

January 19, 2022

## COLLEGE CREATES 911 DISPATCHER PROGRAM

The call came in from a panicked individual. She had been in a car accident.

"911, where is your emergency?," the dispatcher calmly asked. "A motor vehicle accident? I have your location; help is on the way."

That scenario takes place dozens of times a day, and is just one of a multitude of issues 911 telecommunicators handle. It is a high-pressure job, requiring both technical and people skills, but it is also rewarding and critical for the safety of the community.

Middlesex College now offers training that includes components in 911 Telecommunications and Emergency Medical Dispatcher. An enhanced program that encompasses both links to the College's criminal justice program, so students who want to become a police officer or go into homeland security can earn up to 6 college credits after completing the training.

Middlesex County Deputy Commissioner Director Ken Armwood and East Brunswick Township Business Administrator Joe Criscuolo approached the College with a need to build a pipeline of qualified 911 Dispatchers. Many townships in Middlesex County, including East Brunswick, have experienced a shortage in qualified 911 Dispatchers because of an increasing number of retirements. Faculty and staff at Middlesex College worked closely with Armwood, Criscuolo and East Brunswick Police Chief Frank LoSacco to develop a stackable credentialed program with pathways from non-credit to an associate's degree in police science and homeland security.

Tim Hack, chair of History and Social Sciences, and Homeland Security Professor Chris Drew were key members of the team, along with the Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning staff.

"This partnership exemplifies how Middlesex College collaborates with the community to respond to their needs," said Linda Scherr, vice president for academic



**Natalie Hnyda**

affairs. "It also shows how our academic and workforce development teams work together for the benefit of students and the community."

Those who complete both certifications can receive 6 academic credits – 3 credits for First Aid and CPR Operations and 3 for Police Operations – in the Criminal Justice program at the College. Students who complete the program are qualified to work as a 911 dispatcher or emergency medical dispatcher. The median salary for these positions is over \$46,000.

Classes are offered over zoom, and funding is available to help qualified individuals pay for the program.

Natalie Hnyda was part of the first class. She is now working for the Middlesex College Police Department.

"I always wanted to be a 911 dispatcher," she said. "I've always liked helping the community and giving back."

She said the program prepared her well for the dispatcher position at the College.

"It was a really good program," she said. "It gave us a real look at what the career entails. I'm really enjoying the job here. The department welcomed me with open arms and I love the opportunity to contribute to the College."

# WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS



President Mark McCormick, along with Vice President Linda Scherr (center) and Acting Dean Donna Howell, judged an end-of-semester Cupcake Competition in Professor Cindy Braun's Baking class. Students were divided into five teams, and each was assigned a surprise special ingredient that they had to incorporate into their cupcakes such as dragon fruit, coconut and avocado. Team Double Trouble took home the honors.



The Library held a de-stress event by distributing kits to make a Sock Snowman. Librarian Lis Oliu crocheted the little scarves that were included in the kits. Thanks to our colleagues in the Library for adding a little whimsy to the end of the semester.



Ten students were honored in December for completing the Pathways to Healthcare Bootcamp, a program at the College's New Brunswick Center in cooperation with the Rutgers Community Health Foundation.

# THE CHARGING OF COSMIC DUST

In the laboratories of Middlesex College, Cristian Llerena conducted research into the interaction of cosmic dust with plasma and radiation at the boundary of our heliosphere and interstellar space.

The academic endeavor may seem unrelatable to some, but it's a research area that has far-ranging implications for exploring space beyond the solar system, according to Physics Professor Mohit Nigam, who supervised Mr. Llerena's research at the College.

Mr. Llerena presented his research findings, which used data collected from the Voyager spacecrafts, to the American Physical Society (APS) during the APS Mid-Atlantic Section meeting held at Rutgers University on December 4.

"It's an impressive accomplishment for an undergraduate to present to an academic body as esteemed as the APS," said Dr. Nigam, who believes Mr. Llerena's APS poster presentation was just the beginning of a very promising career as a research scientist.

The opportunity for Mr. Llerena to present his research poster, titled "Charging of Cosmic Dust," was made possible thanks to an Innovation Mini Grant funded by the Middlesex College Foundation.

Mr. Llerena plans to continue his undergraduate studies in the spring at Rutgers University as a computer engineering major and then follow with graduate studies.

Mr. Llerena's affinity for conducting research began in high school but was planted firmly in the labs of Middlesex College, he says. He credits his research activities under the supervision of Middlesex College faculty such as Dr. Nigam for opening his eyes to what graduate-level research would be like.

"[The experience] taught me more things than I could have imagined. I got to learn about graduate-level physics, even if it was only a little bit, and now I have a better understanding of how a research project should be conducted," Mr. Llerena said.



Cristian Llerena



The men's basketball team is now 7-5 as they approach the second half of the season. Here, Julius Belton drives to the hoop.

## Connections

External Partner(s)	Who at Middlesex College is Involved	Action
Johnson Controls (Totowa)	Corporate Education and Training Director Vega	Met with Johnson Controls HR staff to discuss training for incumbent workers
KSI Autobody (South Plainfield)	Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning Executive Director Coffaro and Director Vega	Met with KSI Autobody HR staff to discuss training for incumbent workers
Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development	Recruitment and Program Manager Schamberger	Conducted recruitment session for new 911 Dispatcher Program
Water Tech (Edison)	Director Vega	Met with Water Tech HR staff to discuss training for incumbent workers

## Outreach

Date(s)	Outreach Activity	Location or Means of Access
Tuesday, December 21	Metuchen High School Instant Decision Day	Metuchen
Friday, January 7	Information Session on Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program for students in GED/High School Equivalency program	Virtual Event
Thursday, January 13	Edison High School Parent Night (for parents of juniors)	Virtual Event
Friday, January 14	Information Session on Healthcare Careers Apprenticeship Program for students in GED/High School Equivalency program	Virtual Event
Multiple times	Admissions Information Session*	Virtual Events
Multiple times	Paying for College Information Session*	Virtual Events
Multiple times	FAFSA on Demand Workshop*	Virtual Events
Multiple times	Health Programs Information Session	Virtual Events
Multiple times	Live chat appointments with Enrollment Services staff*	Via telephone or the Web

\*in English and Spanish

## Coming Events

Date	Event	Location or Means of Access
Wednesday, February 9*	Board Committee meetings	Via Zoom
Wednesday, February 16 8:00 a.m. = Hearing 8:30 a.m. = Board meeting	Annual Tuition and Fees Hearing followed by the Board meeting	Via Zoom

\*All morning (to be determined)