New deans named for education and science

William J. Behre, a faculty member at TCNJ since 1997 and former chair of the Department of Special Education and Literacy, was named dean of the School of Education effective March 1. Prior to the appointment he had been serving as interim dean.

In his nine years at TCNJ, Behre has become deeply involved in academic issues, serving several terms as a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Board, the Committee on Planning and Priorities, the General Education Advisory Council, the library program committee, and reaccreditation efforts of both the Middle States and NCATE organizations. Behre spent his undergraduate years as an economics major at Vassar College and worked first as a financial communications consultant, mostly for Merrill Lynch. Soon, however, he was drawn into education, becoming a middle school social studies teacher in Brooklyn, where he often dealt with students with learning and behavioral difficulties. In subsequent years he earned a master’s in special education at Hunter College and a doctorate from the University of Michigan.

His research interests have focused on how teachers reason and cope with difficult situations, most recently the challenges of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. At TCNJ, he helped organize the Center for Assistive Technology and Inclusive Education Studies (CATIES), which has generated about $7 million in grants support for research and assistant grants since its inception in 2002. Recently he has been working to reorganize and expand the School of Education Clinic, which provides counseling, audiology, and speech pathology services to the local community and valuable educational experience for TCNJ students. In addition, he is working with the school’s Department of Health and Exercise Science to expand its research and educational programs into a center for research and community service.

Behre, 50, lives in nearby New Hope, PA, with his wife and two daughters. He keeps his hand in the real world of public education as an elected member of the New Hope-Solebury Board of School Directors.

Jeffrey M. Osborn, chair of the biology department and a strong promoter of undergraduate research programs at Truman State University in Missouri, will become dean of the School of Science on July 1. At Truman, a 5,600-student, coed liberal arts institution where he has taught for 15 years, Osborn directs the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Talent Expansion Program, and chairs a university-wide undergraduate research committee.

After earning both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in botany at Texas State University–San Marcos, he went on to earn a doctorate from Ohio State University in plant biology. At Truman, Osborn teaches a full range of courses that routinely incorporate research projects. Many of them focus on evolutionary relationships among seed plants based on the study of pollen development and pollination mechanisms. He has been quite successful in bringing financial support for research to the university, receiving over $3.65 million from sources such as the National Science Foundation, Fulbright Foundation, and Petroleum Research Fund—American Chemical Society. He has conducted research while on leave from Truman at the Swedish Museum of Natural History, University of Alberta, and in Antarctica.

At the national level, Osborn has served two terms on the executive board of the Botanical Society of America and two consecutive terms as the society’s program director. He has served on the Council on Undergraduate Research in a variety of roles, including chair of the biology division and member of the executive board. He is also a member of Project Kaleidoscope, a national alliance devoted to strengthening the nation’s undergraduate science and mathematics community.

New VP for student life brings broad experience

James Norfleet, a teacher and administrator at the college level for over 20 years, has been appointed vice president for student life effective August 1. Most recently, Norfleet served as associate vice president for student
services at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, CA, a comprehensive university with 20,000 students. He has been responsible for the strategic direction and fine management of the university’s career center, student health services, disability resource center, counseling and psychological services, Renaissance Scholars, and student support and equity programs.

Earlier, Norfleet served at Cal Poly-Pomona as the executive director of educational equity services from 1999 to 2002 and as director of the Educational Opportunity Program from 1995 to 1999. At Nyack College, a small private institution in Nyack, NY, he served as associate dean of the college from 1990 to 1995.

Norfleet received his BA in business administration from Pace University and completed graduate studies in higher education and developmental studies at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, and Fordham University in Tarrytown, NY. Norfleet will present his oral defense this summer for a doctorate in education leadership at UCLA.

Anouncing the appointment, President R. Barbara Girtenstein said, "His extensive background in student affairs and passion for working with students will serve us well in his new leadership position at TCNJ."