

STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Stockton's Dr. Harvey Kesselman Named to National Panel on Community Schools

Hamilton Twp. Resident One of 11 Representatives Nationwide

For Immediate Release

Monday, November 23, 2009

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Galloway Township, NJ- Dr. Harvey Kesselman, Dean of the School of Education at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, has been named to the national working group of the newly formed Association of Schools and Colleges of Education for Civic Engagement (SCoECE).

The working group also includes representatives from the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Washington, the University of South Florida, Boston University, the University of South Carolina, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Oklahoma State University, the University of Tennessee, Rutgers University, and Miami University of Ohio. The Association is committed to improving the quality of education by engaging collectively with their respective local schools and communities.

"It's a privilege to be working on a committee that, ultimately, will impact the lives of thousands of students in a positive way," Dr. Kesselman said. "Colleges and universities have resources in faculty, students, staff, facilities and equipment that can be of great benefit to the community. It is incumbent upon all of us to help provide the benefits of these resources to our local schools and communities. In return, we gain and learn a great deal from these partnerships."

Under Dr. Kesselman's leadership, Stockton's School of Education has played a leading role in developing collaborations and partnerships with its local school districts. Last spring the Stockton Center for Community Schools was founded with a dedicated and enthusiastic team of faculty, students, staff, and community volunteers who are working together to ensure an equitable education for every child from early childhood through graduate school. "Fulfilling the promise of educational opportunities for all is central to building strong communities," Dr. Kesselman said.

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The Stockton Center for Community Schools recently teamed with the Atlantic City Public Schools to install two gardens at New York Avenue School to accompany a "Garden curriculum" to meet state standards in academic subjects. Stockton students, faculty and administration, New York Avenue School students and teachers and the volunteer team recently completed the first phase of building a raised bed vegetable garden and a flower garden to be designated as the "reading garden" at the inner city school. The "reading garden" is envisioned as a place where storytelling, songs and reading will take place.

The school gardens are just one aspect of Stockton's new Community Schools program, designed as the latest in the College's community initiatives. Coordinated by faculty member Professor Joe Rubenstein, and directed by Dr. Reva Curry, the program helps provide college resources for the aid of the southern New Jersey region.

Dr. Rubenstein noted that "these projects are of mutual benefit to the school and Stockton. The schools gain resources they otherwise would not have access to and our students have the broadening experience of service to our neighbors." According to Dr. Curry, "Stockton's Community Schools program provides a win-win scenario for both the school and our College."

In addition to the gardens, the following Community Schools projects are on tap for New York Avenue School:

- Teacher assistance: Stockton students have been assigned to various classrooms to mentor and provide homework help.
- Mural: Design and planning of an interior art mural is taking place at the school.
- Healthy active lifestyle: Stockton athletes will come to the school to encourage physical education and activities.

In addition, Stockton's Center for Community Schools is establishing an after-school program at Sovereign Avenue School, a parent center in which Atlantic City School parents might become more involved in their sons' and daughters' educations, and a "green" initiatives program in conjunction with the schools and the Atlantic County Municipal Utilities Authority (ACMUA).

Dr. Kesselman said that one of the goals of the Stockton program is to be identified as a national model, along with the programs of the other members of the national working group. Their goals include the encouragement of cooperation and collaboration of higher education institutions and local schools; to improve student learning through civic engagement; to build School of Education programs around specific community needs for improvement; enlisting the support of constituency groups to help further community schools programs; to be an agent for change for community success; and to infuse service learning into the college and university curriculum.

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For more information or to help with Stockton's Community Schools initiative, contact Dr. Reva Curry at reva.curry@stockton.edu or call 609-652-4535.

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