

2013 WelcomeBack Address
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August 28, 2013

Good afternoon. It is always a pleasure to greet everyone at the Welcome Back Address, but because of the date, August 28, 2013, this welcome has special meaning to me. Fifty years ago today, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and inspired a nation to become its better self. His dream, though only partially realized today, is or should be one of the guiding stars not only for our nation but also for each of us as individuals. Today is a day to celebrate The College of New Jersey's achievements in the last year and to articulate our plans for the year to come, but we would be wise to calibrate our celebrations and craft our goals in the light of Reverend King's message. His soaring rhetoric and his hope for the future were inspiring, but that rhetoric and hope were ever tempered by the harsh realities that surrounded him. Unfortunately many of those circumstances surround us today. A remarkable aspect of King's leadership was that in the face of these realities, he did not succumb to pessimism or political expediency; instead, he persevered. He persevered with integrity and commitment, a quality that should be both an inspiration and a challenge to us.

We begin the 2013-2014 academic year on a strong footing. Our success in attracting some of the most talented freshman students in the state and the region continues to be a point of pride. The College received 11,136 applications for this year's freshman class, a 9% increase over last fall. This has translated into a large class, 1420. Despite the growth in the class we have experienced a 7 point increase in composite SAT scores from last year's class (1250 rather than 1243). There are 276 deposits from transfer students (compared to 238 last fall). In addition, because of the great success of last year's program, we grew the provisional admission program from 22 students to 46.

While there has been improvement in a number of metrics for this class, there has not been in others. The fact that there was no growth in the underrepresented populations of Black and Hispanics is particularly noteworthy on this anniversary day. . In addition, we experienced no growth in out of state freshmen matriculants. We must change both of these trends.

As in year's past, this class is remarkably talented. They are multilingual, artistic, athletic, well traveled and committed to community service. They join a very accomplished student body. Last year students and recent graduates were chosen as Fulbright recipients, received honorable mentions for Goldwater Scholarships, and were named New Jersey Distinguished Student Teachers. Others received grants to pursue their studies post graduation, one focusing on drawing and painting, and three received prestigious engineering scholarships (one to partner with a startup company in Silicon Valley, one awarded by the American Society of Civil Engineers and one to undertake a self-designed project in bioengineering). TCNJ's Student Chemists Association won national awards from the American Chemical Society and Communication Studies students were the only undergraduates in the nation selected to present refereed papers at a national health communication conference.

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

- In 2011-2012, there was a 99% institutional pass rate on the PRAXIS exam. (373 students took the exam, 370 passed).
- Of 585 institutions, the TCNJ School of Business Seniors scored in the 91st percentile on the ETS Major Fields Exam.
- Accounting graduates rank 46th in the country in successful completion of the CPA exam. They rank 1st among New Jersey schools comprised primarily of traditional undergraduate students.
- Our Engineering students had an 80% pass rate on the Fundamentals of Engineering exam, well above the national pass rate.
- Last year's pass rate for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) exam was 98% (New Jersey average is 87%)
- The Nurse Practitioner Certification pass rate for last year was again 100%.

Further validation of our students' success is provided by the results of our post-graduation survey. In the most recent Career Center survey results on the class of 2012 graduates, it was reported that of the students who responded to our survey, 97% were either employed or in graduate school within 12 months of graduation. 46% reported applying for admission to graduate/professional school during their senior year and 32% of them were attending graduate school. The anecdotal evidence for the 2013 graduating class is equally as impressive. There have been admissions to graduate programs at College of William and Mary, University of Kentucky, Brandeis University, and Syracuse University. This year's graduates have landed prestigious employment placements: one will be working at NBC with Richard Engel, one in Governor Christie's office, another at Bloomberg and another at *Seventeen* Magazine. A number of our graduates have again chosen to join the Teach for America Corps.

Last year was again a very successful year in athletics. The highlights of the 2013 spring season include both tennis teams and the men's swimming team qualifying for the NCAA's. The men's swimming team was New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) and Metro Conference Champions. The women's basketball team was ranked 17 out of the 450 Division III schools by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. Women's lacrosse boasted 2 Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association National All Americans and 6 regional All Americans. Successful teams require excellent coaches and as an example of that quality, the men's swimming coach attained a 200th career coaching win this season. The student-athletes proved to be very committed scholars as well. The track team was named one of the Scholar Teams of the Year in Division III by the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association with four of the athletes earning all-academic honors. The women's hockey team received the National Field Hockey Coaches Association National Academic Team Award.

I look forward to another year of athletic success and the new coaching staff in football, cross country and indoor and outdoor track will surely be part of that continuing tradition.

The College is welcoming 17 new tenure track faculty members this fall, some of whom have taught as adjunct and part time faculty at the College in years past, two of whom are returning to their *alma mater* after earning graduate degrees elsewhere. These new faculty bring a wealth of experience—including years in research, consulting and employment at organizations like a big four public accounting firm, the Air Force Research Laboratory in San Antonio, Texas, Eli Lilly, Pfizer, Life Cell Corporation and Fox Chase Cancer Center. A number of the new faculty have previously taught at the elementary, middle and secondary levels, some at institutions of higher education (such as Johns Hopkins and the University of Miami), and one was a postdoctoral fellow at the Medical College of Wisconsin. These new faculty boast graduate degrees from Purdue University, Rutgers University, New York University, University of Maryland, the University of California-Davis, Brandeis, SUNY-Stony Brook, Columbia University, Rice University, and Duke University.

I am very pleased to report that The College will continue this infusion of new energy into the academic community as there are 8 tenure track faculty searches planned for 2013-14.

Just as the new students will join a talented cadre of upperclassmen, so will our new faculty join distinguished academic programs and remarkable returning faculty. Program highlights include

- The College continues to receive third party validation of the quality of education at TCNJ by the *Princeton Review*, *U. S. News and World Report*, *Kiplinger's* and *Barron's*.
- *BusinessWeek* ranked the TCNJ School of Business 59th in the country for undergraduate business education and number one among New Jersey business schools.
- The School of Engineering has been granted a charter to install the New Jersey Zeta chapter of Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering honors society.
- The Counselor Education Department has been re-accredited until 2021 by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP).
- The College of New Jersey Chorale performed in the St. Bart's Concert Series at St. Bartholomew's in New York City and at the Second Annual Project Hand-in-Hand Performance at the Rose Theatre at Lincoln Center (a remarkable performance of Guiseppi Verdi's *Requiem*).
- The College of New Jersey was included in the 2013 Top 100 US Schools for Animation and Game Design by Animation Career Review (ACR).

TCNJ faculty and programs were very successful in attracting external funding:

- The New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH) awarded a grant of \$10,700 to the Art Gallery and Department of Art and Art History to fund the project *Art Amongst War: Visual Culture in Afghanistan, 1979-2014*.
- The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Foundation awarded a grant of \$19,800 for the establishment of a new study center in connection with TCNJ's Sarnoff Collection.
- The School of Science faculty were awarded over \$1.5 million in external grants. Of particular note is the National Science Foundation grant focused on increasing the retention and graduation of students underrepresented in the disciplines of Biology and Chemistry.

Faculty highlights include:

- Faculty breakthrough research spread the College's name on every topic from Walt Whitman to Exercise Deficit Disorder from social inequality in the media to research on radio galaxy "3C452" providing clues to the evolution of the universe.
- Returning faculty have received national and international recognition, including a research fellowship from the Japan Foundation, Fulbright Awards, a Yale University Research Fellowship, a U.S. State Department fellowship, a People's Republic of China fellowship, an assignment through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act to work as a program director for the National Science Foundation, awards from the Leeway Foundation and the New Jersey State Council of the Arts and recognition from the National Association for Education of Young Children.
- Our faculty performed at opera and musical festivals and curated art exhibits across the world

Last year two very important cabinet level searches came to successful conclusions. John Donohue joined the TCNJ community as Vice President of Advancement in November and Jacqueline Taylor as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs in March. Their leadership and vision have already had tremendous impact on the promise of the institution and we are all looking forward to a similar conclusion to the search for the Vice President for Student Affairs. The campus owes a debt of gratitude to the many colleagues who worked and are working diligently to assure that talented individuals are recruited to fill these important positions. This summer, TCNJ also welcomed a new Dean of the School of Education (Jeff Passe) and the Assistant Provost who will be leading the Center for Institutional Effectiveness (Mosen Auryan). This year we will be conducting a national search for a permanent dean of the School of Nursing, Health and Exercise Science.

With this excellence in students, faculty and staff, I am very pleased with the results of last year's fund raising. This past fiscal year gifts totaled \$4,520,535, some \$120,000 above target, representing an increase of almost a million in cash above the totals of the year before. This is the second highest amount contributed through the Foundation in its history. In addition, the endowment realized a net asset increase of \$3.3 million which is a 15.2% growth. As of June 30, 2013, the TCNJ Foundation's endowment totaled \$28.5 million in total assets.

There were also a number of legislative successes last year—the most important of which was the successful passage of the *Building our Future Bond Act*. A very effective coalition of leaders from higher education, business, labor and construction with significant political support from the Governor’s Office and both sides of the aisle in the legislature paved the way for a voter approved capital bond of \$750 million. This bond money along with the approval of \$566 million in revolving funds represented the first major capital investment in higher education facilities by the state of New Jersey in over 25 years.

Several other important pieces of legislation are continuing to be considered, including the extension of the public-private partnership legislation which is the mechanism through which Campus Town is being built and a bill that would extend the tenure period at state colleges and universities from 5 years to up to 7 years (the national norm and the time frame used at Rutgers and New Jersey Institute of Technology, NJIT). A bill that amends a provision in the Alternative Benefit Program to allow for distribution of benefits prior to separation of service, allowing institutions to retain experienced senior faculty on a limited basis, was signed by Governor Christie earlier this month.

Even before the notification of the approval of the state bonds, TCNJ continued to invest in construction and major renovation in FY13. The yearlong Cromwell Hall renovation was completed in August. The project includes new mechanical and plumbing systems, new roof, new interior finishes and a spectacular new entrance and lounge. A number of infrastructure projects including the Brower Student Center roof and skylight as well as replacement of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in the Music Building have improved the environment of these buildings. Several projects requested and paid for by Sodexo are either underway or nearing completion, including a renovation to the Library Café, and a new Zebi Café in the Brower Student Center. A renovation of T-Dubbs in Travers Wolfe is scheduled for next year.

There has been great progress over the summer on two major facilities planning projects. First, the programming and feasibility study for renovations and additions to the Brower student center has recommended that Brower Student Center should undergo a transformative renovation of its interior and exterior and that a small addition should be built on the south side of the current building. Second, faculty, deans, and administrative leadership have been feverishly working on plans for the new STEM building with a goal of final recommendations in early to mid October.

We are thrilled that the Campus Town project is now underway. The developer, The PRC Group, has installed the construction fence and is proceeding with site remediation and demolition. Construction is slated to begin in January 2014 for a June 2015 completion. The project will add 446 beds, approximately 530 parking spaces, a 14,600 square foot campus/community bookstore, an 11,500 square foot fitness center and 55,000 square feet of restaurants, retail and services. We are hoping to be able to schedule a groundbreaking event this fall.

The College’s commitment to first rate facilities includes a commitment to quality maintenance of buildings and grounds. Adding 1,275,171 GSF (a 36% increase) over the last decade has stretched our facilities and maintenance staff thin. While we were not able to

address this staffing pressure on the academic and administrative side this year, we will be adding resources for facilities and maintenance staff on the residential side of the campus in the FY14 budget. Every year at commencement I am struck by the beauty of the campus and the care taken by our facilities and maintenance staff to assure a memorable experience for our students and their families. I am also deeply appreciative of the incredible hard work required to prepare those buildings and grounds for the new academic year after a full summer of academic and residential programming.

Last year, the strategic plan was advanced significantly by the work of four important task forces.

1. Reallocation and Revenue Enhancement considered key drivers of the budget and made suggestions for revenue enhancement. During this coming year, top revenue enhancement priorities will be selected and acted upon and the Budget and Planning Council will work on a longer-term enrollment plan and a framework for a financial model. In addition, the Provost's Office, Treasurer's Office, Enrollment Management, and Center for Institutional Effectiveness will work closely to plan for both new revenue streams and strategic investment of existing dollars.
2. The Distinctive Identity Task Force developed an identity statement based on TCNJ's Mission and Core Beliefs which will inform future decision-making and reallocation decisions.
3. The Strategic Decisions and Processes Task Force created a strategic effectiveness cycle for planning and resource allocation. In addition, the task force began the work of aligning metrics with strategic goals and developing additional metrics to provide the assessment framework for the strategic plan.
4. The preliminary report of the Excellence/Signature Experiences Task Force was used as background for the summer retreats of both the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities and the President's Advisory Council. These retreats extended the discussion on this very important topic, providing Provost Taylor with input for a draft document which, after review by a small group in early August, will be submitted to the re-constituted Task Force. The final task force report will identify approximately 4 signature experiences to be distributed for campus wide discussion by early or mid-October.

Even before these task force reports were finalized, it was necessary to move ahead on budget planning for FY14. The FY14 budget plan continues to build on our history of prudent fiscal management and to honor the Board-approved key performance indicators concerning direct student support, institutional scholarships and waivers, and strategic investments.

The strategic investments support the strategic priorities developed by the planning councils, the administrative units and the cabinet. These priorities were endorsed by the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities and supported by the Board of Trustees. Strategic investments for FY 14 total \$15.9 million, funded from a combination of sources—the

operating budget, strategic reserves, and the TCNJ Foundation. The strategic investment detail and the operating budget that was approved by the Board of Trustees in July can be found on the College's website.

Some of the strategic investments for FY14 are:

- An increase in funding for institutional scholarships and waivers (\$516,000)
- Continuation of funding for the President's Initiative on Academic Excellence supported by the TCNJ Foundation
 - \$200,000 to support faculty and staff research, creative endeavor and professional development
 - \$50,000 to support a part-time grant writer
 - This \$250,000 (an increase from last year) for our most valuable asset, our people, is an exceptionally important message of support from the TCNJ Foundation. We should all give them a round of applause.
- Continuation of funding for the College Engagement Interns (\$50,000). Last year, 12 College Engagement Interns infused the work of Student Affairs with their fresh perspectives. A total of 20 interns will gain professional experience in FY14 in a number of administrative divisions infusing technology, assisting in programmatic efforts, and bringing valuable student insights into the work of the institution.
- Continuation of funding for staff professional development (\$50,000)
- Continuation of last year's increased funding for Support of Scholarly Activities (SOSA)
- Increase in the Library acquisitions budget (\$118,000)
- Funding for the 4th year of the multi-year academic equipment plan (\$610,000)
- Increased funding for operating maintenance projects and minor renovation of academic lab and offices (\$664,000)
- Increased funding in information technology to support institutional priorities (\$430,000)
- Funding for an assessment consultant (\$30,000)
- Additional maintenance support staff for the residence halls (\$618,000)
- Funding for strategic capital improvements within the asset renewal program (\$12.9 million)

I am pleased that the budget recommended to the Board for action at its July meeting, while allocating to these important priorities, did so with the lowest tuition increase in over 14 years—2.5%.

Last spring staff and faculty spent countless hours on 6 separate applications for state funds to support much needed construction, renovation, and equipment. That hard work paid off: TCNJ is included on the list of over \$700 million worth of projects signed off by Governor Christie. The largest portion of our \$57 million allocation will be invested in a new building to support science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The remainder of the \$57 million will be used for improvements in the science building, equipment acquisition, and campus wireless. The state funds combined with institutional dollars (both the match required by the legislation and our conclusion that the entirety of the STEM initiative represented in the 6 applications should be funded), and partner investments (both the over \$70 million investment that will be made by PRC, the developer partnering with us in the Campus Town project, and the over \$30 million being invested by our partner Sodexo in

campus dining venues and a student center renovation and addition), all these combined represent over \$200 million worth of capital construction that will be occurring on our campus over the next 5 years.

For next year, TCNJ will continue to focus on planning but we must do more than plan, we must act. That means that we must have the fortitude to make some difficult decisions. I will expect cabinet leadership to assure that we embrace the recommendations of last year's four planning task forces in developing priorities and funding decisions. Clearly, we must make progress in the third year of the strategic plan. Three key strategic planning priorities for the next year are logical outcomes of the work of last year's task forces. They are:

1. identifying a more complete set of metrics to use in evaluating our progress on the plan and in preparing for the Middle States site visit in March 2015,
2. determining revenue generating initiatives and programs and a timeline for implementing the top priorities, and
3. identifying the data and criteria for evaluating academic and non-academic programs in order to make strategic decisions about where and how to invest.

A fourth strategic planning priority resonates with the special importance of today's date. There has been a stunning coincidence of events and conversations I have had over the summer—with parents, with faculty, with students, and with senior administration. It began with Provost Taylor asking: "Just where does our institutional commitment to diversity fit into the strategic map?" It extended to an observation from a parent concerning the diversity of the freshman class. It broadened in a discussion I had with a faculty member musing on the importance of diversity of perspective and career expectations in our student body. Diversity is emphasized in the TCNJ mission statement and it is clearly articulated as one of our core values, but in fact, it is not apparent in the strategic map as currently developed.

I have asked Provost Jacqueline Taylor, Vice President Gregory Pogue, Vice President Lisa Angeloni and Director Kerri Thompson-Tillett to form a small senior level team to draft a work plan to address the full range of issues associated with recruitment and retention of a diverse student, faculty, and staff community. This work plan will begin with these individuals but will necessarily require wide engagement across the campus. The team should begin its work by gathering the several reports, studies and task force recommendations that have been crafted over the years, including but not limited to the recent studies on progress towards degree completion of African American male students at TCNJ, the TCNJ Advancement Program (TAP, a study that focuses on gender diversity in the science and social science faculty), recent recommendations from the Diversity Advisory Council, results from the Chronicle "Great Colleges to Work For" survey (3 years worth of data) and this fall's Campus Climate Survey results.

The questions that plague me are numerous. What are the reasons for TCNJ's experiencing over the last decade an impressive increase in applications and admissions from students from underrepresented groups but no increase in matriculants from these same groups? What are the statistics with regard to our recruitment and retention of students from the LGBT community? Of students with differing abilities? Of students of all religious faiths? How successful are we in attracting and retaining international students? How welcoming to these cohorts? Are there

gender and other patterns within disciplines that are counterproductive to a just society? And all these questions should be asked regarding, faculty, staff and administration. These are complex and difficult issues and we have talked about them or around them any number of times during my years at the College. We must do so again, but this time we must do more than talk, we must gather the useful recommendations of past studies and reports and develop new ones to craft a proactive and assessable College-wide plan.

The first draft of the work plan will be disseminated to the full community no later than February 1, 2014. The plan must include significant initiatives to be implemented in FY15.

Two other important projects will occupy a lot of faculty, staff, and administrative time in 2013-14. First, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study Steering Committee will meet its benchmarks in preparation for our site visit in 2015. Second, the master planning process will be re-invigorated to assure the integration of all facilities discussions into a comprehensive understanding of all of the campus' facilities needs.

Last year's success in private fund raising must be followed by an even more successful FY14. Vice President Donohue has set an aggressive financial goal of \$5.5 million, representing a \$1million increase over FY13. In addition, this year the College will begin the planning and early execution of a comprehensive campaign.

TCNJ is in an enviable position, but we have many challenges ahead. If we were not aware of the financial challenges before us, Moody's certainly got our attention again on August 14 when it published its negative report on public higher education. Last year, Moody's painted a grim picture for all of higher education but this year their report touted better financial management in private education, particularly commending trustees who held operating margins steady even in the face of revenue declines. Public higher education, on the other hand, saw expenses increase more than 3 percent, even as enrollment remained flat and revenues grew only 2 percent. Nationally, there is no appetite for robust tuition and fee increases so Moody's concluded that the publics will need to continue to cut expenses as states are not in a position or in the mood to invest heavily in higher education. The question for TCNJ is how much is the College in the median of this dismal trend and how much is it an outlier. Surely in some of these metrics TCNJ is an outlier: our application numbers and our admissions are very strong; our operating margins have been healthy and remained steady for well over a decade; and we have just experienced a major infusion of both state and private cash for facilities improvements. But there is no question that TCNJ is suffering from much of the same negative trends that all of public higher education is suffering: we will not see increased funding from the state for operations; we will continue to see pressures to hold down tuition and fee increases; we will have to prove to every audience that we are operating the most efficient and effective organization possible. The title of Moody's report is "Heightened Pressure on Revenue Growth," but the focus of the report is almost entirely on expenditure reduction. I believe their title is right, the body of their report too limiting in its emphasis. Of course, all of public higher education must do everything to control costs, but it must also increase revenue and create partnerships with non-state entities—both of which TCNJ has done.

More than ever TCNJ must focus on implementation, on results. If the College is going to be successful, simple directional recommendations are no longer satisfactory (that is, goals to

improve fund raising or attract more out of state students or increase diversity or more grant dollars or become more innovative in pedagogical delivery are inadequate). Instead, in cases where we can, we must set specific targets and strategies to meet these targets must be established. In the case of increasing diversity, where targets cannot be set, strategies certainly can be established and prioritized and progress can be assessed. Individuals and programs will have to be held accountable for developing and meeting these goals. While we must encourage bold thinking, the College simply cannot respond to every idea that comes forward; only those that represent the best return on our investment of human and financial resources should receive our collective attention. And if TCNJ is going to be bold, we will have to become comfortable with some failures. Thus, when holding an individual or a program accountable, that accountability must include some kind of expectation that individuals and programs will every once in a while try something that is a little bit outrageous, outside our institutional comfort zone. This is not the era for timidity. The only failures that are unacceptable are doing nothing at all or that plague of higher education talking about planning to think about creating a task force that might consider proposing a pilot you get it.

TCNJ is exactly the kind of institution that can embrace this kind of future. The College is a remarkably creative and committed community. We actually care about our students; we care about our disciplines; we care about our colleagues and we care about our communities—both our on campus communities and those that surround us. And finally we are very smart and very energetic. The TCNJ community understands the importance of intellect, creativity, thoughtful risk taking, and assumption of personal responsibility.

Emily Dickinson knew the power of the human mind, the authority of imagination and the efficacy of intellect. She acknowledges that

The Brain — is wider than the Sky —
For — put them side by side —
The one the other will contain
With ease — and You — beside —

The Brain is deeper than the sea —
For — hold them — Blue to Blue —
The one the other will absorb —
As Sponges — Buckets — do —

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If these plans and dreams do not resonate with the expectations for a better humanity and a more just society as embedded in Reverend King's speech a half a century ago, we will have lost our way; we will have embraced the cynicism of the age, the political and economic expediency that threatens our mission. TCNJ is simply better than that. Together let's lead the College to a place wider than the sky and deeper than the sea.