

2016 Welcome Back Address
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Because of the thoughtful work of last year and because of the evidence of the continued success of the College, we begin the 2016-2017 academic year on a very strong footing. Let me share some of these highlights from last year.

In athletics, TCNJ is recognized as a first rate Division III program. We finished 26 out of the 450 NCAA Division III programs nationally and first in New Jersey in the Learfield Director's Cup, which ranks cumulative performance. TCNJ teams won New Jersey Athletic Conference Championships (the women's tennis team for the 33rd consecutive year) and appeared in NCAA championship tournaments. Sharon Pfluger captured her 1000th coaching victory. There were All American athletes in wrestling, lacrosse and swimming, and a field hockey athlete was named to the First Team, National All American, giving her and her mother the distinction of being the first TCNJ mother/daughter to receive such honors (her mother was All American in 1990 and 1991).

Student affairs led major efforts to enhance our programs in sexual assault prevention and education by developing a new Board approved Title IX policy, securing a \$300,000 federal grant from the Office of Violence Against Women, designing an online training program for students and sponsoring The Men's Leadership Group, a space for campus men to discuss issues of gender socialization.

There were a number of very important advancements in our commitment to health and wellness on campus. With help from a state grant, TCNJ's Collegiate Recovery program included a Recovery House, late night events through ReCreate Your Night and a support system for students in recovery. TCNJ's Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention Taskforce worked closely with all the Health and Wellness units to implement a wide range of recommendations from the Jed Foundation, including peer, faculty and staff training programs, signage and barriers for parking garages, and the Second Annual TCNJ Cares Week (to educate and promote suicide prevention efforts).

The College received a number of awards and recognitions for academic and institutional excellence, including the following:

The College was the sole recipient in the Comprehensive University category for the Council on Undergraduate Research's (CUR) national Award for Campus-Wide Undergraduate Research Accomplishment.

(Jeff Osborn won the biennial CUR Fellows Award, the organization's highest award for national leadership and accomplishment in undergraduate research).

The College enhanced its commitment to the local community, to community engaged learning and to sponsored and undergraduate research. The Center for Community Engaged Learning and Research provided First Year experiences for 1235 students, supported 41 sections of Advanced CEL courses, coordinated 39 internships and supported 104 Bonner Community Scholars. The number of grants received and the

number of faculty/staff submitting grant proposals increased impressively; 34 faculty and 53 students from 6 schools and 19 departments participated in the 2015 Mentored Undergraduate Summer Experience (MUSE) program; and 520 students participated in the 2016 Celebration of Student Achievement, presenting over 300 posters and 160 presentations.

One grant proposal that exemplifies the work of our faculty is an interdisciplinary National Science Foundation grant involving faculty from the School of Engineering and the School of Humanities and Social Science. Professors Sepahpour, Kim, Bates and Gazley will assess the effectiveness of professional formation of engineering students. The research could be the platform for increasing enrollment and retention of engineering students, especially women and underrepresented minorities.

Individual academic departments and schools received recognition, accreditations and reaccreditation: the Art Department received accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design; the School of Education received notification of National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education (NCATE) reaccreditation, and the Department of Nursing was designated a National League for Nursing Center of Excellence for Creating a Positive Learning Environment.

There is no way to capture the depth of talent in our faculty in a single speech, but the following short list can at least give you the range of that talent: David Vickerman won The American Prize in Conducting in the College/University band division; Jess Row was named a Guggenheim Fellow; Zakiya Adair won a National Endowment of the Humanities summer fellowship; Diane Bates published a book on Superstorm Sandy; Rick Kamber received the inaugural Robert Anderson First Seminar Instructor of the Year award; Avery Faigenbaum and Jie Kan traveled to China to provide seminars on functional training; and Maureen Connolly published *Achieving Next Generation Literacy*.

Such quality faculty are a major reason the College can boast such extraordinary student success and educational outcomes: TCNJ's New Jersey Board of Nursing National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) pass rate of 94% exceeded state and national averages;

TCNJ's teacher education graduates attained a 95% pass rate on the PRAXIS exam; students from our Teacher Counselor Program received a 97% pass rate on the National Counselor Exam; and TCNJ's accounting students joined students from two other New Jersey institutions to achieve a first time pass rate above 50% on the CPA exam.

The 69% of graduates who responded to the annual post-graduation survey further confirmed these outcomes. 97.7% of those who responded to the survey reported they were employed and/or attending graduate/professional school within one year of graduation.

Our students continue to be accepted into very competitive graduate schools, including Johns Hopkins, NYU's Tandon School of Engineering, Cornell, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, Ohio State, Stevens Institute of Technology, University of Delaware, Rutgers, and Brandeis, a number with full ride assistantships. TCNJ has recently been recognized by the National Science Foundation for the number of our former undergraduate students who have successfully completed doctoral programs in the last decade (#3 in New Jersey in total number of recipients and #2 if the size of alumni body is considered).

Students landed impressive jobs at Lockheed Martin, Vanguard, Life Cell Corporation, New Jersey Turnpike Authority, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Dow Jones, Amazon, Astra Zeneca, the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy, and Teach for America.

We continue to invest in our institution by assuring that our employees have the support that they need to do their jobs well and opportunities for advancement at the College. A large part of this investment focuses on our commitment to diversity and inclusion, with varied programming throughout the year ranging from Diversity through Food to a second annual movie day, this time to view RACE, a biopic about Jesse Owens. Statistics indicate that we are continuing to diversify our staff and faculty with over 30% of total faculty and staff being non-white. Last year's new hires included 26% non white staff hires and 39% non white tenure track faculty hires. 56% of our staff and 54% of our tenure track faculty are women.

Enhanced professional development programming included sessions on leadership development, goal setting and creative problem solving. This past year Human Resources launched the President's Leadership Academy, designed for experienced managers interested in senior leadership at TCNJ. This 18 month cohort model program is intended to reinforce our commitment to the growth potential of our talented employees.

I am pleased to report that TCNJ again received national recognition by third parties including the following:

Of the 705 institutions, in *Money Magazine's Best Colleges 2016-17*, TCNJ ranks 94 nationally and is the top public institution from New Jersey.

Money Magazine's new report listed TCNJ as one of 20 institutions nation wide that are "most likely to pay off financially." There are only 2 New Jersey institutions on the list.

In *Money Magazine's* "25 Public Colleges Where Students Graduate the Fastest," TCNJ ranks #6 and is the only New Jersey school on the list.

TCNJ continues to be the top public institution in *US News and World Report's* list of Northern Regional Universities.

In *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, TCNJ is ranked #1 best value public college in New Jersey and #21 nationally for out of state students.

It's not just the institution, but individual departments which received these recognitions:

Businessweek ranks TCNJ #35 nationally and #1 in New Jersey as a top undergraduate business program.

Accounting.com ranked our accounting program as #20 in the nation for undergraduate accounting programs.

The American Institute of Physics ranked TCNJ's Physics Department in the top 1% nationally for physics graduates among 496 non-PhD granting institutions in the U.S., and in the top 5% nationally among all 751 PhD and non-PhD granting institutions in U.S.

TCNJ has once again been recognized as one of 93 of the 281 institutions surveyed as a "Great College to Work for" by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. This marks the second time in three years that TCNJ has earned distinction for the Tenure Process and the clarity of the Tenure process.

And finally, just yesterday, The Princeton Review released its ranking lists of "The Best 381 Colleges." In addition to being named a "Best College," we did very well in a number of their ranking lists. These are especially meaningful because they are based entirely on the opinions of students at the 381 colleges that were surveyed. TCNJ was ranked:

- Number 6 in the nation based on overall student satisfaction.
- Number 7 for having the most beautiful campus
- Number 12 for best career services
- Number 13 for happiest students
- Number 15 for best health services
- and
- Number 19 for how well different types of students (black/white, rich/poor) interact at our school.

Last year, TCNJ continued to engage in legislative matters and public policy issues that are at the center of life in our communities and on campus. During FY16, we actively tracked more than 330 pieces of legislation that had the potential of having an impact on the way we conduct business at the college. College Relations helped position the College as a leading voice on topics ranging from college affordability to campus safety (including sexual assault and suicide prevention). Institutional leaders testified at legislative hearings, providing expertise for legislative leadership during their deliberation process.

Our outward focus also informed our complete rewrite and redesign of the admissions viewbook, which was done entirely in house. The fall 2015 cover story of TCNJ Magazine on intellectual curiosity of our faculty won a silver medal for editorial Design in the Council on the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Circle of Excellence awards. We continue to see growth in the reputation of the College through thoughtful placement in news media and our audience growth in social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram has been substantial.

The intellectual and cultural life of the College was enriched last year by a wide range of lectures and performances, including presentations by academic colleagues from Ohio State, Columbia, SUNY-Albany and Yale; researchers from big pharma (Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly); the Director of NASA's Goddard Center for Astrobiology; Pulitzer Prize winning journalists; business leaders; artists and musicians ranging from specialists in Hollywood special effects to specialists in music from Tajikistan; experts in autism and in men and masculinities and nationally known opinion leaders and public intellectuals such as Soledad O'Brien, Charles Blow and Gloria Steinem. We hosted exhibitions like "A Palette of Pixels" and a youth-driven theatre group presented "Financial Slavery: The College Debt Sentence." The TCNJ choirs performed alongside more than 100 high school students from Japan at the Lincoln Center's Rose Theatre with the New York Philharmonia Orchestra.

New senior administrative leadership in the School of Humanities and Social Science, Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance and Business Services and College Advancement have already joined or will join our vibrant community, as have 17 new tenure track faculty hires. 59% of these new faculty are female; 6% identify as having differing abilities; 23% are Asian; and 12% are African American. They represent a wide range of disciplines from all 7 schools. These faculty received degrees from prestigious institutions across the country and the world. They bring with them previous teaching experience (at every level of education); they are a former systems analyst at Gallup, a researcher at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and as an IT specialist at the Federal Government Ministry of Education in Ethiopia. These new faculty have been recognized for excellence in teaching and research, and have received postdoctoral fellowships at Drexel University and at Johns Hopkins. And again, we have appointed a former TCNJ undergraduate as a tenure track faculty member.

These exciting new hires will help us welcome an exceptional new class of students. Let me share just a couple of highlights of the entering class:

- This was the largest applicant pool in TCNJ's history (11,827).
- We met the goal of 1465 freshman in the entering class and exceeded the goal for transfer students (273 vs. goal of 240).
- 55 provisional students will be joining us this fall (goal of 65).
- 20% of the entering class identify as Black or Hispanic/Puerto Rican.
- While this was the second highest applicant pool from out of state in history (1096), there was a decrease in out of state enrollees (98 vs. 110 last year), but we need to remember that last year was our high water mark for out of state enrollment.
- We continue to see increases in applications (6%) and enrollment from international students (12 vs. 7 last year).

The individuals in this class are quite talented. The freshman class includes 18 valedictorians and 9 salutatorians; 978 participated in varsity sports and 449 participated in bands or choirs; 80% engaged in service projects and 87 earned Eagle Scout or Girl Scout Gold Awards. They have visited 100 different countries and they speak 68 different languages. This success is all the more impressive considering the fierce competition in undergraduate admissions in our region and in the nation.

With such an exceptional community of students, faculty and staff, it is important that the campus continue to renew facilities. There has been tremendous progress on the new Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) building, and on the renovations of the Science building and of the Brower Student Center, including the opening of the restaurant Traditions. Planning for STEM Phase 2 is underway and preliminary planning is about to begin on renovations of Armstrong, Forcina and the '68 Wing of West. The Armstrong project is being supported by \$8 million we received from the State's Capital Improvement Fund. We are also engaged in programming and planning for the replacement of Travers and Wolfe Halls. The goal is for construction to begin on the residential project at the end of 2019, with a completion date of August 2022.

Campus Town has become an important hub for TCNJ life. The residential component of both phase 1 and phase 2 is in full occupancy and members of the TCNJ community as well as the larger Ewing community have been actively patronizing the retail and eating establishments. This fall even more options will be available for the public. The fitness center has been a great success for our students.

Recent Information Technology accomplishments further enhanced the campus including the replacement or upgrade of over 500 computers; network upgrades in the townhouses, Kendall, Packer, Armstrong and the Spiritual Center; wireless expansion in Packer and the Spiritual Center; cable TV migration to Campus Televideo Service; the installation of the School of Nursing Simulation Lab in Forcina; and 17 enhanced technology spaces.

These accomplishments are characteristic of a remarkable institution with a strong history and a promising future. But there are three projects that deserve particular attention today: the Strategic Plan, the Enterprise Risk Management program, and the Comprehensive Campaign.

After a year and a half of intensive engagement on the campus, we are prepared to begin the implementation of TCNJ's new strategic plan *TCNJ 2021: Bolder, Brighter, Better*. This broadly consultative process built on the foundation of shared governance of the College. Members of the Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (SPARC), which led the process, included members of the standing planning council of the College (the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities, CSPP) as well as additional representatives from key areas of the campus. While every one of the members of the Committee contributed remarkable time, energy and talent, the College community owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the co-chairs: Professor Shaun Wiley and Provost Jacqueline Taylor. We benefitted tremendously from the expertise and wisdom of Dr. Madeline Wing Adler from the American Association of College and University's (AACSB) Penson Center for Professional Development as our consultant. Previous to service as a senior associate of the Center, Dr. Adler served for 15 years as president of West Chester University in Pennsylvania.

The extraordinary campus involvement resulted in an exceptional draft of the strategic plan that was submitted to me and the Board of Trustees last fall. The Board's ad hoc committee on strategic planning and the Executive Committee of the Board provided thoughtful input to the draft, which substantially improved that draft, not by changing the document's recommendations

but by refining and clarifying these recommendations and providing a context for the strategic plan. The full Board of Trustees endorsed the plan on April 26, 2016.

Founded on the progress resulting from our 2012-2016 strategic plan, the new plan will guide us as we sustain and advance the institution over the next five years. Specifically, the plan includes a renewed mission and vision and identifies 5 strategic priorities which will provide focus for the near term. Each of the priorities is undergirded by concrete goals, specific deliverables, timelines and the identification of responsible individuals and/or units. Our new plan foregrounds diversity, inclusion and a healthy campus as a critical priority; it spells out the steps that will allow us to enrich our Signature Experiences, and to continue to build awareness of our reputation regionally and nationally. Equally as important, the final two priorities focus on improving our Information Technology and physical plant infrastructure and remaining financially sustainable in these challenging times.

Last year also saw great progress in our Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) program. ERM focuses management on key areas of risk and helps the institution mitigate those risks in order to enhance value by reducing costs, decreasing variability in results, improving reputation and strengthening strategic decision-making. Throughout the last year, we developed a college wide profile which identified enterprise risks. All of those deemed top tier have been fully vetted by the cabinet and either have been or will be discussed and reviewed this year by the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees. The Board's Audit, Risk Management and Compliance Committee serves as the Board oversight committee for the entire ERM process. The coincident development of a strategic plan and an ERM program is fortuitous in that both define steps for the future health of the institution, one focuses more on aspiration and the other on the mitigation of risk, but they must be coordinated.

The third major project of last year was the continuation of TCNJ's first comprehensive fund raising campaign. We exceeded our fund raising goal for FY16, raising a total of \$9.95 million last year. We continue to see increases in giving with online giving growing by 45%. While we would want to see more alumni giving, it is important to remind ourselves that at 6.6% we remain ahead of our public masters granting institutional peers (4.1%).

The results for the total campaign are impressive. We have already raised \$36.1million or 90.2% of our \$40million goal and we have 10 months to go. The campaign has brought in 67 new current use and endowed scholarships (\$20.3 million) and 65 endowed funds have been established. More than 70 volunteers are actively involved in the fund raising campaign, including alumni, faculty, students, community and business leaders and four former governors. We often talk of the larger gifts (there have been 7 gifts, pledges and bequests of \$1 million or more) and we are thrilled with this kind of generosity, but it is equally as significant to celebrate just how many individuals have contributed. To date, more than 10,000 individual donors have supported the campaign with 30,648 unique gifts.

As part of the campaign, last year was also another year for increasing our engagement of TCNJ/TSC alumni. We hosted regional events in 13 cities across the nation, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Boston and Washington, D.C. The completely redesigned Alumni Reunion Weekend was a tremendous success, attracting more than 1000 alumni back to

campus. A special thank you to the individual Schools and programs that sponsored more than 30 special interest events on that day.

As a community, we can take such pride in these collective accomplishments. Because of this record of success, we should embrace our special responsibility as a leader in higher education. As indicated above, we have done so in some of the most controversial topics – prevention of sexual assault and suicide and how to provide quality higher education at an affordable price. I believe we should embrace another, equally complex and perhaps controversial topic. How should we situate ourselves in the navigation of the chaos of our times?

We are in the midst of the most divisive and embarrassing campaign for president of the United States in recent memory. But the fear and apprehension that are foundation for this circumstance are not limited to the United States; they are worldwide. At such a time, we in higher education must embrace our responsibilities to participate productively in difficult and fraught discussions. We have a responsibility to help the campus community learn how to confront these complex times and in so doing help the communities in which we live do the same.

Only a short time ago, places like Paris, Orlando, San Bernadino, Charleston, and Istanbul evoked only images of beauty and peace. Even as these cities of joy and light were brought into the narrative of violence and death, cities with long painful histories continued their own narratives of violence and death: Chicago and Baghdad. And new cities entered that questionable list: Baltimore and Milwaukee, Dallas and Brussels. Whole countries have become visions of destruction, none more obviously than Syria. While the rationale of the perpetrators may be different in each case, the consequences are similar and the pain felt by the survivors is absolutely the same. If higher education is to be the stalwart of sane and productive response, that response can not be to provide simple answers to complex problems. We must be the forum where we discuss how to address such intractable problems as violence, poverty, homelessness, hunger, and radicalism—radicalism from the left and radicalism from the right, from religious and from secular voices.

Our responses must be both forthright and nuanced. Scapegoating those who are not in the majority or those who are different from the mainstream is particularly unproductive, not to mention unethical and frankly unAmerican. Surely higher education must acknowledge the reality of episodes marked by violence and prejudice but we must be a place where difference can be embraced and understood and when we disagree (as we must), we must insist on civil disagreement—with an emphasis on both words: civil and disagreement. That is, to be civil without honesty about difference is as dangerous as disagreement without acknowledgement of the validity of another perspective. We embrace civility not because we are without passion or conviction but because our hearts are breaking and our passion is to seek sustainable solutions not to feel righteous in the moment. Shouting and name calling might feel good for a short time, but these feelings are fleeting and they rarely lead to productive action. If we are not open to hearing the pain and frustrations of others who come from different places and have different pasts, all of this is an idle exercise.

At least as early as 1947, the Truman Commission on Higher Education described higher education as an important place to facilitate responses to these challenges and discussions about

the true meaning of democracy. The commission defined two functions for higher education: to ensure equality and liberty, helping citizens evaluate ideas and directions that could undermine equality and liberty; and to expand beyond the development of “an intellectual elite,” allowing anyone to pursue an education “as far as his native capacities permit” (P. 494 JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY John Dale Russell. 493-508)

Since that time, this idea has been echoed and developed by a number of organizations and initiatives including the National Issues Forums, the American Commonwealth Leadership for Land Grants, and the more recent concept of deliberative democracy. All of these movements seek to bring people from different backgrounds together to encourage robust debate and active listening.

In July 2015, the Kettering Foundation invited a number of presidents of institutions of higher education to consider their responsibilities as stewards of democracy. The subsequent white paper identified areas for discussion and action, including the surfacing of tensions and conflicts in a constructive manner and the acknowledgement by communities of higher education that we are citizens of place as well as of academe. While this project has surely been productive and instructive, I fear that the focus is more on activity than on discussion, deliberation and intellectual engagement. Surely, it is important that institutions of higher education be stewards of place, making a difference in the communities in which they sit. We take pride in the fact that TCNJ has been noted for its institutional commitment to this kind of social engagement in Trenton and Ewing. But the kind of stewardship that is called for is both broader and more demanding than what has been termed civic engagement. It requires that an institution steward a way of governing and leading, a way of being a citizen and educating a citizenry. Such stewardship includes civic engagement and social action, but as important, it also includes a commitment to engaging in difficult discussions about difference and inclusion, about civility and disagreement, about war and peace, about violence and protest, and about justice.

Surely presidents of higher education need to be in the forefront of this kind of transformation but presidents cannot become stewards of democracy unless institutions of higher education become stewards of democracy. In “What Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump Can Learn from William James,” published in *Time Magazine*, Trygve Throntveit from Harvard describes the kind of political party that would be a partner in stewarding democracy, one that

would explicitly reject a vision of democracy as merely a process of voting and then getting or losing what’s yours. Its major objective and most effective weapon would be a genuine civic ethos: a commitment, among leaders and citizens, to balance divergent ideals and experiences by collaborating across differences and accepting that conflict, though inevitable, is only evil if it precludes frank discussion and collective experimentation. (*Time*, August 1, 2016).

I would submit that it is not only political parties but also communities that should take on this challenge.

In order to facilitate TCNJ’s taking on the challenge, this year we will be partnering with “The Sustained Dialogue Institute.” Sustained Dialogue helps people transform confrontational

relationships. It acknowledges that listening is at least as important as talking, and listening means “listening deeply enough to be changed by what you learn.” The process requires attention to interpersonal relationships, acknowledging power differentials, the complexities of differing interests and perceptions and the difficulties of interaction in a multicultural, multiracial community. After identifying and describing problems, the process develops solutions that commit to both individual and collective action to address these problems. Because it is dialogue, such dialogue should not happen in silos but across divisions, across sectors, across stakeholder groups and of course across racial, religious, sexual orientation and gender identities. This will be hard and in some cases it will be painful, but it is our work to do. When Associate Vice President Kerri Tillet, Provost Jacqueline Taylor and Vice President Amy Hecht reach out to the community in the days to come, I urge you to commit time and talent to this very important endeavor.

As I said last year, The TCNJ Way is not just an academic or public relations way, it is also a moral way and we should embrace the complexity and difficulty of the open and difficult discussions that are part of that way. Emily Dickinson has warned

We grow accustomed to the Dark -
When light is put away -
As when the Neighbor holds the Lamp
To witness her Goodbye - 1144

Institutions of higher education must become the neighbor that holds the lamp to light the way rather than to witness a goodbye; that light must disperse the darkness of accusation and name calling. It must kindle sustained dialogue, active listening and civil disagreement. While we must make individual commitment to the enterprise, we can only be stewards of democracy as a community. I thank you in advance for participating in our collective responsibility.