

May 2, 2003

TO: Participants in Leadership Institute

FROM: Karen Schermerhorn

SUBJECT: My Project – Second Interim Report

PROJECT TITLE: Introducing Community College Students to the process of lobbying for increased community college funding

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE FACING THE COLLEGE: The College is severely under funded.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT: Community College students are uniquely capable of explaining the importance of a community college to their educational prospects and to their futures. I would like to integrate these first-hand accounts into the lobbying process to provide a “spark” that will motivate legislators and/or the newly elected Governor or his staff people to enact a major funding increase for community colleges in Pennsylvania.

ADVANTAGE TO STUDENTS: With increased state funding, community college students should need to pay less frequent, and smaller, tuition increases. “Access” to the College is a key part of the College’s mission.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT: I limited my project to three southeastern Pennsylvania community colleges, Bucks County Community College, Montgomery County Community College, and Community College of Philadelphia. I worked with the Presidents of the AFT faculty locals at these two colleges: Blaine Greenfield, President, Bucks County Community College Federation of Teachers, and Rhoda McFadden, President, Montgomery County Community College Faculty Federation, as well as with Patricia Halpin-Murphy, Director of Government Relations, Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers.

So that these conversations between students and legislators and/or the Governor or his staff people could occur without significant expenditure, I invited, and suggested that the Presidents of the other two AFT locals invite, students from our respective campuses to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Faculty Coalition Conference, an annual conference held in the Spring of each year, which faculty union leaders were already planning to attend. The Conference was held this year on Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26.

I consulted with Blaine Greenfield and Rhoda McFadden as they identified students from their campuses. Jenavia Thompson-Weaver identified four students from Community College of Philadelphia who were interested in attending this Conference and in finding

ways to increase funding for community colleges: David Branch, newly-elected 1st Vice President of SGA; Sonja Claxton, newly-elected President of SGA; Davorka Sabljak, President of Phi Theta Kappa; and Aura Townsend, outgoing 1st Vice President of SGA.

I held informational meetings with the students on April 2, April 9, and April 17; in addition, Sonja Claxton came to Harrisburg on Higher Ed Day, April 15. My goal was to familiarize the students with the basis of community college funding so they would be able to be knowledgeable participants in conversations with legislators. I gave each student a copy of my proposal, and the following information on community college funding:

- Does Pennsylvania Invest Adequately in Its Community Colleges? A State Benchmarking Analysis, Keystone Research Center, June, 2000;
- Stephen M. Curtis, "Pennsylvania's Community Colleges Seek a More Forceful Voice," *Trustee Quarterly* [undated]; and
- Excerpts from 2002-2003 Fiscal Year Budget, Community College of Philadelphia.

We reviewed the level of state funding per capita in Pennsylvania and in other states. I noted that Pennsylvania's ranking (45th) creates upward pressure on tuition, making it harder for students to attend. The students had already been informed that CCP's tuition will increase by \$3 per credit on 7/1/03, and that CCP's technology fee will also increase by \$3 per credit on the same date. We came up with a few questions that a student in such a situation might well ask a state legislator.

Three of the students attended the Conference on Saturday, April 26, from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. The first workshop, "Higher Education: Issues on the Horizon," was a review by Gabriela Gomez, Senior Associate, Department of Legislation, American Federation of Teachers, of current administration proposals for federal funding of higher education, including Pell Grants. All three students asked questions about the proposals for cutting back on various forms of federal funding for higher education, including proposals for limiting the size of Pell grants. One student asked what she could do draw other students' attention to this problem and asked Ms. Gomez whether she was available to come to CCP to make a presentation before a group of students. (Ms. Gomez said she would be glad to come to CCP). The students participated in a small group discussion on the desirability of increasing opportunities for PHEAA loans for students attending expensive private colleges when other students were being denied any college education because community college tuitions are rising.

The second session focused on state issues: "The New Administration: What is the Outlook for Higher Education?" State Representative James Roebuck, Jr. (D-Phila.) and State Senator Joe Conti (R-Bucks) made short presentations and responded to questions. I had introduced all three students to Rep. Roebuck and Senator Conti before this session.

One student asked Senator Conti how he handled community colleges' requests for additional funds when not everyone in his district attended a community college. Students had an opportunity to hear faculty union leaders ask the legislators many questions, for example, on the desirability of large PHEAA increases each year when other sectors of higher education are being cut, on how institutions can be given incentives to keep tuition increases low, and on the general status of the state budget process this year.

In addition to encouraging the CCP students to participate in the discussion, I introduced them to the students from Bucks County Community College and Montgomery County Community College. One of the students from Montgomery County Community College was an outgoing student government officer, but he agreed to forward the names of the new SGA officers at Montgomery County CC to us at CCP so we can maintain contact during the year.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL FOR EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT: I said, at the outset, that I would consider the project a success if legislators indicated that they had learned from the students more about the importance of community colleges. I said I would try to determine whether this was true from follow up letters and conversations.

REVISED PROPOSAL FOR EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT: I now realize that this proposal for evaluating the project may have been too narrow. The students' reactions to the workshops at the Conference have helped me to see that there are many, broader goals to be realized from encouraging students to be active. For example, one of the students who, as an SGA officer, is responsible for placing students on Standing Committees, called me this week to find out what topics these committees discuss, when and where they meet, and who chairs each committee so that she can involve other students in campus governance. Another example: at the end of the Conference, the students also indicated an interest in organizing a forum around Pell grants, and I said I would help them in planning this. There will be other opportunities to build on the political information the students gained at the Conference. Thus, I now believe a more realistic standard for evaluating this project would be tallying the number of contacts I have during the coming year with these students as they develop their own leadership qualities. They are already student leaders; there is a sense in which I am running my own mini-leadership institute for these three students by encouraging them to develop their skills within the Community College governance structure and in the national and state political arena.

SHARING THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT: Each year, I am involved in planning the Pennsylvania Higher Education Faculty Coalition Conference and Higher Education Lobby Day at CCP, and will try to be sure that students are involved in future Conferences and Lobby Days. I will write up accounts of the Conference for the Faculty Federation's Newsletter, for the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers newspaper, The Advocate, and will notify James O'Neill, education reporter for the Inquirer, of my project, for a possible article.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH RESULTS

1. Higher Education in Pennsylvania is severely under funded.

* Pennsylvania rankings:

Appropriations of State Tax Funds for Operating Expenses of Higher Education per \$1000 Personal Income, FY 2002– Pennsylvania ranks 44th.

Appropriations of State Tax Funds for Operating Expenses of Higher Education per capita, FY 2002 – Pennsylvania ranks 45th.

Source: Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University

(<http://coe.ilstu.edu/grapevine>)

2. State Support for Community Colleges in Pennsylvania is inequitable when compared with state support other higher education.

* “Pennsylvania ranks 6th lowest measured by per capita state appropriations (Figure 3). Pennsylvania appropriates \$11 per capita for community colleges compared to the national average of \$33 In state appropriations for the operating expenses of all higher education, Pennsylvania actually ranks even lower – 47th (as reported at www.coe.ilstu.edu/grapevine). However, Pennsylvania state per capita appropriations for all higher education are three quarters of the national level compared to one third for community colleges.”

Source: Stephen A. Herzenberg, Does Pennsylvania Invest Adequately in Its Community Colleges? A State Benchmarking Analysis (Harrisburg: Keystone Research Center, June, 2000).

* “Despite these valuable contributions [of community colleges to worker training and workforce development], a November 2000 ECS report on state funding for community colleges found the average expenditure for each annualized student FTE (full-time equivalent) at community and technical colleges was far below the rate at four-year state universities. In Pennsylvania, the average state expenditure per student at community colleges was \$4,813, compared with \$11,817 at four-year state colleges and universities.”

Source: Stephen M. Curtis, "Pennsylvania's Community Colleges Seek More

Forceful Voice," *Trustee Quarterly* (undated).

3. High tuition discourages prospective students from attending community colleges.

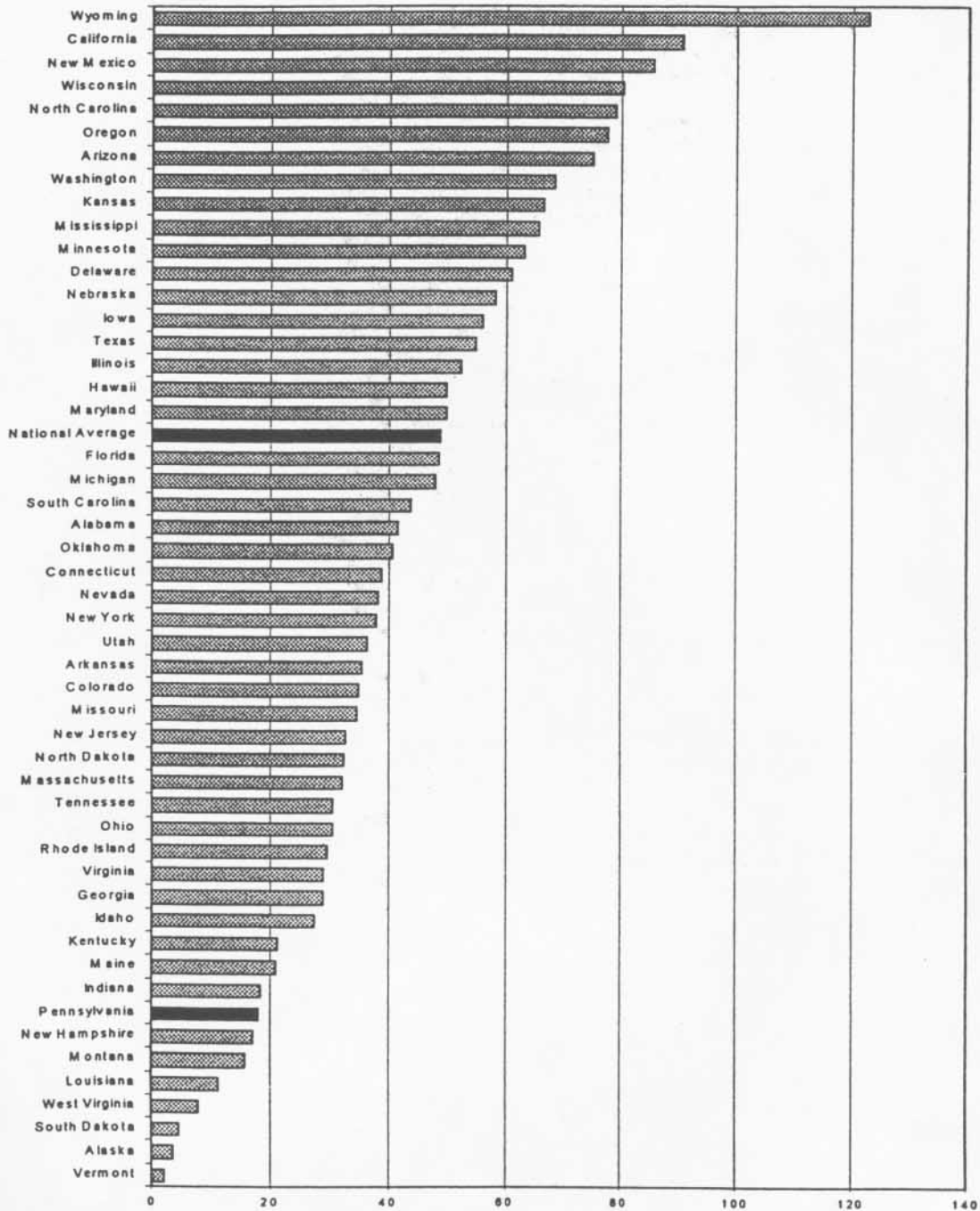
* "[A] report, *Losing Ground*, released by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, finds that public higher education has become less affordable for all but the wealthiest Americans. Colleges and universities increase their tuition particularly during economic downturns. The report assesses the affordability of higher education at two- and four- year institutions by comparing tuition with family income and finds that tuition today requires an ever-larger share of most American families' annual income Report officials . . . concluded that high tuition is a major factor in poor families' low rates of college attendance. Joni Finney, vice president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, said they are particularly concerned about the trend of tuition increase in community colleges. 'Two-year colleges have always been a point of access (to education) for the country. When you raise tuition, that access is generally threatened.'"

Source: Katherine Shek, "Low-Income Students Lose Ground in the Face of

Ongoing Tuition Hikes," *Community College Times*, May 15, 2002.
(<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>)

June, 2000

Figure 3. State Appropriations for Community College per Capita: 1996-97



Source: Table 2.

Dollars per Capita

TABLE 21

**PATTERNS OF FUNDING FOR THE COLLEGE'S
OPERATING BUDGET FROM CITY, STATE AND STUDENTS**

Year	Total Comprehensive Operating Expenses (000)	City Operating Revenue (000)	City Operating Revenue Percent Expense	State Operating Revenue (000)	State Operating Revenue Percent Expense	City and State Combined Percent	Tuition and Technology Fee Revenue (000) **	Tuition and Technology Fee Revenue Percent Expense	City, State and Tuition Revenue as Percent of Comprehensive Expense
77-78	\$18,331	\$6,367	34.7%	\$6,673	36.4%	71.1%	\$5,439	29.7%	100.8%
78-79	\$19,520	\$7,310	37.4%	\$6,427	32.9%	70.4%	\$5,768	29.5%	99.9%
79-80	\$22,025	\$8,710	39.5%	\$6,762	30.7%	70.2%	\$6,595	29.9%	100.2%
80-81	\$23,142	\$9,063	39.2%	\$7,486	32.3%	71.5%	\$6,871	29.7%	101.2%
81-82	\$26,072	\$9,494	36.4%	\$7,953	30.5%	66.9%	\$8,216	31.5%	98.4%
82-83	\$28,189	\$10,690	37.9%	\$7,897	28.0%	65.9%	\$9,742	34.6%	100.5%
83-84	\$31,306	\$9,822	31.4%	\$11,080	35.4%	66.8%	\$10,184	32.5%	99.3%
84-85	\$34,773	\$10,151	29.2%	\$11,035	31.7%	60.9%	\$9,804	28.2%	89.1%
85-86	\$36,617	\$11,043	30.2%	\$12,301	33.6%	63.8%	\$10,332	28.2%	92.0%
86-87	\$37,917	\$12,264	32.3%	\$12,200	32.2%	64.5%	\$11,059	29.2%	93.7%
87-88	\$39,163	\$12,194	31.1%	\$12,277	31.3%	62.5%	\$11,924	30.4%	92.9%
88-89	\$40,833	\$12,286	30.1%	\$14,129	34.6%	64.7%	\$12,835	31.4%	96.1%
89-90	\$43,940	\$12,379	28.2%	\$14,841	33.8%	61.9%	\$14,454	32.9%	94.8%
90-91	\$47,266	\$12,497	26.4%	\$16,238	34.4%	60.8%	\$15,557	32.9%	93.7%
91-92	\$52,649	\$12,913	24.5%	\$18,881	35.9%	60.4%	\$19,178	36.4%	96.8%
92-93	\$57,384	\$12,630	22.0%	\$21,000	36.6%	58.6%	\$22,703	39.6%	98.2%
93-94	\$61,112	\$12,326	20.2%	\$20,925	34.2%	54.4%	\$23,136	37.9%	92.3%
94-95	\$62,139	\$14,102	22.7%	\$21,244	34.2%	56.9%	\$21,482	34.6%	91.5%
95-96	\$64,283	\$15,811	24.6%	\$22,181	34.5%	59.1%	\$22,369	34.8%	93.9%
96-97	\$64,561	\$16,019	24.8%	\$22,679	35.1%	59.9%	\$23,452	36.3%	96.3%
97-98	\$65,563	\$16,394	25.0%	\$23,620	36.0%	61.0%	\$23,899	36.5%	97.5%
98-99	\$71,549 #	\$17,583	24.6%	\$24,558	34.3%	58.9%	\$25,985 *	36.3%	95.2%
99-00	\$70,680	\$17,414	24.6%	\$23,469	33.2%	57.8%	\$28,064 *	39.7%	97.5%
00-01	\$75,746	\$17,881	23.6%	\$26,724	35.3%	58.9%	\$29,435 *	38.9%	97.7%

NOTE: The State definition of operating expense excludes leased building and equipment expense and operating activities for which the College receives special funding. In this analysis, these items are included in gross operating expense. As a result student revenues are lower on a lower percentage basis than they would be if the State definition of operating expense were used.

Includes the recognition of the current value of retirement incentive payments (\$1,918,354) that will be expended in future years through 6/30/2003 as required by GASB 74. Actual expenditures during fiscal year 1998-99 were \$371,005.

* Includes revenues from PhAME and CSX programs.

** A Technology Fee per credit hour was introduced in Fiscal Year 1996-97.

*From CCP Annual Statistical Compendium
1999-2000*