

**R. Barbara Gitenstein
President's Report
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 6, 2009**

During the last four months, The College of New Jersey has been forced to implement unprecedented changes in work arrangements with our faculty and most of our staff. As late as June 3, we had been planning to implement a budget, based on a tuition and general educational services fee increase of 3%, that included no layoffs and no furloughs. However, soon thereafter, it became clear that the contracts the state was renegotiating with CWA, IPFTE, and later with AFT, included furloughs as well as deferred increases. The College was informed in no uncertain terms that we were mandated to implement the contracts as ratified by the membership.

Because of the timing of the discussions between the state and the unions and because of the complexity of the changes mandated, the Board was not able to act on the College's budget for FY10 until September 8, a full 9 weeks later than we had planned.

I believe that we are well on our way to ironing out the major problems in implementing these changes. In addition, I am pleased to say that we have already shared the certification information with the state regarding certain allocation and budget details, a requirement for us to receive the federal stimulus dollars meant to substitute for the reduction in state funding that was included in the original governor's budget. And just this week, while I have some questions about the assumptions in the state directives in making our calculations with regard to the stimulus funds that the state used to maintain support for TAG funding, I am also pleased to say that we have submitted that particular data as well. In other words, we have crossed significant hurdles in this most unpleasant and seemingly interminable budget season. But to say the problems are over would be misleading.

The personal and institutional impact of the reductions in investments in our dedicated faculty, staff and administration will surely be felt across the campus and the time spent in managing these certifications and new reporting requirements undoubtedly takes away from our primary purpose. There continues to be frustration and anger—in every quarter—faculty, staff, and administration, but I believe that we have collectively determined we cannot be paralyzed by these feelings. We must turn to the challenge of the new year and the promise of The College's future.

First, let me share some of the status with regard to other challenges that we are facing:

1. We have been very active in planning and responding to the threat of the H1N1 flu. The Critical Incident Planning Group has been active throughout the summer. The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee were all provided

- updates on the planning activities to date. The College will remain vigilant, but I do believe that we have been diligent in providing a foundation to protect our community.
2. There have been two articles in the press in the last several days that reference TCNJ that could bear some public comment:
 - a. Yesterday (October 5), the *Times* of Trenton published an article on campus crime (at Princeton, TCNJ, Mercer County, and Rider). The article was precipitated by the annual publication of crime statistics on college campuses. While we at TCNJ saw some gratifying drops in some areas of crime, we did report (what all of us already knew) a very significant increase in vehicular theft. As Chief Collins shared with the reporter, we have reason to believe that we are making progress in controlling this problem as the numbers of stolen cars have dropped precipitously in the last 6 months. We certainly take all such crimes seriously and have evidenced our commitment to the safety and security of our campus by our recent investments based on recommendations for the Security Audit.
 - b. Bob Braun's *Star Ledger* column of Sunday (October 4) commented on President Emeritus William Bowen's book on graduation rates and cited TCNJ's 68% 4 year graduation rate as the best, but hardly praiseworthy, graduation rate of any of the public institutions in New Jersey. This graduation rate was not news to any of the administration or faculty of the campus and it is an area of improvement that we have been addressing. Our Center for Institutional Effectiveness has been collecting data to determine graduation rates for specific cohorts, disciplines, and specific populations in order to determine the need for specific support programs. While we can argue that the 4-year rate is somewhat deceptive, Mr. Braun's point must not be disregarded. With students as talented as ours and faculty as committed as ours are to undergraduate education, there is no doubt that our graduation rate should not simply be the best graduation rate at a public institution in New Jersey or in the northeast or of our type across the nation (all of which is true, by the way), but our graduation rate should instead mirror the private institutions with which we compete. This is a challenge we embrace and have been working hard to address in the last several years.

Second, this has been an excellent beginning of the year. The freshman class of 1285 is a very talented group. The average SAT for the generally admitted student was 1287 and the high school rank was the 90%. The class is made up of varsity athletes, high school newspaper editors, band and orchestra members and yes a former cast member of *Law and Order*. We

enrolled the largest transfer class (350) in a decade. In addition to a wonderful new class of 22 faculty, we welcomed 3 new academic deans.

Our administrative leadership has been actively pursuing the possibilities for enhancing students' lives by a thorough study of our exceptionally successful athletic program and beginning plans for a Town Center—one that we hope will take advantage of the opportunities provided by the New Jersey Higher Education Partnership Act (or the New Jersey Economic Stimulus Act), NJSIA 18A: 64-85 that allows us to enter into public/private partnerships with developers.

And finally in the last several weeks, we have seen confirmation from our alumni of their support for their alma mater. Over the last month, we met with over 100 alumni and supporters—most new faces—at events from Sea Girt to New Egypt to Cape May. They all express love and pride in The College.

We have a lot to do, but we have a lot of supporters who wish to help us.

Thank you