

## PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

Thomas A. Edison State College, like most institutions, experiences cycles. There is time for expansion, and there is time for consolidation. We have just been through a period of enormous expansion. Our enrollment has exploded.

Our dramatic enrollment growth continued during the past year, concluding with an official headcount of 6,844 plus 530 limited service students, for a total enrollment of 7,374. By this measure, we rank 11th in size out of New Jersey's 38 senior colleges and universities. We currently have enrolled 985 students more than we had at the same time last year, which represents a 16.9% increase. At the same time the general enrollment increased, there was a 24% increase in Black and Hispanic students.

The College's Black and Hispanic enrollment continues to increase towards our target goal of 18%. Our graduation rate continues to track favorably with our minority enrollment, and we continue to be one of the few schools in the country showing this pattern.

The Challenge Grant project is on schedule. The physical network architecture has been completed; CALL Network pilot sites were established; a distinguished panel of external evaluators has monitored the progress of the proposal; software development to support the simulated classroom continues, as does work on the diagnostic exams and on expanding the base of courses available through the various technologies; and we have enrolled over 800 students in courses in the Center for Learning Through Telecommunications.

After years of testing, the automated transcript evaluation and advising system has been completed, and the student data base is currently being loaded with over 7,000 active student records.

The College has successfully implemented phase two of autonomy; successfully installed an automated fund accounting system; and completed and received an unqualified external audit report. Currently, the College is proceeding to assume payroll processing and risk management functions.

The major challenges at Thomas A. Edison State College continue to be in enrollment growth, in capital facilities, and in academic program development and expansion for the distant learner.

### Enrollment

We expect that our enrollment growth will continue to increase at an annual rate of approximately 7%. We view that this growth can be satisfactorily accommodated with few exceptions by existing staff that was acquired in the Fiscal Year 1989 budget cycle. The basic infrastructure of the institution to accommodate and absorb this growth appears sound. As you are aware, ten of the new positions acquired in the last year were all funded out of student fee income. Other new positions were funded in the special purposes category in priority packages.

### Capital Facilities

Although we have no traditional college classrooms, we do have capital facility and space requirements. We have been pleased with the willingness of the General Services Administration to provide us with additional space and maintenance without cost to the College. Additional space at 105-115 West State Street and at 167-169 West Hanover Street has been approved. This space will more than double the current facilities and is currently being renovated through the Division of Building and Construction and General Services Administration with funding provided by Treasury.

We do, however, have major capital equipment needs which are not provided by General Services Administration and are beyond the capability of our regular operating budget. This equipment is generally computer hardware necessary to network our various college sites and to create a distributive data processing environment for our various college functions.

We requested funding for the necessary computer and administrative support in FY 1990, but it appears that it will not be funded given the current state fiscal environment.

Appropriately supporting our staff with adequate technologies is absolutely essential to our operations. The Challenge Grant has been a major asset in this regard, but there are still many unmet needs in this area.

### Academic Program Development and Expansion

The major thrust of academic program expansion will be in serving adult learners at a distance through various technologies. This was the area principally supported by the Challenge Grant, and around it our future will be built. We will be attempting to expand the number and kinds of courses available to students as well as exploring a variety of technologies as a delivery mode. We believe the infrastructure is in place for this expansion to take place.

However, our ability to serve adult learners at a distance through various technologies will be in direct relationship to the resources available to support this initiative.

In summary, we see continued and steady enrollment growth that can be accommodated reasonably without great expansions or increases in staff. We have anticipated a flattening in the increase in appropriated dollars and will probably be limiting our expansion plans to those thrusts begun through the Challenge Grant initiative. We will have concerns about future funding of the salary program and the provision of equipment and technologies to support our services to learners at a distance.

The challenges have been significant. I am very gratified with the progress and results that have been made, and I am especially gratified with the support and assistance we have received from the Department. Your

continued support during these difficult fiscal times is critical to completing the work to be done and to ensuring that the gains we have made are not lost.