



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **March 7, 2017** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

President Haynes Delivers Final “State of the College” Report

Tompkins Cortland Community College President Dr. Carl Haynes provided a sobering report to the Tompkins County Legislature, as he delivered his final “State of the College” message, the final annual briefing that he will provide the Legislature before his retirement at the end of this academic year. While the College is facing challenges, President Haynes assured that the Community College is fully aware and, through reasoned strategic planning, is responding to meet these new realities.

President Haynes said the College is addressing “brutal facts” affecting the College—among them, declining State support for community colleges (with a per-FTE base aid just \$22 higher than nine years ago); limited County Sponsor support; and enrollment decline (a nearly 12% decline in total enrollment and 30% decrease in core enrollment over the past five years, with the College experiencing its largest one-year decline this year.) Driving the enrollment decline, he said, are “a perfect storm of concerns,” including restrictions on financial aid, increased competition from four-year State schools, effects from an improving economy, and media coverage questioning the value of higher education. Other pressures include the increased outside demand for accountability and assessment, as well as the needs for increased use of technology and for curriculum changes to respond to student interest and employment needs.

Stressing the vital importance of retaining current students, President Haynes described four strategic priorities for the College, as were established in 2015: Redesigning the transition and first semester experience to increase the success for more students; providing ongoing support for high-need students; identifying key marketing strategies to strengthen the College experience in ways that will resonate with current and prospective students; and strengthening the collection, sharing, and use of meaningful information to guide planning and resource allocation. Among the many achievements noted are significant progress on the College’s new Child Care Center, with \$1.5 million for construction included in the State budget and an endowment campaign well underway, and involvement by Computer Graphics students in numerous community projects.

“Higher education is in a very challenging time with reduced public support and for many sectors we are enrollment stressed,” President Haynes concluded. “We are an extremely labor intensive enterprise, which makes reducing costs/overhead by use of technology or automation very limiting. Enrollment pressures at community colleges are particularly severe...These challenges will likely continue in the foreseeable future,” which he said will required continued adaptation to financial realities, while striving to achieve continued student success.

“Tompkins Cortland Community College embraces and indeed manifests a culture of creativity and innovation; adaptability in meeting our challenges; careful planning that relies on transparency and engagement of all members of our faculty and staff; and an extraordinary talented faculty, administrative staff, and support staff. It is the collective synergy of all these factors, in spite of the challenges we face, that will continue Tompkins Cortland, your Community College, on its journey to greatness.”

Legislature Chair Michael Lane called President Haynes' presentation "bittersweet," since it is the last such message he will provide to the Legislature. Many Legislators recognized and thanked the president for his leadership, service, and guidance over many years.

Contact: Tompkins Cortland Community College President Dr. Carl Haynes, 844-8211; Michael Lane, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 844-8440.

Legislature Authorizes Acceptance of State Shared-Services Grant

The Legislature, without dissent (Legislator Jim Dennis was excused), authorized acceptance of a more than \$600,000 shared-services grant awarded to the Tompkins County Clerk's Office from the New York State Department of State Municipal Restructuring Fund. The grant funds will fund further extension of the Office's municipal records digitization and storage program, partnering with Cortland Count and the Cortland County Towns of Harford and Virgil to further expand use of the Tompkins County Electronic Document Management System. The funds will support additional Laserfiche software licensing to accommodate the additional users, scanning of the additional records (using Challenge Industries as the vendors, and upgrade and expansion of the County's data storage capacity, protections, and fiber connection between Tompkins and Cortland data centers.

Contact: Maureen Reynolds, Tompkins County Clerk, 274-5442; Dan Klein, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 272-7582.

Among other business,

The Legislature discussed, but ultimately did not approve, a member-filed resolution advanced by Legislator Dooley Kiefer, "in recognition of leadership by local governments in shared services initiatives and the loss of State aid over the past three decades." The measure would have expressed concern about the latest proposed government efficiency proposal and again state the view that unfunded mandates are the biggest contributor to local property taxes. After discussion, the measure failed to win support by a vote of 5-8—with Legislators Dan Klein, Peter Stein, Anna Kelles, Will Burbank, and Carol Chock voting in favor; Legislator Rich John was excused.

County Finance Director Rick Snyder reported on one-month sales tax receipts for January, which at this very early stage show an 8.32% increase in receipts compared to January 2016. While he remarked that the month would appear to be the best January on record, officials caution this is only a preliminary snapshot, and future adjusted first-quarter results will provide a better measure of County sales tax.

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