

# THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

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## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Members, Board of Trustees

FROM: George A. Pruitt 

SUBJ: President's Report to the Board

### **New Program Development**

*Learning Anytime Anyplace Partnership (LAAP).* The College has been notified that it has successfully competed with 652 other institutions in the first round of the Learning Anytime Anyplace Partnership (LAAP) program. LAAP, a federally funded program, is administered by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The College is among the 122 institutions now invited to present full proposals, and the agency expects to fund 25-30 new programs. Our proposal requests funding to develop 10 on-line courses to support the general management option in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree. The work would be completed over three years.

*Master of Arts in Professional Studies (MAPS) Degree Program.* The proposed Master of Arts in Professional Studies (MAPS) degree program is continuing to be developed. This program will provide adults with a rigorous course of study, which will enable them to apply the lessons of the liberal arts to their development as professionals and members of local and global communities.

With the academic leadership of Dr. Dominick Iorio, longtime Thomas Edison faculty consultant and former dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Rider University, the 36-semester program has been structured as follows:

- Common Core (9 sh)
- Change, Evolution, and Choices (9 sh)
- Liberal Arts Electives (12 sh)
- Capstone Thesis/Applied Project (6 sh)

A distinguished faculty has been convened, and they will work with Dr. Iorio and College staff in further development of courses and curriculum.

Faculty have reviewed the courses in the curriculum proposal and have made suggestions for readings, art works, software, websites, and other relevant materials to support the curriculum. Decisions have been made concerning course sequence within the curriculum, course content, and assessment. The first classes are expected to begin in Fall 2000.

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

The annual National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning, to be held June 12-15, is attracting education professionals from a wide spectrum of colleges and universities. Thirty-four registrants, five of them alums of the National Institute, hail from as far away as Hawaii and Bermuda. The College will again offer three tracks to attendees. New sessions for the upcoming Institute are:

- Prior Learning Assessment in Political Perspective: Reflecting on Changes in School and Society
- Prior Learning Assessment and Its Impact on Learners and Colleges in Canada
- Learning Outcomes: Prior Learning Assessment Students vs. Traditional Students
- Using Portfolios to Assess Current Learning
- Panel: Faculty on Assessing Prior Learning
- Benchmarking for Best Practices in Adult Learning
- The Electronic Portfolio
- Life After the Institute, a session designed to bring closure to the entire experience

The College will also offer the Institute's concurrent, electronic conference this summer. This year's e-conference will focus on graduate-level prior learning assessment: This year, another issue of the *Journal of the National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning* will be produced. The *Journal* will be available early in June.

### **Learner Services**

During the first ten months of 1999, student contact via e-mail and the Internet has grown significantly. Web-based activity in the Admissions area increased by 26% this year, while student e-mail advisement grew by over 50%. Phone contact with students, inquirers, and applicants increased only slightly during this same period of time and has been affected by the limitations of the current telephone system. A new phone system is expected to be installed in September. Other areas of increased activity include: student requests for financial aid/veterans affairs assistance, which increased by 30%, and student contacts related to College compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which have grown by 25%. There are currently 23 students in the pilot evaluation fee program. This program offers students the opportunity to receive an evaluation at a lower fee than the cost of enrollment, and use that fee toward enrollment within 30 days of payment.

### **Partnership Agreements**

*Edison Community College.* Students choosing to complete baccalaureate degrees at Thomas Edison State College under the "Edison-to-Edison" initiative with Edison Community College now total 16. Twelve of these enrollments have occurred since March, when it was announced four students had made application to Thomas Edison State College. Coordination of functions between the two institutions has gone well. These students are expected to advance their enrollment with Thomas Edison State College Fall 1 registration.

*Dallas County Community College District.* The College is exploring a degree-completion partnership with the seven-campus Dallas County Community College District. The District Coordinator for Articulation is currently reviewing the College's articulation agreement for conformity to their institutional requirements and is determining which degree programs are most appropriate. They are eager to move forward and want to provide students with access to Thomas Edison State College course offerings for the fall.

*Military.* The Army Degree Builder piloted at Fort Eustis for Aviation Maintenance personnel has proven a success. As a result we have been asked to expand the program to the Medical Command with a focus on respiratory therapy, radiologic technology, and other health-related fields. The College's flexibility, response time, and program structure are what the Army needs to link training with degree granting academic programs. Another key factor in our success with this relationship is that we do not have a residency requirement. Thomas Edison State College is one of the few institutions able to meet the requirements set out by the Army.

### **Nursing Degree Program**

The contract between Regents College and Thomas Edison State College is in the process of being renewed. The College has requested a one-year contract. We expect to receive the signed contract in May 1999. The Professional Nursing Component of the College's BSN degree has been re-designed. In the new design, there are now several methods to complete this requirement, rather than the previous method of exams only. Proposed nursing component changes were presented at the May 21, 1999, Academic Council meeting.

### **Applied Science and Technology Degree Programs**

The College is proposing a new degree program: the Associate in Applied Science. The degree includes options in Administrative Studies, Applied Electronics Studies, Applied Health Studies, Mechanics and Maintenance, and Occupational Studies. There is a need for a degree program appropriate for students who want either to earn an associate in an applied area that matches their knowledge and college credit or for those who need a credential that makes optimal use of their existing credits quickly for employment purposes while they earn the additional credits for a baccalaureate degree in another field. This associate's degree is designed as a terminal degree and, while students could continue for a baccalaureate in another subject, not all of the 60 semester hours would apply to the bachelor's degree. Potential students in this degree include members of the armed forces, those whose previous classroom study has focused on technical areas, and those who have earned credit recommended by the American Council on Education for certain applied examinations and corporate training. The degree requires 21 semester hours of general education, 21 semester hours in the option, and 15 semester hours in free electives.

### **Distance & Independent Adult Learning**

*Course Enrollments.* DIAL course equivalent enrollments (CEEs) for the two winter semesters have increased by more than 23% over enrollments for winter 1998. Year-to-date FY 1999 enrollment growth is nearly 26% over FY 1998.

*Instructional Development Activities.* A total of 100 courses for Guided Study, 27 for Guided Study with E-mail Option, 7 for On-Line Computer Classroom, and 3 for the Master of Science in Management program have been revised. A total of 57 course exams were revised. New cover pages for exams were also introduced, bringing the "look" of exams more in line with the new image of College publications.

A new Student Handbook has been created to help students understand the various processes involved with studying at a distance. The contents are not particularly time-sensitive, and vendors can achieve economies of scale by producing sufficient quantities for a year or more. Time-sensitive materials (e.g., course syllabi and assignment schedules) were restructured and fundamentally revised. They remain in a Course Manual, along with administrative forms.

The Certificate in Distance Learning program is off to a flying start, and several nationally known faculty are under contract to develop Web-based segments of the course. The first modules are due in by September of 1999.

*Textbooks and Course Materials.* The request for proposals (RFP) for centralizing the shipping of course materials and textbooks with a single vendor resulted in two bid proposals. A proposal review committee determined that MBS Direct, one of the current textbook suppliers, would be awarded the bid. A contract has been prepared for signature, and the new distribution system will be implemented in the coming fall.

*New Faculty Mentors.* There are currently 160 faculty assigned as mentors in the DIAL program. New faculty assigned in the third quarter includes:

Renee Walker, Ph.D., Social Work, Howard University (Subject, 20<sup>th</sup> Century African/American Novel); Lamont King, Ph.D., African History, Temple University (Subject, African History); Samuel Kohn, Ph.D., Mathematics, Yeshiva University (Subject, Mathematics); Suzanne Kavli, M.S. Computer Science, North Dakota University (Subject, Data Structures); Nora Carol, M.S., Adult Education/Innovation Management, Syracuse University (Subject, Management); Mary Lou Steed, Ph.D., Sociology, Duke University (Subject, Anthropology); Andrew Verzilli, Ph.D., Economics, Boston College (Subject, Economics); Douglas Rosentrater, M.A., Communication/Theatre, Northwestern University (Subject, Public Speaking); Sheldon Halpern, Ph.D., English, Columbia University (Subject, Living in the Information Age).

#### **Post-Reporting on Bid Waivers**

*Advertising.* At the September 1998 Board of Trustees meeting, the College was granted a bid waiver to engage an advertising agency to assist with advertising at an estimated cost of \$200,000. The College engaged the firm that offered the best proposal for these services. The College retained Oxford Communications, Inc., to provide advertising services for the College at a cost of \$200,000.

*Image and Awareness Advertising.* At the March 1999 Board of Trustees meeting, the College was granted a bid waiver to engage an advertising agency to assist with image and awareness advertising focused within the state of New Jersey at an estimated cost of \$300,000. The College invited three qualified vendors to submit proposals for these services, including Oxford Communications, Inc. One of these vendors declined to participate because of workload and a second was forced to decline because an existing higher education client saw our potential partnership as a conflict of interest. The third vendor was Oxford Communications, Inc., which the College had retained for other advertising services. Oxford Communications submitted an outstanding proposal that integrates the College's advertising efforts into a single campaign. The College engaged Oxford Communications, Inc., to provide image and awareness advertising services for the College at a cost of \$300,000. This amount covers the costs of the public radio and television advertising and billboards (see below).

*Public Radio and Television Advertising.* At the December 1998 Board of Trustees meeting, the College was granted a bid waiver to become a sponsor of public radio and/or television to increase the College's name recognition and awareness of its mission at an estimated cost of \$30,000. The College has obtained "sponsorship" opportunities on New Jersey public radio and television stations, as well as on public radio in Philadelphia, at a total cost of \$30,000.

*Billboards.* At the December 1998 Board of Trustees meeting, the College was granted a bid waiver to purchase billboard advertising services to increase the College's name recognition and awareness of its mission at an estimated cost of \$35,000. The College has obtained billboards through which to communicate its advertising message in strategic locations throughout the state at a total cost of \$35,000.

*Focus Groups - Degree Completion Handbooks.* At the December 1998 Board of Trustees meeting, the College was granted a bid waiver to purchase professional consulting services to conduct focus groups to gauge the effectiveness of the College's Degree Completion Handbooks (formerly known as Program Planning Handbooks) at an estimated cost of \$15,000. The College has obtained the services of Dr. Edward Ziegler, an expert in focus groups and other marketing research, to conduct these services at a total cost of \$15,000.

### **Marketing & College Relations.**

The College initiated its new image campaign with a major coordinated roll out of advertising in target areas throughout New Jersey. Assisted by the advertising and communications expertise of Oxford Communications and the marketing research of Carnegie Marketing Research, Inc., the College has already begun to reap the benefits of this marketing effort. Strong, clean, and powerful advertising messages have been placed by our agency in print, outdoor, and broadcast media in key markets.

This past quarter saw the College receive multiple honors for its work in marketing and college relations. The College received a Gold Award from the New Jersey Communications, Advertising and Marketing Association in the public program category. The College was also awarded gold and silver awards from the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA) for best public relations event nationally (for the College's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration), for media release series, and for best radio advertisement. The College also received an award from UCEA in recognition of the excellence of our Course Bulletin publication.

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The College was featured in several media stories: The College was highlighted in a column in New Jersey Monthly in March, as well as mentioned in several articles in the Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press. The College was also featured in additional newspaper and television coverage in Florida in conjunction with the signing of the articulation agreement with Edison Community College. The College was also mentioned in coverage of Governor Whitman's teleconference during her trip to Brazil, which was hosted at this end by the College in its ITV classroom. In late April, the broadcast division of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) visited the College to produce a video press release on the College, its MSM program, and distance education. The release will go to national press such as CNN, The Today Show, major network news, local affiliates and human interest television programs.

The College conducted focus groups to explore the reaction of currently enrolled students to a key College publication, the Degree Completion Handbook. The groups were also convened to discover more about the factors influencing prospective students to apply to the College and its competitors. These focus groups, along with survey research being completed in their wake, will substantially inform our marketing efforts.

#### **Relationships with Key Constituencies:**

*Military Markets:* This past quarter was a very active one for military relations and marketing. The College was represented at a wide variety of presentations and forums, including at the Navy Nuclear Power School's Command Career Day in Charleston, SC (where there was such a great interest in the College that we have been invited to do a regular briefing to every graduating class), the Fort Bragg annual education fair (at a base that houses approximately 60,000 Servicemembers), and McGuire Air Force Base. Informational mailings continue to be sent to education offices at all military bases, and targeted mailings have been directed to households surrounding McGuire Air Force Base and Fort Dix.

*Corporate Markets:* Outreach calls were made during the quarter to approximately one hundred new corporate contacts. Staff also made presentations and staffed exhibition booths at two large educational fairs for corporate employees. Employee presentations were held during this quarter at Scheiring-Plough, Novo-Nordisk Pharmaceuticals, Wheelock Industries and Copelco Capital. Meetings with human resource staff members were held with AT&T, Cosmair and Hartz Mountain.

*Community Markets:* Information about the College was provided to numerous prospective students who attended transfer programs at eight community colleges over this past quarter. Informational materials, including copies of the College's poster, were sent to Adult Schools throughout the state, encouraging awareness of the College and its programs. Additional presentations were made to various community groups and organizations, as well as agencies of state and local government.

#### **Development**

As of March 31, 1999, the "Investing in Performance" grand total of gifts and pledges has reached \$1,566,308. The AT&T Foundation confirmed that it will make a \$100,000 grant through the Foundation's Campaign to fund the College's Faculty Training and Certificate Program. Bristol-Myers Squibb also confirmed their support with a \$10,000 gift to expand the College's Degree Pathways Program.

The Foundation's combined fund balance as of March 31, 1999, totaled \$1,140,170, compared to \$920,535 for the same quarter last year. The Endowment fund balance remained strong at \$385,591, and the Quasi-endowment fund balance was \$305,617. Development activity for the first quarter of FY99 ending March 31, 1999, resulted in a cumulative total of \$11,046 received by the Foundation.

The 1999 *Spirit of Edison Award* recipients have been selected and invited to receive their respective awards at the October 30<sup>th</sup> Foundation Annual Gala. John J. McCann has been selected to receive the *Spirit of Edison Alumni* award, and Alfred E. Mann (inventor of the insulin pump) is this year's *Spirit of Edison Community Leader* recipient. The Gala Committee is proud to announce that Nicholas L. Carnevale will receive the *Spirit of Edison Family* award.

Invitations for the Thomas C. Streckewald Memorial Golf Classic were mailed in April and several companies have responded with contributions and sponsorships. AT&T Solutions has agreed to sponsor the *Greg Norman One on One Instructional Video* that each participant will receive. Merrill Lynch Bank & Trust is the event's Flag Sponsor.

### **Alumni**

The Alumni Association kicked off its annual spring phonathon with \$12,886 in direct mail and raised \$47,498 in pledges during eight sessions held from April 17, through April 27, 1999. A total of \$63,035 has been generated so far in direct mail gifts, individual pledges and matching gifts towards the \$115,000 goal. An additional 253 unspecified gifts stimulated by student, alumni, and staff volunteers during the phonathon will count toward the goal. The Development Center, a telemarketing firm located in Philadelphia, will call an additional 2,000 non-donors to stimulate annual fund gifts. The non-donor names were selected through a proprietary electronic screening process developed by Marts & Lundy, a prospect identification firm which the College has engaged to conduct a detailed study of the alumni data base.

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

The Watson Institute continued its work with New Jersey Urban Mayors Association during this quarter on legislative and administrative developments relating to public education. Following the historic conference on this issue with mayors, superintendents, and school board presidents and which was hosted by the College on February 10, 1999, a subcommittee met on April 15, 1999, to discuss strategies and the next steps to implement the work of the conference. Discussion at the meeting included status of the early childhood education plans, a discussion of issues relating to school facilities and a discussion about the *Abbott* regulations

A major initiative focusing on expanding heritage tourism opportunities in Trenton has continued to be a focus of the Institute's work. A delegation from Trenton and the Capital Region met with tourism industry professionals in Savannah and Richmond in late May. A survey document has been developed to assess visitor satisfaction and has already been distributed to several thousand people attending a War Memorial event. An abstract of a proposal for a million-dollar implementation grant was drafted and submitted to the NJ Commission on Higher Education.

### **Greater Trenton's Promise**

The Institute's work on this partnership over the past three months has been focused on strengthening the organizational and structural support for this important effort to improve services for youth in Trenton. Greater Trenton's Promise has also worked during this quarter to partner with the School District to increase internships, apprenticeships and employment opportunities for high school students. Greater Trenton's Promise is also a member of the school management team at Grant Elementary. We have continued to attend meetings and provide resources and support to this school. This is part of the plan to expand the number of partnerships with area schools.

### **Medical Incident Data Set (MIDS)**

The intent of the MIDS project is to reduce the cost of hospital discharge data submission by redesigning data submission protocols and improving the data collection at the state level. Thomas Edison State College, on behalf of the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), is acting as project administrator for FY 99 to provide data intermediary project implementation assistance on behalf of the DHSS for hiring a data intermediary vendor to collect inpatient and outpatient data based on the UB-92 data set for electronic transmission to the DHSS.

### **HINT Legislative Initiatives**

HINT study was the basis for the nine HINT bills S-323 through S-331 which seek to implement administrative healthcare efficiencies. The original nine HINT bills were consolidated into one HINT Omnibus Bill S-323. On January 28, 1999, both the State Assembly (79-0) and Senate (35-0) unanimously approved S-323 with bipartisan support. S-323 was sent to Governor Whitman for her consideration. She conditionally vetoed this bill. Her conditional veto message indicated her full support for the bill with the one exception of the temporary two-year State tax credit. This tax credit would have provided businesses a tax deduction for the purchase, rental, or lease of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) hardware/software. S-323 was returned without the tax credit to the Senate. On March 22, 1999, the Senate amendments were unanimously adopted in accordance with the Governor's recommendations. It is anticipated that the Senate will again vote upon this amended bill and then send S-323 to the Assembly for action. Upon the Assembly's approval on S-323, it will then be forwarded to the Governor for this HINT Legislation to become law.

### **Resignations**

The following staff members have resigned from the College:

|                 |   |                 |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| Eleanor Wilson  | - | Human Resources |
| Marianne Shimer | - | Human Resources |
| Nakie Council   | - | Financial Aid   |

The following staff members have resigned from the State Library:

|                   |   |                                       |
|-------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Kathleen Marshall | - | State Government Information Services |
| Althea Robinson   |   | Library for the Blind & Handicapped   |