



Stockton's Provost Named to Team Preparing Colleges for New NJ Tests

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Galloway Township - Dr. Harvey Kesselman, provost and executive vice president of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, has been named to the New Jersey Higher Education Leadership Team (NJ HELT), which is preparing colleges for new tests that will impact all New Jersey public school students, teachers and college personnel.

New Jersey is one of 19 states and the District of Columbia working together on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), computer-based assessments of K-12 students' mastery of English language/literacy and math.

"This is a game changer in K-12 and higher education," Dr. Kesselman said. "My role is to help to make sure all senior public colleges and universities are aware of this initiative and understand its implications."

In New Jersey, these tests will eventually replace the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), which tests juniors on their abilities in reading, writing and mathematics. PARCC tests will also replace the NJ Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (ASK) tests, currently given to third and fourth graders, with testing in every grade 3-8.

The PARCC will be implemented as a New Jersey pilot program this year and will show "not just what the student knows, but what he or she can do," Dr. Kesselman said. Full state testing will begin in 2014-15.

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New Jersey is among 46 states that have agreed to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which set common expectations for what all students should learn and be able to do, in terms of readiness for college and the workforce. The PARCC will assess how well students master the “common core.”

“This movement reflects a general agreement among leaders in business, government and education that students in the United States are falling behind those in other industrialized countries and the belief that a more rigorous K-12 curriculum is needed,” Dr. Kesselman explained.

The Obama Administration’s Race to the Top education initiative has provided funding for the new core curriculum standards and testing but is expecting each state to articulate how they are put into practice.

The NJ HELT has to prepare colleges for the new tests, because it is expected that:

- High school students who don’t demonstrate success on PARCC will be provided remedial coursework in their senior year before applying to colleges;
- High school teachers in all the tested grades and subjects will ultimately be evaluated in part on how well their students score on PARCC tests;
- Colleges may ultimately benefit by not having to provide remediation work with under-prepared freshmen.

“Folks may be surprised when comparing PARCC results with current assessments,” Dr. Kesselman said. “It will take years to fully appreciate the impact of this national initiative.”

At Stockton, students in the School of Education are already learning about the new assessments as part of their teacher preparation program. Stockton’s Southern Regional Institute and Educational Technology Training Center (SRI & ETTC) has also been providing professional development courses for teachers who will need to adapt to the new system.

“There may also be a need to help supply remediation – as well as advanced courses (for students who test well) – to students in our high school partnership programs,” Dr. Kesselman said.

He noted that Stockton is “ahead of the curve” in helping advanced students, already having developed partnerships with 10 area schools where students can take college courses for credit in their high schools and Stockton faculty provide

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mentoring for the high school instructors.

Dr. Kesselman is representing the senior public colleges and universities on the NJ HELT, serving with Gregg Edwards, deputy secretary of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, Dr. Ray Yanuzzi, president of Camden County College, representing community colleges, Jennifer Short, of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in New Jersey and Dr. Sharon Sherman, dean of Rider's School of Education, who is representing teacher education programs.

"I'm proud to be part of the Higher Education Leadership Team for the implementation of PARCC," Dr. Kesselman said.

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