Good Morning Chairman, members of the Committee. I am very grateful for the opportunity to provide you with comments today. Because there are so many issues to discuss and a number of colleagues who will be offering comments, my remarks will be brief. I of course look forward to responding to any questions you wish answered either in response to these comments or on any other matter of interest to the Committee.

From 2003 to 2013, TCNJ, like most of our colleague institutions, grew enrollment. We all grew because of robust demand for enrollment in our institutions. Specifically, TCNJ grew our freshman class nearly 20%. This institutional decision was made with full awareness that in the reality of funding for higher education in New Jersey, growth would necessarily result in less state operating aid per full time equivalent (FTE) student. But we also knew that, in the absence of new state resources, growing enrollment meant growing tuition revenue and thus helped us with closing budget gaps.

Because we also felt a deep obligation to these students, we simultaneously committed to increasing our 4-year graduation rate. Improved completion rates increases capacity for the institution and affordability for both the student and state. During those same 10 years, TCNJ’s 4-year graduation rate rose over 10%.

Today, as we discuss how we fund higher education in the state, student success must be part of the equation. I am concerned that too often the discussion about funding methodology is oversimplified by looking solely at enrollment numbers. Of course, we must be concerned about access; we must be concerned about enrollment. But if we are not also concerned about attainment or access to success, then we are approaching the state’s needs in a short-sighted fashion.

A forward-looking funding rationale should account for institution size, institution type, FTE, degree offerings, attainment and appropriately articulated state goals.

While we have had this discussion here before, I believe we are better positioned today to take up the challenge of developing a funding rationale. As you know the New Jersey Presidents’ Council partnered with the Secretary of Higher Education to commission an examination of the financing of higher education in the state (I expect Dr. Rose will elaborate on that).

As we develop this rationale, we should make comparisons between institutions and sectors and we should do so with awareness of what is happening across the nation. When these comparisons are made, however, we must make sure that we are including all state investment in institutions, not merely the direct appropriation, but also for instance the state investment in fringe benefits. The commissioned report will provide the foundational information needed to help us proceed with what promises to be a complex process.

I believe the higher education community is up to that challenge. One of the most dangerous unintentional consequences of a simplistic formula for funding higher education in New Jersey would be a threat to one of the great successes of New Jersey higher education—the diversity of missions that allows our institutions to serve the state’s diverse needs and populations.

With my colleagues, I look forward to working with you on our collective effort to provide quality higher education to the people of New Jersey.

Thank you.