



Inclusion Through Diversity

Marcia E. Lynch, Public Information Officer
607-274-5555, Office
607-227-2152, Cell
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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **February 19, 2013** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

TC3 President Dr. Carl Haynes Briefs Legislature on State of the College

In his annual State of the College message to the County Legislature, Dr. Carl Haynes said he is optimistic about the future of Tompkins Cortland Community College in continuing to effectively serve the people of its communities. But he also expressed concerns about significant challenges that TC3, and most other community colleges, face in the near-term that affect their ability to fulfill their mission.

Dr. Haynes reported that both fall and spring semester enrollment at TC3 declined by about 6%, stemming primarily from higher academic standards at the College and subtle changes restricting outside financial aid. He said the College has adjusted this year's budget to reduce spending by \$500,000—and will seek approval to use \$250,000 in reserve funds to help fill that gap. Among potential impact from the Governor's budget, the president said that, while base aid is proposed to remain steady (although not the increased level that colleges need), he is especially concerned about a potential threat to base aid for career programs—that would require that the College annually document that such programs meet valid current employment needs as specified by local Regional Economic Development Council or Department of Labor reports to qualify for continued base aid funding. The Governor's budget also proposes a \$3 million competitive performance-based funding initiative, with the metrics and timetable for allocation are unclear. Dr. Haynes noted that the College has undertaken many initiatives to improve graduation rates and other student outcomes—with higher academic and financial aid standards, monitoring and analysis, educational programs, and academic support services all combine to maintain a “strong ongoing focus on student success” at TC3.

The president expressed concern that there may be a “disconnect” between public and political discourse and the role of comprehensive community colleges, such as TC3, and that the focus in the Governor's budget on “training” focuses on only one part of community colleges' mission, neglecting preparation of students for successful transfer to four-year colleges and serving local employers with noncredit training programs for existing employees—a focus he said risks “an inappropriate narrowing” of the colleges' overall mission. And he questions the need for additional accountability requirements for community colleges beyond existing reporting and assessment of student success, imposed by “well-meaning state and federal agencies,” whose benchmarks often fail to address current college attendance trends, and would add to colleges' administrative burden and cost.

As the College seeks to manage change in a time of a shifting higher education landscape, Dr. Haynes asserts, “I believe that at TC3 we are effectively managing and responding well to these changing dynamics.” Among its achievements, award-winning technology support, within and outside the classroom; a multitude of “lean-office” initiatives to help curtail costs; and a broad range of global initiatives that bring cultural enrichment to the campus and contribute to much-needed financial resources. The president said, “I believe when we look beyond the view out the windshield and look at the radar screen of the future, TC3 will be an essential provider of state of the art educational experiences for our students, we will be effectively serving the needs of area employers and our communities, our enrollments will stabilize—perhaps grow modestly—and even if those with tendencies to want to micromanage us from afar succeed in their efforts, we'll suck it up, do what we have to do, and prevail.”

Contact: Dr. Carl Haynes, President, Tompkins Cortland Community College, 844-8211.

Industrial Development Agency Appointments Approved

The Legislature, by a vote of 9-3, approved Chair Martha Robertson's appointments to the County Industrial Development Agency. (Legislators Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Kathy Luz Herrera, and Dooley Kiefer voted no; Legislators Carol Chock, Frank Proto, and Pam Mackesey were excused.) Reappointed to one-year terms were Legislators Nathan Shinagawa, Jim Dennis, Will Burbank, and Robertson, who will continue as chair of the IDA. Appointed for two-year terms, as at-large members, were Larry Baum, who will continue as representative of Tompkins County Area Development, and Ithaca architect Grace Chiang, who is new to the IDA. City of Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick, appointed by resolution last year, will continue as an at-large member until the completion of his two-year term.

Legislators McBean-Clairborne and Luz Herrera both expressed concern about what they view as a lack of transparency in the process in seeking candidates for the at-large seat. They urged a more open process be used for such positions in the future.

Contact: Martha Robertson, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 272-0584

Legislature Approves Sheriff's Office Grant Funding

The Legislature, without dissent, accepted two grants awarded to the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office—a more than \$60,000 New York State Homeland Security grant to support a countywide law enforcement information security risk assessment and purchase of secure Wi-Fi equipment for mobile connectivity for patrol vehicles, and an \$8,000 State Child Passenger Safety Seat to support the office's Child Passenger Seat Program. Legislators also approved appropriation in 2013 of past awarded funds, including Homeland Security funding and a Legislative Award received last year.

Contact: Sheriff Ken Lansing, 257-1345

Among other business:

- County Administrator Joe Mareane said he is initiating a formal examination of the County's livable wage policy, which will begin with constructive discussion of the policy with the Legislature's Government Operations and Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee's next week. Questions recently raised regarding wage levels paid under a County contract have sparked discussion about whether the County's current policy should be strengthened and, perhaps, made mandatory. Milton Webb and Stanley McPherson, who have worked under contract with ReCommunity at the County Solid Waste and Recycling Center again addressed the Legislature tonight, speaking in strong support of strengthening of the County's living wage policy so that workers who need it can be receive the living wage.
- Administrator Mareane presented Legislators with a report consolidating some of the accomplishments of County departments during 2012, noting that a number of these accomplishments were achieved in partnership with other departments. The presentation may be viewed online at the County web at <http://www.tompkins-co.org/ctyadmin>.
- Deputy County Administrator and County Compliance Officer Paula Younger presented Legislators the 2012 County Compliance year-end report.

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