

**2012 Welcome Back Address
R. Barbara Gitenstein
August 29, 2012**

Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to welcome everyone this afternoon. Let me begin my remarks by acknowledging some of those in attendance this afternoon. I would ask each of you to stand to be recognized as I call your name. I ask the audience to please hold applause until all have been introduced.

From the board of trustees:

- **Robert Altman**
- **Eleanor Horne**
- **Rosie Hymerling**

Former trustee:

- **Walter Chambers**

Student trustee . . . and alternate student trustee . . .

- **Meagan Coburn**

Faculty representatives to the Board:

- **?**

And staff representatives to the Board:

- **Stephanie Chestakow**

Special guests:

- **Randy Lumia – Chair, Foundation Board**
- **Bill Cahill—Chair, Alumni Association**
- **Kimberly Brandley – Foundation Board**
- **Teresa Martinac—Alumni Association**
- **Ed Mauer—Alumni Association**
- **Mike Nitti – Ewing School Superintendent**

Please accept my sincere thanks for your dedication to this institution that we all hold so dear. <applause>

From the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association and representatives of our union leadership:

- **?**

Please accept my sincere thanks for your service and dedication to The College. <applause>

Please be seated.

I would also like to welcome back to campus our faculty and staff emeriti who have joined us today. Your commitment to excellence and to our

students has been the foundation upon which we have built our continued success. Please stand to be recognized. <applause>

We begin the 2012-2013 academic year on a strong footing. Our success in attracting some of the most talented freshmen students in the state and the region continues to be a point of pride. For this year's entering freshman class we received more than 10,290 applications for 1375 positions, a 72% increase in applications since 2001. We continue to see increases in applications from a number of cohorts: there have been increases in applications from African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Educational Opportunity Fund, and out of state applicants. Despite this growth in applications and enrollees, we have maintained a very strong academic profile, with our generally admitted students bragging a 1262 SAT average and a 91% in high school graduating class. As in years past, these students have exhibited leadership in high school organizations (including as newspaper editors and drum majors) and in commitment to service (having volunteered in Costa Rica and India as well as coaching for Special Olympics). These new members of our community have visited 107 different countries and territories and speak over 40 different languages and dialects.

The Fall 2012 freshman class join a very talented student body. Last year, our students were recognized by a number of national honorary societies including Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Tau Delta, Sigma Delta Pi, Pi Sigma Epsilon, and Beta Gamma Sigma. One student was awarded a Fulbright, another a Soros Fellowship for New Americans (this student also received a Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Fellowship). Students were supported for study abroad with a Critical Language Scholarship from the United States State Department, a Gilman Scholarship, the William J. Clinton Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Several of our students won honors from the American Council of Teachers of Russian, and the Association of Italian-American Educators. Other were recognized by the American Chemical Society, New Jersey Counseling Association, the American School Counseling Foundation, the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education, the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Council of Teachers of English. And one of our students was elected

president of the New Jersey State Student Nurses Association

Students have written articles and presented at national conferences—both as single authors and as co-authors or co-presenters with their faculty mentors on topics ranging from sexuality to literary analysis, from gender studies to marketing, from economics to philosophy, from communications to chemistry. Our Engineering students won first place for their design at the ASME International Mechanical Engineering Congress & Exposition, multiple awards at the International Solar Splash competition (a solar boat design competition), a design award for the Micromouse competition, and a design award at the Northeast Bioengineering Conference. Working with Engineers without Borders, a team of our students designed and implemented a water resources project for a village in Thailand and students from Technology Education won numerous awards at the Technology Education Collegiate Association’s Eastern Regional Conference. Our TCNJ Chorale participated, as the only United States choir, at the “Hand in Hand” concert at Lincoln Center, in an international benefit to support Japan’s reconstruction. TCNJ’s Physics Department continues to graduate a very large number of majors, ranking in the top 4% nationally of all 498 U.S. colleges and universities that offer only baccalaureate degrees.

National exams continue to confirm that our students are very prepared to enter their professions:

- The 2011 Nursing Class achieved a 96.49% pass rate on the NCLEX**
- FNP- Family Nurse Practitioner pass rate for 2011 was 100%**
- Teacher certification candidates achieved a 100% pass rate on the Praxis Exam,**
- Department of Counselor Education students achieved a 100% first-time pass rate on the National Counselor Examination,**
- Our accounting graduates continue to lead New Jersey in their success at passing the CPA exam,**
- And Fundamentals of Engineering**

Last year was again a very successful year in athletics. Nine of our teams were named New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Champions; 20 of our student athletes were named NJAC individual Champions; two of our

student athletes were named Division III players of the year, and two were named National Champions. Our women's Field Hockey team won the NCAA III National Championship. TCNJ athletes are true scholar-athletes. Over 300 TCNJ student-athletes maintained a GPA over 3.0 and 166 were recognized by NJAC for All-Academic honors. Our coaches were also recognized this year: our coaches include an inductee into the Wrestling Hall of Fame, a National Coach of the Year, and a NCAA Rookie Coach of the Year.

This kind of success does not happen without intentionality in the leadership of the Student Affairs division. In an effort to enhance the engagement of our students in the community and to improve the integration of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, Student Affairs implemented two major initiatives last spring. The Cabinet of Student Advisors (COSA) was created as a forum for ongoing dialogue between key student leaders and senior administrative leaders across the College, providing diverse student voices as we cultivate a more collaborative approach. The second initiative, the Student Conduct's Mediation Program, was developed to promote alternative strategies for resolving conflict and in keeping with the recent adoption of the new Student Conduct Code. The call for interested faculty, staff and student volunteers resulted in a remarkable response (165 applications). Thirty-five community members have already spent 30 hours in training over the summer and are now ready to participate in this new process.

As well as the remarkable new freshman class, we will be welcoming 22 new faculty and one new librarian for FY13. These faculty were appointed in Psychology; Civil Engineering; Marketing; Health and Exercise Science; History; Biology; Art and Art History; Sociology and Anthropology; Special Education, Language and Literacy; Computer Science and Interactive Multimedia; Physics; Counselor Education; Political Science; and English. They come to us with graduate degrees from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, San Diego State, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Pennsylvania, Penn State, Princeton, University of Minnesota, Duke University, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, Northwestern University, New York University, Lehigh, University of California Berkeley, Rutgers, University of Cambridge, Indiana University, Harvard University, Washington University, and Columbia. Many of our new colleagues bring with them impressive experiences teaching at other institutions of higher education, including

Vanderbilt, Bowdoin and Mt. Holyoke. Some have extensive experience in publishing and others in K-12 teaching and many held impressive postdoctoral fellowships at Stanford, Los Alamos and National Institutes of Health. They have received Fulbright awards and awards from the Warhol Foundation/Creative Capital's Arts Writer Program. Two of our new faculty are returning to their undergraduate *alma mater* and we are proud to welcome them home.

I am also very pleased to report that we will be continuing this infusion of new energy into the academic community as we are conducting 17 faculty searches this coming year.

Just as the new students will join a distinguished cadre of upperclassmen, so will our new faculty join a remarkable returning faculty. Two of our faculty received Fulbright awards last year and one will be a fellow at The Institute for Advanced Study this year.

In the school of Humanities and Social Science, the faculty can boast a remarkably productive year, including 65 refereed scholarly activities, 33 book chapters, 2 books, 4 edited volumes, 38 national conference, 9 awards, and 12 invited lectures and readings. A faculty member in business published the 10th edition of his text on basic finance last year and will celebrate a new edition of an introduction on investments this year.

TCNJ hosted a number of nationally recognized academic conferences. The 2012 biennial national conference of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) brought over 620 faculty members and administrators from across the country and the globe to our campus. Faculty from the Art and Communications hosted a national workshop, "Music, Mind, and Invention," honoring artificial intelligence pioneer Marvin Minsky which attracted leading scientists, video game designers, mathematicians, musicians, and authors. Faculty creative work has been on display in the Vox Populi Gallery in Philadelphia. TCNJ faculty were recognized by the Mass Communication and Society Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and the Association for the Education of Young Children. The lead designer and developer for ZooBurst, an award-winning digital storytelling platform, is a TCNJ faculty member.

Faculty received grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education (recognized by the Secretary of Higher Education as the top grant for teacher education in the state), the National Health Information Technology program and the National Science Foundation. Faculty were named to the Center for Disease Control's National Leadership Academy for the Public's Health, to a panel to recommend health and fitness equipment to NASA, and to the American Law Institute. Last year, we launched two new grant funded centers dedicated to the study of special needs individuals and their families (Center for Autism and the Center for Sensory and complex disabilities). Even as our teacher-scholars have focused attention on national issues, they have not lost sight of our commitment to the local community. For instance, a team of students and faculty last year completed the Women and Girls Needs Study of Mercer County, which was funded by the Princeton Area Community Foundation.

As many of you know, on July 2, 2012 the AFT reached a tentative agreement with the state. We had hoped that ratification could have occurred over the summer; however, the Council concluded that the ratification vote will be held September 7-28, 2012. We expect notification to the campus by the Office of Employee Relations by early October. Because of the delay of the vote, TCNJ was faced with the possibility that we would not be able to offer sabbatical leave for our faculty. We were, however, able to develop a creative solution which involved my exercise of management prerogative to assign responsibilities (within the job definition). Faculty whose proposals had been evaluated positively by the faculty sabbatical committee were offered the opportunity to be on "research leave" for the fall. If the contract is ratified, these leaves will become sabbatical leaves at the point of ratification and will be retroactive to the beginning of the semester.

With this quality of students, faculty and staff, I am very pleased with the results of last year's fund raising. For FY12, the Foundation received \$6.5 million and for FY 11 \$4.1 million. This success is due to the extraordinary commitment and hard work of our advancement staff, as well as the generosity and commitment of our alumni, friends, and donors. I am particularly appreciative of the leadership in the Foundation and Alumni Association for their commitment and I would like to recognize the Executive Board of the Alumni Association for its 100% participation rate. Thank you.

In addition, while total cash from alumni was flat compared to last year, we saw a 5% participation increase in alumni giving. Corporate, Foundation and Association giving grew by almost \$1 million and faculty and staff participation increased by 17%. That is a remarkable expression of support for the College. Thank you for your generosity.

Other fund raising highlights include 12 new endowment funds , the \$20,000 support for the Mayo Business Plan Competition, Nova Nordisk's three-year, \$60,000 agreement as a major sponsor of TCNJ Athletics, the completion of the \$100,000 pledge for an endowment fund in support of the Varsity Softball program, and the naming of the field for the late Dr. June Walker, the six figure commitment from Marilyn Gray '48 resulting in the naming of the Early Childhood Education classroom in the new School of Education Building, and The Alfred Harcourt Foundation \$250,000 in support for scholarships and the EOF program.

While the state's appropriation for TCNJ for FY13 was flat, there were two very important legislative successes last year. The *Building our Future Bond Act* will place a question on the November ballot authorizing the state to borrow \$750 million for capital construction at the institutions of higher education in New Jersey. All projects must be academic projects (no administrative, housing, dining, or athletic facilities projects) and the state portion can represent only 75% of the cost of the project. The advocacy effort for this measure will be a collective one, including not just higher education leadership, but also representatives from the trades, business and industry. Legislative leadership which supported this bill has already called together representatives of each stakeholder group. The second important bill signed by Governor Christie was the extension of the Public Private Partnership Act. This bill reactivates a number of revolving funds that support smaller capital projects for higher education institutions (Higher Education Equipment Leasing Fund, \$100 million; Higher Education Facilities Trust Fund, \$220 million; Higher Education Technology Infrastructure Fund, \$55 million; and Higher Education Capital Improvement Fund, \$165 million) and extends the opportunities for private developers to build academic facilities on campuses.

These potential resources will be welcome support for the necessary enhancement and renovation of our physical plant. But even without this kind of support, TCNJ continued to invest in construction and major renovation in FY12. I hope that all of you have had the opportunity to visit the new School of Education building. It is simply spectacular. I had the pleasure of joining supporters of the College and the school at a “pre-view” of the ribbon cutting last week. It was such a joy to hear of the pride of the alumni and those who led this project to completion (on time and under budget). Some of the new spaces will be in high demand and the students will enjoy the enhancement to their learning that is represented by world class facilities. As well as this major new construction, there were a number of infrastructure projects during FY12, including roof replacements, exterior envelop repairs, and the significant enhancements to Centennial Hall. The Centennial enhancements include wireless internet access, carpet replacement with distinctive TCNJ Blue accented tile, and a refurbished game room (which includes new carpeting, a pool table, shuffleboard, 60 inch television, soft seating, kitchen, air conditioning, and a game and movie rental console). During this next year, a major renovation of Cromwell Hall will be conducted. The plan includes infrastructure improvements as well as conversion of several rooms to be American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, and a complete overhaul of the bathrooms, the main lounge and the main entrance to the building. This project is so extensive that it could not be accomplished over the summer and cannot be made with students in residence, thus requiring the relocation of about 100 residential students to two nearby hotels for this academic year.

We continue to see progress on the Campus Town project. Most of this summer has been spent finalizing the details of the legal documents, and we continue to be optimistic that this very exciting project will be open by early summer 2014. This partnership will provide much needed amenities for our students, faculty, staff, and the local community as well as housing for our students, without the College having to assume additional debt.

Perhaps the most labor-intensive work of last year was the updating of the College’s Strategic plan. This very successful, comprehensive and inclusive process resulting in a plan that identified priorities for the

institution for the next 3-5 years was approved by the Board of Trustees at its July meeting. The broad engagement and participation among faculty, staff and students throughout all four phases, demonstrated our commitment to the principles of shared governance while at the same time resulting in an actionable, timely “good enough” (in our consultants’ terms) plan. The characteristic of such a plan is that there is movement towards implementation and assessment rather than a non-productive focus on the perfectly formed planning document. Four task forces have been formed as a result of the plan and will be working throughout this coming year. They are:

- Definition of a Distinctive Identity**
- Development of Sustainable Financial Models, Reallocation and Diversifying Revenue Streams**
- Enhancement of Strategic Processes and Decision Making**
- Definition of Excellence and Identification of Signature programs**

These task force discussions will be co-led by a faculty member and a senior administrative leader and will result in specific recommendations for investments as we drive the continuing improvement of TCNJ.

This more refined strategic plan builds seamlessly and methodically on the previous plan as articulated in the “Exceptional Path” of 2007 which was modified by the Board of Trustees in the summer of 2009. The six initiatives included in the 2009 plan have been guiding our decisions to assure that the limited resources that we have are strategically invested for the best interest of the institution. This recent history of planning builds on TCNJ’s long record of careful budget management and good stewardship. We will continue the prudent fiscal management that has been guided in recent years by a performance indicator requiring that in planning and managing the budget, we allocate no less than 67% of the total education and general operating expense to direct student support (that is, instruction& research, academic support, student services, and institutional scholarship and waivers). [Just as an aside, we have always tracked somewhat closer to 70%]. In addition this year, the administration proposed to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees two additional performance indicators and the Board approved them. First we adopted an “affordability/access” indicator that requires that we allocate not more than 16% and no less than 10% of total education and

general operating expense to institutional scholarships and waivers. The second performance indicator we adopted requires that we allocate at least 2% of the operating budget to strategic investments.

With these 3 performance indicators, our history of prudent planning and management and some wise actions (significant savings in debt service and fuel and utilities due to bond refinancing and the discontinuation of a natural gas hedge program), we will be able to make some very important investments in FY13.

For FY13, we will be funding strategic projects totaling \$14.1 million (a combination of resources from the operating budget, reserves, and the TCNJ Foundation), the detail of which will be posted on the College's website along with the operating budget. While the strategic planning process recommended that a specific task force on faculty and staff development be delayed until the second year of strategic planning, I concluded that in order to continue the momentum evident in the planning process we needed to make additional investments in our faculty and staff this year. As a consequence we will be funding a significant increase in staff development and the President's Initiative on Academic Excellence, which I will discuss below. Investments include:

- A significant increase in funding for institutional scholarships,**
- The increase in staff development funding referenced above**
- A modest but important increase in support for library acquisitions**
- Funding for the third year allocation to the multi-year academic equipment plan,**
- Funding for out-of-state recruitment and advertising,**
- Salary adjustment for mid-level non-unit employees whose salary was determined to be significantly below market. [Last year prompted by our concern about the loss of a number of non-unit employees due to more competitive compensation offers, the College conducted an extensive salary study].**
- Increased funding in information technology to support academic priorities,**
- Funding for Phase I of the updated strategic plan**
- Funding for strategic capital improvements within the asset renewal program.**

- **Support for the Student Leadership Development Program (a collaborative effort between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs containing both curricular and co-curricular components)**

In addition, we will be funding the President's Initiative on Academic Excellence. While some of the resources for this initiative come from the operating budget, \$200,000 is being funded by the TCNJ Foundation. I would like to ask the members of the Foundation who are with us this afternoon to stand so that as a community we can thank you. This expression of support for our most valuable asset, our people, is deeply appreciated. Thank you.

The President's Initiative on Academic Excellence will have three prongs: the faculty, the student affairs professional staff, and the students.

- **The Faculty:**
 - **Additional resources have been added to SOSA (Support of Scholarly Activity) , equating to 25 additional awards,**
 - **Support necessary for faculty who were put on special "research status" pending the ratification vote on the Tentative Agreement between AFT and the state.**
 - **A special faculty development allocation distributed by the deans in support of faculty development, including faculty-student research, pedagogy and leadership development**
- **Student Affairs Professionals**
 - **Resources to elevate the stature and national reputation of the College, by broadening the horizons and increasing the effectiveness of the professional staff in Student Affairs as well as enhancing learning beyond the classroom through greater collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs will be allocating resources for carefully selected training and professional development opportunities at the national and regional level.**
- **Students**
 - **Resources for a pilot project of up to 12 College Engagement Interns who will provide support to and learn from professional staff members in the Division of Student Affairs. The purpose of**

this pilot project is to enhance student engagement in purposeful learning experiences beyond the classroom and/or to cultivate a greater sense of community across the College.

Last year was not without its challenges; however, as a community we made significant progress in outlining a framework for our future. We know that many of the hardships that we faced and that face us in the future are hardships facing all of higher education. No matter what our strategic plan, no matter what our success in budget management, we must face the drum beat of criticism and skepticism of the public about higher education. Since 2000, Patrick Callan of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has published 5 report cards for the nation and the states on the health of higher education in the United States. According to these *Measuring Up* reports, none of us measured up very well and the progress from 2000-2008 was minimal. In 2005, Secretary Margaret Spellings accused higher education of being unaccountable, inaccessible, unaffordable and without quality assurance. In 2008, the federal government added a wide range of new reporting requirements in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity act to regulate accountability, accessibility, affordability and quality. Those regulations were not just onerous, but often focused our attention on the easily counted measures rather than on effective measures of success. In 2011, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa in *Academically Adrift* calculated that 45% of students showed no improvement in learning outcomes in the first two years of college and only 36% showed improvement after four years of college education. It was no wonder that in 2011 when Peter Thiel began his “20 under 20” Fellowship, offering students \$100,000 not to attend college but to pursue entrepreneurial technology projects, he was greeted by some as a reformer and hero.

The fact that much of the research that formed the foundation for these criticisms was flawed or based on partisan interpretations of questionable data sets and narrow interpretations of “learning outcomes” did not seem to dissuade the critics. Nor did the facts that Peter Thiel boasted bachelor’s and law degrees from Stanford and that most of his fellowship winners were upper middle class and from privileged educational backgrounds bring into question the validity of his program. The public had made up its mind and the criticism of the ivory tower fit well into the sour mood that has characterized public discourse in United States over the last decade. As I said to the community last year, there are important economic reasons reinforcing this new scrutiny and criticism. The most stark of these economic reasons is

that higher education sticker price has grown almost 45% since 2000, during which time family incomes have dropped or remained flat.

A new study by Anthony Carnevale, Tamara Jayasundera, and Ban Cheah for the Georgetown Public Policy Institute's Center on Education and the Workforce (*The College Advantage: Weathering the Economic Storm*) contradicts those who are currently questioning the positive impact of higher education on employment. Carnevale reported that while unemployment for new four-year graduates was 11.1% in July 2011, it dropped to 6.8% in May 2012. For new high school graduates the peak during the recession was 30% in January of 2010 and was at 24% in May 2012. The report also confirms that in May 2012 underemployment for four-year graduates is much less than high school graduates (8.4% vs. 17.3%) and finally the report asserts "the only real gains made during the still struggling recovery have been in jobs filled by workers with at least some postsecondary education

But judging institutional success simply by student employment immediately upon graduation and on graduation rates is not likely to form an informative evaluation. The question before us is not whether the criticism has validity because some of it does and some does not. The question before us is how do we respond to the criticisms. Despite the fact that for the most part TCNJ's results on these simple measures are quite good (95% employed or in graduate school within a year of graduation in our most recent survey and 86% graduation rate, the highest rate of any public institution in the northeast), a response that accepts without question simple measures is inadequate.

While reassuring, the findings of Carnevale's report can be just as destructive to our future as accepting our good results on minimalist standards, the self-serving vision of Thiel or the flawed analysis of Arum. The focus of undergraduate education must not be simply on work force development; it must be on career enhancement and life long learning skills. Particularly an institution like The College of New Jersey should not seek to prepare its students merely for their first jobs, but for their best jobs; we should aim to prepare our graduates for a career trajectory. If that is the case, then we cannot determine our value simply by graduation rates or employment rates. We must carefully analyze what are the signature experiences and transformative engagements that we offer to students, how do we know that these experiences are transformative, what is the support we offer to our faculty and professional staff as they change to meet the expectations of this

new generation of students, what are the facilities that we provide to provide the context for this revolutionized learning and development—for students, faculty and staff? And bottom line: do we consistently allocate resources to these identified priorities?

In other words, not only are there no simple answers to these complex questions and difficult times, but also there are both rewards and adversities that we must embrace as we plan for the future and implement those plans for the future.

As Emily Dickinson has written,

**The Future—never spoke—
Nor will He—. . .
Reveal by sign. . .
Of his Profound To Come—**

**But when the News be ripe—
Presents it—in the Act—**

. . .

**The Dower—as the Doom—
His Office—but to execute
Fate's – Telegram—to Him**

We must be prepared for both Dower and Doom, rewards and adversities, successes and failures, and the message will not be clear; it will be cryptic, requiring constant review, revision, and reflection. But if there is a community that can succeed in these times of complexity and criticism, it is The College of New Jersey community. Together, we cannot fail.

Thank you and best wishes for a productive 2012-13 academic year.

Please join me and Don Hart for the annual welcome back picnic on the Green Hall Lawn, between Packer and Green Halls.