

*The College of New Jersey Presidential Inauguration:
Kathryn A. Foster, Sixteenth President of TCNJ*

*Christopher L. Eisgruber
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The College of New Jersey*

Good afternoon. My name is Christopher Eisgruber, and I am the president of Princeton University. On behalf of the University, I am pleased and honored to offer my warmest congratulations to Kathryn Foster on her inauguration as the sixteenth president of The College of New Jersey.

Today's festivities celebrate jubilant new beginnings, but in many ways, this is also a homecoming. As I expect most of you know, Kate earned her doctorate here in central New Jersey at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School for Public and International Affairs. On our campus, Kate developed her fascination with the notion of political borders and the arrangement of local governments. Her research resulted in an award-winning dissertation that went on to be

published by the Georgetown University Press. This original work established Kate as a promising academic and demonstrated her commitment to scholarship. That commitment apparently extended even to the athletic fields, where I am told that Kate competed for a softball team that quite audaciously took its name from Thomas Hobbes, daring to call itself *Leviathan*—which seems just the right combination of erudition and swagger for a future college president.

Princeton's official archives fail to disclose whether Kate's *Leviathan* indeed reigned sovereign over the softball diamond. Be that as it may, Kate's passion for scholarship is an essential quality in the president of an institution like TCNJ. Academic leadership begins in scholarship and deep devotion to the educational enterprise. In Kate, TCNJ has found something truly special, a leader who exemplifies this institution's values as an accomplished scholar,

a dedicated teacher, and a tireless advocate for public education.

This genuine dedication to the teacher-scholar model is one of many qualities that unite Princeton and TCNJ. People sometimes say that the United States and Great Britain are two countries separated by a common language; you might say that TCNJ and Princeton are two institutions separated by a common name. A little more than two decades ago we settled that matter, in a way, by issuing a joint statement that declared, and I quote, the “entirely separate histories of the two institutions.” Yet, if indeed our histories were separate, our present and our future are happily intertwined, conjoined through shared commitments to meaningful student-faculty interaction; to college access and success; and to serving the state of New Jersey and society.

TCNJ has manifested its commitment to students by raising completion rates, achieving outcomes that rank among the highest in the

nation for public colleges and universities. Through these efforts, TCNJ has served as an engine of social mobility, thereby improving the lives of thousands of students and earning its place as one of this nation's great exemplars of public higher education.

Kate, I am delighted that you are carrying forward this proud tradition of academic excellence. It is clear that your appointment is a joyous occasion for TCNJ's students, alumni, faculty, and staff, as well as for scholarly communities far beyond your campus. On behalf of Princeton University, as your friend and neighbor in the state of New Jersey, and on behalf of the academy, congratulations and best wishes!