

SPEECH

ALL COLLEGE MEETING

September 25, 1984

As students of complex organizations, all of us understand that the hectic activity of institutional components sometimes blur holistic ends. It is therefore appropriate and necessary for this College to assemble itself from time to time to restate and reaffirm our collective agenda. It is for this purpose that I come before you this morning.

June 30, 1983 saw the end of a watershed year in the history of this College. Our enrollment had stagnated, our fiscal condition was tenuous, we ended the year with a deficit in our 440 account, and many of our professional and support positions were being held vacant because of lack of resources to fund them. To prepare for our revitalization, in the spring of that year I appointed a task force for the purpose of making recommendations which would allow us to increase our growth, protect the quality of our services, and cause the activity of our institution to go forward in a productive and cost effective way. The task force completed its work, promulgated its recommendations, and on July 1 a year ago the implementation began. A year later we are in a position to look back and evaluate what we've done with

considerable experience under our belt to make judgments as to the success or lack thereof from this work.

Conceptually and in practice, the majority of the task force recommendations were successfully implemented. The new fee structure has increased our revenues, assisted in the attraction of new students, tied services to cost, and dramatically improved the retention of continuing students. The consolidation of portfolio in the Office of Testing and Assessment has increased our responsiveness to students, increased the amount of work done in portfolio assessment, and preserved the quality of the process. The effective consolidation of all external relations within a single organizational division has reaped impressive dividends. Our productivity in advising has increased with very positive responses from our students.

The implementation of specific task force recommendations has been uneven. In some cases their recommendations were accomplished smoothly with immediate positive results. In other cases there have been rough spots and bumps. In two important areas, much refinement continues to be needed. First, the increased volume in student applicants and enrollees coupled with the increase in student retention, has put an enormous burden on the transcript evaluation process. This situation has been

aggravated by the unforeseen turnover in staff in this area during this period. The second problem area caused by the same variables has been an unexpectedly large burden on the program advisors and the advising process. As all of you are intimately aware, much activity during the year was centered around slapping bandaids and plaster on leaks in the dike from these two critical areas. Much of the problem in these two areas is not temporary and, in fact, will be exacerbated unless there is a quick and long-term solution brought to bear on these issues. There are extenuating factors that go beyond the issue of sheer volume. Both processes are needlessly complicated, often redundant, and unreasonably burdened with excessive paper snuffling requirements. Because I continue to believe that those most closely associated with an issue are best informed as to solutions to problems in an area, I have appointed a small ad hoc committee chaired by Mr. Eklund and consisting of people who are directly involved operationally in these areas to recommend ways and approaches for the long term amelioration and good health of our advising and evaluation processes. I have also requested that each vice president, in consultation with his executive and professional staffs, review each of the task force recommendations and make a determination as to what things work well and should be left alone, what things need attention, and in what areas, if any,

should we go back to the drawing board and start anew. I believe this is doable within the resource limitations with which we have to live. We will know this has been accomplished when two things happen. First, when we are no longer faced with periodic and routine rescue missions from the backlog in transcript evaluations and the advising center. And secondly, when we are able to share functions operationally and easily that will allow all of us in our respective offices and functions to know, appreciate, and respect those special tasks done by our colleagues in other offices and other areas. The objective of the latter is not to have everyone doing everything in an ad hoc manner which carries with it the risk of having nothing done well or in a quality manner, but rather to broaden the exposure of each of you to the entire enterprise so that your perspective and insights can be sufficiently broad to enable us to do our special tasks better.

By and large things have worked well. We should not be dismayed because things have not worked perfectly well, as long as there is collective resolve at all levels within the institution to identify and resolve problems that inevitably arise from such complex activity as we have engaged in in the last year. I would expect that the recommendations I receive will involve the provision of additional staff support to some key areas, streamlining some of our current practices, and substantial relief from the application of computer assisted evaluation and data retrieval for advising.

In summary, the key structures we have created have worked, and though some of them have warts, I hope in the coming months we can exorcise the warts and restore the complexion of what's left. I am confident that we currently have the resources to debug our current systems and make them work as originally conceived.

While I felt it necessary to address this subject, for I know it has been troublesome to all of you, I do not wish it to detract from outlining your accomplishments in what, with all things considered, has been truly an outstanding year for this institution. The state of the College is good. We have made more progress in securing the systems of computing and computers in the last year than achieved in the preceeding years of the College combined. Current growth suggests that when this year is over, I fully expect our enrollment to have exceeded 5,000 students, a 25% increase over the past year and almost 50% increase over the previous year. Applications last year were 115% of our projection, initial year tuition was 101% of our projection, subsequent years tuition was 98% of our projection, portfolio applications were 116% of our projection, TECEP exams were 99% of our projection. Fiscally, we restored the previous year's loss in the 440 account and have doubled our 440 carry-forward reserve brought into the current year. Over the last two years we have persuaded the legislature and the Governor to appropriate \$300,000

to the College above and beyond the original budget increase recommended by the Department of Treasury. We have filled all of our significant positions that were unfilled for fiscal reasons, which has resulted in a 10% increase in professional and support staff. The fiscal condition of this College, support for its programs from the Department of Higher Education, the New Jersey State Legislature and the Office of the Governor is at a level unprecedented in the history of our institution. We have cast off the last vestiges of institutional adolescence and have gained our rightful place as a co-equal partner among the institutions of higher education in New Jersey. We have strengthened our outreach to minority students, and approximately 14% of our expanded base of new applicants is from minority adults. This compares with a former minority enrollment of approximately 10%. We have implemented several major new academic programs, principally among them is the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, three new associate degree programs that are awaiting final approval, and eight new articulation agreements. We have manifold increased the activity and support of our alumni, and alumni giving is up substantially. We have resuscitated the Thomas A. Edison State College Foundation, and the first meeting of the new Board of Directors will occur October 1. We have recruited to this Board Mr. Edward Booher, former Chairman and President of McGraw-Hill Book Company;

Mr. John Connolly, President and Chief Executive Officer of National State Bank; Mr. Richard Gillespie, President, Gillespie Advertising; and Mr. Larry Woolf, President of Caesars Hotel and Casino of Lake Tahoe. Together with Mr. Christian Yegen, our Trustee and Chairman of the Board and President of Integrity Financial Group, we have made an auspicious beginning in attracting an accomplished group of individuals to the cause and mission of this College. We are optimistic that the Board will attract philanthropy and private giving so as to provide a margin of excellence in support of those College functions which cannot be supported by state or institutional funds. We have also attracted eight major grants from a variety of foundations and corporations. We have aggressively supported and funded a variety of staff development activities far beyond any other public institution of higher education in the State of New Jersey.

In short, our resources have increased, our enrollment has increased, our staff has increased, our credibility recognition and respect as a high quality institution within this state has been enhanced, and we have guarded and protected the quality of our programmatic activity. By any and all objective criteria used to assess the health of academic institutions, the work of all our colleagues and this College has been exemplary and outstanding. I applaud you individually and collectively, for it is through your commitment, collective dedication, and hard work that these positive and fruitful accomplishments were achieved.

Institutions, however, are dynamic in their character, and positive movement and improvement must always be its agenda. I think it therefore appropriate that I outline for you what I see as our major tasks within the current and coming months and year.

The first major task is to begin operationalizing computer assistance to the transcript evaluation system and the advising system so that the highly trained and talented men and women we have in those areas can commit their time and intellectual resources to servicing our students and not filling out forms, shuffling files, and moving paper. We are currently organized and staffed in a way which requires an automated environment for which the system is not yet on board. We are like a man at the dock with one foot on the boat one foot on the dock, and the tide is going out to sea. We need to have these systems on board and the crew with both feet firmly planted on a sound and steady deck. I am hopeful that over the coming months, and certainly by the end of the current year, the important enhancement brought about by these applications will be felt within the institution.

With the assistance of our new Foundation Board, the next task is in raising private funds. I have reasonably high expectations that our fund raising efforts will be successful. I urge and hope for your active participation in our advancement efforts. If you have not seen or read the case statement prepared by the

Development Office, please do so for it explains why a public college needs private funds and what we plan to do with the money after we raise it. The benefits of these efforts will be to our students, the College, its programs, and you its staff.

Third, we must sustain the growth that we have generated. While it has caused some of our short-term problems, it is also the key to our long-term viability. With your assistance and through your efforts, we have made an impressive start. We must continue.

And finally, I wish to inform you briefly about policy discussions within the state which may potentially have radical and fundamentally good consequences for Edison as well as our sister state colleges. In February, 1984, the Commission on the Future of the State Colleges issued a report calling for among other things an end to state agency status for the nine colleges, the creation of autonomy for the colleges to manage their own affairs, and the establishment of a unitary governing board for the collection of the nine institutions into a "University of New Jersey." The position that I have taken on these matters is, I hope, well known to you. At the October meeting of the Board of Higher Education, that body will consider its response and course of action related to the Commission's report. What will be proposed is a reaffirmation of the independent identity of the

nine state colleges but will by and large support the other recommendations of the Commission. The major components are first, fiscal and managerial autonomy for each state college. This means independence from all those bureaucracies that control and approve our basic administrative functions. This would mean that we would receive our own funds and pay our own bills. We would no longer be subject to Civil Service control on the classification and decisions about our positions and we would be managing essentially our own resources. The second major provision would include the concept known as "net state funding." Under the current system, once Treasury accepts our 100 account projections for student revenues that dollar amount is generated for us to spend whether we achieve those projections or not. Under a system of net funding, we would receive only those funds coming from appropriated dollars and the student generated fees would be ours to collect, hold, or lose. If we achieved student revenues and lived within our budget, we would keep the difference and carry forward those funds from year to year. They would not revert to the state treasury. This component is a double-edged sword. For institutions that realized or exceeded their revenue projections, it would be a good thing. For those that did not realize their student fee income, it would require internal budget cuts to live within their means. There is reason to believe that

the state and the Department of Treasury are moving towards this approach whether the new system is adopted or not. This underscores and reemphasizes the necessity that we fully achieve and realize our projected student fees.

The issues involved in this initiative are many and complex. In meetings and conversations with my colleague Presidents, with the Chancellor, various members of our and other Trustee Boards, there is strong support for this proposition by the College Presidents and Trustee Boards. There are many publics yet to be heard from, and the new proposal is a long way from being approved and implemented. Because of the significance of this proposition and the far reaching implications for this College, I am providing a copy of the draft document that the Board of Higher Education will consider, to each of the vice presidents and to each member of the Advisory Council. I will further be requesting that the tne Advisory Council review this proposal and at a subsequent All College Meeting prepare and present an analysis of this initiative to you so that you might be well informed and briefed as to its nature.

In closing, I would like to restate my personal commendation for the excellent work you did last year. This institution's accomplishments, when taken collectively, represent an outstanding testimonial to the fundamental repository of competence and good

work that resides within this institution. There are rough spots to be sure, as there are within any institution of this size and complexity, but your creativity and diligence have resulted in truly outstanding outcomes. The recognition of this is a source of pride and comfort to me, and I truly hope that it constitutes a source of pride and sense of reward for you. We have collectively achieved some very good and important things for the adult learners of this state, who after all are the principle reason for our being. We have much to do. Let us recommit ourselves to exceeding the past and building a College that is held in the same high esteem and high regard for which I hold you, our students, and fidelity to the concepts for which this College was created and is sustained. We've done very well, let us continue.

Thank you.