

February 19, 2025

## EMPOWERING DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING AT MIDDLESEX COLLEGE

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at Middlesex College functions as the school's on-site think tank providing stakeholders timely, precise data to help make informed decisions to better serve the entire College community.

"We support the decision-making at the College," explains Meghan Alai, Dean of Institutional Research and Assessment. "We provide the data so that our deans and academic department chairs and program directors have access to information so they can make curriculum decisions."

Institutional Research and Assessment produces both periodic and ad hoc data analyses and reports that can be used by federal, state, and accrediting agencies on a wide variety of topics in addition to enrollment reports and analyses and outcomes studies that support strategic planning and assessment efforts.

The office also maintains an open-door policy at Center 1. If administrators have a question about a population trend or want feedback on an idea for a new program, they can visit any time and ask for the data on hand.

"I work closely with our chairs to get them information," said Alai. "They don't have to be experts on data. They can just sit down and talk about what their needs are and what direction they are heading in. I can tell them what's available or help them come up with a study that gets them what they need."

Institutional Research and Assessment maintains an active intranet database that contains information dashboards where student data can be perused and broken down into various categories. The wide range of stats include, for example, the past five-year headcount and trends by program, gender, and race, and how many students are enrolled in a particular academic program.

This helps Middlesex College develop strategic and targeted programs and initiatives, like the Some College, No Degree program, which appeals to older college students looking to finish their studies, and provides direction to the College of where to bolster connections to high school communities.

"We are definitely focusing on adult learners in addition to dual enrollment," Alai said. "And building relationships around the whole County. In the world of data and informed decision making, we are here to help you not have to be the expert and get the information you need."

Alai is a Middlesex College alumna who is proud of the contributions made by her department, which includes Rachel Cheng, a research

analyst who compiles studies with various departments around campus, and Shannon Angulo, who helps design surveys and assessments.

"We are a small but mighty team," said Alai. "We are all thrilled to support our students and their goals, because they are the reason that we are here."



# WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

## BREAKING GROUND ON GROUNDBREAKING ADDITIONS TO CAMPUS

A groundbreaking event took place on January 21 to kick off construction of two new additions to our Edison campus as part of the Middlesex County Community, Innovation, and Opportunity Strategic Investment Plan: an open-air, multipurpose community venue and a new Student Center. Together these buildings will offer new spaces for education, sports, and entertainment for Middlesex County residents. Speakers at the event included Governor Phil Murphy, Speaker of the Assembly Craig Coughlin, Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners Director Ronald Rios, and Middlesex College President Mark McCormick.

Also on hand at the event were students from the Middlesex College **Hospitality, Culinary Arts, and Dietetics** (HCD) Programs along with Director of HCD Programs Joel Barohn; HCD Professors Andy Rubin, Brian McInerney, and Cindy Braun; and HCD staff



“The Multipurpose Community Venue and Student Center will be a vibrant hub for learning, recreation, entertainment, and community events,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “This project will fuel economic growth and open new opportunities for students and local residents.”

members Mike Smith and Patty Gonzalez. The new Student Center will feature a state-of-the-art Culinary Lab and a fully operational restaurant that will provide students with hands-on, real-world experiences.



“Today’s groundbreaking marks a historic moment for Middlesex County as we continue to transform our vision into reality,” said Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios. “Through strong partnerships and fiscal responsibility, we are building a brighter future for our County, ensuring Middlesex County remains the best place to live, work, and play for generations to come.”





# NEW SEMESTER, NEW START

Students new to Middlesex College were welcomed with a variety of informational activities, workshops, and events to get familiar with everything Middlesex College has to offer.

Virtual workshops offered the week before the start of the Spring semester introduced students to various resources at the College including the Library and Tutoring Services, eLearning, the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Centers, the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources, and the Office of Student Life. Students were also invited to attend a Welcome Event in person to meet representatives from the Academic Affairs and Student and Enrollment Services Divisions.



## QUESTION MART

Students and colleagues staffed QuestionMart tables in College Center, Crabiell Hall, Edison Hall, and Main Hall to provide assistance to new and returning students during the first week of the semester. QuestionMart volunteers fielded questions about course schedules, location of buildings, and availability of campus resources to ensure that students feel welcomed and supported as they get started in this new semester.

Director of Student Life Zulema Cheek led the group in an engaging icebreaker and discussed the benefits of getting engaged in student activities to develop a sense of belonging. Assistant Dean Odé Hoppie facilitated a panel discussion including Acting Assistant Deans Mirta Tejada and Jennifer Applebee, and Department Chair Mat Spano and Acting Department Chair Giuseppe Rotolo shared tips about how to be successful in the classroom. Prizes were given to students who were able to answer correctly questions about registration, enrollment, financial aid, and other resources. Thanks to Director Ria Gaviria and the Center for Student Success team for coordinating these events for our newest students.



## ENGAGING NEW STUDENTS

The **Office of Student Life** held its Student Engagement Fair for the Spring semester. The event was well attended with 43 clubs/organizations and 12 departments present. Students, staff, and faculty shared information about club participation opportunities and the various services departments offer for student support. Bolt the Colt also stopped by to take pictures and engage in the festivities. The room was filled with high energy and excitement in anticipation of a fun-filled and informative semester of events and activities.



## MIDDLESEX COLLEGE CENTERS

The Spring semester is off to a strong start at our **New Brunswick** and **Perth Amboy Centers**. Our colleagues at the Centers are reporting that they are seeing great engagement from students who are eager to start or continue their academic journeys. Our vibrant satellite Centers remain key access points for education and support services, ensuring that students have the resources they need to succeed.

## CONNECTIONS

External Partner(s)	Middlesex College Representatives	Action
Hackensack Meridian Health Executives (Edison)	President McCormick, Vice Presidents Miller and Coffaro, Dean Aydin, Acting Dean Hack, and Acting Assistant Dean Orosz	Discussed opportunities to strengthen our relationship and provide employment opportunities for Middlesex College graduates
Kean University	President McCormick, Acting Dean Hack, and Assistant Dean Orosz	Explored ways to improve transfer for Middlesex College graduates
New Jersey Film Academy (Edison)	President McCormick, Vice Presidents Miller and Coffaro, Dean Aydin, Acting Dean Hack, Executive Director James-Waldon, Chairperson Hogan, and Assistant Dean Orosz	Toured the Performing Arts Center and discussed the collaboration of non-credit and credit programs with the New Jersey Film Academy and Brookdale Community College
NJBioFutures	President McCormick; Vice Presidents Miller, Herron, Laureano, and Coffaro; Chief Financial Officer Maltino; Dean Aydin; Acting Dean Hack; Executive Directors James-Waldon and Kelly; Acting Assistant Dean Applebee; and Chair Ansonoff	Participated in the launch of the partnership with Raritan Valley Community College, Mercer County Community College, Middlesex College, Johnson & Johnson, and New Jersey Council of County Colleges

## OUTREACH

Date(s)	Outreach Activity	Location or Means of Access
Tuesday, January 21	JP Stevens High School Instant Decision Day	Edison
Tuesday, January 21	Middlesex County Workforce Development Board Meeting	Edison
Wednesday, January 22	Rutgers Employment Success Program On-Campus Visit	Edison
Wednesday, February 5	Metuchen High School Instant Decision Day	Metuchen
Wednesday, February 19	Colonia High School Instant Decision Day	Colonia
Multiple times	Admissions Information Session*	Virtual events
Multiple times	FAFSA on Demand Workshop*	Virtual events
Multiple times	Health Programs Information Session	Virtual events
On an ongoing basis	Live chat appointments*	Via the web

\*in English and Spanish

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Location or Means of Access
Wednesday, March 12* and Thursday, March 13*	Board Committee meetings	Via Zoom
Wednesday, March 19 8:30 a.m.	Board meeting	Boardroom and via Zoom

\*Schedule TBD

