

# SIGNALS

T H O M A S E D I S O N S T A T E C O L L E G E

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## New Registration Schedule Extends Deadlines for Students

### *REVISED REGISTRATION CALENDAR ALLOWS MORE TIME TO REGISTER FOR COURSES.*

Beginning in July 2011, students will have up until 10 days before the start of a new term to register for Thomas Edison State College courses. Under the new registration calendar, July 2011 registration dates will be May 14 through June 15; with late registration from June 16 through June 20. August registration dates will be June 21 through July 16; with late registration from July 17 through July 21, 2011.

"Students in our undergraduate programs already enjoy the flexibility of being able to enroll in new courses every month. Under the revised calendar, students can now register for courses closer to the start date of new terms," said Ray Young, associate vice presi-

dent and dean of Learner Services. "This gives students more time to plan their academic schedule and pay for courses."

According to staff in the Office of the Registrar, the extended deadlines will also benefit students entering graduate-level programs. The extra days allow students more time to ensure their graduate application package is processed before starting their courses. Both graduate and undergraduate students are advised, however – that although they will be able to register closer to the start of the term – to order their course materials as soon as their registration is confirmed so that they are prepared to begin their course work on the first day of the new term. ■

#### COURSE NEWS

Note: A complete listing of all undergraduate courses and their availability may be found on the College website at [www.tesc.edu/courses](http://www.tesc.edu/courses).

#### NEW ONLINE COURSES:

EAS-131

Introduction to Meteorology

FIN-334

International Finance

GOG-230

World Geography

LIT-460

Non-Western Literature

POS-315

International Relations I

POS-420

Conflict in International  
Relations

## Revised Program Gives Students 9-Credit Head Start Toward Their Master's Degree

STUDENTS CAN EARN 9 GRADUATE CREDITS  
AT UNDERGRADUATE TUITION RATE WHILE  
FINISHING THEIR BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Thomas Edison State College has revised its Bachelor's to Master's Program for undergraduate students, who can now earn 9 graduate credits at the undergraduate tuition rate and those credits will apply to both their bachelor's degree and a master's degree at the College.

"The revised Bachelor's to Master's Program gives our high-achieving undergraduate students who are serious about earning a master's degree an opportunity to earn 9 credits toward that goal," said William J. Seaton, provost and vice president of Thomas Edison State

College. "In our globally competitive environment, this will help them achieve their goals more quickly. By offering these 9 graduate credits at the undergraduate rate, students will also experience a considerable savings."

The new Bachelor's to Master's Program takes effect on July 1, 2011, and is open to students who have earned at least 60 undergraduate credits toward a bachelor's degree at the College; have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0; and have at least three years of degree program relevant experience. New undergraduate applicants may also take advantage of this program.

For more information, visit [www.tesc.edu/btm](http://www.tesc.edu/btm). ■

# Is Prior Learning Assessment for You?

By Todd Siben  
Senior Program Advisor

IF YOU ARE LIKE MANY ADULTS, A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF YOUR LIFE KNOWLEDGE HAS BEEN ACQUIRED THROUGH LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT OCCURRED OUTSIDE OF A CLASSROOM. THROUGH THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE'S PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA) COURSES, YOU CAN USE YOUR COLLEGE-LEVEL KNOWLEDGE TO EARN THE CREDIT YOU DESERVE.

Because PLAs are such a unique method of earning credit, students often find the concept somewhat difficult to grasp. I'm going to simplify it for you and help you over the next hurdle!

## WHAT IS PLA?:

The PLA process allows you to earn credit for knowledge gained through learning experiences that can be equated to what would have been learned in an accredited college course. This method of course completion provides you with the opportunity to work with a mentor to demonstrate that you already possess college-level knowledge in a subject. Our students have reported that it is one of the most rewarding ways to earn credit because it acknowledges and validates the learning they have acquired outside of a traditional classroom setting.

Students often ask if course credit can be awarded merely for life experience. The answer to this question is no. For example, we would not give you the credit equivalent for our Principles of Management (MAN-301) course because you have a business card that lists your title as 'manager.' We would, however, award credit for the same course once you articulate the knowledge you have of management theory and concepts, substantiate your associated professional accomplishments and demonstrate how those accomplishments equate with the College's MAN-301 course objectives.

I also explain to students that PLA is not necessarily about book knowledge. Being well read on a topic may not be enough for you to earn credit via this method of course completion as PLA typically focuses on "experiential" learning.

## WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE MAY BE APPLICABLE?

Did you grow up in an ethnically diverse culture? Are you proficient at playing a musical instrument? Do you have an interesting hobby in which you have an in-depth knowledge? Do you serve as the 'go-to' person for your employer in Microsoft Excel solutions? If so, you may be a candidate for PLA completion.

## HOW IS A PLA STRUCTURED?

A PLA course has four significant components, they include:

- ▶ A course description that you have selected
- ▶ A set of course objectives provided by the course mentor
- ▶ A narrative that you write, which is fine-tuned to address the course objectives
- ▶ A body of appropriate evidence that will prove your college-level knowledge in the subject you selected



Todd Siben,  
Senior Program Director

The course description can be selected from the PLA database on the College's website. If you can't find a match there, locate a course description from the catalog of another regionally accredited college and submit the course description for approval to a Thomas Edison State College academic advisor.

The course objectives are determined by the PLA mentor and they will serve as your roadmap for satisfying the PLA requirements. Through these, the mentor conveys what capabilities/competencies someone would have if they had taken this course.

The narrative is a student statement that discusses your knowledge of the topics in the course description and correlates these to the course objectives. In the process of completing the narrative portion and tying your narrative to the course objectives, you may even uncover some new learning opportunities. In the narrative, you should also address how, when, where and why you gained this knowledge. You would then provide information on how the knowledge was applied through supporting evidence.

This evidence may include letters of reference or support, transcripts or certificates of completed training, licenses, performance appraisals from the supervisors or samples of your work. If you have targeted the performing arts, for instance, you will want to submit a video/ Web video or DVD of one of your performances. If you are a PLA candidate for Public Speaking (COM-209), you would need similar evidence. A photo of you giving a speech probably will not suffice, for instance, unless it is accompanied by a newspaper article that details your speaking engagement.

Still not sure PLA is for you? Perhaps this is a good time to speak with an academic advisor, determine what subject area your knowledge corresponds to and whether or not this potential credit can help you toward degree completion.

To learn more, click "Earning Credit for What You Already Know" on the College's homepage, or visit [www.tesc.edu/4774.php](http://www.tesc.edu/4774.php) to view all of the College's methods of earning credit.

Isn't it time you got the credit you deserve? . ■

*This year marks Todd Siben's 22nd anniversary with Thomas Edison State College. Previously, he served on the staff of Mercer County Community College, the University of Rhode Island, Northern Arizona State University, The University of Buffalo and Columbia University. He earned his Master of Arts degree at the Teachers College of Columbia University in adult and higher education. Siben has also been known to take courses at the College just to experience things from a student's perspective.*

## Thomas Edison State College's W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing Hosts Sixth Annual Distinguished Lectureship

On March 18, the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing sponsored its Sixth Annual Distinguished Lectureship on Diversity in Nursing. The national event focused on mentoring opportunities for minority nurse leaders to guide future minority nurse educators in their career. Also discussed was the significance of increasing the number and diversity of nurses, nurse leaders and educators to meet the changing national demographic landscape. Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN, and CEO of the National League for Nurses in New York, was among the presenters. The lectureship is supported in part by a grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.

Those interested in finding out more about the program, may contact the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at [nursingdiversitycoordinator@tesc.edu](mailto:nursingdiversitycoordinator@tesc.edu) or (609) 633-6460 or visit [www.tesc.edu/nursingdiversity](http://www.tesc.edu/nursingdiversity) online. ■



*First row from left to right: Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN – CEO, National League for Nurses, New York, N.Y.; Susan M. O'Brien, EdD, RN – dean, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing; Minerva Guttman, EdD, RN, NP – director and associate professor, Henry P. Becton School of Nursing and Allied Health, Fairleigh Dickinson, and Lisa Whitfield-Harris, MSN, MBA, RN – diversity coordinator, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. Second row from left to right: Kenya Beard, PhD, RN – assistant professor, Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing, New York, N.Y.; Louise Riley, MS, RN, BC – assistant dean for Distance Learning, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing; Prisca Anuforo, MSN, RN – assistant professor, Essex County College, Newark, N.J.; Seon Lewis-Holman, MSN, RN – director, Education and Clinical Development, Visiting Nurse Service of New York and Olufunke (Lola) L. Oyedele, MSN, RN – assistant professor, Essex County College, Newark, N.J.*



## John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies ANNOUNCES NEW CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

### THREE NEW ONLINE NUTRITION AND WELLNESS CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS UNVEILED

#### ► PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN FAMILY NUTRITION

This program examines the confluence of factors and influences that cause the current epidemic of childhood and adolescent obesity. Parents, teachers, allied health/medical and fitness professionals, school administrators, caregivers and those who work with children in school, daycare or in after-school programs can benefit from this program.

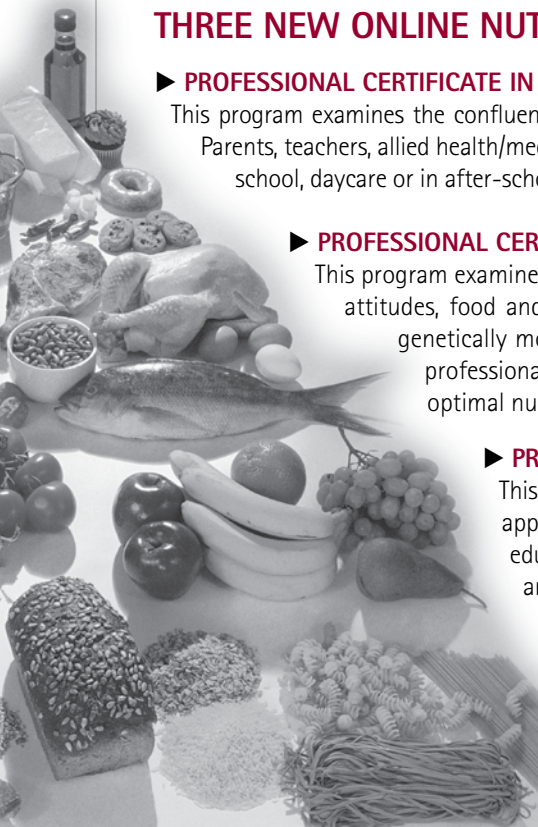
#### ► PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN FUNCTIONAL FAMILY NUTRITION

This program examines contemporary nutrition topics designed to inform individuals about the latest research on eating attitudes, food and fitness behaviors, food shopping and environmental nutrition issues surrounding organic and genetically modified foods. Content and curriculum in each course also prepares allied healthcare and fitness professionals, registered dietitians and personal trainers to map their clients' health history and lifestyle toward optimal nutritional health.

#### ► PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN SCHOOL NUTRITION AND WELLNESS

This program covers effective health and nutrition education and school wellness policies. The program is appropriate for school administrators, teachers (both physical education and classroom teachers), health educators, nutritionists, nurses, food service providers, caregivers, PTA members, allied health/medical and fitness professionals, and parents.

To find out more about these and other noncredit certificate programs, visit [www.tesc.edu/noncredit](http://www.tesc.edu/noncredit). ■



# New Grade Policy Takes Effect in July 2011

## FINAL COURSE GRADES OF F, IF AND W WILL NOW APPEAR ON STUDENTS' THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE TRANSCRIPTS

Final course grades of F, IF and W earned for Thomas Edison State College courses, which start on or after the July 2011 term will now appear on the Thomas Edison State College transcript. In addition, the grades of F and IF will be included in the calculation of the Thomas Edison State College grade point average (GPA).

The College is making this change because recording the outcomes of all attempts to earn credit brings the institution in line with current higher education standards and best practices. This change in policy only applies to F, IF or W grades awarded for Thomas Edison State College graduate and undergraduate online or Guided Study courses that start on or after July 1, 2011.

Prior to the July 2011 term, grades of F, IF or W will not appear on transcripts nor will F or IF grades be calculated in the Thomas Edison State College GPA.

Please note that NC (no credit) grades associated with Thomas Edison State College Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), e-Pack®, FlashTrack® or TECEP® courses will continue to be excluded from the transcript, even if the course start date is after July 1, 2011. Should a student not earn credit, the PLA, e-Pack®, FlashTrack® or TECEP® will not appear on the transcript.

Visit [www.tesc.edu/7171.php](http://www.tesc.edu/7171.php) to view more FAQs on the new grade policy.

If you have any questions about your GPA, please contact the Thomas Edison State College Academic Advisement Center at (888) 442-8372. ■

# Nursing: The Next Generation

## *For Claudette Spencer, RN, BSN '10, love for the field of nursing may be relative*

It seems that Claudette Spencer's love for patient care may be infectious, because the proclivity is spreading like wildfire through her family. "I have three sisters who are all registered nurses, and when we get together, our discussions usually center on our careers," she said.

Those spirited conversations have not been lost on their children. Three of Spencer's nieces and her own daughter are also currently enrolled in nursing schools.

"My daughter reflects back on when she accompanied me on 'bring your daughter to work' days," said Spencer, a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) student in the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and surgical nurse at Robert Wood Johnson's (RWJ) Hamilton, N.J., campus. "Following me through my day piqued her interest in healthcare."

Spencer originally enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree at Thomas Edison State College after receiving her diploma in nursing from Muhlenberg Regional School of Nursing in Plainfield, N.J.

"I knew that obtaining my BSN would bring me much closer to my goal of becoming a nurse educator," she said. "And I knew after researching prospective schools that the learning experience at Thomas Edison State College could coincide with family responsibilities, a busy career, vacation plans, social engagements and important family events.

With her BSN course requirements now completed and an Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society of Nursing Award to her credit, Spencer is enrolled in the School's Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. For Spencer, the ways in which her MSN courses have expanded her competency and prepared her for the next stage of her career are easy to list.

"I am applying what I have learned in my courses to my current clinical practice. The responses on our online Discussion Boards bring us together with other nursing professionals across an array of clinical settings; from legal nurse consultants, to nurse managers, school nurses and those who serve in acute care environments. Best of all, lifelong friendships are developed. I recently completed Theoretical Foundations in Nursing Education (NUR-630) and had an absolutely amazing experience. I was able to plan curriculum, lead an online discussion and design a culminating presentation. It was memorable."

Spencer is already flexing her leadership training.

As a surgical nurse, a typical shift for Spencer is 12 hours long and through most of it, she is on her feet. Spencer, nonetheless, summons the stamina to co-chair RWJ's Shared Governance Committee. "I meet monthly with department heads, gather data from staff nurses and conduct brainstorm sessions with fellow members in order to assist with the implementation of new processes and procedures at RWJ."

Spencer and her husband of 27 years, Jeffrey Spencer Sr., a financial technology specialist, live in Ringoes, N.J. They have two children. Their son, Jeffrey Jr., works in the music production and artist management field; and daughter Tiffany is enrolled at Spencer's alma matter, Muhlenberg Regional School of Nursing in Plainfield. Tiffany is also a Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society member who was recently selected to participate in the International Scholar Laureate Program Delegation on Nursing in Australia.

To learn more about the programs offered through the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing, visit [www.tesc.edu/nursing](http://www.tesc.edu/nursing). ■



*Claudette Spencer, RN, BSN '10*

# Meet a Mentor: **Dr. Bahaudin Mujtaba**

*Bahaudin Mujtaba's birthplace was as close to ideal as it gets; that is, until the bombs started to fall*

International Management mentor, Dr. Bahaudin Mujtaba's childhood village of Khoshi in the Logar Province of Afghanistan, was set in a lush, pastoral valley surrounded by a dramatic mountain range. For the young Mujtaba, the village represented both the beauty and insulation of his youth. "It was like the town of Mayberry on the *Andy Griffith Show*," he recounted. "There were gardens, farmland, beautiful trees, animals grazing and good-hearted people everywhere. The mayor knew everyone by their first name."

By 1983, however, at the height of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the 16-year-old was forced to make a harrowing escape with his mother and younger siblings across the mountain ranges into Pakistan.

But his odyssey had just begun.

Immigrating to southern Florida with his family in 1984, Mujtaba was a stranger in a new country that he found alternately perplexing and captivating. After graduating from Fort Myers High School, he enrolled at Edison Community College in Ft. Myers where he earned an associate degree in engineering. A succession of degrees quickly followed, beginning with a bachelor's degree in management from the University of Central Florida, and a master's degree in business administration and a doctorate degree in management, along with postdoctoral work in human resources and international management, at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale-Davie.

As a professional, Mujtaba's career ascent was swift, and fitting 10-hour workdays into a formidable academic schedule was something he took in stride. Within three years of landing an entry-level job as a dishwasher for the Publix Supermarket chain, he had moved into a managerial position in the chain's baked goods division – all while completing his course work at night and on weekends. Mujtaba spent a total of 16 years

with Publix, culminating in a management position as a human resources senior trainer and executive coach. More recently, he spearheaded an international leadership consulting and publishing association and orchestrates a number of management development programs.

In an academic capacity, Mujtaba has served on the teaching staff and as a faculty administrator at Nova Southeastern University's H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship since 1996, most recently as a professor of management. He has co-authored 20 books on the subjects of management development, international management, diversity and ethics and has published nearly 200 academic journal articles on related topics. He also serves



*Dr. Bahaudin Mujtaba*

“ *The online learning model provides an effective way to gain the competencies necessary in an increasingly global business environment.* ”

as a keynote speaker at national and international academic conferences and in scholarly forums.

At Thomas Edison State College, Mujtaba serves as a mentor for International Management (MAN-372) courses where he puts his expertise in organizational management, online instruction, cultural diversity and international protocol to work. "We live in an increasingly interdependent world, and the aim is to have our School of Business and Management students develop a rich understanding of the ways in which global forces can impact their businesses," he said. "The online learning model provides an effective way to gain the competencies

necessary in an increasingly global business environment."

Mujtaba's recent endeavors in helping to rebuild the Afghanistan economy prove that you can go home again.

"Since 2002, I have been working to enhance the rebuilding process in Afghanistan," he noted. "I have collaborated with the Society of Afghan Engineers in conducting three international conferences here in the

United States and in Kabul, Afghanistan, to strategize on the development of education and capacity building for the new generation of Afghans. Their economy is improving, but there is still much work to be done."

Mujtaba and his wife, Lisa, recently celebrated 24 years of marriage. The couple lives in Davie, Fla. In his spare time, he likes to jog and play racquetball, chess and tennis. He has played small parts in a Fox Television series and served as a cultural consultant for the 2008 movie *The Kite Runner* based on the best-selling book by Dr. Khaled Hosseini. ■

# Academic Calendar

## June 2011 Term

## July 2011 Term

## August 2011 Term

Registration Dates	April 16 - May 8, 2011	May 14 - June 15, 2011***	June 21 - July 16, 2011***
Late Registration	May 9 - May 13, 2011	June 16 - June 20, 2011***	July 17 - July 21, 2011***
Course Transfer Period	April 16 - May 31, 2011	May 14 - June 30, 2011	June 21 - July 31, 2011
Term Start Date	June 1, 2011	July 1, 2011*	Aug. 1, 2011
Midterm Exam Week **	July 18 - July 23, 2011	Aug. 15 - Aug. 20, 2011	Sept. 12 - Sept. 17, 2011
Final Exam Week**	Aug. 22 - Aug. 26, 2011	Sept. 19 - Sept. 24, 2011	Oct. 17 - Oct. 22, 2011
Term Ends	Aug. 26, 2011	Sept. 24, 2011*	Oct. 22, 2011

\* Dates apply to both Graduate and Undergraduate courses

\*\* Select courses have midterm examinations or online proctored midterm and final examinations, please refer to your course materials for details

\*\*\* The College has extended periods for registration dates and deadlines, please see cover article for details

## Thomas Edison State College Partnering with Teach for America to Help Bring Educational Leaders to Underserved School Districts

Thomas Edison State College has recently formed a partnership with Teach For America, a national organization that recruits outstanding college graduates from a variety of backgrounds to teach for two years in traditionally underserved urban and rural public schools. The College is one of only three graduate schools in the state, and the only senior public institution in New Jersey, to enter into an agreement of this kind with Teach For America.

"The collaboration allows Teach For America alumni to enter seamlessly into the College's Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program and provides a valuable opportunity for the organization's alumni from across the U.S. to earn a graduate degree and certification completely online," said Dr. Adrian

Zappala, assistant dean of Educational Leadership programs in the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences at Thomas Edison State College.

"Our partnership provides an opportunity for Teach for America alumni to complete our nationally accredited educational leadership program and make an immediate impact on the success of their schools at the leadership level," added Zappala.

In 2009, the College's Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program was granted initial accreditation by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) through December 2014. To find out more about the programs at the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences, visit [www.tesc.edu/1479.php](http://www.tesc.edu/1479.php). ■

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