

From: Mary L. Carns  
Sent: 2/10/2016 3:48:30 PM  
To: Mary L. Carns  
Cc:  
Subject: TCL Talks: 2016 President's State of the College Address

Dear Lowcountry,

On January 21, Dr. Richard Gough, President of TCL, addressed a crowd of approximately 100 community members including local government representatives and College donors. He shared the College's achievements, his vision for the College and its challenges. A copy of his prepared remarks is below. The address can also be found at <<http://www.tcl.edu/state-of-the-college>>.

***Begin remarks \*\*\*\*\****

Remarks prepared for the 2016 State of the College Address

Dr. Richard J. Gough, President

January 21, 2016

"The mission of TCL is stated quite simply: provide the Lowcountry with a college that works. I believe this mission is vital to our community and our state and I consider it my personal obligation to ensure that we succeed." That quote is the first two sentences from my letter in our first state-of-the-college publication - and I believe it. I'm committed to it. It is my mission as president of the College.

Good evening and thank you for attending this inaugural State-of-the-College address.

For the past two years it has been my pleasure to serve as the President of TCL. My entire civilian career has been spent in higher education and I can say

without reservation – we are one of the best colleges in the state of South Carolina. We are an excellent value and we are valuable to the Lowcountry. We provide affordable, high quality education and training that puts people in to jobs - jobs here, in the Lowcountry. In fact more than 93% of our graduates either go directly into jobs or transfer to a 4-year institution. TCL is a college that works and is best-in-class.

So, why do a state-of-the-college address? Why invite you here? Why not send a letter, an email or post remarks on our website? Because what we do, or what we don't do, makes a difference to you our stakeholders. I believe higher education and workforce development is a local issue and a local responsibility. Higher education in the Lowcountry and regional workforce development impacts you, your family, and your business. For many, many years TCL has been shaped by the aspirations of the citizens of the Lowcountry and by the employment needs of your businesses. You help define our priorities and any vision for our future depends upon you.

So I don't want to talk 'at you' - I want to talk 'with you'. Tonight I want us talk about the value of a TCL education and TCL's impact on the local economy. I want to share my vision for the college and our challenges. [And, along the way, expect me to boast a little about the school.] At the end of my remarks I look forward to fielding any questions or remarks you may have.

Let's begin by reaffirming what we are. TCL is the Lowcountry's community college. We are a comprehensive community college meaning we are both a principal provider of academic instruction and a major provider of vocational preparation and workforce development through adult training programs. We are a community-based institution of higher education, specializing in the education and training necessary to meet local employment needs. And, for TCL and other community colleges, our excellence is defined by our inclusivity. We are an open access college who welcomes all who desire to learn, regardless of wealth, heritage or previous academic experience.

Over the past decade community colleges, like TCL, have captured the attention of the nation. Why? Because community colleges work. Community colleges work because they educate and train local citizens for local jobs providing the foundation for a healthy local economy.

What makes TCL a college that works? First and foremost, our faculty and staff. In the past two years this institution – this TCL team - has accomplished a great deal. My first priority was to restore our presence on MCAS and Parris

Island, establish a military training aviation program and open a Veterans Resource Center. Secondly, to work closely with area high schools and dramatically grow our dual enrollment program. Right now more than 400 area high school students participate in our dual enrollment program. Taking college courses while attending high school. Third strengthen our industrial programs such as our welding program on our Hampton Campus, the Mungin Center. And, lastly, institutionalize Advancement, create an office within the college that focuses on building productive relationships with our key constituents. All this and much more, is the result of a successful team effort by the more than 300 faculty and staff.

Our frontline is our faculty. TCL faculty are dedicated teachers and our students, their #1 priority. In addition to advance degrees, TCL faculty have hands-on experience in the fields they teach. TCL faculty are able to share with our students real-world professional experiences. Like **Pete Semetis**, featured in our State of the College Report <<http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=7>>. And our staff are equally dedicated. Willing to go the extra mile - the weekend, the evening - to serve the needs of the college and our students. Like **Christie Welch-Copeland**, administrative director of our Veterans Resource Center. ([Read more about the VRC here.](http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=6)) <<http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=6>> It's not a big payday at a state-assisted community college. Raises are meager, 1 or 2%, or as is more often the case, non-existent. TCL is fueled by the commitment of our faculty and staff to do good work. They make TCL a college that works.

## **TCL's Impact on the Local Economy**

Colleges in general and community colleges in particular are expected to be workforce developers and economic engines. South Carolina is considered one of the best states in the nation to do business, yet we are approaching a point where we will be unable to keep up with the workforce demands of business and industry. By 2018 it is projected that only 33% of all jobs will require a 4-year degree or more. The majority of jobs – some 57% – will be middle-skilled positions requiring more than a high school degree but less than 4 years of college. In other words, job growth for those with associate degrees or certifications is outpacing job growth for more advanced degrees. For far too long, the educational bureaucracy has compelled students into a standard 4-year degree track, discouraging consideration of a technical career education – also known as a community college education. We should not discourage students from pursuing higher education at a baccalaureate institution. Nor should we discourage students from pursuing a technical career education at a community college. For good reasons, TCL should be the first choice, even the

smart choice.

At TCL we offer more than 90 programs of study - associate degrees, certificates and diplomas – designed to help Lowcountry citizens enter the local workforce in two years or less and, earn a living wage – going from minimum wage to \$20/hour or more. In our health sciences programs, graduate placement rate is almost 100%. Our HVAC program placement rate is almost 100%. The criminal justice graduate placement rate is 95%. The paralegal program graduate placement rate is over 90%. What is the reason for these impressive placement rates? TCL trains workers for existing jobs here, for your businesses, in the Lowcountry. Each year TCL graduates more students and awards more degrees, certificates and diplomas than other local institution of higher education – 529 graduates in the past academic year.

A number of our graduates will go on to 4 year degree institutions. Graduates like Reece Bertholf, Beaufort-Port Royal Fire Department Chief, and his wife, Mikie, a tomography technologist at Beaufort Memorial Hospital - both proud alumni of TCL. ([Learn more about Reece and Mikie here](http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=4) [<http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=4>](http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=4).)

Most students – up to 5,000 annually – choose TCL as a starting point for their higher education and career goals. But for others, TCL is an expansion of a university degree they already hold. Why are they returning to TCL? Employability – to get a job. Like **Lindsay Richardson**. Lindsay's working because TCL is a college that works. ([Read Lindsay's story here](http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=5). [<http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=5>](http://online.fliphtml5.com/cvpa/qlwb/#p=5))

## **TCL the smart choice**

Nationally only 59% of students enrolled in a 4-year undergraduate institution will complete their degree – 61% in South Carolina. Average student debt is \$30,000 nationally, \$29,000 in South Carolina – even for those who left school and did not complete their degree. According to a Harvard study, the number one reason college students leave school before completing a degree is because of incurring student loan debt. In the past 30 years college costs have increased an astounding 1,100%. As a result, parents and grandparents have taken on education debt to help their children or grandchildren. Student debt is becoming family debt. This can be avoided, or at least minimized. The cost per credit hour at TCL is \$166. The cost per credit hour at USCB is \$394, more than twice TCL. TCL has transfer agreements with USC, Clemson, Frances Marion,