Dear JCSU Community Members:

I appreciate your feedback on our last newsletter, which highlighted the Office of Admissions. To expand upon the information previously shared, members of the Administrative Council and I will focus this edition on strategic enrollment planning. We want you to gain a better understanding of the purposeful change, that has had a direct impact on our selective admissions outcomes. I have listed below key terms that you can use as a quick reference when discussing strategic enrollment planning.

Successful scenario and strategic enrollment planning requires a cohesive, logical and imaginative sense of progression. It also requires support from the very top, since moving toward selective admissions impacts budget planning. I am delighted that our Board of Trustees has a clear expectation that we will increase admission standards so that the University is rated and recognized as a selective institution of higher education. For the past two years, we all have been rethinking in order to refocus so that we can reinvent.

JCSU must remain competitive with other stellar colleges and universities. The 21st century student scholars are global, well-travelled, accustomed to multicultural environments, and they are dynamic leaders. We can no longer rest on the false assumption that the way we’ve always done things is still valid and effective when it comes to recruiting and attracting these bright, young minds that we all look forward to engaging in our innovative teaching-learning environment.

In closing, I hope that the information presented will help you better understand our enrollment planning strategies and our commitment to positioning JCSU as a selective admissions University.
Key Enrollment Planning Terms

**Attrition:** When students leave for any reason. Graduates are also "attrited" since they don’t return. This is not the usual usage of the term, but it is convenient when calculating enrollment and revenue to equate the two.

**Discount Rate:** This is the amount of institutional aid granted divided by tuition and fees, but omitting room and board costs, books, and other expenses. It may be an average or individual rate.

**FTE:** Full-time equivalent. Most students are full-time (meaning they carry at least twelve hours per semester). Part-time students are averaged together to create artificial full-time equivalents, which is useful for planning purposes. Budgets are prepared from FTE, which is always less than headcount.

**Institutional Financial Aid:** This is unfunded aid granted to a student directly by the institution. It is simply a discount from tuition unless it exceeds that amount.

**Merit:** This describes applicants who have a high enough high school grade point average and standardized test score to warrant them being targeted for extra recruiting efforts, typically some kind of financial aid award.

**Need:** Some applicants (and students) will have low family incomes and may have trouble affording the costs of attendance. Students in this category often qualify for funded aid such as PELL grants, but also may be targeted by the institution to fill the "gap" in their finances with a small institutional award.

**Net Revenue:** This is tuition revenue minus institutional aid. Gross revenue does not take into account discounting, and discounted dollars are not real and cannot be spent.

**Retention:** Retention is the opposite of attrition. A student who returns for another year has been retained.

**Yield Rate:** This is the percentage of applicants who actually enroll. Yield rates may be calculated for particular populations, like athletes or high ability students.
Enrollment planning is the purview of Admissions and more generally ESSS, and consists of many activities that lead to recruitment and, to some extent, retention of students. While these efforts must take a long view, much of the work and planning is necessarily short-term. In Academic Support Services, we support and extend that work by doing scenario planning on possible futures up to ten years out. We rely on very capable IPAER and IT offices to gather and analyze data. The goal is to produce a model that reasonably incorporates the variables that drive admissions, including economic factors, admissions strategies, and what we call “control variables”—those things we have direct or indirect influence on.

In order to present a range of possibilities, we assume various levels of optimism with regard to conditions. For example, we may incorporate three levels of success with retention, and incorporate these into different scenarios to project a range of futures. This is important because of the interactive nature of the quantities we’re considering. A change in enrollment means a change in revenue, but also a change in financial aid, for example. Because enrollment of new students has dropped for two years in a row, it’s important to consider the long term financial implications of this. These documents have been archived by IPAER on the staff portal from the beginning, and new versions will appear as they are developed.

In the big picture, the university is converting from a fix-priced, (nearly) open-admissions policy to a more common strategy that uses targeted financial aid to attract students with higher high school grades and higher standardized test scores. Competition for these students leads to higher “discounting,” meaning that one cannot hope to charge full tuition to a top student—merit aid will be offered from many schools they apply to. The strategic enrollment model we have prepared divides incoming students into two categories called “regular” and “merit” for short. We track statistics for these individually, such as the yield rate, which predicts how many accepted applicants will actually enroll. Yield rates are higher for less-qualified students, and they receive less financial aid, so they are important to the bottom line.
Finding the right balance between the two is key.

Note that the models are narrowly targeted at revenue from tuition and fees from traditional students. There are several other important factors that go into determining the university’s overall revenue budget, such as Metropolitan College students, room and board charges, fundraising, and endowment income. On the other side of the ledger are expenses, which in the end have to match revenue. Nevertheless, the scenarios give important glimpses at futures that have a large impact on the enrollment and financial trajectory of the institution.

**Control Variables:** In the scenario models described above, there are many related quantities to consider. Some of these we can control directly, like how high tuition is. Others we can control indirectly, like retention. Collectively we call these the “control parameters” for the models. Other quantities, like net revenue, are a product of these. In a sense, the control parameters are like the yoke and throttle of an airplane, steering in a general direction. Some things, like wind and weather we cannot control, and have to adapt as the situation changes.

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**Enrollment Models Reflect Change**

The vision of the University is transformative, and this process of transformation will require careful planning. With the University's implementation of higher enrollment standards, models were constructed which will drive institutional planning with respect to:

**Marketing/Recruitment Efforts**

The Admissions Office will collaborate with Acacia Innovation, a national company that specializes in marketing optimization and strategy, to foster enhanced and more seamless communications with prospective students.

**Web Presentation**

There are several web strategies that contribute to enrollment. You may have noticed that a new “home page” appeared last year, which was tied to marketing materials and designed to drive online admissions. Mass emails also direct prospective students to particular web pages that allow us to evaluate the success of the campaign. A new site devoted solely to the Metropolitan College has been developed, and a complete revision of the website will be accomplished this year. In the meantime, the home page was rearranged and simplified to emphasize admissions, for example with a very visible “apply now” button.

**Admissions Processes**

SEM Works Consultants, a company that specializes in finding solutions to enrollment management issues, has been engaged to assist the University with its transformative change in enrollment management by: (a) auditing, correcting and enhancing the “front-to-back” end processes, ranging from the application process to admissions decisions to financial aid packaging; (b) training and orienting the Admissions team on critical aspects of an effective admissions operations; and (c) advising the University on strategically setting its enrollment...
targets for the next several recruitment cycles.

Retention
The Office of Retention is involved in the following initiatives to help increase student retention and graduation rates:

Café Advising for fall 2010 was held September 7-10, 2010. This initiative is an outreach program to welcome students to the University and to provide information that will inform and empower them for success. University representatives were stationed in the Student Union cafeteria to greet students and answer questions. Students who participated also were entered into a daily drawing for a $25 Visa Gift Card. Winners included: Dykwan George, freshman; Raven-Symone Cobb, sophomore; Phillip Devore, junior; and Darrell King, senior.

The Early Alert Project is a retention best practice designed to provide intervention for students exhibiting signs of failure early in the semester (around the 3rd or 4th week of class). The goal of the project is to provide a formal, proactive feedback system through which students and student-support agents are alerted to early manifestations of poor academic performance. Professors are asked to report on students who may be exhibiting early signs of academic deficiencies and/or disengagement behaviors such as high absenteeism, failing grades, unpreparedness for class, etc. Upon receipt of referrals, students are contacted and encouraged to meet with the referring professors and to seek support services to address academic concerns and/or personal issues. The students’ academic advisor is informed as well. Freshman and sophomore students are the targeted cohorts, but other students can be referred, also.

The fall-to-fall retention rate of first-time freshmen is 68% for fall 2009. The national first-to-second-year retention rate is 68.7%.

Institutional Financial Aid Policies
The University has several sources of financial aid for its students that is disbursed and packaged by the Office of Financial Aid. Assisting the Office of Financial Aid is a Scholarship Committee that is co-chaired by the Vice President for Business and Finance, Gerald Hector, and the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Joy Paige. All academic deans (Dr. Magdy Attia, Dr. Helen Caldwell, Dr. Zenobia Edwards, Dr. David Eubanks, and Dr. Don Mager) are also members of this committee.

The purpose of the committee is to gather all relevant scholarship data and make recommendations to the Office of Financial Aid, which in turn makes the distributions and packaging of scholarships. Students are encouraged to stop by the Office of Financial Aid to learn more about scholarship opportunities at the University.

As mentioned earlier, the University has several sources of scholarships. They are in the following categories: annual scholarships, endowed scholarships and institutional scholarships.
Annual Scholarships: These are scholarship gifts that generous donors give annually to the University to assist students with deferring their cost of education. The scholarships are at times restricted to majors and geographical areas. Annually, the University receives these gifts through the efforts of the Office of Institutional Advancement. Thus far for the 2010-2011 academic year, approximately $470,000 has been awarded to students who are currently enrolled in the University. This amount has already been awarded to students for the academic year (both fall and spring semesters). However, there are other opportunities that will be forthcoming through the University’s fundraising efforts. These gifts are distributed based on restrictions that the donor places on the gift. Students are encouraged to make inquiries of the Office of Financial Aid to find out more information about annual scholarships throughout the course of the academic year. Philanthropic giving has decreased with the recent downturn in the economy; however, opportunities still abound for generous donors and partners of the University to make gifts.

Endowed Scholarships: These are scholarship gifts that donors have provided. However, unlike annual scholarships, endowed scholarships are invested in perpetuity. The earnings from those invested funds are returned to the University in the form of scholarship dollars. At times, these scholarships are restricted to majors and geographical regions. The University is bound by the rules and regulations that govern endowed gifts, and it is not authorized to spend the corpus of the gifts contributed to the University. Recently, changes to the law that governed endowments were made in the form of Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA). This is the first change in these laws since 1972, and it converted UMIFIA (Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act) to UPMIFA. The state of North Carolina has adopted this change. Although UPMIFA allows an institutional investor to spend corpus dollars from a gift of a donor under limited circumstances, Johnson C. Smith University has taken the conservative approach not to do so. Since the downturn in the economy that started in September 2008, the University’s long term portfolio, which incorporates all endowed scholarship gifts, has seen its market value fall below its original cost (or tax cost). This situation has resulted in some of the endowed gifts being deemed “under water.” In such a situation, the University decided not to award gifts from those endowments. However, the Administration has still honored the value of the scholarships that would have been paid from endowment funds, and paid for them from unrestricted operational dollars. The University accomplished this by increasing its tuition discounting in order to keep highly motivated and talented students who are in need of these scholarships to attend JCSU. For fiscal year 2010, the University added to its unrestricted budget approximately $810,000 in such absorptions. For the current fiscal year (2011), the University has added $866,000 to its operational budget to cover these “under water” scholarships. Whenever the long-term portfolio returns to its former levels, there will be opportunities for the endowed gifts to pay for themselves; however, until that scenario is realized, the administration at JCSU will continue to honor the scholarships of our donors, and more importantly provide the much needed scholarship dollars for our deserving students.

Institutional Scholarships are available for merit and need-based aid. The University budgets for these scholarships, and they are distributed and packaged through the Office of Financial Aid, with input from the Office of Admissions for incoming freshmen. Returning student awards are packaged by the Office of Financial Aid, with input from the academic deans and
the Scholarship Committee. The University offers this institutional aid to a number of different student groups across the campus: Athletics, Band, Choir, Resident Assistants, Need Based Institutional Aid, and Merit Based Institutional Aid. For fiscal year 2010, the University incurred $3 million in such aid. For the current year (2011), the University has awarded close to $4 million in such aid. This is the third straight year of increases in this form of aid to students. The year-over-year increases are the results of the Administration's commitment to attracting and retaining highly talented and motivated students at the University, and to also attract and retain students who are part of our extracurricular activities (e.g. Athletics, Choir, Band, etc.). The University is committed to managing this institutional aid budget in a prudent manner that will show our commitment to our students, while ensuring that the necessary “net revenue” is available to build upon our current programs as we go through this transformation on the campus.

**University Budget Process**

The University’s budgeting process is one that is highly focused on balancing all the needs on our campus with the revenues generated by student enrollment and fundraising. The process is an ongoing one that requires all departments and units to come together and plan in a collegial manner how the funds garnered will be distributed. The University has adopted a Zero Based Budgeting process that is purposeful in finding ways to maximize every dollar that is spent on campus. This model allows for all known expenses to be analyzed in the context of how they fit into the overall strategic vision of the University. The deliberations are managed through a Budget Steering Committee that is made up of the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Soumia Ichoua and Hasaan Kirkland. In those meetings, costs from all units of the University are discussed in an open manner, which each respective division or college being given an opportunity to present its proposed budgets.

The University’s budget process does not stop and is always evolving as the year progresses, and revenue targets and actuals are known. In the higher education sphere, a balanced budget (unrestricted revenues must equal unrestricted expenses) must be achieved, and the Board of Trustees signs off on the final proposals that are put forward by the Administration. The first submission of a budget (inclusive of a revenue projection) is done in April of each year. That budget is deemed preliminary and is based upon fall enrollment projections from the Office of Admissions, fundraising projections from the Office of Institutional Advancement, and other miscellaneous revenue sources (e.g. athletic ticket sales). The budget is first presented to the Budget and Finance Committee who votes to adopt or reject the recommended budget and sends it forward to the full Board of Trustees for final passage. Once that final budget is passed in April, it remains a preliminary budget, and departments are issued their respective approved budgets to start spending on the first of July each year.

In October of each year, a final budget is presented to the Board of Trustees for the remainder of the fiscal year. A final budget is needed as the assumptions and variables used to build the preliminary budget in April would be confirmed at that time. If changes are made to the budget, it would be primarily due to the actual enrollment on campus for the fall semester. If the fall semester’s enrollment is less than projected, adjustments are made downward to still balance the budget.
For the current fiscal year, the University is still analyzing its fall enrollment to see where the final budget will come in. The Census Day for the Office of Financial Aid was September 15, 2010. Once the attendance records and all other Title IV requirements are met, the true enrollment total will be given. From that number, the final budget will be crafted as has been the case in years past. The goal of the budgeting process is to always balance the budget. Once the final budget is approved by the Board in October, we will announce any adjustments.

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**Fall “Mid-mester” Program Offered for Highly Talented and Motivated Students**

**October 7– December 10**

**Program Summary:**

The JCSU Fall Mid-mester Program is an accelerated semester program that allows students to earn full-time college credit hours. It is designed for the highly motivated and talented entry level student who is committed to earning a college degree. This program enables students to enroll later in the fall semester (October) and get on track with students who entered at the beginning of the fall (August). Classes begin in October with an accelerated course schedule, and upon successful completion in December, students will transition to a non-accelerated course schedule for subsequent semesters beginning in the spring of 2011. Any major offered at the University is available to students in this program. Currently, 25 applications are under review, and four students have been accepted into the program.

**Program Benefits:**

- The Fall Mid-mester term begins October 7 and ends December 10 (eight weeks, 15 class meetings).
- Students take 13 credits: Four degree courses plus one orientation course.
- Students’ course schedule will be supported by academic resources that will assist with student success.
- Students can live on or off campus (prorated).
- Students may apply for federal financial aid.
- Students will receive a loaner laptop.
<table>
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<th>Dates</th>
<th>Schedule Type</th>
<th>Available Courses</th>
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<td>Fall Mid-Mester 2010</td>
<td>Oct 7 - Dec 10</td>
<td>accelerated</td>
<td>13 credits maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>Jan 12 - May 7</td>
<td>non-accelerated</td>
<td>12 or more credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All subsequent terms</td>
<td></td>
<td>non accelerated</td>
<td>12 or more credits</td>
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</tbody>
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FAQs

What are the admissions criteria for the Mid-mester program?
Generally, the admissions criteria for the University are a minimum of 2.5 GPA and 800 of SAT (or ACT score of 17). In addition, applicants are required to complete a non-cognitive assessment. Each prospective student’s admissions application and supporting documents will be reviewed individually to determine a student’s eligibility to be accepted. A student’s application cannot be considered if either the high school transcripts or SAT/ACT test scores are not on file.

What is a “non-cognitive assessment”? How and why do I need to complete this?
A non-cognitive assessment gives us more information about you as a student. It indicates information about you beyond your GPA and test score such as your level of motivation, persistence and leadership ability.

How do I apply for the Mid-mester program?
You should visit our website to complete the online admissions application. Then, you will need to contact the Office of Admissions right away at 704-378-1010, and they will be able to assist you directly with the application process. They will need your high school or college transcript and /or SAT/ACT scores right away before you can be considered for admissions.

What does it mean that the Mid-mester is “accelerated”?
This simply means that your class schedule will be structured in a manner that will allow you to make up the time you’ve missed since August, which is when the regular semester began. You will spend more time with your instructors and your lessons. This will ensure that you will be on track when the semester ends.

How many classes will I have each day?
You will begin with orientation class then you will begin a regular schedule of two classes per day with a required tutorial session each day.

What kind of academic support will be available to me?
There are a variety of resources for academic support available at JCSU. We have a writing lab (Writing Central), and we utilize peer tutors. Students in the mid-mester program will have extra academic support provided by their instructors during the required daily tutorial sessions.

What does it cost to attend JCSU?
You will need to pay the cost of tuition, room and board, and meal plan if you live on campus. The cost for housing for Mid-mester has been prorated. Off campus students will need to pay the tuition cost. Meal plans are optional for off-campus students:

For more information, contact the Office of Admissions at 704-378-1010.