This Month @ MIDDLESEX COUNTY COLLEGE

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Claire Castillo discusses her project with Professor Richard Thompson. Below, an image from his website, RichardThompson3D.com, which includes examples of his animation work. Applications range from the whimsical to the practical.

Gaming and Animation Degree Program Launching Soon

A new program in Gaming and Animation is being introduced at the College. Graduates will be prepared for jobs in this growing field or to transfer to a four-year university to obtain a Bachelor's Degree.

"People understand and react to messages much better if there is a visual attached to it," said Professor Richard Thompson, who will teach the gaming and animation courses. "Creating video games is huge, but is only one aspect of this field. Graduates may also be employed by pharmaceutical companies, engineering firms, hospitals, the military, museums and film studios. There are lots of applications. It is a competitive, but growing field. It's also very exciting and a lot of fun."

Students will take five gaming and animation courses: 3D modeling & Animation Foundations; Game Design Foundations; Animation Workshop; Game Design Workshop; and a Portfolio class, in addition to art, photography and general education classes. The program can be completed in two years, and would likely include some classes during the summer or Wintersession.

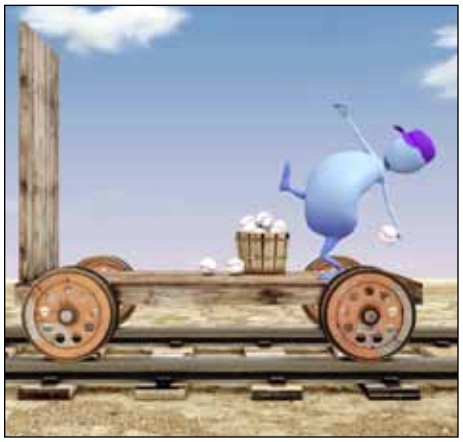
Professor Thompson said he will be using a software program called Maya to create graphics and Unity to develop the games.

While Professor Thompson teaches the technical side of animation, he emphasizes the success of an animation or game rests largely with the story.

"Ultimately, it's the story that sells," he says. "Visual narration is very important to me."

He suggests the field will only grow.

"There is an ever-increasing demand for visual solutions," he said. For additional information, email rthompson@middlesexcc.edu.



From left: Praful Raja, Robert Oras and Eileen Palumbo, Board of Trustees; Brian Daugherty, chair of the MCC Foundation; Freeholder Blanquita Valenti; State Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin '74; Carol Barrett Bellante, Freeholder deputy director; Susan Perkins, vice president for administration and finance; College President Joann La Perla-Morales; Ronald Goldfarb, special assistant to the president; Ronald Rios, Freeholder director; Thomas Tighe, vice chair of the Board of Trustees; Dorothy K. Power, chairman of the Board of Trustees; Brad Morton, executive director of information technology; Freeholder Charles Tomaro; Donald Drost, executive director of facilities management; and Freeholder Charles Kenny.

Ceremonial Groundbreaking: Work on New South Hall to Begin

Middlesex County College held its second ceremonial groundbreaking in 30 days as it celebrated the start of construction for South Hall, which will be a state-of-the-art science laboratory building.

"It'll be fabulous," said Parag Muley, chair of the Department of Natural Sciences. "It'll be an excellent addition to our existing facility that will fill a much-needed niche. It will bring our resources on par with national and international standards as well as incorporate new pedagogies that have been evolving. Students can indulge in self-discovery and self-learn."

South Hall, which will contain 14 labs for chemistry, biology and general sciences classes, is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2016.

"The laboratories in this new building will prepare our students for careers long into the 21st Century," said College President Joann La Perla-Morales at the groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 24. "This new building would not be possible without the support of County freeholders providing the matching funds necessary to receive the higher education bonding dollars that were approved by New Jersey residents two years ago. The timeline to submit a proposal for the bond funding was tight, but a team of faculty and administrators met the deadline with the expressed need for new science laboratories – a priority defined in the recently completed 10-year Master Plan. The wonderful support of the College Board of Trustees, the work of faculty, staff, students and administrators in planning with the architectural team and engineers all resulted in the design of this new building which will be connected to Main Hall where offices and classrooms will keep students and faculty engaged in learning. I thank each of you for assuring that Middlesex County College is positioned to meet the educational needs of our community."

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THIS MONTH AT MIDDLESEX

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Students from the Middlesex County College Veterans and Servicemembers Association, and Democracy House, the College's service-learning program, recently spent a day assisting Habitat for Humanity in building a home for a family in Perth Amboy. At left, Christopher Pellegrino, a Navy Veteran and the president of the Veterans Association, drills a hole to attach the frame to the foundation. Below, Habitat construction supervisor John Martin explains the building process to Democracy House students Declon Friday, Dwayla Carty and Halimat Oshun, and Arianna Illa, the coordinator. The student team worked for eight hours on various tasks.

Notables

Adriana Mamay, the reference and instruction librarian, has been selected as a 2014-2015 New Jersey Library Association Emerging Leader, a program in which promising librarians learn management and leadership skills in five full-day sessions.

Nancy Berger, nursing program director, was nominated for the New Jersey March of Dimes Nurse of the Year competition in the category of Nurse Administrator. The winners will be announced at a dinner honoring the nominees at the Pines Manor on November 19th. This nomination is an exceptional honor and a testament to her abilities and commitment to the Nursing Education field. **Mary Huggins**, a new nursing adjunct professor, has also been nominated in the Nursing Educator category.

Two haikus by English Professor **Mat Spano** that had previously been published in "The Heron's Nest," a quarterly journal of haiku, will be included in the publication's book collection. The book, which celebrates the journal's 15th anniversary, will include 225 to 250 haiku – less than 5 percent of those originally published.

MCC President **Joann La Perla-Morales** (left) received a SUNY Oneonta Alumni of Distinction award in September. The Oneonta Alumni Association presented these awards in recognition of the College's 125th anniversary. The Alumni Association honored alumni who "have distinguished themselves through their careers, their service to their communities and their commitment to our college." The award was presented by the president of SUNY Oneonta, Nancy Kleniewski.

Dr. La Perla-Morales earned her Bachelor's Degree at SUNY Oneonta and her Master's and Doctorate at Columbia University.

Health and Safety Day at Middlesex County College brought dozens of human service and safety agencies to campus to help students, faculty and staff learn how to make their lives healthier. The day included a visit by the children in the College Child Care Center, who learned about fire safety from the Edison Fire Department. Here, Firefighter Dennis Scholl shows his helmet to, from left, Brenda Cortez, Christopher Chaverra and Edward Mezazen. Firefighter Daniel Wood explained to the children what they should do in case of a fire, and they got to sit in the truck, learn about some of the equipment, and watch as a high-pressure hose blasted water on the campus.

Ground Broken for New South Hall Science Building

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Funding for the new building comes from the "Building Our Future" Bond, which New Jersey voters approved in 2012. It allocated $750 million for construction projects at the state's colleges and universities, including $150 million for community colleges.

South Hall replaces two buildings that pre-date the College, from when the site was an Army Arsenal. South I and South II had been used as offices, classrooms and a machine shop. The two were in the news this spring because they were the temporary home for James Monroe Elementary School after its building was lost to fire. The children, teachers and staff called them home for three months. South I and II were demolished this fall.

MCC Board of Trustees Chairman Dorothy K. Power was thrilled to note the addition of another new building.

"Today, we are so excited to be adding a new academic science building with state-of-the-art laboratories to this fine campus," she said. "Thanks to New Jersey residents for the bond funding, and many, many thanks to the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for providing the matching contribution. With your assistance, the trustees and the administration will continue to offer top-notch educational opportunities for our residents."

Middlesex County Freeholder Director Ronald Rios also addressed the crowd.

"We realize the incredible impact that Middlesex County College has on its students and on our residents who benefit from the quality education offered here," he said. "That is why we have given $3.4 million toward this project. Under the guidance of Freeholder Kenneth Armwood, we have used the competitive grants that we have acquired to give the College new lab and classroom space. Our aim is to help the College enhance its chemistry and biology courses, as well as its other health-related and biotech programs. We are especially happy to be here, because for the second time in a month we are celebrating the College's success and growth. This science building and the Center for Student Services demonstrate our continued commitment to meet the changing needs of our students and offer them the best possible facilities."

On September 24, MCC broke ground on West Hall, which will bring the services of several departments under one roof to meet the needs of students and their family members for enrollment services such as admission, financial aid, advising, registration, orientation, scholarships and student accounts.

Middlesex's most recent building, Crabiel Hall, received a LEED® silver rating from the United States Green Building Council, signifying its environmental attributes. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an internationally recognized mark of excellence that provides building owners with a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions.

Donald Drost Jr., executive director of facilities management, said the College is attempting to attain a gold rating for both West Hall and South Hall.