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To Chairman Lee, Dr. Young, the Distinguished Members of the  
Commission to Study the Future of the State Colleges

On behalf of the Trustees and staff of Thomas Edison State College, I extend greetings and welcome. On a personal note, it is extremely gratifying and fitting that the unique talents and broad experiences of Calvin Lee have been recruited to lead this important effort. This experience is a moment of *deja vu*, for we both shared participation in a similar effort as the State of Maryland appointed a commission to examine similar issues several years ago. I have been delighted at the opportunity to revive professional contact with a long-respected colleague.

On this day, I have been President of Edison State College for two months and four days. I visited the College in October of last year to observe and participate in our annual commencement. It was at that time that I learned through the televised newscast that the State was facing a \$150 million shortfall in revenues and that, as a consequence, higher education would be severely taxed to accommodate its share in State budget reductions.

Approximately two weeks later, I reviewed an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education which ranked New Jersey 49th of the 50 states in support for higher education as a function of per capita personal income. In December, in meetings with the Chancellor and my colleagues at other state

colleges, the effects and consequences of both these conditions became the focal point of my orientation to this College. Along with knowing smiles from my colleagues in the State, I was told "Welcome to New Jersey." I am sure that this Commission realizes that, if any of its work or outcomes are to be meaningful, higher education as a segment will have to receive from the public a considerable increase in support if it is to provide meaningful and quality opportunities for the citizens of this State. Our institutions and our citizenry require and deserve more from us than the article I have alluded to suggests that they are receiving.

Thomas A. Edison State College is the external degree college for the State of New Jersey. The concept of this College was first suggested within the Department of Higher Education by Chancellor Dungan in 1971 and was based upon the model of the New York Regents External Degree Program initiated earlier that year. By November of 1971, the Department completed a cooperative agreement with the New York Department of Education to begin an external degree program in New Jersey. The Department had also been developing a planning document which would establish a college as an administrative arm of the Department. This was implemented July 1, 1972 with Dr. James Douglas Brown, Jr. as the Director.

A core administrative staff was appointed and an institutional mission statement was developed. By May of 1973, the Department completed the planning process and established Thomas A. Edison College as the ninth institution in the State college system, authorized to grant degrees, and governed by its own Board of Trustees.

One significant difference between the two state external degree

programs was that the Department and the College staff perceived the New Jersey program as more service oriented than the New York program. The New York program did not offer direct counseling services; all student contact was made through the Office of the Registrar. Edison State College staff believed that personal communication and counseling available at a variety of locations throughout the State was essential to the success of the New Jersey program. This significant difference in concept contributed to the termination of the relationship with the New York Regents in October, 1973.

That early mission statement, with some later modifications, provided the mandates by which Edison State College has emerged as a unique institution, not only in New Jersey, but in the nation. Those mandates are to:

- 1) offer those degree programs required to meet the characteristic needs of New Jersey adult learners;
- 2) develop appropriate noninstructional methods and instruments for earning college credit, with special emphasis on credit-by-examination and portfolio assessment programs;
- 3) provide academic advising for its own students and general educational counseling and information services for nonenrolled adults throughout the State;
- 4) cooperate with business and industry, nonprofit corporations, and government in evaluating employee training programs for college credits;
- 5) develop interinstitutional linkages designed to provide expanded educational opportunities for the adult learner; and
- 6) create educational delivery systems built around contemporary electronic telecommunications technologies designed to provide greater educational access for the distant learner.

In view of this broadly stated mission, one can well understand why the College found it necessary to break out of the restrictive interstate agreement with the Regents External Degree Program and seek its own institutional direction.

From this point on, I think the most useful approach to this short historical review would be the presentation of a calendar of the major events in the College's history following the decision to operate as a free-standing State college.

- June 1973: Awarding of first associate degrees at first Commencement.
- March 1974: Beginning of the first Edison testing and assessment programs.
- July 1974: Establishment of the Statewide Counseling Network funded by the Lilly Foundation.
- January 1975: Beginning of cooperative learning programs with State government, industry, and nonprofit corporations.
- May 1975: Awarding of first B.A. and B.S.B.A. degrees at third Commencement.
- June 1977: Full accreditation by Middle States Association.
- October 1978: Establishment of the Statewide Information Network for Education supported by Federal funding.
- September 1979: Move to the Kelsey Building in Trenton as permanent home of the College.
- October 1979: Awarding of first B.S. degrees at the seventh Commencement.

- February 1980: Initiation of the "Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI)," under contract with the American Council on Education.
- July 1980: State Board approval of change in name of the College to "Thomas A. Edison State College."
- November 1980: Establishment of the Statewide Testing and Assessment Center under funding from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE); Center mission to serve students enrolled at other colleges.
- June 1982: Ten-year reaccreditation by the Middle States Association.

This recital of the major events in our short history provides only part of the evidence of the continuous efforts of the College to fulfill its mission. To round out this record of institutional service, consider the following factual summary of ten-year accomplishments:

- 1) the development of seven undergraduate degree programs, three at the associate and four at the baccalaureate level;
- 2) the enrollment of some 15,000 students since 1972;
- 3) the awarding of approximately 4,000 associate and baccalaureate degrees;
- 4) the use of over 500 faculty from New Jersey higher education institutions to serve in test development, special assessment, degree program review and development, and academic governance;

- 5) the development of 95 examinations in the Thomas Edison State College Examination Program (TECEP) plus the formulation of cooperative agreements with CLEP, ACT/PEP, DANTES, and Ohio University to make available approximately 350 examinations to Edison students;
- 6) the creation of 10 test administration sites across the State;
- 7) the completion of 1,131 individual assessments of prior learning in 1,422 subject fields yielding a total of 20,265 Edison College credits;
- 8) the provision of educational counseling services to approximately 70,000 New Jersey citizens at 139 part-time sites located at such places as public and private colleges, public libraries, adult night schools, corporate centers, military bases, and the like, 39 such sites being currently operative;
- 9) the handling of approximately 103,000 information and referral inquiries by the Statewide Information Network during its four-year history under Edison's management;
- 10) the development of curriculum articulation agreements with 10 community colleges, cooperative relationships with 16 institutional members of the Statewide Testing and Assessment Center, plus several unique cooperative arrangements with out-of-state and foreign institutions and professional organizations;
- 11) the evaluation of 14 corporate and agency training programs since early 1981 covering 211 college-level courses for some 20,000 adults under the Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI),

a regionally contracted program with the American Council on Education;

- 12) the administration of separately funded cooperative programs designed to serve special populations, the most significant being those providing educational services for incarcerated persons, alcohol and drug abuse rehabilitation personnel, the unemployed, day care workers, union workers, the handicapped, State and local police, and State government employees.

When one considers this ten-year record of accomplishments and the fact that Edison State College has recently been granted its first ten-year reaccreditation by the Middle States Association, one can conclude that this young institution has achieved full maturity as a successful external degree model. The College now stands on the threshold of a new era. It could be an era for the realization of great institutional growth and development, for much remains to be accomplished in satisfying the educational needs of thousands of adult learners as yet unserved by the College. On the other hand, we know there is no guarantee of success because of the problems and obstacles we face, particularly those relating to the present condition of the economy and the College's perennial small funding base. However, I join the Board and staff of the College in the firm belief that these problems and obstacles can be overcome. Whether we succeed in that effort will depend to a great extent on the outcomes of this Commission's work and the State's willingness to permit the College to operate under a different set of rules in the future. I should now like to turn to a review of the major areas for institutional growth and improvement during the next decade and to offer the Commission some recommendations as to how the State can be of assistance.

The Challenge of the Next Ten Years

There are six major areas of institutional activity which need to be given high priority in the coming years if Edison State College is to completely fulfill its mission. I refer to the following:

- 1) a significant improvement in institutional capacity to serve more students in a period of declining resources;
- 2) priority emphasis on conversion to an electronic delivery model;
- 3) an expansion of service to special sectors of the adult population currently underserved by the College;
- 4) a greater contribution to New Jersey economic development through the expansion of cooperative programs with business and industry;
- 5) an increase in interinstitutional linkages and consortial arrangements; and
- 6) the development of new funding and administrative relationships with the State.

I will elaborate on a few of these.

Conversion to an "Electronic University"

The significance of the computer and related technologies in the future development of the College and its ability to serve adult learners demands a more expanded treatment at this point. As computing power becomes more widely dispersed throughout American society, Edison State College has the potential of becoming a unique model of the "electronic university." By maintaining a separation of the functions of learning and evaluation, Edison's external degree permits students to acquire learning at any location and through any

method and, thus, to take unique advantage of the computer as a learning, testing, and communications tool besides its more common use as an administrative tool.

To achieve this conversion to a computer-driven delivery model, the College, in cooperation with the New Jersey Institute of Technology and ADONEX, Inc., has developed an ambitious plan for the creation and implementation of a "Computer-Assisted Lifelong Learning Network (CALL Network)." This Network will integrate an entire degree program, essential support services, and existing computer technology to extend the accessibility of a college degree to adults currently unable to pursue a campus-based degree.

The CALL Network will be demonstrated initially in sponsored learning sites, such as corporate training and development centers and networked community learning centers, and will be developed toward the ultimate market of the individual adult learner using a personal computer in the living room of tomorrow.

#### Expansion of Cooperative Arrangements with Business and Industry

Because of its unique mission to assist adults in extending their range of educational opportunities for meeting college degree requirements, Edison State College is in an excellent position to serve business and industry, thus contributing to the economic development of New Jersey. As indicated in the previous outline of the College's first ten years, a significant initiative in this direction was undertaken with the launching of the Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI). In the future, the College will work more closely with both large and small businesses and industries in raising employee educational levels and assisting in the

development of the educated human resources necessary to foster additional industrial development.

Through its Center for Management Education and Services, the College will provide a variety of organizations with an array of on-site services including orientation, counseling, enrollment, and academic advising. In addition, Center members will be able to contract for the following Edison services: educational needs assessments; workshops on portfolio assessment; degree program planning; career counseling; and the evaluation of corporate training courses for recommended college credit through the PONSI program.

Since Edison does not offer instruction, it relies on the faculty of other institutions for test development and the assessment of prior learning demonstrated through portfolios of documented evidence. In the future, the College plans to work out cooperative arrangements with both public and private institutions for providing on-demand instructional services to corporations and other large agencies. For example, when one of these organizations wants an instructional component to prepare employees to satisfy certain college requirements or upgrade professional skills, the Center will work with the organization to develop and issue a request for proposal (rfp) to participating colleges and universities. Interested colleges may also propose an array of credit and noncredit courses from which the Center corporation member may choose that which meets a particular educational need.

Although it is difficult to forecast how many persons will be served through the Center, it is estimated conservatively that some 200 adults for each Center corporation member will be working towards a college degree during any current academic year. In addition, at least three organizations per month are expected to request evaluations of formal training courses

through the PONSI program. It is significant to note that, to date, this program has yielded recommendations for 211 college credits for 20,000 New Jersey corporate employees who could have these credits accepted at the 27 New Jersey institutions that approve PONSI credit recommendations. These evaluations cost the various companies approximately \$35,000, an investment which is the equivalent of a potential tuition remission savings of between 6 and 24 million dollars for this corporate benefit to the 13,000 employees, depending on which four-year public or private New Jersey college or university were to offer the total equivalent instructional program.

The small business sector, consisting of over 100,000 companies scattered across the State, possesses a different set of more difficult problems. However, the College believes it can offer useful educational services to such companies and proposes to establish an Educational Maintenance Organization (EMO) to meet their needs.

The EMO would serve as a clearinghouse for small business requests for training and educational opportunities. Depending on individual need, Edison counselors would be able to recommend individualized learning packages consisting of various combinations of correspondence courses, telecourses, examinations and test study guides, and portfolio assessment. Skill building opportunities can also either be recommended or arranged. If the demand for a particular skill emerges from a number of companies and creates a sufficient critical mass, an appropriate course can be arranged at a central location using the "rfp" system.

In both the large and small business sector, meeting the needs of minority adults will be a central concern. In addition to working through corporations,

businesses, and agencies, organizations that exist to serve minority concerns will be contacted. Increasing the numbers of college-educated minority adults is expected to have a spiral effect: more children of college graduates will be encouraged to attend colleges, and more highly educated individuals are less likely to be unemployed.

As I indicated at the beginning of this presentation on our view of the future of Edison State College, one of the basic missions of the College has always been to work with all kinds of organizations in providing their employees with a variety of extended learning opportunities to improve their educational and professional backgrounds. The College has now reached a point in its historical growth where it has developed the expertise to focus its corporate, small business, and minority outreach efforts in ways which can now be more significant in promoting the economic development of the State.

#### Promotion of Greater Interinstitutional Cooperation

Edison State College has consistently worked closely with New Jersey public and private colleges and universities since the first day of its founding. Its original Advisory Council, and later its Academic Council, drew heavily on faculty and administrators from both sectors for membership. As indicated earlier, the College utilizes faculty from all higher education sectors in hundreds of disciplines as adjuncts for the operation of its testing and assessment program. In addition, the College has created a larger number of formal curriculum articulation agreements with the community colleges than all of the other eight State colleges combined. Finally, although the Statewide Testing & Assessment Center was created just two years ago, it has already proved to be a very effective consortium for the delivery

of testing and assessment opportunities for adult learners enrolled at Center institutions and has achieved national recognition as a model for replication.

In a period of declining funding sources, it is imperative that institutions pool their resources if services to adult learners are to be maintained at a level necessary to satisfy even basic, minimal needs in today's economy. The ironic problem we face is the fact that adult learner demand has never been greater; yet, continuing education and other adult learner programs, which have never enjoyed a high funding priority, are the first to feel the budget axe as cutbacks continue. Edison State College is the right institution, in the right place, at the right time to provide the leadership necessary for the coordination of statewide interinstitutional efforts to expand adult learner programs and services, particularly within the State college system.

Although one of the prime motivating factors for the consortial approach to serving the adult learner stems from the current condition of the economy and the consequent State budget crisis, a condition which we recognize will extend well into the future, it does not follow that the pooling of institutional resources will require no commitment of additional State funds. The assumption of a leadership role in coordinating statewide consortial arrangements requires that the College be provided with financial incentives to do the job. The funding issue is a critical one for Edison State College, given the relative smallness of its base budget. For the State, on the other hand, the issue is not really critical because the increase in Edison funding necessary to carry out such a mandate would constitute a tiny fraction of the State's higher education budget. Rather, the real issue is one of priorities. If the Commission is going to be recommending priorities for the allocation of the State's limited resources, it is absolutely essential that the Edison leadership effort in this area be given a high priority.

Recommendations

I am aware of the enormous volume of information with which you are confronted. I, therefore, fully appreciate the need to distill out and highlight three major and fundamental issues on which we would suggest the Commission make recommendations.

1) Governance

I wish to state candidly that I have no information whatsoever as to the formulation of any position by this Commission or any of its members on the question of the state of governance for the State colleges.

I do, however, have a clear and emphatic view of the appropriate governance relationship for Edison State College. It is my position and testimony to this Commission that Edison State College maintain an independent and autonomous Board of Trustees as currently provided. My personal view is that the creation of a unitary trustee board for the nine State colleges would not serve well the interest of the colleges or of the State. I am sure you will hear from the other presidents as to their respective positions on this matter as it relates to their institutions.

There is no question in my mind, however, that the loss of our Board would significantly contribute to a loss in recognition of the unique and special role for which Edison was created and which Edison must play. All of our institutions are special and different but Edison is differently different. It is inherent in the nature of systems to standardize, and, in some cases, standardization can result in effectiveness and efficiency. However, to standardize, you must homogenize, and those pressures would be disastrous for this College.

Practices of governance, administration, and funding for a college like Edison must be predicated upon the appropriate and legitimate needs of our

unique and peculiar model. It is my view, therefore, that the current governance relationships by which we enjoy our own Board committed to what we do, functions responsibly within the context of a broader authority of the Department of Higher Education and achieves the correct balance between autonomy and governance at the institutional level but with coordination and cooperation at the state and segment level.

2) Administration and Autonomy

The question of the administrative autonomy available to an institution and its managers is a separate but often confused issue from governance. There is a fundamental principle inherent to the behavior of any organization, that those vested with the responsibility of management and the accountability of management must also have sufficient authority over those things for which they are responsible and accountable.

The approval of a budget by the Board of Trustees, which assures that the institution's resources are appropriately arrayed for the effective execution of the institution's mission and purpose, is an appropriate governance function. So, it is also appropriate that the same oversight authority and coordinating authority be vested in the Board of Higher Education to insure that the individual provincial interest of any institution does not run counter to the good of higher education and, more importantly, to that of the broader populace. It is not, however, a governance function within the execution of the deployment of these resources after being approved through the governance process, to subject the institution to countless layers of bureaucratic red tape and procedures exercised by a host of agencies and bureaucracies which have no responsibility for the conduct of the institution's function nor bear any accountability for the effect of its actions on the students and citizens it serves.

All of our respective boards take seriously the responsibility of attracting competent administrators to conduct the affairs of the College. It is frustrating, inefficient, and expensive to have the good work of these administrators hamstrung by the extreme regulation and layers of nonsensical approvals to which we are all subjected in the conduct of our affairs. There are numerous examples available to you as illustration of this point, and I will gladly share them with you should you wish to be so informed. Fiscal autonomy for this College is a fundamental requirement in our ability to effectively serve the citizens of this State.

3) Research and Development

In a real sense, Edison has a responsibility as the research and development arm for public higher education in pioneering processes and technology for delivering services to the adult learner. Our work in developing the TECEP locally and our national influence on the portfolio assessment process are well known examples of this function. There are other issues to be explored, and we view ourselves as having a responsibility in them. For example, I previously alluded to Edison as having done work towards evolving into what we call the electronic college concept. The implications of this notion are potentially profound in the way we deliver what we do now and will be doing in the future. There is clearly very little work being done in prior learning assessment at the graduate level. While I do not wish to suggest that Edison expand into graduate areas and, I hasten to add, I do not rule it out either, clearly the development of the educational technology, intellectual processes, and validation-related research to expand this practice for graduate work which could then be used by our graduate institutions is clearly within the realm of our experience, mission, and expertise.

On a final note, I wish to express my appreciation for the timing of this activity. While I have not been party to Edison's very important past, I fully expect to influence what I believe to be a noteworthy future for this College. To this end, our staff is involved in a number of committees and a Task Force grappling with the issues as to how we can do what we do better for more people and in different ways. It is gratifying to know that our work is taking place within the context of a broader effort so competently led by the members of this Commission.

George A. Pruitt  
President  
Thomas A. Edison State College