

## **Stockton Selected for Nationwide Initiative to Redesign Students' First Year College Experience**

American Association of State Colleges and Universities Announces Project

### ***For Immediate Release***

Monday, February 01, 2016

**Contact: Maryjane Briant**  
**News and Media Relations Director**  
**Galloway Township, NJ 08205**  
**Maryjane.Briant@stockton.edu**  
**(609) 652-4593**  
[www.stockton.edu/media](http://www.stockton.edu/media)

**Galloway, NJ** - Stockton University today announced its selection by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to participate in the three-year "Re-Imagining the First Year of College" (RFY) project, a sweeping initiative aimed at transforming the first year of college to enhance students' success in their undergraduate years and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

The first year of college has emerged as the critical barrier to student success, the point at which undergraduate institutions experience the greatest loss of students. The objective of the RFY project is to help project participants – and ultimately the broader AASCU membership of 420 state colleges and universities – to implement changes that enhance the first-year student experience and increase student retention and graduation rates, particularly among historically underserved populations.

"Attracting and retaining students, particularly low income, first generation, and students of color who are included in this AASCU program, is crucial to ensuring that the future of higher education remains not only relevant but also accessible to all," said Stockton President Harvey Kesselman.

As one of 44 institutions nationwide chosen for AASCU's RFY project, Stockton will select and implement proven, innovative strategies and programs, adapting them to the campus's unique environment and needs. The evidence-based strategies focus on four core areas to help first-year students succeed: institutional intentionality - mission-based initiatives; curriculum; faculty and staff roles; and student roles.

**-more-**

**-continued from page 1-**

“The AASCU ‘Reimagining the First Year’ experience offers an opportunity to engage in a national conversation about a question of vital concern for all institutions of higher education,” said Interim Provost and Executive Vice President Susan Davenport. “Simply put, this is about how best can we serve those constituencies who need us the most. Stockton is proud of the resources it has already developed for these incoming students. It has also invested, and will continue to invest, in recruiting efforts that seek to diversify our student body. But we could do more, and would welcome the opportunity to learn from our peers.”

Stockton will participate in a learning community along with the 43 other state colleges and universities selected for RFY. The learning community will enable participants to attend national conferences and educational webinars, receive one-on-one mentoring, access online tools and resources, and share ideas, successful strategies and lessons learned with each other.

“We are pleased that these AASCU institutions will commit their enormous talent and knowledge to the success of this initiative, which I believe will have a profound effect on undergraduate education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” said George Mehaffy, vice president for academic leadership and change at AASCU. “The state colleges and universities we selected for RFY represent a broad swath of the institutional landscape and exhibit strong leadership and other qualities that are conducive to effecting broad-scale and sustainable change. Together, with the engagement of all campus stakeholders – from students to academic leadership – we will strive to transform the first-year student experience and ensure student success,” he added.

AASCU will kick off the RFY initiative with academic leaders attending the association’s 2016 Academic Affairs Winter Meeting in Austin, Texas from Feb. 4-6. RFY is being funded by generous grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and USA Funds.

### **About AASCU:**

[The American Association of State Colleges and Universities](#) (AASCU) is a Washington, D.C.-based higher education association of more than 400 public colleges, universities, and systems whose members share a learning- and teaching-centered culture, a historic commitment to underserved student populations, and a dedication to research and creativity that advances their regions’ economic progress and cultural development.

### **About Stockton University:**

[Stockton University](#), New Jersey’s Distinctive Public University, offers an outstanding interdisciplinary approach to graduate and undergraduate education in arts and sciences, professional studies, health sciences, and graduate and continuing studies.

Stockton University, with a main campus in Galloway, N.J. and locations in Atlantic City, Hammonton, Manahawkin and Woodbine, N.J., is ranked at #12 among the best public Regional Universities of the North by *U.S. News and World Report*. Its world-class faculty members include many with national and international accomplishments, including Stephen Dunn, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, Guggenheim Fellow Wendel White and Fulbright scholars Robert Nichols and Mary Lou Galantino.

# # #