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TCNJ receives federal award for community service to youth

EWING — The Corporation for National and Community Service named The College of New Jersey to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll With Distinction for exemplary service efforts and service to disadvantaged youth. The college is the only institution in New Jersey to garner the "Honor Roll With Distinction" award.

Launched in 2006, the Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition a school can achieve for its commitment to service-learning and civic engagement. Honorees for the award were chosen based on a series of selection factors including scope and innovativeness of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service, and the extent to which the school offers academic service-learning courses.

With the help of the Bonner Community Scholars Corps, the foundation of TCNJ's Community-Engaged Learning experience which is an integral part of the college's required general education program, students at TCNJ have been increasingly engaged in community service over the past few years. Since September 2006 the Bonner scholars have been responsible for mobilizing all 1,200 first-year students who must complete an eight-hour community-engaged learning experience. The Bonnors help to organize the students into 12 issue-based teams (such as housing, homelessness), each one led by an upper-level student coordinator. Much of the service work takes place in Trenton with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Academic Sports Academy, Young Scholars Institute, and El Centro de Recursos Para Familias.

"The College of New Jersey has maintained a service-learning requirement of its students for more than a decade, and our Bonner Community Scholars program rewards students for excellence in community service," said R. Barbara Gitenstein, president of The College of New Jersey. "TCNJ's commitment to community engagement is helping students develop into leaders who make a positive impact on our college as well as those beyond our campus who are less fortunate in many ways."

The Bonnors themselves completed nearly 11,000 hours of service last year, and will complete well over 18,000 this year. Thirty-nine Bonner scholars recently returned from a weeklong rebuilding trip in New Orleans, where they blogged about their experiences.

"College students like those at The College of New Jersey are tackling the toughest problems in America, demonstrating their compassion, commitment, and creativity by serving as mentors, tutors, health workers, and even engineers," said David Eisner, chief executive officer of the Corporation for

National and [Community](#) Service. "They represent a renewed spirit of civic engagement fostered by outstanding leadership on caring campuses."

The Honor Roll is jointly sponsored by The Corporation for National and [Community](#) Service through its Learn and Serve America program, and the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, USA Freedom Corps, and the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

In congratulating the winners, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said, "Americans rely on our higher education system to prepare students for citizenship and the work force. We look to institutions like these to provide leadership in partnering with local schools to shape the civic, democratic and economic future of our country."

Overall, the [Community](#) Service Honor Roll awarded six schools with Presidential Awards. In addition, four schools were recognized as Special Achievement Award winners, 127 as Honor Roll With Distinction members and 391 schools as Honor Roll members. In total, 528 schools were recognized. A full list is available at (www.nationalservice.gov/honorroll).

"There is no question that the universities and colleges who have made an effort to participate and win the Honor Roll award are themselves being rewarded," said American Council on Education President David Ward. "Earning this distinction is not easy. But now each of these schools will be able to wear this award like a badge of honor."

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