



PENN STATE



Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity



EOC HAPPENINGS



Southwestern Pennsylvania

4000 University Drive, McKeesport, PA 15132 / Phone: 1-888-362-7972 Fax: 412-675-9076 / www.equity.psu.edu/eocswpa

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A NEWSLETTER BY PENN STATE'S EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTERS OF SWPA

January 2009



Dear Friends,

It is with much pleasure that we present to you the refreshed Educational Opportunity Centers newsletter. EOC has been a valuable community resource for more than seventeen years. Thousands of our participants have been transformed by the power of education. We have enjoyed partnerships with hundreds of schools and organizations delivering hope to those who dream of a better life.

All of our joint accomplishments and successes have made us proud. Here we stand once again at a moment of intense need. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports rises in unemployment in each of the nine counties we serve. In Pennsylvania, state schools have been asked to give back 4.25 percent of their budgets; that is approximately \$22 million leaving our state colleges and universities, and the student achievement gap continues to be a lightning rod issue for districts serving low-income and potential first-generation college students. We know there is much work to do.

EOC is committed to raising the rates of high school completion, postsecondary admissions, financial aid, and enrollment. Our commitment and dedication is built on the evidence that our society succeeds when we tap into the potential of everyone. We are excited to continue our work of helping people fulfill their educational goals.

Happy New Year,
Tahirah Abdullah



A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS... Don't miss these five gifts that keep on giving!



INDEPENDENCE CRITERIA

A determination of independence may be based on a wider variety of criteria in the 2009–10 school year. This includes being in foster care, emancipated minors, minors in legal guardianship, verified unaccompanied homeless youth, and the judgment of a previous financial aid administrator for transfer students. This change will assist students who, in the past, did not fall under the independent guidelines for federal and state financial aid programs.

GOODBYE MR. TAXMAN

You can use the Web site www.icanefile.org to file your federal and state tax returns together for free, and there is no income limit. If you are eligible, the Web site will help you claim the Earned Income Tax Credit. Keep most of your refund by not paying someone else to prepare your taxes for you. And remember, the FAFSA is much easier to complete after you've done your taxes!

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HELPS ECONOMY

The U.S. Department of Education announced that it will take further action to purchase Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program loans to ensure that students have continued

access to credit-based financial aid for college.

ACT 101 OFFERED AT MORE LOCATIONS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

More schools are offering services through the state's ACT 101 program. The Pennsylvania legislature established the Higher Education Equal Opportunity Program (Act 101) in 1971. The program provides support services for undergraduate students whose cultural, economic, and educational disadvantages might impede their ability to pursue higher education opportunities successfully. Call our office for a list of colleges that offer the program.

AND THE EMMY GOES TO...

The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (yes, the academy) gives an award for the three best student-produced films/videos created for college course credit. Judging is based on student creativity and originality, as well as production values. The awards are \$500 for third place, \$1,000 for second place, and \$2,000 for first place. Get more information at <http://cdn.emmys.tv/foundation/>



**Congratulations to
Cindy Kosek**

PAEOPP Scholarship Recipient
and EOC Perseverance Award
Winner, 2008.
Cindy is currently enrolled at
Penn State DuBois.

Ready. Set.
Apply. **Enroll.**



2009 Workshops

Allegheny County

Monday, January 12 and Thursday, February 26:
Financial aid at the Career Link East - register by calling the Career Link at 412-436-2226.

Friday, February 6: FAFSA completion at Peters Township Public Library from 10:00 a.m.-noon or 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Register with the library circulation desk at 724-941-9430, or e-mail caweaver@ptlibrary.org.

Thursday, February 12: Financial aid at the Carnegie Library-Woods Run Branch 5:30 p.m.–register with the library at 412-761-3730.

Please contact Lisa Diehl at 412-675-9078 for more information.

Beaver County

Tuesday, February 3: FAFSA completion night at Blackhawk High School at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 4: FAFSA completion night at Lincoln High School at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 14: PHEAA financial aid workshop at Elderton High School at 6:00 p.m.

Workshops also available at Allegheny West Career Link (412-809-3500) and Beaver Falls Career Link (724-728-4860).

Please contact Dana Winters at 724-773-3768 for more information.

Fayette County

Thursday, January 29: Financial aid night at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 19: FAFSA completion night at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 26: FAFSA completion night at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Please contact JoAnn Harris at 724-773-3768 for more information.

Thank You to Our New Partners

Aliquippa Alliance for Unity and Development
Alle-Kiski CareerLink
Alle-Kiski Learning Center
Arbor Education Center
Beaver Area Memorial Library
Beaver County Head Start
Beaver County Jail
BF Jones Memorial Library
EARN Program through PIC Greensburg
Family Links
Focus on Renewal—Sto Rox
Lincoln High School
Norwin Public Library
Penn State Adult Literacy Action
Rochester Library
Washington County Community Days



The EOC of SWPA with the Colorado State EOC in front of the Romero House in Fort Collins, Colorado. The Romero House celebrates Hispanic American culture in Colorado. The EOC of SWPA visited Colorado State in August to share practices and gain new ideas with the Colorado State EOC.



Counselor Lisa Diehl proudly stands with participant Cindy Kosek, winner of the EOC Perseverance Award and the 2008–2009 PAEOPP scholarship. Cindy attends Penn State DuBois.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U Ed. OVP 09-19

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Educational Opportunity Centers of Southwestern Pennsylvania

Penn State Greater Allegheny
4000 University Drive
McKeesport, PA 15132