
New Jersey Commission on Higher Education

◆ **Highlights** ◆

Volume 2 Issue 3

December 1997

In This Issue:

[Connecting for Success: Business-Higher Education Seminar Convened](#)

"Over 150 corporate executives and educators from throughout New Jersey convened on October 27 to explore ways to strengthen and expand linkages between business and higher education. Such connections produce many benefits, including cutting edge research, economic growth, and a highly-skilled workforce..."

[Commission Adopts Budget Policy Statement for FY '99](#)

"Highlighting higher education's benefit not only to students but to society, the Commission on Higher Education's budget policy statement for fiscal year 1999 stresses the need for an increased state investment in higher education next year..."

[Commission Service a Learning Experience for Students](#)

"For Nicole Parisi and Robert Benacchio, September 1997 was the start of no ordinary semester. The two college seniors added a crash course in state higher education policy making to their academic calendars when Governor Whitman appointed them as student members of the Commission on Higher Education..."

[Commission Retools \\$2.9 Million College Bound Grant Program](#)

"The state's \$2.9 million College Bound Program is being examined and refined by the Commission. Program funds provide on-campus support services and academic classes/activities to help students from the state's Special Needs School Districts complete secondary school and prepare for college..."

Connecting for Success:

Business-Higher Education Seminar Convened

Over 150 corporate executives and educators from throughout New Jersey convened on October 27 to explore ways to strengthen and expand linkages between business and higher education. Such connections produce many benefits, including cutting edge research, economic growth, and a highly-skilled workforce.

Jointly sponsored by the State Chamber of Commerce, the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Presidents' Council, the half-day seminar brought together some of the key players involved in business-higher education linkages. Presentations and a panel discussion focused on the economic value of connecting business and higher education and explored ways to enhance existing cooperative efforts and stimulate new ones.

"New Jersey's ability to connect academic and private sector resources can advance entire industries, attract new business, and strengthen our state's overall economy," said Commission Chairman Al Cade.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Anthony P. Carnevale, Vice President for Public Leadership at Educational Testing Service and an internationally recognized authority on education, training, and employment, elaborated on Mr. Cade's point.

Dr. Carnevale said that while European nations tend to have greater integration between industry and higher education, the United States has two distinct sectors that are nevertheless interdependent. He cited employee training and technology development as two key areas where business and higher education must establish strong linkages. Dr. Carnevale also noted that higher education institutions can learn much from business about managerial flexibility and reducing costs.

The seminar also included a panel discussion on future efforts to link business and higher education. Moderated by NJIT President Saul Fenster, the panel explored the appropriate balance between responsiveness to corporate needs and input and higher education's traditional practices.

Seminar participants agreed on the need to expand communication and collaboration between business and higher education. As a first step, they concluded that a directory of information that highlights college, university, and private sector resources would benefit current and prospective New Jersey businesses as well as higher education institutions. A planning group composed of a cross section of the organizations that participated in the seminar will develop ideas for a comprehensive document and companion site on the World Wide Web.

Commission Adopts Budget Policy Statement for FY '99

Highlighting higher education's benefit not only to students but to society, the Commission on Higher Education's [budget policy statement for fiscal year 1999](#) stresses the need for an increased state investment in higher education next year.

"Our research base from several studies illuminates the condition of New Jersey's higher education system and makes this year's budget statement our strongest to date," said Thomas D. Sayles, Jr., chair of the Commission's budget committee.

The statement asks the Governor and Legislature to take the first step toward a balanced funding partnership between government and students. Additional state operating aid coupled with limited growth in tuition can move the system toward the Commission's goal of two-thirds state support of operating costs at the four-year institutions, with the remaining third covered by tuition. For the community colleges, the state, counties, and students should each provide one-third of operating costs. Achieving this ratio will require an increase in state support while reducing the colleges' reliance on tuition revenue.

To this end, the budget policy statement recommends that the state provide sufficient funding in the FY 1999 budget to enable public four-year institutions to hold tuition and fee increases to the rate of inflation and enable county colleges to freeze tuition and fees at current levels. Additional incentives should be provided to public four-year institutions that freeze tuition and fees and to county colleges that reduce student charges.

In the area of student aid, the policy statement calls for Tuition Aid Grants that reflect 1998-99 tuition rates. The Commission also endorses a tuition aid program for part-time students, although funding for such a program must not come at the expense of needed increases to the existing TAG program. The policy statement also supports grant increases for Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) recipients and three initiatives requested by the EOF Board of Directors.

To address the serious problem of capital renewal, the policy statement recommends a five-year capital renewal program for senior public institutions and an expansion of the Chapter 12 debt service program for county colleges.

The budget policy statement also recommends that New Jersey earmark additional funds to encourage and reward public institutions that achieve selected statewide goals identified in the long-range plan the Commission adopted in 1996. The Commission suggests that an additional two percent of operating aid be set aside to reward public institutions that demonstrate improved performance, beginning with key areas such as graduation and transfer rates and operating efficiency. Other states have found such incentives to be successful in encouraging institutions to address key issues.

“While each of the recommendations has a price tag, New Jersey’s robust economy should allow the state to make a significant increase in its investment in higher education,” Mr. Sayles said.

Adopted by the Commission at its December meeting, the budget policy statement will be sent to Governor Christine Todd Whitman and the members of the New Jersey Legislature. Commission members intend to actively seek funding for these priority recommendations.

Commission Service a Learning Experience for Students

For Nicole Parisi and Robert Benacchio, September 1997 was the start of no ordinary semester. The two college seniors added a crash course in state higher education policy making to their academic calendars when Governor Whitman appointed them as student members of the Commission on Higher Education.

[The 1994 Higher Education Restructuring Act](#) brought numerous changes in higher education governance, including student representation on the state coordinating entity. Student government associations at public and independent colleges and universities may recommend candidates for appointment by the Governor. The students serve as nonvoting members, although the Commission supports changing the law to give student members a vote. Nevertheless, the student members participate fully in the Commission’s work, contributing to the discussion at monthly meetings and serving on committees and task forces.

Nicole, a pharmacy major at Rutgers, hails from Gillette, New Jersey. She participates extensively in activities related to her major and intended profession, such as holding various leadership positions in the Alpha Zeta Omega Professional Pharmaceutical Fraternity. She also has been active in student government, first as vice president of her class and then as president. This year she leads the Pharmacy Governing Council and chairs the Big Brother/Big Sister Orientation Program, in which she has participated throughout her college career.

Rob, of Bayonne, New Jersey, is a political science major at Drew University. After graduation, he hopes to attend law school. He has held various offices in the student government association and currently serves as president. He also has worked on campus committees (for alumni groups and university revenue sources) and special campus activities, and participated in community service. Active in college theater and intramural sports, Rob also is a member of the national honor society for his field of study and is listed in *Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges*.

Commission Retools \$2.9 Million College Bound Grant Program

The state’s \$2.9 million [College Bound Program](#) is being examined and refined by the Commission. Program funds provide on-campus support services and academic classes/activities to help students from the state’s Special Needs School Districts complete secondary school and prepare for college. Currently, there are 13 funded programs on New Jersey college campuses. Open competition, enabling all campuses to apply to host College Bound programs, and a new Request for Proposal (RFP) were among a dozen recommendations by an external consultant engaged to conduct the first-ever comprehensive evaluation of the program. Consultant Dr. Carol F. Stoel, affiliated with the American Association for Higher Education and the Council on Basic Education, concluded that College Bound is a needed and valuable effort, one of only three in the U.S. of such size and duration, and suggested refinements to ensure that the program focuses its limited resources for maximum effectiveness.

The Commission released the redesigned RFP on October 31. Proposals are due February 9, 1998, with

award announcements scheduled for April 24, 1998 (contingent upon the FY 1999 Appropriations Act). To help institutions prepare strong proposals, Commission staff offered three technical training workshops during November and December where they provided attendees with specific instructions about the application and review process, including a review of the purposes of the grant program and the criteria by which proposals will be judged. More than 50 individuals attended the workshops.

The RFP includes components that implement other consultant recommendations, for example, by specifying common elements in project evaluation data; by emphasizing collaborative activities with host institutions, external agencies, and other College Bound programs; and by stressing the program's focus on mathematics, science, and technology. Another feature of the new RFP is a two-tiered funding policy whereby grant moneys are set aside for both large and small programs, an approach aimed at maximizing the number of funded projects.

An advisory group for the College Bound program, also recommended by the consultant, was created and held its first meeting. The new panel, which includes representatives of colleges and universities, public K-12 schools, the New Jersey Department of Education, and the Educational Opportunity Fund program, as well as a parent and alumnus of the College Bound program, will advise Commission staff in administering the program and will represent College Bound to various constituencies.



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