

**2015 Welcome Back Address**  
**R. Barbara Gitenstein**  
**August 26, 2015**

Because of the thoughtful work of last year and because of the evidence of the continued success of the College, we begin the 2015-2016 academic year on a very strong footing. Let me share some of these highlights.

The identification of the five Signature Experiences helped focus our energies in very productive ways.

1. Our faculty are dedicated to a personalized, collaborative and rigorous education where their scholarship informs their teaching and their teaching informs their scholarship. As an example, there is an increase of 10% in participation by full time faculty in the First-Seminar Program (FSP). Faculty continue to develop high impact learning experiences, such as the Landmarks series of faculty-led study abroad programs, which focus on events in history that have shaped the course and character of world art and culture; most recently a study group traveled to Spain.
2. Institutional commitment to undergraduate research, mentored internship and field experiences permeates the curriculum. For instance, the 2014 Mentored Undergraduate Summer Experience (MUSE) program included 41 faculty members and 73 students from all seven schools and 23 departments; the 2015 program included 42 faculty, 75 TCNJ students and 22 Brazilian visiting students, from 6 of the 7 schools.
3. Last year, the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CEL) and Research, led by the Bonner Community Scholars, mobilized volunteers for approximately 2100 CEL opportunities, representing over 50,000 hours of service and community engaged learning activities. With the thoughtful leadership of Michael Nordquist, I am confident that this success will continue despite the challenges resulting from the painful loss of Pat Donohue.
4. We made great strides in enhancing global engagement on the campus.
  - a. 119 students enrolled in English as a Second Language and American Studies (ESLAS) coursework this past year. A non credit bearing international summer camp attracted 68 students, 4 teachers, and several staff visitors to our campus.
  - b. During FY15, 470 TCNJ students studied abroad and we will welcome 120 international students on campus this semester.
5. There was also great progress last year in Leadership Development programming.
  - a. TCNJ's first LeaderShape Institute was held in January. A cross divisional team of academic and student affairs leaders, cabinet members, Randy Lumia of the Foundation and Trustee Rosie Hymerling mentored 59 students in this national program.

- b. In Spring 2015, Student Affairs hosted TCNJ's first annual TEDx Conference, based on the theme "Light the Flame."
- c. In partnership with Enrollment Management, Student Affairs created Operation Lead, a pre-welcome week leadership program for 31 incoming freshmen students.

One of the most important areas of focus last year was strategic planning. Through the exceptional work of the Strategic Planning and Resource Committee (SPARC), we set the groundwork for the next strategic plan for the College. 75 members of the larger campus community attended an Action Town Hall meeting on June 15, designed to elicit input into the draft documents that had been prepared by the committee. Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Jorge Caballero, has named a strategic planning committee of the Board, chaired by Trustee Miles Powell. SPARC will be considering the feedback from the Town Hall meeting and Provost Taylor and I will assure that the input of the Trustee committee is incorporated in further updates. The goal is to present a plan to me by mid semester so that I can present a plan to the full Board of Trustees in December.

Strategic planning must include the management of risk. Last year, The College engaged KPMG to provide Enterprise Risk Management ("ERM") program services to the College. I established the internal ERM Work Group, whose members include the Director of Internal Audit, Treasurer, General Counsel and Director of Compliance. Under the direction of the ERM Work Group and with oversight from the liaison to the Board's Audit, Risk Management and Compliance Committee, Trustee Treby Williams, our outside consultant has concluded the first phases of the project and shared their plan with the Board committee and the Cabinet. This fall we will take the next steps in implementation of a sustainable ERM program

The attention to risk management and strategic planning has stood us in good stead as last year was again a challenging year with regard to budget. TCNJ's base state appropriations was reduced by approximately \$2.1 million or 7.3%. In July, the Board approved a plan that included a modest growth in enrollment and off site and off cycle programs as well as a 3% tuition increase. The plan includes funding for 16 new faculty and staff lines (supporting strategic initiatives, safety and security), moderation of planned salary savings, projected fuel and utilities savings and funding for the strategic initiatives which I recommended to the Board of Trustees based on the recommendations made to me by the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (CSPP).

The College has continued to work on diversifying revenue streams.

- 1. Growth in grantsmanship is a promising area for TCNJ.
  - a. Last year, faculty and staff brought in approximately \$4,080,000 in grant funding to the College.
    - i. Including a \$245,000 grant for drug and alcohol education,
    - ii. a SNACK-Smart Nutrition and Conditioning in Kids grant aimed at combating childhood obesity in Ewing and Trenton Schools,
    - iii. over \$250,000 to develop and implement the integration of population health into the nursing undergraduate curriculum

- iv. over \$2.4 million in grant funding in the sciences.
2. Faculty and academic affairs have continued the strategic development of the J-Term and the Summer class schedule, resulting in an 87% increase in seats filled in Winter Term and a 10% increase in Summer enrollments.
3. TCNJ has also recognized that it is important to develop new academic degree offerings to be responsive to the needs of the state and region and to the interest of our current and prospective students. This past year faculty and academic administration developed a B.A. in Journalism, a Bachelor's and post baccalaureate certificate in Public Health, a B.A. in African-American Studies and an M.Ed. in Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

In addition to revenue enhancement, we have continued to manage costs. For instance, by refinancing \$114 million worth of College debt, we were able to save \$3.8 million in debt service. In order to refinance, Standard and Poor's and Moody's Investors Service reviewed our ratings. Both affirmed the College's investment grade bond rating ("A" and "A2" respectively) and our stable outlook. On the heels of the negative review of the state of New Jersey as well as the decrease in state funding, these reports were welcome news indeed.

Last year, there was great progress in programs to enhance the integration of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.

1. A new online system, Lion's Gate, will allow for co-curricular transcripts, a centralized calendar system for co-curricular events, tracking of attendance at co-curricular events, and more efficient management of student organizations.
2. The Center for Community Engaged Learning and Research partnered with Student Affairs on a project for increasing political engagement of our students, including a voter registration drive.

Student Affairs has also reached out to other divisions for productive partnerships. For instance,

1. A partnership between Students Affairs, Academic Affairs and the Trenton State College Corporation will provide housing for the entire freshman class of Career and Community Studies (CCS) students.
2. The Corporation is also working with Student Affairs to provide housing for students recovering from drug and alcohol addiction.
3. Pharma Day in October in which Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, College Relations and TRIO (itself a collaboration between the Board of Trustees, the Alumni Association and the TCNJ Foundation) brought together 16 industry leaders and more than 200 students to discuss opportunities for employment and partnership in the pharmaceutical industry.

4. And Athletics and Admissions worked closely to refine the admissions process for student athletes. Last year, the yield on student-athlete accepts was increased by 100% (from a 33% to a 66% yield).

The College continued its emphasis on Health and Wellness.

1. We established the Mental Health Task Force, revising policies, working with students interested in reducing the stigma on campus, and conducting safe messaging training.
2. TCNJ was recognized at the Building Healthy Campus Communities (BHAC) National Summit for the Breathe In/Breathe Out Campaign, a focus on the beneficial effects of yoga and meditation.
3. With the approval of an additional student fee for recreation, the College will be able to add additional fitness classes and students will now have unlimited access to all Fitness Classes.

We enriched our commitment to addressing sexual assault. We became one of the first “Culture of Respect” campuses in the country. “Culture of Respect” is an independent non-profit organization that was created with support from a number of nationally recognized liberal arts colleges and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Campus Police, Student Affairs and the General Counsel’s office are working to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding between the College and Ewing Township on how to respond to sexual assaults and how to share pertinent information.

Our faculty again extended the reputation of the College by their engagement as scholars, artists, and community citizens. The faculty in the School of Science, along with their undergraduate research assistants, delivered over 120 research presentations off campus. Last year, faculty published ground breaking book length manuscripts on a wide range of exciting topics: the plight of prisoners serving life sentences; the importance of vocation in postsecondary education; a psychological study of religion and spirituality across cultures; the impact of demographics on media coverage; disability studies in South Asia; an analysis of the writings of Toni Morrison; and an anthology of Chinese diaspora poetry. Faculty have published in prestigious journals such as the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of Orthopaedic Research*, *College and Research Libraries* and the *International Journal of Science Education*. One faculty member published his 150<sup>th</sup> refereed journal article (this faculty member’s work has been cited over 4400 times by other scholars). One faculty member presented at an interdisciplinary conference exploring public health outcomes of active transportation, sponsored by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine; another served for a second year as a program officer at the National Science Foundation; and another was the recipient of the 2015 Edmond J. Safra Visiting Nurse Faculty Program at the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation Alumni Award.

Faculty are also engaged in the community in which TCNJ lives, sponsoring and hosting the MIDJersey Chamber of Commerce’s International Business Conference on the TCNJ Campus on October 13 and offering the TCNJ Business Institute for Nurse-Practitioner Led Healthcare

Providers (NPLHP). Not only the faculty have reached out to the larger community and kept the College engaged in regional and national issues. For instance, College Relations was instrumental in helping place and counsel TCNJ experts as they provided testimony to the New Jersey legislature on two very important and complex issues: sexual assault and suicide. The only debate for the 12th Congressional District featuring both the Democrat and Republican candidates was hosted by TCNJ in October.

Last year, the College reached out to alumni from across the country. Staff from advancement and I visited San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sarasota, Phoenix, Denver, and New York. More than 40 students traveled to the nation's capital to meet with members of Congress, government officials, and alumni to network as well as tell the story of TCNJ. We attracted more than 10,000 alumni, friends and students to Homecoming activities last fall. By restructuring Reunion Weekend activities and through exceptional leadership by volunteers, we attracted more than 900 registrants to Reunion last April. All of these opportunities allowed us to tell alumni of the exciting developments on the campus.

Part of that exciting news includes the incredible success of our students. For instance,

1. 78 percent of the 2015 senior engineering students passed the Fundamentals of Engineering exam. (national average of about 71 percent).
2. TCNJ Education students boast a 96 % pass rate on the PRAXIS exam for 2013-2014.
3. In spring 2015, 151 TCNJ students, mostly business majors, out-performed national and international comparison groups on the new Bloomberg Aptitude Test (BAT).
4. TCNJ graduates have been admitted to prestigious graduate programs: one was admitted to the PhD program in Criminology at the University at Albany, the top ranked program in the field; another is fully funded in the PhD program in American Women's History at Rutgers; and others have been admitted to Villanova, University of Pennsylvania Law School, Princeton, Georgia Tech, Stevens Institute of Technology, Tulane, University of Michigan, and Lehigh.
5. Many graduates have wonderful plans for entering the workforce: one will be commissioned in the United States Army as a Second Lieutenant; another has been hired as a contract data analyst for the Drug Enforcement Administration; another will be a staff member for the department of Visitor Services at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Engineering students have accepted jobs at Google, Lockheed Martin, Maser Consulting, and AT&T, just to name a few.

Student organizations as well as individual students raised national awareness of TCNJ:

1. TCNJ's Student Chemists Association received national awards from the American Chemical Society.
2. Two students received Boren awards and one was named a Goldwater Scholar; two students received New Jersey Distinguished Student Teacher awards; and a team of

students placed first in the regional American Society for Mechanical Engineers student design competition (they will be competing in the national competition in November).

2014-15 was another successful year in intercollegiate athletics:

1. TCNJ led the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) schools in NJAC-All Academic Team members with a total of 156;
2. 6 TCNJ teams won NJAC Championships;
3. Two teams competed in the NCAA Elite Eight;
4. and three won national honors:
  - a. the men's swim team won the NCAA championship for both the 400 Free Relay and the 800 Free Relay;
  - b. the cheerleading squad was named the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) All-Girl National Champion;
  - c. and for the second time in four years, our women's field hockey team was named NCAA national champions.

The College and our academic programs again received national acclaim:

1. *US News and World Report*, *Princeton Review*, *Fiske*, *Money Magazine*, and *Forbes Magazine* continue to rank TCNJ as one of the best institutions in nation;
2. *Kiplinger* ranks TCNJ as #1 in New Jersey and #23 in the nation as a best value institution;
3. Accounting.com ranked the TCNJ accounting program as #20 in the country for undergraduate accounting; and
4. TCNJ received the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, a tremendous achievement, placing us within the top 8% of institutions in the country.

The quality of the TCNJ experience was further confirmed by reaffirmation of our accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education with a special commendation for the quality of our self-study.

And of course, because we are who we are, there was lots and lots and lots of construction and renovation on the campus last year.

1. Norsworthy Hall underwent a \$10M renovation and was open for new students last week.
2. Construction on the new Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Building, Science Building Addition and the Brower Student Center projects began this spring. These projects represent over \$100M in construction and renovation.

3. Information Technology completed the replacement of the 20 year old telephone switch and telephone hardware and doubled our Internet bandwidth.
4. The new Barnes and Noble and B&N Café in Campus Town opened earlier this month. Last week, many of us attended the wonderfully festive ribbon cutting for the project and last Sunday, Campus Town welcomed 446 new residents into its residential facilities. The new fitness center will open in the next week or so and other retail establishments will be opening over the next several months including Red Berry Yogurt, Piccolo Pronto, Spencer Savings Bank, Mexican Mariachi Grill, and Yummi Sushi. Just to give you a sense of the success of these opening days, on a typical day, Barnes and Noble expects to bring in \$1200; on August 20, freshman move in day, they brought in over \$4000. Campus Town Phase 2 construction is underway on the north part of the Campus Town site so that next fall there will be an additional 166 beds for TCNJ students in Campus Town.

And we are planning for more.

1. The Facilities Master Plan has been presented to the TCNJ community and the Board of Trustees.
2. The planning for STEM Phase 2 is underway along with a series of Asset Renewal projects across campus

Perhaps the most significant facilities conversations, however, focused on how we appropriately steward the current facilities. Sightlines, a national consultant with over 400 higher education clients, worked with the College to complete a study of current facilities use and management. Some salient points include the following:

1. They observed a number of similarities with peer institutions: the work load of custodial staff, the degree of cleanliness and the complexity of campus facilities are similar to those at peer institutions.
2. They also observed some differences: our campus is younger in both physical age and renovation age than most of our peers; we are experiencing a growth in backlog of renewal needs; physical plant operating expenses are increasing rather than decreasing; our purchase and generation of energy is substantially lower than peers but our energy consumption is substantially higher than peers.
3. The study suggests that we must take critical steps to preserve the physical plant. We must
  - a. set aside more funding for physical plant renewal on an annual basis. (\$18 M is recommended).
  - b. Address the high energy consumption of the College's physical plant
  - c. Consider strategies of repurposing or reusing existing buildings rather than demolishing underutilized buildings and building new ones.

While all these marvelous facilities speak to the vibrancy of our community, without personnel and investment in personnel, the College would not be TCNJ. Human Resources provides the kind of programs and support that help individuals and supervisors perform at the very highest level. The number of transactions managed by Human Resources is simply extraordinary. Just to give a sense of the scope of their work, last year, the division conducted 286 consultations and 450 reviews of compensation and reclassifications; they received some 6500 applications for the over 170 positions that were posted. And that represents only a small portion of the transactions completed by the division.

One of the successes led by this division is the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of our improvement in this area is that this initiative requires collaboration and partnership with other units and departments across the campus. The entire campus must own the success of diversifying the campus and making the campus more inviting to everyone; it cannot be accomplished by a single chief diversity officer but it does require her leadership. We have seen significant progress with regard to diversity of our staff and faculty. The applicant pool for vacant positions last year was 38% underrepresented and 26% of the new staff hires were from underrepresented groups. In the last two years, there have been impressive results in diversifying the full time faculty: in 2014, 58% of the hires were women, 8% Hispanic and 17% African American; this coming year, 58% are women, 17% Asian and 13% African American. Equally as significant is the enhancement of programming, again made possible by partnerships with all divisions of the campus: institutionalizing a Unity Week offering of cuisine from around the world, support for a faculty/staff LGBTQ organization, arranging a bus trip to AMC Hamilton to view the film *Selma*, and coordinating lectures by Wes Moore, Deborah Spar, Charles Blow, Jackson Katz and Charles Ogletree.

Each school in the College and the library will benefit from the talents of 24 new tenure track faculty who will be joining us this fall. Two of the new faculty are TCNJ alumni returning after the completion of their doctoral education. These exciting additions to our exemplary faculty have terminal degrees from Rutgers, Iowa State, California Institute of Technology, Johns Hopkins, Michigan State, the University of Virginia's Center for Applied Biomechanics, Penn State, Syracuse, and Boston University, just to name a few. Several have taught at other institutions of higher education, including Bryn Mawr, Temple, University of Denver, and Virginia Commonwealth, and several have taught in K-12 classrooms. Members of the new faculty have received prestigious fellowships and postdoctoral positions including an NEH Scholar in Residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a residency at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, a Behrman Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of History at Princeton University and a postdoctoral position at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory.

These exciting new hires will help us welcome an exceptional new class of students. It is important to remind ourselves that the competition for undergraduate students remains fierce, but our admissions staff, student ambassadors, and the many faculty and staff who greet and host prospective students have assured that we again have a remarkable story to tell. Some highlights of the incoming class are:



1. This is the largest applicant pool in TCNJ's history – 11,337 applications
2. There was a record high for Out-of-State applications – 1,164, an increase of 6.3%.
3. There is also a record high for applications from historically underrepresented students – 2,785 applications, 9.4% increase.

The proof however is in the matriculants and in that we succeeded very well indeed. We exceeded our goals in every case:

1. There are 1460 freshman enrolled (1440 was the goal);
2. 58 provisional students moved in on August 20 (40 was the goal)
3. 263 transfer students will join us this fall (250 was the goal);
4. 115 out of state freshmen enrolled this fall, an increase of 43.8%; they come from 16 states and territories;
5. There is a 4% increase in enrollment from underrepresented groups with Black, Hispanic and Puerto Rican students making up 20% of the entering class.

With this extraordinary new class of faculty, staff, and students, it is truly gratifying to report last year's great success in fund raising. FY15 concluded with \$15.6 million raised, impressively exceeding the \$12 million goal. As a consequence, we have made tremendous progress in meeting our goals for the Campaign for TCNJ: Innovate, Inspire, Engage. By the end of the fiscal year we had raised over \$26 million or 65 % of the \$40 million campaign goal. And the progress continued. As of July 31, 2015, we had raised an additional \$1.5 million, hitting 68.6% of goal, with almost two years remaining in the campaign. We are deeply gratified by the commitment of the volunteer Campaign Leadership. The Steering Committee is being co-chaired by Barbara Pelson '59 and Allen Silk; more than 60 volunteers have lent their names to the campaign by participation in the several committees, focused on individual schools, the library, athletics and student affairs. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Terri Martinac who convenes the chairs of these committees and as development chair joins Ken Baumann, Jim Gater, Eleanor Horne, Peter Inverso, Barbara, and Allen on the Steering Committee for the Campaign. In addition there are 8 state-wide leaders who have agreed to serve as members of the Honorary Leadership Committee. These include

- Rev. Darrell L. Armstrong '06, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, former member of the Board of Trustees
- Thomas Bracken, CEO of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, former member of the Board of Trustees
- The Honorable Brendan Byrne
- Larry M. Downes, CEO of New Jersey Resources
- The Honorable James J. Florio '62
- Bernard M. Flynn, CEO of New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Group
- The Honorable Thomas J. Kean

- The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman

The willingness of these individuals to lend their names to our effort speaks volumes about their confidence in what we do at TCNJ and I am deeply appreciative of their willingness to be part of our future.

While every gift is important in this first ever campaign for TCNJ, there are a number that came to fruition last year that are especially noteworthy:

1. The first recipient of the The Barbara Meyers Pelson '59 Chair in Faculty-Student Engagement and the second recipient of the Gitenstein-Hart Sabbatical Award were named last year.
2. Scholarships were endowed by members of our Board of Trustees, including the Jorge and Patricia Caballero Scholarship and the Susanne Svizeny '79 Scholarship.
3. Terri Martinac, Jim Gater and Allen Silk substantially increased the corpus of their individual scholarship programs.
4. The Helene Fuld Charitable Trust dedicated the entire trust to TCNJ nursing student scholarships, a gift of \$6.6 million.
5. Uncommon Knowledge and Achievement, Inc., a foundation supported by Leon and Toby Cooperman, will contribute more than \$1 million annually to TCNJ to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds from Essex County to attend a summer program and should they enroll in TCNJ, receive a scholarship. The first group of 22 Cooperman scholars was on campus this summer.
6. A million dollar donation from the Give Something Back Foundation will support 50 disadvantaged students attending TCNJ. This program begins while students are in high school. This extraordinary gift was possible because of an introduction by a member of our Board of Trustees, Treby Williams, and an invitation from Dean Bill Keep and Professor Kevin Michels to have Bob Carr speak to a group of students.
7. Through a million dollar bequest honoring Patricia's mother, Patricia '66 and Michael Busk are funding the Julia Maziarz Fund to support deserving students from under-represented populations who wish to teach in urban settings. A portion of the fund will also be used to support a faculty member who will recruit and mentor these students.
8. Patty and Adolf Herst, along with their family and friends, have raised over \$80,000 for a Dyslexia Initiative. The ribbon cutting for the evaluation center occurred on August 13.

Our successes however must be understood in the context of the continuing criticism and distrust of higher education. In recent years, I have highlighted a number of these criticisms: we are too expensive, too locked in our ivory towers, deaf to criticism and unaware of the realities of the outside communities. One of higher education's sourest critics unintentionally suggests the route

for higher education's future. In his most recent book, *The End of College*, Kevin Carey describes higher education in the United States with great disdain, as a hybrid: in his words it is "designed like a research university, charged with practical training and immersed in the spirit of liberal education" (31-32). He further criticizes this hybrid because of the creation of electives rather than the offering of a singular and static curriculum to all undergraduates.

Yes, he means that as a bad thing. But as I consider his criticisms I am wondering what exactly is the matter with an institution that celebrates scholarly endeavor, embraces the responsibility of helping students be either gainfully employed or admitted to graduate school, prizes the responsibility of higher education in the development of an informed citizenry and recognizes that variety in curricular offerings is an indication of intellectual energy not laziness? In fact, I think that's exactly what higher education ought to be doing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it is what TCNJ does so well. We do it so well that we are able to gain reaffirmation of our bond ratings in the face of the dismal financial condition of the state of New Jersey. We do it so well that we are able to attract the likes of 3 former governors and CEOs from some of New Jersey's most successful businesses to endorse our comprehensive campaign. So let's begin by embracing this hybrid description and shocking Kevin Carey by thanking him for his apt description of our mission. Thank you, Kevin.

Beyond coopting Mr. Carey, however, how do we respond to his criticisms? It begins by simply asserting our voice in the argument. At the spring meeting of the Association of Governing Boards, Thomas Ross, then president of the University of North Carolina system, put the challenge to leaders of higher education very well. As a member of the panel "Exploring the Value Proposition of Higher Education" he said "I think we have to separate the *reputation* of the value of higher education from the *real* value of higher education" (24). He challenged us as leaders to speak out against our loudest critics and reassert the facts that support the value of what we do—not just with regard to employment (and certainly not limited to that first job), but also with regard to the other features of a productive life that higher education supports: citizenship, health, socialization.

But it is more than just speaking up for ourselves. How do we sustain that mission in a world skeptical of our arguments? A number of current authors suggest sustainability results not from a rejection of liberal arts education but from a return to liberal arts education but liberal arts through a new lens. This liberal arts focus has an outward rather than inward view. It acknowledges that higher education sits in a secular world, a world that depends on practicality and the realities of our time. No organization has done more to chart the course for this new view of the liberal arts than the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). In a recent article, Carol Geary Schneider, the retiring president of AAC&U, describes their work over the last 8 years. They began by engaging employers, economists and educators to work together to describe what is necessary for the workforce of the future. Employers were adamant that they needed employees who can think and reason ethically and analytically, solve problems, write and speak well, work in teams, and translate what they have learned in the classroom into what they do in the workplace. Employers insisted that they need employees who had both a breadth of education and a depth of education in a discipline.

Daniel Sullivan, president emeritus of St. Lawrence University, philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum, CNN reporter Fareed Zakaria, Theodore Marchese, former editor of *Change* magazine, and the current editor of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* Goldie Blumenstyk argue the power of liberal arts in educating the citizens and employees of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They insist that traditional higher education will survive while recently celebrated panaceas will not (who really thinks that MOOC's are a solution any more?). But all these commentators assert that only those institutions that ask themselves hard questions, based on understanding the current students seeking higher education and responding to the accountability questions of the public, will thrive.

How does this more nuanced and optimistic view of higher education fit into our current understanding of the future for TCNJ. In last year's welcome back I said that for TCNJ to be successful, we had to attract the right people to our community; we had to adhere to a notion of community that is broad and inviting; we had to see ourselves as part of a larger community (locally, nationally and internationally); and that while we must acknowledge the challenges threatening higher education, we must not be overwhelmed by the loudest critics. As I have shared with you this afternoon, TCNJ is clearly attracting remarkable students, faculty and staff; our sense of a diverse and inviting community is growing in a healthy way; institutionally and individually, we continue to be involved in the communities that surround us—Trenton, Ewing, and beyond; and we are thoughtfully responding to new demands on TCNJ and higher education.

These principles should guide us as we begin the new year. The strategic plan, the capital campaign, the signature experiences—all are important vehicles for the larger purpose: how to make TCNJ sustainable and nimble, how to preserve what we prize, resist the temptation of the shiny new idea that does not help us in the TCNJ Way, but embrace the new idea that does. These choices are not simple or obvious; some of them will not feel comfortable and some will not necessarily feel transformational or different. The goal of these choices however, IS different and WILL be transformational. We are building the College's future, assuring its sustainability. As Emily Dickinson has written

Forever—is composed of Nows—  
'Tis not a different time—  
Except for Infiniteness—  
And Latitude of Home—

From this—experienced Here—  
Remove the Dates—to These—  
Let Months dissolve in further Months—  
And Years—exhale in Years—  
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Together we will thoughtfully compose our nows to create that future that is both an honor to our past and a celebration of our future. Best wishes for a productive 2015-16 academic year. Please join me and Don Hart on the lawn between Green and Packer for the annual welcome back picnic.

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