opportunities, including special populations.

“We reach out to everyone in our community, including individuals in a wide range of circumstances and needs,” said Joanie Coffaro, executive director of WDLL. “For example, there is a large population of individuals in Middlesex County for whom English is not their native language. For those English Language Learners, we offer short-term English as a Second Language courses as well as programming to help them prepare to enter the workforce. This summer we will be offering summer camp programs for young people on the autism spectrum.”

Coffaro says Middlesex College maintains connections with approximately 70-80 employers to better understand and serve their needs. Coffaro notes that one of the biggest employment sectors in Middlesex County looking for trained workers is healthcare but adds that it can be a challenge to find qualified instructors to train future staff.

“In addition to the employee’s work experience and accomplishments, employers are looking for employees with well-developed soft skills as well,” said Tracey Montani, director of workforce development. “Employers value effective

communication, critical thinking, problem solving, dependability, flexibility, and teamwork.”

The division caters to students’ needs by understanding where they are now and where they want to go in the future. Some students are on campus solely to get a degree and move on, while others want to combine work and education together, receiving classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

Another goal of the division is to encourage learning at every stage of one’s life. For example, early retirees may want to learn a new life skill, foreign language or how to play a musical instrument, and Middlesex College wants to provide that opportunity.

“Lifelong learners are seeking opportunities to enhance their skills, advance in their careers with certificate programs, and/or to have fun doing something new and different, like art, cooking, dance, language,” said Natasha James-Waldon, director of lifelong learning. “Our goal is to provide all of the residents in Middlesex County with the opportunity to explore the lifelong learner that resides within them.”

“Through strategic relationships with employers, we connect employers looking for employees with individuals of all abilities who are looking for employment,” said Coffaro. “We work with individuals who may be interested in developing skills in a short amount of time that will position them for a better-paying job or a new career. That can be different from those who just want to come here and get an associate degree and move on. We provide different opportunities for people to explore, thrive and grow.”

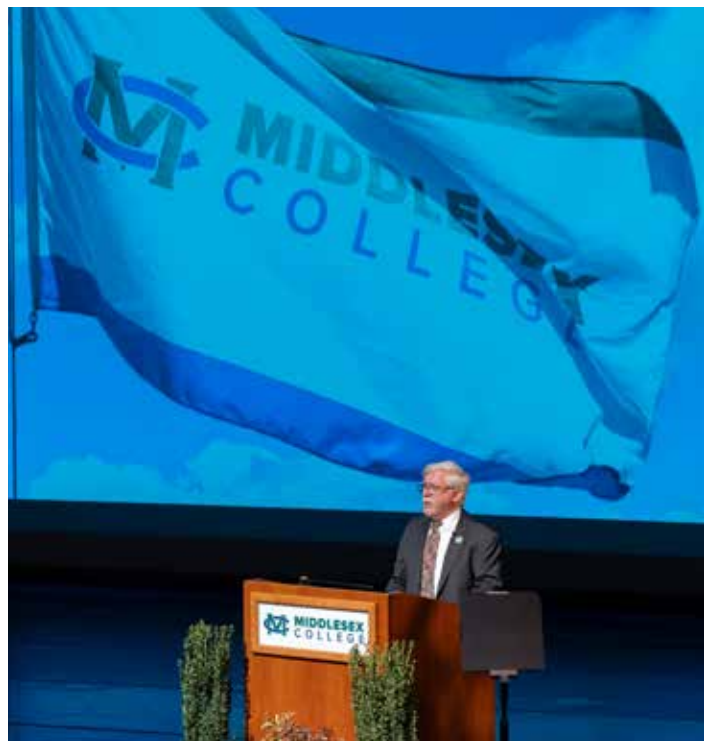
WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

CONVOCATION KICKS OFF THE SPRING SEMESTER



The day started with a breakfast that provided faculty and staff from across campus and the College's two centers the opportunity to gather and reconnect with colleagues and friends.

Afterwards, attendees streamed into the Performing Arts Center to hear President McCormick's State of the College presentation which included a celebration of Fall 2023 faculty and student accomplishments and provided academic and enrollment updates. This year's stage for convocation featured beautiful plants and flowers that will be repurposed in landscaping around the Edison campus.



HAVE A QUESTION?



Students and colleagues staffed QuestionMart tables located throughout campus the first several days of the first week of classes. They answered students' questions and guided them to their classrooms. Pictured above are student Ethan Inocencio and Professor Pattiann McMahon.



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR PARENTING YOUTH

The Perth Amboy Center hosted an information session as part of the Bridges to Employing Youth program, which supports pregnant and parenting youth in Middlesex County ages 16 to 24 through the Center for Support, Success, and Prosperity at the Raritan Bay Area YMCA. During the event, Perth Amboy Center staff members welcomed prospective students who completed an admissions application, a pivotal first step in commencing their academic journey at Middlesex College.

COLTS ARE VICTORIOUS ON PINK NIGHT

Our basketball teams held a Pink Night event to raise awareness about breast cancer on January 25. The women's team triumphed over Brookdale Community College 71-46, and the men's team won against Camden Community College 87-74.



Indian American Women Entrepreneurs Association	Corporate Education and Training Director Vega	Met with representatives from the Indian American Women Entrepreneurs Association to explore training opportunities for Association members
Invenergy	President McCormick and Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning Executive Director Coffaro	Met with Invenergy staff members to explore workforce training opportunities
Mexican Consulate (New Brunswick)	Vice President Laureano, New Brunswick Center Director Rosa, and Enrollment Services Assistant Trejo Idelfonso	Met with staff at the Mexican Consulate to explore opportunities for collaboration in supporting Mexican-Americans in the New Brunswick area, including co-sponsoring college information workshops for high school students and their parents in Spanish

Wednesday, January 17	Information session for Phlebotomy program for incumbent employees at Hackensack Meridian Health JFK Hospital	Edison
Wednesday, January 17	Information table at Navigating Fair Housing Workshop	Perth Amboy Center
Thursday, January 18	J.P. Stevens High School Instant Decision Day	Edison
Tuesday, January 30	ESL Adult Student Transition to College Information Session	New Brunswick Center
Thursday, February 1	Carteret High School College Admissions Night	Carteret
Wednesday, February 7	Edison High School Information Session	Edison
Thursday, February 15	Junior Achievement Open House	Edison
Tuesday, February 20	Community Health and Resource Fair	Perth Amboy Center
Multiple times	Admissions Information Session*	Virtual events
Multiple times	FAFSA on Demand Workshop*	Virtual events
Multiple times	Paying for College Info Session*	Virtual events
Multiple times	Health Programs Information Session	Virtual events
On an ongoing basis	Live chat appointments*	Via the web

*in English and Spanish

Wednesday, March 13*	Board Committee meetings	Via Zoom
Wednesday, March 20 8:30 a.m.	Board meeting	West Hall, Parkview Room and via Zoom
Friday, March 29	Good Friday	

*All morning (to be determined)