



ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**ECC HOSTING ALL-DAY CONFERENCE
COMMEMORATING EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION**

Event Observes 150th Anniversary of the Proclamation

NEWARK – The Emancipation Proclamation was implemented by President Lincoln 150 years ago in January 1863. Essex County College (ECC) will observe this important anniversary with an all-day conference Tuesday, January 29 at the main Newark campus.

Presented by the College’s Humanities Division, the conference will focus on the theme of *Emancipation: The Meaning of Freedom*, from 1863 to 21st Century iterations of liberation and freedom. The event, in which both fulltime and adjunct faculty in the Division are participating in a series of panel discussions, will be held from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Smith Hall. A screening of the 2012 PBS film *Slavery by Another Name* will follow the conference.

The film, based on the Pulitzer Prize winning book of the same name by Douglas A. Blackmon, features ECC student Raymond Spencer as Ezekial Archey. Spencer will introduce the film. English Department faculty member, Rebecca Williams, a self-proclaimed lover of history, is spearheading the effort.

“2013 is a seminal year in that it is the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation as well as the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,” said Williams.

That march featured the famed “I Have a Dream’ speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Williams was involved in commemorating the 40th anniversary of the march as the now former Educational Program Director for the Historical Society of Plainfield where she resides.

The conference has been meant to focus on the meaning of emancipation 150 years after implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation. It will also cover how was “freedom” articulated in the 19th Century and what is meant when people talk of “freedom.”

ECC Acting Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences Stephanie A. Steplight Johnson will kick off the event at 9 a.m. with an address on emancipation. A series of faculty led panel discussions, starting at 10 a.m., will follow. Some of the topics include:

- Civil Disobedience: The New York City Draft Riots, July 13-16, 1863
- All Men are Brothers: Freedom in the Short Fiction of Louisa May Alcott
- Islam and the Search for Freedom and Liberty in America
- Emancipation: Illusionary or Evolutionary? A Discussion of Ralph Ellison's *Juneteenth*
- From the Caribbean to New York City: The Scottsboro Nine and Civil Rights in Retrospect
- Reconstructing History: Representations of Slavery and Freedom in the Work of Oscar Micheaux

The afternoon sessions will include a roundtable discussion on emancipation as a keyword a poetry readings.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to show our students and the College community the scholarship of our faculty," said Williams. "We have faculty participation across the various Humanities disciplines, including English, history and communications."

The conference is co-sponsored by the College's Associate degree Africana Studies Program and the Community College Humanities Association. The conference is free and open to the public.

Essex County College, an open access community college dedicated to academic excellence, serves the dynamic needs of diverse constituencies through comprehensive educational programs and services. With its main Newark campus, West Essex campus in West Caldwell, and satellite centers throughout Essex County, ECC enrolls more than 13,000 students who are pursuing credit courses in academic disciplines while nearly 15,000 more are enrolled in ESL and adult literacy classes, short-term job training, and numerous programs for professional development and personal enrichment. ECC has U.S. Department of Education designation as a Minority Serving Institution and is eligible also from the federal department for Predominately Black Institution grants.