



**THOMAS  
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STATE COLLEGE**

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**MEMORANDUM**

June 13, 1997

**TO:** Members, Board of Trustees

**FROM:** George A. Pruitt 

**SUBJECT:** President's Report to the Board of Trustees

**Periodic Review Report - Middle States Association**

Over the past eight months, virtually the entire College community has been involved in some aspect of preparation of the five-year Periodic Review Report (PRR) for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA).

The College's Periodic Review Report highlights the activities of the institution since the site review by Middle States Association in 1992, and details the development and implementation of the master's program; emphasis on institutional outcomes assessment; the realignment of student services; and strategies to achieve enrollment growth through 2002. We used this exercise as another opportunity for self-study, and feel confident that the strength and high quality of the Thomas Edison program is reflected in the analyses we have developed and presented. The Periodic Review Report was sent to Middle States Association and two external reviewers on May 30, 1997. The College expects to be informed of the Commission's action on accreditation by mid-December 1997.

**The National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning**

The National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning is in its ninth year, and boasts an exceptional and distinguished reputation. It has been heralded, praised and emulated. Similar conferences, developed from the National Institute model, have been realized in Canada and New Zealand. Its faculty and staff, who continue to promote it proudly, are sought for consultation throughout the world.

This year's Institute, to be held June 21-23 at the Henry Chauncey Conference Center, includes new features such as advanced track session topics, optional meetings to assist novice and international participants, and representation of another regional

accrediting organization. Specifically, the new topics focus on serving students with disabilities through distance education; a student perspective on prior learning assessment (PLA) with a panel of successful students from Thomas Edison, Empire State College, and Charter Oak State College; financial responsibility in managing PLA programs; initiating a PLA research program; and a review of the research on experiential learning.

### **Master of Science in Management Program (MSM)**

During the past quarter we have continued to focus on the implementation, refinement and growth of the Master of Science in Management program. This ongoing review of the MSM program led to the exploration of a restructuring of the degree from a 42 to a 36 credit program. This consideration resulted from feedback from students, faculty and prospective constituencies, as well as a review of other graduate degree programs. Student and corporate needs, as well as marketing considerations, led to a review of course content and to the proposed restructuring which would maintain academic integrity, meet the needs of a broader student population, and be compatible with the mission of the College. The Academic Council reviewed and approved this restructuring. This proposed change will be considered by the Board at today's meeting.

### **Learning Outcomes Assessment**

Last winter, a task force was appointed to proceed with designing an appropriate learning outcomes assessment instrument that can be administered for all degree programs. The purpose of this project is to design a successor mechanism to the Post-Graduate Conference that enables the College to assess the educational experience of students as a measure of institutional integrity. When this instrument is finalized, all graduates will be invited to participate in this outcomes assessment effort on a volunteer basis.

### **Admissions Activity Over the Web**

Activity in admissions via the World Wide Web has increased every quarter since the web site was launched. From October-December 1996 there were 1399 contacts compared with 1904 contacts from January-March 1997. Contacts include requests for initial information and for follow-up undergraduate and graduate information, as well as queries from applicants, students and others.

Applications to the College are also submitted over the web, however, the application fee must either be mailed in or paid by phone via credit card. From October-December 1996, the College received 107 applications; 37 prospective students (35%) later submitted payment of the application fee. From January-March 1997, this activity increased to 181 applications. To date, 79 of these prospective students (44%) have paid the application fee.

## **Services to the Military**

**Military Degree Completion Program.** Historically the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) has designated the College as a Learning Assessment Organization (LSO). When it became apparent to the military that the College offered courses sufficient to satisfy a number of degree programs, the College's designation was expanded to that of an Alternative Delivery Organization (ADO). This designation, and the recognition that followed, singled out Thomas Edison State College as a good alternative for servicemembers facing deployment or located in a remote duty station where educational opportunities are limited or totally lacking.

Further, while Thomas Edison State College offers a desirable educational structure for military personnel, the fee structure has been a major limitation. Despite the fact that the College offers a flexible alternative to classroom instruction, a wide range of credit options and portable course delivery, our fee structure was not eligible for reimbursement through DANTES or the Department of Defense (DoD) tuition assistance program. To overcome this limitation, a pilot tuition plan was established. This program is designed for the student who needs twelve or more credit hours of coursework and who can satisfy course requirements through DIAL, portfolio and/or TECEP options.

Participants pay the \$75 application fee, a \$200 assessment fee and a \$700 enrollment fee, which allows them to take up to twelve semester hours. These military enrollees have up to one year to satisfy the credit requirement, but may reenroll during the twelve month period as their program and schedule permits.

**Military Outreach.** The applied science and technology degree programs have always attracted military personnel, both active duty and veterans. This year we have expanded cooperative efforts with the military in this area. The College has been working to increase enrollment and degree completion among active duty military personnel, and has defined opportunities to complete a degree for occupational specialties using Thomas Edison methods. Thirty-nine templates have been prepared for the Army, Navy, and Coast Guard for military specialties ranging from pilots to medical specialists to signal operators. One of the initiatives is a close relationship with Servicemembers Opportunity College to show degree opportunities at the associate level for all of the Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) with large populations.

## **Financial Aid & Veterans Services**

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs State Approving Agency submitted its approval of the Master in Science Degree to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The Department of Veterans Affairs accepted the state recommendation, and eligible Thomas Edison veterans can now receive benefits retroactive to September 3, 1996.

## **Center for Distance & Independent Adult Learning (DIAL)**

**Course Registration.** Preliminary DIAL course equivalent enrollments for the summer 1997 semester are expected to be approximately 1550, an increase of 10% over last summer's enrollments.

**DIAL Publications.** The DIAL Registration Bulletin for 1997-1998 is slated to be distributed to students in the latter part of June. The Registration Bulletin has been expanded and redesigned to provide comprehensive information on both course and credit-bearing examination options. This new format for the Bulletin provides students with information on the full array of Thomas Edison State College course and examination options to earn credits towards a college degree.

**New Faculty Mentors.** New faculty mentors assigned to courses since our last meeting include: Dr. Julia Brown, Ed.D., Mathematics/Community College Teaching, University of Pittsburgh, Course: Discrete Math; Dr. William Walker, Ph.D., Biology, University of Pittsburgh, Courses: Biology, Nutrition; Dr. David Underwood, Ph.D. History of Art, University of Pittsburgh, Course: Western Art History; and Ms. Jennifer Walsh, MFA Photography, Pratt Institute, Course: Introduction to Photography.

## **Degree Pathways**

The Degree Pathways Program continues its momentum forward in the direction of template development. Templates serve as ways to show how credits from two-year New Jersey community college degree programs align with Thomas Edison four-year business degrees. During this quarter, templates were developed for Burlington, Passaic, and Ocean County Colleges.

Copy was completed and approved for the new Intent to Transfer brochure. Additionally, services, including newly created degree-completion "templates," were provided to Burlington, Warren, Brookdale, Passaic, and Camden County Colleges.

In support of Degree Pathways, 272 prospective students attended group information sessions and transfer programs during February-April at six New Jersey community colleges.

## **Corporate College Programs**

The College has been active in strengthening relationships to increase enrollments, reaching out to new organizations, and conducting PONSI evaluations.

**Stronger Partnerships.** To develop partnerships that increase enrollments, the College has structured new partnership agreements that are focused on completing degrees. The agreements strengthen organizational relationships, create structures and provide tools to make it easier for students to enroll. Such agreements are signed or in process with the American Institute of Banking of New Jersey (AIBNJ), AT&T School of Business and Technology, Caesars Casino Atlantic City, Omaha Public Power District

(OPPD), Bergen County Police and Fire Academy, National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists (NRRPT), and Omega Institute.

In May, the College participated in the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce's inaugural "Business Goes to College" event. Daniel Sierchio, Vice President for Training and Performance, PNC Bank, and Dr. Sonja Eveslage made a presentation about PONSI and the American Institute of Banking of New Jersey (AIBNJ) partnership agreement. Five potential sponsors for ACE-PONSI evaluations were identified. William Seaton, Associate Vice President for DIAL, utilized the College's electronic classroom to make his presentation about distance learning. His presentation was interactively received at the Mercer County Community College West Windsor site.

**PONSI Evaluations.** Three additional PONSI site evaluations have been completed. At the Ultrasound Diagnostic Schools (Iselin, NJ), the faculty team recommended 37 credits for 10 courses; at the Computer Learning Center (Paramus, NJ) the team recommended 105 credits for 22 courses, each of these courses are usually over 100 hours in length; and finally, at the Institute of Logistical Management (Huntingdon Valley, PA), the review team recommended 21 credits for 7 courses.

### **Communications & College Relations**

**Media Relations.** The significant media coverage achieved by the College over this past quarter reflects the success of the College's substantial cultivation efforts throughout the year. The 25th Anniversary of the College has provided a unique opportunity to capture media attention and stories about its mission and impact.

The College was featured in a full-page article with photos on the cover of the Business Section of The (Trenton) Times on March 16. On March 23, Thomas Edison State College was the lead college profiled in a page one Accent Section feature on adult learning. The College was highlighted in a sidebar and graph in a cover story on distance learning in The New Brunswick Home News & Tribune and Asbury Park Press on May 6. This was the final installment of a three-part series on distance learning; positive reference to the College also was made in other parts of the series.

Media coverage during this period also included an article in the New Brunswick Home News & Tribune, coverage of the Library for the Blind & Handicapped tour by the trustees in both print and television media, and the Trenton NetDay announcement which was well covered by print and television media. A major article in the national magazine, *Black Issues in Higher Education*, featured the College and student Gregory Adkins.

**Videos.** Production for the new College video is underway. In addition, a separate video is being developed in conjunction with Executive Forum. Edwin Newman, the veteran television journalist, was the host on the Executive Forum syndicated television program which was taped at HBO Studios in Manhattan in May. As part of the College's agreement with Executive Forum, a customized videotape featuring representatives of the College and Mr. Newman on the subject of technologies in higher education will be available for College use and distribution.

## **Special Events**

**Thomas C. Streckewald Golf Classic.** Plans are well underway for the third annual golf classic. Invitations were mailed the week of May 4, and several companies have responded with contributions for the "goody bags" for the golfers. The activities for the day include lunch, a day of golf, and an awards presentation and buffet.

**Silver Anniversary Gala.** The site for the Silver Anniversary Gala scheduled for September 20th has been changed to the Forsgate Country Club in Jamesburg due to the state's recent action in rescinding our permit to hold it on West State Street. This year's "Spirit of Edison" award recipients are: John J. Heldrich, retired executive, Johnson & Johnson; The Honorable Joseph H. Rodriguez, Judge, U.S. District Court; and Howard E. Butt, BSHS '95, and Bureau Chief, N.J. State Police. CoreStates Bank has committed \$25,000 to underwrite the event, and the Sarnoff Corporation will provide in-kind services of printing.

**Alumni Phonathon.** The Alumni Association kicked off its annual spring phonathon with \$31,277 in direct mail and raised \$43,384 in pledges during ten sessions held from April 26 through May 6, 1997. A total of \$74,661 has been generated so far in direct mail gifts, individual pledges, and matching gifts toward the \$85,000 goal. Unspecified gifts stimulated by volunteers during the phonathon as well as other gifts solicited through mail efforts will help move the campaign toward the goal.

## **John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy**

The work of the Watson Institute for Public Policy over this past quarter has continued its significant progress in public policy support and assistance.

**Center for the Urban Environment (CUE).** CUE's work over the past quarter has been varied and productive. On a statewide level, CUE was asked to join the steering committee of the Affordable Housing and Environmentalists Coalition. In addition, CUE participated in a conference on sustainability hosted by New Jersey Future, the non-profit corporation formed by Governor Whitman to help implement the State Plan.

Within State government in Trenton, CUE has responded to several requests for assistance. The N.J. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has asked for help in developing goals and benchmarks for its National Performance Partnership Program around the issue of environmental justice. Additionally, staff from the DEP Green Acres Program have asked for CUE's assistance in developing a plan for parkland acquisitions along the Delaware and Raritan Canal. CUE continues to participate in the Stacy Park Advisory Committee under the auspices of the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation.

At the non-profit community development level, CUE has assisted several groups with project design and proposal development. With Isles Inc., CUE has been instrumental in designing a project to look at the urban environment in relation to public health. The proposal has made it through the first round of reviews at the Robert Wood

Johnson Foundation and has captured the interest of the Center for Disease Control. CUE responded to a request from the Sierra Club for information regarding the importance of Brownfields to urban redevelopment efforts, and assisted the Trenton Downtown Association in development of an informational publication on downtown beautification efforts. CUE also continues to work with the Newark Environmental Coalition as it expands its membership and identifies project activities.

In a continuing relationship with the City of Trenton's Department of Housing and Development, CUE helped complete a proposal to the EPA for funding to work with Cornell University and Isles Inc. on efforts to move the Eco-industrial Park project forward. Work also continues on the Heritage Tourism Project.

On a national level, representatives from the Institute were invited to participate in a conference sponsored by the Development Leadership Network. The conference focused on cutting edge work in community development in low-income communities. Institute staff were able to share their unique perspective on the relationship between local governments and the non-profit sector.

**Trenton NetDay Partnership.** The Watson Institute organized and coordinated the Trenton NetDay project, a local volunteer effort in support of the national NetDay project aimed at bringing the rich educational resources of the Internet to every school classroom. Through its inclusion of both schools and community sites in the wiring efforts, Trenton NetDay was even more ambitious than most projects. In Trenton, community sites included the YMCA, the CYO, the Boys and Girls Club, the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, the Imani Community Center, all Trenton public libraries and other locations. The Trenton NetDay Steering committee consisted of representatives from numerous community based groups, the State of New Jersey, Trenton Public Schools, the City of Trenton and several corporate partners. These corporate partners included AT&T, Lucent Technologies and a host of others.

**Technology Innovation Challenge Grant Partnership with the Trenton School System.** The Watson Institute for Public Policy entered into a partnership with the Trenton school system to develop a grant proposal for the Technology Innovation Challenge grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The application, submitted May 30, 1997, is for support of the efforts of a community of parents, students, educators, businesses and others to be catalysts for fundamental change in the Trenton educational system. Initially focusing on four schools and their surrounding neighborhoods, this project envisions the infusion of technology into every aspect of the educational process in these neighborhoods. The Watson Institute and the Trenton School system joined together in an effort to expand the process of learning beyond the classroom and even the school building. Using the exhaustive resources of the Internet, this grant proposes that, students and parents will be able to share information electronically, send e-mail, and retrieve homework assignments and other important information. The Watson Institute staff, along with members of the staff of the Trenton Board of Education, held intense working sessions on this application. Notification for successful applications will begin on September 1, 1997.

**New Jersey Urban Mayor's Association Partnership (NJUMA)**. The New Jersey Urban Mayor's Association Partnership continues to provide a vehicle for urban mayors to coalesce around major public policy questions, review policy options, and respond in a more informed manner. During the last quarter, the Watson Institute prepared information sessions for the membership of the Urban Mayors Association on several important issues facing New Jersey Mayors. These issues included welfare reform, the financing of public schools and the current status and implications of the New Jersey State Plan.

The Watson Institute staff researched and developed an informational brief on the recent Welfare Reform legislation and its impact on urban governments for UMA members. Additionally, the Watson Institute invited David Sciarra, Executive Director of the Education Law Center, to make a presentation to members of the NJUMA on School Funding and the Education Law Center's recent challenge to the constitutionality of the state's Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA). The Watson Institute also invited Herb Simmons, Executive Director of the New Jersey Office of State Planning to meet with the Urban Mayors Association. Mr. Simmons discussed the "State Plan," and its implications for urban municipalities.

**Trenton Enterprise Coalition**. The Watson Institute continues to play a significant role in shaping the Trenton Enterprise Coalition (TEC) into an organized body whose mission is to serve the Trenton community. The TEC continues its commitment to foster and support residents in building healthy communities within the many diverse neighborhood that comprise our city.

The TEC is finalizing a survey that will focus on providing community information that will provide a network among service providers, with hopes of providing information to close gaps in service. This survey will also serve as the basis for determining financial capacity and personnel of community service organization.

The TEC, in conjunction with the "Trenton Fellows" group of local grass-roots leaders, is currently involved in an initiative to organize and help revitalize the lower Canal Banks community which encompasses West Hanover, Passaic, Spring and Church Streets. The Fellows have completed 50 surveys as well as attended the local civic association meeting to ascertain information that will best equip the membership in moving forward; such as ways to identify and recruit new members, provide training, and design a comprehensive action plan to address community concerns.

### **State Library**

The College's Division of Administration and Finance began processing \$860,000 in grants to 300 public libraries for access to the Internet. On May 13th, 1997 the State Librarian presented the first grant to the Pennington Free Public Library. This grant is part of the \$1.8 million in matching funds set aside by the State Library to take the first step in the implementation of "Libraries 2000," a statewide plan that will assist all of the state's

free public libraries in purchasing hardware and linkages so that access to the Internet or information highway will be available to all of the state's citizens.

The College's Controller recently met with a representative of the United States Department of Education to assist in completing the calculations for the indirect cost rate appropriate for the College's administration of federally funded, State Library grants. The talks were productive, and it appears the calculation will be to the benefit of the College and the State Library. Currently, through the affiliation of the State Library, Thomas Edison State College is the only institution of higher education in the nation in the position of administering rather than receiving federal grants.

### **HINT**

The College's Director of Special Studies and Director of Budget and Analysis were recently invited to make a presentation on "Spacial Data Mining for Health Research, Planning and Education" at "Toward An Electronic Patient Record '97," annual conference of the Medical Research Institute. The Institute focuses on the emerging vision of electronic health records as part of a seamless, patient-centered information system of the Medical Research Institute. This presentation is an example of the College's implementation efforts of the Healthcare Information Networks and Technologies (HINT) study which has identified \$760 million in cost savings and other implementation strategies for computer networks using national data standards and electronic data interchange (EDI) to move healthcare claims and medical information in a cost efficient and timely manner.

### **Bid Waiver Postreporting**

At the March 1997 Board of Trustees meeting, the College was granted a bid waiver to revise the DIAL Registration Bulletin to include the College's testing program, and to purchase a one-year supply of 25,000 copies at an estimated cost of \$56,250. Due to the addition of the testing program offerings, the book this year has 42 more pages than last year. The increase in size and the associated production costs resulted in an actual cost for this fiscal year of \$59,300. The job was delivered on May 9, 1997. It was awarded to Parker-Polychrome, the lowest bidder who met our specifications.

Also at the March 1997 Board of Trustees meeting, a bid waiver was granted to revise the College Catalog and to purchase a two-year supply of 35,000 copies at an estimated cost of \$73,500. This year's book is 5% smaller due to the reconfiguration of services in academic programs. The decreased size and associated savings in production expenses resulted in an actual cost for this fiscal year of \$47,300. The job was scheduled for delivery on June 9, 1997. It was awarded to Nittany Valley Offset, the lowest bidder who met our specifications.

At the September 1996 Board of Trustees meeting, the College was granted a bid waiver to revise the Credit Description Book and to purchase a two-year supply of 2,500 copies at an estimated cost of \$11,700. Due to the reconfiguration of services in academic

programs, the book was revised to reflect Portfolio Assessment only. In addition, the quantity was reduced to a one-year supply of 1,000. Accordingly, the actual cost for this fiscal year was \$7,279. The job was delivered on April 11. It was awarded to XYAN/Graphic Reproductions, the lowest bidder who met our specifications.

**Resignations**

The following people have resigned from the College:

- Merle Ways - Office of Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs
- Tom Donlon - Test Development and Research
- Sheila Taylor - Office of the Registrar

The following people have resigned from the New Jersey State Library:

- Carol Dubois - Administration
- Vromel Gray - Library Development