**Application for the Mildred Dahne Award**

**Department of Accounting & Information Systems-Spring 2010**

The Department of Accounting & Information Systems (hereafter referred to as the department) at The College of New Jersey has established a reputation for excellence during the past quarter century that continues to grow. The department consists of nine faculty members, all engaged in scholarly activity as evidenced by the number of peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations during the past five years.  Students are actively involved with the faculty through student organizations, student competitions, research activity, and the department’s internship program.  The quality of the accounting program was specifically recognized in the 2008 Business Week rankings survey for schools of business. We are proud to apply for the sixth annual Mildred Dahne Award and are providing evidence of **excellence in teaching**, **academic excellence**, and excellence in **student involvement**. We are providing this evidence in accordance with the instructions and criteria specified in the Call for Applications 2009-2010.

**I. Excellence in Teaching and/or Support of Teaching**

When it comes to excellence and innovation in teaching, the accounting faculty is on the forefront of addressing the issues concerning accounting education. The spirit of collaboration and innovation is aptly captured in our writing-intensive capstone course that has a major research emphasis. Developed in keeping with TCNJ’s liberal learning philosophy of helping to “ensure that students learn fundamentals of reasoning, communicating, and living in today's world,” the capstone experience is truly integrative with an eye towards fostering critical thinking. It provides students with an opportunity to ask skeptical questions about how business works and where accounting fits into the big picture. Students are encouraged to question the assumptions that go into financial reports and to challenge them using critical thinking. The accounting faculty has truly brought variety, global perspective, and innovation into accounting education.

Accounting is one of the few disciplines that offer an objective assessment of the knowledge a student gains in college. The CPA exam is a comprehensive, national, uniform exam that tests student knowledge of material covered in an accounting degree program and writing skills. The department has established a national reputation for teaching excellence as evidenced by passing rates of its graduates on the CPA exam. Teaching excellence is further supported by testimonies from students, firms, and the TCNJ Career Center, as well as the department’s efforts in community engaged learning and interdisciplinary activity.

**Evidence of student success**: numerous times during the past twenty years, our students have been ranked among the top ten schools nationally in CPA exam passing rates. For example, in 2003, our students ranked number four in the nation (competing against students from hundreds of business schools) in passing all parts taken for the first time.  In 2006, our students ranked number three and seven in the nation, respectively, on the auditing and regulation parts of the exam. In 2008, TCNJ graduates ranked fifth in the nation on the Financial Accounting and Reporting section of the exam (generally considered to be the most difficult section of the exam) behind Wake Forest, University of Virginia, University of Texas, and Tulane. In New Jersey, TCNJ graduates ranked number one in 2006, 2007 and 2008 (schools with more than 25 candidates) in the percentage of students passing all parts of the exam.  The consistent long-term success of our graduates on the CPA exam has brought national recognition to the department, the school of business and the college and clearly attests to the department’s excellence in teaching.

**Examples of student and recruiter testimonies**: other evidence of the department’s teaching excellence comes from testimonies of previous accounting graduates. TCNJ is a target recruiting school for many national and local firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers and Amper, Politziner & Mattia.  Brendan Gran, a 2008 graduate now employed by Ernst & Young, recently made the following comments on his accounting education at TCNJ: "I wanted to take a moment to thank [...] the accounting faculty for all the hard work you have done building our accounting program at TCNJ. [...] Now that I have been working at EY for about a year, I can tell you with some confidence that TCNJ has put us in a much stronger position than our academic rivals to both pass the [CPA] exam and excel at work. One of my peers from a different school mentioned this to me the other day and I have had members of management offer similar compliments to me over the course of my first year. Please pass this and my thanks along to the other members of the faculty."

Joelle Lyons, the recruiting manager at Amper, Politziner & Mattia (a mid-size public accounting firm) and 2001 TCNJ graduate, testified to the excellence of the department: “TCNJ is currently one of Amper’s top target schools. The high level of regard our firm holds for the department is based on the quality of students that graduate from the program. TCNJ is one of the few schools in the area that supports an internship program during the spring semester. This opportunity allows students to gain valuable experience during the most relevant time for the profession, making them stronger candidates. Additionally, within each entry level class, some of the most successful students with the CPA examination are usually those from TCNJ.”

Steven D. Bromberg, Partner and Lead Recruiting Partner for TCNJ at international CPA firm KPMG LLP, wrote the following: “TCNJ proves to have a strong curriculum, dedicated faculty, and top quality students.  The school continues to enhance its programs to maintain the breadth and depth of education needed for new graduates entering the accounting profession.  TCNJ alumni at KPMG have consistently been rated as strong performers and continue to be highly respected professionals.”

**Relationship with internal and external stakeholders**: The accounting program has been designed to respond to student demand for flexible and innovative options that are aligned with employer expectations in a changing and global business world. Course offerings are scheduled in a way that allows students to take advantage of internship opportunities without falling behind. Students that major or minor in accounting can be confident that the accounting program will help them become skilled professionals.

The department has developed a close working relationship with the Career Center and employers.  Debra Kelly, Associate Director of Career Services, noted the following: “Students majoring in accounting have been highly sought internship and full time employment candidates from the “Big Four,” medium and small CPA firms as well as several Fortune 100 companies.  Employers are aware that TCNJ accounting graduates are recognized for receiving some of the highest CPA exam passing rates for first time candidates.  The accounting department fosters an environment of excellence and serves as a model for other departments.” Each year in May, the department and Office of Career Services host a Round Table Meeting, which brings together faculty, Career Services personnel and firm representatives to discuss recruiting issues, job placement, and current developments in the profession.

The testimonies clearly show the excellence in teaching that has existed for many years and the outstanding achievement of the accounting & information systems faculty.  Courses in the accounting curriculum are constantly updated to reflect changes in accounting and auditing standards and to keep up with emerging issues, such as international accounting standards.  The capstone course in the accounting program focuses on current issues such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and the developing field of forensic accounting.  For non-accounting majors, minors are available in either financial or managerial accounting and the faculty is available for advising.

**Alumni leadership**: several TCNJ alumni have achieved partnership status, the highest level in a public accounting firm and a management and leadership position, another attestation to outstanding teaching.  TCNJ alumni are currently partners at international CPA firms Ernst & Young and PricewaterhouseCoopers, and regional firms WithumSmith+Brown, the Mercadien Group, and J.H. Cohn LLP. Many accounting alumni have generously donated to TCNJ in appreciation of their academic and career preparation.

**Community engaged learning**: for the past five years, students from Dr. Chiang’s cost accounting (ACC 311) classes have been required to do projects outside the classroom with local businesses.  Dr. Chiang also integrated community projects obtained through the Small Business Development Center and Bonner Center into several accounting classes.

**Support of teaching and interdisciplinary activity**: the department assigns mentors to newly hired faculty and takes the mentoring process seriously. Junior faculty members are observed twice each academic year, with a follow-up meeting after the classroom visit. Examples of department faculty interdisciplinary activity are as follows: Dr. Miller has taught *Fundamentals of Accounting for Managers* for over ten years to child care center managers for the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education; Dr. Nigrini is in the process of developing an interdisciplinary course with the Department of Criminal Justice, and Dr. Chiang is currently conducting interdisciplinary research with School of Nursing faculty.

The job placement record of accounting graduates is outstanding, and students continue to be heavily recruited despite the recent recession.  For example, PricewaterhouseCoopers has hired eight TCNJ seniors from the class of 2010 for full time positions. Some accounting graduates go on to obtain advanced degrees in business or law (examples are Harvard Law School, University of Miami Law School and Seton Hall University), and several graduates from recent years are either enrolled in or accepted in doctoral programs in accounting (Rutgers and Temple University).

**II. Academic Excellence**

The Department of Accounting & Information Systems faculty is very productive in scholarly activity, as evidenced by the numerous publications in competitive peer-reviewed journals, paper presentations at conferences and meetings, and media interviews.  Every faculty member is an active researcher. In the past five years the faculty has authored forty-seven publications in peer-reviewed journals and one test bank, many of which are first-authored or sole-authored.   In addition, the faculty has presented thirty-seven papers at regional, national, and international conferences and participated in three media interviews.  The scholarly activity is disciplinary and interdisciplinary, and is evidence that department faculty embrace the teacher-scholar model.

1. Faculty publications in peer-reviewed journals (last 5 years)

Ahlawat,S.    The Journal of American Academy of Business (2006); Advances in Accounting

Behavioral Research (2005)

Braender, L. Journal of Information Systems Education (2009); Management Information Systems for

the Information Age (2007)

Chiang, B.  Advances in Management Accounting, International Journal of Nursing Studies

(2009); Accounting Education: An International Journal (2008); Accounting Education: An

International Journal (2008)

Lafond, A. Business Education Forum, Journal of Accountancy, International Journal of Applied

Management Science (2009); Advances in Accounting Education, Journal of

Accountancy, (2008); Business Education Forum (2007), Journal of Accounting, Ethics &

Public Policy, RMA Journal (2006)

Miller, G. The Journal of Diversity Management (2010); Journal of Government Financial

Management (2006)

Nigrini, M.        Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory (2009); International Journal of Mathematics

and Mathematical Sciences, Journal Of Emerging Technologies in Accounting,

International Journal of Algebra (2008); Mathematical Geology (2007); Journal of

Forensic Accounting (2006): Review of Accounting and Finance, Internal Auditor (2005)

Nouri, H. International Journal of Critical Accounting, Accounting Historian Journal (2009); Journal

of Business and Economic Perspectives, Accounting Educator’s Journal, Critical

Perspective in Accounting (2008); Accounting Education:  An International Journal (2006,

2005); Personal Financial Planning, National Public Accountant Magazine (2006); Global

Perspectives on Accounting Education, Advances in Accounting Education (2005)

Shahid, A.    Journal of Banking Regulation (2009); Journal of Business and Economic Perspectives,

The Accounting Educator’s Journal (2008); Global Perspectives on Accounting

Education (2005)

Wallace, P.  International Journal of Instructional Media (2008, 2005); Journal of Information Systems

Education (2007, 2005); Journal of Educational Computing Research (2007); Journal of

Information Technology Education (2005)

1. Faculty presentations of papers at conferences (last 5 years)

Ahlawat, S.  Annual Meeting of the American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences (2010);

UCD Quinn School of Business, Ireland (2008); Annual Meeting of the European Accounting Association (2006); Hawaii International Conference on Business (2005)

Braender, L. NJEdge.Net Conference (2008)

Chiang, B. American Accounting Association Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting (2008, 2008, 2007)

Lafond, A. American Accounting Association National Meeting (2008, 2007, 2006); American

Accounting Association Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting (2009, 2008, 2007, 2006);

Northeast Business & Economics Association Annual Conference (2008).

Miller, G. American Accounting Association National Meeting (2009); American Accounting

Association Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting (2009, 2007, 2005); Academic Business World

International Conference (2008); Association of Government Accountants 55th Annual

Professional Development Conference (2006); American Society of Business and

Behavioral Sciences (2005)

Nigrini, M.  Information Systems and Control Association: Oceania CACS (Control and

Security Conference) (2007); Institute of Internal Auditors (2007, 2005); International

Association of Airline Internal Auditors: 14th Annual Conference (2005)

Nouri, H.  American Accounting Association Annual Meeting (2008, 2008); Critical perspectives in

Accounting Conference (2008, 2008); AAA Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting (2007, 2006,

2006)

Shahid, A. Mid-Atlantic Meeting of the American Accounting Association (2009); American

Accounting Association Annual Meeting (2008)

Wallace, P. PBL National Leadership Conference (2006)

1. Faculty media interviews (last 5 years)

Nigrini, M. Radio Lab on WNYC (2009); BBC 4 (2005, 2005)

**III. Student Involvement**

Accounting students are actively involved in the daily activities of the department and accounting program through student organizations, collaboration with faculty on research, the department’s internship program and student advising, student competitions, and other activities.

**Student organizations:** student organizations in the department are the Institute of Management Accountants Student Chapter (IMASC), Beta Alpha Psi (BAP), the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), and Phi Beta Lambda/Future Business Leaders of America (PBL).

IMASC has been in existence for over twenty years and students are actively involved with Dr. Shahid, faculty advisor, in planning and organizing activities.  Examples of these activities are an annual dessert social held in conjunction with the Princeton Chapter of IMA and a volleyball game with employees of WithumSmith+Brown, a CPA firm that employs several TCNJ accounting graduates.

In 2006, students approached the department and requested assistance in applying for a chapter of the BAP national honor society. This request was immediately accepted by the department and Dr. Miller became the first faculty advisor. After a two-year pledging process and an evaluation visit by the BAP regional representative, the chapter was officially approved in November of 2008 and installed in March 2009.  BAP student officers plan numerous events during the year, such as a group volunteering at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, a scavenger hunt, and guest speakers.

Dr. Chiang is the NABA faculty advisor.  NABA regularly sponsors, or co-sponsors, with other business student organizations professional workshops where business professionals have served as speakers.  NABA also sponsored several workshops that were opened to all TCNJ students who were interested in business-related topics such as entrepreneurship, real estate, computer software etc. Dr. Wallace has served as faculty advisor for PBL for fifteen years.

**Collaboration with faculty on research**: students are involved with several of the accounting faculty in their research. During the past five years, several faculty members have co-authored papers with students, some of them resulted in a publication in a peer-reviewed journal and others were presented at conferences and published in conference proceedings.  These papers and presentations are also included in section II.

* Nouri, H. and D. Pannone (2009 graduate) *International Journal of Critical Accounting*; forthcoming.
* Nouri, H. and Y. W. Leung (2009 graduate) *Proceedings*-2008 Critical Perspectives in Accounting Conference*,* New York, NY.
* Shahid, A. and V. Garneau (2008 graduate), article published in *The Journal of Banking Regulation*, September 2009.
* Miller, G. and J. Olszewski (2008 graduate) *Proceedings* of the 2008 Academic Business World International Conference.
* H. Nouri and L Liu (2005 graduate).  *Proceedings* - 2007 AAA Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting.
* Miller, G. and C. Westington, (2006 graduate). *Proceedings* of American Accounting Association Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting, 2007.
* Nouri, H. and S. Brody (2005 graduate). *Proceedings* - 2006 AAA Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting.
* Nouri, H., and D. Lombardi (2003 graduate). *Proceedings -* 2006 American Accounting Association (AAA) Annual Conference; 2006 Eleventh World Congress of Accounting Historians.

**Internship program and advising**: the highly successful department internship program has existed for over twenty-five years. During sophomore year, students can participate in the department’s shadowing program, where they are matched up with a firm and spend either a half-day or day with the firm during the summer to learn about public accounting.  The shadowing experience often leads to an offer for a paid internship during spring semester of junior year or summer after junior year.  Ninety to ninety-five percent of students that have completed internships have been offered full time positions.

In addition to the internship program, the faculty does an excellent job of mentoring and advising students.  The 2005 EBI survey of the School of Business students showed that the accounting program had the highest advisor availability and satisfaction with the program.   In some cases, advising and mentoring continues after students have graduated, as several accounting graduates have applied for and entered doctoral programs and in the process sought the advice and assistance of faculty members.

**Student competitions**: since fall 2007, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has chosen TCNJ as one of the colleges to compete in their national case competition.   For the past three years, students have formed teams and participated in this competition.  For each competition, students presented their solutions to employees (including some alumni) of PwC, and one team was chosen for first place. TCNJ business students have won numerous awards at state and national PBL competitions in various business disciplines under the guidance of Dr. Wallace.  Following is a summary of state awards won during the past five years: 2005: 15 awards; 2006: 15 awards; 2007: 18 awards; 2008: 13 awards, and 2009, 17 awards.  In addition, two to three national awards were won every year from 2004-2008.

**New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants (NJSCPA)**. Every year, the NJSCPA awards scholarships to three or four junior accounting majors. During sophomore year, accounting majors are encouraged to join the NJSCPA as student members. In June of this year, TCNJ and the department will be hosting the Scholar’s Institute, a two-day residency program of the NJSCPA. At the Institute, CPA’s from New Jersey provide selected accounting majors from colleges and universities in the state with interactive programming that helps identify their goals and gives them the essential tools to reach those goals.

**Other student involvement**: Junior Colette Shalhoub attended Ernst & Young's (E&Y) 3rd annual Discover Tax Leadership Conference in January 2009, one of 99 diverse undergraduate students from more than 50 U.S. universities. The workshop is part of E&Y's commitment to the recruitment and retention of diverse professionals. Finally, when needed, our students are willing to serve as tutors in accounting for students of all majors taking entry level accounting courses.  Each year, several junior and senior accounting majors serve as tutors in the college tutoring center. In addition, some current junior and senior accounting majors have developed a mentoring program, where freshman and sophomores will be matched up with juniors and seniors who will serve as mentors.

In summary, the department has achieved excellence in all three areas: teaching, academics and student involvement.  Excellence in teaching has led to high CPA exam passing rates of graduates and national recognition, which has been acknowledged by Dr. Gitenstein in several of her speeches during the past five years.  The placement record of accounting graduates is outstanding, as TCNJ is a target recruiting school for many international and regional CPA firms.  The department faculty is actively involved in research as evidenced by the number of publications and presentations during the past five years.  The faculty is also involved in interdisciplinary teaching and research as well as public outreach. Students are actively involved in the program, beginning in freshman year and continuing until graduation. The department is dedicated to the success of accounting majors and all students who take accounting and information systems courses, and it’s active involvement with all stakeholders has resulted in a high quality program that embraces continuous improvement.