

January 21, 2026

STUDENT LIFE OFFICE PROMOTES A GROWTH MINDSET

Participating in campus organizations and activities can have a profound impact on a student's success rate and give the individual a deeper sense of belonging, which is why the Middlesex College Office of Student Life is always evolving.

"Having our organizations and clubs really builds a community of students who learn how to be in a room full of people who may not look like you, think like you, or talk like you," said Middlesex College Director of Student Life Zulema Cheek. "You have to be a fully developed individual and that is an area that Student Life is focusing on, because the world is diverse and you need to be able to function in a diverse environment."

Middlesex College boasts an active roster of over 50 clubs. New ones pop up every semester as interests change. Cheek notes that students recently started a crochet club, a sewing club, a photography club, and a book club. Student Life also sponsors trivia contests and movie screenings, and the karaoke machine stands ready for the next Middlesex College Idol talent show.

Each organization comes with a leadership structure, which is an organic way for students to develop skills.

"To explore, grow, and thrive does not just mean in the classroom," said Cheek. "We try to serve students who are looking to build their educational value. They need to holistically grow. The roles that students hold being in a club help them understand how to work with people, how to have a conversation, and how to deal with conflict resolution."

Sensitive to the ever-changing lifestyles of Middlesex College students, the Student Life team offers a wide variety of times for events and meetings. Cheek has also worked to schedule events at the College's

centers in Perth Amboy and New Brunswick.

Students on the Edison campus can stop in College Center and look through the list of clubs and events. Monitors and flyers on campus display QR codes to find schedules and opportunities to join activities.

"As the students come in and out, their interests change because students change, and so we may have more students interested in one area or another at any given time," said Cheek. "We keep the roster and club availability open, so as long as students say they want it, we will get it done."



WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

DE-STRESSING

The Office of **Student Life** hosted a series of festive De-Stress events on the **Edison Campus** as well as at the **Perth Amboy** and **New Brunswick Centers**.

The Student Life team welcomed students and staff with a hot chocolate bar complete with marshmallows and whipped cream, along with holiday cookies and candy canes. Students enjoyed playing games and watching holiday movies. These De-Stress events provided students with an opportunity to decompress, build community, and embrace the festive spirit. Warm drinks, sweet treats, and joyful activities combined to create a welcoming environment where students and staff could relax, recharge, and celebrate together. The faculty and



staff of **Library and Tutoring Services** held a final crafting event for the semester to help students and employees de-stress at the end of a long semester. Crafters created winter-themed decorations and ornaments using popsicle sticks, glue, markers, stickers, and other materials.

SHOWCASING OUR HONORS STUDENTS

The Honors Student Spotlight, coordinated by Professor **Claire Condie**, director of the Honors Program, showcased the exceptional work and achievements of the College's Honors students over the course of the Fall semester.



The event featured presentations, discussions, and an opportunity for those in attendance to celebrate the dedication and creativity of our Honors students. The range of topics the Honors students presented on was wide, including engineering, women's suffrage in New Jersey, the statistics of dog adoption rates, and the sociological characteristics present in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.

CARING COMMUNITY PARTNER

The BAPS community in Edison is a regular and generous donor to the College's Food Pantry. On December 18, they generously donated several carts filled with non-perishable food to our Food Pantry. We are grateful for their ongoing kindness, which has ensured that our students will find the shelves in our Pantry well stocked when the Spring semester begins.



GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Our College community seeks to nurture an environment that motivates our students to give back to our local communities. Last semester our second-year dental hygiene students delivered an amazing day of community care at schools in Piscataway, where over 100 children with intellectual and developmental disabilities were screened during the Give Kids a Smile event. The Department of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships sponsored a series of events in the Fall, including assembling coloring books with pages designed by our students, packing indoor recess kits for a local elementary school, and painting rocks for a rock garden in partnership with Timmy's Wings of Hope. Nearly 100 students, faculty, and staff, along with local Dharmic organizations, celebrated the season of Diwali with a donation drive for the College's Community Resource Hub and Food Pantry, led by

Community Resource Coordinator **Amanda Lyons**. The event brought in 20 vehicles loaded with donations. Students enrolled in the Honors Program and student members of the College's Alpha Theta Zeta chapter of the Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society for Education students volunteered their time at Beach Sweeps to beautify the Perth Amboy waterfront. Professors **Claire Condie** and **Patti McMahon** were joined by students and alumni at the community beach as part of their commitment to addressing local environmental needs. Students, faculty, and staff from our Hospitality, Culinary, and Dietetics programs continued their annual tradition of preparing a Thanksgiving dinner for residents of the Ozanam Family Shelter in Edison. Thank you to **Chef Brian McInerney**, Professor **Cindy Braun**, and Acting Program Director **Andy Rubin** for guiding the students in this effort.



KAPPA DELTA PI INDUCTION CEREMONY

The College's Alpha Theta Zeta chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, the International Honor Society in Education, celebrated the achievements of the chapter and its members at its Fall Induction Ceremony. The chapter was awarded Gold status by the national Kappa Delta Pi organization for its dedication to the Celebration of Teaching and received programming awards for community service and leadership development during the 2024-2025 academic year. The chapter was also recognized for its Alumni Success Panel and a project and presentation on emergent literacy, designed for Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey's Annual Teen Parent Linking Program conference. The chapter celebrated its newest inductees: **Nurgul Abdulgaziyeva**, **Alejandro Maldonado**, **Veronica Meyer**, **Lindsey Pinto**, **Megan Valdes**, and **Lisa Lee Vargas**. The chapter recognized **Megan Valdes** as Outstanding Member and **Veronica Meyer** as Emerging Leader.



CONNECTIONS

External Partner(s)	Middlesex College Representatives	Action
Anne Klein (Avenel)	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Explored training opportunities
Staff Management Group (Edison)	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Explored training opportunities
Vantage Apparel, Inc. (Avenel)	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Explored training opportunities

OUTREACH

Date(s)	Outreach Activity	Location or Means of Access
Saturday, January 3	On-Site ESL Placement Testing	New Brunswick Center
Tuesday, January 6	On-Site ESL Placement Testing	Perth Amboy Center
Tuesday, January 6	Success Bound Recruitment Event	Perth Amboy Center
Thursday, January 8	Edison High School College Admissions Panel	Edison
Multiple Times	Admissions Information Session*	Virtual Events
Multiple Times	FAFSA on Demand Workshop*	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, February 11* and Thursday, February 12*	Board Committee Meetings	Via Zoom
Monday, February 16	President's Day (College Closed)	
Wednesday, February 18 8:30 a.m.	Board Meeting	Boardroom and via Zoom

*Schedule TBD