

The College of New Jersey
Board of Trustees
February 24, 2005 Public Meeting

R. Barbara Gitenstein
President's Report

(Due to inclement weather the February 24, 2005 public board meeting was abbreviated and only action items were considered. The following remarks are being submitted as an update.)

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman.

It is a pleasure to provide a report to the Board today. I hope that most of you have had the opportunity to review the mid-year report that I shared with the campus leaders on January 26, 2005, and with the Board in the materials we sent you in preparation for the meeting. I am extremely pleased with our successes over the last several months in focusing our attention on 9 major areas for the improvement of The College of New Jersey. As in the past, the full report is also mounted on the website. I look forward to sharing with the full community and the Board our annual results, preliminarily at the June Board meeting and in final form at my opening address next fall.

Even since the finalization of that report, the College's successes have continued. Let me cite just a few:

1. We have been informed that our pass rate for the 2004 taking of the PRAXIS test (required for teacher educators) was 100%.
2. We are seeing excellent progress in the Library project and are enjoying a very productive relationship with Hunt Construction in addressing any issues.
3. On January 17, Dr. Randal Pinket, president and CEO of BCT Partners, a technology and policy consulting firm in Newark and a former Rhodes scholar was our Martin Luther King keynote speaker.
4. February 9, 2005 was an extraordinary celebration—and I will not take his thunder, but allow Bob Gladstone to tell you all about it in his report on the sesquicentennial.
5. On February 16, Kweisi Mfume, immediate past president of the NAACP visited our campus and challenged our entire community to excellence in all areas of our lives.
6. Last night, Professor Bill Ball hosted a Public Issues Summit, focusing local attention on the United States' role in the world.
7. Currently, the Opera theatre is performing the Pirates of Pinzance.
8. Both our men and women's basketball teams have concluded very successful and heartbreakingly close to championship seasons.

These specifics are just illustrative of the extraordinary and numerous things that characterize the recent College experience.

But in the midst of all these wonderful notations, we have to confront reality—particularly the New Jersey reality. As Governor Codey’s budget message has not yet been delivered, the state colleges and universities do not have a clear picture on his recommendations on state support for higher education; however, the budget challenges of the state are quite public. Collectively the leaders of New Jersey’s colleges and universities continue our active lobbying on higher education’s behalf, particularly focusing our attention on the funding of the salary program that was negotiated with our employees by the Governor’s Office.*

The only responsible way to address such challenges is to develop a plan, based on a clear sense of mission. Our mission-based planning process which has been in place since 1999 has allowed us to weather the recent budgetary trials and will stand us in good stead in the months and years to come. On March 1, 2005, I will have the opportunity to share with the new trustees a summary of that planning process and its success. This document will be shared with all trustees and will be mounted on the web for stakeholders to view planning in an historical context and will serve as a summary (but organic and flexible) institutional strategic plan summary.

Each committee of the Board is involved in certain features of institutional planning and several agenda topics for the February meetings focus on specific planning exercises (Academic Affairs: programmatic planning for possible Katzenbach partnership, strategic plan for the School of Engineering, follow up to recommendations of the Honors and Scholars Task Force; Finance and Construction: newly devised reporting documents, update on the internal audit process; Student Life: housing and residential planning).

After our action agenda this afternoon, the Board will have the opportunity to hear from our Director of Anti-Violence Initiatives and be updated on our progress in response to the work and recommendations that came forward from the Sexual Assault Task Force that I named in spring 2001. Like the other planning initiatives, this new program is the result of a community coming together to identify issues and develop responses to improve the community and in so doing “sustain and advance the communities in which [we] live.”

Thank you.

*Since the time of this presentation, Governor Codey has delivered his budget address which includes flat funding for our base appropriation and resources to cover a portion of the negotiated salary increases for FY06. While we are not sure of the specific amount allocated to TCNJ, we believe it will be less than 20% of the total obligation.