Fitch Ratings Affirms Stockton College’s ‘A+’ Bond Rating

Fitch Ratings, a global ratings agency, recently affirmed the ‘A+’ rating on $234.5 million of New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority revenue bonds issued on behalf of Stockton, and stated the college’s rating outlook is stable.

Fitch Ratings considered four key rating drivers which included a satisfactory financial profile, healthy enrollment trends, pressured state support and a high but manageable debt burden.

“Over the past five audited fiscal years (2009-2013), the college has consistently generated positive operating results, including a 4.3 percent operating margin in fiscal 2013,” the report stated. “Fiscal 2014 operating results (unaudited) narrowed somewhat but remained positive, which is consistent with Fitch's expectations for public colleges and universities.”

The report also stated that these financial results are “impressive given the pressured state funding environment.”

With decreasing state support (down to 20.2 percent in fiscal year 2013 from 26.4 percent in fiscal year 2009), Stockton has continued to maintain growth, the report continued. Enrollment has remained consistent with the college's targeted 2 percent annual growth, with the total headcount enrollment of primarily full-time undergraduates increasing by 2.8 percent from Fall 2009 to Fall 2013. The report highlighted Stockton’s “moderate” tuition increases and the college’s “relative affordability” for in-state tuition.

Fitch also noted that recently Stockton has funded its capital needs through operating surpluses and internal resources, avoiding further debt issuance. To read more, [click here](#).

Stockton, Rowan OK Dual Degree Program

Through a new agreement between Stockton and Rowan, students will soon have the option to pursue dual Bachelor of Science degrees from the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Rowan’s College of Engineering.

As part of the five-year program, qualified students will be admitted to Stockton as freshmen or transfers, and remain matriculated here for three years or when their transfer requirements are completed. During their fourth or fifth years, or their academic equivalent, students will continue their studies at Rowan.

Students will receive a B.S. degree in Chemistry, Mathematics or Physics from Stockton after the fourth year, and a B.S. degree in Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, Electrical and Computer, or Mechanical Engineering from Rowan at the completion of the program.

It is anticipated that student enrollment in this program will begin in September 2015.
Three Faculty Members Receive Community Partners Award

Dr. Alysia Mastrangelo, associate professor of Physical Therapy, Dr. Mary Kientz, assistant professor of Occupational Therapy, and Joan Perks, associate professor of Nursing, recently received the Community Partners Award from the Family Resource Network for the Get Fit with Stockton project.

The research team was recognized at the Family Resource Network’s annual awards ceremony on Thursday, Oct. 9 in New Brunswick.

Get Fit with Stockton is a fitness, nutrition, and education program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

As part of the project, undergraduate and graduate students educate and personally train clients of the Arc of Atlantic County. The students tailor programs to individuals’ goals for wellness and fitness.

To view the video about the Get Fit with Stockton project, click here.

Team Helps Seaview Executives Establish Sustainability Plan

A team of faculty members and a business undergraduate student used cutting edge techniques to assist the Stockton Seaview Hotel & Golf Club’s executive team in identifying sustainability strategies and opportunities.

The project was funded by the Provost Office’s The Research Experience for Undergraduates grant awarded to Dr. Bill Quain, associate professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies, and Kristen Comose, a senior Accounting major.

Dr. Clifford Whithem, professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies, and Dr. Michael Scales, associate professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies, joined Dr. Quain and Comose in the planning and execution of the research project.

During two sessions with the Seaview executives, the Stockton team utilized a relatively new technique called “Q-Mapping,” a three-part strategy that enables a group to organize ideas and concepts in order to develop a plan.

Dr. Quain initially developed the three-part strategy when the government of Bermuda asked him for assistance in reviving its hotel and tourism industry during the summer of 2013. Dr. Scales and Dr. Whithem, helped to modify the system for use in private business. The three faculty members, who teach classes at Seaview, approached the executive team to test the technique.

First, the Seaview executives developed more than 100 open-ended questions. The questions were then grouped into categories and displayed in a two-dimensional map. In the last step, the participants utilized a series of six different color “thinking hats” in order to generate a list of action items.

Dr. Quain said the group wears the same color hat, at the same time. For example, if the group members are wearing a “green thinking hat,” they all are exploring ways to create new ideas without criticism. However, if the group is wearing another color hat, they can consider things that might make an idea impractical.

“By keeping everyone on the same subject, and from the same perspective, it helps cut down on arguments, and makes everything run faster and smoother,” Dr. Quain explained. “In other words, it gets things done.”

Dr. Quain said the sessions at Seaview were very effective. The faculty and student team created a case study using the “Q-Mapping” process and submitted it as a manuscript to the e-Journal of Social & Behavioural Research in Business.
Joseph Lizza is NACA Conference Chair, Chrissie King Presents

Joseph Lizza, assistant director of the Campus Center for Operations and Programs, recently served as conference chair for the 2014 National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) Mid Atlantic Conference. Lizza and Chrissie King, facility coordinator for Campus Center Operations, presented at the conference on Oct. 16-19 at the Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center.

As conference chair, Lizza led a team of 31 committee members to organize the conference, which featured over 65 educational sessions, professional development and networking opportunities. He was also responsible for leading workshops and roundtable discussions. The conference showcased hundreds of vendors, and solo musicians, bands, comics and magicians.

More than 600 faculty, staff and students from colleges and universities participated.

“My own involvement, as well as the involvement of my team, which was made up of college and university staff from across the region, shows the commitment of student affairs professionals towards campus engagement,” Lizza said. “Student Life is a major part of the collegiate experience. I feel that Stockton is on the forefront by encouraging and supporting not only staff participation in these types of conferences, but taking it a step further and encouraging staff to pursue leadership roles.”

King presented “Some Assembly Required: Working Towards Job Advancement.” During her presentation, King provided strategies on how to get that first job after graduation. She reviewed résumé tips, discussed undergraduate involvement opportunities, and how to begin mapping one’s professional future.

Haley Baum, assistant director of Student Development, also attended the conference with Stockton Entertainment Team President Nate Taylor. Taylor presented “Tying it Together – Showing New Members the Ropes by the NACA MAT Student Projects Team” with other students from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania and Marist College.

Lizza also serves as the regional coordinator for NACA and has been appointed as the chair for next year’s conference. King serves as the organization’s special event and awards coordinator, and Taylor is the foundation fundraising coordinator.

Hughes Center Welcomes Public Policy Researcher Kelly Sloane

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy welcomes Kelly Sloane as a public policy researcher. Since 2009, Sloane has been trained as a policy analyst and has worked as a program evaluator. The new position was created by the Hughes Center endowment.

Her experience includes program evaluation for youth, community and workforce development initiatives; qualitative data collection, analysis, and report writing; quantitative data collection and analysis; and spatial analysis and asset mapping.

Sloane received her B.A. in American Studies from The Pennsylvania State University and her M.A. in American Studies from the University of New Mexico. She is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography and Urban Studies at Temple University where her research concentrates on policy analysis, distribution of public goods, and the relationship between equality of opportunity, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and place.
Dr. Kelly Keenan Bike Rides from City to Shore for MS Research

Dr. Kelly Keenan, associate professor of Chemistry, participated in the 2014 Bike MS: City to Shore Ride from Cherry Hill to Ocean City on Sept. 25 to help fund essential medical research and support services for the 14,000 people living with Multiple Sclerosis in the region.

Many local families depend on the National MS Society for a wide range of services and programs, including employment counseling, health insurance advocacy, physical therapy and emergency financial assistance, explained Dr. Keenan. The society also invests more money in MS research than any other non-governmental organization in the world, she added.

“MS is a disease of the central nervous system with no known cause or cure. Not only is MS unpredictable, it is also expensive; out-of-pocket medical costs, lost wages and more add up to more than $2 million over a lifetime,” Dr. Keenan said. “There are a variety of medications, with some costing thousands of dollars for treatment which needs to be repeated.”

Dr. Keenan incorporates discussions of Multiple Sclerosis and how treatments work in several of the classes she teaches at Stockton. This was Dr. Keenan’s eighth City to Shore Ride, and this year, she has raised more than $600 for the cause.

“There are so many wonderful volunteers that make this event possible and then there are those afflicted with the disease at various points on the course that make the cause so real,” she said.

Math Center Coordinator Luis Peña, Family Welcome Baby Boy

Luis Peña, math center coordinator, and Stockton alumna Megan O’Reilly Peña, welcomed a son, Nathan Alejandro Peña, on Oct. 19. Nathan weighed in at 9 pounds, 1 ounce. Arcadia is excited to be a big sister!

Congratulations to the Peña family!

Send Us Your News!

We want to know about things going on in the Stockton community. Do you have an unusual hobby? Did one of your coworkers win an award or perform outstanding public service? Births, weddings, graduations and the like are all good things to submit to The Stockton Times. Contact the editor at 609-626-5521 or e-mail StocktonTimes@stockton.edu

News about distinguished students can now be found at Distinctive Stockton Students. To contribute a news item for the blog, please contact the editor at distinctive@stockton.edu