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# New Jersey Commission on Higher Education

# ◆ Highlights ◆

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## ***In This Issue:***

### **Commission Considers Capacity Study**

*"The Blue-Ribbon Task Force on the Capacity of New Jersey's Higher Education System presented its final report and recommendations to the Commission on Higher Education in January..."*

### **Newark's Science Park Moves Forward**

*"With the planned addition of a world-class center for infectious disease research, the four colleges and universities that make up the Council for Higher Education in Newark are a giant step closer to realizing their vision for a science and technology park in the city's Central Ward..."*

### **Governor's FY'99 Budget Has Increases for Higher Education**

*"The proposed budget for FY 1999 unveiled by Governor Whitman this month includes several important increases for higher education..."*

### **EOF Board Adopts Opportunity For a New Millennium**

*"The Educational Opportunity Fund recently adopted a systemwide plan that articulates the vision, mission, strategic goals, and accountability recommendations that will guide the program's continuing efforts to provide disadvantaged students with higher education access and support..."*

### **Executive Director Looks at the Year Ahead**

*"The year ahead promises to be another busy one for the Commission and New Jersey higher education institutions. Several new projects are planned for 1998, and technology-related change is everpresent..."*

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## **Commission Considers Capacity Study**

The Blue-Ribbon Task Force on the Capacity of New Jersey's Higher Education System presented its final report and recommendations to the Commission on Higher Education in January.

"The task force's findings are very positive," Joseph D. Williams, chairman of the Blue-Ribbon Task Force, told Commission members when he presented the task force's extensive report. "While there are a few unmet needs, we found that New Jersey's higher education system is well placed to meet current and future demand. No new institutions are necessary to meet the needs of students, employers, and the state, and no major changes in the system are warranted."

The task force was appointed one year ago to examine the higher education system and its capacity to meet the needs of the state and its diverse population. It was specifically charged by the Commission with making recommendations on the establishment, expansion, closure, or consolidation of institutions, in response to a mandate in the [Higher Education Restructuring Act of 1994](#).

The task force considered broad public input regarding the demand for and delivery of higher education programs. It considered testimony presented by 80 people as well as written comments submitted by over 200 individuals and organizations.

The Commission will discuss the task force's report and consider public input at its monthly meeting on

February 27. Adoption of a final report and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature is scheduled for March 27.

The task force found New Jersey's higher education delivery structure to be generally efficient. With 56 public and independent colleges and universities, the panel concluded that the state does not have a surplus of institutions relative to its population, and nearly all public institutions operate at cost-effective enrollment levels. Program duplication is low, collaboration among institutions is extensive, and instructional space is used efficiently.

The report contains eight recommendations the task force believes will help the higher education system better meet the future needs of New Jersey and its citizens.

Among these is the suggestion that New Jersey establish multi-institution centers involving partnerships between existing two- and four-year institutions. The centers will meet regional and program-specific higher education needs through collaborative and joint degree programs that are offered both on site and through distance learning.

While the report notes that the outmigration of New Jersey students does not negatively affect the state's level of educational attainment or its supply of qualified employees, it does acknowledge that the recruitment and retention of high-achieving students can favorably impact institutional quality. Therefore, the task force recommends that the Commission on Higher Education, working with the Presidents' Council, may wish to examine the many facets of quality necessary to achieve New Jersey's vision for higher education excellence, including the enrollment of high-achieving students.

Finding a large number of degree programs in the state with low enrollments, the task force recommends that the Commission ask each institution's board of trustees to justify undergraduate programs with less than 25 majors and graduate programs with fewer than 10 majors, phase them out, or offer them in collaboration with other institutions.

Given the importance of ensuring access to higher education for an increasingly diverse population, the task force recommends that the Commission seek enhanced state support for programs that serve students who are academically or economically disadvantaged and those who speak English as a second language, such as the [Educational Opportunity Fund](#), Tuition Aid Grants, and [ESL programs](#). In order to ensure the continued optimal usage of college and university facilities, it also suggests that the Commission work with the state to establish a program for ongoing building maintenance and renewal that takes precedence over funding for new construction.

A summary of the report and recommendations of the Blue-Ribbon Task Force is available [here](#).

## I - N - N - O - V - A - T - I - O - N - S

*Beginning with this issue, **Highlights** adds news about institutional innovations and initiatives that help to achieve New Jersey's shared vision for higher education.*

### Newark's Science Park Moves Forward



With the planned addition of a world-class center for infectious disease research, the four colleges and universities that make up the Council for Higher Education in Newark are a giant step closer to realizing their vision for a science and technology park in the city's Central Ward.

Construction of the International Center for Public Health is expected to begin in March 1999, launching the second phase of development of the University Heights Science Park. The 161,600 square foot facility will be largely funded with \$60 million in state grants and loans.

The center will house the Public Health Research Institute, a New York-based biomedical research institute that focuses on infectious disease and public health research, including the study of antibiotic resistance and the development of new antibiotics. The National Tuberculosis Center at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) and the medical school's Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics will also move into the new public health center. Officials hope to attract private technology companies to adjacent building sites.

The 50-acre mixed use University Heights Science Park is a collaborative venture between Newark's higher education institutions (Rutgers University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Essex County College, and UMDNJ), the City of Newark, and private industry. It aims to harness university research as a force for urban and regional economic and community development.

The ambitious project will link higher education and industry, thereby easing the transfer of technology from universities to Science Park companies. It also strives to improve the quality of life for Newark residents by creating jobs and business opportunities, improving education, and providing housing, day care, and retail space.

The first phase of Science Park, completed in 1996, includes a small office and laboratory building, a 30,000 square foot business incubator that houses 17 technology start-up companies, and a child care center. Ultimately, plans call for \$350 million worth of construction over 15 years that will include an 800-student science high school, housing, and retail space as well as technology laboratories, business incubators, and office space.

Although Science Park is open to all technology companies, the focus is on four technology clusters that reflect the research strengths of the sponsoring institutions: biosciences and biotechnology, information and communications technology, environmental and energy technology, and advanced manufacturing technology.

## **Governor's FY'99 Budget Has Increases for Higher Education**

The proposed budget for FY 1999 unveiled by Governor Whitman this month includes several important increases for higher education.

The Governor's budget includes a \$12 million increase in operating aid for the 19 community colleges, the first step in moving toward the balanced funding partnership recommended by the Commission on Higher Education. It also provides a \$26 million increase in operating aid for the senior public institutions.

The budget includes a performance funding initiative, based on a recommendation by the Commission, that rewards public institutions for achieving statewide goals. Each public institution is slated to receive its full performance allocation for FY 1999; beginning in FY 2000 institutional allocations of up to 1% of operating aid will be based on performance in key areas such as graduation and transfer rates and operating efficiency.

The proposed budget also earmarks \$10 million more in spending for Tuition Aid Grants than is projected for the current year, enabling the state to increase both the number and size of grant awards. The Governor also proposed initial funding of \$450,000 for planning grants to involve colleges and universities in urban revitalization, an initiative recommended by the Commission.

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### **EOF Board Adopts *Opportunity For a New Millennium***

The [Educational Opportunity Fund](#) recently adopted a systemwide plan that articulates the vision, mission, strategic goals, and accountability recommendations that will guide the program's continuing efforts to provide disadvantaged students with higher education access and support.

*Opportunity for a New Millennium* culminates a year-long planning process to explore how the EOF program should best address New Jersey's changing economic, educational, and social conditions. It responds to the Commission on Higher Education's long-range plan, which called upon the [EOF Board of Directors](#) to develop a mission statement and strategic goals for the program.

Following an extensive dialogue with key stakeholders, the EOF Board developed a shared vision and an expanded mission for the EOF program that address the guiding principles of promoting access, enhancing quality, and maintaining accountability.

"Our dialogue with the EOF community was inclusive of varying viewpoints, resulting in a vision and mission for the Fund that is not prescriptive, but nevertheless clearly expresses its role and strategic direction," said Herbert Flamer, the EOF Board member (and former chair) who spearheaded the planning process.

Launched in 1968, New Jersey's EOF program is one of the nation's most comprehensive and successful state-supported efforts to provide access to higher education for disadvantaged students. It encompasses supplemental financial aid to help individuals attend college as well as an array of campus-based support services to improve students' chances of academic success. The EOF Board also oversees several small grant programs for graduate and professional school students.

EOF is a collaborative effort between the state, which administers the program, colleges and universities, which recruit and directly serve students, and the students themselves. Opportunity for a New Millennium stresses the importance of these partners working together to address the recommendations contained in the plan.

The plan contains a number of key recommendations that will assure the Fund's continued ability to provide access and opportunity to disadvantaged students, including:

- Every institution that receives public funds should continue to participate in the program.

- EOF's primary focus should continue to be degree- and certificate-seeking students. In addition, more emphasis should be given to improving articulation from community colleges to senior institutions.
- Accountability must be a core component of EOF, shaping both the Board's planning for the future and institutions' efforts to establish long-term goals and desired outcomes for their programs, including steps to improve student success and close the outcomes gap between EOF students and other students.
- Additional funding allocations should be targeted to specific initiatives aimed at improving EOF student transfer and graduation rates, and preparation for majors in which EOF students are underrepresented.
- Annual student award levels should be increased to preserve affordability as increasing costs of attendance are outpacing student assistance funding.

*Opportunity for a New Millennium* also calls upon the EOF Board to update its regulations when they come up for their regular five-year review, reducing or eliminating those that are no longer necessary, adding new or revised language to address demographic and economic changes, and focusing on strategies that improve student success and ensure public accountability. A broad-based working group will develop recommendations for the Board's consideration by September.

"*Opportunity for a New Millennium* lays the groundwork to strengthen and enhance EOF's role as a leader in increasing educational diversity at New Jersey's colleges and universities," said EOF Board chair James Avery.

<p><i>Opportunity for a New Millennium</i> is available <a href="#">here</a> or by calling the Commission's EOF Office at (609) 984-2709.</p>
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## Executive Director Looks at the Year Ahead

by Martine Hammond-Paludan

The year ahead promises to be another busy one for the Commission and New Jersey higher education institutions. Several new projects are planned for 1998, and technology-related change is everpresent.

In the coming months, the Commission will continue advocacy initiated in the fall for its [FY 1999 budget policy recommendations](#). A committee of Commission members and college presidents will evaluate the impact of restructuring, as required by the Higher Education Restructuring Act. Another committee appointed in January will monitor progress in implementing [New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education](#) and determine the need for further recommendations to realize the vision articulated in the plan. In addition, a publication about New Jersey business and higher education connections is being planned, and a fall conference for institutional trustees is slated.

With enactment of legislation to raise the bid threshold for state colleges (from \$7,500 to \$17,700), the Commission will promote other recommended strategies for reducing administrative burdens and increasing institutional flexibility. And, the Commission's K-12/Higher Education Collaboration Committee and the Department of Education will explore ways to improve teacher preparation.

Over the next few months, New Jersey colleges and universities will petition the Commission for bond moneys from the Technology Infrastructure Fund enacted last fall. The distribution of these funds will complement the technology-driven changes already occurring throughout higher education.

Nationally, institutions are using new technologies in various ways, such as faculty web pages, on-line



instruction, and collaborative degree programs that involve higher education, business, and industry. In New Jersey, for example, a consortium involving NJIT, UMDNJ, Georgian Court College, and community colleges in Cumberland, Salem, Ocean, and Burlington counties have established an Economic Development Network for academic instruction, workforce training, and interactive videoconferencing that will serve students and small- and medium-sized businesses in four South Jersey counties.

Institutions are also exploring ways to enhance K-12 education through technology. For example, based on strategies it implemented in New Jersey, Stevens Institute of Technology, working with the National League for Innovation in the Community College, won a \$909,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to train K-12 teachers in Florida, Arizona, and Ohio to integrate Internet technology into classroom instruction.

Colleges and universities hope that technology will increase their effectiveness, capacity, and productivity, while moving the campus culture toward more learner-centered systems. Great expectations for technology are tempered by concerns about the significant costs of interconnectivity and ongoing equipment updates.

Recognizing this, last summer the Commission petitioned the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to create a state universal service fund that provides higher education with telecommunications discounts similar to those that K-12 schools and public libraries are eligible to receive under a new federal law.

These are just a few of the issues and activities that will shape the higher education agenda for the coming year. The Commission looks forward to working with the higher education community and other constituencies to address these and emerging opportunities.



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