



# Gloucester County College

LEARNING FOR REAL LIFE

**Press Release #** 29  
**Date** 9-27-07

**Title** GCC FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE PROVIDES TIPS, SUPPORT

Deptford Twp. – What to expect, how to prepare, and who to seek out for assistance are only some of the helpful tips offered to Gloucester County College students enrolled in the Freshman Year Experience.

With 30 percent of incoming college freshman across the country not completing their first year of study, attrition rates have become a concern among colleges and universities. During the past year, GCC has been focusing on ways to divert the frustration and uncertainty that can lead to students dropping out. Designed to make a student's first year at college successful and productive, GCC initiated the freshman program in fall 2006 as a proactive strategy to help increase retention rates, boost grade-point-averages, and improve graduation stats. This semester, 240 students are enrolled in the Student Success course that includes classroom instruction, mentoring, and seminars.

“While some attrition is inevitable, hands-on retention strategies have proven to be beneficial in helping students make a successful transition to college, do well academically, and earn their degrees,” stated Dr. Lois Lawson-Briddell, Director of the Freshman Year Experience. “GCC’s program helps us to better meet our students’ needs and to increase their success rate. Working with the students when they first enter college helps them to achieve academically.”

In addition to class time, the three-credit semester course

includes a series of seminars addressing life concerns and mentoring support that teams up students with faculty and staff. Course instruction on note taking, testing skills, time management, and the advantages of pursuing higher education, coupled with seminars on how to manage personal finances, set educational goals, raise a family while in college, and healthy living habits make the Freshman Experience a valuable tool for new students.

“As a college, we are very much committed to the success of our students,” stated GCC Acting President Dr. Russell A. Davis. Davis was responsible for establishing the pilot program when serving as vice president of Student Services. “The transition from high school to college is a new experience for most students filled with expectation, uncertainty and the excitement of being independent. The faculty and staff at GCC are here to support and encourage student achievement.”

A GCC survey conducted last spring substantiates that keeping students involved and informed about school policies is beneficial to academic success. Eighty-two percent of GCC students completing the student success fall course registered for spring classes. Of those, 90 percent intend to transfer to a four-year institution.

“The Student Success course helped me get a feel for college and made me feel more comfortable as a GCC attendee,” said Joseph Santine of Turnersville. “It assisted me on the ins and outs of college life.”

Next fall, the curriculum committee plans to fine-tune the program even more concentrating on specific student groups, such as athletes, women, and minorities, particularly male minorities where the drop out rate is higher. A tracking system will help to monitor the program’s success.

The 250-acre GCC campus is located on Tanyard Road in

Deptford, just off Exit 56 of Route 55.

---

**For more information contact:**

Gina Redrow

Phone: (856)415-2230

Email: [gredrow@gccnj.edu](mailto:gredrow@gccnj.edu)

Andrea Stanton

Phone: (856)415-2229

Email: [astanton@gccnj.edu](mailto:astanton@gccnj.edu)