Stockton athletic center will go solar
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GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP - The "Big Blue" Athletic Center at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey is about to generate some new energy.

The college board of trustees Wednesday approved an agreement with Marina Energy LLC for the installation of solar panels on the athletic center roof to provide electricity to the college. Marina Energy is a subsidiary of South Jersey Industries.

The college will pay nothing for the equipment but will sign a 10-year agreement to buy the generated power. The details are still under negotiation, but Donald Moore, the college's executive director of facilities and plant operations, said the goal is to save at least 20 percent and as much as 35 percent on current costs.

He said the college has already been approved for solar rebates from the state, and he is also looking at the possibility of putting solar panels on some student housing.

"This is a way for us to improve and upgrade with no financial outlay by the college," Moore said. The panels are expected to be installed in April or May.

The trustees also approved a $3.14 million contract with Kisby Lees Mechanical for the replacement of 56 rooftop HVAC units and related pipe work on main campus buildings, and a $227,000 contract to replace the units on D-wing. The work will begin over the summer.

College officials also reported Wednesday that spring enrollment held steady and applications for the fall are exceeding last year.

Dean of Enrollment Management John Iacovelli said the number of spring transfers was down slightly, but that was because the college was retaining more of its own students.

"A good retention rate means less need for new or transfer students," he said. "We are trying to do managed growth so that we can grow without putting undue stress on the campus."

He said new freshman applications as of Feb. 15 were 24 percent higher than last year at the same time, and the number of admissions were up 16 percent and the number of deposits received were up 8 percent. The average SAT of students admitted so far was 1,138, above last year's 1,105.

"It is still very early, but this is very encouraging," he said.

The graduate degree program continues to expand, and the doctoral program in physical therapy will graduate its first 37 students in May, Dean of Graduate and Continuing Studies Deborah Figart said.