

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL APPENDIX MATERIAL
SUBMITTED TO THE
SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION-ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEES
for the
June 10, 2024 Meeting

Submitted by

New Jersey City University

Lissette Vasquez, "Jersey City Assemblywoman Jessica Ramirez Celebrates New Jersey City University's Financial Upgrade," February 22, 2024, Jersey City Patch, © 2024, Patch Media.

John Heinis, "State Senator McKnight commends NJCU for upgraded Moody's credit rating," Feb. 21, 2024, Hudson County View, © 2024, Hudson County View.

ROI-NJ Staff, "Moody's upgrades NJCU's outlook from 'negative' to stable," Feb. 21, 2024, ROI-NJ.com, © 2024, ROINJ.

Matthew Fazelpoor, "Bouncing Back: New Jersey City University continues its promising rise out of budget turmoil," Feb. 21, 2024, NJBIZ, © 2024, Bridge Tower Media.

Tom Bergeron, "NJCU Outlines School's 1st Academic Master Plan," Feb. 20, 2024, ROI-NJ.com, © 2024, ROINJ.

Matthew Fazelpoor, "NJCU unveils new mission, vision statements as enrollment increases," Feb. 5, 2024, NJBIZ, © 2024, Bridge Tower Media.

Matthew Fazelpoor, "NJCU introduces first strategic enrollment plan," April 8, 2024, NJBIZ, © 2024, Bridge Tower Media.

ROI-NJ Staff, "NJCU sees big jump in spring enrollment," Jan. 30, 2024, ROI-NJ.com, © 2024, ROINJ.

Tom Bergeron, “NJCU, in next critical step, announces strategic enrollment plan,” April 16, 2024, ROI-NJ.com, © 2024, ROINJ.

Matthew Fazelpoor, “NJCU releases 1st Academic Master Plan,” Feb. 19, 2024, NJBIZ, © 2024, Bridge Tower Media.

Tom Bergeron, “NJCU signs 1st-of-its-kind agreement with group representing 17 Latin American consulates,” Dec. 5, 2023, ROI-NJ.com, © 2023, ROINJ.

Matthew Fazelpoor, “NJCU, GLACO enter first-of-its-kind collaboration,” Dec. 5, 2023, NJBIZ, © 2023, Bridge Tower Media.

Ron Zeitlinger, “Nearly 1,700 awarded diplomas at NJCU commencement,” May 16, 2024, NJ.com, © 2024, Advance Local Media, LLC.

Tom Bergeron, “NJCU ranks No. 10 nationally (No. 1 in N.J.) for social mobility,” Dec. 21, 2023, ROI-NJ.com, © 2023, ROINJ.

Matthew Fazelpoor, “NJCU, Jersey City police union partner to offer education to officers,” Jan. 10, 2024, NJBIZ, © 2024, Bridge Tower Media.

Submitted by

New Jersey Legislative Democrats

ROI-NJ Staff, “ROI Influencers Higher Education 2024: Andres Acebo,” May 13, 2024, ROI-NJ.com, © 2024, ROINJ.



NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF

**HIGHER
EDUCATION**

Transition Plan for New Jersey City University

April 2024

Brian K. Bridges, Ph.D.

New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education

Background

In August 2023, the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education, Dr. Brian Bridges, determined that the financial circumstances present at New Jersey City University (“University” or “NJCU”) warranted the appointment of a State Monitor pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:3B-53.4. Henry J. Amoroso (“Mr. Amoroso” or “Monitor”), a New Jersey attorney and Seton Hall tenured professor of legal studies, was appointed as State Monitor and began his service on August 29, 2023.

Mr. Amoroso spent the next six months conducting a detailed review and analysis of every aspect of the University’s financial and governance operations. He worked in close coordination with University leadership and provided the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (“OSHE”) with monthly status updates. This detailed analysis culminated in Mr. Amoroso’s submission of the “Fiscal and Governance Monitoring Report and Fiscal Accountability Plan” (“Plan”) on March 12, 2024 to the Secretary of Higher Education and the Interim President of NJCU.

In addition to a detailed explanation of the current financial state of the University, the Plan contains eleven recommendations for the University, five focused on fiscal stability and six focused on governance capabilities. Each recommendation is accompanied by benchmarks and required actions to guide the University toward achieving the outlined recommendations.

Following careful review of the Plan and discussion with both Mr. Amoroso and University leadership, the Secretary of Higher Education submits the below Transition Plan, as required by *N.J.S.A.* 18A:3B-53.6. The Transition Plan outlines the process for the withdrawal of the State Monitor, drawing heavily upon the recommendations presented by Mr. Amoroso as the trusted expert in these circumstances. Each numbered item below represents a prerequisite for the cessation of State Monitor oversight at NJCU. The Secretary must determine that all of the numbered requirements of the Transition Plan below have been successfully satisfied before the Secretary will authorize the withdrawal of the State Monitor.

Transition Plan

Fiscal Accountability Requirements

1. The Board of Trustees will immediately pursue and promptly complete an appropriately resourced assessment that culminates in identifying a fiscally sound New Jersey public institution of higher education with which to merge/partner/affiliate.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By or before March 31, 2025, the University will select a partnership option(s) and begin the process of memorializing the terms and conditions of said partnership. Concurrent with the assessment described above, the University will make a diligent effort to keep the appropriate accreditation bodies reasonably informed about any potential partnership option(s) under consideration by the University.
2. The Board of Trustees will accelerate the collection of significant revenue from property monetization for application to both debt reduction and capital investments.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By July 1, 2024, the current property monetization advisors, in consultation with the Monitor and interim President, will deliver an amended and updated Property Monetization Plan to the State Monitor, the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees, and the Interim President. The Property Monetization Plan will be adopted by the Board of Trustees at the first meeting following the submission and implementation shall begin immediately thereafter and be modified as appropriate.
3. The Board of Trustees will substantially reduce the institution's long-term debt through a range of proven debt reduction strategies, including but not limited to initiating debt relief measures, dynamic asset management, strategic reinvestment of revenues, capital growth, and sustainability.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By or before March 31, 2025, NJCU's long-term debt shall be reduced from its present baseline level by at least \$30 million.
4. NJCU will increase its pursuit of substantive grants from external sources by hiring an individual to focus on grant writing and management.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By September 1, 2024, an appropriate candidate shall be hired to oversee grant writing and grant management.

Governance Requirements

1. Following the confirmations necessary to establish a fully-active Board of Trustees consisting of at least nine members, consistent with University bylaws, the Board of Trustees will reorganize its committee structure to include an Executive Committee, Finance & Audit Committee, Property & Facilities Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and any other committees determined necessary by the Board to ensure its bylaws are aligned with and accurately reflect this modification.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By or before its first meeting of the 2024-2025 Academic Year, the Board of Trustees shall facilitate the prompt implementation of the recommended committee structure.
 - b. Applicable timeline: By or before its first meeting of the 2024-2025 Academic Year, the Board of Trustees shall adopt and implement an annual meeting schedule that includes five regular meetings of the full Board to conduct business in addition to one day-long retreat held annually to review progress in implementing the Fiscal Accountability Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and engage in future fiscal, governance, and academic strategic planning.

2. The Board of Trustees will establish and fully implement an Office (or other administrative unit) or reconfigure an existing position (or administrative unit) to be responsible for student success that delivers comprehensive services, resources, and opportunities, and supports students to achieve academic outcomes commensurate with their potential; motivates them to persist to graduation, promotes their lifelong learning; and ensures they have welcoming, safe, and comfortable spaces within NJCU to thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By September 1, 2024, the Office or position detailed above shall be held by a qualified individual and prepared to offer the required services and supports to students.

3. The Board of Trustees will adopt Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enhance the institution's accountability, strategic alignment, and operational excellence.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By September 30, 2025, NJCU's administration and Board of Trustees will develop, adopt, and begin to monitor the institution's performance and progress using a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which, at minimum, shall address: financial health, student success, admission and enrollment, faculty and staff, facilities and other capital resources, endowment size and growth, and technology infrastructure and digital learning resources.

New Jersey City University
Joint Legislative Higher Education Committee
June 10, 2024

Andrés Acebo, J.D.
Interim President

Esteemed and honorable members of the legislature, distinguished colleagues, and cherished supporters of public higher education:

Today, you have convened to take testimony on the State-Appointed Monitor's initial report and recommendations, OSHE's superseding corrective action plan for our institution, the University's significant progress in stabilizing its affairs with a campus-driven and collaborative vision for a bolder and more sustainable future, and our collective efforts for an equitable and enhanced presence for a near century-old-institution that's anchored in the most diverse and densely populated communities in our country.

Today, you'll disproportionately but importantly hear about the financial challenges that NJCU has weathered and those still left to overcome along with the broader needs and stresses of public higher education in New Jersey and the national and regional trends that impact them.

Today, I need to begin with the names of just some of the students who crossed our graduation stage over the last two years and those who will follow them soon and mark them present in our discussion. **(Thyquel Halley, Darwin Garrido, Laney Fox, Kudret Ozkaya, Feifei Wang, Sydney Millevoi, Ruth Diegue, Breanna Felix, Dr. Lamont Tyrone Harris Jr., Dr. Melissa Garcia, Sandy Guerrero, Ashley Pottinger, David Valica, and Shahod Augustin).**

These are just some of the students that we are privileged to serve. Students who New Jersey is privileged to call theirs. Students who were the first to be able to earn a doctoral, masters, and/or bachelor's degrees in their families. They did it in their communities so that others could see, so others could dream, so others can follow. And because they did others will have someone to chase. They are the stars of this saga.

Many of them weathered a pandemic that robbed them of rights of passages like proms and high school graduations, others found themselves –not uncommon in our community – finishing a degree that life delayed because academic journeys are not linear in our community when systemic barriers and problems disproportionately test them in our community. Some were deployed to serve and protect the freedoms that are too often taken for granted before they moved a college graduation tassel from right to left. They're dreamers, they're trailblazers, they're radically resilient, they are the unprecedented people that these unprecedented times desperately need.

Some of them unjustly and inequitably are forced to feed a curious mind with a starved belly, work multiple jobs to care for themselves and their parents and loved ones, they find themselves at times unhoused and insecure, but they persist. They climb. Each one of them is their ancestors' wildest dream come true.

And at NJCU, they're celebrated. They're championed. And they've been centered in every campus and community discussion, every constituent and stakeholder deliberation, every strategic plan designed and implemented, every curricular reform, and every academic and community partnership launched over the last 18 months. Today will be no different.

Today, I stand before you not just as the person blessed to lead NJCU at this critical time, but as someone whose life has been profoundly transformed by the power of education and this state's investment in me. I am a first-generation college student, and my journey through higher education has shaped my deep commitment to ensuring that NJCU remains a beacon of hope and opportunity for countless others who dare to dream beyond the confines of their circumstances.

My story begins in a humble household where the notion of attending college was both an expectation and a distant dream and an uncharted path. My immigrant and working-class parents, hardworking and resilient, instilled in me the values of perseverance and the belief that education was the key to unlocking a better future. With their encouragement and the support of dedicated educators (overwhelmingly graduates of NJCU), I embarked on a journey that would forever change my life. The challenges were many, but the rewards were immeasurable. I learned firsthand the transformative power of education—how it can uplift individuals, empower families, and strengthen communities.

Stories like mine are common on our campus. They underscore the importance of the mission our campus has refreshed, revitalized, and championed. Our university has long served as a lifeline for students from diverse backgrounds, many of whom, like me, are the first in their families to be able to attend college. We are committed to providing them with not just an education, but a transformative experience that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in an ever-changing world.

NJCU is at a pivotal moment in its almost century-long history. We have faced significant challenges, many exacerbated by the unprecedented global pandemic, but I am here to share with you a story of resilience and revitalization. Over the last 18 months, we have embarked on an ambitious journey to secure the future of our institution and to ensure that we enter our second century with an enhanced ability to serve our students with excellence and integrity -- to be worthy of those who walk our campus in pursuit of the most noble of pursuits – a shot at a better life.

Our revitalization efforts have been comprehensive and multifaceted. Our work began in earnest when last Spring, well before the monitoring statute was enacted, we launched our Recovery and Revitalization Plan – a framework for long-term financial sustainability, mission focus, and student success (*by addressing various essential areas, including structural operating deficit reduction, long-term debt defeasance, deferred maintenance, student success/retention investments, and resource allocation for mission focus to drive mobility and community engagement*).

We have implemented a strategic plan that focuses on financial sustainability, academic programming that is responsive to our students' acute needs as we shepherd their success, and

community engagement that not only solidifies our role as the only public anchor university in our community but as a magnet for resources and partnerships that lift the community.

Through prudent financial management, we have stabilized our affairs to create a more sustainable financial model that New Jersey's taxpayers can be proud to hold equity in and continue to invest in as we continue to create something better than what has ever existed before on our campus.

Our work has involved difficult decisions, but ones that were necessary to secure our long-term sustainability with a distinctively proud mission.

We have set a new foundation that is worthy of the resilience and hopes of the communities we serve. A path forward has been paved to strengthen our mission and our commitments for the thousands that cross our campus and the tens of thousands who have been touched by it.

NJCU began FY23 confronting an unsustainable multi-year structural operating budget deficit and at the beginning of our administration it was in the earliest stages of fundamentally addressing it. We immediately developed and implemented strategies aimed at eliminating this burden on our mission and were successful in significantly reducing the existing structural operating deficit. We positioned ourselves to strengthen our mission-focused revitalization. This work was not accomplished without pain or sacrifice, but it was achieved with the establishment of unprecedented shared governance and labor relations and collaboration in New Jersey.

Through concerted advocacy efforts by campus stakeholders, including legislative leaders in this room and not, labor leaders, faculty, staff, students, and alumni, last June, the State announced a \$10 million stabilization funding investment in NJCU for Fiscal Year 2024. The State further invested an increase in Outcomes Based Allocation (OBA) for institutions of higher education, which led NJCU to receive a \$3.8 million OBA increase.

Working with our Board of Trustees, we announced at our September board meeting that net of any additional stabilization funding appropriations from the State, the University further reduced and reconciled the structural operating deficit for FY24 by another 25 percent or \$2.8 million through a combination of additional savings and new revenues.

Every day, we implement strategies that meaningfully drives our mission, reduces and mitigates our financial constraints, and evaluates every potential option and strategy for the longer-term reinvestment in decades-long deferred capital maintenance, mitigation of excess debt obligations, and increase cash reserves.

As a result, the University in a few short weeks will end the fiscal year with a year-end balanced operating budget for the first time in more than five (5) years as we strategically drew down on the \$10 million stabilization funding to address critical deferred maintenance needs — both budgeted and unbudgeted. We still have more work to do and we need your continued support to do it.

The current state of higher education presents both challenges and opportunities. Economic pressures, shifting demographics, and rapidly changing technology require us to be agile and forward-thinking. At NJCU, we are embracing these changes with a spirit of innovation and a commitment to excellence and by embracing and leading the disruption.

Our students are at the heart of everything we do. They come to us with dreams of a brighter future, and it is our responsibility to support them on their journey.

We are expanding our support services to ensure that every student can thrive. This includes academic advising, career counseling, mental health services, and financial aid. We are also fostering a diverse and inclusive campus environment where all students feel valued and supported – so that they know that they belong in every space that didn't contemplate encountering them for lack of vision and imagination.

As we look to the future, we must continue to advocate for policies that support equitable access to higher education, sustainable funding models, and the creation of an environment where academic excellence can truly thrive rather than be distressed by underinvestment and lack of collaboration.

The NJCU community has been tested. And as we know, there can be no testimony if there was no test. NJCU is a testament to what can be achieved when we work together with a shared vision and a common purpose. When leadership knows and feels the needs of its community. When we listen and not just dictate.

Our story of revitalization is one of hope and resilience. It is a story that highlights the power of education to transform lives and communities and the promise delivered by countless individuals who care about where the story begins. It is a story that affirms our commitment to our mission and our belief in the potential of every student who walks onto our campus.

In December 2023, NJCU launched a partnership with Hudson County Community College (HCCC) to create the HCCC|NJCU Connect Program. This initiative facilitates seamless transfer pathways for students from HCCC to NJCU, promoting higher education accessibility and continuity. The program is a model that in the coming weeks will unveil new partnerships with other community colleges and underscores NJCU's commitment to educational collaboration and student retention.

In February 2024, we unveiled a refreshed University Mission Statement and our first Vision Statement, reflecting its commitment to serving a richly diverse community as New Jersey's oldest public four-year minority and Hispanic-serving institution. These statements, developed with campus stakeholders, emphasize NJCU's dedication to service and shared governance. By refreshing our mission and vision statements, we have underscored NJCU's role in empowering students and fostering community development.

Even more recently, this past Spring we introduced our first Academic Master Plan (AMP) as part of our strategic initiatives. This plan was driven by new institutional pillars: (1) Student Success and Retention, (2) Community Engagement, (3) Culture of Continuous Improvement,

and (4) Financial Stewardship and Responsibility, which outline 10 measurable goals aimed at enhancing academic quality and institutional sustainability. This newly formed and focused approach signifies that NJCU's efforts on long-term academic excellence and operational efficiency are on track towards bearing the results we seek.

Following the AMP, we launched our first Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) to tackle enrollment challenges and support the institution's mission. The SEP details goals and key performance indicators aimed at improving application yield rates, transfer student integration, retention, and graduation rates. It also highlights engagement opportunities with key academic programs.

NJCU's financial health has significantly improved, with the university reporting its first balanced operating budget since 2017. In recognition of this progress, Moody's Investor Services upgraded NJCU's outlook from "negative" to "stable" for the first time in several years. This upgrade reflects the successful implementation of financial turnaround plans and robust management practices.

Enrollment but more importantly retention and completion have also been a priority for our administration. NJCU has experienced significant growth in this area thanks to focused efforts on student success and support services. Enrollment declines have impacted institutions across higher education since the pandemic and few have been immune; however, our deliberate efforts of breaking down institutional and systemic barriers of access as we continue to reimagine what a regional comprehensive public university can deliver to the community it serves, is demonstrating measurable outcomes. For Spring 2024, new transfer, undergraduate, and graduate enrollments saw significant increases, marking our first substantial gains since the pandemic.

On May 15, 2024, NJCU celebrated the graduation of nearly 1,700 students, an increase in both undergraduate and graduate degree conferrals compared to previous years, even after reducing the size of our academic portfolio. This achievement demonstrates the effectiveness of NJCU's academic programs and its renewed commitment to student success.

NJCU continues to be a catalyst for educational and community development, making significant strides in academic planning, financial stability, governance reforms, and student success initiatives that I hope our conversation today will highlight.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your support and partnership. The progress we have made would not have been possible without the collective efforts of our dedicated faculty, staff, students, and community members, as well as the unwavering commitment of our legislative partners.

Together, we can ensure that NJCU remains a vibrant, dynamic institution that not only meets the challenges of today but also paves the way for a brighter, more inclusive future. Let us move forward with confidence, passion, and a resolute belief in the power of education to transform lives and build a better tomorrow right in the communities that most depend upon it.

Our work has rejected, admittedly stubbornly, the illusion of complexity that too often gives cover to do nothing or to do little when it's time to address the needs of people that have been marginalized, underserved, and woefully underrepresented.

Higher education has been under attack, perhaps justifiably in some people's eyes. Too much attention is given to the ideologies of left and right and not enough on the promise of lifting those from the bottom to the top. Higher education sits on a mantle of tradition, but it's always driven innovation.

The greatest innovation will be how it evolves and transforms itself by not just simply harnessing the disruptive but promising nature of artificial intelligence but by confronting – as we are at NJCU – manufactured apathy, which is the unfortunately effective strategy of tiring individual resolve and collective hope.

Baldwin eloquently observed that “the world is held together, that it really is held together, because of the love and passion of a very few people.” The ancient Greeks gave this love and passion a word – *agape*. King spoke of it too when he observed the fierce urgency of now. “It means understanding, creative, redeeming goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative.” King said that it's “the love of God operating in the human heart.”

The people that walk our campuses today look different than they did when these institutions were first established. Our institution is even more indispensable today precisely because of the people that depend upon them to realize generational mobility that changes one family at a time, one neighborhood at a time, one city or town at time, one state at a time – to deliver for us a nation that is more perfect than could have been contemplated at its founding.

We have an amazing opportunity in front of us. To strengthen not just individual institutions but an entire public higher education ecosystem.

And like every great act in our society. It will require the love and passion of a very few people.

I thank you for being amongst those people. I look forward to working with you to center our students and their promise.

Thank you for your dedication to the cause of higher education, and for the opportunity to address this esteemed assembly. I ask that we continue this journey together, inspired by the possibilities ahead and united by our commitment to making those possibilities a reality for all.

Thank you.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education Transition Plan	Section 1
Refreshed Mission & Vision Statements	Section 2
NJCU's Academic Master Plan	Section 3
NJCU's Strategic Enrollment Plan	Section 4
Moody's Investors Service Credit Rating	Section 5
General Education Reform	Section 6
HCCC NJCU CONNECT Program	Section 7
NJCU Differentiators	Section 8
Compilation of Recent Relevant News Articles	Section 9



SECTION 1

New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education Transition Plan for New Jersey City University



NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF

HIGHER EDUCATION

Transition Plan for New Jersey City University

April 2024

Brian K. Bridges, Ph.D.

New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education

Background

In August 2023, the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education, Dr. Brian Bridges, determined that the financial circumstances present at New Jersey City University (“University” or “NJCU”) warranted the appointment of a State Monitor pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:3B-53.4. Henry J. Amoroso (“Mr. Amoroso” or “Monitor”), a New Jersey attorney and Seton Hall tenured professor of legal studies, was appointed as State Monitor and began his service on August 29, 2023.

Mr. Amoroso spent the next six months conducting a detailed review and analysis of every aspect of the University’s financial and governance operations. He worked in close coordination with University leadership and provided the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (“OSHE”) with monthly status updates. This detailed analysis culminated in Mr. Amoroso’s submission of the “Fiscal and Governance Monitoring Report and Fiscal Accountability Plan” (“Plan”) on March 12, 2024 to the Secretary of Higher Education and the Interim President of NJCU.

In addition to a detailed explanation of the current financial state of the University, the Plan contains eleven recommendations for the University, five focused on fiscal stability and six focused on governance capabilities. Each recommendation is accompanied by benchmarks and required actions to guide the University toward achieving the outlined recommendations.

Following careful review of the Plan and discussion with both Mr. Amoroso and University leadership, the Secretary of Higher Education submits the below Transition Plan, as required by *N.J.S.A.* 18A:3B-53.6. The Transition Plan outlines the process for the withdrawal of the State Monitor, drawing heavily upon the recommendations presented by Mr. Amoroso as the trusted expert in these circumstances. Each numbered item below represents a prerequisite for the cessation of State Monitor oversight at NJCU. The Secretary must determine that all of the numbered requirements of the Transition Plan below have been successfully satisfied before the Secretary will authorize the withdrawal of the State Monitor.

Transition Plan

Fiscal Accountability Requirements

1. The Board of Trustees will immediately pursue and promptly complete an appropriately resourced assessment that culminates in identifying a fiscally sound New Jersey public institution of higher education with which to merge/partner/affiliate.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By or before March 31, 2025, the University will select a partnership option(s) and begin the process of memorializing the terms and conditions of said partnership. Concurrent with the assessment described above, the University will make a diligent effort to keep the appropriate accreditation bodies reasonably informed about any potential partnership option(s) under consideration by the University.

2. The Board of Trustees will accelerate the collection of significant revenue from property monetization for application to both debt reduction and capital investments.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By July 1, 2024, the current property monetization advisors, in consultation with the Monitor and interim President, will deliver an amended and updated Property Monetization Plan to the State Monitor, the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees, and the Interim President. The Property Monetization Plan will be adopted by the Board of Trustees at the first meeting following the submission and implementation shall begin immediately thereafter and be modified as appropriate.

3. The Board of Trustees will substantially reduce the institution's long-term debt through a range of proven debt reduction strategies, including but not limited to initiating debt relief measures, dynamic asset management, strategic reinvestment of revenues, capital growth, and sustainability.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By or before March 31, 2025, NJCU's long-term debt shall be reduced from its present baseline level by at least \$30 million.

4. NJCU will increase its pursuit of substantive grants from external sources by hiring an individual to focus on grant writing and management.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By September 1, 2024, an appropriate candidate shall be hired to oversee grant writing and grant management.

Governance Requirements

1. Following the confirmations necessary to establish a fully-active Board of Trustees consisting of at least nine members, consistent with University bylaws, the Board of Trustees will reorganize its committee structure to include an Executive Committee, Finance & Audit Committee, Property & Facilities Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and any other committees determined necessary by the Board to ensure its bylaws are aligned with and accurately reflect this modification.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By or before its first meeting of the 2024-2025 Academic Year, the Board of Trustees shall facilitate the prompt implementation of the recommended committee structure.
 - b. Applicable timeline: By or before its first meeting of the 2024-2025 Academic Year, the Board of Trustees shall adopt and implement an annual meeting schedule that includes five regular meetings of the full Board to conduct business in addition to one day-long retreat held annually to review progress in implementing the Fiscal Accountability Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and engage in future fiscal, governance, and academic strategic planning.
2. The Board of Trustees will establish and fully implement an Office (or other administrative unit) or reconfigure an existing position (or administrative unit) to be responsible for student success that delivers comprehensive services, resources, and opportunities, and supports students to achieve academic outcomes commensurate with their potential; motivates them to persist to graduation, promotes their lifelong learning; and ensures they have welcoming, safe, and comfortable spaces within NJCU to thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By September 1, 2024, the Office or position detailed above shall be held by a qualified individual and prepared to offer the required services and supports to students.
3. The Board of Trustees will adopt Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enhance the institution's accountability, strategic alignment, and operational excellence.
 - a. Applicable timeline: By September 30, 2025, NJCU's administration and Board of Trustees will develop, adopt, and begin to monitor the institution's performance and progress using a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which, at minimum, shall address: financial health, student success, admission and enrollment, faculty and staff, facilities and other capital resources, endowment size and growth, and technology infrastructure and digital learning resources.



SECTION 2

Refreshed Mission & Vision Statements



New Jersey City University
2039 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, N.J. 07305 | www.NJCU.edu

Contact: Ira Thor
Associate Vice President for University Communications
O: 201-200-3301 | C: 973-420-8466 | ithor@njcu.edu

For Immediate Release/February 2, 2024

New Jersey City University Announces Mission Refresh and First Vision Statement

JERSEY CITY, N.J. | [New Jersey City University \(NJCU\)](http://www.NJCU.edu) in partnership with campus stakeholders and in affirmation of the valued promise of shared governance has partnered to unveil a refresh of the University Mission Statement. Furthermore, as part of the process, which was finalized during the Fall 2023 semester, NJCU is proud to introduce its first Vision Statement.

Both statements are offered in both English and Spanish, in recognition of the richly diverse community the university serves and as testament to its status as the oldest public four-year minority and Hispanic-serving institution in New Jersey.

MISSION STATEMENT:

New Jersey City University empowers its students through a highly accessible, equity-driven, and transformative education. An NJCU education focuses on students' personal, professional, and civic development to facilitate their socio-economic mobility. We uplift our diverse community of students, including historically underserved and underrepresented, first-generation, and adult learners.

MISIÓN

New Jersey City University empodera a sus estudiantes a través de una educación altamente accesible, impulsada por la equidad y transformativa. La educación en NJCU se enfoca en el desarrollo personal, profesional y cívico de los estudiantes para facilitar su movilidad socioeconómica. Elevamos a nuestra diversa comunidad de estudiantes, incluyendo a aquellos históricamente desatendidos y subrepresentados, estudiantes de primera generación y estudiantes adultos.

VISION STATEMENT:

We aim to inspire intellectual curiosity, nurture conscious citizenship and community engagement, and uplift our community through teaching, research, and service by dedicated and supportive faculty, staff, and partnerships that create opportunity.

VISIÓN

Aspiramos a inspirar la curiosidad intelectual, fomentar la ciudadanía consciente y el compromiso comunitario, y elevar a nuestra comunidad a través de la enseñanza, la investigación y el servicio por parte de un profesorado, personal y socios solidarios que crean oportunidades.

Luke Visconti, the chair of the NJCU Board of Trustees, stressed: "I am proud of the unprecedented spirit of collaboration and shared governance that led to our refreshed mission and vision statements. The Board is dedicated to serving the people of Jersey City, Hudson County, and New Jersey, and we believe the only way to successfully

18x

accomplish this is by including all of NJCU's constituents in the process. NJCU is the on-ramp to the middle class for our students. As chair, I am personally committed to leading the Board in continuing the shared governance necessary to best serve our community. I am grateful to be a member of the hard-working and successful NJCU community, which embodies the very best characteristics of humanity and our country."

NJCU Interim President **Andrés Acebo** acknowledged the significance of the mission refresh and new vision statement as part of the university's continued transition, which also benefited from the administration's commitment to shared governance.

"I am filled with immense pride and gratitude as I reflect on the collaborative journey we have undertaken to articulate a new mission and vision statement for New Jersey City University. This monumental achievement stands as a testament to the power of shared governance and the strength of our collective commitment to shaping and serving the future of our institution.

Our mission, the heart of our educational endeavors, cements our dedication to creating an inclusive and empowering environment for all our students. Through shared values of academic excellence, social responsibility, and community engagement, we aspire to provide a transformative educational experience that prepares our students for the challenges and opportunities that their remarkable lives will confront.

Our vision, a beacon guiding us forward, paints a brilliant and worthy picture of the future we collectively seek for our community. It is a future where intellectual curiosity and social impact thrive, and where we serve a model for advancing knowledge, cultivating conscious citizenship, and promoting equity.

The collaborative efforts that have gifted us these revitalized mission and vision statements are nothing short of inspiring. Faculty, staff, students, administrators, trustees, and community stakeholders have come together to articulate our shared values and aspirations. The thoughtful discussions, diverse perspectives, and collective wisdom that have shaped our new mission and vision statement truly exemplify the renewed spirit of shared governance at NJCU.

This process has not only resulted in a meaningful articulation of our institutional identity but has also strengthened the bonds that tie us together as a community. It is a pertinent reminder that, as we navigate the evolving complexities of higher education, our greatest asset is our collective intelligence, compassion, and commitment to our students' success."

Rachél Fester, Ph.D., NJCU's Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation Liaison Officer for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, helped orchestrate the mission and vision statement process on behalf of the university.

"NJCU is deeply committed to meeting and exceeding the Standards for Accreditation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education — our institutional accreditation agency," **Dr. Fester** noted. "As part of this commitment, on behalf of the Office of the President, I worked hand in hand with the University Senate Ad-hoc Committee on Strategic Planning to engage all faculty, staff, students and alumni in a thoughtful review and refresh of our University mission. I am extraordinarily proud of both our process, which upheld principles of shared governance and rigorous research, and the outcome — a meaningful and measurable mission that celebrates our distinctive and important role in the higher education landscape of our state."

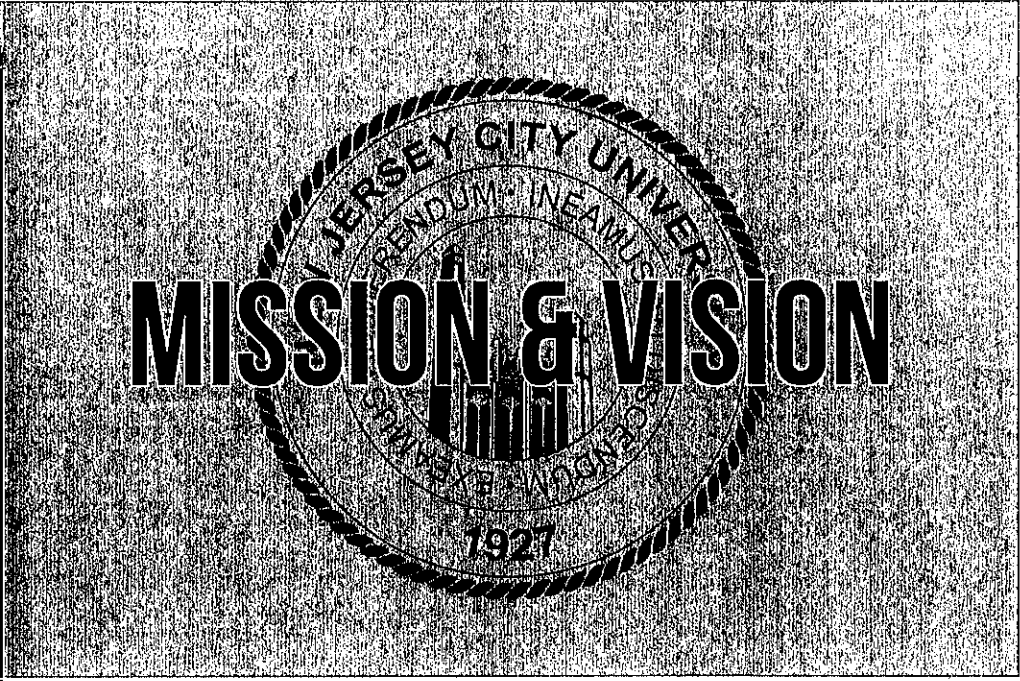
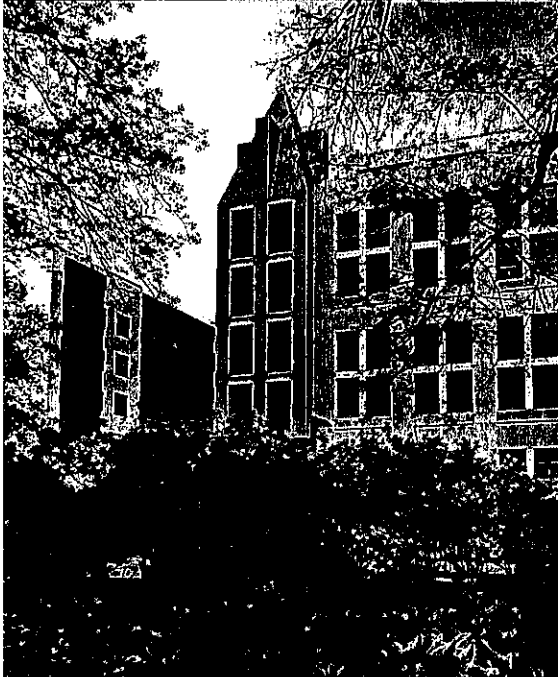
Fran Moran, Ph.D., the President of the University Senate and Chair of NJCU's Political Science Department added: "The new NJCU mission and vision statements reflect NJCU's recommitment to the students and people of Hudson County and New Jersey. Just as important, their development demonstrated a renewed commitment from University Administration to the principles of shared governance so essential to a healthy academic institution. President Acebo and the members of the Board of Trustees entrusted the University Senate to help draft these statements and they welcomed and incorporated our input. The final versions of these statements were the culmination of a full-day retreat attended by members of all constituencies. Speaking on behalf of the University Senate, I can unequivocally say that the

students, faculty, staff and alumni we represent are all deeply committed to this institution and the ideals expressed in these statements.”

About NJCU

New Jersey City University is a comprehensive public regional institution of higher learning located in Jersey City, N.J., dedicated to the development of our students, our city, our communities, and our state. We are a game-changing force for our students and have been recognized as one of the top colleges in the nation improving their upward economic mobility. In fact, NJCU has been ranked No. 1 in New Jersey and Top 10 in the nation in the CollegeNET Social Mobility Index for 2023. Whether enrolled in one of our undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral programs at our three locations, NJCU students have access to an affordable, diverse environment, and an exceptionally supportive faculty. This prepares them to go on to become the next generation of workers and leaders who improve their communities and the State of New Jersey.

—WWW.NJCU.EDU—



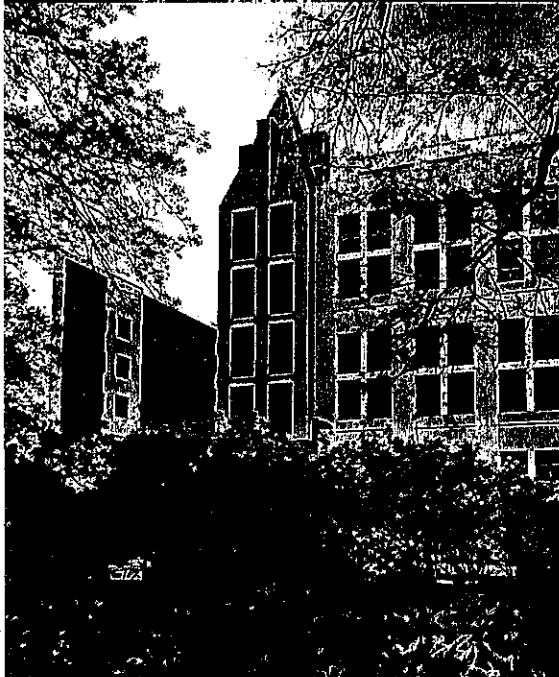
MISSION

New Jersey City University empowers its students through a highly accessible, equity-driven, and transformative education. An NJCU education focuses on students' personal, professional, and civic development to facilitate their socio-economic mobility. We uplift our diverse community of students, including historically underserved and underrepresented, first-generation, and adult learners.

VISION

We aim to inspire intellectual curiosity, nurture conscious citizenship and community engagement, and uplift our community through teaching, research, and service by dedicated and supportive faculty, staff, and partnerships that create opportunity.

NJCU
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY



MISIÓN

New Jersey City University empodera a sus estudiantes a través de una educación altamente accesible, impulsada por la equidad y transformativa. La educación en NJCU se enfoca en el desarrollo personal, profesional y cívico de los estudiantes para facilitar su movilidad socioeconómica. Elevamos a nuestra diversa comunidad de estudiantes, incluyendo a aquellos históricamente desatendidos y subrepresentados, estudiantes de primera generación y estudiantes adultos.

VISIÓN

Aspiramos a inspirar la curiosidad intelectual, fomentar la ciudadanía consciente y el compromiso comunitario, y elevar a nuestra comunidad a través de la enseñanza, la investigación y el servicio por parte de un profesorado, personal y socios solidarios que crean oportunidades.

NJCU
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY



SECTION 3

NJCU's Academic Master Plan



New Jersey City University
2039 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, N.J. 07305 | www.NJCU.edu

Contact: Ira Thor
Associate Vice President for University Communications
O: 201-200-3301 | C: 973-420-8466 | ithor@njcu.edu

For Immediate Release/February 16, 2024

New Jersey City University Announces First Academic Master Plan

JERSEY CITY, N.J. | [New Jersey City University \(NJCU\)](http://www.NJCU.edu) has announced the introduction of the institution's first **Academic Master Plan (AMP)** as the next phase in the university's commitment to its mission and refocus of its efforts around student success and support services.

The AMP was designed by the Division of Academic Affairs and authored by the Office of the Provost with collaborative input provided by hundreds of members of the university community coming together during the Fall 2023 semester to articulate a shared governance produced guidelines for NJCU's academic portfolio.

The AMP is driven by four (4) new insitutional strategic pillars: (1) Student Success and Retention, (2) Community Engagement, (3) Culture of Continuous Improvement, and (4) Financial Stewardship and Responsibility.

Key measurable organizational actions (KOAs) and key performance indicators (KPIs) were developed to achieve the following 10 AMP goals:

- I. Prioritize academic programs that provide jobs where students can use their degrees;
- II. Emphasize civic and community engagement within all academic disciplines;
- III. Ensure a community of care for all NJCU students, including faculty and staff involvement in student success;
- IV. Ensure that principles of justice, equity, and inclusion are taught and applied across all curricular and co-curricular programs and services;
- V. Ensure that every student can be mentored through research, internships, or other educational experiences;
- VI. Ensure that environmental conditions are optimized for teaching and learning;
- VII. Ensure that curricular content and degree offerings are responsive to the needs of the labor market;
- VIII. Strengthen and develop academic programming that demonstrably provides opportunities for students to attain economic mobility;
- IX. Invest in academic programming that yields persistent and high levels of enrollment, retention, student learning, applicable licensing scores, and career placement;
- X. Ensure long-term financial sustainability of the academic portfolio.

24x

The goals of the AMP were identified according to the results of the Mission Refresh Survey conducted in the Spring 2023 semester. The university community was then invited to complete a survey responding to the degree of priority for each of the goals as well as an opportunity to provide an open-ended response to each goal. Participants completed the survey, and the majority of those responding ranked all goals as either highest or high priority.

The plan addresses more than the formal curriculum for NJCU's academic portfolio which currently features 143 for-credit programs: 59 undergraduate, 31 graduate, two doctoral, 27 minors, 23 certificates, and one specialized program. It includes goals to address the shared lived experiences of the university community.

NJCU Interim President **Andrés Acebo** acknowledged the significant progress demonstrated with the introduction of the **Academic Master Plan**, noting: "Today, we have outlined an outcomes-oriented approach that deliberately focuses on where our students' journeys and stories begin. This perspective is at the heart of our mission of meeting our students where they are and giving them the tools to empower their lives. Our university's first comprehensive Academic Master Plan was an intentionally community-driven endeavor whose process exalts the potential of shared governance in higher education — a data-driven plan that was written by our campus, for our community."

Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs **Dr. Donna Breault** said: "New Jersey City University's Academic Master Plan is a guide to operationalizing our mission. It speaks to our shared lived experiences as a university community, and it helps us to create the conditions through which our community will continue to thrive."

Fran Moran, Ph.D., the President of the University Senate added: "The new Academic Master Plan is the culmination of months of close collaboration between administration, faculty, students, and professional staff. It provides a solid blueprint to guide this institution on how we can continue to best serve our students and our community."

The introduction of the Academic Master Plan is the latest step in the University's strategic revitalization of its mission. Notably, the administration's partnership with campus stakeholders and commitment to the promise of shared governance, culminated on February 2 in the unveiling of a refresh of the University Mission Statement and the introduction of NJCU's first Vision Statement.

The plan is one of three strategic initiatives reflecting the university's strategic plan: Academic Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Plan, and Strategic Plan for Student Development and Community Engagement. The latter two publications are also expected to be introduced in the first half of 2024.

About NJCU

New Jersey City University is a comprehensive public regional institution of higher learning located in Jersey City, N.J., dedicated to the development of our students, our city, our communities, and our state. We are a game-changing force for our students and have been recognized as one of the top colleges in the nation improving their upward economic mobility. In fact, NJCU has been ranked No. 1 in New Jersey and Top 10 in the nation in the CollegeNET Social Mobility Index for 2023. Whether enrolled in one of our undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral programs at our three locations, NJCU students have access to an affordable, diverse environment, and an exceptionally supportive faculty. This prepares them to go on to become the next generation of workers and leaders who improve their communities and the State of New Jersey.

—WWW.NJCU.EDU—



ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN 2024-2028

NJCU
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

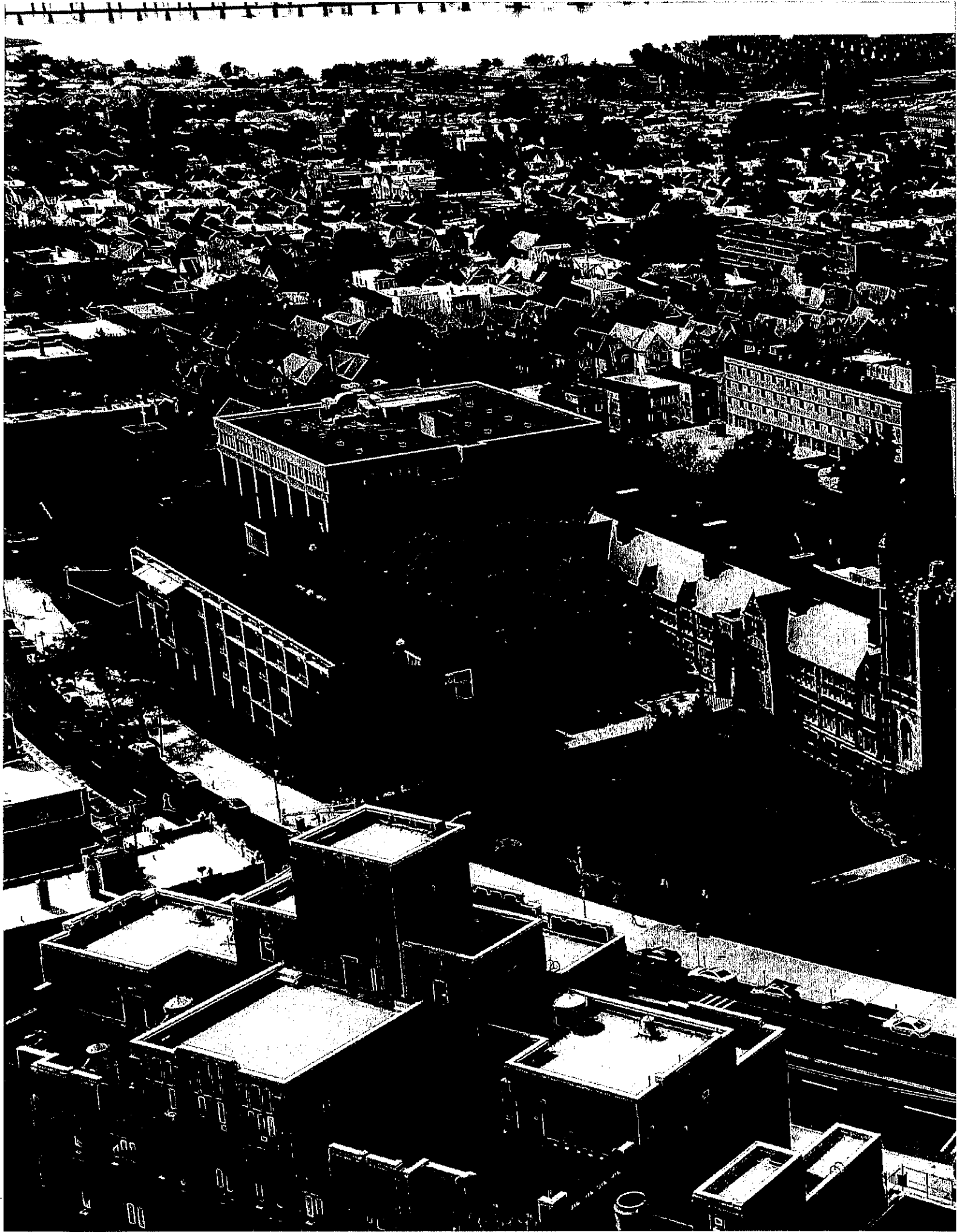




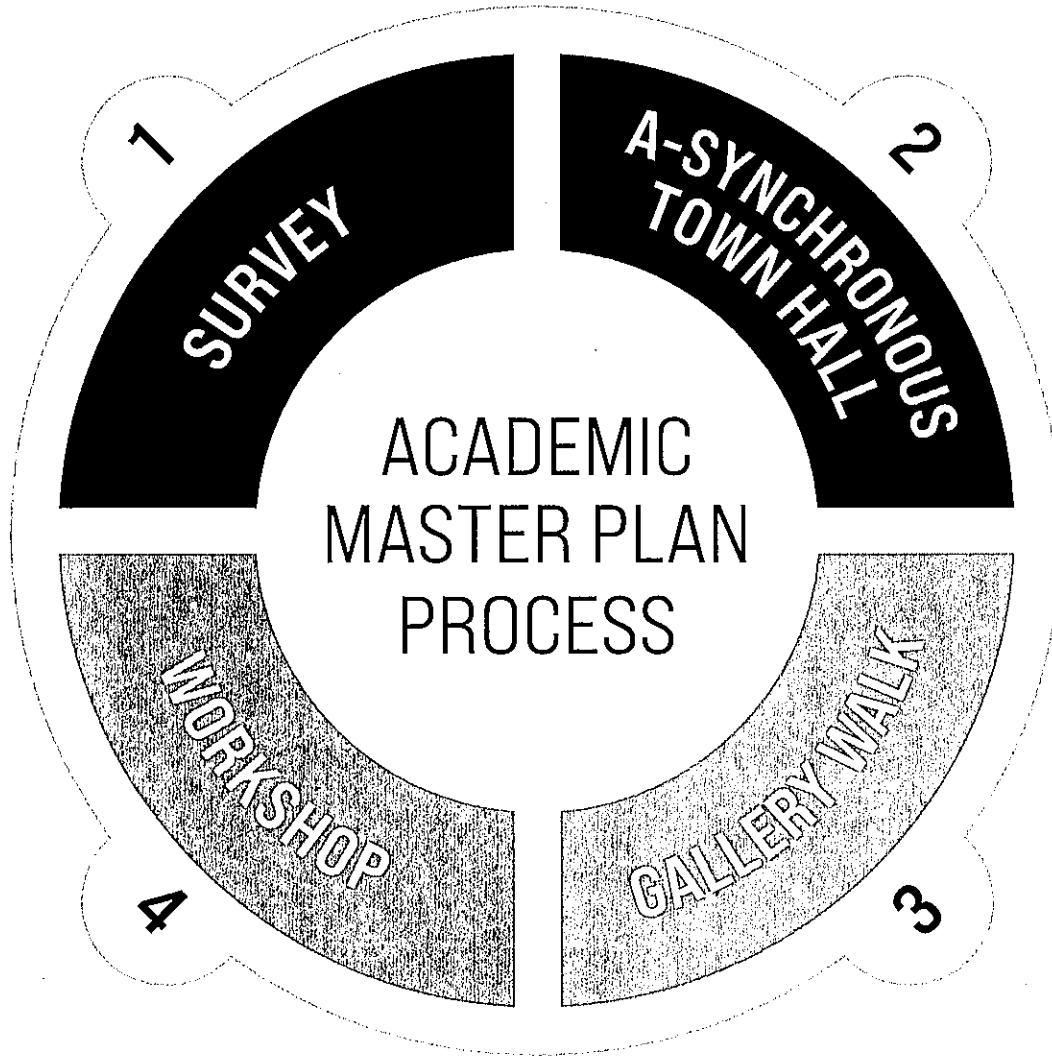
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	3
Executive Summary	5
The Process	7
Message from the President	8
Message from the Provost	10
Message from the Deans	12
Mission and Vision Statements	15
Values	15
Strategic Pillars	15
Academic Programs	18
Most Common Majors	20
General Education Curriculum	21
Who We Serve	23
Understanding the Plan	24
Goal I	25
Goal II	26
Goal III	27
Goal IV	28
Goal V	29
Goal VI	30
Goal VII	31
Goal VIII	32
Goal IX	34
Goal X	35



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Academic Master Plan was developed by hundreds of members of the university community coming together over one semester to articulate guidelines for New Jersey City University (NJCU)'s academic portfolio.
- The plan is one of three documents reflecting the university's strategic plan: Academic Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Plan, and Strategic Plan for Student Development and Community Engagement.
- The plans serve as a basis for budget planning for the institution.
- The plan addresses more than the formal curriculum. It includes goals that address the shared lived experiences of the university community.
- Three guiding principles drove the development of the plan's goals: mission, market, and margins.
- Currently, NJCU maintains 143 for-credit programs: 59 undergraduate, 31 graduate, two (2) doctoral, 27 minors, 23 certificates, and one (1) specialized program.
- The university's most common undergraduate majors include business, health professions, homeland security, and psychology.
- The university's most common graduate majors include education, business, health professions, and homeland security.
- The university made substantial revisions to its general education curriculum and is now the most transfer-friendly public university in New Jersey.
- NJCU serves the most racially and ethnically diverse student population of any four-year public institution in New Jersey.
- NJCU serves the largest percentage of first-generation students when compared to other four-year public universities in the state.
- The plan's goals emphasize the need to prepare our students for successful careers upon graduation.
- The plan's goals also emphasize the need to invest in resources to support student success for retention and program completion.



THE PROCESS

The process to develop our Academic Master Plan took place over the course of the Fall of 2023. The Academic Master Plan's goals were identified according to the results of the Mission Refresh Survey conducted in the Spring semester of 2023. The university community was then invited to complete a survey responding to the degree of priority for each of the goals as well as an opportunity to provide an open-ended response to each goal. Ninety participants completed the survey, and most of those responding ranked all goals as either highest or high priority.

The results of the survey were shared with the university community, and all community members were invited to participate in an asynchronous town hall. Community members had two weeks to provide comments, discussion, and documents on a Padlet addressing each of the goals. Community members provided over 350 comments in the asynchronous town hall. These results were published and shared with the community in preparation for the third step, the Gallery Walk.

From October 24th through October 27th, community members were invited to the Gothic Lounge where they had access to chart paper identifying each goal in the Academic Master Plan. During the first two days, participants were given Post-it notes and asked to contribute possible key performance indicators for each goal based upon the results of the survey and the asynchronous town hall. During the second two days, community members were given dot stickers and asked to prioritize the key performance indicators identified during the first two days. The results of the Gallery Walk were recorded and shared with the community members during the fourth step in the process, the Academic Master Plan Workshop.

More than 90 community members including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and business partners came together on Thursday, November 9th, to write the Academic Master Plan. During the half-day workshop, participants reviewed the results of the survey, asynchronous town hall, and gallery walk. They identified key organizational actions (KOAs) and key performance indicators (KPIs). They also identified strategies to achieve the KOAs and KPIs and the individuals responsible for the outcomes and financial implications of the plan.

With the plan developed, the costs to implement the plan were extracted and reviewed by a team of stakeholders including the following: the president, provost, CFO, deans, assistant provosts, and key faculty and staff members. The committee reviewed expenses for FY25 and subsequent fiscal years to determine which elements of the plan were operational and which were aspirational. For parts of the plan that were identified as aspirational, additional measures will be taken to seek grant funding.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A Mission-Driven Approach

At NJCU, our work, every day, is proudly anchored and tethered to a mission and a remarkable community—a mission of mobility and of empowering a socioeconomically diverse population and historically underserved and marginalized people. This is our promise, and a pillar of our commitment to being one of the public anchor institutions in Hudson County and our surrounding communities.

As our university unveils its first comprehensive Academic Master Plan, we continue to deliver on that promise. Our Academic Master Plan will drive our mission with intention.

Our Academic Master Plan builds upon the framework outlined in Spring 2023 in our *Recovery & Revitalization Plan*, which outlines the essential focal points for long-term financial sustainability, mission focus, and student success.

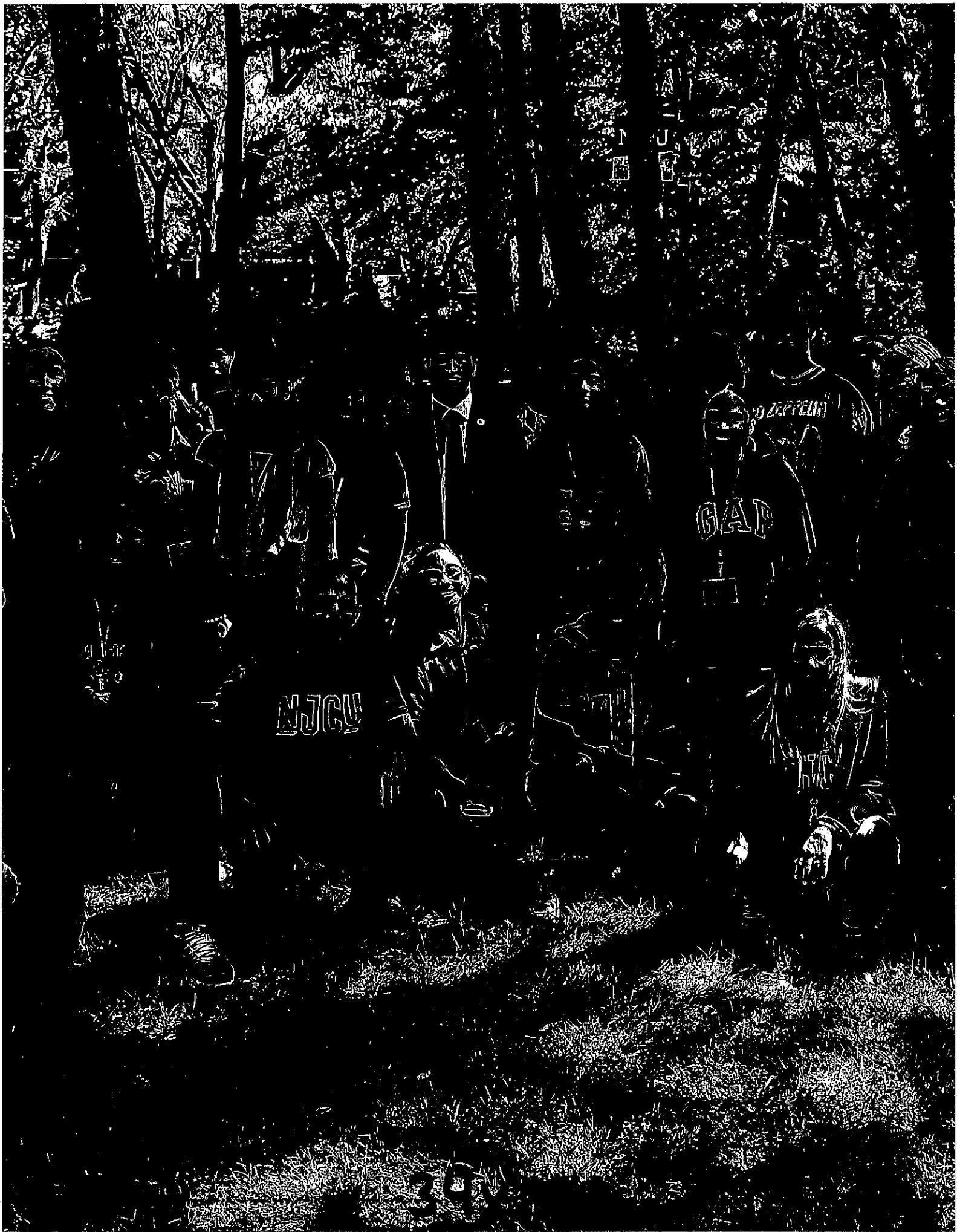


Together, we have revitalized the University's mission so that it that enrolls, retains, and graduates more students, with a deliberate and primary focus of driving the highest level of equitable access to a four-year degree for the State's most underserved and promising populations. We will emphasize that NJCU's central teaching and learning mission will focus on offering quality academic programs that are relevant to the needs of Jersey City, Hudson County, and the State to bring the promise of economic mobility within reach for thousands of individuals and their families every year.

I am appreciative of the dedication and commitment of our university community and stakeholders whose work led to the development of this *Academic Master Plan*. Our work in this pivotal area did not begin with the unveiling of this document. Rather, it has been grounded in deliberate and collaborate efforts over the course of the last year, including an overhaul of our academic portfolio and the most substantial revisions to our general education curriculum in decades, which has resulted in NJCU becoming the most transfer-friendly public institution in the state.

We will continue to fulfill the promise of a better life through access to higher education—a promise of meeting an extraordinary community where they are. At NJCU, you don't have to change your zip code to find your promise. The communities this institution has served for nearly a century deserve nothing less.

Andrés Acebo
Interim President



MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST

A Promise

NJCU's Academic Master Plan is the cornerstone of the university's revitalization. It reflects our strong commitment to ensure that our work focuses on the institution's mission, strategic priorities, and core values. As the longest-standing Hispanic-serving institution in New Jersey, NJCU serves the most socioeconomically diverse students in the state. We are fully committed to ensuring that our students have every opportunity to thrive. Through this plan, we move forward with clear intention and urgency to respond to the changing landscape of higher education and the very real needs of our students and community.



A Guide

This plan is a living document that guides future development of curricular and co-curricular programming. It also guides key decisions regarding university resources. Priorities are only real if they are explicitly reflected in our institutional budget. This document drives our decisions regarding our budget year-over-year. Further, the Academic Master Plan will serve as the foundation of our new program review process that will be developed during the Spring of 2024. The review process will reflect our commitment to continuous improvement that includes student success and retention and fiscal stewardship.

A Testament

This plan was developed by the university community over one semester, the Fall of 2023. The process followed a challenging year of fiscal crisis. During the 2022/2023 academic year, NJCU reduced its academic portfolio by 34%, and this resulted in the loss of exceptional faculty and staff. Hundreds of community members, including faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders, participated in the development of this plan. This document reflects the resiliency and determination of the NJCU community to come together and build the plan for the university's future.

Donna Bréault, Ph.D.

*Provost and Senior Vice President
of Academic Affairs*



MESSAGE FROM THE DEANS

NJCU is resolute and resilient, shaping a course towards a future defined by both purpose and service. As we chart our way, we are guided by a profound understanding of our identity with a steadfast and renewed commitment to our community which includes many low-income families. Our institution, the largest Hispanic-serving entity in the state, has been a beacon of hope for those seeking generational advancement, particularly in Hudson County, where most of our students herald from households with the lowest incomes in the state.

Our university's rallying cry, "enter to learn, exit to serve," echoes through our nearly 100-year long history. It reflects the central principle that has shaped the destiny of our graduates. Now, as we stabilize our finances, streamline our academic endeavors, and reimagine our purpose, we embark on a journey to better serve the diverse tapestry of students who call, and will call in the future, NJCU their academic home.

As we move forward with dedicated faculty, collaborative leadership, stringent financial controls, and a rededicated focus on our mission, we envision a future that places our students at the forefront. Our Academic Master Plan is not just a document; it is a testament to our commitment to educational excellence, justice, equity, and community service. The driving question that propels this master-plan process is simple yet profound: What kind of future does NJCU imagine for itself academically?

Dr. Scott Mittman

Dean of the College of Arts and Science

Dr. Lourdes Sutton

Dean of the College of Education

Dr. Marvin Walker

*Dean of the College of Professional Studies,
and Acting Dean of the School of Business*

Dr. Wanda Rutledge

Dean of Graduate Studies, Adult, and Continuing Education







MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

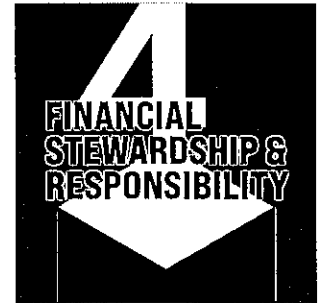
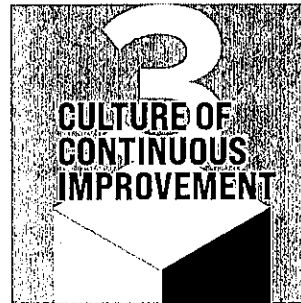
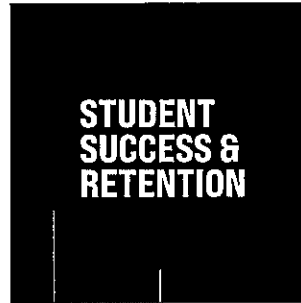
Mission

NJCU empowers its students through a highly accessible, equity-driven, and transformative education. An NJCU education focuses on students’ personal, professional, and civic development to facilitate their socio-economic mobility. We uplift our diverse community of students, including historically underserved and underrepresented, first-generation, and adult learners.

Vision

We aim to inspire intellectual curiosity, nurture conscious citizenship and community engagement, and uplift our community through teaching, research, and service by dedicated and supportive faculty, staff, and partnerships that create opportunity.

STRATEGIC PILLARS



VALUES

To Know

- Academic excellence
- Knowledge and scholarship

To Grow

- Lifelong learning
- Discovery and growth
- Conscious citizenship
- Socioeconomic mobility
- Empowerment and freedom
- Leadership

To Connect

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Civic engagement

40x

Guiding Principles for Academic Programming: Mission, Market, and Margins

Higher education cannot function within a vacuum. While this has always been the case, it is even more so as institutions face new challenges. Scholars have warned of the impending enrollment cliff with particularly dire warnings for schools in the Northeast (Copely & Douthett, 2020; Grawe, 2021; Harvey, 2021; Harvey, 2021; Schutte, 2023). This is particularly sobering when we consider how more than 50% of New Jersey’s students leave the state to attend college. Based upon declining birth rate, scholars anticipate a minimum of a 10% decline in the undergraduate applicant pool in the next decade. This does not include additional trends that pose market challenges to universities.

Alternatives to college also pose a threat to universities. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the percentage of students planning to pursue non-degree micro-credentials increased from 34% to 47% between 2019 and 2022 (Spies, HolonIQ, 2023). In 2021, over 100 million learners pursued micro-credentials from a variety of providers—spending more than \$10 billion dollars. Many of these micro-credentials are offered by agencies and corporations. Students now expect universities to incorporate micro-credentials into their programs to make them more competitive (Spies, HolonIQ, 2023).

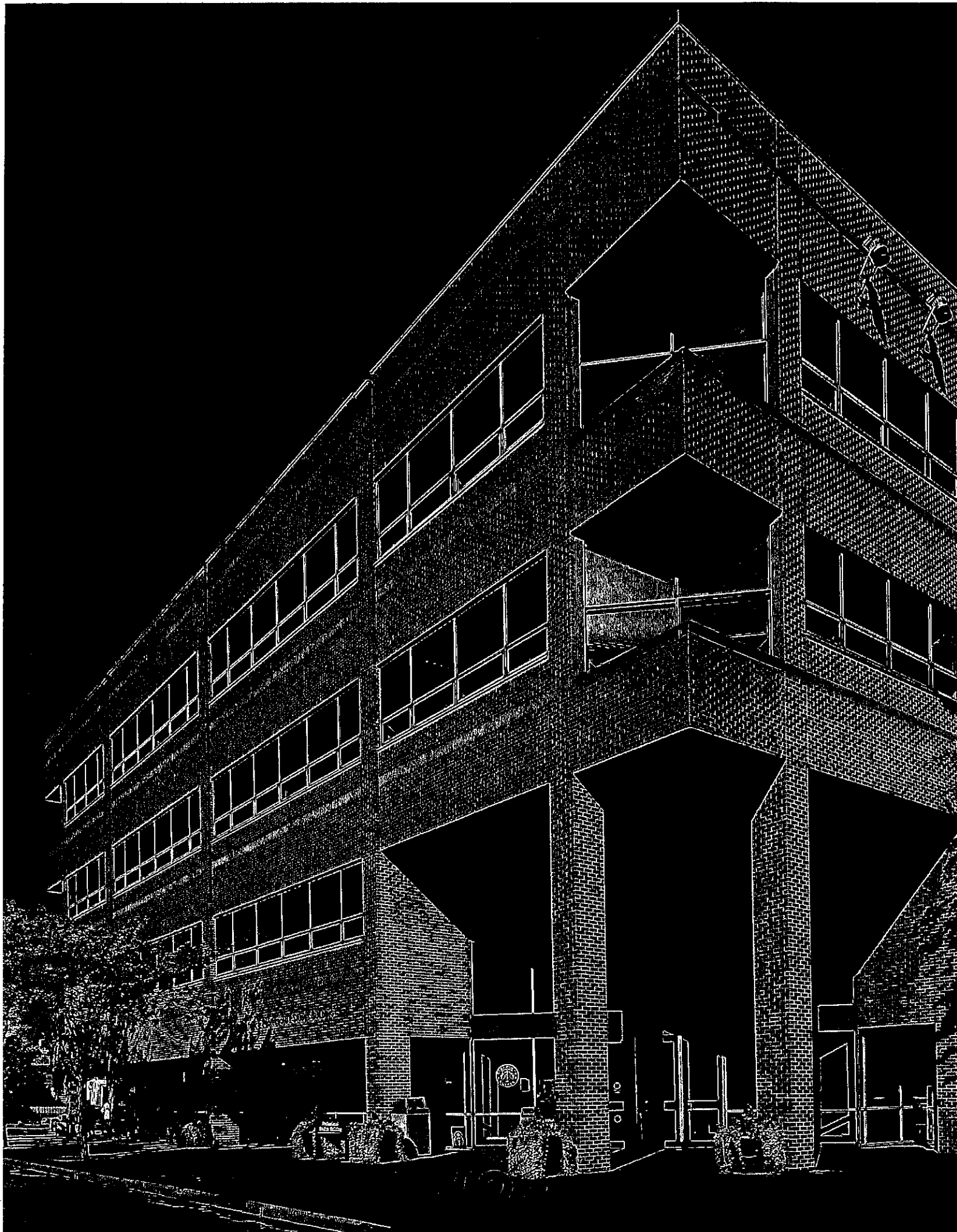
With the declining enrollment and the new sources for faster and cheaper credentials, competition will increase. In a 2019 survey, 500 university leaders indicated that the biggest issue their institution would face in the next three to five years was competition with other universities. As noted in Bauld’s (2023) assessment of increased competition, it is important to explore ways to collaborate with other state institutions instead of seeing them solely as competitors. NJCU set the example when sunsetting its Ed.D. in Community College Leadership in 2022 and building a partnership to help students complete their degrees through Rowan University’s Ed.D. program. We are also collaborating with Hudson County Community College to use their services to support our students for whom English is a second language. We are committed to collaboration with state institutions to ensure all students and state institutions thrive.

With the changing landscape of higher education, we use three key principles to guide our efforts in academic programming: mission, market, and margins. As Cowen and Winston (2019) note, without a clear sense of purpose, universities cannot prioritize strategic initiatives. NJCU has a vital mission that is clearly tied to the community it serves, and so we set goals and strategies informed by our mission, and we make four distinctions in relation to that mission:

- **Mission Essential:** The absence of a program or initiative would clearly challenge or undermine the university’s mission.
- **Mission Consistent:** Programs or initiatives are consistent with the university’s mission, but their absence would not challenge or undermine the mission of the university.
- **Mission Adjacent:** programs or initiatives that are not explicitly aligned to the mission, but they do not detract from the mission and may serve entrepreneurial functions.
- **Mission Inconsistent:** Programs or initiatives that do not support the mission of the institution.

Second, we consider the market for our programs. This includes seeing our academic program in relation to other programs in the state or relevant market as well as the changing needs of the labor force. Finally, we consider the margins for programming costs. We believe it is important to understand the cost of programming and the value of investing in programming for the institution. Between 2008 and 2018, New Jersey’s funding for universities declined by 22.6% when adjusted for inflation (Mitchell, Leachman, & Saenz, 2019). With limited funding, it is essential to base budget decisions on clear metrics and make strategic decisions to support the academic strengths and opportunities within our portfolio.

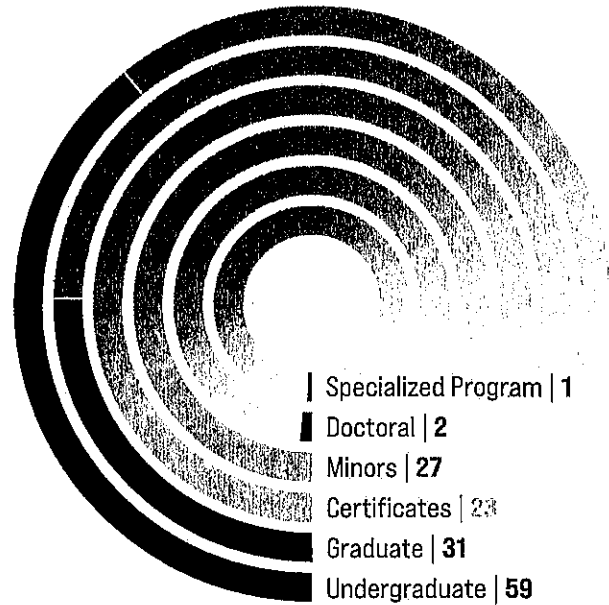
These three principles—mission, market, and margins— influenced the development of our strategic goals as well as the strategies and the key performance indicators we developed as part of our academic master plan. The framework continues to help us navigate the external forces that impact higher education as we address the needs and opportunities related to our academic portfolio.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Undergraduate (59)

- Accounting, B.S.
- Accounting—Bridge Program to the M.S. in Accounting, B.S.
- Art—B.A. Degree, Specialization in Art Therapy
- Art—B.A. Degree, Specialization in Fine Arts and Crafts
- Art—B.A. Degree, Specialization in Graphic Arts and Design
- Art—BFA Degree, Concentration in Ceramics
- Art—BFA Degree, Concentration in Drawing/Painting
- Art—BFA Degree, Concentration in Graphic Design
- Art—BFA Degree, Concentration in Illustration
- Art—BFA Degree, Concentration in Photography
- Art—BFA Degree, Concentration in Printmaking
- Biochemistry, B.S.
- Biology—Medical Imaging Science Specialization, B.S.
- Biology—Medical Laboratory Science Joint-Degree Program, B.S.
- Biology Joint Degree and Dual-Degree Programs
- Biology, B.A./B.S.
- Business Analytics and Data Science, B.S.
- Business Information Systems, B.S.
- Chemistry, B.A./B.S.
- Computer Science, B.S.
- Criminal Justice, B.S.
- Cybersecurity, B.S.
- Elementary Education Co-major with K–6 Certification (With Major in Arts and Sciences)
- English—Creative Writing, B.A.
- English—Literature, B.A.
- English—Teacher Certification Elementary Education (K-6), B.A.
- English—Teacher Certification Secondary Education (K-12), B.A.
- Exercise Science, B.S.
- Finance, B.S.
- Fire Science, B.S.
- Global Business, B.S.
- Health Sciences—Public Health Education, B.S.
- History, B.A.
- History—Social Studies (Teacher Certification), B.A.
- Management, B.S.
- Marketing B.S. and Career Preparation
- Mathematics, B.A.
- Mathematics—Teacher Certification, B.A.
- Media Arts, B.A.
- Music—Music Business, B.A.
- Music—Musical Theatre, B.A.
- Music—No specialization, B.A.
- National Security Studies, B.S.



- Nursing—Accelerated Program (Second Degree), B.S.N.
- Performance—Classical - Instrumental (other than piano), B.M.
- Performance—Classical—Instrumental (other than piano), B.M.
- Performance—Classical—Instrumental (piano), B.M.
- Performance—Classical—Voice, B.M.
- Performance—Jazz Studies, B.M.
- Philosophy & Religion, B.A.
- Political Science, B.A.
- Psychology, B.A.
- Secondary Education with K-12 Certification (with major in Arts and Sciences)
- Sociology and Anthropology, B.A.
- Spanish, B.A.
- Spanish—Teacher Certification, B.A.
- Sports Management, B.S.
- Supply Chain, Logistics and Maritime Port Management, B.S.
- Women's and Gender Studies, B.A.

Graduate Programs (31)

- Accounting, M.S.
- Accounting—B.S./M.S. Bridge Program in Accounting, M.S.
- Business Analytics and Data Science, M.S.
- Business Information Systems, M.S.
- Counseling—Clinical Mental Health Counseling Option, M.A.
- Counseling—School Counseling Option, M.A.
- Cybersecurity, M.S.
- Educational Psychology, M.A.
- Educational Technology, M.A.

- Educational Technology with a Concentration in School Library Media Specialist, M.A.
- Educational Technology for New Pathways Completers, M.A.
- Educational Technology with Stem Certificate, M.A.
- Elementary Education—Teacher Certification, MAT
- Financial Technology, M.S.
- Management Specialization: Health Care Management, MBA
- Management Specialization: Supply Chain and Maritime Port Management, MBA
- MBA, Business Analytics Specialization
- MBA, Finance Specialization
- MBA, Organizational Management and Leadership Specialization
- National Security Studies, M.S.
- Nursing with a Specialization in School Nursing, M.S.
- Performance—Multi-Style Strings, M.M.
- Performance—Classical Instrumental, M.M.
- Performance—Classical Vocal, M.M.
- Performance—Composition, M.M.
- Reading and Reading Specialist Certification, M.A.
- Secondary Education—Teacher Certification, MAT
- Special Education—Autism Specialization, MAT
- Special Education—Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant Endorsement Eligibility, M.A.
- Special Education—Special Education with NPTNJ Program, MAT
- Special Education—Teacher of Students with Disabilities Endorsement Eligibility Program, MAT
- Mathematics, Minor
- Music, Minor
- Military Science, Minor
- National Security Studies, Minor
- Philosophy, Minor
- Political Science, Minor
- Pre-Law, Minor
- Professional Financial Planning, Minor
- Psychology, Minor
- Sexuality and Queer Studies, Minor
- Sociology, Minor
- Spanish, Minor
- Women's and Gender Studies, Minor

Specialized Program (1)

- School Psychology, Professional Diploma

Certificates (23)

- Assistive Technology, Specialist Certificate
- Big Data and National Security, Certificate
- Bilingual/Bicultural Education Certification
- Counseling-Play Therapy Certification
- Crime Scene Analysis, Certificate in
- Driver Education Certification
- Dual Endorsement Program: ESL and Bilingual/Bicultural Endorsements
- English as a Second Language Alternate Route
- English as a Second Language Certification
- Extremism and National Security, Certificate in
- Graduate School Nurse Certificate Program
- Intelligence Analysis, Certificate in
- International Security, Certificate in
- Loss Prevention
- New Jersey Certification for Driver Education
- New York Permanent Certification for Driver Education
- New York Provisional Certification for Driver Education
- Principal Certification Program
- School Psychology Certification
- Special Education—Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant, Endorsement Eligibility Program
- Special Education—Teacher of Students with Disabilities Endorsement (TOSD) Eligibility Program
- STEM Certificate
- Supervisor (P-12) Certification

Doctoral Programs (2)

- D.Sc. Civil Security—Leadership, Management, and Policy
- Ed.D. in Educational Technology Leadership

Minors (27)

- African & African-American Studies Minor
- Biology, Minor
- Business Analytics and Data Science Minor
- Chemistry, Minor
- Computer and Information Systems, Minor
- Computer Science, Minor
- Criminal Justice, Minor
- English—Creative Writing, Minor
- English—Literature, Minor
- Fire Science, Minor
- Fitness, Exercise and Sports, Minor
- Global Studies, Minor
- History, Minor
- Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies, Minor

44x

MOST COMMON MAJORS**UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS**

In 2022, 78% of the undergraduates who graduated majored in six key academic areas:

Academic Disciplines	Number of Graduates	Percentage of Graduates
Business, Management, Marketing	262	22%
Health Professions	246	20%
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting	175	14%
Psychology	138	11%
Biology	79	7%
Computer & Information Science	48	4%

GRADUATE DEGREES

Academic Disciplines	Number of Graduates	Percentage of Graduates
Education	228	52%
Business, Management, Marketing	95	22%
Health Professions	35	8%
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting	31	7%
Psychology	29	7%
Visual/Performing Arts	23	5%

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Academic Disciplines	Number of Graduates	Percentage of Graduates
Education	25	89%
Homeland Security	3	11%

45x

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

As with all colleges and universities, general education provides a broader disciplinary context within which students can see and understand their majors. According to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), general education introduces students to new intellectual experiences and ensures that students can demonstrate essential intellectual skills related to communication, reasoning, analysis, and literacy.

However, for students to complete their degrees in a timely manner, access and ability to complete general education requirements are essential. This is particularly true of students who are transferring to NJCU.

According to Monaghan & Attewell, losing credits when transferring to a four-year institution decreases the likelihood of graduation. Kadlec & Gupta concur. When students are forced to use transfer credits as electives, they struggle to complete their degrees in a timely manner. Reeper & Grote examine the factors that impact transfer student completion using a curricular complexity framework, and they identify obstacles that already exist for transfer students including the timing of the courses offered and the number of prerequisite courses that control what students can take in each semester.

The challenges faced by transfer students must be managed on top of those imposed by restrictive general education programs, and they often result in even more delays and a greater likelihood that students will not complete their degrees.

It is understandable that academic programs maintain prerequisites. As such, we know that our students have some restrictions on the courses they can take in a specific semester. By making our general education program more flexible, students can now complete those requirements in a more flexible fashion and with more choices. Further, they can get credit for coursework they have completed elsewhere so they have additional opportunities each semester to focus on their majors.

The general knowledge that students achieve from their general education curriculum—whether it is from NJCU or from a community college—becomes the foundation that helps students see their worlds in a larger context. It helps them to ascertain their needs more clearly and to see how knowledge and skills achieved through other disciplines strengthen their ability to ask bigger questions and to communicate more effectively. The sum intellectual total of knowledge, skills, and outcomes achieved through general education are not, as Dewey notes, “a fixed possession.” Instead, they are “an agency and instrumentality for opening new fields (p. 90).” To that end, we have created as many ways as we can to achieve this broad disciplinary perspective so that we can help our students use that enlarged understanding to achieve their academic and professional goals.

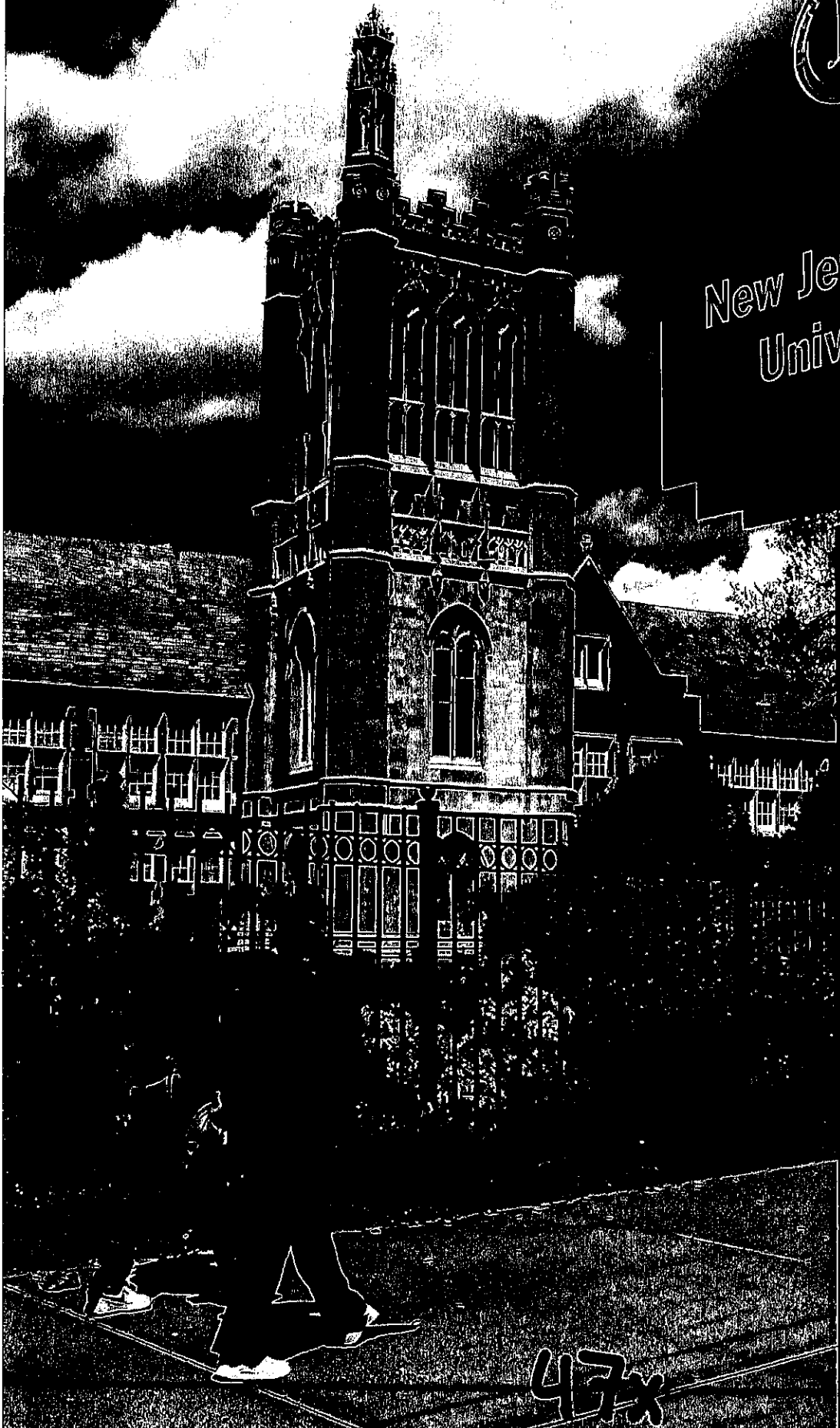
The general education program reform developed by the General Education Committee provides the opportunity for transfer students to progress to degree completion in a timely manner while maintaining academic standards. This creates an opportunity for reform which makes NJCU a state-wide leader as the most transfer-friendly public university in the state.

The new general education curriculum allows every course on the approved New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) list, including those without direct equivalencies, to be accepted at NJCU for general education credit. In an era where higher education must be willing to adapt and change, NJCU has become the only four-year institution in New Jersey to do this.

In *Child and the Curriculum*, Dewey argues that the child should be the center of gravity around which the curriculum evolves. The same can be said of our students. When the center of gravity influencing our curriculum decisions becomes something other than our students, then we fail to live up to our mission. Our students and our curriculum should be, as Dewey describes, “two limits which define a single process (p. 189).” We believe the new general education curriculum achieves this.



New Jersey City University



47x

WHO WE SERVE

As noted in our **Recovery and Revitalization Plan**, NJCU serves the most racially and ethnically diverse student population of any public four-year institution in New Jersey. While the average percentage of Hispanic students in New Jersey’s public four-year institutions is 18%, 45% of NJCU’s student population is Hispanic. Further, 20% of NJCU’s students are Black while the average percentage of Black students in New Jersey’s public four-year institutions is 12%. These statistics not only underscore our imperative commitment to serving the underserved but also illuminate the distinctive tapestry that defines our academic community. The predominant number of NJCU students proudly claim the title of first-generation scholars, emanating from households with incomes that set us apart as the institution championing generational advancement in Hudson County.

NJCU also serves the largest percentage of first-generation students when compared to other four-year public institutions, and the median annual income our students is \$42,200.¹ Throughout this Academic Master Plan, the NJCU community had our unique and exceptional student population in mind as they identified key operational actions and key performance indicators with a specific focus on ensuring economic mobility.



¹ The Upshot: Economic diversity and student outcomes at New Jersey City University. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/new-jersey-city-university>.

U.S. CENSUS DATA

	New Jersey	Hudson County	Jersey City	NJCU
Total Population	9,288,994	724,854	292,449	N/A
Black/African American	1,219,770	79,498	58,103	N/A
Black/African American % of Total	13%	11%	20%	20%
Hispanic/Latino	2,002,575	293,019	72,777	N/A
Hispanic/Latino % of Total	22%	40%	25%	45%
White, not Hispanic/Latino	4,816,381	206,530	69,624	N/A
White, not Hispanic/Latino % of Total	52%	28%	24%	18%
Median Household Income	\$89,296	\$80,329	\$81,958	\$42,200

Source: www.census.gov

48x



UNDERSTANDING THE PLAN

A Vital Part of the Whole

The Academic Master Plan is one of three plans developed for NJCU's strategic planning. The Strategic Enrollment Plan was developed using the same process during the same period—Fall of 2023. In the Spring of 2024, the university committee will use the same process to develop a strategic plan for student development and community engagement.

10 Goals

The Academic Master Plan consists of 10 goals. The goals were formed based upon the three guiding principles of our strategic planning: mission, market, and margins.

K.O.A.s and K.P.I.s

The Academic Master Plan operationalizes the 10 goals through two key measures: key organizational actions (K.O.A.s) and key performance indicators (K.P.I.s). In addition, the plan introduces strategies that we will use to achieve the key organizational actions.

GOAL I**PRIORITIZE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE JOBS WHERE STUDENTS CAN USE THEIR DEGREES.**

Research indicates a growing gap between the skills possessed by students and those demanded by the labor force. “To close the skills gap, national education systems must prioritize developing students’ capabilities for lifelong success in the labor market, instead of the traditional emphasis on helping them get a job upon graduation.” (Hoteit, L., Al-Hajjar, A., El Hachem, M., & Aouad, W., 2023)

To enhance the relevance and effectiveness of our academic offerings, NJCU is committed to prioritizing programs that directly align with the current job market. By focusing on academic programs that provide tangible career pathways, we aim to increase the employability of our students and contribute to their long-term success. This strategic approach involves continuous assessments to identify industries with high demand for skilled professionals, ensuring that our curriculum reflects real-world needs. We actively seek input from industry leaders, establish advisory boards, and cultivate strategic partnerships to stay informed of evolving trends. Additionally, we emphasize practical experiences, internships, and work-study opportunities within our programs, providing students with hands-on exposure to the professional environment. Through these efforts, we strive to create a learning environment where students can maximize the utility of their degrees, fostering satisfaction, success, and a strong connection between education and future employment.

K.O.A.s

- I.a.** Prioritize academic programs that provide opportunities with connectivity to campus.
- Increase student leadership/work study initiatives by 5% annually.
 - Increase the number of courses providing embedded tutoring by two courses per year.
- I.b.** Prioritize academic programs that increase the number of students who continue toward graduate degrees.
- Add a minimum of two additional bridge programs by 2028.
 - Increase access to dedicated graduate advisors for key programs by ensuring a graduate advisor per college by 2024 and additional advisors based upon FTE by 2028.
 - Increase graduate information and networking sessions per graduate program by 15% year-over-year.
- I.c.** Prioritize academic programs that provide education on employment opportunities—“How to start your career.”
- Increase the number of programs with meaningful co-op and internship opportunities by 25% by 2028.²
 - Increase the number of programs that have an advisory board that can help mentor students and advise programs on curriculum design by 25% by 2028.
 - Increase cross-department and cross-program collaboration to provide a minimum of 10 events related to job opportunities (e.g. job fairs) annually.
 - Provide employment opportunity data for professional programs by 2028.
- I.d.** Prioritize academic programs that demonstrate measurable progress on teaching those student learning outcomes that are in most demand by employers as reported by the AAC&U survey on what skills employers most want.
- Increase number of programs with programmatic goals that align with AAC&U’s five competencies for workforce success: communication, teamwork, sales and customer service, leadership, problem solving and complex thinking.
 - Increase number of workshops offered by CTL and others on revising curriculum and improving pedagogy in AAC&U’s five workforce competencies.
- K.P.I.s**
- Increased retention of students involved in internships, embedded tutoring, mentorship, and bridge programs.
 - Decrease in D’s, F’s, and W’s in courses where AAC&U’s five competencies are emphasized.

² Career services will work with the Provost’s office and key stakeholders to develop a rubric for substantive internship experiences. This instrument will be used in relation to this KPI.

GOAL II

EMPHASIZE CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN ALL ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES.

The Carnegie Foundation defines community engagement as “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”

Universities and their community partners reinforce a shared commitment growth and success when they partner. Further, when academic programming includes community engagement, students can benefit from real-world applications that make a difference. They can see how their learning impacts those around them. Community-engaged learning also has a positive impact on faculty. Faculty engaged in community engaged learning become boundary spanners—building connections across organizations, agencies, institutions, and disciplines. In these roles, they focus on problem solving and facilitating relationships while they address gaps in student knowledge, community needs, and their own lines of inquiry (Purcell, Pearl, & Van Schyndel, 2020). As an institution anchored in Jersey City and Northern New Jersey, we believe community engagement is an essential part of our mission.

K.O.A.s

II.a. Build curriculum emphasizing civic and community engagement.

- Reestablish a faculty learning community for engagement by 2025.
- Increase external funding and support for Community-Engaged Learning curriculum development efforts by at least \$25,000 annually by 2028.
- Commission an internal self-study to investigate the combined efforts of community/civic engagement and other existing offices.

II.b. Build infrastructure for community engagement

- Establish a center for community engagement charged with supporting academic program initiatives that have clear and measurable impact within the community.
- Build necessary “soft infrastructure” for community engagement: education about CEL, communication plan, etc.

K.P.I.s

- Increase number of faculty participating in community engaged learning.
- Increase in number of students participating in community engagement.
- Increase in number and variety of courses with CEL designations.
- Increase retention of students participating in community engagement.



GOAL III**ENSURE A COMMUNITY OF CARE FOR ALL NJCU STUDENTS, INCLUDING FACULTY AND STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT SUCCESS.**

We recognize that all students attending NJCU have social, emotional, physical, financial, and academic needs. To help students thrive, we must provide support in all these areas.

Student success efforts cannot be limited to academic support alone. Similarly, student success initiatives cannot be siloed. It is essential to create and sustain an explicit culture of care that includes all university stakeholders. Further, we must always hold ourselves accountable regarding the culture of care we provide. This commitment requires us to focus on communication, connection, and empowering our community while recognizing the potential obstacles to care within our organization (Greenhough, Davies, & Bowlby, 2022).

**KOAs:****III.a. Define, scope, and scale “community of care.”**

- Create centralized apparatus for providing unduplicated in-person learner supports.
- Develop a robust campaign to increase awareness of “community of care” assets.
- Create apparatus for providing holistic support for faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Deploy resources that promote teaching and learning in the virtual, blended, experiential, and in-person environments.

III.b. Utilize, impact, and measure satisfaction with “culture of care” assets.

- Measure participation, repeat participation, and varied participation in culture of care assets.
- Measure academic outcomes of individuals receiving/using support services.
- Measure satisfaction levels of individuals receiving and using support services.
- Include efficacy of outreach strategies in continuous assessment and improvement, including preferences for high-tech vs. high-touch strategies.

KPIs

- Increase use of community of care assets for learners by 5% in 2025, 10% in 2026 and 15% in 2027 and 2028.
- Reduce D’s, F’s, or W’s for students who access learner supports.
- Increase in number of students accessing community of care assets.
- Increase retention for students accessing community of care assets.
- Increase the number of graduates employed by NJCU.

GOAL IV**ENSURE THAT PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ARE TAUGHT AND APPLIED ACROSS ALL CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.**

NJCU's diversity is one of its most profound strengths. We recognize that students attending more diverse schools are more likely to develop sharper critical thinking capacities. They are also more likely to have more positive attitudes about people who are not like them (Chicas-Mosier, Fogelman, & Peretz, 2023).

When universities focus on justice, equity, and inclusion, they can enhance the academic environment, promote retention of students, faculty, and staff, and create a more inclusive culture (Williams & Clowney, 2007). At NJCU, we are committed to holding ourselves accountable in terms of an inclusive and just culture. This work includes identifying organizational and cultural obstacles to equity, justice, and inclusion (Malcom-Piquex & Bensimon, 2017). We strive toward a model of social justice leadership where we support the sense of community found at NJCU and continually examine how power structures, past practices, and policies may hinder these efforts (Brown, 2006).

KOAs:

- IV.a.** Create a fully-funded and staffed office of Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that leads cohesive and collaborative campus-wide efforts.
- Perform a national search for a DEI officer that can spearhead the development of the office.
 - Develop training programs that will benefit the office of JDEI and the greater university community.
- IV.b.** Extend/replicate existing student success initiatives to allow more students to participate and increase retention and graduation rates.
- Identify existing successful student success initiatives and ensure options are available to all.

- Initiate a student needs assessment for support services.
- Revise policies relative to student success.
- Revise waitlist, registration, and scheduling policies to ensure sections are available to all students.
- Investigate and revise the university calendar, policies, and supports to ensure students of all faiths can participate and succeed.

IV.c. Adopt ongoing, interactive, DEI professional development for administration, faculty, and professional staff to create a positive shift in our campus climate and expand our knowledge base.

- Initiate JDEI division and hire directors for the LATI Center, Lee Hagan Center for Africana Studies, DACA, etc.
- Hire a University Chaplain to promote interfaith relations, address issues of campus life in a diverse community of various religious backgrounds, and provide educational support to faculty.
- Prepare all full-time faculty, staff, and adjunct faculty to adopt a strength-based lens in their approach to address belonging and representation through JDEI initiatives.

IV.d. Based upon JDEI professional development, create a model or template for JDEI instruction that begins at the course or program approval level and is applied in all curricular and co-curricular programming.

- Create a senate committee to incorporate DEI requirements in the course and program approval process.
- Identify student affairs administrators to restructure co-curricular programming according to JDEI guidelines.
- Enhance supports for LGBTQIA students.
- Enhance support for students with learning disabilities.

KPIs

- Improve retention by race/ethnicity.
- Decrease D's, F's, & W's by race/ethnicity.
- Improve climate regarding race/ethnicity based upon results of climate survey.
- Improve climate regarding learning disabilities based upon results of climate survey.
- Improve climate regarding religious inclusion based upon results of climate survey.
- Number of individuals who complete key JDEI professional development opportunities, including the First Gen Initiative.

GOAL V**ENSURE THAT EVERY STUDENT CAN BE MENTORED THROUGH RESEARCH, INTERNSHIPS, OR OTHER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES.**

Experiential education encompasses a broad view of more traditional co-operative education assignments, internships or externships and is more a method of action-based training traditionally used in the workplace (Kolb, 2014; Murphy, Sahakyan, Yong-Yi, & Magnan, 2014).

Educators have adopted experiential education to teach adult students (Fenwick, 2000). Education researchers have identified the concept of experiential education, or experiential learning, as a system to improve civic and global engagement, increasingly important gaps in traditional education practices (Association of Experiential Education, 2012; Kolb, 2014). Educators facilitate learning by purposively including experiential education into course or programmatic design, encouraging after action reflection, and creating a collaborative learning environment.

**KOAs:**

- V.a. Increase student participation in experiential education on and off campus.**
- Increase the number of pathways and means of financial support for students to participate in at least one experiential education opportunity.
 - Implement required professional development/career preparedness course during first year to assist students with creating career paths and having a positive effect on retention and increasing internship participation.
 - Identify a platform to track all co-curricular student involvement including internships and research experiences.
- V.b. Increase faculty/alum participation/involvement in mentoring students in career preparedness.**
- Provide career development/mentoring workshops through the Center for Teaching and Learning.
 - Increase the participation of alumni as professional mentors for students.
 - Organize workshops/interactions between alumni and current students (professional networking events).
- V.c. Improve accessibility to experiential education opportunities.**
- Maximize the Federal Work Study program to mirror professional opportunities.
 - Identify staff and resources to increase utilization of Graduway mentoring platform.
- V.d. Increase community partnerships**
- Develop MOU template related to affiliation agreements.
 - Increase partnerships between NJCU and community partners including local businesses/companies.

K.P.I.s

- Increase participation in internships and research mentoring.
- Increase career planning and feelings of career preparedness as measured by survey.
- Increase number of business and community partners.

GOAL VI**ENSURE THAT ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ARE OPTIMIZED FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

The environmental conditions of NJCU's learning spaces are vital keys to student success. We recognize that our spaces should reflect our commitment to learning, collaboration, mentoring, and building community. The learning environment should promote communication, focus, problem solving, and risk taking. To do this, we must invest in effective lighting, temperature controls, and flexible furniture. We must also invest in programming and means of communication to impact the culture in addition to the physical spaces.

We also recognize that our learning spaces must reflect principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These principles include the following:

- Multiple means of engagement that include a range of strategies that provide student choices related to their interests.
- Multiple means of representation that acknowledge that students learn differently.
- Multiple means of action and expression where students can access information and demonstrate what they have learned in varied ways (Blackorby & Marino, 2020).

Our work related to this goal is, in many instances, aspirational as our capital needs are substantial. We are committed to making as much progress as possible regarding our physical spaces, programming, and communication systems to ensure a positive learning environment for years to come.

KOAs:

VI.a. Manage educational infrastructures (physical, facilities, technologies, and utilities) to achieve academic goals.

- Ensure that classrooms (lecture and laboratory) and other physical spaces (gyms, athletic fields, parking lots) are readily available, safe, and conducive to learning as educational spaces.
- Provide readily accessible in-person and remote technology and services for both staff and students to minimize class disruptions.
- Align environmental health and safety programs with academic and support service programs.

VI.b. Develop programs and resources to encourage partnerships and collaborations among students, faculty, staff, and community to support institutional commitments.

- Improve timely communication of both emergency and non-emergency concerns, including suggested solutions, and updates.
- Improve the maintenance request and campus concern reporting and action updating to ensure timely solutions and ongoing communication.
- Expand hours of service for repairs and access to food/student assistance.
- Develop programs that promote an open line of communication within departments, between the administration and employees, and between students, faculty, and staff.

VI.c. Improve our culture of care for students, faculty, and staff. Expand health, fitness, and wellness programs, facilities, and services to students, faculty, and staff.

- Improve our safety culture.
- Increase professional development activities and trainings for faculty and staff to build organizational leadership and ethics, job skills and knowledge, and service care for students.
- Improve accessibility of educational resources and services to all students including those with disabilities and medical conditions.

KPIs:

- Time to response for emergency and non-emergency concerns
- Classroom and office temperatures
- Percentage of time classrooms are accessible to all (e.g. elevators operational)
- Reduction of safety incidents

55x

GOAL VII**ENSURE THAT CURRICULAR CONTENT AND DEGREE OFFERINGS ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE LABOR MARKET.**

Buckminster Fuller (1982) created the “Knowledge Doubling Curve”; he noticed that until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II, knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today, different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. David Schilling’s article on Industry Tap in 2013 says that human knowledge on average is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the “internet of things” will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours.

Knowledge acceleration and the interplay between science and technology has led to discoveries that allow for longer life spans. Technology and the internet have been key factors driving globalization in recent years. This globalization has been a force leading to economic interdependency and lowering economic and cultural impediments to communication between countries worldwide.

These factors validate our view that the shelf life of new knowledge is getting shorter, people are living longer, and expanded populations of learners are seeking a college education. Building on a history of access to affordable learning throughout the lifecycle of a learner and their career, NJCU seeks to establish a model for academic and learner success that adapts to these changes to lead social and economic mobility and provide a diverse workforce for the future.

We will continue to provide access to high-quality, relevant education at every stage of life and career, identifying opportunities for collaboration and partnership with industry professionals throughout the state and region for real-life learning and working. To accomplish this, we will encourage experiential learning opportunities (including internships, research, and service projects) for every student.

In acknowledging that our learners need education that is practical and applicable to their lives, we will provide flexible undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs accessible to them whenever and wherever they seek it over their lifetimes. We will welcome learners with prior learning credits and experiences and make transfers seamless from the perspective of the student, providing more relevant and affordable pathways to degrees and careers.

We will measure our success by when our graduates are shown to be continually integrated into the university throughout their lifecycle and are clearly succeeding in ways that work for all—they are graduating at high rates, and having designed careers of their choosing, working in high-impact jobs that provide prosperity and fulfillment.

KOAs**VII.a. Ensure students are career ready.**

- Review and revise Orientation to College to include career readiness.
- Provide all students access to career coaches.
- Track and advise students about career-related needs.

VII.b. Incorporate external industry stakeholders in the program review process.

- Establish criteria for review.
- Adopt basic competencies for technical and soft skills across disciplines.

VII.c. Explicitly connect liberal arts education to career readiness.

- Adopt a common language between higher education and the labor market.
- Incorporate the common language into program development and review.

VII.d. Update cooperative education/internship program.

- Allow students to have experiences earlier in their program.
- Allow students to have more than one experience.
- Track outcomes.

Goal VII continued on next page →

VII.e. Track learning outcomes related to career readiness.

- Collect data regarding job placement rates.
- Implement graduation exit surveys and post-graduation surveys.
- Collect employer feedback.

VII.f. Provide faculty professional development on best practices for keeping the curriculum current and relevant to the labor market.

- Provide professional development related to experiential and project-based learning.
- Create opportunities for faculty to share best practices.
- Involve industry representatives in the development of professional development.

VII.g. Support lifecycle learning for undergraduate, graduate, and non-credit students.

- Promote policy and process for prior-learning credits.
- Incorporate micro-credentials in degree programs.
- Increase the number of non-credit to credit conversion opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

KPIs:

- Pre and post assessments in OTC and pre-graduation related to career readiness.
- Increased number of programs using industry stakeholder feedback in curriculum revision process.
- Increased use of prior-learning credits.
- Increased micro-credential programs.
- Increased non-credit to credit conversions.

GOAL VIII

STRENGTHEN AND DEVELOP ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING THAT DEMONSTRABLY PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO ATTAIN ECONOMIC MOBILITY.

The AAC&U's national survey of employer views on higher education asks, "[w]hat do graduates need to know and be able to do in order to succeed in the workplaces of today and tomorrow, and how does a college education enable or contribute to the development of a shared knowledge base and skill set?" (Finley, 2020, p.iii). The most recent update to the survey continues to show that employers overwhelmingly believe that a higher education prepares students for the workforce, with 80% of employers either agreeing fully or somewhat (Finley, 2023, p.7). While the most sought-after skills and mindsets change from one survey to the next, employers consistently rank as very important the following skills: "oral and written communication, critical and creative thinking, complex problem-solving, teamwork and the ability to work with diverse others, and digital literacy and data analysis" (Finley, 2023, p.2).

While economies and industries are changing in unpredictable ways, employers will continue to seek employees with certain skills sets. At NJCU, we will prepare students to succeed by providing them those skills that are essential to their ability to adapt in a workforce that is changing quickly by intentionally introducing, reinforcing, and ensuring mastery of them throughout the undergraduate experience. We will ensure that written communication skills are introduced in an updated English composition sequence, reinforced throughout the major and General Education program, and finally mastered in both General Education capstones and upper-level major courses. More globally, we will develop new academic programs and revise existing ones to ensure that each major and minor program, taken together with the General Education program, ensures that students develop a core group of skills most desired by employers.

Additionally, employers prefer for students to attain a micro-credentials as part of their degree, in comparison to just micro-credential alone or a degree without a micro-credential (Finley, 2023, pp.26-29). Responding to this new and rapidly emerging market trend, NJCU will intentionally develop and incorporate micro-credentials into our academic programming, micro-credentials that will be earned in either traditional degree credit courses, or micro-credentials that earn degree credit outside traditional degree credit courses.

We will measure our success in continual assessment of student learning, the number and variety of micro-credentials we offer, and the impact we have on our students' economic mobility as measured by organizations like CollegeNet's Social Mobility Index, which ranked NJCU in 2023 first in N.J. and 10th in the nation for improving students' upward economic mobility. (<https://socialmobilityindex.org/>)

KOAs:

VIII.a. Enhance communication skills across all programming.

- Revise English composition courses to provide more formative assessment and individualized support.
- Increase focus on communication skills across all majors.
- Include communication projects in upper-level courses where students demonstrate cumulative skill development.

VIII.b. Provide career-enhancement and skill-building micro-credentials, minors, and certificates.

- Identify career-enhancing skills applicable to undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Identify and select micro-credentials that support career-enhancing and skill-building opportunities.
- Determine appropriate programs/courses for inclusion of micro-credentials.
- Pilot inclusion of micro-credentials within appropriate programs.
- Evaluate the results of the micro-credential pilot.

KPIs:

- Increased pass rates in English composition.
- Measured improvements in communication competencies measured in capstone courses.
- Increased academic success and retention for students earning micro-credentials.

58x

GOAL IX**INVEST IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING THAT YIELDS PERSISTENT AND HIGH LEVELS OF ENROLLMENT, RETENTION, STUDENT LEARNING, APPLICABLE LICENSING SCORES, AND CAREER PLACEMENT.**

Continuous improvement drives our decision-making process. It will continue to inform how we invest our resources in order to drive student success. For every initiative aimed at increasing retention, enrollment, student learning, licensure, and career success, we are committed to recording metrics and using them to determine how we move forward. We recognize that every initiative we begin to support students comes at the exclusion of other possibilities, so we will continually strive to ensure that we have made thoughtful decisions regarding our resources.

We also recognize that this can be challenging when investing in institutional infrastructure. We may not see a clear link between technological systems and student success measures. In these instances, we will examine the degree to which the improvements in infrastructure enable us to focus more clearly on student success measures. If we can access better data using fewer human resources, then we are positioning ourselves to make better decisions and invest more of our budget in the initiatives themselves.

KOAs:**IX.a. Improve student engagement and learning.**

- Create summer workshops equivalent to OSP that include all students.
- Offer additional support services to students who do not qualify for OSP (tutoring, counseling, volunteer opportunities, networking).
- Increase credit recovery opportunities.

IX.b. Create a technical hub or center to enhance campus-wide technical capabilities.

- Connect the hub to STEM programming to increase degree completion.
- Secure public/private partnerships to increase technology support.
- Obtain grant funding to increase technology resources.

IX.c. Establish relationship managers to manage partnerships with other universities, students on campus, and private corporations to impact academic success and support career placement opportunities.**KPIs:**

- Increased academic success and retention of students participating in summer support programming.
- Increased access to key data points to better serve students.
- Increased academic success and retention of students using support services (tutoring, writing center, career center).
- Increase academic success and retention of students using credit recovery opportunities.

59x

GOAL X**ENSURE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO.**

The long-term sustainability of NJCU's academic portfolio depends upon development of a structured and uniform program evaluation process that is then implemented with fidelity. The program evaluation process will include reliable mechanisms for identifying program delivery costs and assessing academic effectiveness. These data will then inform marketing plan development and resource allocation.

KOAs

- X.a. Identify and regularly evaluate the holistic costs of delivery of every academic program.**
- Develop a committee to create a uniform template, rubric, report outline, and completion timeline that incorporates all relevant data points.
 - Have the reports reviewed within department and cross-reviewed with an external department. Revise based upon internal and external feedback.
 - Review the cost/revenue determination process every three years.
- X.b. Develop a program evaluation process that measures academic effectiveness every three years.**
- Analyze the areas where we will need further enhancements for the collection of data for program review.
 - Attend to potential redundancies among program offerings.
 - Attend to potential redundancies among course offerings, develop shared curriculum across programs, reduce single section courses, and develop more cost-effective ways to deliver multi-section courses.
 - Attend to necessary digital technology developments to ensure programs stay current.
 - Enter key assessments, completer data, and technological developments for each program for the three-year review.
 - Based upon review outcomes, identify steps for program improvement.

- X.c. Develop a systematic marketing plan based upon program effectiveness and cost/revenue data.**
- Develop plan that addresses both areas of strength and weakness.
 - Utilize media arts program faculty and students to reduce costs.
 - Create sessions throughout the year to share information about marketing plan.
 - Assess and revise plan according to outcomes.
- X.d. Create a cross-disciplinary resource allocation committee to make recommendations for all program investments.**

KPIs

- Maintaining an average ROI of academic programs of 3.0.
- Maintaining tuition increases under the rate of wage inflation.
- Maintaining a marketing ROI between 15 and 25.
- All faculty line replacements based upon program review process.
- Curriculum revisions, program development, and program sunseting based upon program review process.

References

- Bauld, A. (2023). Does anyone win when colleges compete? *Ed Magazine*, Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Blackaby, J. & Marino, M. T. (2020). Opportunity in crisis: The role of Universal Design for Learning in educational redesign. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, 18(1), 71-91.
- Brown, K. M. (2006). Leadership for social justice and equity: Evaluating a transformative framework and pedagogy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(5).
- Blackminster Fuller, R. (1982). *Critical path*. New York: St. Martin's Publishing Group.
- Ghikas, A. M., Fogelman, K. J., Peretz, T. H. (2023). Can higher education transition to serve diversity, equity, justice and inclusion missions without sacrificing fiscal standing? *Higher Education Politics & Economics* 9 (1): 2-24.
- Gopley, P. & Douthett, E. (2020). The enrollment cliff: mega-universities, COVID-19, and the changing landscape of US colleges. *The CPA Journal*, 90(9): 22-27.
- Gowen, S., & Winston, H. (2019). Who are we? Why an institution's mission and identity matter. (<https://www.higheredjobs.com/blog/post/Display.cfm?post=2103&blog=27>)
- Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier Books.
- Finley, A. (2020). How College Contributes to Workforce Success: Employer Views on What Matters Most. (<https://dgm81p1hiv63.cloudfront.net/content/user-photos/Research/PDFs/AAGU-Employer-Report2021.pdf>)
- Finley, A. (2023). The Career-Ready Graduate: What Employers Say About the Difference College Makes. (<https://dgm81p1hiv63.cloudfront.net/content/user-photos/Research/PDFs/AAGU-2023-Employer-Report.pdf>)
- Gawe, N. (2021). How to survive the enrollment bust. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 142.
- Greenough, B., Davies, G., Bowby, S. (2022). Why cultures of care? *Social & Cultural Geography*, 24(1), 1010.
- Harvey, B.C. (2021). Teetering on the demographic cliff: Part 2: Turning away from the challenge is the riskiest strategy of all. *Running for Higher Education*, 50(1), 13-27.
- Hotell, L., Al-Hajjar, A., El-Hachem, M., & Aouad, W. (2023, April 23). *Ten Lessons for Universities to Prepare Students for Long-Term Success*. Higher Education, Boston Consulting Group. (<https://www.bcg.com/publications/2023/ten-lessons-for-universities-prepare-students-future-work>)
- Johnson, M. R. (2017). Understanding College Students' Civic Identity Development: A Grounded Theory. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 21(3), 31-59.
- Johnson, P., Meja, M., & Bohn, S. (2018). *Higher education as a driver of economic mobility*. Public Policy Institute of California.
- Kadlec, A., & Gupta, J. (2014). *Indiana Regional Transfer Study: The student experience of transfer pathways between Ivy Tech Community College and Indiana University*. San Francisco: Public Agenda.
- Koib, D. A. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experiences as the source of learning and development*. FT press.
- Malcom-Piqueux, L. E., & Benismon, M. E. (2015). Design principles for equity and excellence at hispanic-serving institutions. *Perspectives: Issues in Higher Education Policy and Practice*.
- Mitchell, M., Leachman, M., & Saenz, M. (2019). State higher education funding cuts have pushed costs to students, worsened inequality. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, 24, 9-15.
- Monaghan, D. B., & Atwell, P. (2015). The community college route to the bachelor's degree. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 37(1), 70-91.
- Purcell, J.W., Pearl, A., & Van Schyndel, T. (2020). Boundary spanning leadership among community engaged faculty: An exploratory study of faculty participating in higher education community engagement. *Engaged Scholar Journal*, 6(2), 1-30.
- Reaping, D., & Grote, D. (2021, July). *Rethinking the Curricular Complexity Framework for Transfer Students* Paper presented at 2021 ASEE Virtual Annual Conference Content Access: Virtual Conference. (<https://peer.asee.org/37630>)
- Schuetta, A. (2023). Navigating the Enrollment Cliff in Higher Education. Spotlight Report Brief. *Trellis Company*.
- Williams, D.A. & Clawney, C. (2007). Strategic planning for diversity and organizational change: A primer for higher education leadership. *Effective practices for Academic Leaders*, 2(5), 146.



SECTION 4

NJCU's Strategic Enrollment Plan



New Jersey City University
2039 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, N.J. 07305 | www.NJCU.edu

Contact: Ira Thor
Associate Vice President for University Communications
O: 201-200-3301 | C: 973-420-8466 | ithor@njcu.edu

For Immediate Release/April 5, 2024

New Jersey City University Announces First Strategic Enrollment Plan

JERSEY CITY, N.J. | New Jersey City University (NJCU) has announced the introduction of the institution's first **Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP)** as the next critical strategic planning phase of the university's commitment to its refreshed mission and vision, with a keen focus on addressing the enrollment challenges facing higher education institutions across our state and nation. The entire 36-page plan can be reviewed at NJCU.edu/SEP.

The SEP is a product of NJCU's commitment to shared governance. Designed by the Division of Academic Affairs, the SEP was authored by the Office of the Provost with collaborative input provided by hundreds of members of the university community coming together during the Fall 2023 semester to articulate guidelines and goals for recruitment, admission, and retention of NJCU's students. The Division of Academic Affairs is the university's parent unit which oversees Enrollment Management and University Admissions.

Similarly to the Academic Master Plan (AMP), NJCU's Strategic Enrollment Plan is driven by four (4) new institutional strategic pillars: (1) Student Success and Retention, (2) Community Engagement, (3) Culture of Continuous Improvement, and (4) Financial Stewardship and Responsibility.

Key measurable organizational actions (KOAs) and key performance indicators (KPIs) were developed to achieve the following 10 AMP goals:

1. Be the Bachelor's Degree Completion Institution of Choice for Hudson County Residents.
2. Be the Most Transfer-Friendly Public University in New Jersey.
3. Consistently Increase Completion Rates Year-Over-Year for All Students.
4. Provide the Most Labor-Market Relevant Graduate Programs For Underrepresented Professionals In New Jersey.
5. Provide Relevant and Engaging Workforce Development Programs Focused on the Needs of a Global Workforce.
6. Understand and Analyze the Higher Education Marketplace in Terms of Competing University Program Offerings.
7. Strategically Respond to Market Forces for Undergraduate, Graduate, and Noncredit Programming.
8. Strengthen Our Identity by Providing Student Support Services Throughout the Student Life Cycle.
9. Drive Program Investment Decisions According to Program Return On Investment (ROI).
10. Increase and Diversify Non-Credit Programming to Respond to Workforce Needs in New Jersey.

63x

NJCU Interim President **Andrés Acebo** praised the importance of the introduction of the Strategic Enrollment Plan, saying: “At NJCU, we are best positioned to tackle higher education’s challenges of a shrinking enrollment market and often limited resources, by developing programs that stabilize or increase enrollment, dismantling traditional obstacles for transfer students, and improving retention rates of our existing students. The Strategic Enrollment Plan guides our work through strategic, data-driven decisions around our students’ entire enrollment life cycle — from recruitment and admission, to retention, and ultimately graduation. At the same time, the SEP focuses on our institution’s critical role in the region and in the local community as a beacon of aspiration and hope. Like our Academic Master Plan, the development of the SEP is truly unique because it was intentionally and deliberately driven by motivated and committed stakeholders in our university community—faculty, staff, and students—and I am appreciative of the dedication and commitment to fulfilling this significant objective. We are marshaling and leading a transformational approach to the delivery of a regional comprehensive public higher education.”

Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs **Dr. Donna Breault** said: “The entire NJCU community is working together to address the challenges of declining enrollment. Our Strategic Enrollment Plan was built upon our shared commitment to the mission of the university, while being guided by strategic use of data. The Strategic Enrollment Plan captures this work and our commitment to continue to grow the NJCU community. It represents the vision and insights of the hundreds of faculty, staff, and community members who helped draft it.”

José Balda [B.A. `00; M.A. `06], NJCU’s Assistant Vice President for University Admissions added: “We’re thrilled to unveil our Strategic Enrollment Plan, marking a pivotal moment for our institution. This plan outlines our vision and objectives for attracting, retaining, and supporting students as they embark on their educational journey with us. It’s a testament to our unwavering commitment to student-centered excellence. With this plan as our guide, we are confident that our institution will continue to flourish and make a lasting impact in the lives of our students and the communities we serve.”

The plan will serve as a basis for budgeting decisions. The plan also discusses historical enrollment challenges with applications and transfer students, and two, four, and six-year graduation rate improvements, while presenting data surrounding each area. It also offers opportunities to engage with the university’s largest sending districts and reviews the demand for NJCU’s most attractive academic programs.

Like the Academic Master Plan process, the goals of the SEP were identified according to the results of the Mission Refresh Survey conducted in the Spring 2023 semester. Throughout the Fall 2023 semester, the university community was then invited to complete a survey responding to the degree of priority for each of the goals as well as an opportunity to provide an open-ended response to each goal. Participants completed the survey, and the majority of those responding ranked all goals as either highest or high priority.

The Strategic Enrollment Plan is the third of four major components of NJCU’s renewed, long-term, strategic, mission-driven planning. Phase one was the release of the **New Jersey City University Recovery and Revitalization Plan: A Framework for Long-Term Financial Sustainability, Mission Focus, and Student Success** in April, 2023.

In February, 2024, the second phase of planning resulted in the university unveiling its first **Academic Master Plan (AMP)**, using the same process that was engaged in creating the Strategic Enrollment Plan. The AMP was announced shortly after the introduction of the university’s **refreshed, bilingual Mission Statement** and first Vision Statement. The fourth phase will be the Strategic Plan for Student

Development and Community Engagement, which is currently being studied, and expected to be implemented in Fall, 2024.

About NJCU

New Jersey City University is a comprehensive public regional institution of higher learning located in Jersey City, N.J., dedicated to the development of our students, our city, our communities, and our state. We are a game-changing force for our students and have been recognized as one of the top colleges in the nation improving their upward economic mobility. In fact, NJCU has been ranked No. 1 in New Jersey and Top 10 in the nation in the CollegeNET Social Mobility Index for 2023. Whether enrolled in one of our undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral programs at our three locations, NJCU students have access to an affordable, diverse environment, and an exceptionally supportive faculty. This prepares them to go on to become the next generation of workers and leaders who improve their communities and the State of New Jersey.

—WWW.NJCU.EDU—

65x



STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT PLAN

2024-2028

NJCU

NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

66x

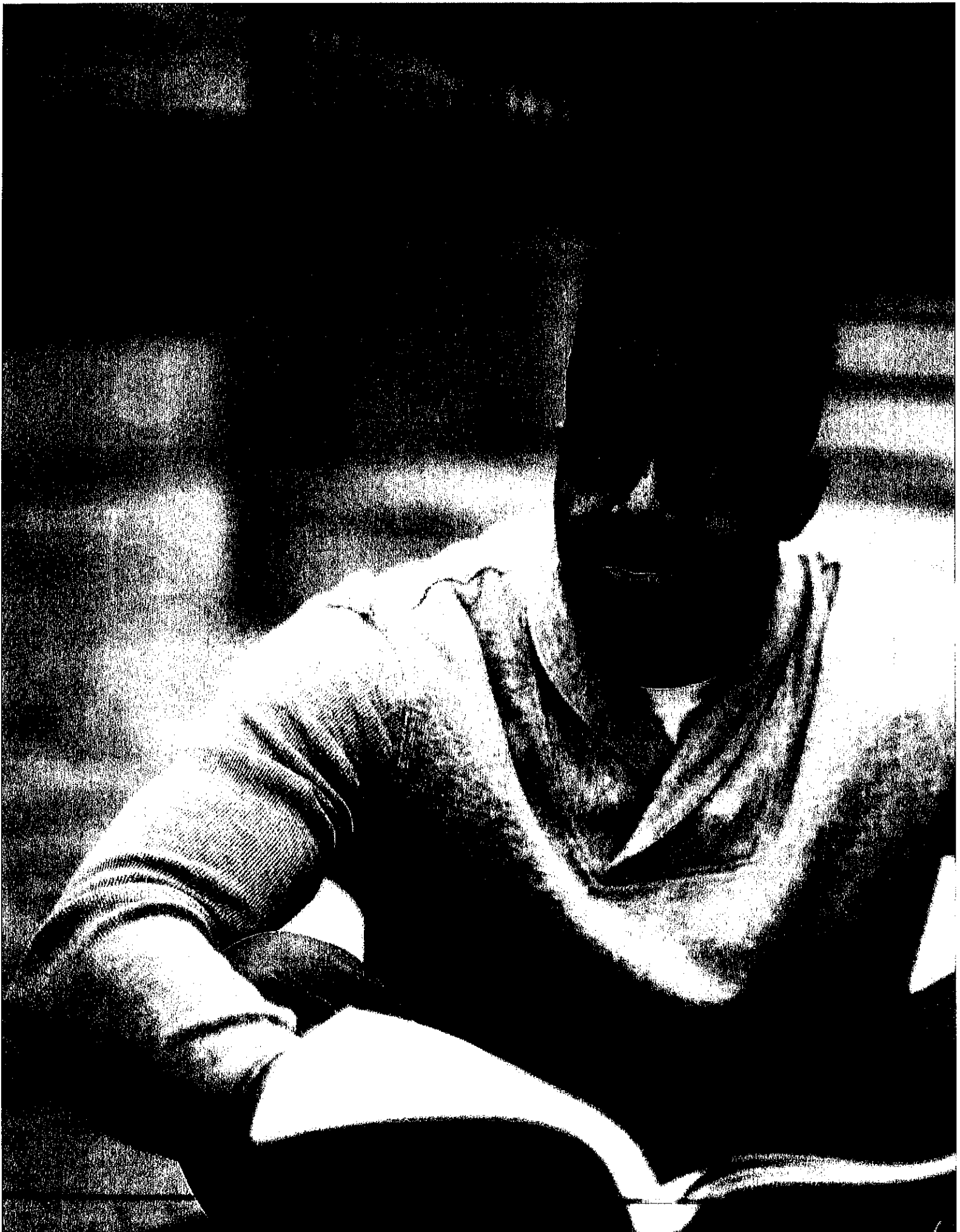




TABLE OF CONTENTS

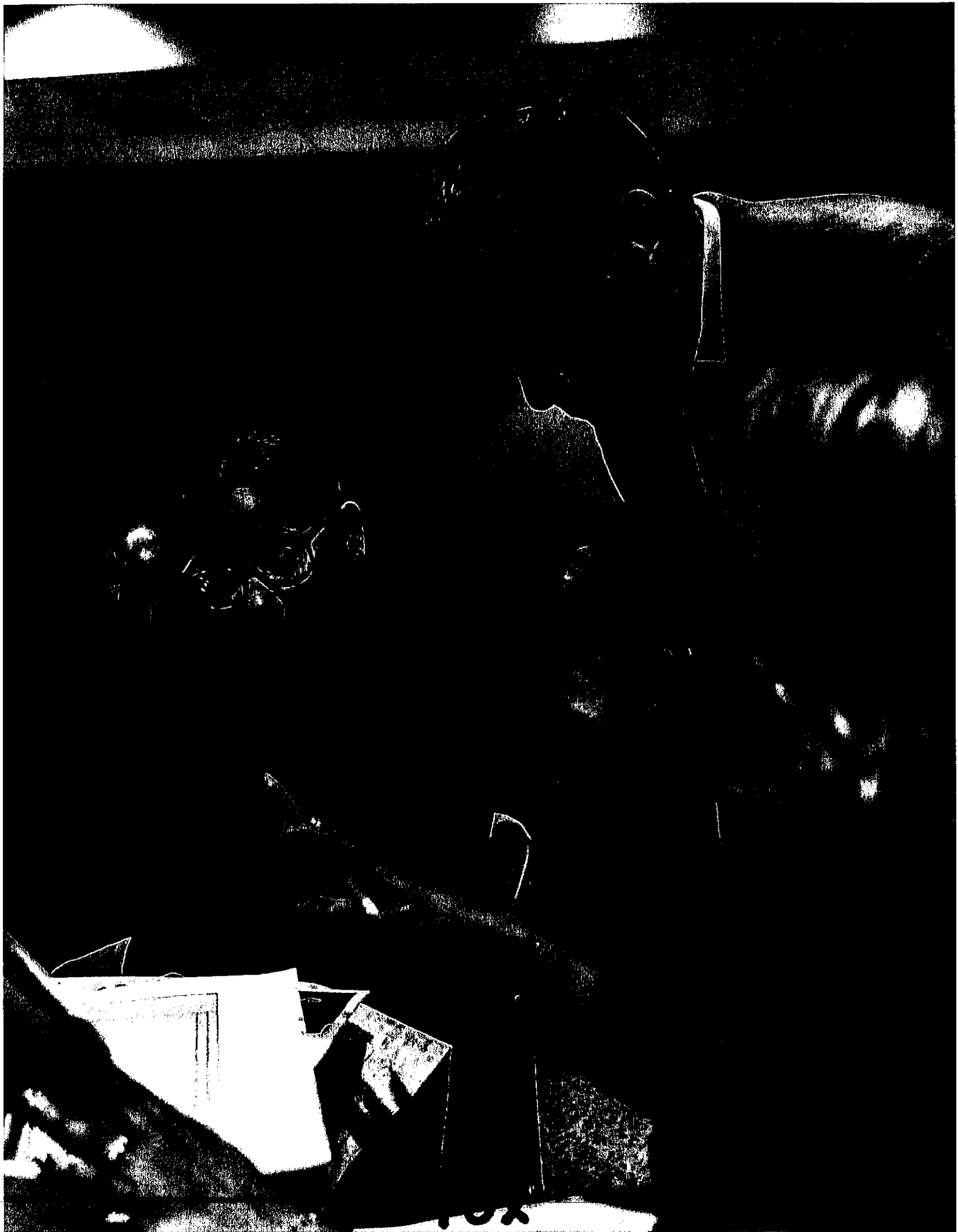
Table of Contents	3
Executive Summary	4
The Process	7
Message from the President	8
Message from the Provost	10
Message from our Admissions Leaders	12
Mission and Vision Statements	14
Values	14
Strategic Pillars	14
The Context of our Enrollment Challenge	17
Historical Context:	19
Retention and Graduation	19
How We Compare	20
Who We Serve	22
How We Compete	24
Understanding the Plan	26
Goal One	27
Goal Two	27
Goal Three	28
Goal Four	29
Goal Five	30
Goal Six	30
Goal Seven	31
Goal Eight	32
Goal Nine	33
Goal Ten	34

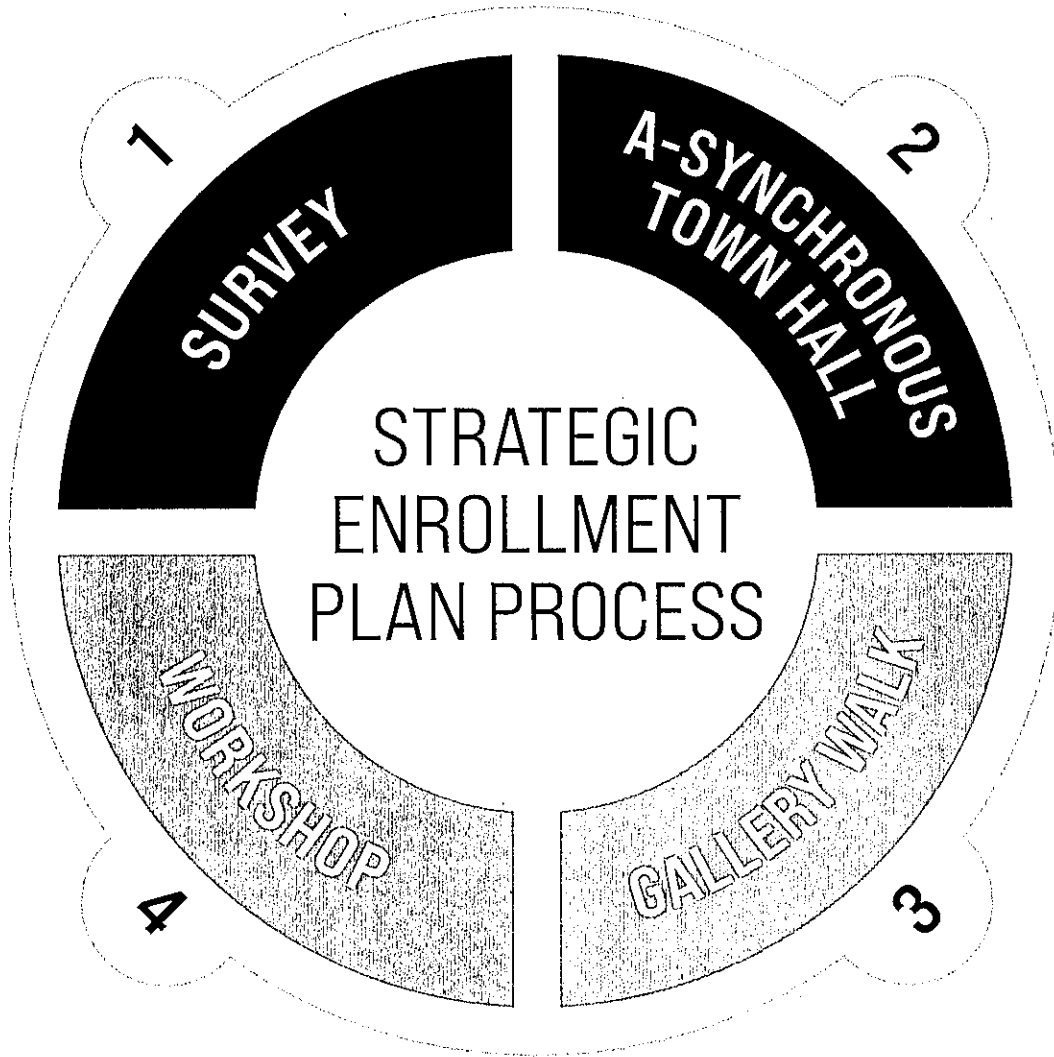
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Strategic Enrollment Plan was developed by hundreds of members of the university community coming together over one semester to articulate guidelines and goals for recruitment, admission, and retention of New Jersey City University students.
- The plan is one of three documents reflecting the university's strategic plan: Academic Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Plan, and the Strategic Plan for Student Development and Community Engagement.
- The plan serves as a basis for budgeting decisions.
- Since 2015 and the adoption of the Common App, applications to NJCU have increased by 67% while enrollment declined by 7%.
- Since 2013, transfer applications have declined by 54% and transfer enrollment has declined by 52%, but we expect to turn this trend around because of the overhaul of the general education curriculum and partnerships like the HCCC|NJCU Connect program.
- From 2014 to 2021, the average retention rate for first-time, full-time freshmen was 73.9%.
- Since 2014, four-year graduation rates have increased by 55% and six-year graduation rates have increased by 8.4%.
- New Jersey City University's largest feeder high schools have maintained their enrollment since 2019 while the top feeder community colleges have experienced declining enrollment ranging from 23% to 79%.
- Nearly half (49.8%) of NJCU's incoming freshmen are from Hudson County and 17.3% are from Jersey City.
- The Strategic Enrollment Plan emphasizes our regional impact and the importance of transfer students.
- The plan also emphasizes graduate and non-credit enrollment of underrepresented professionals.
- Throughout the plan, data regarding market and margins play a vital role.



69x





71x

THE PROCESS

The process to develop our strategic enrollment plan took place over the course of the Fall of 2023. The goals for the strategic enrollment plan were identified according to the results of the Mission Refresh Survey conducted in the Spring semester of 2023. The university community was then invited to complete a survey responding to the degree of priority for each of the goals, as well as an opportunity to provide an open-ended response to each goal. Fifty-nine participants completed the survey, and a majority of those responding ranked all goals as either highest or high priority.

The results of the survey were shared with the university community, and all community members were invited to participate in an asynchronous town hall. Community members had two weeks to provide comments, discussion, and documents on a Padlet addressing each of the goals. Community members provided over 150 comments in the asynchronous town hall. These results were published and shared with the community in preparation for the third step, the Gallery Walk.

During the first week of December, community members were invited to the Gothic Lounge, where they had access to chart paper identifying each goal in the strategic enrollment plan. During the first two days, participants were given Post-it notes and asked to contribute possible key performance indicators (KPIs) and key organizational actions (KOAs) for each goal based upon the results of the survey and the asynchronous town hall. During the second two days, community members were given dot stickers and asked to prioritize the key performance indicators and key organizational actions identified during the first two days. The results of the Gallery Walk were recorded and shared with the community members during the fourth step in the process: the Strategic Enrollment Plan Workshop.

More than 100 community members including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and business partners came together on December 15, 2023, to write the Strategic Enrollment Plan. During the half-day workshop, participants reviewed the results of the survey, asynchronous town hall, and gallery walk. They identified key organizational actions (KOAs) and key performance indicators (KPIs). They also identified strategies to achieve the KOAs and KPIs as well as the individuals who would be responsible for the outcomes and the financial implications of the plan.

With the plan developed, the costs to implement the plan were extracted and reviewed by a team of stakeholders including the following: the president, the CFO, the provost, assistant provosts, deans, and goal leaders. The committee reviewed expenses for FY25 and subsequent fiscal years to determine which elements of the plan were operational and which were aspirational. For parts of the plan that were identified as aspirational, additional measures will be taken to seek grant funding.

72x

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Strategically Driving Our Mission

At New Jersey City University, we passionately believe that you don't need to change your zip code to discover your promise and reach your potential. This principle is a cornerstone of our mission-driven work which focuses on the economic mobility and empowerment of our socioeconomically diverse student population that is primarily made up of historically underserved and marginalized people.

Our best approach in an era of often limited resources, is to make strategic, data-driven decisions around our students' entire enrollment life cycle — from recruitment and admission, to retention, and ultimately graduation. We also must focus on our institution's critical role in the region and in the local community as a beacon of aspiration and hope. These are key aspects of our promise to the community we have served for nearly a century.

For leaders across higher education, it is no secret that enrollment challenges will continue amidst a well-documented shrinking market of college-aged students. Long term, this is not an NJCU issue but rather a more systemic, national concern within higher education. At NJCU, we are best positioned to tackle these challenges by developing programs that stabilize or increase enrollment, dismantling traditional obstacles for transfer students, and improving retention rates of our existing students. At the same time, our enrollment management professionals continue to work with our high school and community college partners, to make the important case of college as an attractive option for transforming the trajectory of one's life.

As such, we continue to deliver upon our promises with the third of four phases of our university's long-term vision and strategic planning as we unveil the first comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) at our institution.

The Strategic Enrollment Plan builds upon the foundation laid in our Recovery & Revitalization Plan released in Spring 2023 and the momentum of our first Academic Master



Plan which was introduced earlier this semester. Our renewed and revitalized focus on the community we are privileged to serve will actively drive our pursuit of community partnerships and affiliations that enhance student success outcomes on our campus from enrollment to retention and degree completion. Our strategic focus affirms a commitment to meet our students where we find them.

Our Strategic Enrollment Plan, like the preceding Academic Master Plan, is based upon four essential strategic pillars: student success and retention, community engagement, culture of continuous improvement, and financial stewardship and responsibility.

The Strategic Enrollment Plan, like our recently unveiled Academic Master Plan, is truly unique because their development was completely driven by motivated and committed stakeholders in our university community: faculty, staff, and students. At NJCU, shared governance is not a talking point, but rather a bedrock value of the important mission we are fulfilling daily. I am appreciative of the dedication and commitment of our university community and stakeholders whose deliberate and collaborative efforts led to the development of this long-sought vision.

Together, we will continue to fulfill the promise of a better life through access to higher education — a promise of meeting our community where they are to empower their lives, so they are poised to reach their fullest potential. Our extraordinary students deserve nothing less.

Andrés Acebo
Interim President



MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST

The headlines are numerous and dire. Higher education is facing an enrollment cliff. According to analysts like Nathan Grawe,¹ the drop in enrollment will be felt most beginning in 2025, when high school enrollment is expected to decline by 15%. Those declines will be felt over the next five- to ten-year period within colleges and universities. These warnings started before the pandemic, and the perceived threats have increased since then. According to *Fortune*,² some students fell behind during the pandemic and do not feel ready for college. Others are rethinking the value of a college degree. Further, universities are not just competing with one another; they must now compete with companies that are paying higher initial wages and luring recent high school graduates into full-time employment before, or instead of, a college degree.

As a result, many universities are strategizing ways to recruit prospective students, including investments in infrastructure, program development, and partnering with online program management (OPM) service providers to forge new enrollment opportunities. Additionally, institutions have increased the number of scholarships they offer simply to broaden the admissions funnel. Truth be told, previous administrators at New Jersey City University engaged in some of these strategies. The problem with grasping at straws to grow your enrollment is that you will eventually run out of straws. Quick-fixes or perceived magic bullets to increase enrollment may provide temporary relief for declining numbers, but they will inevitably fail.



¹ Grawe, Nathan D. (2018). *The Agile College: How Institutions Successfully Navigate Demographic Changes*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

² Binkley, Collin and The Associated Press. (March 9, 2023). "The labor shortage is pushing American colleges into crisis, with the plunge in enrollment the worst ever recorded." *Fortune*. (<https://fortune.com/2023/03/09/american-skipping-college-huge-numbers-pandemic-turned-them-off-education/>)

75x

Instead, NJCU is doubling down on its mission. We know who we are. We know who we serve. Through our strategic efforts, we have made significant changes related to enrollment:

I. Recognizing that enrollment management is a vital part of the academic enterprise

In July of 2023, we moved the unit of admissions and enrollment management into the Division of Academic Affairs. In doing so, our amazing staff and leaders in admissions work alongside faculty, department chairs, and deans to collectively showcase our academic programming and to share the pulse of potential students, while ensuring the programming is responsive to the needs of those whom we serve. Now, faculty, staff, and administrators in the colleges and among the academic support services see even more clearly their roles in recruiting potential students. This organizational change shifted our focus from isolated strategies to explicitly building even stronger relationships with students and community leaders as we eagerly invite them to be part of our unique community.

II. Embracing our new normal

NJCU once maintained an enrollment of more than 8,000 students. We know that we are not that university anymore. We strive to maintain an enrollment of around 5,500 students. As a result, we altered our organizational structure and academic programming to reflect our new target enrollment. We reduced our executive leadership by 50%, and we reduced our academic portfolio by 34%. These significant changes allow us to focus more clearly on our mission and to support the anticipated 5,500 students more effectively.

III. Increasing access and reducing barriers

NJCU primarily serves non-traditional students, many of whom struggle financially. Many of our students work one or more jobs and juggle family responsibilities while they attend our university. Through this strategic planning process, we have renewed our commitment to be responsive to the needs of our students. We strive to reduce financial burdens and increase access to programming through more deliberate scheduling, programming with paid internships, and increased online access through hybrid and online courses. All units who work with students, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, etc., work together to ensure that the decisions made across the full student experience are responsive to the unique needs of those whom we serve.

This Strategic Enrollment Plan reflects our commitment and our resolve to uniquely serve our community. Like the Academic Master Plan, more than 100 of our faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community partners worked to create this plan. It is a testament to our revitalized mission and a preview of the wonderful work to come at NJCU.



Donna Breault, Ph.D.

*Interim Provost and Senior Vice President
of Academic Affairs*

76x

MESSAGE FROM OUR ADMISSIONS LEADERS

Guided by the Provost’s leadership, the Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) represents the collective effort of faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and external partners over several months. It reflects a unified commitment to achieving SEP goals amid the evolving landscape of higher education. Establishing a robust foundation for our SEP is imperative to thrive in today’s volatile higher education environment. The intention is for this framework to be a living document that effectively:

- Ensures the realization of the institutional mission and vision.
- Represents a systems approach that intricately links planning, budgeting, and assessment.
- Capitalizes on the institution’s competitive advantages while addressing the changing higher education marketplace and environment.
- Enhances the institution’s capacity to attract and retain students, meeting their current and future needs and expectations.
- Fosters collaboration within the academic community and ensures organizational learning.

Despite a rise in new spring 2024 student enrollment, New Jersey grapples with significant declines in high school graduates and a growing number of learners opting out of the traditional four-year college experience. Amid fiscal challenges and disruptions caused by the pandemic, issues related to mental health, physical health, and a lack of personal connection and support pose real obstacles, yet they are not insurmountable.

NJCU’s faculty, staff, and students demonstrate dedication, resilience, and resourcefulness. A collaborative effort is underway to shape the institution’s future, and this plan introduces a blueprint guiding us toward sustainable growth, academic excellence, and inclusive student success. To achieve our goals, NJCU will leverage all available tools to support both prospective and enrolled students. Recognizing that success cannot rely solely on traditional-age high school students, we must broaden our enrollment strategies, emphasizing retention and diversifying our learner population, including transfers, graduate, and adult learners. This commitment extends to fostering an environment that supports all learners on their journey to success and graduation.

Let us embark together on a journey to elevate our institution to new heights.

Jose Balda

Assistant Vice President for University Admissions

Stacey Kanga

Director of Undergraduate Admissions

Tatiana Reyes

Director of Graduate Admissions

77x



MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

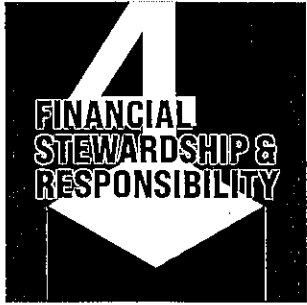
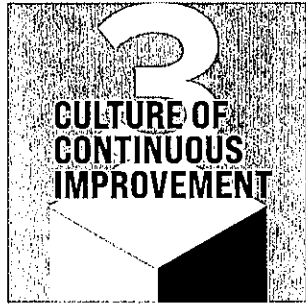
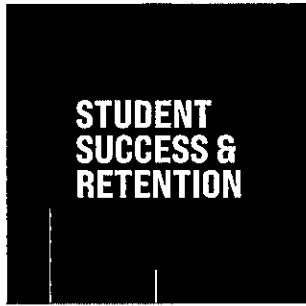
Mission

NJCU empowers its students through a highly accessible, equity-driven, and transformative education. An NJCU education focuses on students' personal, professional, and civic development to facilitate their socio-economic mobility. We uplift our diverse community of students, including historically underserved and underrepresented, first-generation, and adult learners.

Vision

We aim to inspire intellectual curiosity, nurture conscious citizenship and community engagement, and uplift our community through teaching, research, and service by dedicated and supportive faculty, staff, and partnerships that create opportunity.

STRATEGIC PILLARS



VALUES

To Know

- Academic excellence
- Knowledge and scholarship

To Grow

- Lifelong learning
- Discovery and growth
- Conscious citizenship
- Socioeconomic mobility
- Empowerment and freedom
- Leadership

To Connect

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Civic engagement

79x





81x

THE CONTEXT OF OUR ENROLLMENT CHALLENGE

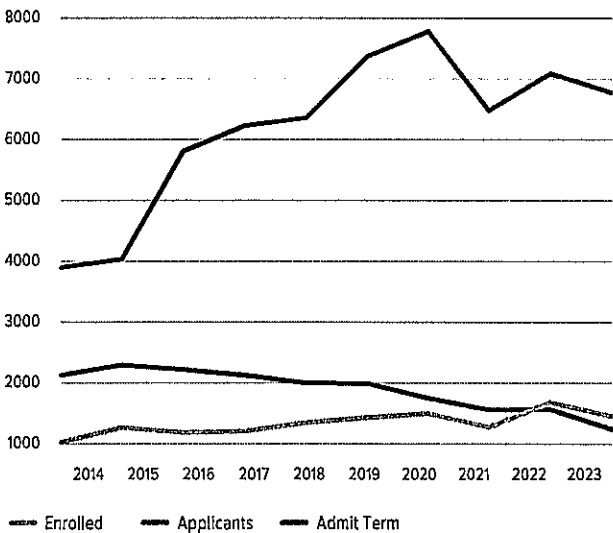
Historical trends: Applications

Between the Fall of 2014 and the Fall of 2020, freshman applications increased by 99.6%. This was due, in part, to the adoption of the Common App. In 2021, freshman applications declined by 16.7%, and in Fall of 2022, freshman applications increased by 9.4%. By Fall of 2023, the number of freshman applications declined by 4.4%. Transfer student applications experienced a steady decline from 2014 to 2023 of 41.7%. With the revised general education curriculum and partnerships like the HCCC|NJCU Connect Program, we expect to see increases in applications moving forward. Graduate applications experienced a steady increase other than a slight dip in 2021. From 2014 until 2023, graduate applications increased by 41.6%.

Historical context: Transfer Students

Nationally, transfer enrollments declined through the pandemic and until 2022. According to Higher Education³ Today, transfer enrollment dropped by 16% from 2020 until 2022. This trend shifted the next year. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center⁴ reported that transfers increased from Fall 2022 to Fall of 2023 by 5.3%. They also indicated that low-income, Black, and Hispanic students enrolled as transfer students at a higher rate in 2023. Since 2013, NJCU's transfer applicants have declined by 54% and the number of transfer students enrolling at NJCU has declined by 52%. To address this trend, the university radically overhauled its general education curriculum to make the university the most transfer-friendly public university in New Jersey. The university also shifted additional resources to the Transfer Resource Center, and entered into the Hudson Connect⁵ partnership with Hudson County Community College.

First-time Freshman Applicants and Those Enrolled (2014–2023)

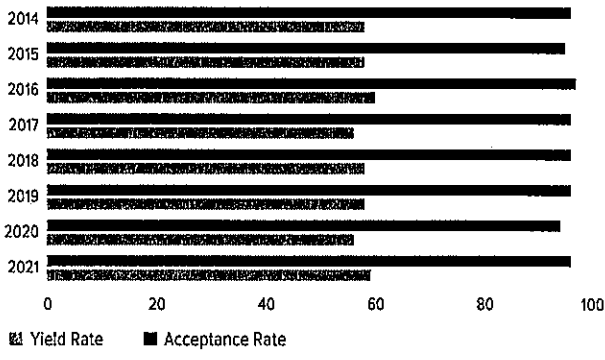


Transfer Student Applicants and Those Enrolled (2014–2021)



The acceptance and yield rates for transfer students have remained consistent since 2014.

Acceptance and Yield Rates for Transfer Students (2014–2021)



³ Danielle Melidona (May 16, 2022). "Two New Reports Provide Insights on Enrollment Trends and Policies to Support Transfer Students." *Higher Education Today*. (<https://www.higheredtoday.org/2022/05/16/two-new-reports-provide-insights-on-enrollment-trends-and-policies-to-support-transfer-students/>)

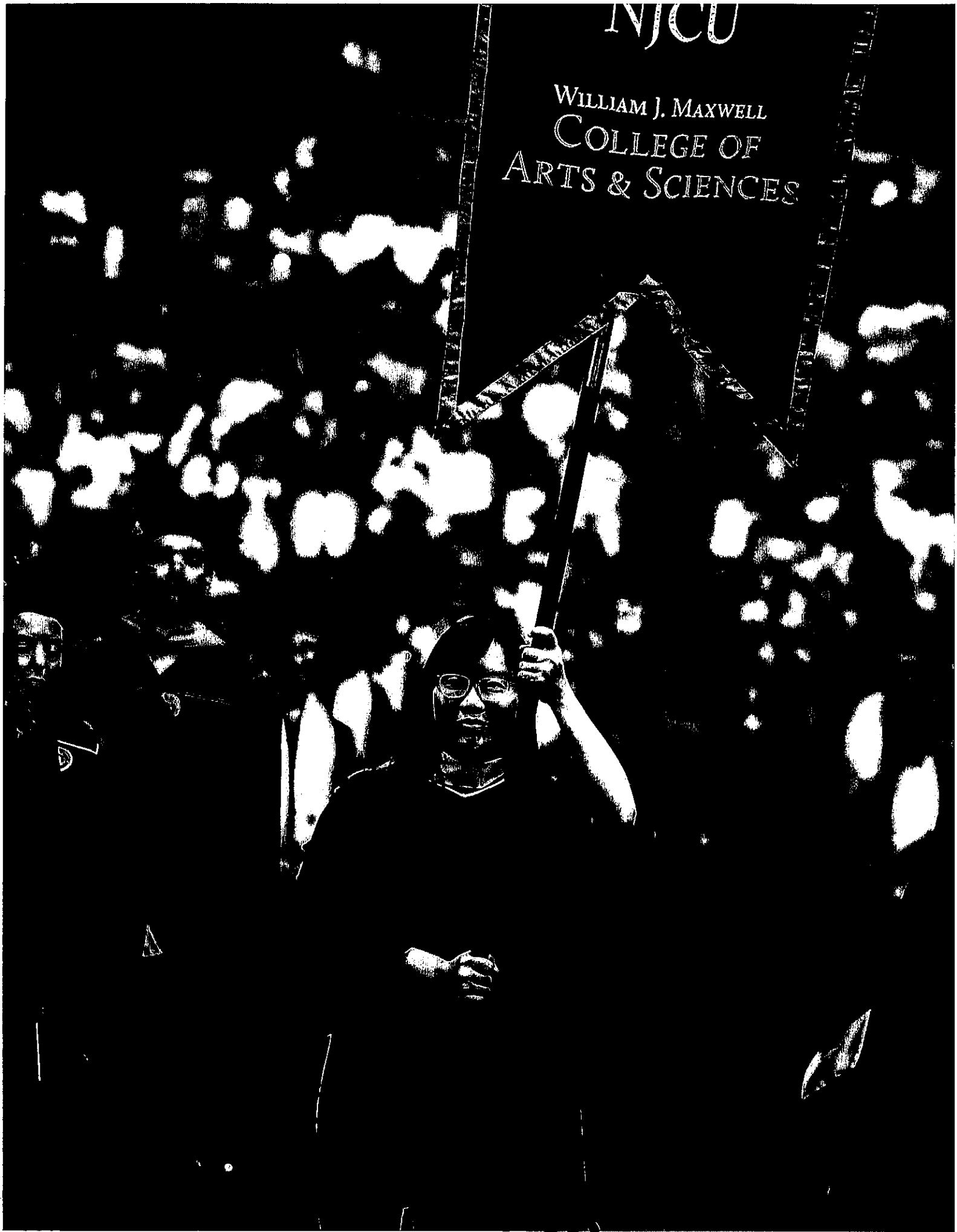
⁴ National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (February 28, 2024). "Transfer and Progress: Fall 2023 Report." (<https://nscresearchcenter.org/transfer-and-progress/>)

⁵ HCCC | NJCU Connect Program (<https://www.hccc.edu/programs-courses/academic-pathways/transfer-dual-admissions/hccc-njcu-connect/index.html>)

82x

NJCU

WILLIAM J. MAXWELL
COLLEGE OF
ARTS & SCIENCES



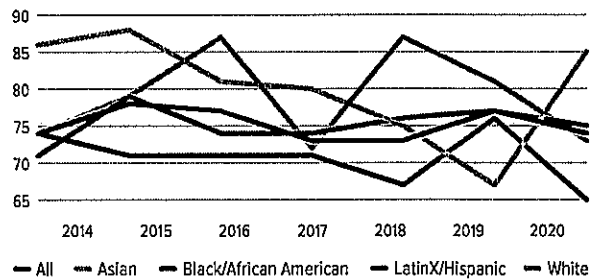
**HISTORICAL CONTEXT:
RETENTION AND GRADUATION**

Two-Year Graduation Rates

NJCU's retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen from their first to second year have ranged from 66.4% (2022) to 77.6% (2015). The average rate of retention for first-time, first-year freshmen is 73.9%. The average rate of retention by race/ethnicity is as follows:

- Asian 74%
- Black/African American 71%
- Hispanic/Latino 74%
- White 76%

Two-Year Retention

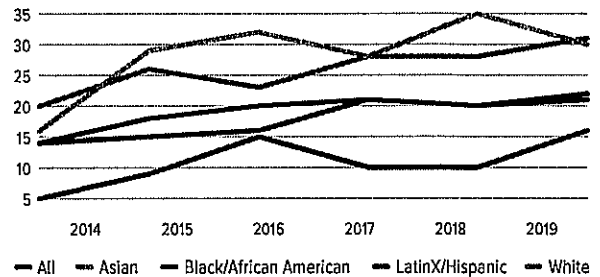


Four-Year Graduation Rate Improvement

Four-year graduation rates for full-time, first-time students are low given the non-traditional nature of the students NJCU serves. Rates overall have increased by 55% since the 2014 cohort. The percentage of increase in graduation rates according to race/ethnicity since the 2014 cohort are as follows:

- Asian 89%
- Black/African American 108%
- Hispanic/Latino 57%
- White 53%

Four-Year Retention

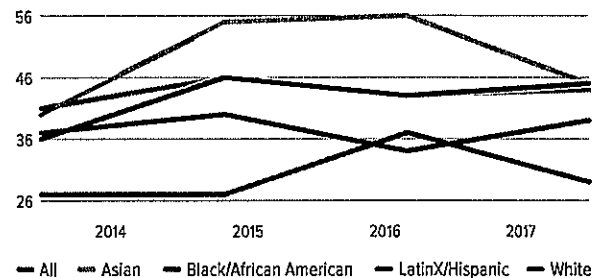


Six-Year Graduation Rate Improvement

Six-year graduation rates have increased by 8.4% overall from the 2014 cohort to the 2017 cohort. The percentages of increase according to race/ethnicity are as follows:

- Asian 12.4%
- Black/African American 9.9%
- Hispanic/Latino 6.5%
- White 9.1%

Six-Year Retention

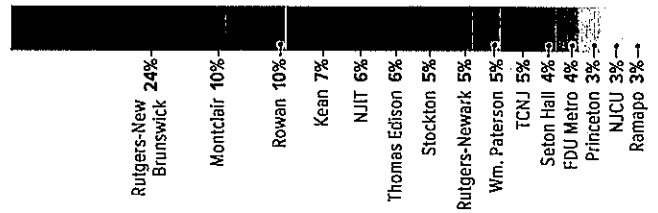


84x

HOW WE COMPARE⁶

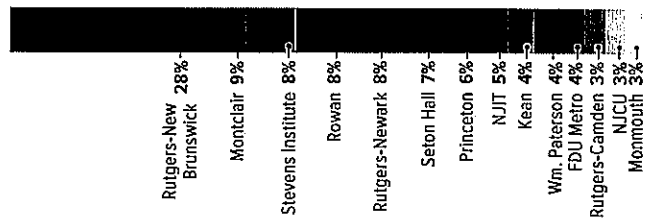
Undergraduate Enrollment in New Jersey, Fall 2021

NJCU ranks 14th in undergraduate enrollment in New Jersey. The universities with the closest undergraduate enrollment to NJCU include Rutgers-Camden and Ramapo College of New Jersey.



Graduate Enrollment in New Jersey: Fall 2021⁷

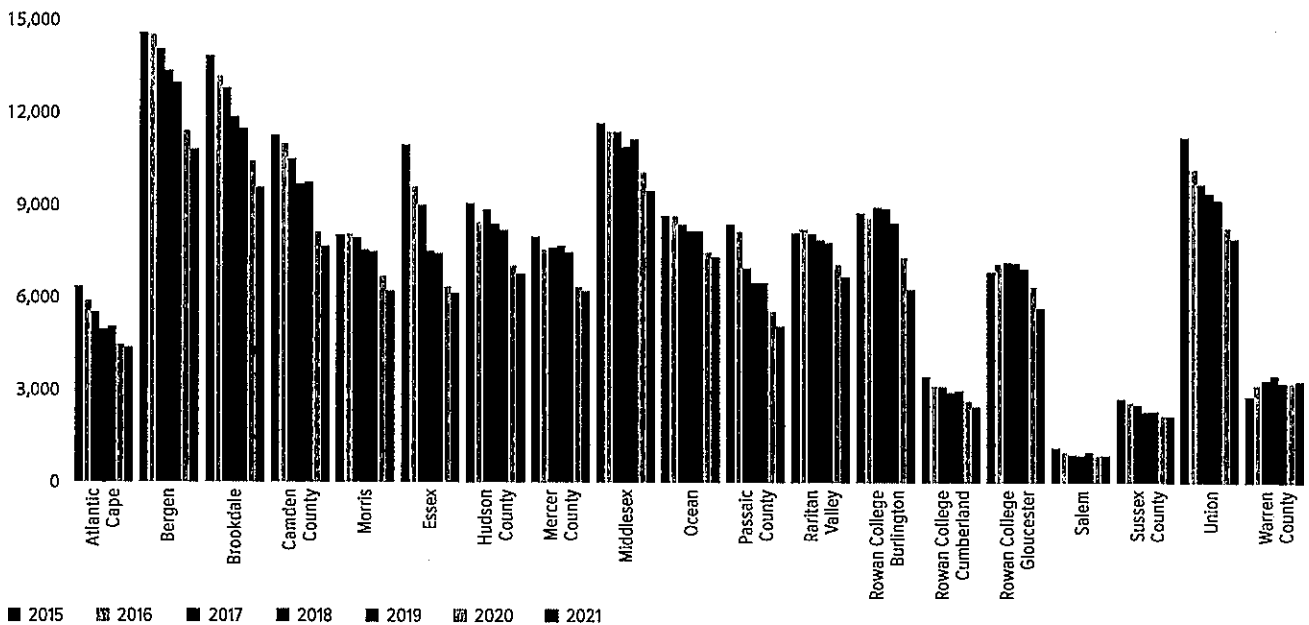
NJCU ranks 13th in terms of graduate enrollment in New Jersey. Our closest peer in terms of graduate enrollment is Rutgers-Camden.



Context: Community College Enrollment in New Jersey⁸

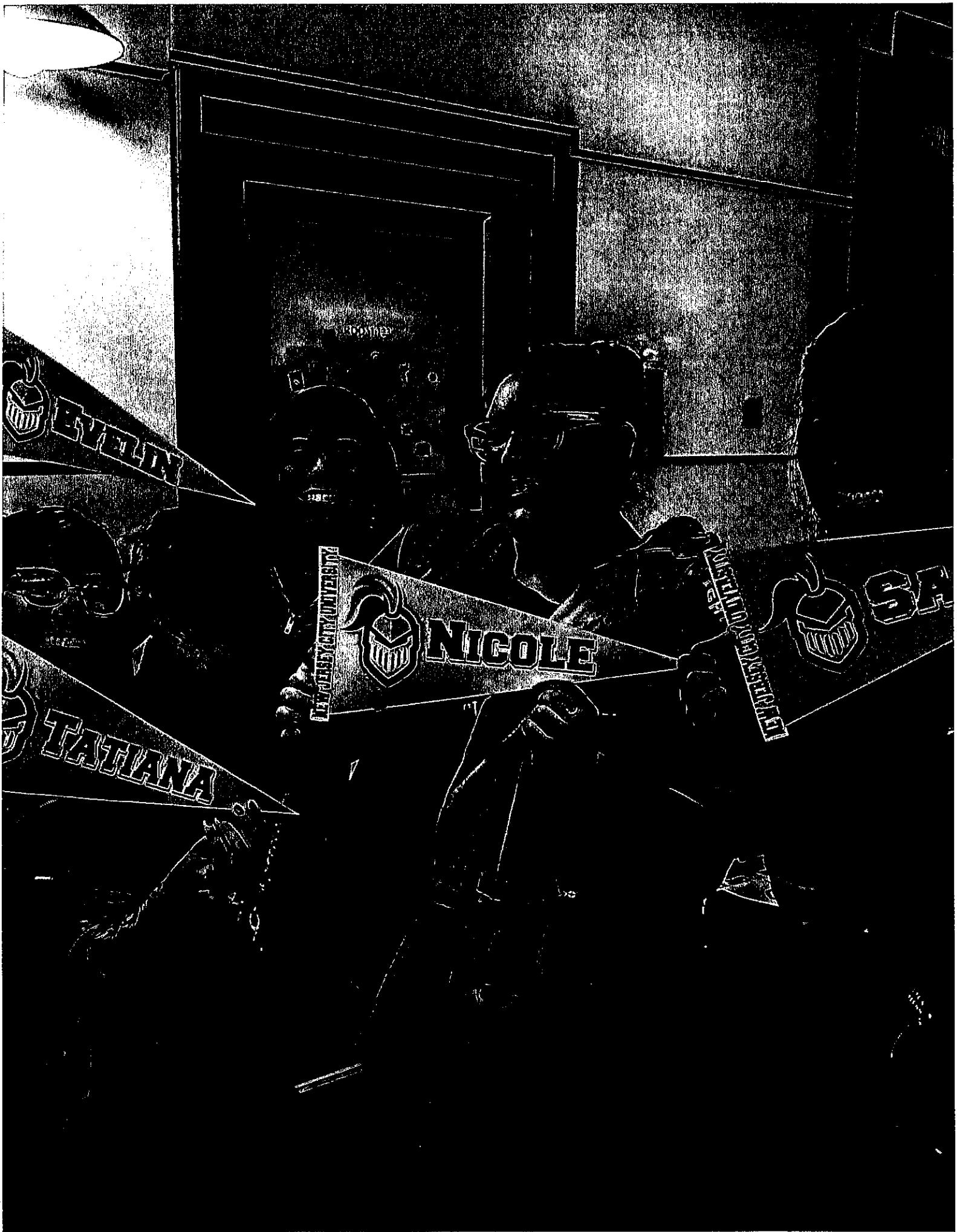
Community College enrollment in New Jersey has declined since 2015 at all institutions other than Warren County Community College. The average decline for all institutions is 34%. See Figure 1 below. ↓

FIGURE 1: Community College Enrollment



^{6,7,8} Data from IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Education Statistics

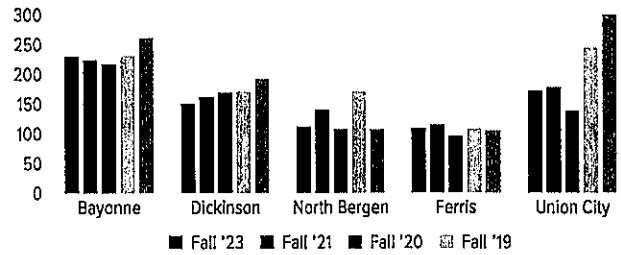
85x



WHO WE SERVE

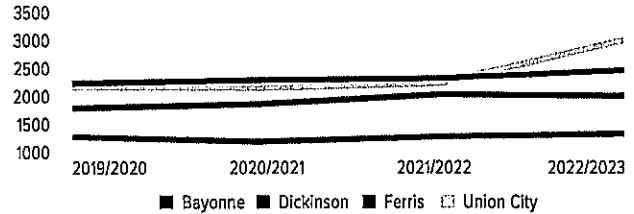
Top Feeder High Schools for First-Time Freshmen

The number of seniors at NJCU’s top feeder high schools has remained somewhat stable with slight decreases (Bayonne, Dickinson) or slight increases (North Bergen, Ferris) in graduating seniors in most schools. The exception would be Union City High School which had more significant declines since 2019.



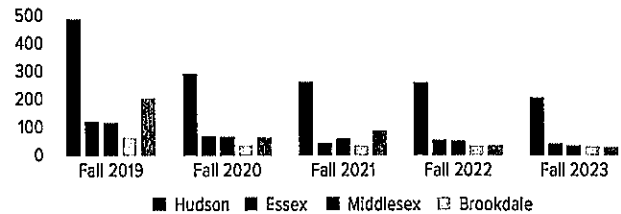
Enrollment Trends in Top Feeder High Schools

While the state is experiencing enrollment declines in high schools overall, NJCU’s top feeder high schools are maintaining or slightly increasing their enrollment since 2019.



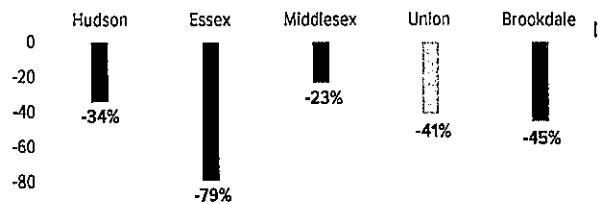
Top Community Colleges for Transfers

The top community college for transfers to NJCU is Hudson County Community College.



Enrollment Decline in Top Community Colleges for NJCU Transfers⁹

The top community colleges where students transfer to NJCU have experienced declines in enrollment ranging from 23% (Middlesex) to 79% (Essex County).



Distribution of Freshman Applicants by County

The largest percentage of applications for New Jersey residents comes from Hudson County. The second largest percentage is Essex County.



⁹ Data from IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Education Statistics

87x

Percentage of Hudson County High School Seniors Enrolling at NJCU

The district that has the most seniors attending NJCU is Jersey City Public Schools. The district that has the smallest percentage of the incoming class is Weehawken. Overall, 7.5% of Hudson County seniors enroll at NJCU, and 49.8% of NJCU’s incoming class are from Hudson County.

School District	Percentage of Senior Class Enrolled at NJCU	Percentage of NJCU Incoming Class
Bayonne School District	10.9	7.6
Harrison Public Schools	3.1	.65
Hoboken Public School District	4.4	.52
Hudson County Schools of Technology	6.8	5.2
Jersey City Public Schools	10.4	17.3
Kearny School District	4.4	2.3
North Bergen School District	7	4.4
Secaucus Public School District	.8	.13
Union City Public Schools	7.1	8.07
Weehawken Township School District	.9	.13
West New York School District	6.07	3.3

Percentage of Jersey City High School Seniors Enrolling at NJCU

The school with the highest percentage of students enrolling at NJCU is Innovation High School. Overall, 17.3% of NJCU’s incoming class is from Jersey City Public Schools.

Jersey City High School	Percentage of Senior Class Enrolled at NJCU	Percentage of NJCU Incoming Class
Infinity Institute	3.5%	0.26%
Henry Snyder High School	8.2%	1.8%
James J. Ferris High School	15.8%	4.8%
Lincoln High School	7.1%	1.5%
Dr. Ronald E. McNair High School	1.6%	3.9%
William L. Dickinson High School	12.4%	5.4%
Liberty High School	7.5%	0.52%
Innovation High School	27.5%	2.47%
District	10.40%	17.3%

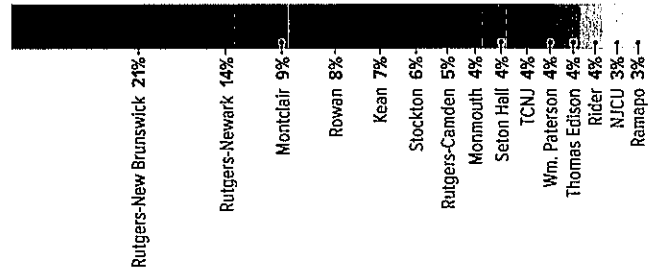


88x

HOW WE COMPETE¹⁰

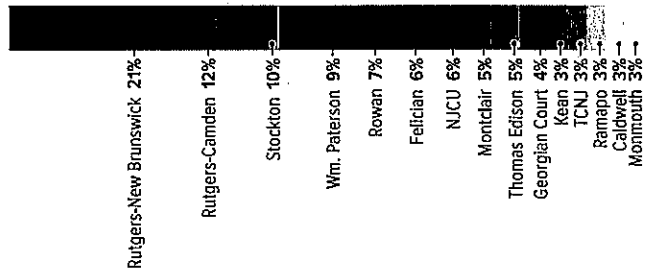
Undergraduate Business Majors

NJCU ranks 14th in New Jersey undergraduate completers in Business majors.



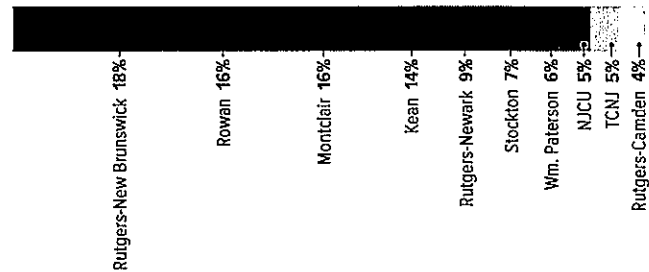
Undergraduate Health Professions Majors

NJCU ranks seventh in New Jersey Completers in undergraduate degrees in health professions.



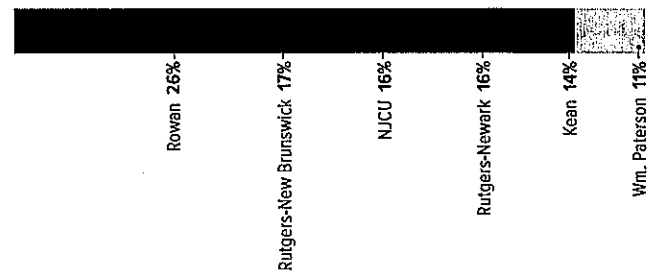
Undergraduate Psychology Majors

NJCU ranks eighth in the number of undergraduate degrees in psychology.



Undergraduate Homeland Security, Criminal Justice, Fire Science Majors

NJCU ranks third in New Jersey completers of undergraduate degrees in Homeland Security, Criminal Justice, and Fire Science

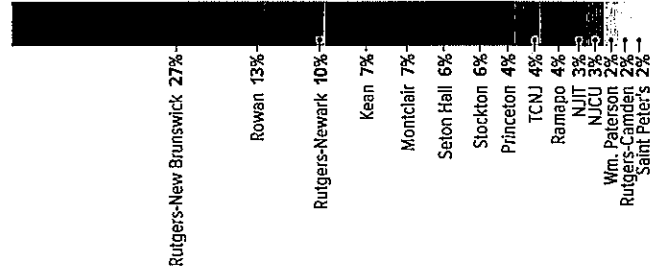


¹⁰ Data from IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, National Center for Education Statistics

89x

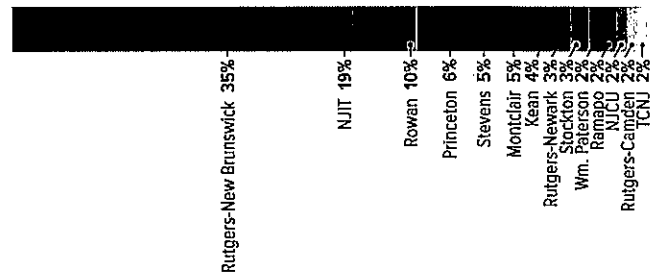
Undergraduate Biology Majors

NJCU ranks 12th in undergraduate completers majoring in Biology.



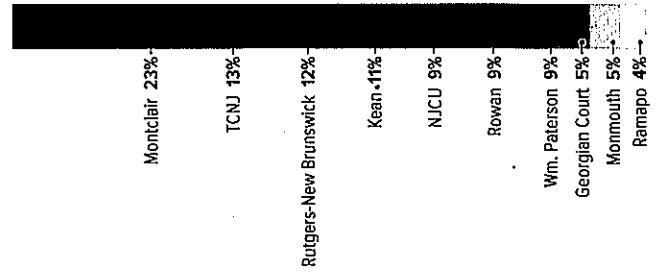
Undergraduate Computer Science Majors

NJCU ranks 12th in undergraduate completers majoring in computer science.



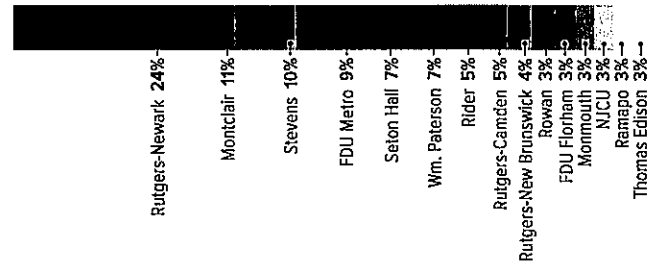
Master's Education Majors

NJCU ranks fifth in the number of completers for education master's degrees.



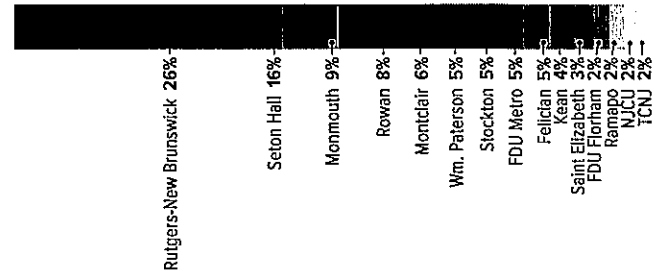
Master's Business Majors

NJCU ranks 13th in the number of completers with a master's in business.



Master's in Health Professions

NJCU ranks 14th in the number of completers in master's in health sciences.



90x

UNDERSTANDING THE PLAN

A Vital Part of the Whole

The Strategic Enrollment Plan is one of three plans developed for New Jersey City University's strategic planning. The Academic Master Plan and the Strategic Enrollment Plan were developed using the same processes during the same period — Fall of 2023. In the Spring and Fall of 2024, the university will use the same process and develop a strategic plan for student development and community engagement.

10 Goals

The Strategic Enrollment Plan consists of 10 goals. The goals were formed based upon the three guiding principles of our strategic planning: mission, market, and margins.

KOAs and KPIs

The Strategic Enrollment Plan operationalizes the 10 goals through two key measures: key organizational actions (KOAs) and key performance indicators (KPIs). In addition, the plan introduces strategies that we will use to achieve the key organizational actions.

GOAL ONE

BE THE BACHELOR’S DEGREE COMPLETION INSTITUTION OF CHOICE FOR HUDSON COUNTY RESIDENTS.

KOAs

- 1a Refine our brand identity within Hudson County high schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations (CBOs).**
 - Increase recruitment events in Hudson County by 20%.
 - Enhance marketing strategies and define recruitment targets.
 - Redesign admissions marketing materials including microsites.
 - Collaborate with community-based organizations.
- 1b Provide a seamless transfer pathway for Hudson County Community College Graduates to NJCU.**
 - Support and enhance the HCCG|NJCU Connect Program.
 - Prioritize targeted marketing events for HCCG Connect students.
 - Provider access to NJCU campus resources for HCCG Connect students.
- 1c Increase the number of admitted students who have some college credit but who have not completed undergraduate degrees.**
 - Partner with N.J. ReUp program, targeting N.J. residents that have not completed undergraduate degrees.
 - Promote continuing education program offerings to the Hudson County community.
 - Partner with local businesses and organizations to provide options for employees to complete bachelor’s degrees.
 - Partner with Hudson County governmental agencies (e.g. first responders, civil service, etc.) to provide degree completion for employees.

KPIs

- Increase in admitted students from Hudson County: 10% for Fall 2025; 15% for 2026; 20% for 2027; 25% for 2028.
- Increased number of students participating in HCCG|NJCU Connect by 10% year-over-year.
- Development of corporate completion partnerships: three annually from 2025–2028.

GOAL TWO

BE THE MOST TRANSFER-FRIENDLY PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN NEW JERSEY.

KOAs

- 2a Revise curriculum, schedule, and policies to remove transfer student barriers.**
 - Revise existing majors and minors.
 - Develop transfer-friendly policies on major, minor, and concentration maximum and minimum credits.
 - Develop new transfer-friendly curriculum.
 - Offer transfer-friendly schedules and modalities.
- 2b Promote transfer student success.**
 - Develop a robust and welcoming transfer center.
 - Improve undergraduate transfer policy.
 - Improve transfer student culture.
 - Improve transfer student services.
- 2c Recruit and promote the ease of transferability.**
 - Increase transfer recruitment.
 - Promote transferability to external sources by attending more open houses, promoting student success stories, etc.
 - Expand HCCG|NJCU Connect Pathways.
 - Identify and offer new scholarship opportunities for transfer students to reduce the costs of tuition.
- 2d Develop transfer partnerships.**
 - Develop comprehensive approach to high school dual enrollment programs.
 - Develop a comprehensive approach to community college partnerships.
 - Develop a comprehensive approach to enrollment opportunities for incarcerated individuals.
 - Develop a comprehensive approach to awarding lifetime credits to transfer students by partnering with business partners who want their employees to finish their degrees.

KPIs on following page →

92x

KPIs

- Increase number of transfer students by 10% for 2025; 15% for 2026; 20% for 2027; and 25% by 2028.
- Increases dual-credit partnerships with high schools by 10% year-over-year.
- Develop at least one Connect-equivalent partnership each year beginning in 2025/2026.

GOAL THREE**CONSISTENTLY INCREASE COMPLETION RATES YEAR-OVER-YEAR FOR ALL STUDENTS.****KOAs****3a Create organizational structures and services to monitor and support and retain students with at-risk academic performance.**

- Create committee to oversee development of SEEK program including staffing, budget, and program objectives.
- Redesign academic scheduling of courses for General Education and DFW courses.

- Increase monitoring of at-risk students.
- Use data regarding at-risk students for continuous improvement of student success and retention initiatives.

3b Promote degree completion through intrusive advising and more flexible academic completion programs.

- Create and implement a liberal arts degree program.
- Facilitate student major declaration.

3c Increase the number of students participating in mentoring programs.

- Institutionalize faculty/staff/alumni mentoring program.
- Institutionalize peer mentoring program.

KPIs

- Increase of completion rates by 5% year-over-year.
- Increase use of first alert/advising/monitoring system by faculty and support staff by 20% year-over-year.
- Increase participation in mentoring program by 15% year-over-year.



GOAL FOUR

PROVIDE THE MOST LABOR-MARKET RELEVANT GRADUATE PROGRAMS FOR UNDERREPRESENTED PROFESSIONALS IN NEW JERSEY.

KOAs

4a Increase the depth of engagement and collaborative partnerships formed between NJCU graduate programs and organizations committed to supporting underrepresented populations.

- Design and implement targeted outreach initiatives to connect with underrepresented communities and organizations.
- Investigate relevant conferences and events that would attract underrepresented populations. Create partnerships with appropriate exhibitors that could encourage/improve new student and alumni interest in graduate programs.
- Improve graduate certificate tracking and communications.
- Evaluate value of alumni interaction and faculty/staff outreach and use data to invest in increased partnerships.

4b Strategically distribute resources for enrollment efforts in sought-after fields such as nursing, business, education, and STEM.

- Leverage the success stories of those who have excelled in targeted graduate programs through testimonials, case studies, and alumni profiles.
- Introduce targeted financial incentives, scholarships, or tuition discounts for students enrolling in specific graduate programs.
- Invite alumni to recruitment events to share their success stories.

4c Implement focused social media campaigns and customized search engine optimization (SEO) methods specifically designed for graduate programs within underrepresented populations.

- Curate landing pages, SEOs, and social media tags with keywords in English and Spanish that align with language, preferred website content, and search patterns of current and prospective students enhancing the visibility and relevance of graduate programs for diverse populations.
- Create a vibrant and supportive online community that connects alumni with current, and prospective students which fosters collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and a sense of belonging, specifically among diverse students.
- Create a focus group of former and current graduate students who have gone viral in social media to provide knowledge about social media trends.
- Promote collaboration between NJCU alumni, professors, and external stakeholders and prospective students to create stories on online platforms.

KPIs

- Increase percentage of underrepresented graduate admissions by 10% year-over-year.

94x

GOAL FIVE**PROVIDE RELEVANT AND ENGAGING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF A GLOBAL WORKFORCE.****KOAs****5a Increase the number of students participating in career development activities that lead to meaningful jobs related to their fields.**

- Create centralized team dedicated to both career readiness and employee relations.
- Educate students in building career pathways starting with the course, "Orientation to College" and continuing throughout their degree programs.
- Partner with NJCU programs/departments that have been effective in this goal.
- Increase communication and partnerships with key industry actors like Choose N.J., N.J. Economic Development Authority, and N.J. Business and Industry Association.

5b Increase the number of departments who embed career development modules within established curricula.

- Offer guidance to departments that want to connect their courses to the needs of current and future global workforce.
- Establish partnerships between faculty, Institutional Effectiveness, and Career and Professional Development to analyze data from First Destination Survey that can be leveraged to achieve goal five.

KPIs

- Increased number of students participating in career development activities to include 75% of student body by 2026.
- Increased embedded career development modules to include 50% of departments by 2026.

GOAL SIX**UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE THE HIGHER EDUCATION MARKETPLACE IN TERMS OF COMPETING UNIVERSITY PROGRAM OFFERINGS.****KOAs****6a Conduct comprehensive market research to identify market trends.**

- Identify market trends including standardized process and form for gathering and sharing data.
- Analyze competing programs using a standardized process and form for gathering and sharing data.
- Assess programs to ensure quality and reputation using standardized process and form.

6b Measure employability and success of graduates (R.O.I.)

- Foster collaboration and partnerships with industry leaders to capitalize on market demands.
- Strengthen career services.
- Include cooperative education in all academic programs.

6c Ensure successful accreditation and student success of graduates.

- Provide robust services to support student success.
- Enhance academic quality by investing in faculty development.
- Promote student success stories.
- Implement program review and continuous improvement.

K.P.Is

- Increased rankings in IPEDS completion data by CIP code when compared to state and other competitors.

95x

GOAL SEVEN

STRATEGICALLY RESPOND TO MARKET FORCES FOR UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND NONCREDIT PROGRAMMING.

KOAs

7a Emphasize careers students want to pursue through robust co-op/internship programming.

- Centralize a revised co-op/internship program to provide meaningful experiences that can prepare students for future careers.
- Develop and maintain data regarding consistency in major choices vs. students who change their majors mid-degree.

7b Increase our external visible presence at key recruiting events such as college fairs, community colleges, etc.

- Increase the number of recruiters who can attend key events and follow up with high schools and community colleges.
- Invest in additional digital marketing to increase recruiting opportunities.

7c Create a corporate partnership program providing tuition discounts and negotiated services to organizations and agencies.

- Create partnership MOU template and encourage schools, governmental agencies, and companies to work with the university to help employees complete undergraduate, graduate, and non-credit programs.
- Hire a corporate partnership liaison to grow the corporate partnership program.

KPIs

- Increase number of transfer students by 10% for 2025; 15% for 2026; 20% for 2027; and 25% by 2028.
- Development of corporate partnerships: three annually from 2025–2028.
- Increased participation in internships by 10% year-over-year.
- Increased career planning and feelings of career preparedness as measured by survey.



96x

GOAL EIGHT**STRENGTHEN OUR IDENTITY BY PROVIDING STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE STUDENT LIFE CYCLE.****KOAs****8a Host a minimum of two one-stop events per semester to advertise student support services.**

- Create comprehensive communication plans regarding student services.
- Use the Monday common hours to showcase student services in GSUB.
- Measure attendance of events to ensure objectives are being met.

8b Develop internal and external communication plan regarding the unique and compelling support services provided to NJCU students throughout their time at NJCU.

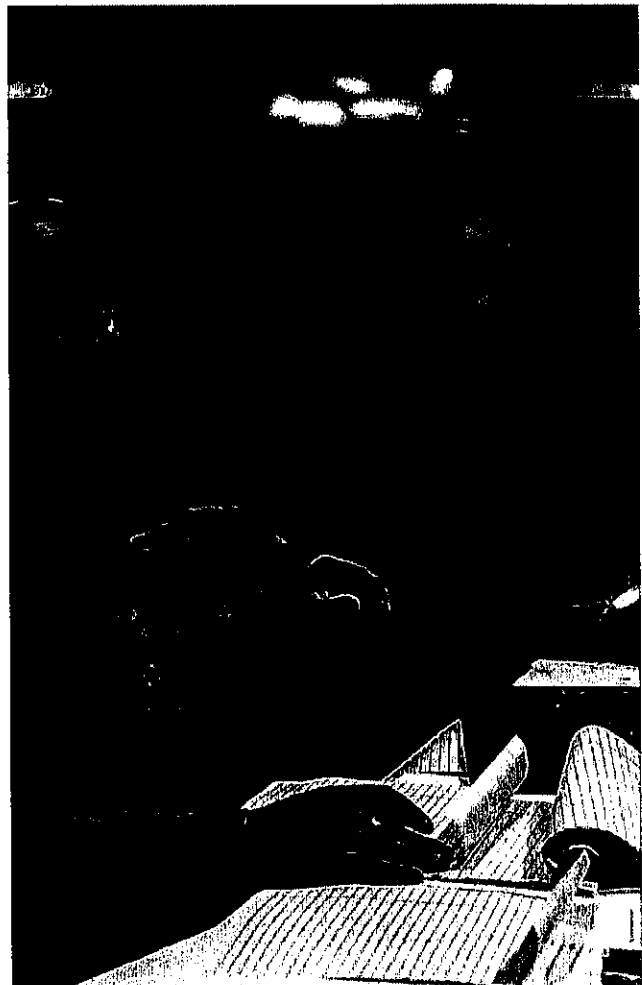
- Review services provided throughout the life cycle of undergraduate, graduate, and noncredit students to identify needs.
- Add support services based upon review.
- Develop compelling website communications regarding support services.
- Develop marketing plan that includes information regarding support services.

8c Increase hours of operation for key support services to increase access for the working students.

- Expand operating hours for key offices like financial aid, student accounts/Bursar, and Registrar.
- Monitor hours services are accessed to ensure appropriate levels of support at times when services are sought the most.

KPIs

- Increased student services based upon review.
- Increased events that include all student services.
- Attendance at one-stop shop events.



97x

GOAL NINE

DRIVE PROGRAM INVESTMENT DECISIONS ACCORDING TO PROGRAM RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI).

KOAs

9a Examine important measures of student and alumni outcomes to make informed decisions that support and enhance the return on investment for each program to position it for success.

- Continuously assess and analyze retention rates based on the following characteristics: student segments and demographics with special focus on first-time, full-time freshmen and first-generation students. Use results as a measure of return on investment.
- Evaluate and analyze enrollment headcount for newly enrolled and ongoing enrolled counts of program majors as a measure of ROI.
- Evaluate and track licensure exam and certification pass rates data for alumni of programs.
- Track and evaluate post-graduate success of program alumni employment rates and salaries of college majors by academic level as an economic success measure for ROI of individual programs.

9b Continuously analyze individual programs, comparing the gains and benefits to the costs involved.

- Utilize the pay-back method, evaluating how long it will take students to pay back or recover the initial investments in years.
- Consistently track and calculate the net revenue per student to evaluate the financial efficiency of the program.
- Analyze the net present value to identify future streams and costs of individual programs (NPV= Benefits-Costs)

9c Assess stakeholder involvement in each program to enhance success and maximize return on investments.

- Conduct ongoing evaluation and analysis on different elements of alumni engagement by establishing a data collection, recording, and reporting system for participation rates, and levels and areas of alumni engagement within individual programs. Upload and maintain data in a platform accessible to all departments.
- Assess and analyze students' continuous participation and involvement levels with their characteristics in high-impact and co-op/internship opportunities within each program.
- Assess and analyze faculty and staff engagement in research, mentorship, service, and professional development within each program.
- Analyze and evaluate engagement with community stakeholders and partnerships within each program.
- Conduct ongoing evaluation and analysis of engagement with web and social media pages of individual programs to identify areas of high volume and interest based on click percentages and inquiries. Use data to evaluate levels of engagement and support initiatives for recruitment and retention.

KPIs

- Increased retention rates by program year-over-year.
- Increased enrollment by program year-over-year.
- Increased percentages of licensure passage rates year-over-year.
- Increased employment rates of graduates year-over-year.
- Decreased time to pay back student loans year-over-year.
- Increased alumni engagement year-over-year.
- Increased student participation in internships year-over-year.
- Increased faculty engagement in co-curricular experiences year-over-year.
- Increased traffic on website year-over-year.
- Increased ROI per program year-over-year.

98x

GOAL TEN**INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY NON-CREDIT PROGRAMMING TO RESPOND TO WORKFORCE NEEDS IN NEW JERSEY.****KOAs****10a Analyze the needs of the future workforce.**

- Analyze the needs of the future workforce (employees and learners) to assess the demand for various non-credit programs.
- Establish a streamlined process for developing new non-credit programs.
- Work with departments and academic units to identify micro-credentials that can be converted to credit.
- Seek out new or leverage existing relationships to diversify program offerings within niche specializations.

10b Enhance marketing and outreach

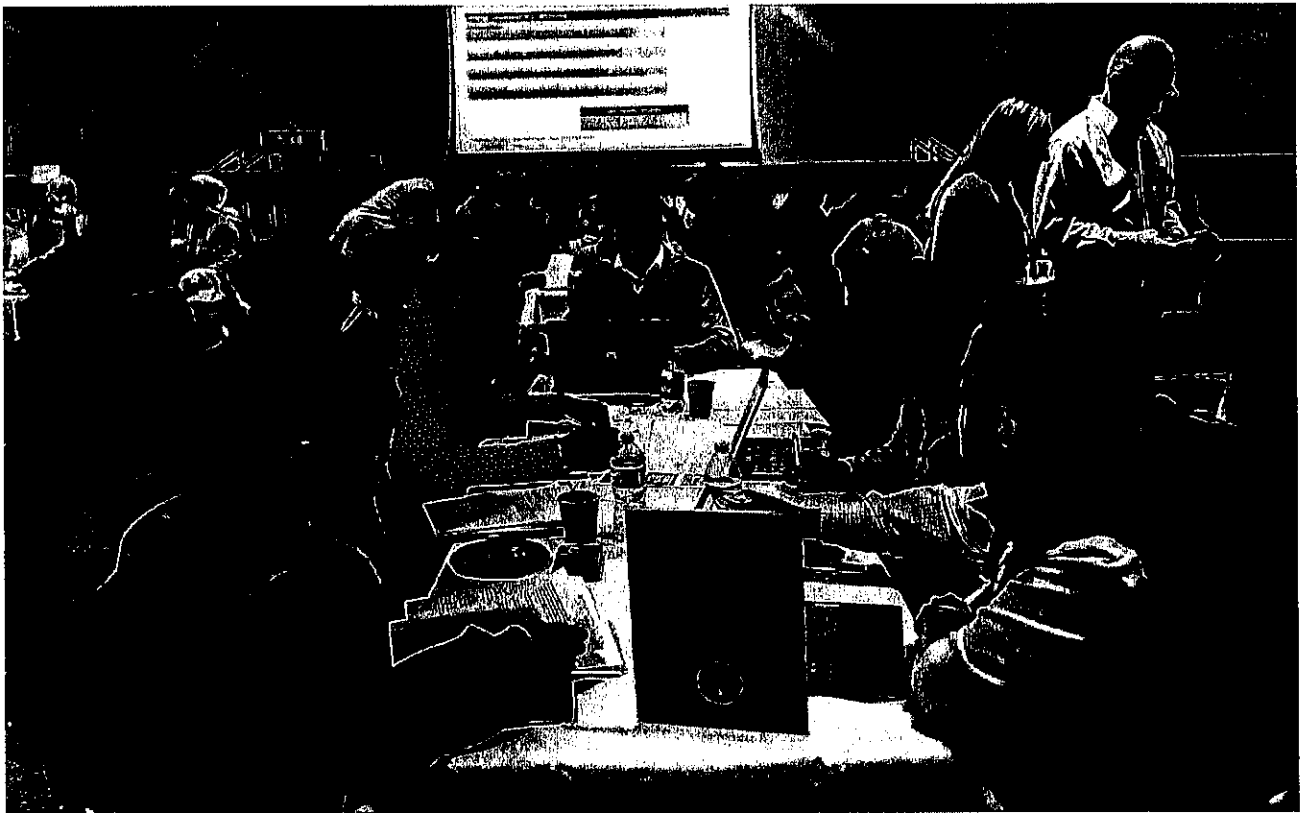
- Develop a robust marketing strategy that utilizes various channels such as social media, email campaigns, and partnerships with local business and community outreach programs.
- Redesign continuing education website and online presence.
- Engage community and build rapport and trust within Jersey City, Hudson County, and surrounding areas.

10c Establish funding resources

- Investigate and pursue grant opportunities offered by federal, state, and private entities.
- Leverage New Jersey Department of Labor negotiations.

KPIs

- Increase number of noncredit programs offered year-over-year.
- Increase enrollment in noncredit programs year-over-year.
- Increase partnerships with agencies and organizations for workforce development year-over-year.



99x





NJCU

NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

101x



SECTION 5

Moody's Investors Service Credit Rating

102x

MOODY'S

RATINGS

Rating Action: Moody's changes New Jersey City University (NJ) outlook to stable from negative; affirms Ba2 ratings

20 Feb 2024

New York, February 20, 2024 – Moody's Investors Service has changed New Jersey City University's (NJCU, NJ) outlook to stable from negative and affirmed its outstanding Ba2 issuer and revenue bond ratings. The bonds were issued through the New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority (NJEFA). The university had total outstanding debt of \$244 million at June 30, 2023.

Revision of the outlook to stable from negative reflects meaningful traction on financial turnaround plans which have allowed NJCU to significantly reduce operating losses and stabilize cash reserves. Despite this momentum, challenges remain around stagnant net tuition revenue, high leverage, and thin reserves. Improvements in financial strategy and risk management, and management credibility, which are governance considerations under Moody's ESG methodology, are key drivers of the rating action.

RATINGS RATIONALE

NJCU's Ba2 issuer rating is supported by its role as a public university and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) for the state of New Jersey (A1 stable), serving an important access role for a diverse undergraduate and graduate student population. While the leadership team has experienced additional transitions during fiscal years 2023-24, the team remains cognizant of the materiality of operating stress and has made significant traction on its financial turnaround plans. NJCU is expected to exceed its 35 days cash on hand (DCOH) Lease Agreement covenant for fiscal 2023, with a Moody's calculating 43 DCOH based on unaudited fiscal 2023 financial data. Further, unaudited fiscal 2023 results show an operating deficit of roughly \$8 million, significantly less than the forecasted \$22 million budget gap. Fiscal 2024 is currently budgeted for breakeven operations and a slight increase in liquidity, supporting maintenance of headroom above the DCOH covenant. Budget 2024 operations do not include the additional \$10 million provided by state stabilization funds, which NJCU anticipates using for budgeted and unbudgeted capital needs. The appointed State of

103x

New Jersey fiscal monitor continues to work directly with leadership to evaluate real estate positions and as state liaison for appropriation support.

The Ba2 revenue bond ratings incorporate the university's issuer level credit characteristics and general obligation to pay, with a first lien pledge on tuition and fee revenue.

RATING OUTLOOK

The stable outlook reflects the likelihood that financial turnaround plans will support at least an 8-10% Moody's calculated EBIDA margin for fiscal 2024, with over 1x debt service coverage, and exceeding the minimum 35 days cash on hand financial covenant.

FACTORS THAT COULD LEAD TO AN UPGRADE OF THE RATINGS

- Material and sustained improvement in operating performance, contributing to sustained debt service coverage of over 1.5x
- Significant increase in liquidity to over 60 days cash on hand, with more than sufficient headroom for financial covenant
- Improved brand and strategic positioning reflected in stronger enrollment patterns and revenue growth
- Over time, deleveraging to a more sustainable debt profile

FACTORS THAT COULD LEAD TO A DOWNGRADE OF THE RATINGS

- Inability to continue implementing financial restructuring leading to deteriorating financial performance
- Further decline in available reserves; breach of financial covenants

LEGAL SECURITY

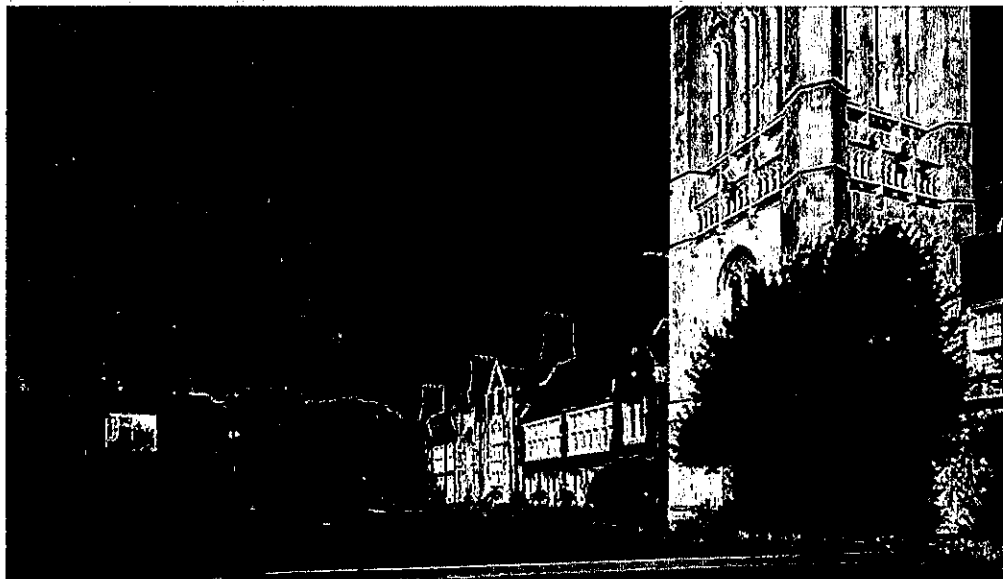
The revenue bonds are general unsecured obligations of NJCU. Concurrent with the issuance of the Series 2021A and 2021B bonds, pledges were changed on the new and parity bonds to include a first lien pledge on tuition and fee revenue. In addition, two covenants were added: (1) a covenant requiring the university to set tuition at a price sufficient to cover operating costs and debt service; and (2) a liquidity covenant that requires the university to maintain 35 days cash on hand (as defined by the Lease Agreement) commencing as of June 30, 2023. Further, there is a debt service reserve fund on the Series 2021 bonds that must be maintained at the maximum annual debt service provided, however, the amount shall not exceed the lesser of (i) ten percent (10%) of the original principal amount of the bonds or (ii) 125% of the average annual debt service requirement on the bonds. The Series 2007F, 2010G,

104x

STATEMENT BY SENATE MAJORITY LEADER M. TERESA RUIZ AND CHAIR OF THE LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS, NELLIE POU, ON MOODY'S UPGRADE OF NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

[Home](#) → [Senator](#) → [M. Teresa Ruiz](#) →

Statement by Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz and Chair of the Latino Legislative Caucus, Nellie Pou, On Moody's Upgrade of New Jersey City University



[M. Teresa Ruiz](#) | [Nellie Pou](#) | [News & Releases](#)

[<](#) [≡](#) [>](#)

TRENTON – Senators M. Teresa Ruiz and Nellie Pou applaud Moody's Investors Service for upgrading New Jersey City University's (NJCU) outlook to stable from negative and affirming its outstanding Ba2 issuer and revenue bond ratings.

Moody's revision of NJCU's outlook reflects meaningful progress on financial turnaround plans, resulting in a reduction of operating losses and stabilization of cash reserves. Despite ongoing challenges, the university has demonstrated improvements in financial strategy and risk management, key drivers of the rating action.

Senators Ruiz and Pou commended NJCU's President Andres Acebo for his leadership and his steadfast approach to addressing the necessary changes needed at NJCU. The Senators recognize the pivotal role NJCU plays as a public university and Latino-Serving Institution for the State of New Jersey, emphasizing its significance in offering education access to a diverse student population. The senators also recognized the leadership team's endeavors in addressing fiscal challenges and making substantial progress on financial turnaround plans. They expressed hope that the institution will persist in its efforts to right-size, thus enhancing and expanding upon the successes observed today.

New Jersey City University, a four-year undergraduate and graduate public university with several sites across Jersey City serves as a vital educational institution in close proximity to New York City. Both Senators commended NJCU's commitment to providing quality education and its role in enriching New Jersey's communities.

105x



SECTION 6

General Education Reform

106x

NJCU
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

NEW FOR FALL 2024

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Program Description

The General Education Program creates lifelong learners prepared for success in their personal and civic lives. While a major prepares students for their chosen career path, the General Education Program equips students with the skills and knowledge that make them more adaptable in a fast-evolving job market.

In the new General Education Program, all courses approved for General Education requirements in New Jersey's Community Colleges are also accepted at NJCU. Many of these courses are also part of students' majors, and so most existing students will be closer to completing the General Education Requirements by migrating to the new GenEd program.

Meet with your advisor today to migrate.

For more information, contact:

THE UNIVERSITY ADVISEMENT CENTER
Vodra Hall, Room 101
Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
201-200-3300

njcu.edu/gened



107x



General Education Requirements

The following are required for new students entering the university beginning with the fall 2024 semester. Students who entered before fall 2024 may elect to migrate to this new program. If they do not migrate, they follow the requirements in place during their term of entry.

Transfer students with an earned A.A., A.S., B.A., or B.S. from an accredited university are waived the entire General Education program. Transfer students without one of these degrees but with 60 or more earned credits are waived the Civic Engagement and Capstone requirements.

	COURSE NUMBERS	CREDITS	NO. OF COURSES
Intellectual and Practical Skills:			
Written Communication	ENGL 101 & 102*	8	2
Oral Communication		3	1
Quantitative Knowledge	MATH 114, 140, 164 or 175**	3-4	1
Technological Competency (and/or Information Literacy)		3	1
Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World:			
Historical Perspectives		3	1
Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning		3	1
Society and Human Behavior		3	1
Humanistic Perspectives		3	1
Global and Cultural Awareness		3	1
Integrative and Applied Learning:			
Civic Engagement		3	1
Capstone Seminar		3	1
Total		38-39	12

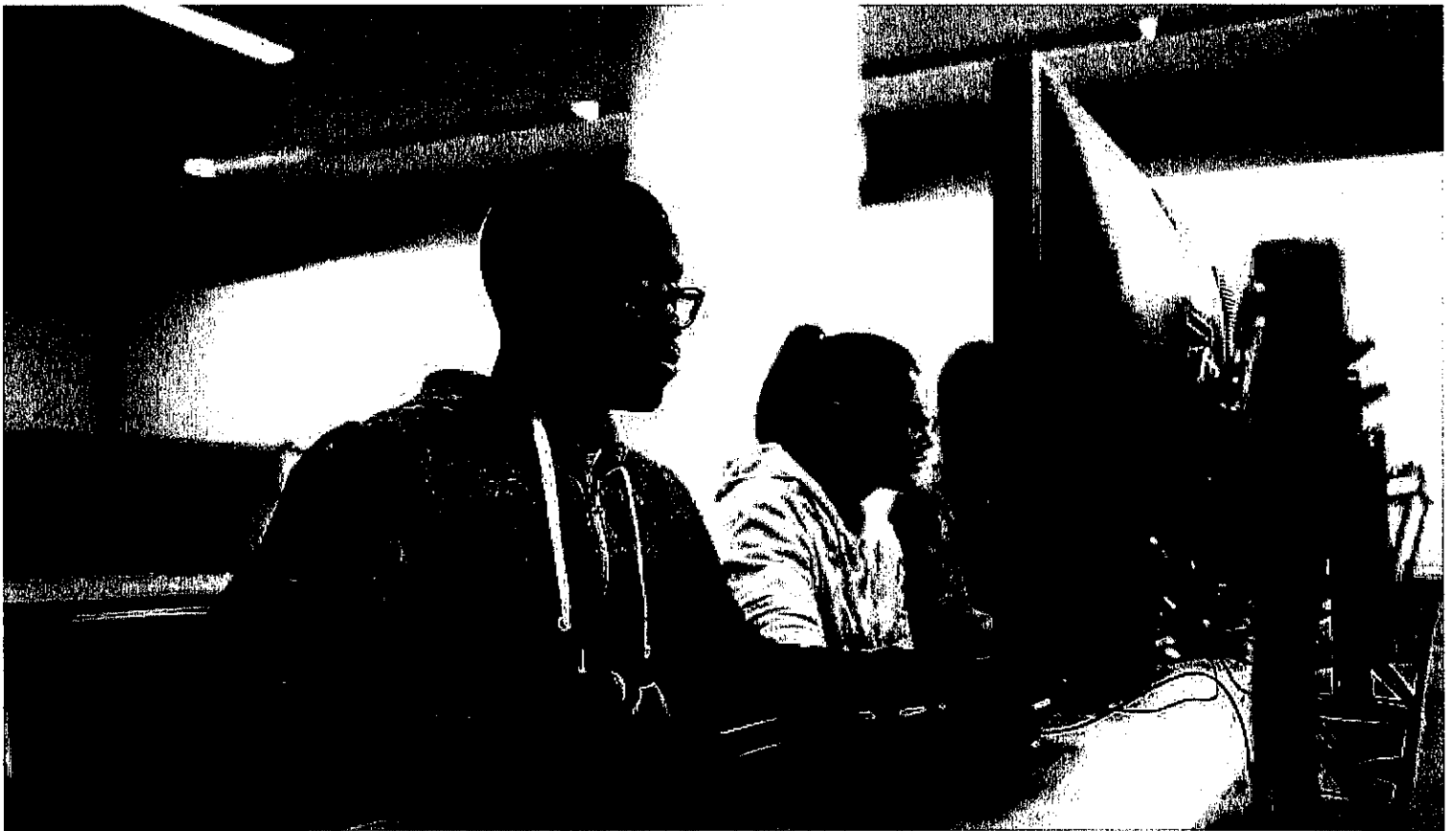
* Students may take ESL 101 and ESL 102, or ESL 115 and ESL 116. Some students are also required to take a foundational course.

** The required Math course and associated sequence varies by students' meta-major. Please consult with your advisor.

108X

Academic Affairs Updates from the Office of the Provost: NJCU's General Education Program

April 27, 2023



109x

Dear Members of the NJCU Community:

This week, we announced the introduction of the **New Jersey City University Recovery and Revitalization Plan: A Framework for Long-Term Financial Sustainability, Mission Focus, and Student Success**. As introduced on page nine of this framework for our future, NJCU's General Education curriculum is a vital part of the student experience. In collaboration with our University Senate, the University is now poised to adopt the most significant overhaul of its general education curriculum in decades.

As with all colleges and universities, general education provides a broader disciplinary context within which students can see and understand their majors. According to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), general education introduces students to new intellectual experiences and ensures that students can demonstrate essential intellectual skills related to communication, reasoning, analysis, and literacy.

However, for students to complete their degrees in a timely manner, access and ability to complete general education requirements are essential. This is particularly true of students who are transferring to NJCU.

According to Monaghan & Attewell, losing credits when transferring to a four-year institution decreases the likelihood of graduation. Kadlec & Gupta concur. When students are forced to use transfer credits as electives, they struggle to complete their degrees in a timely manner. Reeper & Grote examine the factors that impact transfer student completion using a curricular complexity framework, and they identify obstacles that already exist for transfer students including the timing of the courses offered and the number of prerequisite courses that control what students can take in each semester.

The challenges faced by transfer students must be managed on top of those imposed by restrictive general education programs, and they often result in even more delays and a greater likelihood that students will not complete their degrees.

It is understandable that academic programs maintain prerequisites. As such, we know that our students will have some restrictions on the courses they can take in a specific semester. By making our general education program more flexible, students can complete those requirements in a more flexible fashion and with more choices. Further, they can get credit for coursework they have completed elsewhere so they have additional opportunities each semester to focus on their majors.

Reducing obstacles for students in general education does not lower our standards; creating space to mirror the general education program found in community colleges does not make us a community college.

The general knowledge that students achieve from their general education curriculum — whether it is from NJCU or from a community college — becomes the foundation that helps students see their worlds in a larger context. It helps them to ascertain their needs more clearly and to see how knowledge and skills achieved through other disciplines strengthen their ability to ask bigger questions and to communicate more effectively. The sum intellectual total of knowledge, skills, and outcomes achieved through general education are not, as Dewey notes, “a fixed possession.” Instead, they are “an agency and instrumentality for opening new fields (p. 90).” To that end, we need to create as many ways as we can to achieve this broad disciplinary perspective so that we can help our students use that enlarged understanding to achieve their academic and professional goals.

Dewey writes a great deal about educational experiences. He also warns against what he calls “mis-educative experiences.” For Dewey, a mis-educative experience is anything that stands in the way of intellectual, personal, or professional growth.

We need to ask ourselves if the experiences of transfer students who must navigate our current general education program are mis-educative because students are more focused on the challenges of scheduling and understanding the tiers than being focused on the content of our courses. Instead, our students should use the knowledge and skills they have achieved from their varied general education courses to enhance their growth and understanding within their fields of study.

The general education program reform proposed by the General Education Committee **provides the opportunity for transfer students to progress to degree completion in a timely manner while maintaining academic standards. This creates an opportunity for reform which will make NJCU a state-wide leader as the most transfer-friendly public university in the state.** Yes, this would help us financially, because it would help us reclaim the transfer market that we have lost in recent years. Even more importantly, it would help our students.

110x

The proposed overhaul will allow every course on the approved New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) list, including those without direct equivalencies, to be accepted at NJCU for general education credit. In an era where higher education must be willing to adapt and change, **NJCU will become the only four-year institution in New Jersey to do this.**

In *Child and the Curriculum*, Dewey argues that the child should be the center of gravity around which the curriculum evolves. The same can be said of our students. When the center of gravity influencing our curriculum decisions becomes something other than our students, then we fail to live up to our mission. Our students and our curriculum should be, as Dewey describes, “two limits which define a single process (p. 189).” I believe the proposed revisions to the general education curriculum achieve this.

Sincerely,

Donna Adair Breault, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs
New Jersey City University

111x



SECTION 7

HCCC|NJCU CONNECT Program

112x



New Jersey City University
2039 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, N.J. 07305 | www.NJCU.edu

Contact: Ira Thor
Associate Vice President for University Communications
O: 201-200-3301 | C: 973-420-8466 | ithor@njcu.edu

For Immediate Release/December 13, 2023

[Link to Event Photo Gallery](#) (📷 Credit: Paul Gargiulo, NJCU University Communications):

New Jersey City University and Hudson County Community College Sign Historic HCCC|NJCU Connect Program Transfer Agreement

Elected Leaders Applaud Transformative Higher Ed Partnership

JERSEY CITY, N.J. | [New Jersey City University \(NJCU\)](#) and Hudson County Community College (HCCC), led by NJCU Interim President [Andrés Acebo](#) and HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber, gathered at a signing ceremony on December 11 to formally introduce and launch **HCCC|NJCU CONNECT** — a transformational program that will provide highly visible, inclusive, and barrier-free transfer pathways to guide students and their families from high school, through studies at HCCC, and on to a timely graduation from NJCU.

This historic agreement will enable a seamless transfer experience from HCCC to NJCU as HCCC students take the next step in their academic journeys and pursue their bachelor’s degrees at NJCU in one of 15 academic major disciplines after completing their associate degree at HCCC.

A critical element of the partnership will allow every credit earned at HCCC to transfer to NJCU. In April, NJCU [announced the most significant overhaul](#) of its general education curriculum in decades — reform which makes NJCU a statewide leader as the most transfer-friendly public university in the state. NJCU is the only four-year institution in New Jersey to do this.

The HCCC|NJCU CONNECT program, [announced in June](#), will officially launch in January, 2024, with the signing of the agreement. Students will be dually-enrolled and have access to all programs and facilities at both institutions throughout their programs of study.

Reflecting on the impact of the agreement, HCCC President Dr. Christopher Reber stated “We both serve large communities of traditionally underrepresented students. Many students at both institutions are the first in their families to go to college. Many of these students are navigating monumental barriers to pursue their education. When they succeed, it is life-changing for the students, their children, their families, and their communities, and the outcomes ripple throughout generations.”

“The work we are doing lives and breathes within our community,” President Acebo said at the ceremony. “Help doesn’t always come from the outside – the most sustained focus of our work must be rooted within the communities that we serve. You can’t be for the community if you’re not in the community.”

Acebo added: “This historic announcement for both institutions builds upon NJCU’s nearly century-long commitment to providing a socioeconomically diverse population with access to an excellent education as a catalyst to social mobility.

113x

This is a pillar of our commitment to being one of the public anchor institutions in Hudson County and surrounding communities. NJCU recently announced the most significant overhaul of its general education program in decades. Our intentional work alongside our partners at Hudson County Community College will only further the distinction that NJCU is now the most transfer-friendly public university in the State of New Jersey. The partnership between NJCU and HCCC provides tools to change the trajectory for students who enroll in the community college, make the transition to the four-year institution, and engage fully in the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree."

The partnership between the two Jersey City anchor institutions was applauded by many statewide legislative and local elected officials.

District 31 Senator-Elect and current Assemblywoman **Angela V. McKnight** said: "I celebrate this partnership between New Jersey City University and Hudson County Community College — two institutions that continue to change the lives of our residents and families in Hudson County. Together, NJCU and HCCC are creating a pathway that strengthens the dream of higher education and the social mobility it creates for our community. I congratulate President Acebo and his senior leadership team as they continue to author an impressive mission-driven comeback story on Kennedy Blvd., and also applaud President Reber and his team at HCCC for their collaborative work on this important initiative."

District 32 Senator-Elect and current District 33 Assemblyman **Raj Mukherj** said: "I am thrilled to support the launch of the HCCC|NJCU CONNECT program. This partnership between our county college and a state university will revolutionize the transfer process for students in Hudson County, providing them with a clear and efficient pathway to a four-year degree. We are committed to supporting students in our county and ensuring their success, and I applaud NJCU and HCCC on this testament to that dedication."

District 33 Assemblywoman **Annette Chaparro** said: "The importance and impact of the HCCC|NJCU CONNECT program to our communities are life-changing. HCCC President Dr. Chris Reber and NJCU President Andrés Acebo are true examples of community leaders with a vision to uplift residents of Hudson County and beyond."

District 33 Assemblyman-Elect **Gabriel Rodriguez '04** said: "On behalf of the Hudson County community and our community at large, and a proud alumnus of NJCU, I applaud the efforts of President Acebo and all those involved in bridging the gap and championing greater access to opportunities in education. We know that education opens the door in the lives of families pursuing the American dream. This initiative by NJCU and HCCC, makes a real difference in the lives of our residents, getting them one step closer to progress, success and making that dream a reality."

District 33 Assemblyman-Elect **Julio Marengo** attended the signing and noted; "It was very exciting to be in the room where this happened earlier this week. Both institutions are committed to supporting Hudson County students' goals and it showed. Streamlining this process will give students a better chance at attaining a bachelor's degree; a valuable tool that still gives job seekers an edge when they enter the job market. CONNECT will act as a compass for immigrant families, especially those who have recently arrived. I look forward to seeing this program strengthen the number of students that transfer from community college to a four-year college. This is how we get closer to the American Dream."

District 31 Assemblyman **William B. Sampson IV**, a former NJCU student, said "The HCCC|NJCU CONNECT partnership brings education closer to home, promising timely graduation and enriching university experiences for all. I'm grateful that residents in the 31st district can now access affordable education with comprehensive services, thanks to this collaboration. This effort will allow smooth timely transitions from HCCC to NJCU. The citizens of the 31st district are grateful to both institutions continuing their initiatives of improving higher education in our communities."

Hudson County Executive-elect, Craig Guy added: "I am so proud that Hudson County's students have another opportunity for success with the HCCC|NJCU Connect program. The opportunity to obtain a good education and also come out of the process with the necessary life skills to attain gainful employment is invaluable."

County Commission Chairman Anthony Romano noted: "A good education serves more than just the student; it raises the standards of an entire community. When access to education is blocked by barriers and bureaucracy it also hurts more than just students — entire communities miss out. The HCCC|NJCU CONNECT program removes these barriers so

that every student in Hudson County has an option that presents a blueprint for success. Thank you to NJCU President, Andrés Acebo and HCCC President, Dr. Chris Reber for spearheading this in our community.”

HCCC|NJCU CONNECT was developed during participation in the Aspen Institute–American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Transfer Student Success and Equity Intensive. The intentional work, spearheaded by NJCU with HCCC as a partner, creates a first-of-its-kind pathway for students in the Hudson County community to have a clear blueprint from community college to NJCU to obtain a timely four-year degree. The program will allow students to complete their first two years at HCCC and automatically enroll and culminate their 4-year degree at NJCU, all seamlessly.

When students from a community college are accepted to a four-year college, they can face significant challenges and sometimes find that a portion of their credits will not be accepted, causing them to spend both time and money to retake similar courses at their new school. The HCCC|NJCU CONNECT program proactively eliminates this hurdle and provides transfer students with additional resources, including a transfer counselor who will work with them to ensure they have the support they need to be successful while transitioning from HCCC to NJCU.

What makes the HCCC|NJCU CONNECT program truly unique are the additional wrap-around services that students can receive from NJCU and HCCC while attending both institutions. Notably, students can live in NJCU’s residence halls, attend programs on the NJCU campus, and utilize the university’s vital services, including the Gothic Rack — which provides all students access to new and gently used professional attire for interviews, career fairs, networking events and the workplace — the Gothic Knight Food Pantry, and the Children’s Learning Center (CLC), which offers drop-in childcare services for students with children—all at an extremely competitive cost. Meanwhile, students will retain access to HCCC’s holistic support services and programs. The schools will also establish data and information-sharing procedures among their staff in order to share best practices and promote student success.

Each year, about one-quarter of HCCC graduates – more than any other community college – transfer to NJCU. HCCC|NJCU CONNECT will provide support for students who may be the first in their families to attend college, work at least one job, and commute to and from classes by cultivating an essential sense of belonging at both institutions. HCCC and NJCU have committed the time, personnel, and financial resources to construct the program’s infrastructure, enhance and leverage student services, build awareness of the CONNECT program, and engage with prospective students and their families.

There are now 15 academic pathways encompassing a variety of fields and disciplines available to HCCC students who want to begin a course of study here and continue on to NJCU after completing their associate degree. HCCC students in the following programs will be the first to benefit from these pathways – Accounting A.S. (to B.S. in Accounting at NJCU), Biology A.S. (to B.A. or B.S. in Biology), Business Administration A.S. (to B.S. in Management or B.S. in Marketing), Chemistry A.S. (to B.A. or B.S. in Chemistry), Computer Science (Cybersecurity) A.S. (to B.S. in Cybersecurity), Criminal Justice A.S. (to B.S. in Criminal Justice), English A.A. (to B.A. in Creative Writing or B.A. in Literature), Human Services, Pre-Social Work A.S. (to B.S. in Social Work), Mathematics A.S. (to B.S. in Mathematics), Nursing A.S. (to B.S. in Nursing), and Psychology A.A (to B.A. in Psychology).

Jodi Bailey Accavallo, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Development and Community Engagement at NJCU, and **Dr. Lisa Dougherty**, HCCC Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment, served as the institutional chairs of the program through several years of intensive work leading up to its launch. HCCC|NJCU CONNECT is modeled after the highly successful Northern Virginia Community College–George Mason University ADVANCE program. HCCC|NJCU CONNECT will create a singular student experience focused on addressing students’ holistic needs, diminishing equity gaps, and promoting students’ goal and credential attainment.

About NJCU

New Jersey City University is an institution of higher learning dedicated to the development of our students, our city, our communities, and our state. We are a game-changing force for our students and have been recognized as one of the top colleges in the nation improving their upward economic mobility. Whether enrolled in one of our undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral programs at our three locations, NJCU students have access to an affordable, diverse environment,

115x

and an exceptionally supportive faculty. This prepares them to go on to become the next generation of workers and leaders who improve their communities and the State of New Jersey.

About HCCC

Hudson County Community College serves more than 18,000 credit and non-credit students annually. The College offers nearly 90 degree and certificate programs, including award-winning English as a Second Language; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Culinary Arts/Hospitality Management; Nursing and Health Professions; and Humanities and Social Sciences. The HCCC Culinary/Hospitality Management program was ranked number six in the U.S. by Best Choice Schools.

HCCC has partnerships with major four-year colleges and universities in the greater New Jersey-New York area and beyond, accommodating seamless transfer of credits for further undergraduate and graduate education.

—WWW.NJCU.EDU—

116x



SECTION 8

NJCU Differentiators

117x

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

New Jersey City University

- Serves the second-highest proportion of undergraduate Pell awardees in the State of New Jersey, at 53%, one of only two universities where low-income students are more than 50% of the enrolled undergraduate population¹
- Enrolls 4% of the State of New Jersey's public college and university students
- Enrolls 5% of the State's Pell grant awardees
- Awards 6% of all Pell grant funding awarded to public institutions in New Jersey

PERCENT of UNDERGRADUATE AWARDED PELL		
	NJ Public 4 Yr Institutions	Percent of UG awarded Pell
1	Rutgers University-Newark	56
2	New Jersey City University	53
3	Rutgers University-Camden	48
4	Kean University	47
5	William Paterson University of New Jersey	46
6	Montclair State University	45
7	Stockton University	40
8	New Jersey Institute of Technology	38
9	Rowan University	31
10	Rutgers University-New Brunswick	28
11	Ramapo College of New Jersey	26
12	The College of New Jersey	19
13	Thomas Edison State University	18

- Graduates 7% of all NJ Public 4 Yr institution Bachelor's degree awardees in Health Professions; 9% of all Black students in this category, and 8% of all Hispanic students in this category
- Graduates 3% of all NJ Public 4 Yr institution Bachelor's degree awardees in Biological and Biomedical Sciences; 5% of all Black students in this category, and 6% of all Hispanic students in this category

¹ When looking at all public 4 year AND 2 year institutions in New Jersey, a list of 32, NJCU comes in #3 and Hudson Community College comes in #1, underscoring the high rates of poverty in Hudson County and the need for NJCU to remain an anchor institution. When looking at all public 4 Year institutions in the tri-state area of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, out of 93 such institutions, NJCU came in 11th for highest proportion of enrolled Pell awarded students.

118x



INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

NJCU Commitment to all NJ Community College Students

- In Spring 2023, NJCU's Academic Affairs team collaborated with faculty on overhauling the general education curriculum. **The revised Gen Ed curriculum, which the University Senate approved with an overwhelming majority of 95%, allows every course on the approved New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) list, including those without direct equivalencies, to be accepted at NJCU for general education credit.** The policy goal was to make NJCU the most transfer-friendly four-year institution in the State of New Jersey.
- Initial data from 2024 demonstrate that this policy had a positive impact on transfer applications and admissions to NJCU. **Spring 2024 new transfer FTE enrollment was 17.5% higher than Spring 2023 new transfer FTE enrollment.**
- Based on early admissions and enrollment figures, this trend will persist for Fall 2024. So far, nearly three months before Fall semester begins, nearly 30% of all new transfer students admitted for Fall 2024 have committed to NJCU by enrolling.

Overall Mobility Index

#3 out of 49 Colleges in New Jersey

This measure reflects both access and outcomes, representing the likelihood that a student at New Jersey City University moved up two or more income quintiles

Chetty et al. (2017) "Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility"

Social Mobility Index

#10 in the United States

#1 in New Jersey

CollegeNet (2023) Social Mobility Index

Social Mobility Index 2023 - College Rankings by CollegeNET

Rank	Institution	City	State	Ethos	Tuition	% Low Income	Grad Score	Median Early Career Salary	Average Debt	Endowment (in M)	% Freshman Pell	% Pell to rich 1/2
1	California State University-Dominguez Hills	Carson	CA	14	\$7,060	61.2	79.1	\$44,700	\$14,500	\$18.22	74	16.7
2	Winston-Salem State University	Winston-Salem	NC	3	\$6,276	53.4	87.8	\$33,200	\$25,000	\$50.57	74	26.1
3	California State Polytechnic University-Pomona	Pomona	CA	69	\$7,439	35.4	101.1	\$54,000	\$17,792	\$165.97	46	23.7
4	CUNY Lehman College	Bronx	NY	10	\$7,410	58.6	86	\$43,100	\$10,500	\$38.22	70	15.8
5	Farmingdale State College	Farmingdale	NY	6	\$8,576	30.4	60.3	\$51,700	\$15,700	\$4.39	40	24.7
6	CUNY Bernard M Baruch College	New York	NY	186	\$7,464	48.9	105.6	\$57,200	\$11,500	\$278.10	56	12.7
7	California State University-Long Beach	Long Beach	CA	43	\$6,884	37.6	110.1	\$48,100	\$15,000	\$109.67	50	25
8	California State University-Los Angeles	Los Angeles	CA	67	\$6,805	61.6	90.9	\$46,100	\$13,381	\$63.64	74	17
9	California State University-Northridge	Northridge	CA	53	\$7,069	50.8	90.6	\$45,400	\$14,488	\$174.27	62	18.1
10	New Jersey City University	Jersey City	NJ	2	\$13,564	53	63.4	\$42,700	\$18,500	\$16.87	62	15
11	CUNY Brooklyn College	Brooklyn	NY	10	\$7,440	54.9	85.5	\$43,900	\$11,819	\$123.28	64	14.4

1204



SECTION 9

Compilation of Recent Relevant News Articles

MEMBERS OF NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE CAUCUSES REAFFIRM SUPPORT FOR NJCU AND APPLAUD LEADERSHIP OF INTERIM PRESIDENT ANDRES ACEBO

Home → Senator → Angela McKnight →

Members of New Jersey Legislative Caucuses Reaffirm Support for NJCU and Applaud Leadership of Interim President Andres Acebo

Angela McKnight | Brian P. Stack | M. Teresa Ruiz | Nellie Pou | News & Releases | Nilsa Cruz-Perez | Raj Mukherji

(Trenton) – The undersigned members of the New Jersey Legislature, Latino Legislative Caucus, Black Legislative Caucus, and Hudson County Legislative Delegation issued this statement affirming their continued commitment and support for New Jersey City University's (NJCU) revitalized mission and the thousands of students and families it serves, as well as the hundreds of faculty and staff who serve them. Many members, who have proudly grown in number in the new legislative session, have deep and personal ties to the University's mission and the students and families it touches. We personify the stories of the students who walk onto NJCU's campus, and some of us attended and graduated from the University, which is why we proudly supported last year's legislative stabilization appropriation and will continue to legislatively support the University's work and commitment to the populations it serves.

We also deeply value the importance of representation that authentically mirrors the constituencies we are privileged to serve. It's that representation that we proudly highlight and support. We applaud the servant leadership that the State and our communities have witnessed from NJCU Interim President Andrés Acebo, J.D. President Acebo is the only current Latino to lead any institution of higher education in New Jersey and the youngest known ever to lead a public university in our State. Equally notable is that he also personifies the stories of the students he serves as a first-generation, public school-educated son of working-class immigrants, born and raised in Hudson County, who became the first person in his family to attend college. He exemplifies the promise of equal opportunity and higher education. His passion for and connection to the community and mission that he has remarkably led out of crisis and into a period of significant revitalization has earned our confidence in his continued leadership to usher the University into its second century of service with stability, community engagement, strategic growth, and student-centered service. His passion and leadership have earned him significant honor and distinction.

X221

New Jersey City University is one of our State's oldest Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Nearly half of its overwhelmingly commuting students identify as Hispanic/Latina/o. Thirty percent identify as Black/African American, and at least eight percent identify as Asian American Pacific Islander. Two-thirds of all students are first-generation, and the overwhelming majority come from low-income and working-class households. It serves the most socioeconomically diverse student population of any public university in New Jersey, with a publicly celebrated history of driving social and economic mobility. This year's commencement saw nearly 1,700 graduates, an 11.6% increase in degree completion over last year. This is a testament to the resiliency and the new emphasis on student success in and for the community.

Public records affirm the University's significant strides at an unprecedented pace under Acebo's leadership. A global rating agency improved the University's financial outlook to stability while achieving new milestones in access and affordability, responsive academic and curricular reform, shared governance, labor relations, and community engagement.

The University has been led with exceptional resilience in navigating challenges posed by the global pandemic, higher education disruptions, and structural and systemic financial issues. Quick and decisive actions, commitment to shared governance, collegial work with organized labor, community engagement, strategic planning and implementation, and a student-centric mission-driven commitment have positioned the University to better serve the communities we represent.

The University developed strategies and engaged internal and external stakeholders in several key areas, including:

1. Stabilizing the financial trajectory of the institution through developing and implementing NJCU's Recovery and Revitalization Plan;
2. Strengthening ties to the community by leading a community-wide process of reviewing and refreshing the institution's Mission and Vision to reaffirm and rebuild the institution's historic commitments to students, families, and our community, including those that have been historically underserved and underrepresented;
3. Setting out a feasible, transparent, and community-supported road map by developing and implementing an integrated NJCU Strategic Plan comprised of an Academic Master Plan, a Strategic Enrollment Plan, and a Student Development and Community Engagement Plan;
4. Strengthening access and affordability for students through an overhaul of the General Education curriculum to ensure seamless transfer for all New Jersey community college students, intentional affiliations, and partnerships such as the concurrent admission program with Hudson Community College, which provide direct pathways for degree programs and shared resources to community college students;
5. Revamping the institutional aid structure and process to ensure that students with financial need are supported in ways that reduce their future financial burdens, including for our State's undocumented students through its partnership with TheDream.US;
6. Building and strengthening relationships with key community stakeholders to ensure a robust and thriving Hudson County and New Jersey economy through initiatives such as the Project Labor Agreement (PLA) and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at providing internship opportunities for NJCU students; and
7. Building and strengthening opportunities for immigrant and first-generation students through the MOU signed with GLACO — Grupo Latino americano de Consúles en New Jersey — to initiate higher education programs and services tailored to the Latin American and Latino community in New Jersey to advance their educational attainment and career development, as well as to establish partnerships between Latin American higher education institutions and NJCU faculty and staff to promote mission-aligned programs in the most diverse communities in our country.

These are only some highlights of the recent and significant transformations being led at New Jersey City University under uniquely representative leadership and stewardship. We have witnessed the University community's tireless work to place itself on stable footing, reorganize and reallocate structures, processes, and resources, and ensure that students will have continued and enhanced access to a dedicated and engaged faculty and staff for the institution's second century serving the State of New Jersey.

We applaud the work of President Acebo and NJCU's students, faculty, and staff. We unequivocally support their continued leadership and work to ensure stability, community engagement, strategic growth, and student-centered service.

123x

Undersigned:

LD-31

Senator Angela McKnight

Assemblywoman Barbara McCann Stamato

Assemblyman William Sampson

LD-32

Senator Raj Mukherji

Assemblyman John Allen

Assemblywoman Jessica Ramirez

LD-33

Senator Brian Stack

Assemblyman Julio Marengo

Assemblyman Gabriel Rodriguez

Assemblywoman Carmen Morales – LD-34

Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez- LD-19

LD-29

Senator M. Teresa Ruiz

Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor-Marin

Assemblywoman Shanique Speight

LD-35

Senator Nellie Pou

Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter

Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly

LD-27

Assemblywoman Rosie Bagolie

Assemblywoman Alixon Collazos-Gill

Assemblywoman Annette Quijano – LD-20

Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez – LD-5

124x

Legislative Higher Education Hearing on NJCU

Testimony of Henry Amoroso, State Monitor of New Jersey City University

Monday, June 10, 2024

Good morning, Senator Cryan, Chair Assemblywoman Carter, and members of both the Senate Assembly and Higher Education Committees. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to this joint session. It is an honor and privilege to be here.

Since August 2023, I have served as the state-appointed monitor, N.J.S.A. 18A:3B-53.4, of New Jersey City University (NJCU), the first institution of higher education to receive intensive State monitoring support for attaining and sustaining greater fiscal accountability and transparency under innovative legislation sponsored by Senators Gopal and Cryan and Assembly members Jacey, Carter and McKeon, and signed into law by Governor Murphy last July.

As you are aware, in addition to authorizing Secretary Bridges to appoint a State monitor for institutions that can benefit from specialized fiscal oversight, this law requires each monitor appointed to report annually to the Governor and to the Legislature on the financial condition of the institution being monitored as well as on the progress it has made toward regaining full institutional control.

My testimony today will cover both requirements. In addition, I have structured this time to allow many opportunities to answer questions or provide additional

comments relevant to my initial monitoring findings, initial recommendations and benchmarks, future monitoring plans, and the progress that NJCU's current board, administration, faculty, and staff have made toward regaining the University's autonomy to date.

The Monitoring Context

To set the stage for my remarks, it was immediately clear as I became familiar with NJCU's students and resources, that a high-performing institution of higher education is needed in Hudson County to provide undergraduate and postgraduate learning opportunities for this region's diverse high school population, as well as adult learners, many of whom are the first members of their families to pursue a college degree. I was warmly welcomed by Interim President Acebo and his administration, members of NJCU's Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and its students. Interim President Acebo and select members of the Board worked diligently and collaboratively as we closely monitored the institution's fiscal and academic performance. I very much appreciate the collegial manner in which we have collectively worked to address those issues, which resulted in the institution's fiscal exigency.

Monitoring findings

I know that you have already read my initial monitoring report, so I will focus today on its key points, particularly the benchmarks established, the steps that have already been taken by NJCU to achieve those benchmarks, and the institutional outcomes we collectively expect to result once those steps are completed.

First, let me underscore the hard realities of NJCU's current situation:

- In June of 2023, the University declared a fiscal exigency relying on a report that indicated there would be a \$22 million deficit. My finding indicates that the operating deficit did not present itself. Nonetheless it was found that there would be a significant ongoing deficit, should the university fully fund the expenses necessary to remedy the financial shortcomings that prevented and or limited the types of outcomes we would all expect.
- NJCU's more than \$150 million in long-term lease liabilities are steadily eating away at its bottom line and those investments have not provided the return on investment one would expect with these types of initiatives.
- An advanced bond refunding in 2021 will in the next fiscal year increase the Universities debt service by \$3 million, creating greater pressure on our budget, consuming needed dollars for student success.
- Undergraduate enrollment is clearly down from its pre-pandemic highs, which has resulted in significantly reduced revenues.

- Moreover, the combination of deferred maintenance and high debt levels is handicapping the University's financial recovery.

NJCU's Response

Now, some better news: To its credit, the University's leaders have already acted to not only mitigate a number of these challenges, but also moved aggressively in implementing steps recommended in the initial monitoring report, which were affirmed by the Secretary of Higher Education. For example:

1. Interim President Acebo has already restructured NJCU's academic programming to appropriately align it with its available resources and refresh the University's mission.
2. Following the monitor's report, the institution has engaged in a broad search to identify a cabinet level position to promote student success and persistence, and fully expects to have that recommendation by the June Board meeting. This position will focus on outreach programing, career resources, improvement to students' learning and living conditions, as well as other initiatives that have proven effective in sustaining student persistence.
3. NJCU has engaged subject matter experts in the areas of real estate assessment and capital needs to guide the Board to pursue monetization of

property and to invest in capital to address areas of direst need of improvement and repair.

4. The institution is likewise working collaboratively with State officials to refresh its Board of Trustees; one new Board member is in place; and two more new Board members will follow, and we expect additional board members thereafter.
5. The Board will meet in June to update and re-align its Bylaws with the monitoring benchmarks.
6. NJCU has initiated, through an RFP process, the search for a consultant to guide the Board and other organizational leaders in a determination of the most suitable partnerships to further the institution's mission.
7. The University has made substantive progress in collaborating with legal counsel and real estate advisors to recommend strategies for monetizing certain properties. These recommendations will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees for implementation.
8. Spending on capital improvements has significantly increased, and the University is looking to refurbish at least one residence hall to bring students back to campus and generate revenue for servicing its EDA debt.

How the Monitoring Benchmarks Will be Used Moving Forward

To facilitate tracking the progress of New Jersey City University toward attaining the monitoring benchmarks, I created a tool that incorporates all of the recommended and approved benchmarks detailed in the monitoring report and affirmed by the Secretary of Higher Education. This tool will assist Interim President Acebo, the Executive Board and appropriate committees and the monitor in tracking and documenting the University's progress toward attaining fiscal stability and readiness for autonomy. This document will also serve as a monthly means of reporting progress and outcomes to the Secretary of Higher Education. Though all of these initiatives are welcome, it is important to note that the University is still under serve financial pressure as a result of its high debt levels, limited revenue, and significant capital needs.

This tool also allows NJCU's leaders a means of establishing and communicating firm timelines for when these benchmarks will be reached, as well as for defining the steps to be taken in accomplishing each one. This systematic approach to measurement and transparency will assist NJCU to mitigate its current financial position and address governance issues so as to avoid future challenges by putting student success at the forefront of its focus and detailing the path it will take in

improving the University's learning environments and support structures to meet the needs of current and future students.

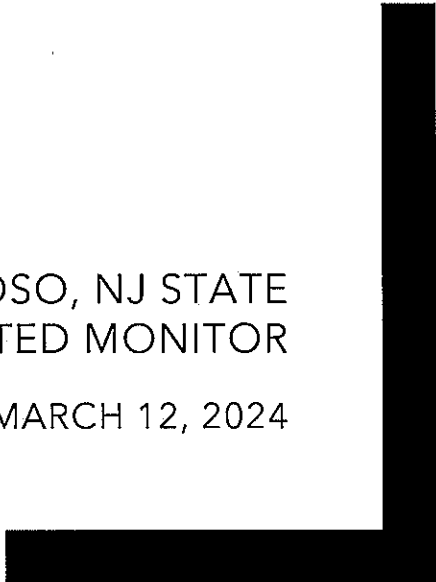
I now welcome your comments and questions.



**NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY'S FISCAL &
GOVERNANCE MONITORING REPORT AND
FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN**

HENRY J. AMOROSO, NJ STATE
APPOINTED MONITOR

MARCH 12, 2024



166x

**NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY'S
FISCAL & GOVERNANCE MONITORING REPORT
AND FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background	4
Initial Monitoring Plan	5
Monitoring Findings & Recommendations	7
Fiscal Accountability Plan	13
Fiscal Recommendations	
Governance Recommendations	
Plan for the Next Monitoring Period	26
Monitor's Exit Strategy	27

NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY'S FISCAL & GOVERNANCE MONITORING REPORT AND FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

Executive Summary

In 2023, the New Jersey State Comptroller detailed significant fiscal deficiencies at New Jersey City University (NJCU) arising under lax oversight by the institution's Board of Trustees and poor financial management by top administrators. Subsequent personnel layoffs and deep budget cuts at the institution precipitated a financial crisis. In response, the State enacted a law in July 2023 (P.L. 2023, c. 115) that requires public institutions of higher education such as NJCU to submit annual fiscal monitoring reports and empowers the Secretary of Higher Education to appoint a monitor at public institutions of higher education that the Secretary determines are financially unstable.

Under the 2023 statute, a monitor is authorized to provide direct oversight of a public institution of higher education's fiscal and governance operations. In addition, the law requires a monitor to develop a financial accountability plan within six months of appointment that sets benchmarks for the financially troubled institution subject to monitoring, including a description of remedial actions the institution must complete as a condition for the cessation of State monitor oversight.

In August 2023, the Secretary of Higher Education, Brian K. Bridges, made a finding of instability in the financial condition of NJCU and, on August 29, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:3B-53.4, appointed New Jersey attorney and Seton Hall tenured professor of legal studies Henry J. Amoroso as the University's fiscal monitor, the first fiscal monitor of a public institution of higher education ever appointed by the State.

This report details the Monitor's investigation and findings from September 1, 2023, through March 12, 2024, and includes a Fiscal Accountability Plan for the University based on his findings with eleven (11) recommendations for achieving a prompt fiscal turnaround, along with time-focused benchmarks and actions required to attain the proposals. One of the most pivotal recommendations is for NJCU to reconstitute as Jersey City College, a campus of a larger mission-aligned system with its own chancellor and attendant support, but one integrated into a larger system or institution. Although there is a narrow pathway for NJCU to become an independent city university, it is one that would require far greater investment from the State than is presently appropriated, and such a path would remain fraught with numerous, significant challenges.

A brief recent history of NJCU's fiscal incapacity, financial controls, and certain governance issues is included, but most of this report is intentionally forward-facing. Its purposes are to (1) communicate the Monitor's conclusions about the institutions' fiscal and governance capacity and controls to the Secretary of Higher Education, NJCU's Board of Trustees and interim administration, and other stakeholders; (2) recommend a Fiscal Accountability Plan; (3) describe how this Plan addresses the circumstances that resulted in the Monitor's appointment; and (4) explicate how implementation of the Fiscal Accountability Plan will result in terminating State monitoring and the Monitor's exit from NJCU in FY2025.

NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY'S FISCAL & GOVERNANCE MONITORING REPORT AND FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

BACKGROUND

Since its founding in 1927, New Jersey City University (NJCU) has provided an accessible, high-quality education to a diverse student body. Classified by the Carnegie Foundation among the nation's Masters Colleges and Universities: Larger Programs, it enrolled 6,539 students in the academic year 2022-2023, representing a 30% decline from its historic high enrollment of 9,361 in 2003. The institution accepted 90.7% of the individuals who applied for admission in 2021, a rate significantly higher than most of its peer institutions according to the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in 2021. NJCU has also traditionally admitted a larger proportion of first-generation and minority students. According to *U.S. News*, it has the highest campus ethnic diversity in New Jersey and the seventh highest in the nation. IPEDS data shows that 77% of all students enrolled in 2021 were members of racial or ethnic minorities.

NJCU's commitment to inclusivity and empowerment is exemplified by its many student support programs and its active role in supporting legislative reforms to expand higher education statewide. Despite recently reporting better graduation outcomes, it nevertheless has experienced major challenges since 2020, including a marked decline in student enrollment and questionable financial management decisions by the previous administration.

In May 2022, a confluence of these challenges was initially projected to result in a reported structural deficit of \$22 million, prompting NJCU's leaders to declare a fiscal emergency and request additional stabilization funding from the state. Soon thereafter, President Sue Henderson resigned, and an interim president was named. When this interim president resigned to pursue another opportunity, the Board of Trustees named Andrés "Andy" Acebo the institution's new interim president in January 2023.

At the state level, Governor Phil Murphy ordered a comprehensive investigation of NJCU's fiscal stability and governance practices and launched an initiative to address these issues statewide. In July 2023, this initiative fueled the legislature's enactment of New Jersey's *Higher Education Accountability & Monitoring Act* (P.L.2023, c.115). This statute expands state oversight of all public colleges and universities by requiring the submission of an annual fiscal Monitoring report and granting the Secretary of Higher Education the power to continuously Monitor their financial stability in real time and appoint a Monitor to intervene before struggling institutions' financial situation becomes catastrophic.

NJCU's 2022 fiscal audit showed tuition and fee revenues of only \$92.5 million, with salaries totaling some \$88.6 million. This left scant resources for its considerable ongoing operating costs, particularly expenditures needed to address its capital needs and mounting debt. Although universities traditionally devote tuition revenue to salaries, NJCU's declining enrollment levels meant that tuition revenue was increasingly consumed. The State investigation of its fiscal capabilities and controls revealed NJCU became increasingly

dependent on subsidies from annual state appropriations after it adopted new accounting standards in 2015; laid off more than 40% of its management staff and shuttered five athletic programs during the COVID epidemic, and experienced sharp declines in enrollment between 2017 to 2022.

Because the fiscal mismanagement at NJCU was seen as creating a major budgetary crisis at the institution and NJCU had declared a fiscal emergency barely a year before, it was the first state university to benefit from the new legislation. Secretary of Higher Education Brian K. Bridges appointed New Jersey attorney Henry J. Amoroso as NJCU's fiscal Monitor on August 29, 2023.

INITIAL MONITORING PLAN

The Monitor began Monitoring NJCU on September 1, 2023. His initial Monitoring Plan for the institution mirrors the requirements of the *Higher Education Accountability & Monitoring Act*, including but not limited to:

- a. overseeing the fiscal management and expenditures of funds of NJCU, including overseeing budget reallocations and reductions, approvals of purchase orders, budget transfers, and payment of bills and claims;
- b. overseeing the operation and fiscal management of all NJCU facilities, including developing and implementing recommendations for restructuring the institution offered by its Board of Trustees;
- c. initiating the creation and implementation of a rigorous plan to address the circumstances that resulted in the appointment of a State Monitor, including establishing measurable benchmarks and aligning specific activities with each benchmark to address the deficiencies of the institution that have been identified before and/or during this Monitoring process;
- d. overseeing all staffing and human resource activities of NJCU, including overseeing the hiring, promotion, and termination of its employees, as well as the ability to deny proposals by NJCU's administration to hire, promote, or terminate employees, except that all actions of the State Monitor shall comply with the *New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act*, established pursuant to P.L.1941, c.100 (C.34:13A-1 et seq.), and any collective bargaining agreements entered into by the institution;
- e. assessing all actions and decisions made by NCJU's interim president and/or Board of Trustees to determine whether these should be overridden to improve the fiscal stability of the institution;
- f. attending all meetings of NJCU's Board of Trustees and its committees, including closed executive sessions;

- g. creating and delivering training to the members of NJCU's Board of Trustees at least quarterly to provide them with information that addresses the deficiencies and actions occurring at NJCU that resulted in state Monitoring; and
- h. formulating recommendations for future presentation to the state legislature to support the development of and sustain in perpetuity a range of systemic, significant improvements in NJCU's fiscal condition and the institutional governance capabilities such fiscal stability requires.

Launch of the Monitoring Plan

An extensive range of Monitoring activities were implemented by the Monitor between September 1, 2023, and March 12, 2024. These include:

1. conducting a careful, in-depth review of NJCU's financial statements, both audited and budgeted, for the period from 2020 through February 2024, including a thorough assessment of income and expenses (including its payment history over the past 12 months);
2. attending all meetings of the Board of Trustees and its current committees;
3. conducting interviews and providing consultation to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and other members of the Board individually and/or in small groups on an *ad hoc*, as-needed basis;
4. developing and delivering targeted financial and governance training and education to the Board of Trustees at an all-day Strategic Board Retreat and Workshop on Governance and Mission Alignment in December 2023;
5. touring relevant properties of the institution, comprising the real estate and structures owned by NJCU, leased or rented to NJCU, or to which the institution is or was obligated to provide financial support from 2020 forward;
6. reviewing the operational activities of the Hudson County Small Business Development Center at NJCU and its governance and fiscal relationship with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the University;
7. reviewing the institution's relationship with the NJCU University Foundation, including the Foundation's recent activities directed toward raising donor funds for the institution and other local charities and the amount raised;
8. meeting with key constituent groups at NJCU, including but not limited to a sample of students; members and elected officers of the University's teacher's union; administrators and managers; contractors and vendors of goods and services, whether selected through a competitive bid process or non-competitive purchase agreement; and other university stakeholder groups;

9. securing and reviewing a representative recent sample of local, state, and national print, broadcast, and electronic media covering activities at NJCU, including all available media products (press releases, published articles, social media posts, video, film, radio programming, podcasts) created by internal and external journalists or public relations specialists, including students and/or professionals in NJCU's Media & Communications Office;
10. participating in the development and review of NJCU's new *Academic Master Plan* released on February 16, 2024, for the period of 2024 to 2028;
11. reviewing and assessing NJCU's mission statement and its newly refreshed statement of this mission; and
12. assessing the essential elements of NJCU's academic infrastructure that impact student enrollment, retention, and graduation, as well as teaching, faculty, and student research, and other activities, including but not limited to the adequacy of its libraries; information technology and supports; student supports and resources; administrative and management staffing; and institutional effectiveness initiatives.

INITIAL FINDINGS

A Problematic Past. NJCU has been navigating significant challenges as a consequence of the changing macro environment in higher education during much of the past decade. These challenges continue to impact the University's financial stability, academic performance, and competitive positioning and have never been fully addressed. Although the mismanagement of funds was problematic during a previous administration, the mismanagement occurred when the institution was already experiencing substantive issues with its fiscal stability, governance capability and engagement, and student academic performance, each of which has contributed to its downward financial, management, and academic spiral.

The University's Recent Progress. The Monitor found the current administration has performed well under its amended spending plan, which was adopted and implemented in Fall 2023.

The present Board of Trustees Chair, who was appointed to the Board on April 20, 2022, and became its leader in the Spring of 2023, when these crises were occurring and no one aspired to this position, has in the months since done yeoman's work. His collaboration with the Monitor has played an instrumental role in this process, including making himself consistently providing valuable input into the Monitoring process and meeting with the Monitor whenever requested; participating in planning and speaking at the Board retreat; providing the Board with some of the leadership it needs; and serving as the champion for the University's best interests throughout.

In addition, an increase in the state's formula Outcome Based Assessment (OBA) funding in conjunction with the implementation of income and debt reduction initiatives, which started before the Monitor's appointment, allowed NJCU to meet covenant benchmarks relative to

cash on hand and anticipated year-end cash balances as a result of improved financial performance during FY2023.

The Monitor further anticipates that the institution's spending plan for FY2025, currently under development, will be equally prudent and conservative. The anticipated continued state stabilization funding in FY2025 will help sustain a much-needed continuation of the substantive investments NJCU has made in improving student success, as well as promoting the development and launch of new initiatives dedicated to further advancing students' academic performance, increasing their persistence through graduation, and bolstering the University's undergraduate and graduate enrollments.

Notwithstanding its recently demonstrated commitment to and success in attaining these outcomes, the University remains markedly understaffed.

Fiscal Monitoring

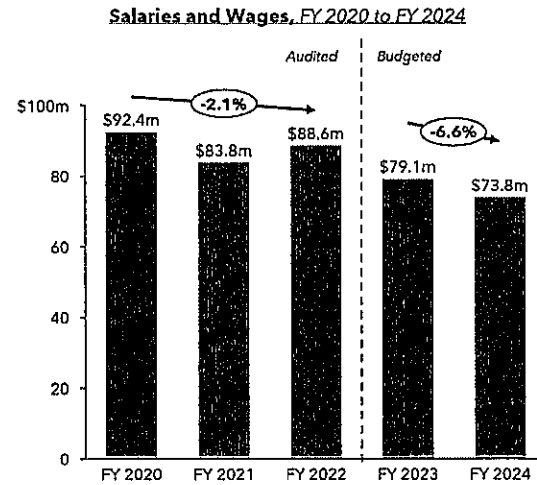
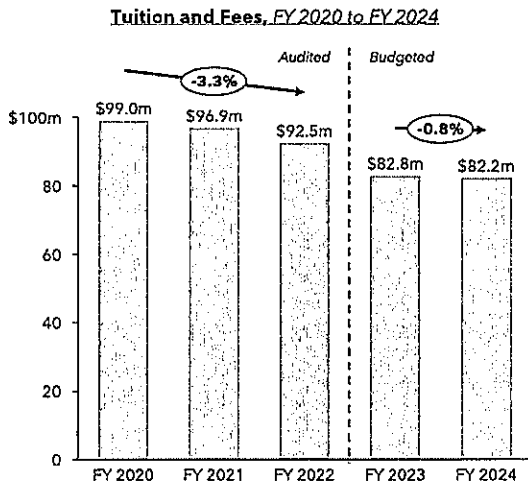
Like many institutions of higher education, NJCU has grappled with the ripple effects of declining student enrollment since 2016. By mid-2022, its decreasing tuition revenue - the institution's principal source of income - and the abrupt end of COVID stimulus funding fueled the Board's growing awareness of the University's dire financial condition.

When Monitoring began in September 2023, the interim administration had made significant progress in addressing some of NJCU's fiscal issues, including implementing cost-cutting measures that are beginning to reduce the budget deficit. But the task he faced was immensely challenging and it is not one that can be achieved quickly enough to ensure achievement of the institution's fiscal stability without significant additional state investment.

If NJCU had been in better financial shape when COVID-19 reached the U.S. in early 2020, the institution might have been able to avoid a fiscal emergency, but it would still have required additional investment from the State to overcome the accumulated consequences of having made no capital investments over many years. In fact, the institution was ill-prepared to weather any new threats, especially a multi-faceted juggernaut such as a global pandemic that further reduced tuition revenue, raising the Board's concern that a major financial crisis was imminent.

Its perception of an approaching fiscal disaster was exacerbated by the previous administration's diversion of nearly \$14 million in federal COVID relief money for an institutional scholarship program - a violation of federal law the New Jersey Comptroller found was likely knowingly committed. The diversion of federal funds further damaged the institution's financial management reputation and creditworthiness.

Indeed, NJCU's 2022 fiscal audit documented tuition and fee revenue of \$92.5 million, with total salaries for the year of \$88.6 million. The less than \$4 million that remained after salaries did not come close to meeting the institution's other annual operational expenses of \$76 million. Although the State allocates substantial subsidy funding for institutions of higher learning, the compelling disequilibrium at NJCU requires a disproportionate amount of stabilization funding. Its auxiliary income of approximately \$3 million helps reduce this dependence, but the institution currently has no viable plan for substantially closing this gap.



In the period immediately following the University's 2022 fiscal audit, the Monitor found its officials took further action to reduce the institution's salaries and wages. However, it was also evident that NJCU consistently underfunded its capital expenditures for many years, contributing to an accumulation of increasingly adverse fiscal consequences related to its physical plant and facilities.

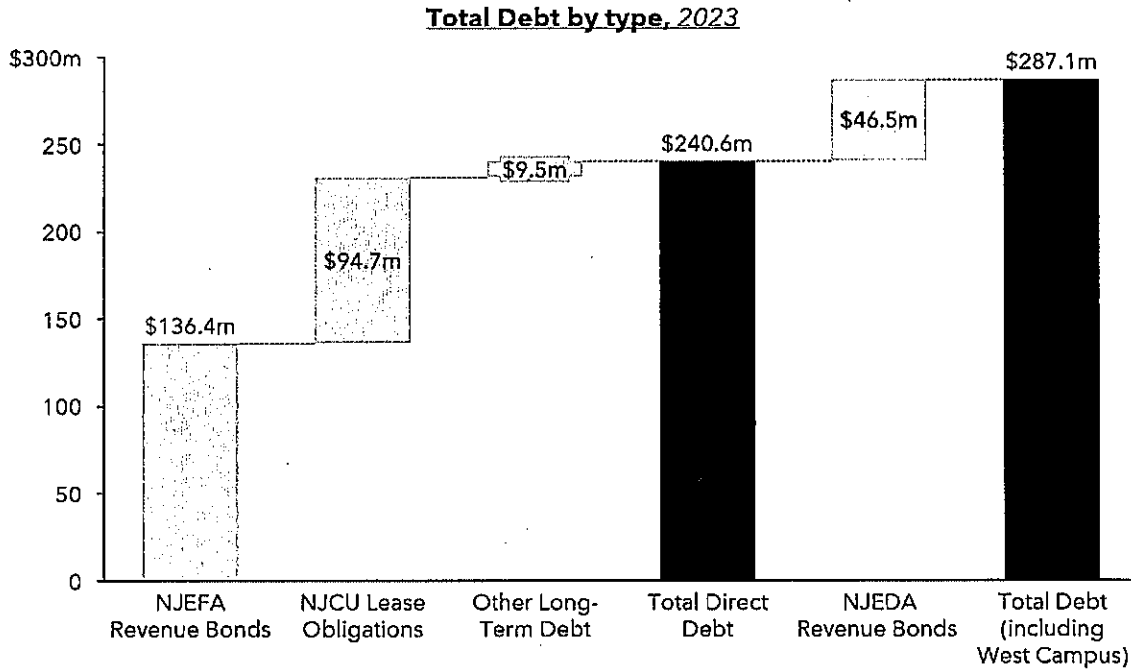
Based on the University's projections from a recent study, it has an immediate need for \$50 million of capital investment for infrastructure. These funds are needed now for new boilers and chillers and the repair of leaky roofs, and for windows and doors that do not close securely - none of which will make the University more student-friendly or welcoming in today's highly competitive higher education environment.

In addition to the \$50 million to address these urgent maintenance issues, NJCU must also invest in other improvements to the campus - including but not limited to residence halls, classrooms, technology upgrades, the library, laboratories, and other student-facing facilities and resources. This will provide the University with a comfortable and supportive learning environment that is comparable to its peers. At present, the total amount of capital investment required must be examined further to determine the full level of capital investment that must be made to improve the institution's competitiveness and bolster its student enrollment in the current higher education landscape.

NJCU's Current Total Debt. In addition to unraveling the origins of the University's recent financial crisis, the Monitoring process also determined that the institution's fiscal sustainability is chronically compromised by its total debt level, which varied significantly by type across the four most recent years.

As the accompanying chart shows, the largest debt increase in the period occurred in the institution's long-term net lease liabilities.

Much of this debt results from NJCU's investment in long-term leases at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and the Harborside Jersey City campus. NJCU also authorized an advance refund that modified its debt payments obligations, which will result in an increased burden of \$2.8 million in FY2026.



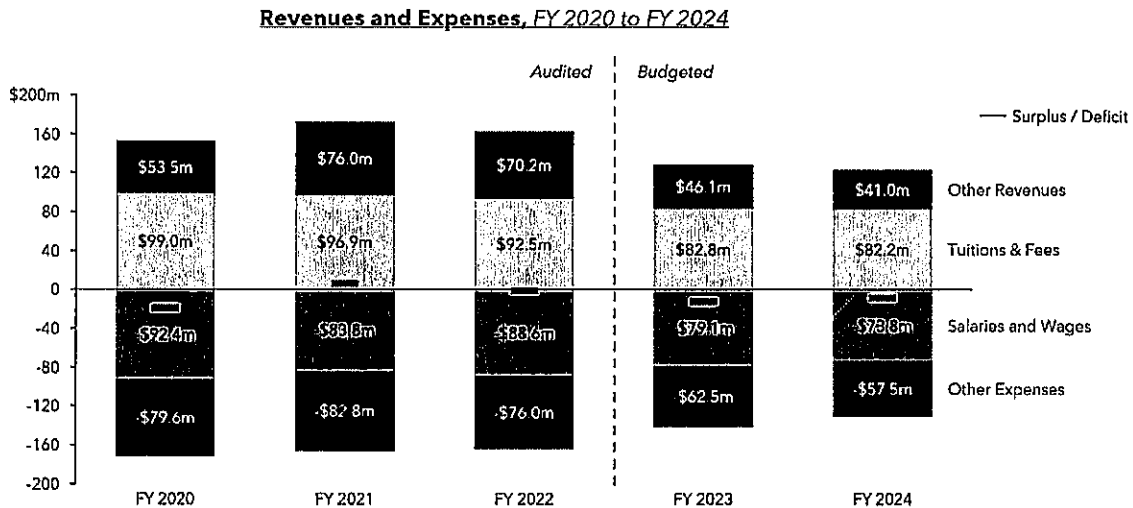
• NJEDA Revenue Bonds: Related to the West Campus Housing LLC project. Calculations were made assuming the bonds were paid in full by maturity.

1

¹ This waterfall chart shows how different types of debt add up to NJCU's total debt for 2023. It starts with "NJEFA Revenue Bonds," followed by additional debts like "NJCU Lease Obligations." Each bar starts from the top of the previous one, not from zero, to indicate the adding up of debt types. The "Total Direct Debt" bar represents the sum of all these individual debts. The chart concludes with a separate addition of "NJEDA Revenue Bonds" related to West Campus, which, when combined with "Total Direct Debt," gives the full "Total Debt (including West Campus)." Total Debt does not include pension liabilities.

175x

Running Operational Costs. The review of NJCU's revenues and expenses from FY 2020 to FY 2024 also revealed a recurring pattern of operational challenges, with expenses consistently outpacing revenues, resulting in deficits each year. In contrast, the budget data for FY 2023 and FY 2024 showed a reduction in the deficit – a possible indicator that earlier measures taken to control costs and enhance revenues may be having their intended, positive effect.



In addition, as previously noted, an assessment of both the audited and budget financial statements across this 5-year period confirmed a near-perfect alignment between NJCU's salary expenses and tuition and fee revenues, which drove and still drives NJCU's ongoing reliance on significant state funding to meet its annual operational needs.

Despite some mitigation from auxiliary revenue, NJCU's reliance on state appropriations has become increasingly essential since FY2020.

The Monitor also determined that although the \$46.5 million debt structure of the West Campus is not a direct debt of the University, as set forth in the bond covenant documents, this campus nonetheless requires budgetary allocations from NJCU for subsidies and these allocations contribute to the institution's current financial problems. Again, NJCU's long-term lease obligations for its Harborside and Fort Monmouth properties also exacerbate its ongoing financial strain and contribute to its fiscal woes.

The Monitor's conclusions about the NJCU's fiscal stability based on these findings are:

- NJCU has faced and continues to face a complex web of financial obligations, including long-term debt from bonds, long-term lease obligations, and escalating capital needs.

- NJCU's total debt is stable, but it remains high for an institution of its size, resources, and student body, at \$287.1 million² after incorporating the state's assumption of responsibility for pension obligations, its debt with the Education Facilities Authority (EFA), its long-term obligations, and its practice of subsidizing the West Campus LLC's debt. This level of debt requires rigorous, immediate, and substantive management strategies and cost-containment measures.
- The institution has significant long-term lease liabilities of some \$94.7 million that can provide a focus for future restructuring or renegotiation efforts and provide opportunities to alleviate the pressure on its long-term financial obligations.
- With appropriate board governance, NJCU can obtain, conservatively, \$30 million in property monetization, either in hand or committed through contract, by December 2025.
- NJCU's \$145.9 million in noncurrent long-term debt threatens its financial well-being and limits its potential to achieve many of its academic and other institutional goals.
- The persistence of a low revenue-to-debt ratio - currently 0.56 - means that NJCU's liabilities consistently outpace its asset base, posing a threat to the institution's creditworthiness and requiring proactive fiscal policies to restore a healthier balance and ensure continued covenant compliance. Additionally, if the University were to apply the same ratio to the direct, indirect, and long-term lease liability obligations, the ratio would further deteriorate to 0.47. This underscores the requirement for prompt implementation of immediate remedial fiscal interventions.
- Federal funding of \$49,457,000 received by NJCU in 2019-2021 to "ease the economic burden of COVID" was essential to boosting its operational assets and allowing the University to allocate additional cash to operational needs that had been neglected. Its financial emergency became dramatically evident when this funding ended in 2022, and more so when the Comptroller found evidence these funds were misdirected to monetize student scholarships by the former president's administration and the Board.

FINDINGS FROM GOVERNANCE MONITORING

The Monitor frequently met and closely collaborated with NJCU's Interim President Acebo and other administrators, as well as members of NJCU's Board of Trustees, including its Chair to whom the Monitor reported weekly. The Monitor also delivered training to the Interim President Acebo and members of the Board of Trustees on December 4, 2023, at a Board Retreat and Workshop on Governance and Fiscal Accounting.

² This debt calculation closely approximates the value of direct, indirect, and long-term lease obligations and is taken from the FY2023 unaudited statements. At the time of this report, the FY2023 audit was not available.

The Monitor's conclusion from these interactions with NJCU's administration and Board is that it does not presently have a sufficient governance structure. Moreover, the current Board's organizational structure is not well-aligned with the strategies and tactics a fiscal turnaround will demand. Further, the Monitor concludes that the administration is currently understaffed to meet the demands of its current financial problems.

In addition, the Board's committee structure is outdated, does not function well, and cannot provide the governance support needed to implement the Monitor's recommendations, or adequately support the Interim administration and navigate the complex path to NJCU's fiscal stability, robust accountability, and long-term institutional survival.

Moreover, the Board does not meet frequently enough to provide adequate, ongoing oversight of the institution's budget, independently determine its roles and the institution's best interests, and stay abreast of the institution's often fluctuating fiscal, capital, academic, and human resource needs, and resources. Because the fiscal turnaround period that lies ahead will require frequent and consistent engagement of individuals with expertise in higher education, finance, governance, and academic affairs in NJCU's top decision-making roles, the Monitor concluded that immediate, significant changes in the Board of Trustee's membership and structure are warranted.

Summary of Fiscal and Governance Findings

Collectively these findings show that NJCU's current level of debt from all sources renders the institution unable to support high-quality academic instruction, pursue the generation of knowledge through robust academic activities, or serve as a significant community resource. NJCU's fiscal situation requires prompt remediation that realigns its expenses with dependable sources of revenue, including identifying additional sources of income and new means of reducing expenses without compromising or adversely impacting its academic mission.

Evidence-based approaches to accomplish these outcomes are detailed in the Fiscal Accountability Plan.

THE FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

The Fiscal Accountability Plan developed to achieve a turnaround of NJCU's financial instability includes 11 recommendations that will promote the institution's financial stability and solvency and improve its governance capabilities. Each recommendation is grounded by the fiscal and governance information secured during the initial 6-month Monitoring period.

The five fiscal responsibility recommendations reflect generally accepted fiscal and financial accounting strategies currently utilized within similarly sized and situated institutions of higher education within the region and across the United States. Several of these that have been successfully implemented by NJCU's peers are incorporated into the Monitor's specific recommendations.

The six governance recommendations likewise reflect evidence-based practices that have been successful in promoting fiscal and operational improvements within similarly situated regional and national institutions of higher education, including institutions that required and accomplished a turnaround.

In addition, the Plan includes benchmarks aligned with all fiscal and governance recommendations. These benchmarks detail the minimum standard of performance expected to be attained by NJCU, as well as a description of the activities the Monitor requires the institution's top administrators and Board of Trustees to implement as a means of reaching each benchmark and accomplishing a complete reversal of the institution's fiscal trajectory.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROMOTE NJCU'S FISCAL STABILITY

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Board of Trustees and the interim president immediately pursue and promptly complete an appropriately resourced assessment that culminates in identifying a fiscally sound New Jersey public institution of higher education with which to combine. This recommendation should be implemented, with input from stakeholders, by assessing and determining the "best fit" of NJCU's academic and fiscal assets and liabilities with those of fiscally stronger and academically sound state universities.

There is a pathway for NJCU to become an independent city university. That path would require a much greater investment from the State than is presently offered, and the University would remain buffeted by significant fiscal challenges for many, many years. This reality compels NJCU to pursue a course of prompt action many other institutions have taken - namely, negotiating and implementing a strategic relationship with a partner institution from which both Universities can derive immediate and long-term benefits.

The potential strategic relationships examined may range from joint academic programs and shared administrative services to full mergers - with each relationship closely examined for its potential to complement the strengths and meet the governance, academic success, and fiscal goals of both institutions. The essence of strategic relationships in higher education lies in their ability to leverage synergies that enhance academic offerings, expand research capabilities, bolster fiscal stability, and achieve operational efficiencies while ensuring that any relationship pursued is aimed at improving student outcomes and job market readiness.

Toward this end, the Monitor recommends a close assessment of the "chancellor model" as part of a larger institution that would serve as its lead. This model is often utilized by New Jersey and other states to align and centrally govern, administer, and manage the leadership, academic, and fiscal activities of a geographically distinct, multi-campus system of higher education. In this model, the president is the systemwide head of the entire institution, and chancellors lead individual university or college campuses. Rutgers University is renowned for successfully implementing the chancellor model.

BENCHMARK 1a: By July 15, 2024, in collaboration with the Monitor, NJCU's interim president and Board of Trustees will include in their FY2025 budget the engagement of a nationally qualified higher education advisory firm to rigorously examine the

feasibility of the University's forming a strategic relationship (such as an affiliation or merger) with another public institution in the state, with a specific focus on assessing the feasibility of implementing the chancellor model of institutional governance.

BENCHMARK 1b: By the December 2024 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the consulting firm will present a completed feasibility study of NJCU's strategic relationship options to the Monitor, the interim president, and the University's Board of Trustees, including an assessment of the feasibility of implementing the chancellor model of governance. In addition, the consultant firm presents and provides the rationale for recommending the relationship option most likely to substantively improve NJCU's fiscal stability, governance capabilities, and student outcomes.

BENCHMARK 1c: No later than the third quarter of FY2025, in collaboration with the Monitor, NJCU's interim president and Board of Trustees select an appropriate strategic relationship from among the options recommended by the advisory firm; create an actionable plan to combine; and commit adequate resources for pursuing the implementation of the chosen relationship.

- **Required Action:** By May 15, 2024, the interim president and Board will launch a nationwide search for a well-qualified higher education advisory firm to carefully examine the institution's strategic relationship options for combining its academic enterprise with another New Jersey public university's academic enterprise and make specific recommendations about which option is most likely to promote NJCU's immediate solvency, long-term fiscal health, and governance capabilities.
 - The University budgets adequate funds to procure this service in FY2025
- **Required Action:** By July 15th, 2024, the Monitor, interim president, and Board of Trustees review all competitive proposals submitted by national higher education consultants; select the consultant that best meets the institution's needs; and negotiate a contract detailing the firm's scope of work and implementation timeline.
- **Required Action:** The advisory firm initiates a feasibility study no later than August 1, 2024, and provides regular written updates on its progress, including any significant interim findings, to the Monitor, interim president, and Board at least monthly through September 30, 2024.
- **Required Action:** In collaboration with the Monitor, interim president, and Board of Trustees Chair, the advisory firm prepares a comprehensive written summary of project activities completed and the conclusions reached. The firm presents this information and data to the Board, interim president, and Monitor at the December 2024 meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- **Required Action:** No later than the fourth quarter of FY 2025, in consultation with the Monitor and Interim President, the Board of Trustees enters a letter of intent, plans, and commits adequate resources to implement the relationship option they selected.

RECOMMENDATION 2: NJCU accelerates the collection of significant revenue from property monetization for application to both debt reduction and capital investments.

This requires both a comprehensive review and an accurate valuation of NJCU's assets and the rapid thorough exploration of diverse monetization strategies, recognizing the limitations imposed by bond covenants and regulatory schema with the potential to positively impact the University's financial health.

This recommendation can be implemented through a range of monetization strategies, with a focus on monetizing Fort Monmouth and non-related properties on the West Side campus, including:

1. **Leasing Surplus Real Estate:** NJCU may possess real estate assets that are underutilized or not directly required for its educational mission. By leasing these assets to commercial entities, NJCU can generate consistent revenue. This strategy demands a careful selection of tenants and lease terms to ensure alignment with NJCU's values and community standards.
2. **Development Partnerships:** Ongoing relationships with developers to transform underused properties into valuable assets can provide NJCU with immediate financial gains and long-term revenue shares. These partnerships may involve developing residential complexes, retail spaces, or innovation hubs that serve both NJCU and the broader community.
3. **Asset Sales or Partial Sales:** Certain non-core assets may hold significant value on the market without being essential to NJCU's mission. The sale or partial sale of these assets could inject immediate capital into NJCU's finances, supporting strategic investments in its key areas of focus including debt defeasement. The Fort Monmouth campus as well as the properties on the West Side campus should be the immediate focus.
4. **Departmental Restructuring and Program Cuts:** An ongoing assessment of all academic and non-academic departments and programs to identify areas where efficiencies can be achieved through restructuring or cuts should be explored. This strategy requires achieving a balance between necessity and the preservation of the institution's academic integrity.
5. **Securing Sponsorships or Naming Rights:** Naming rights and sponsorships are an underexploited resource that can offer substantial financial support. Facilities, programs, and events represent opportunities for corporate partnerships, aligning NJCU with partners that share its educational and social objectives.

The implementation of these property monetization strategies will require the completion of a Property Monetization Plan that includes accurate and timely market analyses and a description of all viable strategies appropriate for the region(s) in which the properties are located, including recommendations for which strategies should be pursued; in addition to supporting authentic stakeholder engagement to ensure these strategies contribute positively to advancing NJCU's mission, strengthening its valued relationships with regional communities and neighborhoods, and promoting its immediate and long-term financial health.

BENCHMARK 2a: Within 45 days of the state's acceptance of this Monitoring Report and Fiscal Accountability Plan, NJCU's currently engaged property monetization contractor delivers an amended, updated Property Monetization Plan to the Monitor, the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees, and the interim president.

BENCHMARK 2b: Once the amended Plan is approved by the Monitor and Board, Plan implementation begins immediately (within 5 days).

- **Required Action:** An iterative Plan development process including cyclical review, revision, and close collaboration of all parties continues until it is approved by the Monitor, the Board of Trustees, and the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education. Time is of the essence in completing and securing approval of a final plan.
- **Required Action:** Once approved, the Plan is returned for immediate implementation supervised by an appropriate committee of the Board and overseen by the Monitor.
- **Required Action:** The contractor delivers twice monthly Property Monetization progress reports to the Monitor and the appropriate members of the Board. These reports detail progress in achieving the Plan's goals, including successes achieved, the projected impact of these monetization successes on NJCU's budget, the obstacles encountered in monetizing properties, as well as the strategies being deployed to sustain the monetization successes and eliminate or surmount the obstacles.
- **Required Action:** The Monitor, in collaboration with the Board, takes whatever additional actions are required to promote the monetization of non-academic properties identified, including modifying any benchmark or its target date, as needed, to comport with additional information that emerges during the Monitoring period.

RECOMMENDATION 3: NJCU's Board of Trustees and interim president substantially reduce the institution's long-term debt through a range of proven debt reduction strategies, including but not limited to initiating debt relief measures, dynamic asset management, strategic reinvestment of revenues, capital growth, and sustainability.

Long-term debt reduction will require a comprehensive approach that incorporates property monetization, securing ongoing state assistance, and making strategic capital investments. This multi-faceted strategy should aim to not only alleviate current financial pressures but also position the University for long-term financial stability and operational success. Actively pursuing state assistance can provide necessary funds and resources. Careful planning and execution of the institution's capital investments will ensure its budget is used efficiently, for example, by prioritizing projects that offer the highest return on investment and directly contribute to the University's core mission of education and student success.

BENCHMARK 3: By Q3 of FY2025, NJCU's long-term debt has been reduced from its baseline level by at least \$30 million.

- **Required Action:** Promptly determine an accurate baseline for the University's existing long-term debt for use in determining the magnitude of progress achieved each quarter and fiscal year.

- **Required Action:** Conduct an in-depth assessment of NJCU's total outstanding debt for use in identifying its eligibility for and applying for funds from specific debt relief programs as well as for taking advantage of all opportunities for debt renegotiation.
- **Required Action:** To implement dynamic asset management, develop a systematic approach for continuous evaluation and optimization of NJCU's asset portfolio by the Board of Trustees that can be used to seamlessly align the portfolio with market conditions and the institution's goals.
- **Required Action:** To achieve a strategic reinvestment of revenues, dedicate a predetermined portion of the revenues achieved from property monetization to critical areas of infrastructure, technology, and academic programs.
- **Required Action:** To secure and sustain capital growth and sustainability, use the institution's improving financial health to attract and engage additional funders, focusing on long-term projects that promise substantial returns on investment and contribute to NJCU's strategic objectives.

RECOMMENDATION 4: NJCU (and any institution it merges with) must make targeted capital investments aligned with the University's strategic growth objectives in the areas of physical and technological infrastructure expansion and upgrades; the expansion and diversification of its academic programs of study; and the enhancement of its student success program resources and supports.

The literature of higher education reflects that targeted capital investment will, in turn, promote substantive increases in student enrollment (with concomitant increases in tuition and fees), student persistence, and graduation rates of full-time first-time undergraduates.

BENCHMARK 4a: By the start of FY2026, NJCU, its institutional partner, and/or the state make targeted capital investments of \$20 million or more aligned with NJCU's strategic growth objectives.

BENCHMARK 4b: By FY2026, NJCU's and its strategic partners' targeted capital investments leverage at least a 5% increase in NJCU's full-time student enrollment.

RECOMMENDATION 5: NJCU increases its pursuit of substantive grants from external sources, including but not limited to federal and state agencies, private and public foundations, corporations and other business entities, and private donors, as well as assertively investigate and implement evidence-based energy conservation strategies and practices.

Energy conservation strategies have the potential to generate significant savings for NJCU, allowing the redirection of funds currently spent on energy costs to projects that promote student success or achieve key operational objectives, including capital improvements. In

addition, the institution can benefit from participation in financial incentives that may be available for adopting new energy generation strategies.

BENCHMARK 5: No later than June 30, 2024, NJCU's Board and Interim President will continue to pursue all viable energy-saving strategies, as well as determining which federal- and state-supported energy sector grants, other energy-saving strategies or energy-related grants and energy-related donor cultivation strategies are viable sources of revenue for the institution and initiating the immediate pursuit of such energy grants and the implementation of such strategies.

- **Required Action:** The interim president directs one or more individuals in NJCU's Office of Research, Grants, and Sponsored Services (ORGSS) to examine the availability of new federal- and state-supported energy sector funds and other foundation or corporate energy-related grants in 2024 and beyond by reviewing available grants and forecast grants; and assessing how well the University meets the competitive criteria for all available opportunities. ORGSS maintains a record of energy-sector funding reviewed and the review findings.
- **Required Action:** In collaboration with the staff of ORGSS and other interested and qualified faculty of the University and its combination partner, the interim president determines which, if any, of the energy grant or other funding opportunities available should be pursued, including allocating qualified and experienced fund development personnel and other needed resources to the proposal development process in a timely fashion (providing adequate time prior to the grant submission deadline to prepare a competitive proposal to state or federal agencies and foundations).
- **Required Action:** The Director of ORGSS reviews NJCU's energy-related grant proposal development strategies to ensure the University is allocating adequate resources to complete and submit a sufficient number of competitive funding proposals by their deadlines to increase the likelihood that grant funding will increase. If the Director's review finds ORGSS' current resources are inadequate to pursue all viable opportunities, this information is communicated to the Monitor.
- **Required Action:** ORGSS staff reviews and oversees all energy-related grant proposals submitted and submits monthly reports to the interim president and the Monitor detailing proposals submitted, proposals funded, new proposals underway, and any feedback received about previous proposal submissions. This includes a critical analysis of how NJCU's proposals can be improved to result in more grants being awarded.
- **Required Action:** The interim president and ORGSS review the University's federal indirect cost rate and take whatever actions are necessary to ensure the rate is accurate, current, and competitive for pursuing energy-related funds against similar-sized and situated universities.
- **Required Action:** The Board and Interim President collaborate with the qualified energy consultant who has already been engaged to review federal and state programs available for reducing energy expenditures in universities with diverse

physical infrastructures to update and refresh his plan to apply for program participation and supervise the preparation and submission of such applications.

- **Required Action:** The Board allocates funds to implement the energy-saving program(s) they are accepted for participation in.
- **Required Action:** The energy consultant reports on Plan implementation, including energy savings realized to the Board at least quarterly.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADVANCE NJCU'S GOVERNANCE CAPABILITIES

In addition to making five recommendations designed to achieve a prompt turnaround in NJCU's fiscal stability and solvency, the Monitor also devised six recommendations for improving the University's governance capabilities. The prompt and simultaneous full implementation of these 11 recommendations is essential to the achievement of both outcomes.

Although separated into distinct categories for Monitoring, reporting, and discussion purposes, NJCU's governance capabilities and fiscal stability are, in fact, inextricable: An institution of higher education cannot achieve financial stability without a capable governance structure and qualified, committed leaders cannot be easily, meaningfully, or permanently engaged in governing fiscally unstable or financially struggling institutions.

The governance recommendations that follow - along with their benchmarks and required actions - are dedicated to ensuring that NJCU has an appropriate governance structure in place and is well-prepared to engineer, achieve, and sustain the rapid, permanent fiscal turnaround it presently requires to survive and prosper.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Defer the search and selection of a permanent president and other top administrators of NJCU until the University's Board is re-structured and fully operational.

BENCHMARK 1: NJCU's Board of Trustees does not pursue or engage in a search for or the appointment and/or hiring of a permanent president or other top administrators until a new Board is selected, all members are oriented and demonstrably engaged in Board service and committee assignments, and the Board structure is fully optimized to support implementation of NJCU's Fiscal Responsibility Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 2: By June 30, 2024, the committee structure of the NJCU Board of Trustees is restructured to comprise an Executive Committee, Finance & Audit Committee, Property & Facilities Committee; Academic Affairs Committee., and any other committees the Board may later determine to be necessary to ensure its bylaws are aligned with and accurately reflect this modification.

Board members serving on each of these committees will be charged with and responsible for engaging with qualified institutional stakeholders to achieve the Monitor's

recommendations relative to providing institutional oversight or supervision as well as participating in fund development activities that promote the institution's financial stability.

- **Required Action:** The Chair of the Board of Trustees guides the full Board in the process of adopting and implementing whatever Board policies or procedures are required under its bylaws to modify its committee structure.
- **Required Action:** In collaboration with members of the Board and the interim president, the Chair assigns all Board members to serve on one or more of the Board committees they are most interested in and qualified for.
- **Required Action:** The Board Chair leads a review and analysis of the Board's bylaws, including a discussion of changes required to align these with its new committee structure. This analysis should culminate with a motion by a Board member for the full Board to approve the new committee structure's description in the bylaws.

BENCHMARK 2: No later than July 15, 2024, the Chair of the Board of Trustees secures Board approval for prompt implementation of the recommended committee structure.

- **Required Action:** The Monitor provides the Board of Trustees with training and education that explicates the rationale for the recommended modifications in the Board's committee structure.
- **Required Action:** The Chair of the Board and Monitor meet individually with all Board members to answer their questions and provide additional information about the Board's recommended committee structure.
- **Required Action:** The Chair facilitates the discussion of and votes on a motion to implement a restructuring of the Board's committees at the earliest possible full meeting of the Board, including the vote on a motion to approve this structure.
- **Required Action:** The Board Chair and Monitor collaborate to assign all Board members to the committee(s) best aligned with their knowledge, skills, professional expertise, governance experience, and interests, as well as to recruit new Board members that strengthen the committees that need additional expertise, skill, or knowledge. The full Board discusses and votes on a motion approving all members' committee assignments.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Replace at least four members with new members to the NJCU Board of Trustees who have an interest in being highly engaged in achieving a prompt fiscal turnaround.

The Monitor observed uneven participation by current Board members, including a paucity of current members highly invested in achieving a prompt, complete turnaround in the institution's fiscal stability. An infusion of new talent, interest, expertise, and enthusiasm can prepare this key governance body to tackle and complete the committee assignments and other Board work required to quickly achieve and permanently sustain NJCU's fiscal turnaround.

BENCHMARK 3: No later than May 1, 2024, the NJCU Board of Trustees will have four new well-qualified, interested members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the New Jersey Senate to replace current holdovers.

- **Required Action:** The Board Chair facilitates the adoption of a motion by the full board to increase the number of Board positions by at least four, following the process for doing so articulated in the bylaws of the Board.
- **Required Action:** The Monitor and Board Chair identify, recruit, vet, and nominate new members to fill all positions newly added to the Board.
- **Required Action:** The Monitor and Board Chair facilitate the New Jersey Governor's appointment of four or more new members to the Board, following the Board's and State's authorized member appointment processes.
- **Required Action:** The Monitor and Board Chair provide an orientation and other needed training to all new members to ensure they are ready to participate fully in decision-making and complete all Board assignments they receive aligned with the Fiscal Responsibility Plan as soon as they join the Board.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The members of the Board of Directors meet at least five times each fiscal year to conduct business, promote and evaluate the institution's fiscal recovery, select an appropriate suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), devise new strategies to achieve both, and maintain high levels of participation in these activities throughout their term of service. They also participate in at least one full-day retreat annually.

BENCHMARK 4a: No later than June 30, 2024, the Board adopts and implements an annual meeting schedule that includes six regular meetings of the full Board to conduct business and one day-long retreat annually to review progress in implementing the Fiscal Accountability Plan and KIPs and engage in future fiscal, governance, and academic strategic planning.

- **Required Action:** The Board Chair facilitates the creation of a new schedule of engagement for Board members that includes at least five regular meetings and an annual retreat.
- **Required Action:** Notwithstanding regularly convening established Board meetings on a schedule aligned with the Monitor's recommendations and benchmarks, the Board Chair calls and convenes *ad hoc* meetings to ensure members remain fully informed about and engaged in proactively preventing and/or responding to any fiscal, academic, governance, or other major crises that may arise in the course of the University's operation.

BENCHMARK 4b: No later than July 15, 2024, the Board adopts and implements a schedule of meetings for all committees of the Board that fully supports the attainment of all recommended fiscal benchmarks.

- **Required Action:** The Board Chair facilitates the creation of a recommended schedule of Board Committee meetings to achieve this benchmark.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Establish and fully implement an Office (or other administrative unit) responsible for student success that delivers comprehensive services, resources, and opportunities, and supports students to achieve academic outcomes commensurate with their potential; motivates them to persist to graduation, promotes their lifelong learning; and ensures they have welcoming, safe, and comfortable spaces within NJCU to thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

BENCHMARK 5: No later than August 1, 2024, the University has developed a proposal for a new Vice President of Student Success to report directly to the President and is responsible for working across administrative divisions and academic units in support of the University enrollment and retention goals further developing pathways for increased graduation rate and career placement.

- **Required Action:** The Interim President, in collaboration with the University Provost, members of the Academic Affairs Committee of NJCU's Board of Trustees, and other campus leaders, initiate, implement, and complete the process of adding a new administrative unit responsible for student persistence to the University.
- **Required Action:** The University budgets adequate funds to ensure all students have access to meaningful services provided by personnel in the new administrative unit.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Adopt Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enhance the institution's accountability, strategic alignment, and operational excellence.

The Monitor has carefully curated a suite of KPIs well-aligned with NJCU's core strategic ambitions – including indicators of the institution's financial health, student success, student admissions and enrollment status, improved faculty and staff development, and facilities optimization.

These KPIs also draw upon industry insights, such as those provided by EY-Parthenon, Ernst & Young's global strategy consulting arm, to establish benchmarks and metrics for precise Monitoring of academic and financial performance. Although the Monitor has not recommended specific metrics or measurement strategies, a collaborative approach in which the institution's administration regularly engages with the Board to establish realistic performance targets and rigorously tracks progress with evidence-based metrics is recommended. The methodology ensures NJCU's strategic Monitoring is both adaptable to and aligned with its evolving objectives, enabling a dynamic framework for continuous improvement and excellence.

BENCHMARK 6: No later than September 30, 2025, NJCU's administration and Board of Trustees will adopt and begin to Monitor the institution's performance and progress using a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

A representative sample of KPIs used by institutions similar in size and mission to NJCU is provided in discrete categories that represent the institution's major functional performance areas, including financial health, student success, admission, and enrollment, faculty and staff, facilities and other capital resources, endowment size and growth, and technology Infrastructure and digital learning resources.

Financial Health KPIs

Revenue vs. Cost Efficiency

- **Description:** Evaluates financial efficiency by analyzing the ratio of total revenue to total operational costs, highlighting areas for cost optimization and revenue enhancement.
- **Oversight:** Finance Committee

Reserve Ratio

- **Description:** Measures the financial cushion of the university by comparing net assets to total expenses, reflecting the institution's ability to sustain operations during downturns or unexpected financial challenges.
- **Oversight:** Finance Committee

Property Monetization Timeline

- **Description:** Establishes a strategic timeline for leveraging underutilized properties, aiming to enhance revenue through property development, sale, or lease.
- **Oversight:** Executive Committee

Audit Completion Timeline

- **Description:** Sets rigorous deadlines for the completion of financial audits, ensuring adherence to compliance standards and identifying financial risks early.
- **Oversight:** Audit Committee

Debt-to-Operating Revenue Ratio

- **Description:** Monitors the university's financial leverage by comparing total debt to operating revenue, aiming for optimal balance to support growth and stability.
- **Oversight:** Finance Committee

Net Tuition and Fees per FTE

- **Description:** Measures the average net income from tuition and fees per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, after accounting for financial aid and scholarships. It helps assess the university's revenue efficiency and can indicate the institution's affordability and accessibility for students.
- **Oversight:** Finance Committee and Admissions Department

Endowment Size and Growth

- **Description:** Tracks the size and growth rate of the endowment fund, aiming to support financial sustainability and strategic initiatives through investment returns.
- **Oversight:** Finance Committee

Student Success

Graduation Rates (Overall and by cohorts)

- **Description:** Monitors the percentage of students graduating within expected timeframes across different programs, identifying areas for academic support and program improvement.
- **Oversight:** Student Affairs Committee

Student Retention Rate

- **Description:** Assesses the year-to-year retention rates of students, with a focus on critical transitions such as from first to second year, to implement targeted retention strategies.
- **Oversight:** Student Affairs Committee

Student Satisfaction Index

- **Description:** Evaluates overall student satisfaction across various dimensions of university life, including academic experiences, campus services, and community engagement.
- **Oversight:** Student Affairs Committee

Graduate Employment Rate

- **Description:** Tracks the employment rates of graduates in fields related to their study areas, offering insights into program relevance and career preparation effectiveness.
- **Oversight:** Career Services Department

Graduate Employment Rate

- **Description:** Tracks the employment rates of graduates in fields related to their study areas, offering insights into program relevance and career preparation effectiveness.
- **Oversight:** Career Services Department

Admission & Enrollment

Acceptance Rate and Yield

- **Description:** Analyzes the balance between selectivity and yield rates to refine admissions strategies, enhancing NJCU's competitive position and appeal to prospective students.
- **Oversight:** Admissions Department

Year-over-Year Enrollment Growth

- **Description:** Sets ambitious yet achievable targets for enrollment increases, informed by demographic trends and strategic outreach efforts.
- **Oversight:** Admissions Department

Diversity and Inclusion Index

- **Description:** Quantitatively measures progress in creating a diverse and inclusive campus environment, reflecting broad initiatives from recruitment to campus life.
- **Oversight:** Diversity and Inclusion Office

Faculty & Staff

Student-to-Faculty Ratio

- **Description:** Maintains optimal class sizes and faculty availability to ensure high-quality education and student engagement.
- **Oversight:** Academic Affairs Committee

Faculty Development and Tenure Rates

- **Description:** Increases tenure rates and supports faculty development programs to attract and retain high-caliber educators and researchers.
- **Oversight:** Human Resources Department

Facilities & Resources

Sustainability and Environmental Impact Goals

- **Description:** Advances NJCU's commitment to sustainability by setting specific environmental goals, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, and green campus initiatives.
- **Oversight:** Facilities Management Department

Technology Infrastructure & Digital Learning Resources

- **Description:** Ensures the University's technology infrastructure supports innovative teaching methods, research, and administrative efficiency through regular upgrades and evaluations.
- **Oversight:** Information Technology Department

The adoption and rigorous implementation of these KPIs will help propel NJCU toward achieving its strategic objectives, fostering an environment of continuous improvement and accountability.

PLAN FOR THE NEXT MONITORING PERIOD

Between March 15, 2024, and September 14, 2025, the Monitor will carry out the required actions for which he is responsible in the Fiscal Accountability Plan and provide careful, ongoing oversight of the required actions for which others are responsible in this plan, including NJCU's interim president and the Chair and other members of its Board of

Trustees, other employees of the institution, and other individuals and groups required to complete a required action.

In addition, the Monitor will continue to attend all meetings of the Board of Trustees; meet regularly with the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education and other state officials, engage diverse internal and external audiences in discussions of the institution's strengths, resources and needs; and collect and analyze internal and external data and information pertinent to the institution's fiscal stability and governance capabilities. The Monitor will also continue to provide training to members of the Board of Trustees, interim administration, and other stakeholders.

In the next period, the Monitor may eliminate, add to, or modify the existing recommendations, benchmarks, required actions, and/or KPIs to comport with new fiscal, governance, and academic data or information obtained.

The Monitor will create and provide a comprehensive report of all Monitoring activities completed in the period to the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education.

EXIT STRATEGY FOR THE MONITOR

The Monitor's exit from oversight of the fiscal and governance activities of NJCU requires the attainment of all governance benchmarks as well as the completion of a strategic relationship with a fiscally stable New Jersey institution of public education, completion and Board approval of the Property Monetization Plan, and substantive attainment of all other fiscal and governance benchmarks. These accomplishments will result in higher levels of institutional income or substantial reductions in short- and long-term institutional debt.

The Monitor expects these outcomes to be attained by the commencement of FY2026.



NEW JERSEY SENATE

ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT
SENATOR 31ST DISTRICT
2324 JOHN F. KENNEDY BLVD.
JERSEY CITY, NJ 07304
(201)-360-2502
FAX: (201)-721-5413
EMAIL:
SENMCKNIGHT@NJLEG.ORG

COMMITTEES:

HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES
& SENIOR SERVICES
EDUCATION
LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY

June 10, 2024

Good Morning Chairman Cryan, Madam Chairwoman Carter and members of the Higher Education Senate and Assembly committee members.

Thank you for having this hearing today to listen to testimony regarding the findings of New Jersey City University's Fiscal & Governance Monitoring Report and Accountability Plan that was recently issued by the State Appointed Monitor to New Jersey City University (NJCU).

As a Senator who represents NJCU in the 31st district, I engage with the university and its stakeholders, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of NJCU's commitment to education, access, diversity, socio-economic mobility, and community. With much respect and love, I express my solid support and dedication towards New Jersey City University! It brings me massive joy to witness the unwavering dedication to NJCU's mission.

- In fact, for the past few years, NJCU has soared in the rankings for CollegeNet's Social Mobility Index, and now ranks number 1 in New Jersey and Top 10 in the nation for providing students with the best tools for a pathway towards a brighter future.
- NJCU serves as a beacon of opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds, providing accessible and high-quality education that empowers them to achieve their academic and professional aspirations. As a comprehensive public regional institution of higher learning, NJCU is dedicated to the development of its

193x

- students, our city, our communities, and our state. As such, the institution is a catalyst for a significant regional impact.
- o NJCU's newly refreshed mission statement aligns with its role as the indispensable anchor institution for the socioeconomically diverse Jersey City and Hudson County communities. New Jersey City University empowers its students through an accessible, equity-driven, and transformative education. An NJCU education focuses on students' personal, professional, and civic development to facilitate their socio-economic mobility. NJCU uplifts its diverse community of students, including historically underserved and underrepresented, first-generation, and adult learners.
- o According to the University's new Strategic Enrollment Plan — which was highlighted by NJ.com in its story "Half of NJCU students come from Hudson County" — nearly half (49.8%) of NJCU's incoming first-year students are from Hudson County and 17.3% are from Jersey City. Overall, 7.5% of all high school seniors in Hudson County enroll at NJCU. In addition to Jersey City Public School students, it's notable that 10.9 percent of the Bayonne High School senior class enrolled at NJCU (7.6 percent of NJCU's overall incoming class) while 8.1 percent of NJCU's incoming class is from Union City, with 7.1 percent of Union City High School's seniors continuing their studies at NJCU. Without NJCU as a thriving institution, the higher education prospects for students in Hudson County would face devastating consequences.

Beyond its campus, NJCU plays a key role in the socioeconomic development of Jersey City and the region, serving as an engine for innovation, cultural enrichment, and community engagement. This university is more than just a higher learning institution, it's a community institution.

The ongoing active involvement of a diverse student body and the collaboration with many unions and community organizations truly is a testament of how vital NJCU is in the community.

I continue to be proud to have played a role in securing stabilization funds last year and praise the strategic decisions made by Interim President Andy Acebo and his team. By continued investments in NJCU, the state reaffirms its commitment to educational equity, economic development, and the common good, thereby enriching the lives of countless Hudson County residents who rely on NJCU to change the course of their lives so that they can have a better future. This is especially true with freshmen students. By transforming the life of one student, we are also making generational changes in the lives of entire families.

194x

Interim President Acebo and the board continue to set NJCU on a trajectory of unprecedented strength especially seeing and knowing the accomplishments that have been conquered in such a short period.

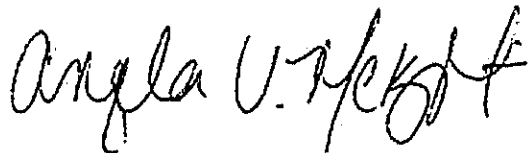
Interim President Acebo remains commitment to fostering an environment where all students no matter their background or economic status receive a quality education which will help further their development.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Board Members for embarking on this journey to ensure NJCU continues to provide a top-notch and quality education for current and future students.

I will leave you with this, I am a continual champion and advocate for NJCU! This institution continues to break barriers while raising the bar.

Thank you so much!

Forever care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela V. McKnight". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela V. McKnight
Senator, 31st District

195x

Statement from Assemblywoman Barbara McCann Stamato:

"NJCU plays a crucial role in providing accessible and affordable higher education to a diverse range group of students. As a whole NJCU is responsible for producing a skilled workforce, promoting innovation and research, and fostering civic engagement. By funding NJCU, New Jersey is investing in the future of it's residents and contributing to the overall well-being of the community. I urge you to recognize the importance of NJCU as an indispensable asset to our students and the Jersey City community and to prioritize its financial support in the state budget. "

196x



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

WILLIAM B. SAMPSON IV
ASSEMBLYMAN, 31ST DISTRICT
25 WEST 8TH STREET
BAYONNE, NJ 07002
TEL: (201) 455-2966
FAX: (201) 455-2969
AsinSampson@njleg.org

COMMITTEES
CHAIR, CONSUMER AFFAIRS
VICE CHAIR, LABOR

June 10, 2024

Dear State Senators and Members of the General Assembly,

On behalf of the residents of New Jersey's 31st legislative district — including those of Bayonne, Kearny, and Jersey City — I am writing to express my wholehearted support of New Jersey City University (NJCU), and the continued state financial support of this near century old indispensable institution which provides life-changing higher educational access to some of our state's most underserved people.

Long before I represented the people of District 31, I was a student at NJCU. I have seen firsthand how the university transforms the lives of the students who cross its campus and, in the process, the trajectory of their families. NJCU ignites students to confront systemic barriers, generational challenges, and other obstacles in their journey to achieve the social mobility that only can come from a higher education. A well-funded New Jersey City University will allow the Institution to continue to embrace this important mission and overcome decades-old capital improvement needs.

By investing in NJCU, the state not only ensures the affordability and accessibility of higher education for its residents but also cultivates a skilled workforce, fosters innovation, and promotes social mobility and economic prosperity.

The data is clear: nearly half (49.8%) of NJCU's incoming freshmen are from Hudson County and 7.5% of all high school seniors in Hudson County enroll at NJCU. In my district alone, 17.3% of NJCU's students are from Jersey City and 10.9 percent of the Bayonne High School senior class enrolled at NJCU, representing 7.6 percent of NJCU's overall incoming class. These are some of the vital reasons NJCU must remain a thriving institution.

NJCU plays a pivotal role in the socioeconomic development of Jersey City and the region, serving as an engine for innovation, cultural enrichment, and community engagement. By investing in NJCU, the state reaffirms its commitment to educational equity, economic development, and the common good, thereby enriching the lives of countless Hudson County

residents who rely on NJCU to change the course of their lives so that they can have a better future.

I urge you to recognize the importance of NJCU as an indispensable asset to our community's students and the Jersey City community and to prioritize its financial support in the state budget.

Sincerely,



Assemblyman William B. Sampson IV

198x

NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE



GABRIEL RODRIGUEZ
Assemblyman, District 33
5600 John F Kennedy Blvd
West New York, NJ 07093
TEL: 201-223-4247

June 10, 2024

Senate Higher Education Committee
Assembly Higher Education Committee

As a proud alumni, I support New Jersey City University's revitalized mission and the thousands of students and families it serves. Families like mine who because of this institution were able to earn their degrees, further their careers and giving them the opportunity to provide, not only for their sons and daughters, but also giving them the ability to serve their communities as educators, counselors, law enforcement and health care workers.

NJCU is one of our State's oldest Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Nearly half of its overwhelmingly commuting students identify as Hispanic/Latina/o. Thirty percent identify as Black/African American, and at least eight percent identify as Asian American Pacific Islander. Two-thirds of all students are first-generation, and the overwhelming majority come from low-income and working-class households. It serves the most socioeconomically diverse student population of any public university in New Jersey, with a publicly celebrated history of driving social and economic mobility.

On behalf of the Hudson County community and the community at large, I applaud the efforts of NJCU President Andy Acebo and all those involved for standing by the mission of this institution, bridging the gap and championing greater access to opportunities in education. We know that education opens the door to progress in the lives of families pursuing the American dream, and NJCU continues to provide that opportunity affordably, proudly and in the name of community.

Sincerely,
Gabriel Rodriguez, Assemblyman LD 33

199x



NEW JERSEY

LEGISLATIVE DEMOCRATS

FOR RELEASE:
June 4, 2024

Senate:
Press Office
(609) 847-3700

Assembly:
Press Office
(609) 847-3500

Members of New Jersey Legislative Caucuses Reaffirm Support for NJCU and Applaud Leadership of Interim President Andres Acebo

(Trenton) – The undersigned members of the New Jersey Legislature, Latino Legislative Caucus, Black Legislative Caucus, and Hudson County Legislative Delegation issued this statement affirming their continued commitment and support for New Jersey City University's (NJCU) revitalized mission and the thousands of students and families it serves, as well as the hundreds of faculty and staff who serve them. Many members, who have proudly grown in number in the new legislative session, have deep and personal ties to the University's mission and the students and families it touches. We personify the stories of the students who walk onto NJCU's campus, and some of us attended and graduated from the University, which is why we proudly supported last year's legislative stabilization appropriation and will continue to legislatively support the University's work and commitment to the populations it serves.

We also deeply value the importance of representation that authentically mirrors the constituencies we are privileged to serve. It's that representation that we proudly highlight and support. We applaud the servant leadership that the State and our communities have witnessed from NJCU Interim President Andrés Acebo, J.D. President Acebo is the only current Latino to lead any institution of higher education in New Jersey and the youngest known ever to lead a public university in our State. Equally notable is that he also personifies the stories of the students he serves as a first-generation, public school-educated son of working-class immigrants, born and raised in Hudson County, who became the first person in his family to attend college. He exemplifies the promise of equal opportunity and higher education. His passion for and connection to the community and mission that he has remarkably led out of crisis and into a period of significant revitalization has earned our confidence in his continued leadership to usher the University into its second century of service with stability, community engagement, strategic growth, and student-centered service. His passion and leadership have earned him significant honor and distinction.

200x

"New Jersey City University is one of our State's oldest Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Nearly half of its overwhelmingly commuting students identify as Hispanic/Latina/o. Thirty percent identify as Black/African American, and at least eight percent identify as Asian American Pacific Islander. Two-thirds of all students are first-generation, and the overwhelming majority come from low-income and working-class households. It serves the most socioeconomically diverse student population of any public university in New Jersey, with a publicly celebrated history of driving social and economic mobility. This year's commencement saw nearly 1,700 graduates, an 11.6% increase in degree completion over last year. This is a testament to the resiliency and the new emphasis on student success in and for the community.

Public records affirm the University's significant strides at an unprecedented pace under Acebo's leadership. A global rating agency improved the University's financial outlook to stability while achieving new milestones in access and affordability, responsive academic and curricular reform, shared governance, labor relations, and community engagement.

The University has been led with exceptional resilience in navigating challenges posed by the global pandemic, higher education disruptions, and structural and systemic financial issues. Quick and decisive actions, commitment to shared governance, collegial work with organized labor, community engagement, strategic planning and implementation, and a student-centric mission-driven commitment have positioned the University to better serve the communities we represent.

The University developed strategies and engaged internal and external stakeholders in several key areas, including:

1. Stabilizing the financial trajectory of the institution through developing and implementing NJCU's Recovery and Revitalization Plan;
2. Strengthening ties to the community by leading a community-wide process of reviewing and refreshing the institution's Mission and Vision to reaffirm and rebuild the institution's historic commitments to students, families, and our community, including those that have been historically underserved and underrepresented;
3. Setting out a feasible, transparent, and community-supported road map by developing and implementing an integrated NJCU Strategic Plan comprised of an Academic Master Plan, a Strategic Enrollment Plan, and a Student Development and Community Engagement Plan;
4. Strengthening access and affordability for students through an overhaul of the General Education curriculum to ensure seamless transfer for all New Jersey community college students, intentional affiliations, and partnerships such as the concurrent admission program with Hudson Community College, which provide direct pathways for degree programs and shared resources to community college students;

5. Revamping the institutional aid structure and process to ensure that students with financial need are supported in ways that reduce their future financial burdens, including for our State's undocumented students through its partnership with TheDream.US;
6. Building and strengthening relationships with key community stakeholders to ensure a robust and thriving Hudson County and New Jersey economy through initiatives such as the Project Labor Agreement (PLA) and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at providing internship opportunities for NJCU students; and
7. Building and strengthening opportunities for immigrant and first-generation students through the MOU signed with GLACO — Grupo Latinoamericano de Cónsules en New Jersey — to initiate higher education programs and services tailored to the Latin American and Latino community in New Jersey to advance their educational attainment and career development, as well as to establish partnerships between Latin American higher education institutions and NJCU faculty and staff to promote mission-aligned programs in the most diverse communities in our country.

These are only some highlights of the recent and significant transformations being led at New Jersey City University under uniquely representative leadership and stewardship. We have witnessed the University community's tireless work to place itself on stable footing, reorganize and reallocate structures, processes, and resources, and ensure that students will have continued and enhanced access to a dedicated and engaged faculty and staff for the institution's second century serving the State of New Jersey.

We applaud the work of President Acebo and NJCU's students, faculty, and staff. We unequivocally support their continued leadership and work to ensure stability, community engagement, strategic growth, and student-centered service.

Undersigned:

LD-31
 Senator Angela McKnight
 Assemblywoman Barbara McCann Stamato
 Assemblyman William Sampson

LD-29
 Senator M. Teresa Ruiz
 Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor-Marin
 Assemblywoman Shanique Speight

LD-32
 Senator Raj Mukherji
 Assemblyman John Allen
 Assemblywoman Jessica Ramirez

LD-35
 Senator Nellie Pou
 Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter
 Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly

LD-33
 Senator Brian Stack
 Assemblyman Julio Marengo
 Assemblyman Gabriel Rodriguez

LD-27
 Assemblywoman Rosie Bagolie
 Assemblywoman Alixon Collazos-Gill

Assemblywoman Carmen Morales – LD-34
 Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez- LD-19

Assemblywoman Annette Quijano – LD-20
 Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez – LD-5

202x



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF BAYONNE

630 AVENUE C • BAYONNE, NEW JERSEY 07002-3898
TEL. (201) 858-6010 • FAX (201) 436-2413

JAMES DAVIS, *MAYOR*



June 4, 2024

Dear State Senators and Members of the General Assembly:

On behalf of the people of Bayonne, I am writing to support additional state funding for New Jersey City University (NJCU). Adequate financial backing from the state would enable NJCU to continue its vitally important mission: providing an affordable education for Hudson County's first-generation college students.

A healthy NJCU is crucial for the rising student generation. Nearly 50% of the incoming freshmen class at NJCU is from Hudson County. An impressive 10.9% of the Bayonne High School senior class has enrolled at NJCU. They represent 7.6% of NJCU's incoming class. Most of them are first-generation college students. For them, a college degree from NJCU is their ticket to the middle class and their key to achieving the American Dream. The State of New Jersey has a responsibility to ensure the future of NJCU, so that it can continue to provide a ladder to social mobility for generations to come.

Hudson County provides an important gateway to people who have come here to provide a better future for their children. NJCU is a great engine of advancement for students from working-class, immigrant, and minority backgrounds. The university provides students with the skills they will need to be productive employees in New Jersey's dynamic economy. The university has developed partnerships with New Jersey businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. These partnerships have had an extremely positive impact on Hudson County communities. Severe cutbacks at NJCU or its closing would have devastating impacts on students, families, municipalities, and the region.

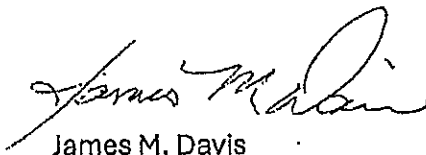
A financial rescue package from the New Jersey Legislature would enable NJCU to maintain its academic programs, scholarships, and infrastructure. By supporting the university, the State of New Jersey would sustain NJCU's ability to continue developing an educated workforce, greater social mobility, and a growing economy.

205x

NJCU began as the New Jersey State Normal School at Jersey City in 1927. For nearly a century, it has served the people of Bayonne, Hudson County, and the State of New Jersey. I urge you to give New Jersey City University priority in the state budget, so that it can continue to provide educational opportunities to first-generation college students.

Thank you very much for keeping the door of opportunity open for future generations of New Jersey's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James M. Davis".

James M. Davis

Mayor

City of Bayonne

206x



150 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608 609-989-1100

June 10, 2024

Dear Senate Higher Education Chair Cryan, Assembly Higher Education Chair Carter and Members of the Assembly and Senate Higher Education Committees:

Your willingness to jointly hear and reflect on the implementation of the higher education fiscal monitoring law (P.L. 2023, c.115) is very much appreciated. Thank you for being engaged on this critical subject – we know your time is limited, the tasks challenging and the issues great. We are grateful for your thoughtfulness, timeliness and willingness to take stock of where we are. While your immediate focus is on New Jersey City University (NJCU), this conversation is critical to larger process questions, particularly given the introduction of proposed regulations meant to inform the fiscal monitoring law.

The New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU) represents seven (7) of the senior public higher education institutions across New Jersey. **As such, this letter reflects the collective experience and thoughts of our institutional members.**

Background

Public Law 2023, c.115, prime sponsored by Senator Cryan and Assemblywoman Carter, among others, was enacted in July of 2023. The law requires public institutions of higher education to submit annual fiscal monitoring reports, authorizes the Secretary of Higher Education to appoint State monitors of institutions where needed, and requires higher education chief financial officers to complete training. The law's goal, as stated by Governor Murphy, is to "help ensure greater stability and transparency at public colleges and universities throughout our state so that these institutions can continue to provide New Jersey students with the high-quality education they deserve." NJASCU appreciates the work, effort and thoughtfulness that went into this legislation.

From an institutional perspective, the legislation ensured that public institutions of higher education that declare a financial emergency or find themselves in a position where they may be unable to fund their own operations in the near term received the support and oversight needed to get them 'back on track' serving the students of New Jersey. The collaborative work undertaken at New Jersey City University over the last year, which includes deliverables set forth by the law comprised of a fiscal accountability plan and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education's (OSHE) transition plan, are critical components to moving forward toward a sustained, healthy and vibrant place for students to learn. Beyond hearing from NJCU and the monitor about their experiences so far, today's hearing also gives us an opportunity to review the process effectuated by the law.

Office of the Secretary of Higher Education recently issued proposed regulations implementing the fiscal monitoring law. By and large, the regulations mirror the law. Where specificity was needed, OSHE provided important details on the process that is envisioned under the law. We appreciate their work and expect to weigh in on the regulations in expectation of the July 5, 2024 due date for comment.

There are a few items, however, that we want to ensure you are aware of and thinking about, as you embark on today's conversation and any action going forward:

1) **Composite Financial Index (CFI) score**

As it relates to the definition of "financial instability" set forth in the law, we would urge caution around the use of an institution's Composite Financial Index (CFI) score without working with individual institutions to back out the

www.njascu.org

The College of New Jersey
Kean University
New Jersey City University

Ramapo College of New Jersey
Stockton University
Thomas Edison State University

William Paterson University

207x

State's pension liability. It appears that the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is incorporating items such as pension liability through use of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data when compiling the CFI score. Pension liability is the responsibility of the State, not the institution and as such, may adversely impact the institution's CFI score. We would urge clarification regarding this definition in the code proposal upon adoption.

2) Reconciling regulations with statute and standards

New Jersey state colleges are required to be accredited by the MSCHE according to N.J.S.A. 9A:1-3.4. MSCHE standards place particular emphasis on the need for careful balance between each of the standards. In this case, Standard II (Ethics and Integrity) and Standard VII (Governance, Leadership & Administration) are relevant. Standard II makes it clear that accredited institutions must comply with 'all applicable laws and regulations' as well, while Standard IV requires that 'even when supported by or affiliated with governmental...organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy' (*emphasis added*). Care must be taken to reconcile the requirements of P.L.2023, c.115 with the above-mentioned standards, particularly since the standards as part of accreditation become a requirement that must be followed under state law

Equally, actions of the monitor should remain moored in questions of fiscal compliance in order to maintain balance between the provisions. Venturing too far beyond fiscal consideration, into areas such as instruction and student support, may further raise the specter of concern as it relates to accreditation. The current code proposal is somewhat vague as to this point. We plan to raise the need for clarity with OSHE but wanted to alert you to this concern.

It is our understanding that there have been conversations between MSCHE and the State. We would urge that this critical dialogue continue and have urged MSCHE to serve as a resource to the State. This will hopefully help ensure that conflicts are kept to a minimum.

3) Transition back to institutional control – ensuring a specified pathway and open dialogue

One of the areas that was critical to the law's sponsors was the need to develop a pathway for a school, when supported by a monitor, to move back into compliance. That is accomplished via the fiscal accountability plan the monitor develops in concert with the school as well as the transition plan ultimately authored by OSHE.

The proposed regulations set up a new process by which an institution may submit an application to the Secretary for removal of the monitor. NJASCU interprets this language as an opportunity for institutions to petition for the removal of a State monitor when certain conditions are met. However, we ask for the regulations to further clarify that this step is not mandatory to the cessation of a monitor. Upon the determination that the conditions that necessitated the appointment of the monitor have been resolved and a transition plan fully implemented, no other additional steps or work should be required or mandated.

While the law would require the Secretary share the transition plan outlining the process for the withdrawal of the State monitor with the leadership of an institution, we would also urge that the regulations include an opportunity for feedback from the impacted institution before finalizing the plan.

Further, while a fiscal accountability plan can and should change based upon any change in circumstances or even factors uncovered, it is critical that the plan stay focused and directed at the outset and remain thus. Institutions should have a clear pathway as they progress through monitoring to ultimate compliance.

4) The need for articulated CFO training

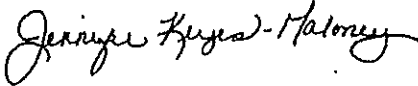
Finally, given the specifics outlined in statute as it related to training for Chief Financial Officers, we would urge more clarity in the regulatory proposal. While the code appears to allow OSHE or a third party to provide the training, we are curious as to what process OSHE plans to utilize to approve training providers and whether multiple entities may be expected? Similarly, does OSHE foresee training potentially being provided by another state agency and if so, whom?

We were pleased to see the regulations reflect the need for multiple training windows as necessary to properly

comply with the law. We also value the Secretary's willingness to convene the CFOs from the various institutions to calibrate or amend training to reflect current and future needs. We would recommend that the regulation require a review at a certain interval to ensure that such activity occurs.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you NJASCU's thoughts on the implementation of P.L. 2023, c.115. NJASCU stands ready to assist you in any way we can. Thank you again for keeping an eye on this critical process for our institutions, students, and taxpayers of New Jersey.

Cordially Yours



Jennifer Keyes-Maloney
Executive Director

cc: President Michael Bernstein, Ph.D., The College of New Jersey
President Cindy R. Jebb, President, Ph.D., Ramapo College of New Jersey
President Lamont Repollet, Ed.D., Kean University
President Joe Bertolino, Ed.D., Stockton University
President Merodie Hancock, Ph.D., Thomas Edison State University
Interim President Andres Acebo, Esq., New Jersey City University
President Richard J. Helldobler, Ph.D., William Paterson University