MIDDLESEX COLLEGE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
Submitted by Mark McCormick, President

November 16, 2026

YEAR OF AESTHETICS LEAVES INDELIBLE MARK ON MIDDLESEX COLLEGE

Officially, the Year of Aesthetics at Middlesex College is complete, but the remaining artwork scattered throughout campus and a burgeoning sense of community linger as evidence of beauty, truth, and a shared transformational experience.

"We were exploring something new—new ideas, new themes, new points of view," said Middlesex College Philosophy Professor Giuseppe Rotolo, one of the faculty members who came up with the idea for a year-long exploration and celebration of aesthetics. "There was the opportunity for growth, because all of these things pointed toward achieving personal growth through reflection. And of course we all thrive by building community."

Middlesex College Philosophy Professor Jonathan Finnerty said the first seeds of the Year of Aesthetics came about while he was doing graduate work at Princeton University. He noted that every student, whether an undergrad or graduate, had an interest in broader academic themes that paralleled the interests of the faculty.



Aesthetics fit the feedback given by Middlesex College students. Loosely defined, it means an appreciation of the arts, beauty, and the things human beings value, and how our perspectives are different based on our own experiences and backgrounds.

"The main divide that I wanted to engage with is the divide between disciplines. Aesthetics is something that can be taught through most disciplines, and we partnered with many of our colleagues across campus to achieve this," said Finnerty. "When students encounter interdisciplinary ideas in a public setting, it creates the conditions for deep personal reflection and the expansion of new ideas."

Events during the Year of Aesthetics took many forms including academic seminars, poetry readings, and a vibrant color walk, where students picked a colored beanie at random and then had 45 minutes to tour campus, find their color, and photograph it, giving them a different way to view their surroundings.

Both professors say they were pleased with how the Year of Aesthetics brought together so many different branches of the Middlesex College tree.

The hope is that the concept can be revisited again in the future.

"When we practice aesthetics, thinking about values and visuals, we develop a new language that is inclusive and accepting," said Finnerty. "The aim is not to change what our students believe, but to show them how to believe in a robust and accountable way."

"There are things that unite us, no matter what side you're on, and there are things filled with beauty and things we value," Rotolo added. "We wanted to show all the things we have in common instead of what divides us."

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

HARVESTFEST 2026

Hundreds of Middlesex College community members and 3,000 residents of Middlesex County gathered to celebrate the most colorful time of year at our annual HarvestFest.

The Edison Campus was brimming with seasonal joy, including 88 tables staffed by College employees, students, and community groups. Attendees enjoyed festive activities including a pick-your-own pumpkin patch, inflatable games, a magic show, horse-drawn carriage rides, and a classic car show. Food trucks and cider kept the crowd fed and happy. Performances from student groups provided the perfect soundtrack to the evening, leaving the community buzzing from an evening dedicated to celebrating the season of new beginnings.















CREATIVITY UNVEILED AT STUDENT ART SHOWCASE

HarvestFest coincided with the **Visual, Performing, and Media Arts** *Student Art Showcase*, comprised of art from students and recent alumni of various majors, levels, and mediums. The goal of the exhibit is to highlight student achievement in a visible, celebratory way that fosters pride, builds connections, and inspires future students to see the value of an education rooted in creativity and self-expression. Works including drawing, painting, and sculpture are on display in Chambers Hall through October 2027.









COLTS SOCCER SCORING BIG

After not fielding a team last season, Women's Soccer returned with heat this season, winning four matches and qualifying for the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 19 playoffs. The team lost their playoff game in the semifinals to Bergen Community College.

For the first time in its 60-year history, the Middlesex College Men's Soccer team is headed to the NJCAA National Tournament, held this year in Dallas, Texas, after winning their NJCAA Region 19 District Final match against Ocean County College. The team is the current #10 ranked NJCAA Division III Men's Soccer team in the country after that final win completed a 14-game winning streak.



CONNECTIONS		
External Partner(s)	**Middlesex College Representatives**	**Action**
ChemExpress (Monmouth Junction)	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Discussed training opportunities
Rowan University (Glassboro)	President McCormick and Vice Presidents Coffaro, Laureano and Miller met with Rowan Vice President Bullard	Explored opportunities for collaboration
World Financial Group (Union)	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Discussed training opportunities

OUTREACH		
Date(s)	**Outreach Activity**	**Location or Means of Access**
Thursday, October 22	Highland Park High School College Fair	Highland Park
Thursday, October 22	New Brunswick Health Sciences Technology High School College Fair	New Brunswick
Thursday, October 22	Paterson College Achieve High School College Fair	Paterson
Thursday, October 22	Spotswood High School College Fair	Spotswood
Friday, October 23	College Fairs USA (at Woodbridge High School)	Woodbridge
Sunday, October 25	American Cancer Society Breast Cancer Walk	Edison Campus
Tuesday, October 27	Newark Board of Education College Fair	Newark
Wednesday, October 28	New Brunswick High School College Fair	New Brunswick
Thursday, October 29	Dunellen High School College Fair	Dunellen
Monday, November 2	English Conversation Café*	New Brunswick
Monday, November 2	English Conversation Café*	Perth Amboy
Monday, November 2	Jewish Educational Center High School College Fair	Elizabeth
Wednesday, November 4	Financial Literacy Workshop Series with OceanFirst Bank (sponsored by New Brunswick Tomorrow)	New Brunswick
Thursday, November 5	Perth Amboy Magnet High School Career Fair	Perth Amboy
Saturday, November 7	New Brunswick Education Foundation Workshop Series	New Brunswick
Monday, November 9	English Conversation Café*	New Brunswick Center
Monday, November 9	English Conversation Café*	Perth Amboy Center
Tuesday, November 10	Community Resource Fair	Edison Campus
Tuesday, November 10	Success Bound and EMPOWER Recruitment (at Perth Amboy High School)	Perth Amboy
Thursday, November 12	Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Financial Literacy for Next Generation	Edison Campus
Thursday, November 12	South Plainfield High School College Fair	South Plainfield
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, December 9 and Thursday, December 10	Board Committee Meetings	Via Zoom
Wednesday, December 16	Board Meeting	Boardroom and via Zoom