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New Jersey Commission on Higher Education

# ◆ Highlights ◆

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## **Commission Adopts Capacity Recommendations, Including Call for Multi-Institution Centers**

The Commission on Higher Education in late March adopted a report to the Governor and Legislature on the capacity of New Jersey's higher education system, culminating more than a year of extensive background research and broad public input.

The Commission concluded, based on recommendations by the Blue-Ribbon Task Force on the Capacity of New Jersey's Higher Education System, that the state has a generally efficient higher education delivery structure, and there is no need to establish, close, or consolidate institutions. Nearly all the public colleges and universities have cost-efficient enrollment levels, and systemwide there is low program duplication, extensive interinstitutional collaboration, and efficient use of space. The report does identify some areas of unmet need, however, and makes recommendations for the future.

The Commission and the Presidents' Council will address some of the recommendations jointly, through the work of the Long-Range Plan Review Committee, created to monitor and update New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education. The committee will examine four areas related to the Commission's findings and recommendations regarding capacity.

The Commission cited the need for multi-institution centers, rather than new colleges, to improve access to postsecondary degree programs in underserved regions of the state. Such centers are recommended to respond to potential student demand in the northwest, southeast, and coastal regions of New Jersey, where there are limited opportunities to pursue four-year and graduate degrees and where the college-age populations are

projected to grow. (See [related article](#).)

The Long-Range Plan Review Committee will also examine the many facets of institutional quality, including the enrollment of high-achieving students. This topic flows out of the capacity study finding that although New Jersey's high rate of college student outmigration harms neither the state's level of educational attainment nor its supply of qualified employees, recruiting and retaining high-achieving students can enhance institutional quality.

Also on the committee's agenda will be the Commission's recommendations that institutions justify, combine, or phase out low-enrollment programs and that occupational supply and demand data be considered in relation to long-range planning.

Other ongoing Commission efforts also respond to the capacity study. For example, to ensure access to higher education for students who are academically or economically disadvantaged and those who speak English as a second language, the Commission will continue to seek increased state support for Tuition Aid Grants, the Educational Opportunity Fund, and the Education of Language Minority Students program.

The Commission will heighten efforts to establish a program for building maintenance and renewal at senior public institutions, as recommended in the capacity report. The Commission has called for such funding since 1995 to address deferred maintenance and renewal needs and protect the state's substantial investment in the infrastructure of its public colleges and universities. Such funding will help to ensure the optimal use of facilities, and should take precedence over funding for new construction.

The Presidents' Council is finalizing a proposal to improve articulation between colleges and ease student transfer, addressing another finding of the capacity study. In addition, a committee of the Council and Commission will continue advising the two bodies regarding an interconnected technology infrastructure for higher education and an appropriate operational environment for distance learning, another issue addressed in the capacity report. Finally, both systemwide and institutional accountability reports will focus on efficiency in meeting state needs and inform future planning and decision making.

The Commission's recommendations and a summary of the blue-ribbon task force's report are available [here](#). To request a copy of the Commission's full report to the Governor and Legislature, please call 609-292-4310.

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

### **Rutgers and Brookdale Plan Partnership for 4-Year Degrees**

Residents of Monmouth and Ocean counties will benefit from a proposed partnership between Brookdale Community College and Rutgers University to address a critical need for public education beyond the associate degree in these rapidly growing counties.

The evolving alliance accords with the Commission's recommendation to establish multi-institution partnerships, rather than build new colleges, where there are unmet higher education needs. The alliance ultimately will provide site-based access to both baccalaureate and, where appropriate, graduate programs in Monmouth and Ocean counties, neither of which is home to a senior public institution.

Brookdale Community College officials said they initiated the joint effort partly in response to surveys of Brookdale graduates, who identify local access to public baccalaureate degree programs as a highly

desirable educational option. Brookdale students typically enroll directly from high school, and nearly three-quarters seek transfer opportunities. The closest public senior campuses are at least one hour away from the Lincroft-based community college. Despite good relationships and articulation agreements with independent colleges and universities in the region, the need for local access to less expensive, public institutions remains.

The Brookdale-Rutgers partnership will not just serve "traditional" or currently enrolled college students. The partnership will serve "working people, who are part of the economic future of the community, looking for higher education opportunities," said Dr. Peter Burnham, president of Brookdale Community College. He said that, initially, most of the instruction offered by the partnership will focus on Monmouth County.

Dr. Burnham sees the evolving Brookdale-Rutgers alliance as fulfilling the original concept of restructuring, "a major philosophical underpinning of which was to develop an environment where collaboration would help break down some of the artificial barriers between and among institutions of higher education in New Jersey."

While the proposed alliance is not the first partnership between a community college and a university, both partners see the alliance as a tremendous opportunity.

"Collaboration between Rutgers and Brookdale faculty, who are developing site-based programs for the new partnership, has already improved articulation between the two institutions for students seeking a traditional undergraduate experience," said Dr. Raphael Caprio, Vice President for Continuous Education and Outreach at Rutgers.

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

### **Stevens and NASA Link to Inspire Minority Students' Interest in Science**

Stevens Institute of Technology and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are taking science classes to new heights in the hopes of inspiring minority students to pursue advanced study and careers in science and technology.

In the first year of the pilot project, Stevens' Center for Improved Engineering and Science Education (CIESE), linked nine NASA engineers and scientists with students and teachers from schools in Union City, Hoboken, and Jersey City. The mentoring project aims to provide the science teachers with enhanced educational resources, particularly Internet-based data and information. It also strives to offer positive role models for minority students by introducing them to Hispanic NASA professionals who have succeeded in scientific careers.

The NASA mentors communicated with the teachers and students through e-mail and two face-to-face meetings. In addition, the Stevens-NASA project brought the teachers onto Stevens' campus for monthly professional development workshops.

Coordinators hope that desktop videoconference technology will enhance that communication in the project's second year.

Increasingly, communications technology enables busy professionals to serve as a resource for students and teachers without losing time from demanding jobs. Throughout the nation, volunteers in the scientific, engineering, technology, education, and business communities are using e-mail and other

technology applications to serve as “telementors” who help students and teachers expand their subject knowledge and learn about career opportunities; they also provide support, encouragement, and positive role models.

As the project begins its second year, several teachers involved in the pilot and several new teachers will spend two weeks working with the NASA mentors at the agency’s Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland to identify the scientific topics that will be enriched by the NASA mentors’ technical knowledge and experience.

## **Commission Seeks Additional Funding for Institutions**

In testimony before the appropriations committees of the state Senate and Assembly, Commission Chairman Alfred Cade offered support for Governor Whitman’s proposed budget and sought funding to address two additional priorities.

Mr. Cade said the proposed budget for FY 1999 takes steps to address rising higher education costs and enhance quality, and the Commission applauds the Governor’s ongoing commitment to student assistance. The recommended \$10 million increase for the Tuition Aid Grant program will allow for an increase in both the number of grants and the amount provided to needy students. He told the legislators that increasing state support for community colleges will move the state closer to providing one-third of operating costs at these institutions, as recommended by the Commission since 1995. The additional \$12 million (an 11% increase), with a commitment by the Governor of \$12 million in each of the following three fiscal years is “an extraordinary step toward a more balanced funding partnership,” Mr. Cade said.

The chairman said that earmarking for performance-based funding 1% of the operating aid allocated to each two- and four-year public institution will improve accountability and enhance quality.

Many of these recommendations, and others supporting various aspects of the higher education budget, address funding needs the Commission identified in its Budget Policy Statement. Recognizing that all needs cannot be met, Mr. Cade requested consideration of two additional priorities the Commission considers important to preserving access, affordability, and quality. He pointed to the significant contribution of New Jersey’s 14 independent colleges and universities with a public mission and urged the appropriations committees to provide a \$2 million increase as a step toward the total \$7 million necessary to bring these institutions to the prescribed statutory funding level. Mr. Cade noted that the independent sector was the only one not slated for increased funding.

Mr. Cade also called for \$10.5 million in additional funding for the senior public institutions, for a total increase of 3.1%. He recommended delaying the movement of fringe benefits to institutional budgets until the responsibility for collective bargaining is assigned to the institutions. This delay will make \$6 million more in discretionary funds available to the senior public institutions this year. With an additional \$4.5 million for the operating budgets, the Commission hopes that tuition increases at the senior public institutions can be held to the rate of inflation.

Mr. Cade noted that the state’s contribution to institutional revenue plays a pivotal role in keeping public institutions affordable. He said the Commission believes additional state operating aid is necessary to avoid driving tuition even further beyond the desired one-third share of institutional revenues.

Mr. Cade said the Commission also sees the need for greater institutional cost containment, augmented by increased revenues from gifts and grants, particularly at the research universities, which are making strides in this area.

“Our concern continues to be providing a higher education system that fulfills its responsibility to serve the needs of the state and its citizens. Our colleges and universities are critical to New Jersey’s quality of life, its economic well-being, and its ability to respond to the demands of the 21st century. For these reasons, the state’s ongoing investment in higher education is essential,” Mr. Cade concluded.

### **Commission Awards Grants For 15 College Bound Programs**

The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education in April awarded grants to 15 New Jersey colleges and universities for precollege enrichment programs that help at-risk urban students complete high school and pursue college-level study in the sciences, mathematics, and technology.

The \$2.9 million College Bound Grant Program, established in 1986, provides on-campus support services, academic classes, and other activities for urban students in grades 6 through 12. The 15 grants to institutions in each sector of New Jersey’s higher education system will enable nearly 2,000 students from the original 30 urban school districts designated as “special needs” to participate in on-campus enrichment programs during the summer and the regular academic year.

“I am extremely pleased that this competitive grant process enabled the Commission on Higher Education to fund five new campus programs and expand College Bound’s presence through New Jersey,” said Alfred Cade, chairman of the Commission.

“With these 15 grants, the College Bound program will continue to help historically underrepresented students finish high school and go on to college,” he said. The Commission and the College Bound Advisory Group will showcase the 15 funded programs at a kick-off event to be held Tuesday, June 2 at 10 a.m. on the campus of the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark.

<b>College Bound Grant Recipients</b>	
<b>Burlington County College</b>	<b>Ramapo College of NJ</b>
<b>The College of New Jersey</b>	<b>The Richard Stockton College of NJ</b>
<b>Essex County College</b>	<b>Rowan University</b>
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>Rutgers University</b>
<b>Mercer County Community College</b>	<b>Seton Hall University</b>
<b>New Jersey Institute of Technology</b>	<b>Union County College</b>
<b>Passaic County Community College</b>	<b>William Paterson University of NJ</b>
<b>Seton Hall University</b>	



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