

campus news

“Construction” is still our middle name

The best-laid plans The College adopted 18 months ago for new campus facilities are well under way, but not without some schedule changes, money problems, and controversy.

A key factor, which probably will delay construction of the new library and purchase of some new scientific equipment, concerns the sale of New Jersey state bonds that will help pay for those projects. According to Peter Mills, the capital planning executive, The College hopes the money can be made available before an expected flood of new public school construction makes it likely that building costs will rise by five to 10 percent in another 12 months.

Local public concern over plans for a parking garage that would be close to a residential area along Pennington Road prompted a Ewing Township planning board to suggest building student housing on the site instead. At press time, negotiations for the purchase of two properties needed for the housing were still under way, but it seemed likely



A crane lifts a prefabricated section of concrete floor into place at the new parking garage serving the Travers/Wolfe residential towers.

that construction on the apartments for 586 students would begin this winter. The parking garage planned for that site will be relocated to what are now the lots nearest the track.

Completion of that housing is linked to another project: the enlargement and modernization of the Travers/Wolfe residential towers. Students moving into the new apartments will enable one of the towers to be vacated for the reconstruction.

Here's the status of other elements of the capital improvement program that were to get under way by late 2002:

- **Parking garages**—The new garage at Travers/Wolfe opened on schedule with space for 342 cars. The facility near Forcina Hall, to serve about 290 cars, was slightly behind schedule, but opened in September, with some finishing work still under way. Instead of being built along Pennington Road, a third new garage will be enlarged and relocated near the track, on former lots 6, 7, and 8, where the student apartments had been planned. Temporary parking will be provided across Metzger Drive until the new garage is finished.
- **Crowell Hall**—The three-story science and mathematics building, dedicated in 1964, was demolished this summer.
- **Science Complex**—The 120,000-square-foot brick structure opened for occupancy this fall and now houses mathematics and statistics, chemistry, and physics. On hold due to the delayed state bond sale are completion of the planetarium and observatory in the complex. A planned two-story connecting link between this building and the Biology Building is the focus of discussions over a new design and whether it can be paid for by the bonding company for a former contractor or by The College.
- **New library**—Site preparation for a new Roscoe L. West Library between the present library and Eickhoff Hall began last summer. The demolition of the Alumni Meditation Chapel on a corner of that



The trustees have approved a \$1.8 million budget for construction of a new chapel in the Georgian colonial style of other campus structures. It will seat about 150 in its main meeting space and will have several additional rooms for offices and meetings. Designed by Kitchen and Associates of Collingswood, it will be built by Torchio Brothers of Vineland. Above is a rendition of the front of the chapel. An article on the former Alumni Meditation Chapel is on page 28.

site was expected to be completed in December. It remained uncertain whether the new library could be occupied in the summer of 2004 as has been planned.

- **New chapel**—A new and larger chapel, designed to include several meeting areas, is expected to be erected between Norsworthy and Decker residence halls and open in September 2003.
- **New art building**—Work on the site for this building, south of and facing the Music Building, on what is now a faculty and staff parking lot, probably will not begin until the state bond question is resolved. Detailed planning for the interior of the structure was to begin this fall. Construction was to begin in 2003.

Standard five-course load to be cut to four

What may be the most far-reaching change in the structure of faculty and student work at a state educational institution in many years is now well under way at The College. Announced as a proposal in January 2001, the shift has been endorsed by the faculty, approved by the administration and will be taking effect over the next two years.

The basic goal, according to Provost Stephen R. Briggs, who also is vice president for academic affairs, is to provide students with a richer educational experience.

The essential changes that will be felt by students and faculty are these:

- The course credit hour system will be replaced by a course unit system. Today, students must have 120 or 128 credit hours to graduate, which means about 40 to 42 standard courses. The usual course load is five per semester. Under the new system, 32 to 34 standard courses would be required for graduation; the usual course load would be four per semester.
- Students will be expected to do more work outside of class (more reading, more writing, more independent study, more preparation for class activity). Faculty will be expected to design courses that provide richer learning opportunities and create a culture of high expectations.
- The standard faculty workload per semester would fall from four courses to three. That would enable faculty to spend additional time on their own scholarly and creative pursuits, and to focus more effort on enhancing each student's learning experience with internships, research, and independent study.

While the change has been applauded by most elements of the faculty, student body, and administration, some thorny issues have prompted considerable discussion, and have yet to be entirely resolved. A major question has been how to adapt

the general education requirements, which obligate all students to take a variety of courses that represent a core of the liberal arts experience, to the overall reduction in courses required for graduation. As this was written in August, it was expected the fall semester would bring intensive discussions on that problem as each of the seven academic schools begins to redesign its curriculum. Briggs said he expects the new general education requirements should be agreed upon by the end of this year. He expects some revised general education courses to be presented as pilot programs in the spring of 2003 and to see continued development of those during the year beginning next fall. Freshmen entering in the fall of 2004 ought to be registering for courses under the transformed 32-to-34-course curriculum.

Faculty in some disciplines have expressed frustration at the need to reduce the number of courses required for some majors, arguing that students may graduate without adequate preparation for the job market, or that the accrediting boards may withhold approval of the TCNJ curriculum. The administration has conceded the need for giving students in professional degree programs as much flexibility as possible and has committed to maintaining significant forms of accreditation. However, Briggs also has stressed the need to ensure that students have the chance to take free elective courses, and has challenged the faculty to come up with “creative and distinctive ways to fulfill national standards.”

Other academic changes

Based on declining student interest and national trends, The College took steps this year to reduce the number of master’s degree programs being offered. The Board of Trustees in June approved an administration request to discontinue programs leading to a Master of Arts in Teaching Health, MA in Audiology, MA in Music, and the MEd and MAT in Music Education.

Provost Briggs told the board the recommendations for discontinuance had been fully discussed with the relevant academic departments, and that at every level of the review process the recommendations supported discontinuance.

The trustees also approved offering a new academic minor in Middle East Studies that will, according to the proposal, “provide students with the opportunity to become proficient in Arabic or Hebrew and to focus on historical, political, socio-cultural, and economic issues related to the Middle East.” To be taught by faculty from the history, political science, and modern languages departments, it will be required for students majoring in International Studies with a concentration in the Middle East.

Rev. Wayne R. Griffith '81 joins TCNJ board

The Rev. Wayne R. Griffith, the newest member of TCNJ’s board of trustees, would like to be known for having a “tough mind and a tender heart,” and his background suggests it is a fair description. He combines the skills needed to be a full-time Baptist minister with those of a real estate developer and financial analyst.

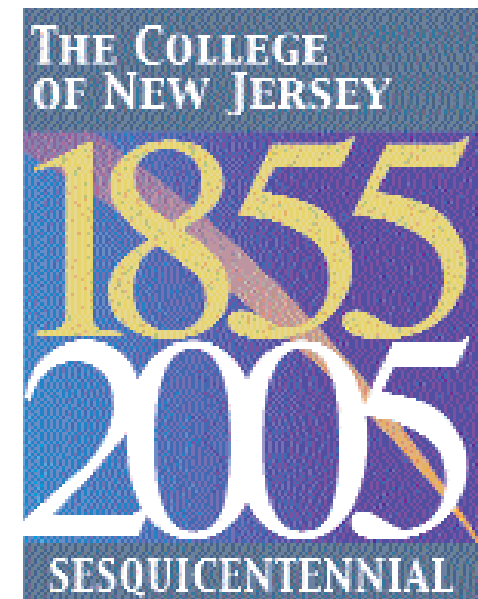


Graduation came a little more slowly for Griffith than is usual. He was 24 when he earned his degree in 1981, after years of night classes taken while working as a real estate salesman, a loan officer with Capital State Bank in Trenton, and a community service specialist with the U.S. Bureau of the Census. In the years following, he held a series of jobs in state government: a year as an assistant planner for the state Department of Human Services and 13 years in the state Department of Community Affairs, three as a program analyst and 10 as a housing development specialist.

In 1997 he helped form Griffith and Grace Consulting, a Trenton firm that specializes in helping private and faith-based institutions find financial support for development projects. Two years later he organized the Concerned Pastors Economic Development Corporation, of which he is president and CEO. The firm is now developing commercial properties in the Sovereign Bank Arena area off Broad Street in Trenton, as well as 50 townhouse units for market rate and moderate income customers elsewhere in the city.

All through these years, during college and later, Griffith has been a Baptist minister. For 14 years he served St. Phillips Baptist Church in Hamilton Township, and since 1992 he has been pastor of the First Baptist Church of Pennington. Gradually he has been pursuing a master’s of divinity degree at Philadelphia Bible University in Langhorne, PA, where he also teaches some courses. Among other associations, he serves on the boards of the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital Foundation, the Mercer County Community College Foundation, and the executive committee of the New Jersey Boy Scouts of America.

Rev. Griffith, who turns 47 this year, lives with his wife, Joanne, on Hawk Road in Lawrence Township. Their daughter just graduated with a nursing degree from the University of Virginia.



The official logo for our 150th celebration in 2004–05.

Our 150th is around the corner

The 2004–05 academic year will be dedicated to celebrating The College’s 150th anniversary—its sesquicentennial. Already in the planning stages are a Founders’ Day Festival, a Sesquicentennial Ball, concerts, lectures, exhibits, and sporting events.

In September, President R. Barbara Gitenstein introduced the sesquicentennial logo to the campus community. The design will appear on all publications and merchandise associated with the celebration and will be printed on college-wide materials during the sesquicentennial year. The logo design highlights the years 1855, the year The College was founded as the New Jersey State Normal School, and 2005, The College’s 150th year.

The Sesquicentennial Planning Committee has established a Web site at <http://150years.tcnj.edu>. The site is a source of up-to-date information about the celebration and the place to go to get involved. Visitors to the site may use online forms to make suggestions for events, volunteer to host an event, or share a personal memory about The College.