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Hughes Center at Stockton selected for national polling project

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey has been selected as one of 15 colleges and universities nationally to assist in a polling project which seeks to determine how people develop stances on issues. The colleges will be guided by the American Democracy Project, and Stockton's William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy will prepare and implement the poll.

In deliberative polling, participants take an initial poll, are given balanced information on the topics, and then take a second poll. Participants take part in conversations and deliberations with other participants, experts and policy makers to discuss the topics with the help of a facilitator. When participants retake the survey, changes – either positive or negative – are measured and analyzed.

At the project's end, these deliberations will be published on television and Internet outlets, allowing the public and policy makers to see how those polled came to decisions and developed viewpoints on the issues.

Hughes Center Director Sharon Schulman said the project "fits nicely with our civic engagement initiatives for our students and community." She said the center hoped to complete the first polling project by June 2009. Training and preparations will take place in the upcoming fall semester and the first poll will be conducted and administered by the conclusion of the academic year.