



**Member Colleges and
Universities**

Bloomfield College
Caldwell University
Centenary University
College of Saint Elizabeth
Drew University
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Felician University
Georgian Court University
Monmouth University
Princeton University
Rider University
Saint Peter's University
Seton Hall University
Stevens Institute of Technology

**Statement to Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in New Jersey
May 9, 2019**

Good morning.

Thank you, Chairman Sarlo and members of the committee, for the opportunity to present some brief remarks on behalf of the fourteen non-profit public mission independent colleges and universities in New Jersey. I am Gene Cornacchia, president of Saint Peter's University located in Jersey City.

The non-profit, public mission independent colleges and universities are an important component of the higher education system in the state. In addition to providing higher educational opportunities for students, we also have a significant economic impact estimated at \$4billion/annually; are playing a vital role in the advancement of the innovation economy and providing the expertise needed to support the innovation economy.

Our independent colleges and universities provide additional high-quality choices for students to continue their education in New Jersey at an institution that best fits their educational needs including program offerings, location, size and culture. The combination of state and federal student aid for those that qualify as well as the significant institutional aid that our institutions provide allows for an affordable choice.

What is a surprise to many, overall our sector's students have the same racial, ethnic and economic demographics of the students attending the public sector four year colleges, and of the state population. The myth of independent colleges being predominantly white upper middle class is just that -- a myth. Some of our independent institutions like Felician University, are the most diverse in the state in racial, ethnic and economic demographics.

We all know that a college degree enhances the lifetime earnings of the student and our sector is providing a significant percentage of the degrees in the vital areas of our economy. Our independent colleges are producing 41% of all undergraduate and graduate Engineering degrees; 34% of all undergrad and graduate Math degrees and 31% of all undergrad and graduate Nursing degrees. For advanced degrees where much of the research that could lead to the "next big thing," our independent colleges and universities are producing 64% of the advanced degrees in Physical Sciences; 68% of the advanced degrees in Chemistry and 48% of the advanced degrees in Computer Sciences.

Our institutions are already working on jump starting the innovation economy that will hopefully lead to economic growth for the state and more prosperity for our citizens. We are also a vital part of achieving the state goal of "65% by 2025".

For example, the Princeton Innovation Center BioLabs is a new joint venture with Princeton University and BioLabs to provide space for startup companies in the life sciences area. Some of you saw firsthand at our legislative conference the work being done there. The Stevens Venture Center is a technology incubator that has spawned several thriving tech companies in FinTech, in biomedical devices, and in cybersecurity.

The new Hackensack Meridian **School** of Medicine at **Seton Hall** is also an exciting new opportunity to educate the next generation of doctors that are needed to support our society.

Saint Peter's Ignite Institute; Felician University's Lenke Family Innovation Lab; the College of St. Elizabeth's data analytics and media design and management program; and FDU's Rothman Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship are some other examples of programs and centers that are promoting technology innovation, commercialization and entrepreneurship and preparing students to contribute in substantial ways to New Jersey's innovation economy by offering certificates, stackable credentials and degree programs in every modality conceivable – on ground, online – synchronous or asynchronous, hybrid, etc.

The success of the State in growing the innovation ecosystem is also dependent on producing those graduates that help market these innovations, provide business leadership and knowledge, provide the legal representation and all other areas that will support these businesses as they grow. Our independent colleges and universities are part of this ecosystem – an ecosystem that depends on the health and vitality of each of us.

In addition to providing opportunity for students to continue their education in New Jersey and producing the graduates needed for our workforce; our independent colleges and universities provide an economic benefit of approximately \$4 billion which is a nearly \$4,000 to \$1 return on the limited state support that our colleges and universities receive.

In FY 2018 our independent colleges and universities received only \$1 million in direct state support. New Jersey students who attend our institutions for the 2017-18 academic year were eligible to receive \$113 million of student aid from TAG, EOF and STARS II. This aid provides student CHOICE to attend one of our independent colleges. Our 14 independent colleges and universities will share only \$1 million in operating aid under the proposed FY 2020 budget which is well below the \$16.4 million received in FY 2010 and the \$24 million received prior to the recession in FY 2006.

I leave you with two quotes from the 2010 Kean Commission report on Higher Education that highlight the importance of the independent college sector:

- “Overall, the independent colleges and universities **expand the diversity and choice** afforded to New Jersey's college students, and they have done so for a long time.”
- “New Jersey's independent colleges and universities **serve an important public purpose**. They annually award almost as many baccalaureate degrees and advance degrees – master's, professional, and doctorate – as New Jersey's three public research institutions.”

There are many factors that impact the future of all our colleges and universities and especially smaller independent institutions– trend of less college age students; competition from on-line institutions; and reduction in state support. If we are to remain viable as an option for students to stay in New Jersey rather than going out of state and to provide the educated workforce the state needs, then the State needs to work with our sector.

We are committed to working with Governor Murphy and his Administration and the Legislature as well as the other sectors in higher education to advance higher education in the state.

Thank you.