

Report to the Board of Trustees
President R. Barbara Gitenstein
December 2, 2004

Thank you Madame Chairwoman. I am very pleased to report to the Board on some excellent successes and recent areas of focused work at The College.

Let me begin with my observations of the Middle States Association exit interview given by Dr. Janet Dudley-Eschbach, yesterday. This report is a summary of the report we should receive in a week or 10 days for our correction of errors and within a month or so in final form. The site team's recommendations will then be shared with the Middle States Association Committee on Self Study which will together consider what should be the recommendation for action by the entire commission.

While we do not yet know all of the specifics of the report, my impression of the interview (which was shared by other campus members and also confirmed by Dr. Eshbach) was that the report will be very positive. There were no requirements observed that would indicate not meeting a Middle States standard. There were several areas suggested for improvement – almost all of which we had identified ourselves as areas for self-improvement in our self-study that formed the basis for the team's review. I will not list them all, but just give a sense of the types of suggestions/recommendations that will be forthcoming.

The team suggested the production of a concise and comprehensive strategic planning document that would serve as a sort of middle ground between the very global mission statement (approved by the Board four years ago) and the very detailed planning framework (which is in draft form). We were encouraged to develop multi-year budget models and better ways of sharing and explaining the results of our assessment of programs and initiatives. As a Middle States Commissioner, I was particularly struck by the numerous commendations that were proffered. I will resist detailing all of them, but it is appropriate that the Board understand just how positive a report this was. The team commented on our candid and participatory self-study, on our commitment to continual self improvement, on our effecting tremendous changes in the campus over a very short period, on our engaged and hard working faculty, and on our greater focus on outcomes vs. inputs in evaluating ourselves. The team described the academic transformation as exemplary and the level and quality of the changes in recent years almost unbelievable. In her conclusion, Dr. Eshbach stated that the site visitors were "deeply impressed with the story of the transformation that was begun in the recent past and continues to this day." She continued to describe TCNJ as an "institution of remarkable achievement" at a "moment of new maturity."

As you will see later in the meeting, the Board will have an opportunity to consider a resolution thanking all the exceptional faculty, staff and students who helped TCNJ in the Middle States process – wonderful commitment and dedication that will surely help us as we move forward. I look forward to receiving the final report – which of course will be shared.

Because of trustee interest and in the absence of a Vice President for Development, it is probably appropriate that I report in this venue in more detail than usual regarding private fund raising. We have seen some noteworthy successes during the fall semester: the sponsorship of last evening's Public Issues Summit by Nexus Properties, a newly established full-ride scholarship funded by ETS for a Trenton Central student who is admitted to TCNJ, an oral commitment of \$25,000 to the Bonner Center from a local corporation, a \$20,000 contribution to the Women in Learning and Leadership Program (WILL) by the Bunbury Foundation, and a \$250,000 contribution of the Martinson Foundation for a partnership between our Children Designing and Engineering program (CDE, Department of Technology Education) and the local Boys and Girls Club. I am pleased to report that we have been asked to participate in the second level application of Wachovia's Teacher Initiative and we just recently were informed that our request for federal funding for the Bonner Center (\$340,000) was included in the omnibus appropriation bill passed last week. There are several asks out for corporation support of the EOF Promise Award and we have confirmed contributions of \$52,500 for EOF Promise from several companies and foundations, including Lockheed Martin, Ford Motor Company, and the Lowell Johnson Foundation.

Even with all this good news, we are unfortunately running behind total giving this year compared to last at this time – largely because last year at this time we had received a very large bequest. Currently, a large bequest is being finalized, but we will probably not receive any income until January or February. There are three letter campaigns being led by volunteer leadership, directed at our three volunteer boards (Trustee, Foundation, and Alumni Association). These campaigns are urging a significant increase in personal contributions to the annual fund – all of which supports student aid (merit and need-based). I hope that everyone considers this opportunity for giving seriously. I want to personally thank those of you who have already given so generously and all of you who have been willing to take leadership in making the “asks.”

During the fall semester there were four very successful fund raising/friend raising events. The Golf and Tennis Outing was sold out for the third year in a row. Everyone had a great time and we raised \$36,000 for scholarships. We welcomed more than 8,000 guests (alumni, parents, friends) at Homecoming and celebrated with our local community with a parade through Ewing. On October 20, we held the first Washington, D.C. alumni gathering – which was so successful, we've got another one in the works for March. On November 4, we had the glitziest booth at the New Jersey Educational Association Conference Exhibit hall. Yes, because it was Atlantic City, we had a Wheel of Fortune – with slots for the 6 different names of the College. Individuals spun the wheel and then got some TCNJ memorabilia if the wheel stopped at the name they had chosen. After all that gaming, we hosted approximately 135 alumni at a reception at the hotel, and over 260 alumni registered and updated their information on our online community.

There are a couple of projects that are worth mentioning today because of the impact they will have on our national positioning. First, on October 25, I was part of a presentation to

the American Council on Education regarding our institutional transformation/planning process. The National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) has chosen TCNJ as its first case study to illustrate what they are calling “Building Organizational Capacity.” The presentation was in draft form, but when it is complete, we will share it with the Board. The thesis of NACUBO’s study is that institutions that effect and sustain real transformative change do so in a very deliberate and thorough fashion. They cite our success in the case study. I believe our recent Middle States exit interview might confirm that as well.

Second, on December 13, we will host a town hall meeting on the most pressing issues in education, sponsored by the *New York Times*. While this is sponsored, promoted and structured by the *Times*, they specifically sought out TCNJ as the appropriate place for the event because of our geographical centrality and historical reputation as an exemplary teacher education program. We have already received over 120 RSVP’s, including K-12 leadership from all over the state (principals, superintendents, commissioners of education), representatives from the governor’s office, and our own faculty and students.

I continue to work closely with the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU) presidents and the New Jersey Presidents Council in advocating for state dollars for public higher education. We are still waiting to receive the full funding promised for fiscal year 2005 – I have been in contact with the treasurer’s office and he is aware of just how much we need the funding that has been promised, and he is sympathetic to our situation. But as we all know from the newspapers, the state has significant challenges with its budget. And I must say rumors regarding next year’s budget are even grimmer.

Which brings to mind what Charles Dickens said in his novel about the French Revolution: “It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.” But as you all know, TCNJ has not attained its stature in higher education by looking at a glass half empty. Throughout our recent history we have embraced challenges and taken thoughtful risk. We cannot afford to change that culture now. With your support and wisdom, we shall continue to achieve our “arc of aspiration.”

Thank you.