

## Union County College

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By President Margaret M. McMenamain, Ed.D.



**“The Institute develops training solutions to improve overall productivity, reduce cost and strengthen the competitiveness of local employers. “**

In Bill Clinton’s day, the catchphrase was, “It’s the economy, stupid.” Almost twenty years later, the economy is still stupid. However, for community colleges, our role in helping Americans cope with the nation’s economic woes is what makes our institutions the nation’s best hope for recovery.

At Union County College, our Industry-Business Institute (IBI) served more than thirty local companies in 2010 by providing training for employees in basic and technical skills. Much of the funding for these programs is provided through the New Jersey Council of County College’s Consortium and the New Jersey Business and Industry Association.

The IBI provided contract training programs and New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development training programs during 2010. Programs included Supervisory Training, English as a Second Language, Microsoft Office, Understanding Standard Operating Procedures, General Computers and Customer Service.

The Institute received \$400,000 from a congressional earmark to lead a year-long initiative to define local, “green” job opportunities, and design, field-test, revise, package and disseminate packages of instructional and related services for selected “green” jobs.

The Institute also received \$395,000 in Urban Enterprise Zone Assistance to provide for continued funding of the Retail Skills center (RSC) located at the Jersey Gardens Mall which is located within the City of Elizabeth’s Urban Enterprise Zone. The RSC helps job seekers to find job placement. Specifically, these funds provide for career training programs in customer service, job search strategies, resume writing, conflict management, time management and communication skill-building.

The Retail Skills Center also provides services to assist employers with hiring. It helps them find qualified workers through free job postings and job fairs. The Center also makes its facilities available for meetings and training.