



## **RVCC joins multi-state service learning project**

**Hunterdon County Democrat** By **Hunterdon County Democrat**

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Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) in Branchburg is one of seven community colleges nationally that has been awarded a Service Learning grant from the New York-based Teagle Foundation. The three-year, \$8,500 annual grant will enable seven community colleges to work together on a national project, "Student Learning for Civic Capacity: Stimulating Moral, Ethical, and Civic Engagement for Learning that Lasts."

The project will be overseen by the Community College National Center for Community Engagement and Kapiolani Community College of Hawaii, who have received a total of \$270,000 to administer the grant among the seven colleges.

RVCC faculty from several disciplines will play national leadership roles through their work with the College's Service Learning program. They will be joined by faculty from De Anza College, California; Delgado Community College, Louisiana; Kapiolani Community College, University of Hawai'i, Hawaii; Kingsborough Community College and Queensborough Community College, both of New York; and Mesa Community College in Arizona.

"With its long tradition of responding to community needs and incorporating community service in the curriculum, Raritan Valley Community College now has another great opportunity to play a leadership role in developing a national model for Service Learning," said RVCC Interim President James B. Ventantonio. "The Teagle Foundation grant reaffirms RVCC's commitment to fostering a learning environment that emphasizes the importance of community service and civic engagement."

Service Learning at Raritan Valley Community College is a nationally recognized program that enables students to use community service as part of their coursework and receive credit for the experience. Each year, students donate the economic equivalent of over \$1,000,000 in service to numerous organizations and their clients. RVCC students serve many different kinds of organizations, such as schools and after-school programs, ESL centers, nursing homes, adult day care centers, libraries, courthouses, youth correctional facilities, consumer affairs offices, and domestic violence and animal shelters. By participating in Service Learning projects, students learn about important community issues while helping diverse populations.

The Teagle grant project has several components, including:

- Developing 70 courses in different disciplines that build students' current and future commitment to civic and moral responsibility and encourage their participation in co-curricular programs such as student government and clubs.
- Evaluating student learning experiences and sharing the results through publications and national presentations.

- Using additional resources from campus, state, federal and foundation sources to create new opportunities.

The Teagle project is not the first time RVCC has been involved with a multi-state Service Learning grant. Raritan Valley Community College also received a three-year, multi-state grant from the Community College National Center to develop Service Learning homeland security projects from 2004-2006. RVCC earned two national awards for the projects: the 2006 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction for General Community Service and for Hurricane Relief, and the 2007 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll Special Achievement Award. At the time, RVCC was one of two community colleges nationwide that received the Special Achievement Award for its commitment to service.

For more information on the college, visit [raritanval.edu](http://raritanval.edu).

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