

**THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**

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Office of Public Relations  
Pomona, NJ 08240

## **Hughes Center at Stockton Selected for Prestigious, Unique Polling Project**

**Stockton Among First Colleges in Area to Engage in Deliberative  
Polling<sup>®</sup> to Educate Public, Policymakers, Formulate Opinions**

### **For Immediate Release**

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**Galloway Twp., NJ** – The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey has been selected as one of 15 colleges and universities nationally to participate in a sophisticated polling project that not only asks people questions but also educates them on the issues and then publicizes their thinking processes for the general public. The 15 colleges involved will be guided by the American Democracy Project (ADP) and Stockton's William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy will prepare and implement the poll.

Deliberative Polling<sup>®</sup>, a relatively new and advanced technique, differs from traditional polling that simply measures the public's opinion on questions and issues. In traditional polling, those individuals surveyed have received their information through snippets of information from sources such as television, newspapers and the Internet, without the benefit of in-depth knowledge of the issues.

In Deliberative Polling<sup>®</sup> participants move on to more steps that include an initial poll, followed by the dissemination of balanced information on the topics and then a second poll. Additionally, participants take part in conversations and deliberations with other participants, experts and policy makers to discuss the topics in an unbiased atmosphere with the help of a facilitator. When participants retake the survey, changes – either positive or negative – are measured and analyzed.

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## **Hughes Center Takes Part in New Polling Technique / page 2**

When all is completed, these deliberations are shared with the general public through television and Internet outlets. This information allows the public and policy makers to hear and see how their peers came to decisions and viewpoints on the issues. This transparent process gives the broader public more information and the survey participants leave the project knowing they have contributed to overall public decisions on major issues.

“This is an exciting opportunity for the Hughes Center and Stockton College,” said Hughes Center Director Sharon Schulman. Our mission is to engage the public and policy makers such as elected officials and regulators on issues of importance to the area. It also fits nicely with our civic engagement initiatives for our students and community. This project will provide an outstanding tool enabling area residents to deliberate among themselves and the general public and offering their conclusions to the policy makers.”

Schulman said the Center hoped to complete the first polling project by June 2009. Training and preparations will take place in the upcoming Fall semester and the first poll will be conducted and administered by the conclusion of the academic year.

The ADP’s goal is to have graduating students from colleges and universities who are civically engaged and who will become the next generation of stewards and leaders of democracy. Currently, 229 educational institutions participate in the ADP. Besides Stockton, some of the other institutions participating in this project include Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis, and the universities of Maine, Tennessee, Central Oklahoma and Northern Kentucky.

Deliberative Polling<sup>®</sup> was first developed at the University of Texas in 1988 by Professors James Fishkin and Robert Luskin. Today, the Center for Deliberative Democracy is housed at Stanford University. Professor Fishkin is its director and Professor Luskin is a Senior Fellow at the Center.

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