Academic year 2014-2015 was another amazing year for NJ STARS students at Bergen Community College. Here are some highlights:

- 101 new NJ STARS students began their first term at Bergen Community College in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015
- 59 NJ STARS graduates transferred to 4-year colleges as NJ STARS II students in May, 2015
- 12 additional NJ STARS students will graduate in August, 2015 and transfer to 4-year colleges as NJ STARS II students

Although we are very proud of all our students, many of whom graduated with Honors and/or Phi Theta Kappa distinctions, two NJ STARS graduates, Rhonda Richardsen and Natasha Pineiros (pictured on the right) earned special awards. See page 2 for more information.

Laura Zottarelli, of Lodi, who became a new NJ STARS student in the Fall 2014 semester, was elected President of the Student Government Association starting in Fall 2015. Laura is pictured on the left, and above on the far left.

Why Students Should Use NJ STARS Scholarships

Students often call asking if they can still use their NJ STARS since they already went to another college. There are several reasons students give when asking to transfer to Bergen Community College in order to take advantage of the NJ STARS program. The top reasons:

- They didn’t realize how much they would owe at their current college

* They want to be closer to home; or they didn’t feel ready to be away
* They belatedly realized they could transfer to their 4-year college later and receive NJ STARS II funds

“"In addition to the reasons given by students why they should have used their NJ STARS scholarships, it should also be noted that student loan debt in the U.S. exceeds $1.2 trillion dollars."
Interactive Tool Guides New Students through Admission & Certification Processes

An Interactive NJ STARS PowerPoint presentation is now available which will help guide new students and their parents through Admissions steps and the NJ STARS certification process.

The presentation is available at www.bergen.edu/njstars (click on Resources tab in the purple sidebar on the left) or on Google Drive (see Social Media article), or it can be emailed as an attachment.

There are several ways to use this presentation:

- For questions on a particular topic, go to the Table of Contents, click on the topic and you will be directed to that particular slide.
- Click on any link on any slide to be directed to a webpage on the college’s website or another website where you will either get an answer to your question or you will find additional resources to help you find an answer.
- Click on links that will direct you to online forms which can be completed and processed quickly!

COMING SOON!!
- Audio comments to be added to PowerPoint slides
- Information Webinars will be available for students and their parents who cannot make it to one of the Information Sessions.

NJ STARS Students Awarded Top Honors

We are extremely proud of two of our NJ STARS graduates who earned top awards this year.

Rhonda Richardson, of Vernon, earned a spot on the 2015 All-USA Community College Academic Team. Only 20 students in the U.S. received this designation.

Additionally, as New Jersey’s top achieving community college student, Rhonda ranks as the state’s 2015 Coca-Cola New Century Scholar as well. She will receive a combined $7,000 in scholarships.

Natasha Pineiros, of Hackensack, earned the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship for exemplary academic performance.

Of more than 2,600 students from 540 community colleges who applied, Natasha was one of only 90 students who won this award. Natasha will receive $40,000 per year to continue her education.

Natasha shared the honor with Mariia Alibekova, Bergen Community College’s Valedictorian of the Class of 2015.
Social Media- Help Spread the Word About NJ STARS

NJ STARS of Facebook

Visit the NJ STARS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bccnjstars.

Please “like” the NJ STARS page at www.facebook.com/bccnjstars. This will help to spread the word about the NJ STARS program to your friends, and friends of friends on Facebook.

One benefit of liking the page is that you can adjust your settings to receive notifications such as “The FAFSA is due”, or “Priority registration has begun”.

You can also access the following tabs on the NJ STARS Facebook page:

* Events- Access the latest events and RSVP on applicable event/s.
* Twitter- Click to follow NJ STARS on Twitter and also access the latest NJ STARS tweets.
* YouTube- Set to the college’s channel on YouTube, you can view any Bergen Community College video uploaded to YouTube such as Studio Bergen videos, etc.
* Pinterest- Choose pins from various Pinterest boards such as Reach for the Stars, Leadership, Inspiring Quotes and Social Media & Apps for College Students.
* Photos- View recent and older photos of both current NJ STARS students and NJ STARS graduates.

NJ STARS Documents on Google Drive.

If you have a gmail account, you can access an NJ STARS folder on Google Drive that contains all of the NJ STARS documents including the Interactive NJ STARS PowerPoint presentation, Honors and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) information.

You can access the NJ STARS folder on Google Drive at www.bergen.edu/njstars. Click on the News and Events tab in the purple sidebar on the left. If you would like the direct link to the folder on Google Drive, please email ckrostek@bergen.edu.

Upcoming NJ STARS Information Sessions

Due to the success of the NJ STARS Information Sessions held at Bergen Community College in March, April and June, we have scheduled two additional sessions on Tuesday, July 14th and on Monday, August 10th.

The sessions will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at Bergen Community College in the Technology Building, Room TEC-128D.

Prospective NJ STARS students will receive information about the NJ STARS program, followed by a Q&A session. Tours and refreshments will be available, and students can bring a guest.

Representatives from the JKW School of Honors, Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), Admissions and Financial Aid as well as an NJ STARS Academic Counselor will be available to answer your questions.

Please remember to RSVP to njstars@bergen.edu.
NJ STARS is a scholarship program exclusively for New Jersey residents that covers the cost of tuition at New Jersey’s 19 community colleges.

Students who rank in the top 15 percent of their high school class at the end of either junior or senior year may be eligible.

Students must complete a rigorous series of high school courses as a first step toward eligibility, as determined by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education in consultation with the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.

Students must take at least 12 college credits per semester and are allowed to take up to 18 credits each semester if they are able to handle the course load and wish to accelerate their graduation.

For more information, go to www.bergen.edu/njstars, or send an email to Catherine Krostek @ ckrostek@bergen.edu or njstars@bergen.edu.

Effective October, 2014, students no longer have to graduate in the top 15% of their high school class to qualify for the NJ STARS scholarship.

The new legislation states that students who rank in the top 15 percent of their high school class at the end of either junior or senior year may be eligible.

Per Catherine Krostek, since we already know which students qualified in their junior year of high school, they can now come in with their NJ STARS Application/Contract before they even graduate from high school.

As a result of this new legislation, 36 new NJ STARS students have already been certified for the Fall 2015 semester; as opposed to last year when students started coming in with their contracts in mid-July.

For more information, please go to www.njstars.net.

Other NJ STARS News

To read articles about our NJ STARS students, please go to www.bergen.edu/njstars. Click on the News and Events tab in the purple sidebar on the left side of the webpage.