

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

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The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Announces the Official Opening of the Stockton Center on Successful Aging

For Immediate Release

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Galloway Twp., NJ – The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey is pleased to announce the formal establishment of the Stockton Center on Successful Aging (SCOSA). The Center's mission is to develop programs that promote healthy, successful, and civically engaged aging among New Jersey's rapidly growing older population.

During the past six months Stockton faculty and administrators dialogued extensively with community partners from throughout the state in order to create a Center that is maximally effective in meeting community and statewide needs for academically supported gerontological research, education and services. The Center will encourage partnerships with not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, and other educational institutions. To encourage these collaborations, memoranda of understanding have been signed with The Society on Aging of New Jersey, the Seashore Gardens Living Center, Galloway Township and the Family Services Association. Several other affiliations are being negotiated, for example with the UMDNJ NJ Institute on Successful Aging, the Alzheimer's Association and the Atlantic County Government.

Concurrent with the planning, SCOSA developed programs in each core area, designed to lay the foundation for more extensive future efforts. Commencing last March with an educational lecture on the research underlying successful aging by Dr. Cindy Bergeman, Psychology Chair at the University of Notre Dame, the Center also sponsored "Stockton at Sunrise" lectures for residents of the Sunrise Assisted Living at Galloway in April, a continuing professional education program for providers in May, and computer training for seniors in June.

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Recently launched programs also include: a Brown Bag Lecture Series featuring the latest research on aging, organized by SCOSA Research Chair Dr. Lisa Cox; an educational series for seniors, organized by SCOSA Program Assistant Anita Beckwith and funded by the Atlantic County Division of Intergenerational Services; and a disaster preparedness program for vulnerable seniors coordinated by Dr. Michael Cronin. SCOSA Education Chair Dr. Christine Ferri has led planning for the Annual Conference of the Society on Aging of New Jersey (Civic Engagement: Changing the Way We Care – November 2nd at the Somerset Holiday Inn). SCOSA's Service Chair Christa Caldarale-Ahearn is helping SCOSA to develop a Caregiver Support Group, which will have its first meeting on September 27th. A newsletter and Web site (www.stockton.edu/agingcenter) have also been produced.

The College has selected Dr. David Burdick to direct the Center. Burdick, Professor of Psychology and Coordinator of Gerontological Studies, has held several leadership positions with local, state, and national aging organizations. He is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, and was named Gerontologist of the Year by the Society on Aging of New Jersey in 1997. A specialist in technology and aging, and intergenerational relations, he currently directs Stockton's efforts in a three-year contract with the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services to improve the state's congregate and home-delivered meals programs for older adults.

Today, as baby-boomers grow old, population aging is accelerating, and colleges and universities such as Stockton must step up their efforts. New Jersey and the southern coastal counties are aging more rapidly than the national average. Locally, this trend is because we have become an attractive retirement alternative, similar to Florida, Arizona, and North Carolina. Additionally, tourism accounts for a large portion of our area's economy, and adults over age 55 comprise a large proportion of tourists.

Provost David Carr and Dean Cheryl Kaus, who encouraged the establishment of SCOSA and provided core financial support, note that "Since the gerontology program's founding in 1978, Stockton has quietly developed a solid leadership position in aging studies, graduating over 500 students from our certificate program, sponsoring workshops, and conferences, and collaborating in grants and research." Carr reports that "In recent years we have hired several new faculty and administrators with excellent credentials in gerontology to complement those already involved in our program." These include Ferri (Psychology), Cronin and Dr. Sharon Hines-Smith (Social Work); Dr. Cheryl Kaus (Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences), and Dr. Dee McNeely-Greene (Associate Vice President for Student Services).

For further information on SCOSA, go to www.stockton.edu/agingcenter, or contact Dr. Burdick at (609) 652-4311. His e-mail address is David.Burdick@stockton.edu.

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