

Presidents Remarks – TCNJ Public Board Meeting – February 27, 2007

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Let me begin by introducing Jack Kirnan, who has joined us as Interim Dean of the School of Business. Jack comes to TCNJ from Rutgers University where he served as the Senior Director of their MBA programs. Previous to that position, Jack had a highly successful career on Wall Street. He was a leading auto and auto parts analyst, holding a variety of senior-level positions at Merrill Lynch, Kidder Peabody, and Salomon Smith Barney. After that, he assumed senior management and research positions at Credit Suisse First Boston and Charles Schwab. He earned a PhD, in Economics from Fordham University.

Welcome.

As I am sure everyone is aware, Governor Corzine delivered his second budget address on February 22, 2007.

I am very thankful that Governor Corzine recognizes the absolute need for increased support of higher education and am appreciative that he has proposed, despite the state's significant financial constraints, additional funding for fiscal 2008. Higher education has gone without necessary and reliable support for more than a decade, and our colleges and universities will undoubtedly diminish in quality if they do not receive consistent and predictable funding going forward. During this time frame, the success of TCNJ has been extraordinary—as evidenced by our consistent excellent rankings in U.S. News and World Report, Kiplinger's and Barron's and the continued growth in interest in attending The College. We have been part of something very very special for the citizens of the state of New Jersey and it is our collective obligation to preserve this extraordinary opportunity for our students.

In his proposed budget, Governor Corzine included a 4.4% increase for independent colleges, 6.7% for community colleges, and a 1.5% increase for senior public colleges and universities. His proposal also included modest increases for TAG, EOF, and NJStars I and II; overall, a 2.3% increase for higher education. The governor's proposal is surely a step in the right direction, but we are concerned that the increase proposed for the senior publics will not cover state-negotiated labor contracts or other mandatory cost increases for the senior public colleges and universities.

One additional area of concern is that the proposal continues the phase-out of the Outstanding Scholar Recruitment Program, a program that has done much to keep our state's most academically talented students in New Jersey. The state and region is facing a shortage of nurses and highly qualified teachers, and the statistics show that OSRP was helping address those problems. The numbers also prove that OSRP has helped retain New Jersey's top science majors, who are vital to an economy so linked to the

pharmaceutical industry. Eliminating the Outstanding Scholar Recruitment Program will negatively impact our economy, our educational system, and the quality of life of New Jersey residents. I hope that New Jersey can find the means to reinvigorate its commitment to merit aid for high-achieving students. I will certainly continue to advocate for its restoration.

As is true in the past, the governor's budget is the foundation for the conversation that will ensue with the assembly and legislature over the next 4 months, but it is necessary to acknowledge the extraordinary financial challenges faced by the state. While we cannot predict the final outcome of the budget discussions, we can go into the discussions with the confidence that TCNJ has a strong foundation on which to advocate for support.

We continue to see great progress in our engagement of alumni and to see wonderful increases in fund-raising. We have had several extraordinary gifts this year: \$5million from Tom and Carol Loser, substantial increases to their scholarship program by Barbara and Vic Pelson; an \$100,000 gift from Kim Wentworth for the naming of a reading room in the library—just to name a few. Recently, there have been wonderful events all over the country—in Florida, in D.C., and all over New Jersey—to keep alumni up to date on the current success of the college and to help facilitate their networking with one another. As a consequence we continue to see growth in the percentage of alumni giving back to TCNJ—in all ways, financially and in support of our programs, students, and admissions programs. But our goal to reach 10,000 alumni giving is a high bar and all of us will continue to have to encourage others to participate in supporting their alma mater.

Other promising news centers on our information about applications for next year's class. Our applications for the fall 2007 season continue to look extremely good: we are currently ahead of last year's application numbers by 10% (and 33% above the year before that); the academic profile of the applications continues very strong and our increase in applications from underrepresented groups has increased significantly (27% of the applicant pool reported as "non-white" vs. 21% in '06; there is an increase of 10% in Black applicants, 9% in Hispanic, and 21% in Asian Pacific). There is a 35% increase in out-of-state applicants.

The faculty searches for next year's class also continue strong: 14 tenure-track searches are underway this year. So far, six outstanding teacher-scholars have accepted our offer to join the faculty in September. Of these 6, all are women and 4 are non-white. Negotiations with 3 additional candidates are ongoing as of today and the remaining 5 searches are in various stages of interviewing and wrapping up.

Of special note: In the Geoscience line, a summa cum laude graduate of the TCNJ physics department (with a minor in Classical Studies) will be returning to the College to share her enthusiasm for science with our undergraduates. Dr. Maggie Benoit comes to us from a post-doc at MIT and has conducted research in Alaska, Ethiopia, and Antarctica.

These are excellent indicators of our continued progress at TCNJ, and we must make sure that these facts are widely acknowledged. In the next year, we must focus a great deal of attention on articulating in crisp and forceful detail just how successful TCNJ has been at realizing its mission and serving the citizens of the state of New Jersey. That success is both in the kinds of details that I have just articulated, in the continued recognition by third party sources, and in the very fact that we are never really satisfied with our success. One of our cultural values is that we always strive to be better at what we do, to serve our students, their future employers, the state of New Jersey, and the enterprise of higher education better and more effectively than we currently are doing. The process of articulating who we are must begin with a reinvigorated strategic planning process. Strategic planning emphasizes our attention to institutional effectiveness, in all its aspects, including learning outcomes assessment, financial management, increasing diversity of revenue streams, responsiveness to state needs and mandates, alumni success, and faculty quality as evidenced by teaching, scholarship, and service to the College and their disciplines. The result of this attention will surely assure our publics that we are truly an engaged and accountable institution, a very special community and organization that simply must be preserved.

I look forward to some very important events this spring, including our induction ceremony for our new Phi Beta Kappa chapter, the performance of George Carlin, the continuing success of our spring athletic programs, and the planting of grass where the Pennington Road Apartments used to be!

Thank you.