



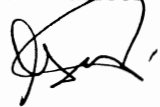
**THOMAS
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MEMORANDUM
March 10, 2000

TO: Members, Board of Trustees

FROM: George A. Pruitt 

SUBJ: The "Millennial" Five-Year Plan for Thomas Edison State College

As author/scientist Arthur C. Clark has pointed out, the new millennium does not actually begin until January 1, 2001. Accordingly, there seems to be a convenient symmetry in beginning the plans for the next generation of the College to coincide with the beginning of the next millennium.

We have always taken these five-year cycles very seriously. We use them to make decisions about resource allocations, new programs, new facilities, and new personnel. We have spent the last year-and-a-half examining the nature of our work, assessing our strengths and weaknesses, and attempting to discern new opportunities for the College. What follows is a description of the major strategic objectives we will take on over the period of the plan.

There are certain assumptions about the external environment that provide a context for our thinking. We do not believe that the College can depend on major policy-driven higher education initiatives from state government. Therefore, the College must be prepared to generate the resources necessary to control and create its future. Among the places we will look to achieve this will be state government. We strongly believe that the state has an obligation to support state institutions. Nevertheless, the processes of state government are fickle and unpredictable. Accordingly, increases in student revenues, enrollment, and institutional productivity, along with fund-raising and grantsmanship, will be very important in achieving our future.

It is also our belief that the competitive environment and proliferation of institutions with similar-sounding programs will make for a confused and complicated marketplace. We firmly believe that there is great demand from individuals and organizations for the high quality work we do. And finally, we go forth rededicated to the mission of this college* which, summarized in a sentence, is “to provide flexible, high quality educational opportunities for mature adults.”

For the purpose of presentation to the Board of Trustees, we have chosen to describe things that the College expects to have achieved at the end of the five-year planning period. We have grouped these major objectives under seven headings. What follows is a brief description and delineation of the major goals for each section. Assuming concurrence from the Board of the strategic direction as outlined in this document, the College will proceed with developing specific strategies, timetables, assignments of responsibility and accountability, and evaluation measures for each of the major goals. It is our expectation to present the plan to the Board in September for preliminary review, with the Board’s final consideration and approval at the December 2000 Board meeting.

I. Programmatic Initiatives

In order to support the College’s mission to “provide curricula and degree opportunities...consistent with the operations of our students” and to “make available” educationally valid learning opportunities which serve as alternatives to college classroom study and which are appropriate to the varied needs and learning styles of adults,” the College will undertake a variety of new programmatic initiatives. The College will have, or will have done, the following things in five years’ time:

- The College will have created new degrees, degree tracks, and courses, within its graduate degree programs to respond to market demands. Examples from the College’s MSM area include
 - * Human Resource Management
 - * Information Technology Management
 - * Operations Management
- The College’s various distance-delivered baccalaureate-degree-completion programs will feature an additional synchronous learning component, thereby increasing diversity among delivery systems and making valuable use of the new technologies presented by our I-TV classrooms.
- The College will have a self-supporting “Center for Professional Studies” to develop and deliver noncredit distance and continuing-education and customized training to individuals and organizations.

* Mission Statement appended.

- The College will explore the potential of the use of our traditional “assessment of experiential learning” for new, non-degree, initiatives. Examples are
 - * Customized assessment (testing) for specific private-sector training
 - * Competency based testing for institutional clients
 - * Assessment for the award of certificates

- The College will improve and expand its distance-education program such that
 - * It will be recognized as a model for best practices in the use of technology appropriately matched to content and audience.
 - * It will be known nationally and internationally both as a provider of and broker for distance education courseware.
 - * Enrollment in courses and other offerings will grow by at least 7.5% in each of the five years, maintaining DIAL’s position as among the top five distance-education course providers in the nation.
 - * Course delivery methods will become more diverse, and the “traditional” largely print-based Guided Study mode will account for only 50% of the total delivery system, while electronic, online, and new “study pac” modes will account for the other 50%.
 - * Course development will focus on increasing Web presence, with an increase in the number of online baccalaureate degrees from 4 to 7.
 - * Revenue will increase by at least 12%
 - * The TECEP program will be restructured such that it can be presented online

- The College will develop strategic educational and technological alliances, nationally and internationally, for the sake of course development, course acquisition, and joint ventures in providing distance-education products.

II. Reputation

Thomas Edison State College has a strong base on which to build a significant reputation as a New Jersey institution with a "national reach." The College needs to position itself strategically not only as a most desirable place for adults to learn and employees to work; it must also be seen as an attractive partner for program and enrollment development. Therefore, in five years’ time, the College will have, or have done, the following:

- The College will maintain recognition as among the best in the country at providing flexible, high quality educational opportunities for mature adults.

- We will have achieved a measurable increase in name recognition in New Jersey.

- College faculty consultants and staff will be acknowledged as experts in their fields.
- Even as we increase our enrollment, the College's student demographic profile will continue to reflect the current high success rate among those wishing to pursue graduate study.
- The College will be an attractive strategic partner for such entities and institutions as ACE, SOC, PBS, USOU, and UNISA.

III. Quality Assurance

Thomas Edison State College is committed to quality. In order to maintain and improve upon our already high standards, the College will develop a comprehensive system for measuring institutional performance and student outcomes. Therefore, in five years' time, the College will have, or have done, the following:

- The College will have achieved re-accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools for the next ten years.
- The College will have established a clear set of institutional performance measures on which it will assess its own progress toward goals and maintenance of standards. These performance measures will include (but will not be limited to)
 - * degree program review/audit
 - * student and faculty evaluation of courses, tests, and programs
 - * evaluations by Academic Council and other advisory groups of College programs and services
 - * assessment of internal performance standards (e.g., turnaround times for response to student requests)
 - * percentage of alumni/ae giving
- The College will have appointed a Vice President for Planning, Research, and Evaluation.
- The College will conduct a continuous systematic review of student outcomes.

IV. Student Services

The College must continue to fulfill its mission to “conduct its affairs in a manner which acknowledges the maturity, autonomy, and dignity of its students....” Therefore, the College will have, or have done, the following things in five years’ time.

- The College will provide students with the opportunity to proceed to degree completion with a minimum of direction from College staff.
- The College will have a Web-based “Virtual Student Union. Features of the “Virtual Student Union” will be
 - * interactive self-assessment
 - * interactive student advisement
 - * electronic access to academic and financial records for students
- The College will provide increased access for inquirers, applicants, and enrolled students by expanding hours of availability to be supported by
 - * use of flex-time, use of part-time staff, use of volunteers and alumni
 - * improved management of prospective students by outsourced fulfillment services

V. Resources Development

The College must have a sound base comprised of human, fiscal, and physical capital if it is to be successful in carrying out its mission. Planning for the future must take our need for enhanced internal infrastructure and economic stability into account. Therefore, the College will have, or have done, the following things in five years’ time:

- The College will ensure economic stability by annually generating a 10% revenues/expense surplus through cost containment and
 - * increased student revenues
 - * increased operating efficiencies
 - * increased acquisition of grant funding
 - * increased endowment
 - * increased state appropriation
 - * consideration of the establishment of a for-profit subsidiary for Thomas Edison State College.
- The College will have an enrollment growth to 10,000 students, and the student demographics will accurately reflect the racial and ethnic demographics of the State of New Jersey. To achieve this growth, the College will employ
 - * strategic alliances for degree completion, joint programming, etc.

- * aggressive, targeted, marketing and publication
- * alumni affinity groups

- The College have an endowment growth to double its current size

- The College will strengthen its capacity to serve its students by expanding the campus with additional facilities in Trenton.

- The Datatel system will be fully implemented in all College units and reliance on the system for all operations will be 100%.

- There will be ongoing funding of the College's Marketing campaign through the College's operating budget.

- The College will develop and expand its human resource capacity that will foster professional development for both staff and faculty consultants, resulting in
 - * increased staff effectiveness
 - * increased awareness of and response to such legislation as the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - * enhanced reputation of the College as a desirable place to work

VI. Public Policy

An important aspect of the College's mission is to "fulfill the public service obligation inherent to American institutions of higher education." Therefore, the College will have, or will have done, the following in five years' time:

- Through the Watson Institute, the College will provide leadership in an alliance with Mercer County Community College and the City of Trenton, the County of Mercer, and the State of New Jersey to develop and foster the Heritage Tourism program in our community.

Affiliation with the New Jersey State Library

In 1996, the New Jersey State Library was affiliated with Thomas Edison State College. This has proven to be a fruitful relationship that has had benefits that will generate future benefits, for both entities. The affiliation will have a positive effect on the execution of the College's mission in a variety of ways. Therefore, in five years' time, the College and/or Library will have, or have done, the following:

- The permanence of the affiliation will be codified in State statute.

- The Library will acquire additional facilities and technology in support of its service to the citizens of New Jersey.

- The College will explore the many useful synergies that exist between it and the Library for the improvement of student services, the delivery of programs and courses, and the dissemination of College information to potential markets.

A strategic plan ought to be more than a listing of tasks to be performed, but rather it should generally describe the kind of reality we wish to have and the nature of the college we are trying to create. We try to recreate ourselves every five years, building on our strengths and responding to areas of disappointment. When finished, this plan outlines our vision, our ambitions, the demands that we will make on ourselves, and our expectations of the kind of college we are trying to create. It is the next stage in our evolution – in short, it is a description of our future.

GAP/lme