

1990 STATE-OF-THE-COLLEGE ADDRESS

When describing the state-of-the-College to the Board of Trustees at its meeting last Friday, in characterizing current events I was reminded of the movie title "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." The bad was the budget cuts that we sustained for the current year, the ugly is a proposal for further cuts next year, but there is also much good in our past achievements and the prospects for our future.

As I briefed you in July, our current budget sustained a 14% cut in appropriated dollars from last year. At the same time, we concluded a fiscal year which saw an 8% increase in enrollment. By increasing fees, increasing enrollment, and reducing staff through attrition, we have started the year with a balanced budget. I can, therefore, report to you that the state-of-the-College is stable but fragile.

As I told you in July, the massive cuts in appropriations for this year were a function of the enormous deficit experienced by state government. Cuts received by the College, though severe, were spread across every corner of the state and shared by every institution, organization, or program funded by state dollars. We were not cut because we were a low priority, but rather because there were no other alternatives. For this reason we did not oppose the reduction that we received, and, though the cuts were painful, we have managed them appropriately, and we begin the year on solid footing.

The reductions in personnel were not in the areas of direct service to students, and, while many areas of the College will be stretched by the growth, there is no reason why we cannot continue the high quality of service to our students which is the source of our growth in the first place. Unfortunately, the College has been informed that the state is planning for an additional 8% reduction in support next year on top of the already reduced base of current funding.

The consequence of further cuts of this magnitude on public higher education in New Jersey are grave. Most institutions in this state assumed that the Draconian cuts of FY '91 would stabilize our funding, and while no one expected great increases for fiscal '92, neither did we anticipate further reductions of this magnitude.

Many institutions depleted reserves, deferred maintenance, and took other one-time fixes in order to get through a bad year. Those resources, once used, are no longer available. Another round of cuts will undoubtedly cause the elimination of programs, personnel, decreased enrollment, and higher tuition. These proposed cuts and their attendant consequences are adverse to the legitimate interest of higher education, and will severely and negatively impact the public interest and the citizens of this state.

I will, therefore, to the extent possible, vigorously oppose the proposed reductions. I have no illusion that this College individually or higher education collectively has the ability to overcome the adverse fiscal conditions in which we find ourselves. We do, however, have an obligation to vigorously define the educational needs of our citizens and the resources necessary to meet them.

For Thomas Edison State College to sustain an 8% reduction in appropriations will require us to generate in excess of \$400,000 in new revenues simply to maintain the status quo. We, unlike our traditional colleagues, will have fewer options in responding to cuts of this magnitude. We don't have a department to close down or majors to eliminate, nor can we easily manage enrollment so as to limit the students we have to serve with reduced resources. Nor are further staff reductions a reasonable or viable alternative. It shall, therefore, be our position to first attempt to defend our appropriations, and, failing that, we will attempt to make up for lost revenues through continued increases in student fees and enrollment.

I am fully aware that we are quickly reaching a point by which we cannot sustain the increased growth without increased staff. Fortunately, our enhanced automation has helped us accommodate this growth.

I am not ready at this point to concede that the reductions will actually occur. This college enjoys a broad bipartisan base of support in both houses of the legislature. We will be petitioning the state to find some other fiscal policy option than further reducing support to public higher education in general and especially Thomas Edison State College.

While I wish I had better things to report on the fiscal side, there really is good news virtually everywhere else. Enrollment increased by 8%; we had an excellent follow-up in our second National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning (that program is beginning to achieve its planned objectives of cementing our role as a national leader in the assessment of experiential learning); and we successfully completed the implementation of the most ambitious undertaking in the College's history - the Call Network, our Challenge Grant proposal.

I would like to quote part of the transmittal letter of the Challenge Grant External Evaluation Team, "... it is the finding and conclusion of the panel that the College satisfied the conditions of the grant, and not only achieved the stated objectives of the project but did so in an exemplary manner. The initiative represents a bold prosecution of the College's unique mission. The College's staff, faculty, and leadership are to be commended for their commitment to innovation and leadership in their service to adults in higher education."

I am also delighted to announce that the College has received the largest single gift in its history. The Digital Equipment Corporation has made an equipment grant that has a street value in excess of \$650,000. This equipment gives us state-of-the-art technology allowing us to construct and maintain in-house a national automated network to support the CALL project. This grant will make us independent of many third party host computers to support our work of serving students at a distance using technology.

We have completed our self-study for initial accreditation of our nursing program by the National League of Nursing, and we expect a successful site visit from the visiting team later this month.

The renovation of our Hanover Street facility will begin at the end of this month with the expected occupancy of that facility sometime around the first of the year. We will be moving during the year. We probably ought to be used to that, but this one is going to be a major and extraordinarily complicated reshuffling of people, programs, and equipment. It will require planning and patience to pull it off without disruption.

In a major victory, we have finally freed ourselves from the clutches of the Capitol Post Office, and we now have our own address and will be handling our own mail. And, for the first time in the 79 year history of this elegant building, you can enter the front door without covering your head or wiping your feet.

The year before us will be challenging. Aside from the ominous clouds on the fiscal horizon, we are involved in the self-study which will culminate in a 1992 site visit and reaffirmation of our accreditation by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. This is a time-consuming and very important task, and, while I have no doubts as to the outcome of the exercise, it is important that we take very seriously both the challenge and opportunity this process provides.

We have received preliminary approval from the Board of Higher Education to proceed with the development of our master's program in management. We have two years to fully develop this program and submit it for final approval by the Department of Higher Education. In spite of the obvious fiscal constraints, we fully intend to go forward with this initiative.

And, finally, we are in discussions with the City of Trenton about the creation of a public policy think tank which will have as its objective to bring the resources of academia to bear on public policy formulation by people responsible for the development of such policy. What we are proposing is very different from existing organizations such as the Woodrow Wilson School or the Eagleton Institute, though we expect to collaborate and receive their support in the work we plan. Those very fine and prestigious organizations come in at the end to autopsy the body. What we propose is to be there at the beginning to provide help at the birth. While we expect the City of Trenton will probably be our first client, if things go well there will certainly be others.

All of you have been given a copy of my Annual Report to the Board of Trustees. I sincerely commend it to you for your reading, as I did last year and the year before that and the year before that. I know how difficult it is during the year to maintain perspective as to how your individual initiative and work contributes to the overall success of this college. Every year when I go through the process of preparing this report for our Board, I am genuinely moved by your collective achievement, the talents of our students, and the importance of the work in which this college is engaged. I want you to read the report because I want you to receive the validation that's contained in it. I want you to be as proud of yourselves and your colleagues as I am. Read the report and you will get a good sense of why it is we do what we do, and I know you will feel good about it.

Well, we've handled the bad, and we'll do battle with the ugly, but, most of all, we should celebrate the good. There are certainly a great many challenges for us to face this year, but challenges are opportunities. And, hell, if it were easy, anybody could do it. The comfort I take is that if anybody can do it, we can do it! Certainly, one problem we won't have is monotony. You will be kept advised as these various issues are developed and addressed during the course of the year. Much of what will happen to us depends on the quality and depth of your commitment to our collective welfare.

It is in that reality that is the major source of my resolve. We have enormous assets and strengths upon which to confront a period like we are facing.

Autumn officially begins Sunday, so it's time to tee it up for another season. Though we've trimmed the roster, we have depth in every position. But we face a tough schedule, we have a good game plan, and if you meet anyone who wants to wager as to how all of this will play out in the end, you tell 'em that I'm betting on us.

Thank you.

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE
NEW EMPLOYEES HIRED FROM SEPTEMBER 1989

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TITLE & OFFICE</u>	<u>HIRED</u>
William T. Thompkins	Imaging Specialist Management Information Systems	9/25/89
James A. Colaizzo	Admissions Representative Admissions Office	10/11/89
Charlotte Stevens	Senior Clerk Typist Registrars Office	11/04/89
Tuma George-Hines	Clerk Transcriber Center for Direct Independent Adult Learning	11/06/89
Dr. Norman Crawford	Vice President for Public Affairs	11/14/89
Sedell Bailey	Assistant to Director of Administrative Services	11/20/89
Nettie Youngblood	Accountant 3 Controllers Office	11/20/89
Suzan Nagib	Automation Specialist Management Information Systems	12/11/89
Virginia E. Alexander (Vee)	Asstistant to the Director of Testing and Assessment	1/16/90
Mindi L. Shalita	Asst. to the Controller for Payroll Functions Controllers Office	1/18/90
Mary Taylor	Clerk Transcriber Registrars Office	2/20/90
Jamie Heulitt	Senior Clerk Typist Registrars Office	2/26/90
Deborah A. Kidd	Senior Clerk Transcriber Testing and Assessment	4/30/90

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TITLE & OFFICE</u>	<u>HIRED</u>
Cassandra D. Walker	Clerk Transcriber Registrars Office	5/21/90
Robert Jackson	Desk Top Applications Specialist Management Information Systems	5/29/90
Mary L. Buzby	Senior Clerk Transcriber Academic Programs	6/11/90
Linda Holt	Director of Publications, Communciations & College Relations	6/18/90
Ida Julian	Director of College Development Office of College Development	6/18/90
Nancyanne Kopp	Program Manager Corporate Programs	7/30/90
Donald Neal	Clerk Administrative Services	8/27/90
Ruth Webb West	Program Advisor for Nursing Test Site Nursing Program	9/17/90