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## NEWS

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### GCC NAMED A NATIONAL TOP ASSOCIATE DEGREE PRODUCER

Deptford Twp. – Gloucester County College (GCC) has captured two top spots as a national producer of associate degree programs in the Community College Week, an independent biweekly newspaper covering community, technical and junior colleges across the country.

Out of all community colleges nationwide, GCC ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the number of associate degrees awarded to education majors and 29<sup>th</sup> in parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies. Data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education was analyzed by Community College Week which also included four-year institutions that provide associate degrees.

“Being recognized nationally as a leader in education and health, physical education and recreation programs reflects both on the quality of our instructors and the College’s commitment to student retention,” said GCC President Dr. Russell A. Davis.

According to John Henzy, acting vice president of academic services, since 1999 the College’s education program has been in the spotlight, in part because of the Teachers 2000 (T2K) program. T2K— a unique GCC program that groups aspiring teachers together for two years— encourages learning through a variety of resources including computer-assisted instruction, videos, the Internet, group “quests,” classroom and Web-based threaded discussions, field trips, seminars, and lectures. Students take classes in 3-week blocks, four days a week under the guidance of master instructors who gear their courses toward prospective teachers. Based on the success of the Teachers 2000 program, beginning this fall GCC will introduce seven additional academic learning communities (biology, communications, English, history/political science, mathematics, chemistry/food science, and psychology).

This year, two Teachers 2000 instructors—Namorah Byrd and Chara Badger—were presented Minority Junior Faculty Awards by the Christian R. & Mary F. Lindback Foundation. “It’s very unusual to have a college receive back-to-back awards,” said Henzy.

College administrators have charted the positive impact since the implementation of the T2K program. In 2003, 36 students were enrolled in the education program. This year, the number has increased to 167. The grade point average of both the freshman and sophomore classes this spring was over 3.10. During the last three years, retention rates have held at 70 percent.

“The T2K program has enabled us to retain more students in the education field and increase the number of graduates earning an associate degree each year,” said Charles Harkins, acting dean of arts and sciences. “It’s a great start for education majors and everything transfers to the four-year universities.”

Catching the 29<sup>th</sup> top-seeded position in the associate degree producer arena is GCC’s health, physical education and recreation program. Scholar athletes and award-winning teams make the program a winner both on and off the field. Under the guidance of athletic director and dean of health, physical education and recreation Ron Case, the Roadrunners have won 14 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) National Team Championships, 21 individual national championship titles, were named Best Overall Two-Year College Athletic Program in the Country by the National Alliance of Two-Year College Athletic Administrators (NATYCAA), awarded 7th Collegiate Athletic Administrators of New Jersey (CAANJ) Cup for Best Overall Athletic Program in New Jersey, won five World Series Baseball Championships with over 28 players signing professional contracts, earned six NJCAA Division III National Wrestling Team Championships and boasted more than 250 All-Americans. This year, five GCC students were named Academic All-Americans.

“Having GCC associate degree programs acknowledged as one of the top producers is a great honor. It speaks well of the dedication of our faculty, staff and students,” said Davis.

GCC’s 250-acre campus is located on Tanyard Road in Deptford, just off Exit 56 of Route 55.

