

August 31, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Warm greetings as we embark on a new academic year! Hopefully you had some well-deserved down time and relaxation during the summer, were not bothered by the earthquake and were minimally affected by Hurricane Irene. Fortunately, the college incurred minimal damage from the storm and, although students are continuing to arrive throughout this week as they are able, the semester is underway.

We want to take this opportunity to recognize Dr. Mark Kiselica, for his service as Vice Provost and now as Interim Dean of the School of Education. We also want to formally announce that Dr. Marcia Blicharz is serving as Interim Dean of the School of Nursing, Health, and Exercise Science. Marcia has most recently served as Chair of Nursing and previously served as Acting Dean for the School of Nursing. Please join us in thanking them for their service and leadership.

During this interim period for the college, we will be focusing on important institutional goals such as updating the institutional strategic plan, enrollment management and curricular assessment and fostering greater integration between Academic and Student Affairs. The results of these efforts will position TCNJ well for the future.

We want to provide some updates and highlights of the strategic work for the coming year. The reporting structures for Academic Affairs will differ somewhat from what was previously announced, as the position of Interim Assistant Provost is being held due to the budget concerns. Primary responsibilities in Academic Affairs are as follows: Strategic planning, academic deans, faculty tenure and promotion, liberal learning, study abroad, honors, curricular assessment and accreditation and SOSA with Susan Bakewell-Sachs, the Interim Provost; budget, adjunct positions and course schedule management, critical incident planning, non-traditional programs, academic grants, MLUC, WILL and the Center for Teaching and Learning with Bill Behre, the Interim Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Operations; and Admissions, Records and Registration and Financial aid with Lisa Angeloni, the Associate Provost for Enrollment Management. You'll find all three of us on the second floor of Green Hall. Academic Affairs also has two faculty fellows this year, Drs. Tabitha Dell'Angelo and Chu Kim-Prieto, who will focus on understanding our current needs, challenges and successes in diversity, broadly understood to include not only race and ethnicity, but also other areas such as sexual orientation and gender identity/expression and class. We will also have a faculty leader for assessment, Dr. Lynn Braender, who will work closely with the Center for Institutional Effectiveness and the assessment of transformation. In addition, we will have an ACE Fellow, Dr. Joseph Youngblood, from Thomas Edison State College this year – two areas he will be focusing on are diversity and strategic planning.

## Updates

This summer the college hosted a two-week credit-bearing experience for academically and service motivated high school students. The students spent a portion of their day in a sociology class with Dr. Diane Bates and a portion of their day at service sites coordinated by the Bonner Center. Thanks to Diane and the Bonner Staff for making this program an extraordinary success. We plan on running two sessions with a total of eight-to-ten sections of about 15 students next July. Any faculty interested in offering a service-based course should contact Bill Behre ([behre@tcnj.edu](mailto:behre@tcnj.edu)).

Once again we are welcoming an exceptional incoming class of 1375 students, from a record setting 10,151 applications. Applications increased for all ethnic groups. The incoming students bring many talents, experiences and accomplishments. Our admissions staff work very hard at recruiting strong potential students. Our ability to yield these students is affected by many variables, including our scholars' events, open houses, accepted students' day and regular communications, vital opportunities for potential students and their families to visit the campus and begin to build relationships with faculty and staff. Thanks to all who contributed to this overall effort during the past year.

We continue to face the "new normal" of ongoing budget pressures. As President Gitenstein discussed in her opening address to the community, our financial challenges cannot be addressed solely through tuition increases. These would be unsustainable for our students and their families. Similarly, we cannot simply add students or cut budgets, as these moves would substantially change the undergraduate experience that we have worked so hard to build. Therefore, while we must continue to look for efficiencies where possible, we must also explore ways to diversify our revenue streams. These new revenue sources must be consistent with the deeply held values of our community, must be self-sustaining, and must generate revenue that can be used to support our core mission. This context calls for open-mindedness and creativity. It is likely that not every idea will be viable, but all ideas can be on the table. If you have any potential revenue-generating suggestions, please contact Bill Behre with your thoughts.

## Faculty

We have welcomed five new tenure track faculty members this year in four schools in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Music, Nursing, Physics and the Library in Information Literacy. They bring an impressive variety of teaching and research interests and we can expect our students and our community to benefit from their contributions through teaching, scholarship and service. We also celebrate the eight faculty who have been appointed to a sixth year with tenure this year in the schools of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts and Communications, Business and Science.

### Faculty Searches

Last year we had a smaller-than-average number of searches. This year we have 22 approved faculty searches across six schools. Successful searches offer us opportunities to renew and build upon our distinguished TCNJ community of learners.

### Updating the Institutional Strategic Plan

The Committee on Planning and Priorities has recommended that the development of an updated institutional strategic plan be the strategic priority for the College for the 2011/2012 academic year. CPP will assume responsibility and oversight for the process. Susan Bakewell-Sachs, in her role as Interim Provost, and Dr. Morton Winston will co-chair this effort, which will be comprehensive and include a reaffirmation of the mission and core beliefs. Please stay tuned for important updates and invitations related to this process.

### J-term

We are planning to pilot a mid-winter term in a compressed format from January 3-13. Such a term can, for example, offer TCNJ students an opportunity for special experiences not possible during a full semester, offer transfer students the chance to more quickly align their program of study with their preferred timeline and offer non-TCNJ students who are home on break to take a course. We currently have five classes planned. We would like to reach ten offerings. Please speak with your dean if you are interested in offering a course during this time.

### Center for Teaching and Learning

This year's theme is innovation. As part of this theme, the Center for Teaching and Learning will be exploring the role of different teaching modalities on a campus like ours. This builds on the recently completed blended learning pilot and will facilitate dialogue that can inform our strategic planning. A call has gone out for interested faculty to apply to be the faculty lead for the Center. If you are interested in this position, please email [academic@tcnj.edu](mailto:academic@tcnj.edu) by September 6.

By definition, times of transition are unsettling. Our primary goal for this year is to minimize any disruption to our enterprise while we continue to sustain and advance the college's positive trajectory. In doing so, we hope to lay a solid foundation upon which a new provost can continue to build. We look forward to your continued engagement and support as we work to improve our students' experiences and sustain our community.

Sincerely,

Susan Bakewell-Sachs, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Bill Behre, Interim Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Operations  
Lisa Angeloni, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management