

Presidents Remarks – TCNJ – July 10, 2007

Thank you, Chair Holland.

Let me begin my remarks with information about the conclusion of budget discussions with regard to the state appropriation to higher education in New Jersey. As I had said at the time of the Governor's budget address on February 22, 2007, the news this year is certainly better than last year. The governor's budget proposal for investment in higher education was largely endorsed by the final legislation Governor Corzine signed on June 28, 2007. The budget restores four and one-half percent of the eight percent cut that was sustained by institutions of higher education in FY 2007. For TCNJ, that translated into an addition of \$1.609 million to our base appropriation. In addition, we will be receiving some resources from the pool of salary dollars that was allocated for the annualization of the negotiated salary increases of the FY07 budget. (We do not yet have an official notice of what that amount would be, but we are planning for about \$200,000). While all of this is welcome news indeed, there are additional challenges that we must meet that will not be covered by this state investment. The largest of these include additional salary increases negotiated at the state level and inflationary increases, including those for fuel and utilities. All of those must be addressed before we could consider any additional investment to enhance student opportunity and access or respond to state and community needs. It was gratifying throughout the state budget process to acknowledge the support and help of several of our legislators who sought to add resources for higher education. For instance, Senator Doria sponsored a bill for additional state dollars for all sectors of higher education, including a request for resources to cover the salary increases negotiated by the state and Senator Shirley Turner sponsored a bill to restore the Outstanding Scholar Recruitment Program. While neither of these bills was successful, all of higher education should be appreciative of the commitment to higher education that these sponsors manifest by their advocacy for these programs and bills.

In the face of this challenge, I am relieved that we will be able to keep our tuition increase lower than last years and still be able to meet our salary obligations, address the inflationary costs and invest in some much needed restorations to and enhancements of programs that respond to needs of the state and our students. The board will be acting on a 6% increase in tuition and a 4.5% increase in room and board. Added to the increases in mandatory fees, the total increase for a residential student will be 5.9%.

Because we have continued to seek new efficiencies and continued to focus our attention on reallocating resources to primary purpose, we will be able this year to invest in support for a wonderfully revitalized student life division, an enhanced accountability/internal audit function, the second stage of the academic transformation, and restoration of some resources to maintenance and information technology programs. While the needs far outweighed the resources available, I am confident that next year's budget plan helps TCNJ move ahead in its ambitious plans to serve its students, support its faculty, respond to state mandates, and improve the local community.

As I announce these new investments, I do so fully aware of the hard work and sacrifices of many of our staff and faculty who have made this possible. Innumerable community members have gone above and beyond the call of duty, taking on new responsibilities in consolidated services and programs, and continuing to provide the kind of service that we prize at The College. All have been part of helping us refine our priorities and together they have provided the foundation for some difficult decisions that were necessary in this environment. The faculty and deans are to be especially commended on their thoughtful review of academic programs being considered for closure. In accordance with the TCNJ Program Closure Policy, the community has been engaged in discussion regarding the potential closing of select graduate programs for well over a year. The Board of Trustees' Academic Affairs Committee has been updated regularly on the progress of these discussions during the year.

In accordance with the TCNJ Program Closure Policy adopted by the Board of Trustees in December 2005, I have recommended that the Board of Trustees take action at its October public meeting to discontinue the following programs:

- MED in Elementary Supervision
- MED in Elementary Master Teaching
- MED in Elementary and Early Childhood Education
- MED in Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant
- Substance Abuse Post-Masters Certificate
- Masters in Speech Pathology

None of these decisions was made easily, but all have been made with considerable input and discussion from the campus community.

The statistics on next year's class of students suggest that we will have another extraordinary year. Projections for Fall 2007 indicate that the class will be at least as large as last year's (about 1300 incoming freshmen and about 300 transfers); however the SAT profile and high school rank will be a bit lower than last year's. I am convinced that this drop is the direct result of the state's failure to fund the Outstanding Scholar Recruitment Program. We continued to provide institutional merit scholarships to a smaller group of students, but we were unable to provide the resources necessary to make up for the state's portion of OSRP. One of our first projects for the new year will be to develop an institutional plan that can turn the tide for the fall of 2008 so that we can return to our high water mark in inputs of the freshman class. But, it is very important to underline that while some input statistics are not quite as stellar as those for the class of Fall 2007, this fall's freshman class is an extraordinarily talented group of young people. They will add a tremendous variety and pool of talent to our community.

The out of state enrollment for this fall increased to 85 (from 62) . And as we have seen over the last 5 years or so, the ethnic diversity of our incoming class continues strong (African American enrollees increased from 91 to 97; Asian-Americans grew to 140 from 123 and Hispanic/Puerto Rican will be 123 , a drop from last year's historic high of 143, but higher than any previous year).

This remarkable class will benefit from the increasingly talented faculty who are attracted to TCNJ. Over the last two years, we have hired 34 new faculty and librarians which continue to enhance the diversity of the faculty in gender, ethnic background, and discipline: 15 are women; 6 are Asian, 2 are African-American, 1 is Hispanic; 7 were appointed in business; 9 in science, 8 in culture and society, 1 in education and 5 in engineering. These new faculty earned doctorates from some of the best institutions in the nation, including Princeton, Penn, Johns Hopkins, Cornell and Purdue, just to name a few.

During the next year, we will be focusing a good deal of attention on bringing new senior leadership to the campus to address pressing needs that were identified by the community over the last several years: we will be searching for a permanent Executive Vice President and Provost, a General Counsel, and a Chief of Police. All of these searches are underway; we hope that the Chief will be named before the end of the summer, the General Counsel sometime in the fall, and the EVP/Provost no later than the end of the Spring semester.

I do not mean to suggest that all we do in the summer is wait for the fall. Indeed, much of the planning for next year is begun during these months. For instance, on June 20, 2007, we held a wonderfully productive retreat that included the President's Advisory Council as well as faculty, staff, and student leadership. The results of this retreat will lay the groundwork for new initiatives that should guide our investment of time and finances over the next 3-5 years. These initiatives include a focus on diversifying revenue streams, on enhancing institutional accountability (both financially and educationally), on improving our accessibility by revamping scholarship and financial aid programs as well as advisement and support programs, on enhancing our campus sense of community and on our integration into the larger township and county communities, and on proactively marketing and positioning TCNJ as the national exemplar that we assert in our mission statement.

In addition to these planning activities, the campus has welcomed summer students to our Governor's School of the Arts, College Bound, Special Olympics and the second year of our Urban Teacher Academy. Alumni affairs and major events offices have been very busy over the last several months with Reunion Weekend, May 5 and Commencement on May 18. There have also been a series of smaller staff and faculty "thank you" events including a "governance tea" and an ice cream social which were well attended and a sweet break in both cases.

The faculty and administrative leadership have established excellent foundations for our move into the future, and I feel confident in the creativity and commitment of our community to address the challenges that currently confront higher education. But as a community, we also must recognize that perhaps our most important job over the next several years will be to engage a much broader group in understanding the power and promise of higher education in general and the quality and accountability of TCNJ in particular. We must become constant and consummate advocates not only for resources but also for the continued authority and autonomy which will allow us to fulfill our special mission to the state. The New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities has just initiated a major program: the New Jersey College Promise campaign. As a member institution, TCNJ is intimately involved in this advocacy plan which seeks to present to the citizenry of the state the need for a robust and diverse set of public institutions, in order to meet the range and numbers of New Jerseyans who seek post secondary

education and the wide range of businesses and companies that seek well prepared employees. Building on that shared program of advocacy, TCNJ will mount its own effort to assure that the people of New Jersey, particularly the opinion leaders of the state, are fully aware of the specific benefits of a TCNJ education and the specific benefits of TCNJ as a corporate entity and intellectual center to the state and to the Mercer County community. We will continue to underline our position as a fully engaged and accountable institution—who seeks not only to create the leaders of the future, but also to help improve the communities of Ewing, Trenton, Mercer County and the state of New Jersey.

Thank you.