



New Jersey City University  
Board of Trustees  
2039 Kennedy Boulevard  
Jersey City, NJ 07305-1597  
njcu.edu

**New Jersey City University Board of Trustees  
Public Session Agenda  
Gothic Lounge, Hepburn Hall, Room 202**

**February 24, 2025  
5:30 PM**

**AGENDA**

- I. Public Session Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (December 9, 2024)
- IV. Chair's Report (L. Visconti)
  - a. Finance and Audit Committee Report (N. Brathwaite)
  - b. Real Estate, Infrastructure, and Capital Committee Report (R. Salerno)
  - c. Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee Report (J. Davis Toth)
- V. State Monitor's Update (H. Amoroso)
- VI. President's Report (A. Acebo)
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Consent Agenda
  - a. Personnel Actions (Reappointments, New Hires, Tenure, Promotions, etc.).
  - b. Board Bid Waivers (SPH Consulting Group and Kessler PR)
  - c. Reimbursement for Management and Operation of West Campus Housing LLC for FY 2025.
  - d. Authorization for Monetization Plan Action (275 West Side Avenue)
  - e. Reauthorization of Project Labor Agreement with Hudson County Building and Construction Trades Council (2 Year Extension)
  - f. Authorization of Conferral of Degrees AY24-25
  - g. (Reserved)



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- IX. Old Business
- X. New Business
- XI. Next Scheduled Public Meeting – April 14, 2025 (Tuition and Fee Schedule Hearing)
- XII. Adjournment

### **SPECIAL NOTICE**

Individuals that wish to address the New Jersey City University Board of Trustees must submit a request to speak form accessible from the following university webpage in accordance with Board Policy:

<https://www.njcu.edu/about/administration-governance/board-trustees/speaker-request-form>

A copy of the terms for addressing New Jersey City University's Board of Trustees may be obtained at the following link: <https://www.njcu.edu/about/administration-governance/board-trustees/terms-addressing-new-jersey-city-universitys-board-trustees>



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# Meeting Minutes

**New Jersey City University**

**Board of Trustees**

**December 9, 2024**

**ATTENDING:**

Mr. Luke Visconti, Chair *(In Person)*  
Mr. Ralph Salerno, Vice Chair *(In Person)*  
Ms. Natalie Brathwaite *(In Person)*  
Mr. Carlos Lejnieks *(In Person)*  
Ms. Jenny Davis Toth *(via Telephone)*  
Ms. Irene Trowell-Harris *(via Zoom)*  
Dr. Edward Whittaker *(via Zoom)*  
Mr. Andrés Acebo, Interim President, Ex Officio *(In Person)*  
Dr. Venessa Garcia, Faculty Representative, Ex- Officio *(In Person)*  
Mr. Dominic Yarson, Student Trustee, voting *(In Person)*  
Ms. Branda Logan, Student Trustee, non-voting *(In Person)*  
Mr. Henry Amoroso, State Monitor, non-voting *(In Person)*  
Ms. Monica de los Rios, University Counsel & Chief Ethics Officer,  
non-voting *(In Person)*  
Mr. Joe Baumann, Outside Counsel, non-voting *(In Person)*

**ABSENT:**

Ms. Helen Dao, Alumni Representative, Ex- Officio  
Mr. Peter Hernandez, Foundation Representative, Ex Officio

The meeting was called to order at 5:25 p.m. in Hepburn Hall, Gothic Lounge, Room 202, by Mr. Visconti.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll call was taken by Ms. Lee, Board Secretary and noted there was a quorum. Trustees/Ex Officios Dao, and Hernandez were not in attendance.

## **MINUTES**

Vice Chair Salerno made a motion on behalf of the Executive Committee to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2024, Public Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lejnieks. The motion was passed with two abstentions (Dao, and Hernandez).

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Visconti acknowledged Mr. Dominic Yarson, the new student voting trustee member who was sworn in by University Counsel Ms. de los Rios prior to the December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Public Session. He will replace Mr. David Valica. Mr. Visconti thanked Mr. Valica for his contribution, and referenced the importance of student trustee Logan, and trustee Yarson to the Board for their input and their ideas.

Mr. Visconti turned the floor over to outside counsel Mr. Baumann who brought forth out of the Executive Session the resolution passed by the Board to ratify an extension of Interim President Acebo's contract for an 18-month term with a one-year renewal to the floor. The motion was unanimously passed with two abstentions (Dao and Hernandez). Mr. Baumann yielded the floor back to Mr. Visconti.

Mr. Visconti reported on the significant progress made in 2024, including financial stability, infrastructure improvements, and academic and community engagement to stabilize and advance NJCU's core objectives. In collaboration with the State Monitor. The Chair thanked President Acebo for his contribution and efforts for the success NJCU has had in the last year.

Mr. Visconti yielded the floor to Trustee Brathwaite, chair of the Finance and Audit Committee for her report.

Ms. Brathwaite reported on the financial review of Fitch Ratings upgrading NJCU's outlook to "Stable," marking the university's first positive revision in more than a decade. The preliminary unaudited FY24 financial statements show an approximate \$7million improvement in net position compared to the previous fiscal year.

Trustee Brathwaite continued to report that the committee has adopted the Internal Audit Charter, establishing the purpose, authority, and responsibilities of NJCU's internal audit function, with Baker Tilly conducting a comprehensive risk assessment to guide the institution's FY25-FY27 audit plan. She provided updates on property monetization transactions that are nearing completion that will significantly enhance NJCU's cash reserves and debt reduction efforts, and that the committee continues to focus on proactive budget planning and oversight for continued stabilization funding to reflect the ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility and strategic growth. The committee remains dedicated to NJCU's long-term mission-driven success.

There were no questions. Ms. Brathwaite yielded the floor back to Mr. Visconti.

Mr. Visconti yielded the floor to Trustee and Vice Chair Salerno, chair of the Real Estate, Infrastructure, and Capital Committee for his report.

Trustee Salerno reported considerable progress on NJCU's property monetization efforts as called for in OSHE's transition plan which will yield substantial financial benefits for the university, allowing to reinvest in critical infrastructure needs and capital improvements. He provided examples of those transactions and key highlights of the committee's ongoing efforts which were provided in the Board Book.

Dr. Garcia questioned about the Ft. Monmouth Transaction plan. Vice Chair Salerno deferred to President Acebo, who answered that the plan is to expedite the use of the sub-lease. And subject to third-party regulatory approvals, that the leasing will yield positive benefits for NJCU. Dr. Garcia had a follow-up question about whether NJCU's nursing equipment would stay at that location and President Acebo responded that it would.

There were no further questions, and Mr. Visconti yielded the floor to Trustee Davis Toth, chair of the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee. As Trustee Toth was unable to present as she said she was driving and unable, she deferred to President Acebo to present on her behalf. President Acebo provided the update.

President Acebo highlighted the University's revitalized commitment to student success, community engagement, and strategic partnerships, and through this committee, provided key examples including partnerships with the Jersey City Board of Education to enhance mental health services in Jersey City Public Schools; an agreement with Jersey City Public Schools to support the Jersey City Arts High School Program on NJCU's campus; the release of NJCU's Student Development and Community Engagement Strategic Plan; a Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE); new academic programs, the creation of a new Master's of Social Work degree from a Federal Grant; among other successes.

Upon no further questions, President Acebo yielded the floor to the State Monitor for his update.

#### **STATE MONITOR'S UPDATE**

Mr. Amoroso thanked the full Board of Trustees for the collaborative work this past year, and the opportunity to continue working together to ensure the success in meeting the goals laid out in the previously published report. Amoroso noted the staff, the President, the Board and the NJCU community have met all benchmarks, and met all deadlines, and are well along toward debt reductions. Great strides have been taken, and commended President Acebo for his work and yielded the floor back to Acebo.



## **INTERIM PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Interim President Acebo yielded the floor to the following for their presentations, which the materials were included in the board e-book and posted on the NJCU website, to the room: Erin McCann, VP for Student Development and Community Engagement, "Student Development and Community Engagement Strategic Plan Update."

Dr. Rachél Fester, VP of Institutional Effectiveness gave an oral report updating the community on the self-study report for Middle States. She reported that they are ahead of schedule and overall, in excellent shape.

Dr. Fester ceded the floor back to Interim President Acebo, who highlighted examples on the progress over the past year, including a photo slideshow PowerPoint presentation during his speech, which reflected the positive NJCU events and milestones in the community.

## **Academic Affairs**

### **A. Strategic Initiatives**

1. **Textbook Inclusion Program:** NJCU became the only university in New Jersey to include textbooks as part of tuition, significantly reducing financial barriers for students.
2. **Bridge Program:** A support initiative for students entering with lower GPAs, providing targeted assistance throughout their critical first year.
3. **Center for Community Engaged Learning:** Directed by a faculty member, this new center expands community-based learning opportunities.
4. **Grading Policy Reform:** Updated policies allow for WU or WA grades for students who drop out without official withdrawal, reducing the adverse impact on GPAs and financial aid eligibility.

### **B. Academic Programming**

1. The College of Education has developed a new K-12 program, pending state approval.
2. A new undergraduate certificate in Behavior Management and Applied Behavior Analysis will be initiated in Spring 2025.

### **C. Strategic Hires**

1. Dr. J.D. Jayaraman and Dr. Esther Nir have been respectively appointed Interim Dean of the School of Business and the College of Professional Studies.
2. Full-time graduate advisors were added to the College of Professional Studies and the College of Education.
3. A full-time transfer advisor was hired through grant funding.



## **Enrollment Management**

### **A. Enrollment Metrics**

1. Undergraduate Enrollment: Applications increased by 8.25%, admit offers by 9.60%, and total enrollment by 11.25%.
2. Graduate Enrollment: Applications decreased by 5.48%, but admit offers increased by 9.83%, and enrollment rose by 11.28%.

### **B. Strategic Hires**

1. Key additions include:
  - a. Director of New Student Programs
  - b. Assistant Director of Enrollment Communications
  - c. Graduate Admissions Counselor
  - d. Transfer Success Coach
  - e. Multiple Admissions Recruiters

### **C. Strategic Initiatives**

1. Expanded recruitment efforts in key markets and strengthened transfer pipelines.
2. Optimized CRM systems for personalized outreach and improved communication strategies.
3. Revamped onboarding and yield programs for prospective students.
4. Launched readmit campaigns to re-engage former students.

## **Student Development and Community Engagement**

### **A. Student Experiences**

1. Athletics: The Men's and Women's Soccer teams achieved their best start in nearly two decades.
2. Residence Life: Processed 321 applications, welcoming 167 returning and 154 new students.
3. Disability Services: 270 students registered for support in Fall 2024.
4. Counseling Center: Provided 181 appointments since the start of the semester.
5. Food Pantry: Assisted 225 individuals in September, a 20% increase from the previous year.

## **Community Engagement and Events**

### **A. Key events hosted this year include:**

1. Fireside Chat with U.S. Senator Andy Kim and U.S. Representative LaMonica McIver.
2. Open House events for prospective students and families.
3. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the A. Harry Moore LIFT Program and the Center for Student Persistence.

### Strategic Initiatives

1. Office of Student Persistence: Established in November to provide targeted support services and individualized persistence plans for students.
2. Care and Concern Committee: Revamped to address student mental health and food insecurity.
3. First-Generation Center: Launched to mentor first-generation students navigating college.
4. Enhanced Student Engagement: Over 100 student organizations actively participated in Welcome Month programming.

### Strategic Partnerships and Agreements

- A. **Hudson County Latin American Chamber of Commerce (HCLACC)**. A groundbreaking partnership fostering international connections and boosting the local economy through initiatives like the International Business Expo and student internships with Latino entrepreneurs.
- B. **Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ (SHCCNJ)**. This collaboration established the Hispanic Business Hub on campus, providing workforce development, internships, and entrepreneurial mentorship for students.
- C. **Mercer County Community College (MCCC)**. A transfer agreement facilitating seamless credit transfer, joint admissions, and transfer scholarships.
- D. Launch of the **Hudson Connect Program**, a collaborative initiative to bridge educational and economic opportunities in the region.
- E. Partnership with the **Jersey City Police Officers Union** and the **Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County**, strengthening our ties to local youth and law enforcement communities.
- F. Collaboration with **Essex County Community College** to establish clear pathways for student transfer and success.

### Significant Grants and Awards

#### **1. \$3 Million Federal Grant for Hispanic Students**

- a. This grant supports "The Professional Pathways Project," which:
  - a. Introduces a new Master of Social Work program.
  - b. Develops a micro credential in Multicultural/Multilingual Services.
  - c. Enhances curriculum in the Educational Technology Leadership Ed.D. and Civil Security Leadership doctoral programs.

## 2. \$150,000 OSHE Grant

Awarded for the “Some College, No Degree” initiative, helping adults return to complete their degrees through debt relief and individualized resources.

## 3. \$222,000 NJ Department of Education Grant

Funds teacher development programs focused on literacy and English Language Arts (ELA).

### Institutional Stability and Future Positioning

- a. Ranking #1 in New Jersey and #10 nationally for improving students' upward economic mobility.
- b. Active exploration of a strategic partnership with a like-minded four-year public institution to ensure financial and institutional stability.

2024 marked a pivotal year for NJCU’s financial health, with **Moody’s and Fitch Ratings** upgrading the university’s financial outlook for the first time in over a decade. These upgrades reflect our successful efforts to stabilize operations and secure NJCU’s future.

Key advancements include:

- Implementation of shared governance practices to foster collaboration and accountability.
- Completion of a mission and vision refresh to align with NJCU’s strategic priorities.
- Adoption of the **Academic Master Plan** and **Strategic Enrollment Plan** to guide academic and recruitment efforts.
- Development of the **Student Development and Community Engagement Plan**, enhancing support services and student life.

There were no questions, and the floor was opened for Public Comment.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Visconti asked Ms. Lee if there were any public comments. Ms. Lee called up Dr. William Calathes, acknowledging his time limit of three minutes.

Dr. Calathes read his prepared statement as the Union Representative for NJCU and shared his experience as a member of AFT Local 1839. He commended Mr. Acebo for his stabilization efforts at the University, and thanked the State Monitor, the Board of Trustees, and the NJCU staff and Faculty for their hard work and valued the way the information was articulated and presented. As the Labor Representative for NJCU, he voiced the grievances from his constituents regarding the budget for the fiscal year. Mr. Calathes offered to have the union collaborate with the Board of Trustees, based on the impressive work already completed through the State Monitor’s guidance, and work together to ensure all voices are heard, thus fostering a positive relationship and unite to continue to build a stronger Institution.



Mr. Visconti thanked Mr. Calathes.

Dr. Rachél Fester, VP Institutional Effectiveness, NJCU, spoke as an individual attendee. She praised President Acebo's work during this past year, and how he has provided the leadership and expertise needed at such a pivotal time in NJCU's history. Fester also placed on the record how she felt that Acebo has been the right person put in the role at the right time during the financial crisis who has brought the University out of a situation that could have been detrimental to the students, the community, and to the state.

Student Sofa Mostafa spoke about the hardships faced by many students who are on financial assistance and are searching for answers to find work yet are struggling to pay their bills and may be locked out student loans due to lack of guidance. Chair Visconti acknowledged the student's plight and said the board would investigate the situation.

Alumni Student Tesha Mateo was called to the forum by the Board Secretary. After a second calling, and no answer, with no more questions, the Board Secretary yielded the floor back to Chair Visconti for the Consent Agenda portion.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS**

President Acebo introduced a friendly amendment of inclusion of Dr. Esther Nir, Acting Dean, College of Education to the Personnel Actions Resolution due to the timing of the Board meeting and the receiving of the information. The item was passed. Vice Chair Salerno made a motion to approve all the items on the agenda and was seconded by Trustee Brathwaite. The resolutions were unanimously passed with two abstentions (Dao and Hernandez).

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The Board Secretary announced that the next Board meeting will be held on February 24, 2025. Mr. Visconti requested a motion for the board to move into executive session prior to the public session to discuss confidential personnel matters and contractual matters. The minutes of the executive session will become available to the public when there is no longer a need for confidentiality regarding these matters and was seconded by Ms. Brathwaite. The motion passed with two abstentions (Dao and Hernandez).

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Visconti requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Mr. Salerno and seconded by Mr. Lejnieks. The motion passed with two abstentions (Dao and Hernandez). The meeting was adjourned at 6:08p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Lee  
Board of Trustees Secretary

# **President's Report**

## Andres Acebo

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**From:** Andres Acebo  
**Sent:** Friday, February 7, 2025 7:44 PM  
**To:** Francis Moran; Venessa Garcia; Christopher Shamburg; John Donnellan; EunSu Lee; Joyce Wright; Jeremiah Yorker  
**Cc:** Milagros Peralta  
**Subject:** NJCU Presidential Update - February 7, 2025  
**Attachments:** President's Memo to University Senate (2.7.25).pdf; SPH-NJCU Summary Report (2.7.25).pdf

Dear Members of the University Senate Executive Committee,

I hope this message finds you well and that the Spring Semester is proving to be engaging and mission driven.

Attached, please find a comprehensive presidential memo detailing key institutional updates and progress on compliance with the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education April 2024 Transition Plan for New Jersey City University. This memo covers in greater detail all of the items and matters we discussed during our recent **university-wide forum on February 5, 2025**. Additionally, I have included our **SPH Consulting Group's Summary Report**, which was sanctioned by the University to inform the work of institutional partnership considerations.

I have just returned from a productive **Walk to Washington** trip, sponsored by the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. Without exception, every conversation—whether with state and local representatives, members of our congressional delegation, industry leaders, or candidates vying to be the next governor of our great state—celebrated our university's refreshed mission and the collective work we have undertaken over the last two years to revitalize it and ensure its long-term sustainability.

I return emboldened and encouraged by the high regard that our collective efforts have earned. Our campus has much to be proud of, and we have every reason to remain engaged and passionate as we continue working diligently to ensure our mission thrives well into our second century.

I look forward to our continued dialogue and collaboration.

Yours in service,

Andrés Acebo  
Interim President  
**New Jersey City University**  
2039 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Hepburn Hall, Room 321  
Jersey City, NJ 07305-1597



## MEMORANDUM

To: University Senate Executive Committee

From: Andrés Acebo, Interim President

Cc: Board of Trustees

Millie Peralta, Chief of Staff

Dr. Donna Adair Breault, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Brian Kirkpatrick, Vice President for Administration and Finance

Erin McCann, Vice President for Student Development and Community Engagement

Dr. Rachel Fester, Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness

Monica de los Rios, Esq., University Counsel

AFT Local 1839 Executive Committee

CWA Local 1031 (Staff Representatives)

IFPTE Local 195

NJCU Foundation

Date: February 7, 2025

Subject: Institutional Updates and OSHE Transition Plan Compliance

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### I. Introduction

On February 5, 2025, we gathered as a university community for a candid and constructive forum that underscored the strength of our shared commitment to New Jersey City University's mission. Faculty, staff, and students engaged in thoughtful exchanges about the state of the university, reflecting on both the challenges we face and the opportunities before us. These discussions were not just an exercise in dialogue; they were a testament to our collective resolve to continuously improve, adapt, and future-proof our institution in service of our students and the communities we uplift.

This memorandum seeks to capture the key themes that emerged from our conversations—the areas where we are making progress, those that require renewed focus, and the steps we must take to ensure that NJCU remains a beacon of opportunity and excellence for generations to come. More than an assessment of the present, this document is a blueprint for the future—one that is shaped by the voices of those who define our institution and its impact every day.

The progress we have achieved at NJCU over the past year reflects not only the diligent efforts of our leadership team but also the revitalization of our shared governance and labor relations framework. These relationships have been instrumental in developing and implementing a renewed institutional vision, a strengthened strategic direction, and a framework for long-term sustainability.

Through deep collaboration with faculty, staff, students, and union leadership, NJCU has articulated a refreshed mission statement and, for the first time in our institution's history, a formal vision statement. These defining statements are not simply words on paper—they are guiding

principles that reaffirm our role as a beacon of opportunity, a champion for social mobility, and an engine of economic advancement for the communities we serve.

### **Navigating Higher Education's Crossroads: Challenges and Opportunities**

NJCU is not alone in confronting the headwinds facing higher education—particularly regional comprehensive public universities that serve underrepresented and underserved populations. Across the nation, institutions like ours face:

- Declining Enrollment Trends – Driven by shifting demographics, fewer traditional college-age students, and increased competition from alternative education models.
- Public Skepticism and Policy Shifts – As institutions of higher learning are asked to prove their value, we must demonstrate our return on investment through career outcomes, affordability, and social impact.
- Financial Pressures – As state and federal funding structures evolve, universities must become more financially self-sustaining while ensuring accessibility and affordability for students.
- Workforce and Industry Demands – Higher education must continuously evolve to meet the workforce's changing needs, ensuring that our students graduate with the skills necessary to thrive in high-demand fields.

While these challenges are significant, they also present unprecedented opportunities for institutions willing to embrace innovation, form strategic partnerships, and redefine their role in an evolving educational landscape. NJCU is rising to this challenge, ensuring that we are not just reacting to change but leading it.

Each of the institutional advancements detailed in this memorandum strengthens NJCU's ability to forge and sustain strategic partnerships that will fortify our future. By staying true to our mission, embracing collaborative innovation, and leveraging strategic relationships, we are positioning NJCU as a national model for urban, public higher education in the 21st century.

### **Strengthening Governance, Mission, and Strategic Direction**

At the heart of our efforts has been a renewed commitment to shared governance, collaboration, and transparency. Together, we have achieved the following:

- Refreshed our institutional mission statement and, for the first time in NJCU's nearly century-long history, established a formal vision statement that reflects our unwavering dedication to access, equity, and academic excellence.
- Implemented a series of strategic frameworks, ensuring that NJCU's future is built on a solid foundation of data-driven decision-making and intentional planning:
  - **The Academic Master Plan**, aligning our curriculum with workforce demands and regional economic development needs to enhance student career pathways.

- **The Strategic Enrollment and Retention Plan**, which has already yielded measurable enrollment gains and introduced new initiatives to support student persistence and success.
- **The Student Development and Community Engagement Plan**, which strengthens student support services, student persistence initiatives, student persistence, leadership development, and community partnerships that are central to NJCU's mission.

These frameworks are not just documents; they are action plans that will guide NJCU through the next decade, ensuring that we continue to be a leader in providing accessible, high-quality education to those who need it most.

With this foundation in place, we are now focused on securing NJCU's long-term sustainability—not just through financial and enrollment stabilization, but through thoughtful, strategic partnerships that align with our mission and preserve our identity.

## **II. Middle States Self-Study and Accreditation Compliance**

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) self-study process is incredibly important. It is an opportunity to demonstrate institutional integrity, showcase academic excellence, and affirm our commitment to continuous improvement.

NJCU's Self-Study Steering Committee, composed of faculty, staff, and administrative leaders, has worked diligently to prepare a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of our institution. The self-study process is not just about compliance—it is about charting a bold, forward-thinking strategy for the university's future.

### **Key Developments in the Self-Study Process**

- The Self-Study Design, which articulates our approach to evaluating NJCU's performance against MSCHE standards, is scheduled for submission this month. This design reflects a collaborative and transparent process that has engaged faculty, staff, students, and governance bodies across the university.
- The Self-Study process is aligned with NJCU's broader institutional transformation, ensuring that our recent strategic planning efforts—including the Academic Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment and Retention Plan, and Student Development and Community Engagement Plan—are fully integrated into our accreditation documentation.
- The MSCHE site visit is scheduled for **April 21, 2025**. This will be a critical moment for NJCU, as it will allow the MSCHE representatives to assess our self-study design's measuring of our progress, institutional effectiveness, and compliance with accreditation standards.



Our goal is to ensure that this visit affirms NJCU's commitment to academic excellence, financial sustainability, and mission-driven innovation.

We are taking this process seriously, not just as an exercise in compliance, but as an opportunity to reaffirm NJCU's standing as a mission-driven, student-centered institution committed to academic rigor and institutional sustainability.

This process also serves as an essential complement to our ongoing strategic partnership exploration, ensuring that NJCU is positioned for long-term success regardless of the pathway forward.

### **III. Strategic Partnership Exploration**

#### **Aligning with the OSHE Transition Plan and Regulatory Oversight**

As part of the April 2024 Office of the Secretary of Higher Education of New Jersey's (OSHE) Transition Plan, NJCU has undertaken a comprehensive and deliberative process to evaluate potential merger, partnership, or affiliation opportunities with other New Jersey public institutions.

The Transition Plan mandates that:

*"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."*

Since the onset of this process, we have been deliberate, transparent, and methodical, ensuring that any potential partnership will achieve the following:

- Enhance NJCU's long-term financial and operational sustainability.
- Preserve our mission as a minority-serving, access-oriented institution.
- Expand academic and career opportunities for our students.
- Strengthen our ability to serve our mission.

#### **Engaging an Expert Consultant to Guide the Process**

To ensure a rigorous, data-driven evaluation of all partnership options, NJCU conducted a competitive selection process in July 2024 and engaged SPH Consulting Group—a firm with extensive experience in higher education strategy, finance, and institutional partnerships.

SPH was tasked with conducting a comprehensive study and evaluation of partnership and affiliation options, ensuring that any future partnership aligns with NJCU's:

- Refreshed mission and vision
- Academic Master Plan
- Strategic Enrollment and Retention Plan
- Strategic Student Development and Community Engagement Plan

The consultant was engaged to complete the following:

- Provide expert analysis, strategic recommendations, and cost projections to inform NJCU's decision-making process.
- Ensure that NJCU maintains and enhances its presence in offering degree programs and distinctive services to the communities it serves.

### **Scope of Work and Key Areas of Analysis**

SPH's required scope of work has been extensive, including the following:

1. Institutional Review & Data Analysis
  - Conducted a comprehensive review of NJCU's mission, vision, and integrated strategic plan.
  - Analyzed the most recent IPEDS and financial data (FY 2020–present) to assess NJCU's position.
2. Institutional Strengths and Market Positioning
  - Assessed student demographics, faculty, staff, facilities, academic programming, and extracurricular offerings to identify strengths and weaknesses.
  - Conducted a limited market analysis of higher education institutions in New Jersey, evaluating NJCU's competitive position and growth opportunities.
3. Partnership & Affiliation Evaluations
  - Identified and assessed potential partnership opportunities with higher education institutions, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government entities.
  - Conducted a financial analysis of select potential partnership, examining costs, revenue generation potential, and long-term return on investment.
  - Evaluated potential partnerships based on their ability to:
    - Expand academic programming
    - Strengthen student recruitment, retention, and graduation rates
    - Foster research collaboration and institutional sustainability

- Enhance NJCU's presence in critical markets

SPH's findings and recommendations have been instrumental in guiding NJCU's Board and leadership in making informed decisions about the future of the institution.

### **Stakeholder Engagement and Progress**

Throughout this process, we have prioritized transparency, engagement, and shared governance to ensure that our faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders have been involved in shaping NJCU's future:

- **Fall 2024** – Facilitated direct engagements between SPH Consulting Group and the University Senate Executive Committee, AFT Local leadership, and the President's Community Advisory Council, fostering robust conversations on NJCU's future and the role of shared governance in the transition process; and
- **December 16, 2024** – Provided a full update to the University Senate, outlining our selection process, evaluation criteria, and stakeholder engagement strategy; and
- **January 8, 2025** – Held a campus-wide forum with faculty, staff, students, and governance representatives, presenting our progress toward meeting the OSHE partnership mandate; and
- Ongoing engagement with student government leaders and university governance committees, ensuring that NJCU's constituencies are heard and involved in shaping the implementation of any future partnership.

### **Decision-Making and Timeline**

- **February 10, 2025** – The Board of Trustees will hold a closed session meeting, where institutions that submitted partnership proposals will present their plans.
- **March 31, 2025** – NJCU remains on track to finalize partnership option identification, as mandated by the OSHE's transition plan benchmarks.

This is not just about meeting a deadline — it's about securing the right partnership that respects NJCU's legacy, advances its mission, and ensures its long-term sustainability.

### **Partnership Identification Criteria**

All partnership considerations have been and will continue to be guided by seven (7) guiding principles.

1. **Students First:** Prioritize student success and experience in all aspects of the partnership.
2. **Mission Alignment:** Ensure the partnership aligns with NJCU's mission of providing accessible, equity-driven education.



3. **Focus on Long-Term Financial Sustainability:** Develop strategies that enhance financial health and stability.
4. **Academic Programming Complementarity:** Leverage complementary academic strengths to expand educational offerings.
5. **Commitment to Financial and Programmatic Investment:** Demonstrate willingness to invest in shared goals and initiatives.
6. **Experience with Wrap-Around Support Services:** Provide robust support services tailored to diverse student needs.
7. **Respect and Support for Local Community Needs:** Engage with and support the unique needs of NJCU's local community.

#### IV. Spring 2024 Enrollment Update

As of **February 7, 2025**, our pre-census spring headcount enrollment report reflects significant enrollment gains, a testament to the success of our strategic recruitment, retention initiatives, and targeted enrollment strategies:

- New undergraduate headcount enrollment has increased by over 80% compared to the same period last year.
- Transfer enrollment has increased by approximately 15% spring-over-spring.
- Our pathway partnerships, dual enrollment articulations, and the Some College/No Degree initiative have seen dramatic improvements, resulting in an over 150% increase in matriculation compared to last year.
- New graduate enrollment headcount is up by over 16% from the same period last year.

While we acknowledge that serious enrollment challenges remain, and the university is still well below its pre-pandemic headcount peak levels, these improvements demonstrate that our collective strategies are yielding meaningful results.

Our dual enrollment agreements, community college transfer pipelines, and outreach efforts focused on adult learners are directly impacting these improvements. Specifically, our Some College/No Degree initiative has allowed us to re-engage individuals who have educational credits but no credential, positioning NJCU as a leader in helping non-traditional students complete their academic journeys.

Moreover, our enrollment efforts are supported by a revised and disciplined approach to financial aid management, including reforms to discounting practices and waivers that ensure enrollment growth does not come at the expense of institutional financial stability. These practices are a key component of our efforts to maintain balanced budgets while increasing access and opportunity for students.

Our renewed focus on student persistence and retention are critical elements to our student success efforts. Moving the needle significantly in those metrics is critical to the long-term sustainability and impact of our mission. We have much work to do in this regard considering decades of underinvestment. I am very proud of our faculty, staff, and administrators who are leaning into this work with innovative focus. Those efforts tied to the right institutional relationships will embolden the work with the appropriate and necessary level of resources to make a measurable difference.

## **V. Fiscal and Operational Stability**

### **Credit Rating and Renewed Market Confidence**

NJCU has made measurable strides in stabilizing our financial position, reaffirming our commitment to fiscal responsibility while investing in our institutional future.

Our unaudited FY24 financial statements reveal a \$7 million improvement in our net financial position over the prior fiscal year. This achievement is the result of deliberate financial stewardship, cost containment measures, and strategic revenue enhancements.

For the second consecutive year, NJCU remains on track to close the fiscal year with a balanced budget, a milestone that underscores our ongoing efforts to ensure financial sustainability.

A critical component of our fiscal stability has been the strategic allocation of stabilization funding, which has been primarily directed toward addressing decades-long deferred maintenance needs on campus. Specifically, we have committed approximately \$13 million toward essential capital improvements, ensuring that our students, faculty, and staff have access to a modernized, functional, and sustainable learning environment.

For the first time in over a decade, NJCU's credit rating outlook has been upgraded to stable by both Moody's and Fitch. This is a direct reflection of the progress we have made—it signals to policymakers, funders, and potential partners that NJCU is on the rise.

### **Real Estate Transactions and Financial Performance**

We have strategically monetized underutilized assets while ensuring that NJCU remains aligned with its long-term mission-driven priorities:

- **Claremont/Hampshire Ground Lease Sale** – \$9 million in net proceeds, strengthening liquidity and long-term debt defeasance planning.
- **Fort Monmouth Lease Assignment** – Facilitating the eventual elimination of \$22 million in long-term lease liabilities and immediately reduced annual operating costs by \$2 million.
- **Honeywell Transaction** – Executed a purchase-sale agreement that will generate approximately \$5.2 million in enhanced liquidity allowing for reinvestment into student success initiatives and campus modernization.

### **Capital Investments and Deferred Maintenance Projects**

As part of our commitment to campus modernization and safety, we have launched an aggressive capital improvement to address long-deferred infrastructure needs. This includes:

- **Vodra Hall Dormitory Renovations** – A full-scale renovation of Vodra Hall, including HVAC system replacements, plumbing upgrades, and modernized living spaces to improve student residential life.
- **Campus Classroom Upgrades** – Significant classroom refurbishments, including new technology integration, updated furnishings, and improved lighting and accessibility to create modern learning environments.
- **Boiler and Chiller Replacements** – The replacement and modernization of aging boiler and chiller systems across campus, improving energy efficiency, heating, and cooling reliability.
- **Critical Roof Repairs** – Completion of long-overdue roof replacements and leak prevention projects to protect campus facilities from further structural damage.
- **IT Infrastructure Enhancements** – Expanding Wi-Fi access, upgrading network security, and modernizing classroom technology to enhance student learning experiences and campus connectivity.

Each of these projects directly supports our goal of providing a safe, functional, and technologically advanced campus environment. These improvements also ensure that NJCU remains competitive in attracting and retaining students by offering facilities that meet the expectations of today's and tomorrow's learners.

### **IV. Strengthening Our Prospects for Partnership**

The progress we have made in stabilizing NJCU, reinvesting in our campus, and expanding our enrollment pipeline has strengthened our ability to secure a strong partnership that will ensure NJCU's mission endures for generations.

By leveraging our institutional progress, embracing strategic collaboration, and staying true to our mission, NJCU is not just seeking a partnership but shaping a future that preserves and strengthens our legacy as an engine of opportunity and social mobility.

At this pivotal moment, we are proving that an institution built to serve, uplift, and transform lives can—and will—secure its future.

We have stabilized, strengthened, and positioned NJCU for a sustainable future with innovative and strategic partnerships. Through rigorous analysis, strategic planning, and deliberate action, we are ensuring that NJCU is built to serve students for generations to come.



Enclosed is a copy of the SPH summary report, which provides an assessment of NJCU's operations and recommendations for its structural future. The report recommends that NJCU explore a strategic partnership with another higher education institution in the state to secure our long-term mission. While acknowledging the significant efforts made to address financial challenges—including reductions in staff, academic programs, and debt – the consultant observes that the structural and systemic issues weathered by NJCU are best addressed by seeking an innovative relationship with another four-year public institution. This is a relationship that NJCU has been exploring and developing for nearly a year.

The Board of Trustees has undertaken a deliberate and thorough evaluation of strategic options for NJCU's long-term sustainability. While the SPH report does not dictate a specific course of action, it provides a strong foundation for the Board to make an informed decision about NJCU's future. University leadership is emboldened by the report's recognition of our progress and the fact that, due to our efforts over the past two years, multiple institutions now view NJCU as a valued potential partner with much to offer. Additionally, SPH encourages NJCU to consider several restructuring initiatives, identifying the most viable options as scaling down or downsizing, sharing facilities, or a complete merger. We continue to proactively seek OSHE's feedback and engage our State and local representatives. Throughout this process we have also kept our MSCHE representatives duly informed.

In late 2024, NJCU issued an RFP for a potential partner institution, and the Board is currently reviewing multiple proposals while engaging in productive discussions with interested institutions. No decisions have been made, and the process remains in strict compliance with State law and confidentiality agreements. As we move forward, NJCU will continue to engage and communicate with students, faculty, staff, and our broader community. The release of this report is an opportunity to continue our meaningful dialogue, and your input remains essential as we chart the best path forward for our university and the students we serve.

I remain grateful for the dedication of our faculty, staff, and collective leadership as we navigate this transformative moment together in service to our extraordinary community of students. I look forward to discussing these updates further at our upcoming university senate meeting and remain profoundly grateful for your commitment to NJCU's mission.





CONSULTING GROUP  
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER:

*Due Diligence Support for Exploring Strategic Partnerships*

February 7, 2025



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- New Jersey City University (NJCU) serves a critical mission by providing a public 4-year higher education to citizens of Hudson County and surrounding region, the majority of whom are under-represented and minoritized individuals. While the school has historically struggled with lower retention and graduation rates, it is also clear that it strives to provide its students with the academic, financial, and mental health support needed especially for lower-income first generation students.
- Due to a series of unfortunate events and decisions by former university leaders, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, NJCU took the bold step to declare fiscal exigency in June 2022 to address a multi-year operating budget deficit. Since then, new leadership has been working diligently to address these challenges, including reducing underperforming academic programming, right-sizing staffing, controlling expenses, and generating additional revenue from various sources including from non-essential real estate sales.
- NJCU has adopted a refreshed mission and vision statement with institutional values, an academic master plan, a strategic student enrollment plan, and a student development and community engagement plan that has been remarked upon by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and global rating agencies, including Moody's and Fitch.
- NJCU needs additional staff and resources to serve out their strategic sustainability work and to mitigate potential operational risks for the institution.
- NJCU must continue to address deferred capital maintenance needs estimated by SPH to amount to over \$120 million, most of which is urgently needed. The institution is additionally facing significant debt and lease costs, with bond debt payment alone currently consuming approximately \$7M annually. An amount that is set to increase to ~\$10M by 2026 and ~\$12M by 2031. Further, the institution, as publicly noted, has effectively exhausted its capacity to acquire any additional debt.
- Financial modeling by SPH did not reveal a realistic path forward for NJCU as a sustainable and wholly independent enterprise able to provide the quality and extent of the services their core student population and their community and state need and deserve without extraordinary State support
- A number of immediate institutional restructuring initiatives have been deployed and should continued to be be considered, including downsizing, developing shared partnerships for academic programming, administrative services, or facilities, or merging with another institution, either completely, into a system, or as type of an affiliation. However, in choosing restructuring options NJCU needs to consider the objective of maintaining a tangible public 4-year higher education presence in Hudson County and the greater surrounding region, while also acknowledging NJCU's critical need to immediately address various challenges, including declining enrollment demographics, structural financial shortfalls, strategic staffing gaps, and decades-long capital needs -- all while ensuring a quality and meaningful higher education to its core constituents (students primarily from the surrounding population).
- In this setting, the restructuring tactics that present the greatest potential include 'Scaling Down/Downsizing', 'Shared Facilities', and 'Complete Mergers'. While the first two options primarily would leverage relationships with institutions that are proximate to NJCU, a merger will require identifying a willing and able partner with a complementary mission
- At least two 4-year New Jersey public institutions of higher education that currently compete for students with NJCU could serve as potential merger partners. A potential merger with one of these institutions should be readily explored.

Further, the need for the State to provide support to these strategic merger efforts is critical to the success of any such initiative.

- Finally, it should be noted that the State of New Jersey needs to meet the relatively high level of urgency that NJCU has acknowledged in addressing any major institutional restructuring option. An urgency driven by the current financial situation, the time it will take to negotiate the initiative and receive the necessary state and federal approvals, leadership bandwidth limitations in needing to address both the current institutional challenges and the change process, tangible resources that these initiatives would take, even in the best of circumstances, and continuing progressive challenges to the higher education environment in general.

## BACKGROUND AND DUE DILIGENCE

Like many other regional public comprehensive institutions of higher education, NJCU has been experiencing decreasing enrollment. The declining enrollment, along with various historical managerial and governance decisions, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in the strategic declaration of fiscal exigency in June 2022, with a reported significant multi-year multi-million dollar structural operating budget deficit. Investigations by the State Comptroller's Office and the appointment of a State Monitor followed.

Current leadership and staff at NJCU, in collaboration with the State Monitor, have been working tirelessly to address the fiscal challenges, the extensive deferred maintenance needs, and the significant debt and lease burden, while reducing academic programming, decreasing staff counts by approximately 30%, and striving to continue to meet the ongoing needs of their students and faculty. Significant progress on all these fronts has been made with a dedicated focus on the long-term sustainability of NJCU's distinctive and important mission.

The higher education environment in the U.S. is currently characterized by a continuing decline in the population of individuals that traditionally sought higher education, increasing costs and regulatory burden, and massive excess teaching capacity. Which in any sector would call for significant consolidation. Consequently, the need for NJCU to consider major institutional restructuring to ensure the sustainability of its mission to its core students, primarily individuals from the Hudson and surrounding counties, in whatever form necessary, was articulated. A merger was suggested as a potential restructuring option. A Request-for-Proposals (RFP) was issued to identify a firm specializing in mergers in higher education and SPH Consulting Group responded and was selected.

The report that follows stems from this engagement and addresses the due diligence and the partner identification portions of the engagement. SPH understood that a rapid timeline was necessary to meet the milestones of the state's budgetary process, and that the objective was to assist NJCU leadership in identifying a path forward to sustainable, ongoing, and quality operations at NJCU, so that the institution could continue to successfully serve its core student population. SPH strived to focus its analysis on what would be best for the students traditionally served by the institution, and to provide an external and objective perspective. Information that would assist NJCU and New Jersey (NJ) state leaders in their decision-making. SPH observations are current as of November 2024, although we understand NJCU leadership has continued to address many of the areas addressed in this report. Following, we provide a summary of our findings to date.

➤ **Governance/Corporate** - NJCU is considered, for all intents and purposes, a 'state agency' whose public voting-members are appointed by the Governor subject to the advice and consent of the Legislature.

- **Opportunities**

- Despite the clear commitment of current NJCU board members to the institution, its students, and its mission, it is also clear that most are only able to be engaged with board operations to a modest degree.



**Table B. Projections of job growth by industry sector by county surrounding NJCU**

-----Total Growth 2022 to 2032-----					
	Healthcare	Computers	Business	Education	Psychology Soc. Svcs.
<b>Bergen</b>					
- Base Population	121,950	36,828	257,161	27,148	21,207
- Total Change	15,267	3,520	(4,439)	1,245	2,075
- Annual % Growth	1.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.8%
- Total % Change	13.6%	7.1%	0.5%	5.7%	8.8%
<b>Essex</b>					
- Base Population	85,120	27,617	189,160	30,276	19,184
- Total Change	85,120	27,617	189,160	30,276	19,184
- Annual % Growth	1.0%	0.5%	-0.1%	0.6%	0.6%
- Total % Change	10.9%	5.5%	-0.4%	5.9%	6.5%
<b>Hudson</b>					
- Base Population	50,186	28,095	193,709	16,073	12,598
- Total Change	5,993	4,218	6,531	590	1,098
- Annual % Growth	1.1%	1.1%	0.6%	0.5%	0.8%
- Total % Change	12.0%	12.3%	6.2%	4.9%	8.3%
<b>Middlesex</b>					
- Base Population	90,455	40,047	252,515	27,545	19,273
- Total Change	13,049	6,506	13,441	1,698	2,467
- Annual % Growth	1.5%	1.3%	0.7%	0.7%	1.2%
- Total % Change	15.9%	14.0%	7.8%	7.1%	12.6%
<b>Union</b>					
- Base Population	55,107	18,151	130,055	14,871	11,615
- Total Change	7,002	1,876	(582)	428	953
- Annual % Growth	1.3%	0.7%	0.1%	0.4%	0.8%
- Total % Change	14.5%	8.2%	1.1%	4.0%	7.9%
<b>5-County Total</b>					
- Base Population	402,818	150,738	1,022,600	115,913	83,877
- Total Change	49,601	18,215	10,641	5,427	7,808
- Annual % Growth	1.2%	0.8%	0.3%	0.5%	0.8%
- Total % Change	13.4%	9.4%	3.0%	5.5%	8.8%

identified as the most single important element determining the success of institutional mergers.<sup>1</sup> There currently appears to be insufficiently experienced Board members in order for the Board to function properly or effectively.

- The state (regulatory and political) environment presents added difficulties to the operations of NJCU, with little tangible incentive for public institutions of higher education in NJ to collaborate or to become more effective.

➤ **Market** - For any organization providing a complex public service there are at least three factors critical to success: (1) Where it is located vis-à-vis the population it seeks to attract; (2) The unique socio-demographic profile that defines the community it serves; and (3) Who it is competing with to provide their services. Located in Jersey City, NJCU's geographical location, the unique socio-demographic profile of the market area population, and the heavy concentration of competing schools, creates both significant challenges along with some potential strategic opportunities (Table A).

- **Opportunities** – Despite its recent financial and operational challenges, the market in which NJCU operates could provide a number of strategic opportunities for the school. As a provider of post-secondary education, seeking to

The appointment of additional board members with sufficient time to become more engaged in the necessary functions and responsibilities of the board, and with the necessary breadth of experience and expertise to undertake the needed change management, represents a potential opportunity.

- Merger with another institution would also provide an avenue for board rejuvenation and restructuring.

#### • Challenges

- The coming need to consider major institutional restructuring options, including a merger, requires a fully committed, active and effective Board. In fact, the commitment and preparedness of the governing board has been

<sup>1</sup> Azziz et al. Strategic Mergers in Higher Education. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019.

attract students in a highly competitive market, NJCU needs to offer the right academic programs that meet the specific needs of its prospective students. At the same time, NJCU needs to offer academic programs that prepare their students to compete for jobs and find career success following graduation.

**Meeting Industry Needs** – According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, in New Jersey there are five industry sectors that are projected to have substantial growth in demand for trained professionals over the next 10 years: (1) healthcare; (2) computers and information; (3) business, marketing and management; (4) education, and (5) psychology and social services (**Table B**). NJCU has undergraduate and graduate programs in each of these disciplines. Focusing their available resources to strengthen these programs will enable NJCU to offer programs that ensure their own market relevance (**Table C**).

- **Identifying Prospective Partners** – Currently, while NJCU offers degrees in each of the five aforementioned industry sectors, they are only producing a small percentage of graduates in each of these disciplines. Using degrees granted as a proxy for market share, it is evident that NJCU is not capturing a significant portion of the potential student market. Regarding undergraduate degrees granted, among the five industry sectors with the largest growth, in 2022 NJCU's most impactful program in healthcare only granted 4.4% of all bachelor's degrees recorded. At the graduate level, NJCU granted only 7.5% and 5.5% of all master's degrees in education and healthcare, respectively, in the entire state of NJ. As a standalone institution NJCU's impact on graduates in these high demand fields is limited. Partnering or merging with another institution or institutions could result in significantly increased market share.
- **Challenges** – An analysis of NJCU's market, in particular the needs of its students and its own position compared to those schools against which it competes for students, finds several unique challenges that need to be managed.
  - **Academic Performance** – NJCU offers academic programs across a wide array of disciplines. Unfortunately, the university is struggling to compete with those schools with which it directly competes for students. Key indicators used to assess performance include: (1) 4-year graduation rate for first-time full-time freshmen; (2) 6-year graduation rate for first-time full-time freshmen, and (3) 2022 undergraduate student retention. In each of these categories, NJCU is either the lowest or second lowest among a group of 12 other competing schools. In 2022, NJCU reported a 20%, 4-year graduation rate and only a 39% 6-year graduation rate. Its student retention rate was only 73%. In 2024, NJCU developed and began to implement a strategic enrollment plan and student development and community engagement plan that builds on its new academic master plan that identified ways in which to improve on these key performance indicators. A strategic partnership and/or merger with a mission aligned four-year public institution would exponentially enhance the resources necessary to realize significant improvements.
  - **Supporting Non-Academic Needs** – A review of NJCU's market area identified a population with a diverse demographic and economic profile. The community served is home to a significant immigrant population, with a high percentage of food insecurities, high unemployment, and varied median household income. The students coming to NJCU from this diverse community have additional needs that go beyond a classroom experience. From housing to mental health services to food insecurity, these are all basic requirements that NJCU is dealing with to support its students. Supporting their student's needs in these areas requires allocation of additional resources that are not easily available for NJCU.
  - **Remedial Academic Support** – According to NJCU's academic administration, many of the students that come to the school require remedial support to complete their classes. This situation is substantiated by the demographic data which shows that in 13% of Hudson and Union Counties, and 9% of Essex County households report limited English spoken in the home. This is 3 times higher than the nation average [4%] and nearly 2 times higher than the statewide average [7%].<sup>2</sup> The student population attending NJCU has its own unique needs, and the school is challenged to allocate robust support services from its limited resources that would enable many of their students to find academic success.

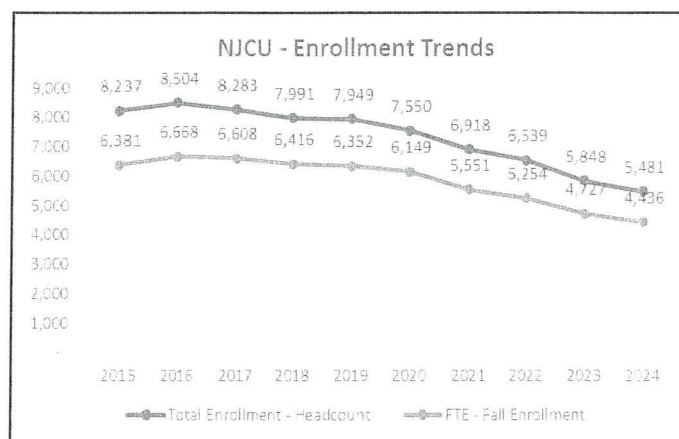
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<sup>2</sup> (4) [https://www.doh.nj.gov/doh-shad/indicator/view/Dem\\_Ed.County.html](https://www.doh.nj.gov/doh-shad/indicator/view/Dem_Ed.County.html) - See Table #3, NJCU Market Area – Socio-Economic Summary, Page 12

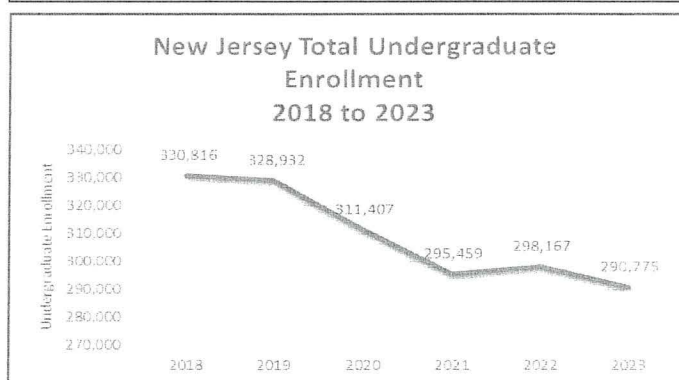


**Table C. NJCU and competitors in five key employment fields**

	Sum of 2022 Bachelors	Sum of 2022 Masters
<b>Biology</b>	<b>1029</b>	<b>48</b>
Kean University	218	10
Montclair State University	189	22
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>79</b>	
Rowan University	372	6
Saint Peter's University	62	
William Paterson University	67	10
<b>Bus.-Mkt-Mgmt</b>	<b>2643</b>	<b>900</b>
Kean University	560	46
Montclair State University	684	349
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>95</b>
Rowan University	658	112
Saint Peter's University	140	79
William Paterson University	288	219
<b>Comms-Journ</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>51</b>
Kean University	128	10
Montclair State University	351	12
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>24</b>	
Rowan University	316	14
Saint Peter's University	21	10
William Paterson University	135	5
<b>Education</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>1577</b>
Kean University	195	258
Montclair State University	74	551
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>228</b>
Rowan University	322	223
Saint Peter's University	37	71
William Paterson University	84	219
<b>Health Programs</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>506</b>
Kean University	133	66
Montclair State University	201	108
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>35</b>
Rowan University	283	150
Saint Peter's University	84	46
William Paterson University	393	99
<b>Psychology</b>	<b>1615</b>	<b>300</b>
Kean University	371	108
Montclair State University	423	84
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>29</b>
Rowan University	432	33
Saint Peter's University	34	12



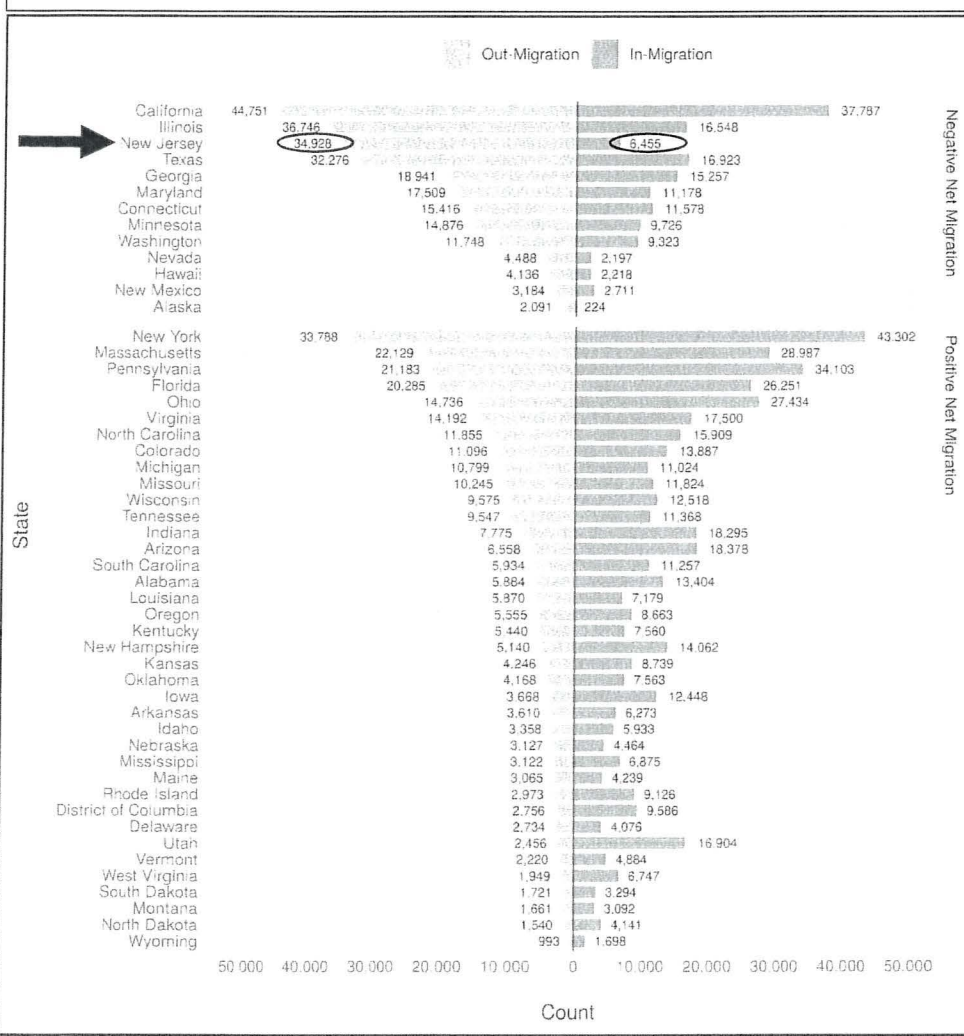
**Fig. A. NJCU enrollment: 2015-2024 (sources: 2015 to 2022 – IPEDS Database, 2023-24 – NJCU Internal)**



**Fig. B. New Jersey total undergraduate enrollment.**

➤ **Enrollment** - Like most colleges and universities across the country, securing student enrollment is perhaps the most basic core challenge that NJCU faces. **Overall, New Jersey's statewide market for total student enrollment has failed to show signs of recovery as compared to other states.** While some schools have managed to buck the statewide trend and increase their enrollment, NJCU's overall enrollment trajectory has continued downward (Fig. A). New Jersey has also experienced a general decline in undergraduate enrollment (Fig. B). In addition, New Jersey leads the country in outmigration of college-bound students to other states (Fig. C), posing a significant challenge for all institutions of higher education in the state. Between 2015 and 2022, NJCU reported an 18% decline in its fall FTE enrollment. Other schools who directly compete with NJCU for the same population of students, with the exception of Kean University which had a 5% decline, experienced growth in their student enrollment (Table D).

**Fig. C. Number of first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students at Title IV institutions who migrate into and out of the state or jurisdiction: Fall 2018**



Source: NCES BLOG – National Center for Education Statistics, The “Where” of going to College, Residence Migration and Fall Enrollment, 5/28/20. By Roman Ruiz.

• **Opportunities** – NJCU finds itself in a difficult position with the overall demand for entrance into universities and colleges declining, an overabundance of capacity among local and regional competitors, and an absence of available resources to mount an active campaign to capture more students. Despite this seemingly “perfect storm” of factors working against them, there are several options NJCU can pursue to stabilize its enrollment.

○ **Consolidating Academic Programs** – As a liberal arts university with a history of supporting the varied educational interests of its market area population, NJCU has developed and offered a wide array of different academic programs. Despite recent efforts to reduce the number of its program offerings, NJCU still offers classes with minimal enrollment across a broad array of different degrees. Based on the available data and trends observed, NJCU needs to again examine its academic program offerings and

eliminate some while also bolstering others (see ‘Academic Programming Assessment’ section below). Part of NJCU’s educational mission is to prepare students for what comes next, helping them to find upwardly mobile employment and build a successful career. Based on trends for future demand by industry sector, NJCU is well positioned to build on certain degree majors that meet employment trends in their local market and across the region especially through a strategic alignment with partner institution.

**Table D. Competitor Analysis – Enrollment Trends**

	FTE - Fall Enrollment								Chg. 2015-2022	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Amt.	Perct.
Kean University	11,625	11,683	11,972	11,990	12,208	11,936	10,734	10,990	(635)	-5%
Montclair State University	17,615	18,146	18,162	18,277	18,145	18,036	17,801	18,886	1,271	7%
<b>New Jersey City University</b>	<b>6,381</b>	<b>6,668</b>	<b>6,608</b>	<b>6,416</b>	<b>6,352</b>	<b>6,149</b>	<b>5,551</b>	<b>5,254</b>	<b>(1,127)</b>	<b>-18%</b>
New Jersey Institute of Technolog	9,428	9,372	9,471	9,675	9,658	9,870	10,055	10,687	1,259	13%
Rowan University	14,239	15,420	16,415	17,124	17,303	17,283	16,663	17,197	2,958	21%



- **Identifying New Teaching Models** – Technology has evolved enabling schools to offer a wide array of distance learning programs. NJCU has built capacity and demonstrated some success with offering distance learning options to its students. Currently, NJCU attracts ~85% of its students from within a relatively small 5-county geographical area. Current technology offers NJCU the opportunity to expand its reach and connect with a wider prospective population of potential students.
- **Identifying New Partnerships** – NJCU has already taken steps with new and creative partnerships with such programs as the one it launched with Caucus University, in the country of Georgia. According to NJCU staff, this partnership will generate ~\$360k of additional revenue.<sup>3</sup> This is but one example of a unique relationship that will yield a new source of students. Other similar opportunities may be available that could build on this idea of attracting entirely new sources of students. In addition, studies have identified industry sectors that will require competent and trained professional over the next 10+ years. From healthcare to computers and data science, NJ has organizations that will see growth in demand for services and require additional well-trained graduates. Potentially, NJCU could identify and partner with some of these organizations to build targeted training programs that directly address the future employment needs of these companies.

NJCU has also begun to harness its geographic relationship with its largest feeder high schools. In 2024, NJCU and the Jersey City Public Schools (the third-largest school district in the State of New Jersey) have launched a dual credit on-campus program to house the Jersey City Visual and Performing Arts Program.

- **Community Colleges** – NJCU already has a working relationship with Hudson County Community College, including early success of the HCCC|NJCU CONNECT Program. Many students who graduate from HCCC move on to complete their bachelor's degree at NJCU. In response, NJCU has reformed its general education curriculum which has seen an exponential growth to new undergraduate transfers. Other similar partnerships are in development. More can be done to expand that partnership, which could include greater sharing of classes, improving the systems in place that allow HCCC graduates to transfer seamlessly to NJCU. It would be of value to explore an even closer bridge between HCCC and NJCU in which virtually all lower division classes are held at HCCC and NJCU would focus strictly on upper division [3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year] classes and graduate programs.
- **Identifying a Merger Partner** – Though most difficult to identify and execute, the best option for NJCU might be to identify the right organization with which it can merge its entire operation into a single organization. There are at least two 4-year public universities that are geographically positioned with the operational structures necessary to provide some or all the academic programs currently offered at NJCU. There are numerous difficult decisions that would be required but, if structured correctly, a consolidation would benefit both organizations and provide a path forward to serve the needs of NJCU, its students, and the local community.
- **Challenges** – In its current state, NJCU faces significant challenges to rebuilding its student enrollment back to levels that were sustained because of aggressive institutional discounting to drive headcount enrollment. With the general decline in high school age students, changes in the market regarding future various industry sectors, and training opportunities offered for career development outside the traditional track of a college degree, NJCU faces numerous pressures to maintain a viable level of student enrollment.
  - **Changing Demographics** – Studies show that enrollment in colleges and universities will continue to decline over the next decade. *“Colleges expect a drop in enrollment in the coming years due to a decline in birthrates during and after the Great Recession... the demographic trend could cause a 10% statewide drop in enrollment by 2035.”*<sup>4</sup> The market has already seen growing consolidation with the closure of

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<sup>3</sup> NJCU is expecting to receive between 26 and 27 students per semester which will generate ~\$150K in tuition & fees, which with the addition of room and board [\$210K], the program should produce \$360K of incremental revenue.

<sup>4</sup> University leaders urge state oversight, financial support to keep colleges afloat, by Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Monitor, 10/16/24

many colleges and universities. As did healthcare over the past three decades, which experienced severe declines in hospital capacity due to demographic, technologic, and care models trends, so are higher education institutions experiencing similar stressors. As our population continues to age, and there are fewer high school graduates, higher education will experience its own broad-based reduction in the number and size of colleges and universities needed. NJCU now finds itself in the midst of a changing landscape.

- **Competitors** – it is well documented that higher education sector is struggling with overcapacity and a shrinking demand for services. This condition is not unique to New Jersey and the schools located therein. Enrollment across New Jersey has been hard hit with a decline in student enrollment which will ultimately produce a natural consolidation in the number of schools that can continue to operate. Unfortunately, despite its critical mission of supporting a unique population of potential students, NJCU is in the difficult position of trying to compete with larger schools that have deeper resources, better facilities, and far less debt. These competitor schools see NJCU's current challenges as an opportunity for themselves to absorb additional market area and further expand their own student enrollment.

**Table E. NJCU Proforma Scenarios - FY 2025-29 (proj.) - Summary**

NJCU - 5 Year Proforma Scenarios - Summary						----Chg. 2025 - 2029-----	
Revenue	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	Amount	Perct.
- Best Case	\$ 146.9	\$ 149.4	\$ 151.5	\$ 153.6	\$ 155.9	\$ 9.0	6.1%
- Anticipated Case	\$ 145.3	\$ 147.2	\$ 149.0	\$ 150.7	\$ 152.4	\$ 7.1	4.9%
- Worst Case	\$ 145.3	\$ 146.6	\$ 147.4	\$ 148.2	\$ 149.0	\$ 3.7	2.5%
<b>Expenses</b>							
- Best / Anticipated / Worst	\$ 144.8	\$ 148.9	\$ 154.0	\$ 159.2	\$ 164.5	\$ 19.7	13.6%
<b>Change in Net Position</b>							
- Best Case	\$ 2.1	\$ 0.5	\$ (2.5)	\$ (5.6)	\$ (8.6)	\$ (10.7)	-509.5%
- Anticipated Case	\$ 0.5	\$ (1.7)	\$ (5.0)	\$ (8.5)	\$ (12.1)	\$ (12.6)	-2520.0%
- Worst Case	\$ 0.5	\$ (2.3)	\$ (6.6)	\$ (11.0)	\$ (15.5)	\$ (16.0)	-3200.0%
<b>Cash &amp; Investments</b>							
- Best Case	\$ 19.1	\$ 23.3	\$ 27.0	\$ 30.3	\$ 31.1	\$ 12.0	62.8%
- Anticipated Case	\$ 17.6	\$ 19.7	\$ 21.0	\$ 21.3	\$ 18.7	\$ 1.1	6.2%
- Worst Case	\$ 17.6	\$ 18.9	\$ 18.5	\$ 16.4	\$ 10.4	\$ (7.2)	-40.9%

- **Financials** - From a financial perspective, NJCU finds itself in a very difficult situation relative to its ability to maintain viable operations. Based on three potential financial models analyzed (i.e., anticipated growth, and best- and worst-case scenarios), given the current institutional and market conditions, there is no case in which the school is able to remain a fully independent operation and generate adequate revenue to support a thriving mission without substantial State support. (Table E).

There is recognition by some of the individuals interviewed that for NJCU to survive in some form and continue meeting the needs of its current and future students, outside assistance in some form will be needed. The degree to which NJCU “merges” into another larger organization may vary depending upon who the partner is and what financial and/or operational resources they can bring to bear to leverage existing infrastructure and reduce the cost of NJCU’s operating infrastructure.

In addition, given NJCU’s extensive CapEX needs and its inability to take on any additional long-term debt to finance those needs it seems likely that New Jersey will also need to provide additional support. Whichever course of action is taken, current leadership has stressed that the status quo that led to fiscal exigency cannot be preserved. For NJCU to best serve its distinctive mission, some configuration of external participants along with changes to academic



programming (see 'Academic Program Assessment' section below), and the continuing identification of opportunities to further reduce the school's administrative infrastructure will be required for NJCU to chart a path forward that meets the needs of its core students.

- **Opportunities** – NJCU is not without various options to assist in realigning itself into a financially viable organization. These opportunities may include:
  - **Debt Management:**
    - NJCU may choose to refinance its debt in some manner as to reduce the coming increase in debt burden. For example, refinancing Series 2016D bonds, which otherwise will add an additional \$2M a year in debt service payments beginning in 2026. This is something that current leadership, in collaboration with the State Monitor, have been studying.
    - NJCU could work with state agencies and legislators to help identify approaches to leverage state credit rating and capacity to support debt service and balance reductions.
  - **Leased Space Reduction:**
    - NJCU's work to vacate its long-term capital lease obligations at its Fort Monmouth campus should continue. The planned novation, which will reduce annual operating expenses by over \$2M a year and remove approximately \$22 million in long-term lease debt obligations from the balance sheet.
    - The Harborside lease first began in December 2014 with a 20-year term in addition to a second lease amendment in 2021 for additional space. Total annual costs are over \$3M a year which does not include operating expenses for the location. Furthermore, NJCU is responsible for the costs of remodeling and building out the space. The location appears to be grossly underutilized and only 50% of leased space is built out. NJCU should continue to work on mitigating its liabilities at Harborside.
  - **Real Estate Monetization:**
    - NJCU should continue to actively pursue monetization efforts of underutilized or excess properties in an effort to generate unrestricted cash, using the real estate sales cash proceeds to fund capital improvements and/or to start building necessary operating cash reserves.
    - In the near term (through FY 26) NJCU may want to accelerate the monetization of none-core real estate interests. To date, NJCU's leadership has or is in the process of effectuating Board authorized transactions, including
      - Block 7 sale and lease back
      - Ground lease monetization.
      - The total potential unrestricted cash generated through these transactions ranges from \$36M to \$44M.
    - In the longer term (beyond FY 26) NJCU may choose to:
      - Continue to assess entire real estate and facilities portfolio for repurposing or liquidation.
      - Assess all main campus properties and identify what facilities would be required to maintain the school at an enrollment of about 4000 student FTEs.
      - Align future academic program offerings to reflect current projections for future employment across New Jersey as well as the primary 5-county NJCU market area

- Align capital and capacity needs with those of a strategic or merger partner, aiming to ensure that the student population of Jersey City and surrounding area continue to be well served.
- Challenges** – NJCU is currently operating at a significant disadvantage since its financial needs are so acute and immediate. Time is also limited regarding the extreme cost and timing to engage with campus deferred maintenance.
  - CapEx Prioritization** – Deferred CapEx maintenance needs, estimated to exceed \$128M (Table F), would be challenges for any organization to support, much less in an organization where cash reserves are so limited and capacity to borrow has been exhausted. Significant debt restructuring will be needed before the school can enter a long-term plan for managing these facility needs. Given the urgent nature for some of the upgrades and the need for modernization (see 'Facilities Assessment' section), time to plan and execute is extremely limited.
  - Union Support** – Hard conversations with labor leadership will be needed to generate the level of support that will be required. This support would be needed no matter what course of action NJCU's Board and the State ultimately decides is most appropriate
  - Operating Support Staff** – Hard decisions will need to be made regarding NJCU's strategic direction. This would include the choice between attempting to maintain complete independence or seeking a partner who would either merge with NJCU or become a very active participant in the school's continuing operations. Without this type of singular commitment and focus to a new vision for the school, the challenging steps that will be required ahead by NJCU will be further complicated.
  - Achieving Operational Break-Even** –SPH estimates that at its current level of enrollment, achieving operational break-even would be difficult if not impossible in light of structural and systemic challenges to the sector. SPH evaluated what level of enrollment would NJCU need to be to operate at break-even

Table F. Summary of Deferred Maintenance Needs – Facilities & IT	
Deferred Maintenance - .Cost Estimate	Allowance
Plumbing/HVAC/Fire/Electrical	75,091,445
Roof Replacement	
- Immediate	185,000
- Long Term	18,720,120
Other Facility Repairs	7,385,000
Subtotal (Facilities only)	101,381,565
Information Technology (IT)	15,000,000
Subtotal (Facilities + IT)	116,381,565
Contingency - Estimated @ 10%	11,638,157
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>128,019,722</b>

Source: Limited Visual Roof and Façade Report, CBRE, 2/29/24

Table G. NJCU Proforma Scenarios for Operational Independence - FY 2025-29 (proj.)							
	Scenario For Operational Independence [Break-Even]					-----Chg. 2025 - 2029-----	
	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	Amount	Perct.
Breakeven Scenario - Enrollment	4,500	5,000	5,500	6,000	6,500	2,000	44.4%
Year over Year % Change	1.4%	11.1%	10.0%	9.1%	8.3%		
Net Tuition & Fees	\$ 41.7	\$ 47.2	\$ 53.0	\$ 59.0	\$ 65.1	23.4	56.1%
Other Revenue	104.5	106.6	108.3	110.2	112.6	8.1	7.8%
Total Revenue	\$ 146.2	\$ 153.8	\$ 161.3	\$ 169.2	\$ 177.7	31.5	21.5%
Total Expenses	\$ 144.8	\$ 152.3	\$ 161.2	\$ 169.2	\$ 177.6	32.8	22.7%
<b>Change in Net Position</b>	<b>\$ 1.4</b>	<b>\$ 1.5</b>	<b>\$ 0.1</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 0.1</b>	<b>(1.3)</b>	<b>-92.9%</b>



and which would enable NJCU to remain fully independent. Using the same expense model as was applied to the three scenarios outlined above, for this to occur SPH projects that NJCU enrollment would, at a minimum, need to be increased from its current level (~4,500 FTE students) by 44% up to ~6,500 (Table G).

To achieve this NJCU's enrollment would need to increase by ~9% each year throughout the 5-year period of the proforma. In the scenario as defined (enrollment +9%/year), Cash and Investments would increase but not to the level recommended where NJCU would have up to 6 months of operating cash or ~\$80M. This scenario also assumes that despite the increased enrollment operating costs would remain relatively unchanged.

Based on current market conditions, including the state of college enrollment across New Jersey and the competitive nature of this market with all of the other public and private schools competing for students, SPH finds this scenario to be highly unlikely. In the scenario as defined [Enrollment +9%/Year], Cash and Investments would increase but not to the level recommended where NJCU would have up to 6 months of operating cash or ~\$80M. **Therefore, even with this high level of growth in enrollment, retaining operational independence would seem difficult to achieve.**

- **Facilities** - If stabilizing the decline and re-building student enrollment represents NJCU's more significant concern, the condition of the campus and its physical plant is a close second. Decades of neglect and an absence of regular planned maintenance have left NJCU with significant risks to its facilities. The future of NJCU will depend on finding a path forward in which some of the long-term debt it has accumulated can be eliminated and a viable plan to finance significant capital improvements can be identified.
- **Opportunities** – While its student enrollment has been declining over the past 8-years, NJCU's former leadership pursued a strategy of acquiring a significant amount of property and buildings both adjacent to the campus and in alternate remote locations. This acquisition strategy has created a significant financial and operational burden on the school with substantial long-term debt and capital expenditures. At the same time, it has neglected maintenance of its main campus leaving virtually all buildings in a state of disrepair. Despite this situation, there are several opportunities for NJCU to create a viable path forward.
  - **Divest of Real Estate** – Completing the sale of the various off campus properties represents a significant opportunity to substantially reduce outstanding long-term debt and obtain cash to offset some of the potential costs associated with addressing deferred maintenance and reducing annual operating expenses. Table C provides a summary of potential savings through real estate transactions. Each transaction represents a real opportunity for NJCU to improve its annual operating position, potentially retire some of its long-term debt and thereby improve its balance sheet. Currently, realistically NJCU has an opportunity to realize between \$34-42M.
  - **Consolidate Campus Facilities** – With an enrollment of ~4000 to 4,500 FTE's [Undergraduate + Graduate], NJCU should re-consider how many buildings it really needs to serve this student population. With further planning, NJCU should consider closing some of the facilities on the main campus, consolidating academic programs and reducing their current physical capacity to a level that is more appropriate and reflective of its current student enrollment and needs.
  - **Undertake a Comprehensive Capital Financing Plan** – If NJCU is to complete all the upgrades and deferred maintenance that it needs, it will require participation and input from several different sources. This situation is certainly a challenge but even more an opportunity to garner support for a turnaround and a longer-term "re-birth" of this school. If it is to survive, this need for Capital Expenditures (CapEx) investment is an opportunity to make some hard decisions around what facilities to fix and maintain versus what can be either closed and/or sold. It is also an opportunity to build a coalition of support by engaging partners including the State of NJ along, with another school partner, to invest financial



resources into a well-crafted plan that will bring most needed elements of the NJCU campus back up to an appropriate level of operational safety.

- **Challenges** – As challenges for NJCU go, the current state of the NJCU campus along with the number of condition of properties it has acquired, represents perhaps the greatest threat to the sustainability of the school's mission.
  - **Adequate Capital** – In its current financial state, even if the current estimate of \$128M is off by 20%, it still leaves ~\$100M in CapEx investment required to achieve a proper state of building safety. In short, there is no way for NJCU to finance all the deferred maintenance that will be required to ensure a path forward for the school. Despite some changes in day-to-day operations to improve their cash flow and financial position, NJCU still lacks the capacity needed to cover its capital needs. Hard decisions will need to be made regarding what maintenance is engaged, when it can be started, and how quickly it can be completed. Without external assistance, the amount of deferred maintenance needed is virtually insurmountable for the school to manage.
  - **Timing of Maintenance** – The list of deferred maintenance projects is long and represents a set of technically complex work that will require significant time to plan, mobilize for, and execute. Moreover, many of the projects will involve removing and replacing older hardware, including boilers, plumbing and electrical systems that are deeply imbedded within the infrastructure and foundations of buildings that are in the center of the campus. This will likely result in disruption to the day-to-day operation of the campus, especially during the school year when students are in those buildings. Many of the larger issues identified could, if not attended to expeditiously, bring down the entire operation of the campus, making it impossible to hold classes, and/or provide student support services. In short, as NJCU's current leadership has publicly argued much of NJCU's campus is operating on "borrowed time" and the institution needs to continue aggressively addressing its decades-long critical deferred maintenance needs.

➤ **Campus Security** - Overall, campus security appears to be adequate and well managed, and the NJCU campus is reportedly safe and well secured. Changes to the composition of the population who use the campus will require changes to the operation of campus security and the training of security person. Combining campus security with several risk and safety management functions has oriented the risk and risk mitigation efforts of the campus to be focused primarily on physical safety.

- **Opportunities**

- The campus's implementation of an extensive camera system creates the opportunity to expand the use of remote monitoring, potentially leveraging a growing Artificial Intelligence (AI) capacity. With appropriate training, the use of technology could allow NJCU to expand service at lower cost.
- University leadership should consult with campus security leadership as they contemplate opening the campus to populations that are different from the typical college campus population, to ensure that security has what it needs to do its job.
- NJCU should expand its conception and operationalization of risk management beyond physical security.
- NJCU should ensure that a clear leader succession plan in this area is in place.

- **Challenges**

- Staffing levels are relatively scant, and the emergency, risk, and environmental health and safety component of the unit is under-resourced.
- The unit lead has a high number of hats to wear and functions to oversee, which may result in greater risk if an event requiring focused attention were to occur.

➤ **Information Technology (IT)** - The IT department at NJCU is currently providing adequate services to the campus, although having most servers in-house and the staffing reductions occurring in the past two years have created serious areas of potential risk and less optimal services to the campus.

- **Opportunities**

- The institution should fully invest in internal staffing to support cyber security needs or better, consider moving most of the functions to the cloud and/or outsourcing the IT services.
- The institution should continue to focus on protecting its IT networks and data through working with 3<sup>rd</sup> party firms who provide monitoring, testing, and best practices advising for the institution.
- Continued training of all staff, faculty, and students at the institution on cyber security awareness and best practices should be a mandatory and recurring activity.
- The institution should prioritize capital spending to the most critical IT needs, such as end-of-life hardware which has the potential to open the institution up to additional cyber risks.
- More system developers, cyber security administrators and a storage area network (SAN) administrator would be helpful.
- The institution should develop a policy and multi-year schedules for all major hardware and software, and for end-user equipment, which assigns end-of-life dates and average useful life expectancy, so there is continuing more awareness of needs. Anticipated replacement costs should be part of the schedules so that they can be added to the institutional capital expenditure planning no less than on an annual basis and preferably during the annual budget planning cycle.

- **Challenges**

- Currently many of the IT servers are located on campus and potentially putting the system at risk to environmental events.
- Staff has been reduced, consistent with NJCU's Recovery & Revitalization Plan. However, prolonged understaffing may place the unit at additional risk.
- The paucity of comprehensive data on software providers and the absence of a contemporary IT strategic plan is a challenge to adequate planning of IT needs.

➤ **Human Resources (HR)** - NJCU should be an attractive employer. It has an appealing refreshed mission and vision, and their benefits package should be competitive with that of other public universities in New Jersey and with other employers in the area. However, the financial challenges of the past several years have left them understaffed in many key areas. As a result, NJCU is surviving – not thriving. That situation will prove challenging as the institution tries to either scale up to remain independent or tries to engage in organizational change as they develop a partnership or undertake a merger.

- **Opportunities**

- NJCU's lean staffing situation could allow it to think strategically about what the university truly needs to operate well.
- A shared services arrangement in specific areas might be attractive to NJCU. Such a shared service arrangement could potentially, although not always, allow the university to acquire needed FTEs and expertise at a lower cost.
- Benchmarking data could help NJCU identify the true cost of its operations and add some of the necessary detail to its various strategic planning efforts.



- The HR team should use the great work that has been done lately to get the university back on track to further build out their employee recognition and engagement efforts. Recognition programs can be beneficial as the campus builds its culture and thinks about how to engage a partner in ways that will be consistent with institutional values.

- **Challenges**

- A number of functions at NJCU are so leanly staffed that they will struggle in assisting the university's efforts at change management.
- There are areas where the staffing is at such low levels that the campus experience is impacted.
- HR operates at a very transactional level. There is little in the way of cultural formation or employee engagement. Those functions will be important to help the institution in any change management efforts moving forward.

➤ **Auxiliary Services** - The current state of housing and food services would have to be described as being uncertain, while its bookstore operations are outsourced and budget neutral. Importantly, NJCU does not currently have control over its housing facilities but is financially responsible for their maintenance and any funding deficit. Only one of the three residence halls is currently operational. The situation with food services is similar, although less cumbersome financially than housing, in that the current contract requires a minimum volume that is not being met by current demand. The institution is currently responsible for this gap, although it is beginning to explore alternative food service options.

- **Opportunities** – Despite the current situation with facilities needing significant capital investment, there could be several opportunities for NJCU to capture.

- **International Collaborations** – Leadership at NJCU has taken some initial steps in building international collaborations with other universities to bring over students to take advantage of NJCU academic programs. While only in their early stages, these programs could be a source of incremental revenue that leverages available housing facilities.
  - **Caucus University (CU)** - NJCU's partnership with CU is for a 2+1 agreement for a B.S. in Cybersecurity is live. Students take their first 2 years in Georgia with CU faculty. Their fifth semester is taught online by NJCU faculty while the students are still in Georgia. They take their sixth and final semester at NJCU. The 1<sup>st</sup> cohort has 25 students who will arrive in person starting January 2025. These students pay full price for housing and is a recurring agreement.
  - **Jilin International Studies University, China (JISU)** – Though only in the planning stages, this would be an institutional partnership. SPH have had cohorts for Finance, BS and the PhD in Educational Technology. The programs and terms of the agreement are being renegotiated.
- **Hudson County Community College (HCCC)** – HCCC may also represent an opportunity to bring back housing occupancy on the NJCU campus and make it a revenue positive opportunity. HCCC does not own dormitories. NJCU is entertaining an agreement that would give HCCC students access to NJCU dorms, in particular Vodra Hall. General terms have been agreed, and the document is undergoing final legal review.
- **Permanent Closure of Dorms** – In one scenario, NJCU could significantly reduce the number of buildings it operates on its campus. As a campus of 4000-4,500 students, one strategic option would be to substantially downsize its campus footprint and permanently close some of its buildings. The school could determine that due the size of its enrollment, the need and demand for housing is too small to justify maintaining any of its dorms. The majority of the student population comes from within a relatively small 5-county area, with 84% of students coming from two adjacent counties [Hudson and Essex]. Permanently closing of both dorms (Vodra and Co-oP) would eliminate both the need for CapEX investment to bring the dorms back online and the operating expenses associated with maintaining them.



- **Challenges**

- NJCU's most significant challenge related to auxiliary services is the ownership/relationship between it and its foundation around student housing. The current agreement has NJCU saddled with the cost of repairs and maintenance and covering all operational gaps, while lacking any actual control or upside benefits that might be possible.
- It is unclear whether there is sufficient separate accounting of the actual expenses and revenues of auxiliaries to allow for the development of effective strategies and decision-making regarding these services.

➤ **Legal Affairs** - The University Counsel (UC)'s function is quite lean, as are many other functions with NJCU. The UC provides mostly directional assistance and may insert themselves into processes, as needed. There does not seem to be a single source of information and planning on risk management. The current leadership has supplemented its legal services by retaining and appointed special outside counsel in a cost-effective manner.

- **Opportunities**

- Potentially expand the Risk Management function of NJCU, including creating a single source and place for related data and planning.
- Engage the campus community further in identifying, prioritizing, and monitoring risk management items
- Enhanced familiarity of the UC with the various approvals required for institutional restructuring by the various governmental and private accrediting agencies would be helpful in the coming debate, although understanding that these are principally the responsibility of the Provost's office.

- **Challenges**

- The institution would benefit from the establishment of a single-source risk management process and dashboard, involving both executive leadership and the campus community, to ensure that all responsible parties can identify, prioritize, and monitor all campus risk factors, not just physical threats, in order to maximize risk mitigation.

➤ **Academic Programming** - NJCU has developed an Academic Master Plan Strategy which speaks to major high impact initiatives in undergraduate research, diversity and global learning, and service learning and internships. NJCU has also made a clear commitment to stabilizing enrollment in two ways.

First, the new enrollment management plan anticipates recruiting more community college students, a greater percentage of the students in Hudson County, and attracting more students from across the State. Second, the Academic Master Plan identifies strategies for retaining more of the first-time full-time freshmen that enroll at NJCU. In this regard, NJCU has revised its gen-ed program to more efficiently serve its first-time full-time freshmen and to be more transfer friendly.

The data indicates that six specific majors are most appealing to the NJCU student population. Those programs meet student goals for a good job upon graduation and they meet the economic needs of the State. In turn, NJCU has excess capacity in many of its degree programs, a capacity could represent an opportunity for innovation, by NJCU alone or with a partner.

- **Opportunities**

- NJCU's location in a growing area of the State and its proximity to New York City are assets in developing the relationships necessary to build attractive academic opportunities.

**Table H. NJCU number of degrees and certificates awarded, by level and program: July 2022-June 30, 2023**

Program	Certificates	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctoral
Grand total	8	993	382	43
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, Gender, and Group Studies	1			
Communication, Journalism, and Related Programs	17			
Computer and Information Sciences and Support Service	76	1		
Education	1	196	40	
Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics	9			
English Language and Literature/Letters	22			
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	77			
Mathematics and Statistics	16			
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, Fitness, and Kinesiology	8			
Philosophy and Religious Studies	2			
Physical Sciences	11			
Psychology	8	141	11	
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and F	135	24	3	
Social Sciences	56			
Visual and Performing Arts	81	23		
Health Professions and Related Programs	126	36		
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support	0	186	91	
History	28			

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, Fall-2022-23

○ NJCU could form a partnership with an institution that already has a robust student success infrastructure. Such a partnership would help NJCU avoid the costs required to build a permanent infrastructure for their programming.

○ Outside of six degree programs (Biology, Management, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Computer Science and Nursing) (Table H), the institution has significant excess capacity in facilities, in tenured faculty, and in degree programs. NJCU should evaluate potential partnerships with an emphasis on finding an arrangement that could make that excess capacity financially profitable.

○ NJCU has academic capacity in faculty, facilities, and academic programs. Much of that

capacity will be challenging to capitalize upon. As a result, leadership should consider more creative opportunities to leverage that capacity as it assesses partnership opportunities. For example:

- NJCU could decide to become a center of excellence in its most productive areas and accelerate its sunsetting process in the remaining areas.
- NJCU has invested in dual credit programs with area high schools and community colleges. The Triple Connect program with HCCC served ~100 students last fall. In addition, over the last year, it has developed leasing arrangements to give K-12 institutions access to its existing facilities. Given the relationships that these connections create, NJCU could consider becoming a new higher education model that explicitly bridges the educational experience between high schools, community colleges, and its four-year programs.
- NJCU's extensive connection to community colleges, particularly Hudson County Community College (HCCC), might argue for NJCU as a hub or destination of choice for community college students.
- NJCU's programs with excess capacity may be complementary with programs on other nearby campuses. It is possible that, short of a full merger, a joint department could be created by merging programs at two institutions.
- As NJCU sunsets courses or programs, it may find that a collaboration with another campus is beneficial. This is particularly true if NJCU can build course offerings that capitalize on its location. Programs in the arts, business or health care might be good candidates for such a multi-campus administered degree program.
- To leverage its excess facilities capacity, NJCU could provide a location to serve programs from multiple institutions. Institutions for whom experiential or internship opportunities exist in Jersey City, or who might serve learners in Jersey City, could utilize a single location.



- NJCU has several corporate and community connections. In areas of capacity and local interest, NJCU could develop niche or commissioned programs that could provide important continuing education (building toward a degree, a certificate, or another credential) for company employees in their geographic market area.
- NJCU should continue its thorough, holistic curriculum review or risk losing the opportunity to respond to the current financial situation in the most strategic manner.

- **Challenges**

- The NJCU academic master plan establishes a new baseline that a strategic partnership can resource and scale.
- An ongoing challenge is that the Student Affairs staff has been depleted over the past two years.
- NJCU's historic low retention, progression and graduation rates will be of concern to any potential partner. Addressing student success will require a commitment of resources. And for a potential partner, there will be concerns about the impact of the inclusion of the NJCU student population on their own student outcomes.
- Student success at NJCU must be addressed whether they remain independent or in collaboration with a potential partner. NJCU's strategic plans should identify clear targets for improvement and hold leaders accountable for progress toward those targets.
- Given the level of tactical detail and financial resourcing, the current student success efforts are serving more as pilot studies. For the proposed programming to be truly meaningful it must be resourced adequately with staff and other support and integrated into the long-term budget at scale with recurring, not one-time, funding.

➤ **Faculty Affairs** - NJCU has a large cohort of long-time faculty who are invested in the institution's mission (**Table I**). Greater attention needs to be paid to how programs are evaluated and how faculty FTEs are deployed in the new financial realities of the institution. Greater work should be done to ensure that the faculty have the tools and the accountability to connect their work with the student success goals the institution requires. The financial realities at NJCU may require the processes contemplated in the Academic Master Plan to move at a faster pace than were originally contemplated.

- **Opportunities**

- Per 2022 IPEDS data, NJCU has a much larger than average percentage of tenured faculty. Many faculty possess terminal degrees and are very experienced. Such a large percentage of senior faculty makes it difficult for the institution to make large curriculum changes nimbly.
- NJCU must connect student success to faculty performance in a meaningful way in the context of their evaluative criteria.
- Faculty development efforts must accelerate to help faculty acquire and maintain the skills to align with strategic student success initiatives.

- **Challenges**

- The faculty are very committed to the culture of NJCU. Significant work will need to be done to prepare the campus for any contemplated partnership.



**Table I. Faculty ranks of NJCU and closest 4-year public competitors (source: IPEDS 2022)**

Institution Name	Professors (S2022_SIS, All full-time instructional staff)	Associate professors (S2022_SIS, All full-time instructional staff)	Assistant professors (S2022_SIS, All full-time instructional staff)	Instructors (S2022_SIS, All full-time instructional staff)	All ranks (S2022_SIS, All full-time instructional staff)	Lecturers (S2022_SIS, All full-time instructional staff)	No academic rank (S2022_SIS, All full-time instructional staff)
Kean University	40	64	149	0	372	119	0
Montclair State University	208	223	110	0	640	0	99
New Jersey City University	71	88	39	0	203	5	0
New Jersey Institute of Technology	134	106	92	0	491	147	12
Rowan University	148	223	243	51	799	134	0

- **Student Life and Student Affairs** - Student Affairs provides many on campus activities for students and is funded through student fees. There are currently 23-27 student organizations/clubs and 13 Greek organizations active on the campus. Centralized tracking of attendance and a centralized calendar of events is not currently available for campus events. A budget is awarded to the SGA for sponsoring activities.

Recreation is managed by the athletics department, who coordinates with Student Life for many student events. Recreation activities share space with athletics. Overall, the availability of staff is limited for budgetary reasons. As the John J. Moore Athletics and Fitness Center (JMAC) facilities are shared with athletics and a local charter high school, usage for recreation purposes is limited. Outdoor activities also occur at the Gerrity Athletic Complex, although these are also shared with athletics and city events, and transportation of students to the facility can be problematic. Nonetheless, we should recognize that having students return to campus for activities in pre-COVID numbers is a challenge across the country.

- **Opportunities**

- A centralized tracking system to track attendance participation, efficiency, and effectiveness of student life events would be beneficial for planning purposes.
- A centralized calendar of all student-related events would be helpful to better inform and encourage participation by the community.
- Extending the hours of the student union and JMAC would benefit students who are on-campus and those commuters who come to campus for activities.
- Additional staff is an important opportunity to enhance student life services, although it does represent a budgetary challenge. Adding at least one position to focus on coordinating and overseeing student activities and intramurals would be beneficial.
- The university provides free housing to SGA members which reduces potential university revenue.
- Providing predictable transportation to those recreation facilities that are off campus would help increase student participation in those activities.

- **Challenges**

- Budgetary and staffing limitations limits facility hours and activity opportunity.
- The website needs updating and needs to be maintained so that the information presented is accurate and up to date.
- Limited facilities for student activities and recreation is a continuing issue due to the need to share space, the paucity of staff, and limited hours of operation.
- Budgetary constraints have required significant reductions in student affair staff.

➤ **Collegiate Athletics** - Athletics has seen significant reduction since reaching a high of 18 teams and \$3.6M budget in AY 2018-19 to the current 15 teams and \$1.24M annual budget. Currently, there are a total of 271 student-athletes of which 10.33% are from out-of-state. Overall, athletic facilities are in good condition but are shared with student life for student recreation activities and intramural sports. JMAC is also shared with a high school who rents the facility, as well as certain academic programs, which limit the time available for all.

- **Opportunities**

- Athletics could increase the number of student-athletes on some rosters as most, but not all, are below the maximum postseason roster limits for the current year.
- E-sports is an area for potential growth.
- Recruiting out-of-state athletes is a potential growth opportunity, facilitated by the fact that NJCU charges the same tuition for in and out of state students.
- Creating a compliance officer position, separate from the Director of Athletics position, rather than having a single assistant compliance officer position, is important to ensure compliance with all regulations. A compliance officer could also handle Title IX reporting for the department.
- The web site is the front door to athletics and needs updating and consistency. A full website review should be completed to correct/update the information presented, broken links, etc.

- **Challenges**

- The hours of operation at the JMAC are limited and limit access for students and student-athletes, particularly for students living on campus.
- The budget was reduced by just over 50% in the past two years, 66.1% in the past five years, while the number of student-athletes has only decreased by 10% in the past two years. This has created stressors across the unit.
- The JMAC has some facility-related issues which need to be addressed, including issues related to ventilation in the mechanical rooms and insufficient storage space. As the department has grown, storage areas have been taken over by new teams, such as wrestling. Portable storage buildings are helpful and can be made climate controlled to provide additional storage and return space to the JMAC, such as locker rooms, which are currently being used as unsecured storage areas for equipment.
- The agreement for the use of JMAC by the charter high school should be reassessed. The use of the gym by other parties limits the time available to the student-athletes and the general student population.
- The Gerrity Athletic Complex is also a shared space, although the distance from campus and the lack of consistent transportation is a more significant barrier to its use for recreational activities.

➤ **Advancement, Philanthropy, and Alumni Affairs** - The Advancement and Alumni Engagement function at NJCU has operated at very minimal levels. New leadership has breathed life into the operation, but it is going to take time and resources to build an advancement operation that can contribute meaningfully to NJCU. There are opportunities for productive relationships among corporate partners, foundations and alumni. However, it will take time and intentionality to cultivate those relationships. As philanthropy grows, the Foundation will need to build a mature financial management division to ensure that they meet all obligations.

- **Opportunities**

- The NJCU Foundation should conduct a strategic plan for building an advancement and alumni engagement function that aligns with the university's path forward.
- Greater levels of philanthropy are required. NJCU's current endowment is small and not growing. Given past fundraising activity and its lack of infrastructure, it is unlikely that NJCU could raise sufficient funds in a timely manner to address its current budget challenges.
- The Foundation has had to reduce its contributions to campus over the past several years, particularly in the area of scholarships.
- Greater strategic alignment between the Foundation and the university should be sought to align interests and ensure that the Foundation is supporting the institution's most important strategic goals going forward. NJCU will need to assess alumni's needs and wants and intentionally design an alumni engagement program in combination with a partner that leverages these strengths and diminishes the potential for silos or identity loss.
- NJCU would benefit from a partnership with an institution that:
  - Currently supports a much more robust philanthropic program that more closely reflects best practices.
  - Possesses a broader geographic base from which to fundraise
  - Offers a more robust campus culture that could provide more ways to engage alumni
- NJCU's community and corporate relationships are an asset to its fundraising activity and could be an asset to a partner.

- **Challenges**

- The Foundation and the nascent alumni organization do not have many regular channels with alumni, donors, and friends to help the university with change management and brand management.
- The Foundation does not have an up-to-date and accurate database of donors and alumni
- There are questions about the current pledges to the Foundation. That ambiguity must be addressed.
- The lack of an institutional strategic plan will make it challenging to create a compelling campaign
- The current ambiguity about the future of the university will make it hard to raise large gifts.

➤ **Communications** - The Communication unit at NJCU is small, operates with limited resources, and has had a limited scope of responsibility. Currently internal resources are almost exclusively focused on internal communication and student recruiting. While this has gotten NJCU through COVID and their immediate situation, it is not sufficient to help them move to the next phase of their development. Whether they remain independent or seek to manage the change of a partnership, they will need to develop a more robust strategic communication function.



- **Opportunities**

- NJCU should consider making the chief communication officer a direct report to the President during any change management effort to ensure that there is a direct line between communication and strategy.
- NJCU's communication function is not resourced in a way that is currently sustainable, nor is it resourced to scale up if the institution made the decision to grow. NJCU does not have the resources or expertise currently to manage the evolution in communication technology that is being driven by AI.
- NJCU's enrollment communication unit is understaffed and under-resourced. It has evolved in important ways under the strategic enrollment plan but will need additional resources to fully implement that plan. They are able to recruit students with their current budget because they are focused on their immediate geographic area and because they are heavily using face to face and digital techniques. If NJCU decides to remain independent and increase its recruitment activity out of its traditional area, it will require a significant increase in funding in order to compete with other institutions that are established, and spending more in the market for advertising.
- NJCU should utilize its communication platforms to assist the Foundation in creating a stronger culture of philanthropy on campus and in the community. The Foundation will continue to evolve but the university has a larger and more robust communication presence that could be leveraged.
- AS NJCU makes plans for its future, it should integrate communications into its strategic plan with a focus on reputation management. Those efforts will position the university more effectively to acquire resources and make the brand more resilient in times of crisis.
- NJCU should consider investing in technology-based solutions to extend its enrollment marketing resources. Automation, AI, and Customer Relationship Management systems could be long-term cost-effective ways to scale up their capabilities. Leapfrogging old technology could result in cost avoidance.
- NJCU could benefit from a partnership with an institution that already has a robust communication operation.

- **Challenges**

- NJCU's minimal university communication infrastructure is currently being stressed and will likely be unable to manage the communication needs of a significant institutional change.
- It is unclear whether the in-house team has the bandwidth or the expertise to effectively manage a large number of outside consultants. An assessment should be done to determine whether it is more cost effective in the long term to outsource key functions or to build them in-house.

➤ **Regulatory** - NJCU is in good standing with its regulatory accreditors. Its regional accreditor already has experience working through a merger involving a NJ 4-year public institution (i.e., the merger of Bloomfield College with Montclair State University).

- **Opportunities**

- The most likely potential merger partners (see 'Restructuring Options' section below) are accredited by the same regional accreditor and by the same state agency as NJCU, and are in good standing, as is NJCU. This should facilitate review of the process and approval of a merger.
- The merger process is being explored sufficiently in advance of NJCU being in full financial distress (i.e., being unable to meet payroll in the near future), which also bodes well for approval of a merger.

- **Challenges**

- The new guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the associated Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) policies, create a greater complexity for the merger process and a potential delay to accomplishing a merger, if this pathway is chosen.
- The political environment and related influences in NJ can be daunting to address.

## **INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING OPTIONS**

In the conversations SPH had with various NJCU stakeholders, varying opinions were expressed regarding what would be the preferred course of action or the most realistic scenario for how NJCU should continue to operate. Some stakeholders expressed a desire for NJCU to continue operating as a fully independent school without entering into any new significant partnerships or entertaining a merger with another institution.

Representatives of faculty and staff expressed a foundational goal of “retaining jobs”, although during these conversations there was no real expression of what NJCU might be able to do to preserve operational independence in its current state. Overall, stakeholder opinions varied widely as to the potential future of the institution, although all individuals queried expressed a strong recognition of the value that NJCU provides to their students, and the strong desire and goal of ensuring the presence and availability of a 4-year public higher education in Jersey City and Hudson County, whatever the form this might take. The State Monitor’s report<sup>5</sup> suggests various potential avenues forward including the development of joint academic programs, shared administrative services, a system model, and a merger.

At this time various institutional restructuring options exist including downsizing, developing shared partnerships for academic programming, administrative services, or facilities, or ‘merging’, either completely, into a system, or as type of an affiliation.

Considering NJCU’s critical need to address various challenges, including declining enrollment, financial shortfalls, staffing gaps, and capital needs, while ensuring a quality education to its core constituents (students primarily from the surrounding population), the restructuring tactics that present the greatest potential include ‘scaling down/downsizing’, ‘shared facilities’, and ‘complete mergers’. While the first two options primarily would leverage relationships with institutions that are proximate to NJCU (, a merger will require identifying a willing and able partner.

While various entities could be considered potential merger partners, at least two 4-year NJ public institutions of higher education that compete for students with NJCU could serve as potential merger partners.

- **Opportunities**

- **Highlight NJCU’s assets:** Regardless of what path is taken, it is important to highlight and maximize NJCU’s assets and positives, which could include:
  - Its locations, including at Harborside.<sup>6</sup>
  - Its facilities, many of which are in good conditions and are being improved.
  - Its unique and refreshed mission addressing the needs of urban/under-represented America.
  - The available state ‘Salary Cap’, such that currently NJCU has 200+ more authorized State-approved positions (with fringe reimbursed by the State) than are being used.
  - Its unique and highly prized academic programs.
  - The number of passionate, knowledgeable, and dedicated staff.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://newjerseymonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NJCU-Monitoring-Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Harborside 2, 200 Hudson Street, Jersey City, NJ 07311

- Its current and ongoing efforts to reduce operating deficits, address deferred maintenance issues, and generate available cash from the sale of various properties.
- **The potential to significantly capture greater market share:** As discussed previously (see 'Market Assessment' section) in New Jersey there are five industry sectors that are projected to have substantial growth over the next 10 years<sup>7</sup>: (1) healthcare; (2) computers and information; (3) business, marketing and management; (4) education; and (5) psychology & social services. Peer institutions offer small programs in the same five disciplines. Alone, no school is able to capture a significant fraction of the market. A consolidation = with NJCU offers an opportunity to substantially increase the market share in academic areas where industry has identified a high demand for graduates.
- **Challenges**
  - Considering the degree of debt of NJCU, and its capital and staffing needs, financial assistance from the State will be essential to ensure the success of any restructuring tactic undertaken, especially a merger. The degree to which this support is forthcoming is unknown.
  - The readiness-to-change of NJCU faculty, staff, and leadership is unclear and needs to be developed.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## ABOUT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (SPH) CONSULTING GROUP

SPH Consulting Group (SPH) is ready to serve as the partner of choice for advising, guiding, and assisting college and university governing boards, executives, and policymakers as they consider major future-oriented institutional restructuring strategies, including mergers, acquisitions, consolidations, closures, and major strategic partnerships. SPH provides a variety of services that will help ensure full and complete consideration and decision-making regarding strategic options for major institutional restructuring, and the successful execution and implementation of the chosen strategy. SPH consultants understand and know how to navigate the complexity, unique requirements, and sensitivities that major institutional restructuring in higher education requires.

Ricardo Azziz, Principal of SPH Consulting Group, is a recognized thought leader in mergers, consolidations, acquisitions, strategic partnerships and other major restructuring in higher education. Ricardo's book *'Strategic Mergers In Higher Education'* (JHU Press, 2019); contributions to the TIAA Institute (*'Mergers in Higher Education: A proactive strategy to a better future?'* in 2017, and *'Critical competencies for leading major institutional restructuring in higher education (aka Big Scary Change)'* in 2023), and his regular column (*'Merger Watch'*) in *Higher Ed Dive* are widely used as reference materials for the subject. His next book, *'Leading Existential Change In Higher Education: Mergers, Closures and Other Major Institutional Restructuring'* will be published shortly (JHU Press, Fall 2025).

Understanding the growing need for mergers and consolidation in a sector with declining demand, increasing costs, and excess capacity, and the general lack of understanding of what is required to successfully accomplish these institutional restructuring initiatives, Ricardo established SPH Consulting Group in 2019. The company has been certified by the Southern Region of the National Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) as an official Minority Business Enterprise (MBE).

Uniquely, Ricardo aimed to establish a consulting group of individuals that have actually experienced and managed through mergers, consolidations, closures, and other major institutional restructuring. In fact, SPH team members represent some of the nation's most recognized thought leaders in major institutional restructuring, including mergers, in higher education. SPH consultants have served in leadership or implementation roles or as consultants in major transactions, including closures, mergers, consolidations, and strategic partnerships.

## SPH CONSULTING GROUP NJCU ENGAGEMENT

The State Monitor proposed a 'Fiscal Accountability Plan' to achieve turnaround of NJCU's financial instability through eleven recommendations, including those to promote the institution's financial stability and solvency (5 recommendations), and improve its governance capabilities (six recommendations). Key to the present RFP was Recommendation #1. In essence, this recommendation suggested that there be consideration *"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."* Consequently, RFP #24-004 "Higher Education Consultant for New Jersey City University" was issued May 31, 2024, by the University, to which SPH Consulting Group responded.

Regarding the timeline, SPH understood that a shorter, more immediate timeline for completing the initial scope of work by November 2024, to meet the State's budgetary process, and to complete all work by January 2025, was required. Our response considered the urgency of the situation at NJCU and the likelihood that it may take 18-24 months for final planning and regulatory approval of any proposed complex substantive change to an accredited institutional structure. .

Based on the scope of work provided by NJCU in RFP #24-004, SPH offered an organized and well-tested 4-phased approach which can address the strategic challenges that have been identified in the RFP: a) PHASE 1: Project Alignment, b) PHASE 2: Discovery, c) PHASE 3: Strategic Direction, and d) PHASE 4: Implementation Planning. SPH's approach aimed to provide the critical insights needed to make hard decisions regarding the future of NJCU as it seeks to navigate the evolving market that is higher education in the nation, the region and finally its local market.

Above all, this analysis was designed to fulfill two distinct purposes. First, provide the State of NJ, various legislative constituents, the Board of Trustees, and the University's administration with a fresh and unbiased review of the current state and standing of NJCU. Second, and equally as important, offer a type of investment prospectus that can be offered to organizations that might be interested in considering acquisition or some other type of partnership with all or part of NJCU.

SPH assumed the following objectives for this engagement:

- 1) Focus on what is best for the students served by the institution.
- 2) Help identify a path to sustainable, ongoing, and quality operations at NJCU, so that the institution can continue to successfully serve its core student population.
- 3) Provide an external and objective perspective to assist NJCU and NJ state leaders in their decision-making.

The process that SPH pursued to date to prepare this report included review of approximately 170 documents containing over 2600 pages provided by NJCU staff, review of a myriad of external documents and sources, undertaking over 50 interviews and multiple other conversations, and four in-person campus visits. To the extent possible, SPH attempted not to repeat the work that others have already done including the State Comptroller Office, the State Monitor, CBRE, the university's current leadership, and others

Overall, when the data was available, NJCU staff were helpful in providing it and SPH did not encounter any major issues with staff responsiveness. Unfortunately, not in all instances was the data requested available or obtained, which limited some of the assessments made. Nonetheless, SPH strived to supplement these information gaps with conversations with staff and the review of external sources.

# NJC

**“Enhancing Infrastructure”**

**“Investing in Progress”**

**“Building the Future”**

*\*two (2) year lookback*





# CAPITAL PROJECTS



**Before & After Pics**

**Department of Facilities and Construction Management  
Division of Administration and Finance**

# GROSSNICKLE HALL – GREENHOUSE REMOVAL PROJECT



**Project Budget \$400,000**

- ❖ Removal of rotted structure
- ❖ Removal of plumbing, electrical, HVAC
- ❖ Repairs to "facade" front of building
- ❖ Installation of LED NJCU Signage



# GROSSNICKLE HALL – GREENHOUSE REMOVAL PROJECT – BEFORE

056





# GROSSNICKLE HALL – GREENHOUSE REMOVAL PROJECT – AFTER

057



# GROSSNICKLE HALL – GREENHOUSE REMOVAL PROJECT – AFTER

058





# GROSSNICKLE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR / AHM PROJECT

059



**"LIFT" program, a partnership with the A. Harry Moore School designed to support students with special needs.**

## Project Budget \$1,961,000

- ❖ Full renovations to ADA Requirements
- ❖ (3) academic classrooms,
- ❖ (1) career technical education room,
- ❖ Handicapped bathrooms with shower rooms,
- ❖ Mock-up apartment,
- ❖ Culinary arts room with kitchen and dining,
- ❖ Equipment room and storage rooms,
- ❖ Fitness center gym,
- ❖ Registered nurse exam room with office,
- ❖ Professional offices,
- ❖ Grocery store,
- ❖ New flooring throughout,
- ❖ New window coverings,
- ❖ HVAC repairs and updates,
- ❖ Upgraded led lighting, light switches, and wall receptacles with USB charger ports.
- ❖ (2) new exterior handicapped doors,
- ❖ (1) new main entrance door,
- ❖ (1) Handicap Ramp
- ❖ (2) interior ADA security doors, and card access controls.



# GROSSNICKLE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR / AHM PROJECT - BEFORE

06Q





# GROSSNICKLE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR / AHM PROJECT - AFTER

061





# GROSSNICKLE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR / AHM PROJECT - AFTER

062





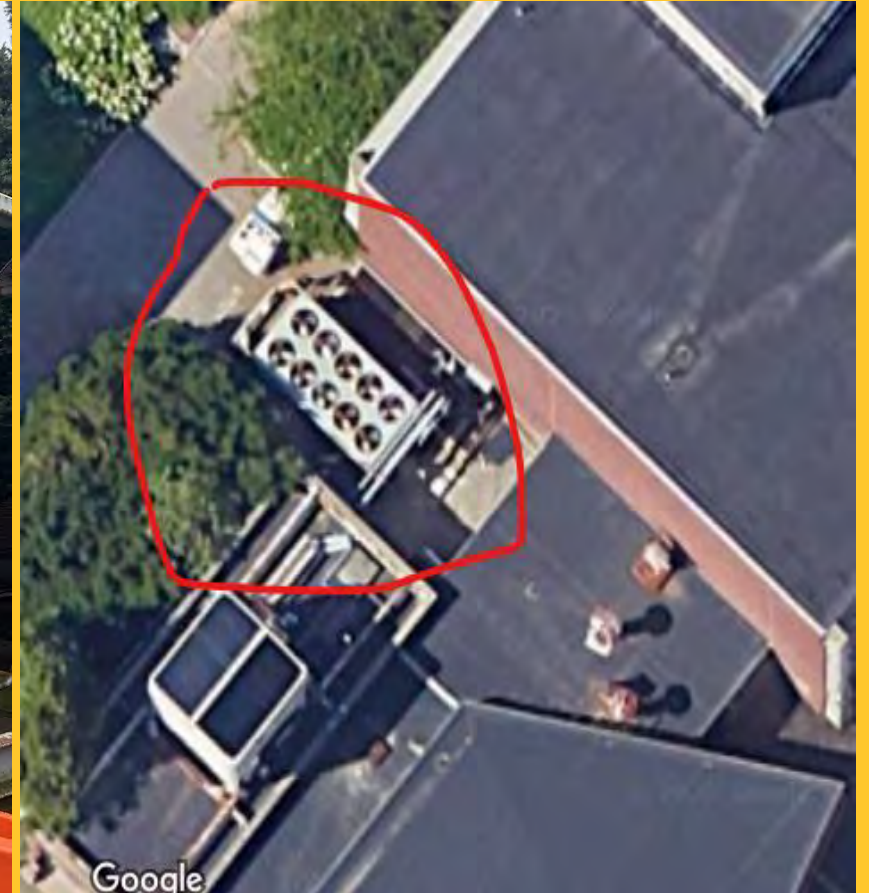
# GROSSNICKLE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR / AHM PROJECT - AFTER

063





# HVAC - GROSSNICKLE HALL – RELOCATION OF RENTAL CHILLER





# HVAC - GROSSNICKLE HALL - RELOCATION OF RENTAL CHILLER





# GROSSNICKLE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR / AHM PROJECT

066






# VODRA HALL - DORMITORY RENOVATIONS PROJECT

067

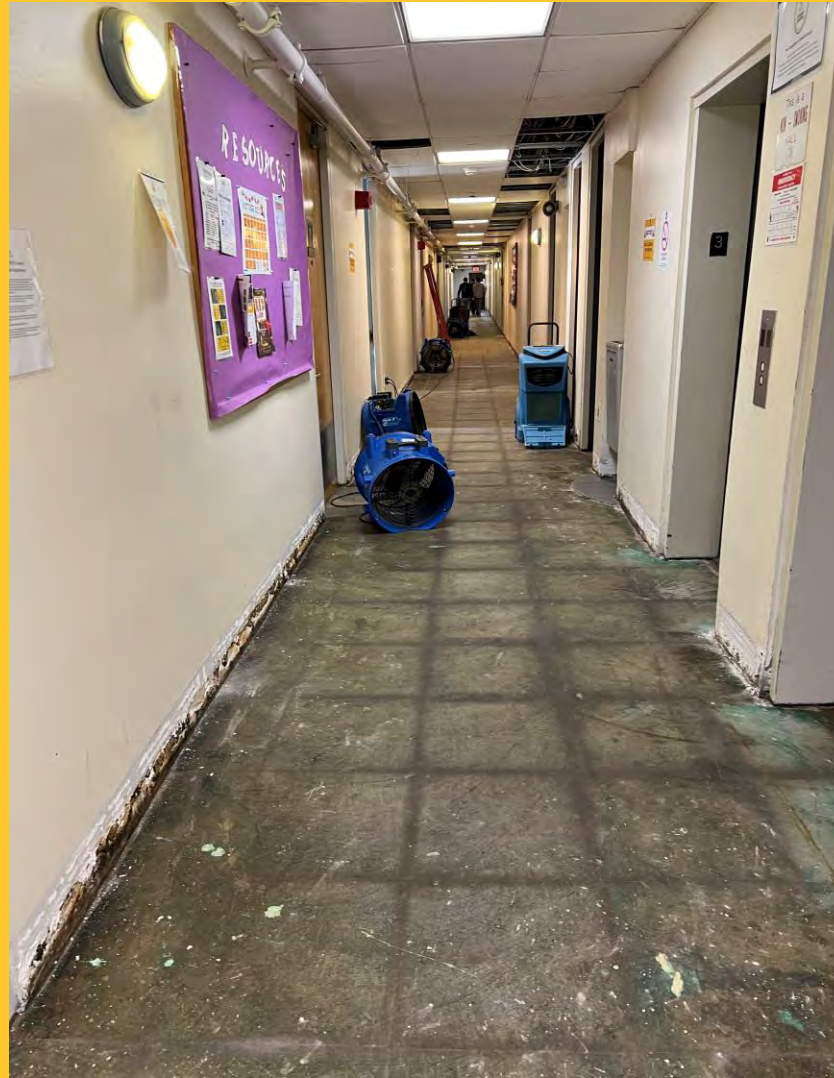


**Project Budget \$3,800,000**

- ❖ Full renovations included:
- ❖ Dormitory Roof w/ Safety Railing,
- ❖ HVAC - VRFs, Evaporators, Condensers, & Piping,
- ❖ HVAC Leak Detection System,
- ❖ Domestic Heated Water System,
- ❖ Updated bathrooms, sinks, showers, toilets, etc.,
- ❖ LVT Flooring in lounges, dorm rooms, & corridors,
- ❖ Upgraded led lighting, light switches, and wall receptacles with USB charger ports Upgraded Ceiling tiles in corridors and lounges
- ❖ Painting throughout lounges, dorm rooms, & corridors.
- ❖ Lounge Furniture & Mattresses.
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> Lounge Kitchenettes w/ microwaves & fridges
- ❖ Laundry Appliances. 
- ❖ Keyless Locks / Swipe
- ❖ New window coverings.



# VODRA HALL DORMITORY PROJECT - BEFORE





# VODRA HALL DORMITORY PROJECT - BEFORE





# VODRA HALL DORMITORY PROJECT - AFTER





# VODRA HALL DORMITORY PROJECT - AFTER





# VODRA HALL DORMITORY PROJECT - AFTER

072





# VODRA HALL DORMITORY PROJECT – ROOFING & HVAC EQUIPMENT - AFTER





# HEPBURN 201- TRANSFER RESOURCE CENTER

074



**Project Budget \$50,000**

- ❖ Furniture
- ❖ LVT Flooring
- ❖ Upgraded led lighting,
- ❖ light switches
- ❖ Wall receptacles w/ USB charger ports
- ❖ Window Coverings
- ❖ HVAC Unit
- ❖ Painting



# HEPBURN 201- TRANSFER RESOURCE CENTER

075





# HEPBURN 201- TRANSFER RESOURCE CENTER - AFTER

076





# WEST CAMPUS VILLAGE – DINNING HALL PROJECT

077



**Project Budget \$12,000**

- ❖ LVT Flooring
- ❖ Painting
- ❖ Electrical
- ❖ Re-purposed Dining Furniture from Vodra Café
- ❖ Updated Vending Machines



# WEST CAMPUS VILLAGE – LOUNGE / DINING HALL PROJECT - BEFORE

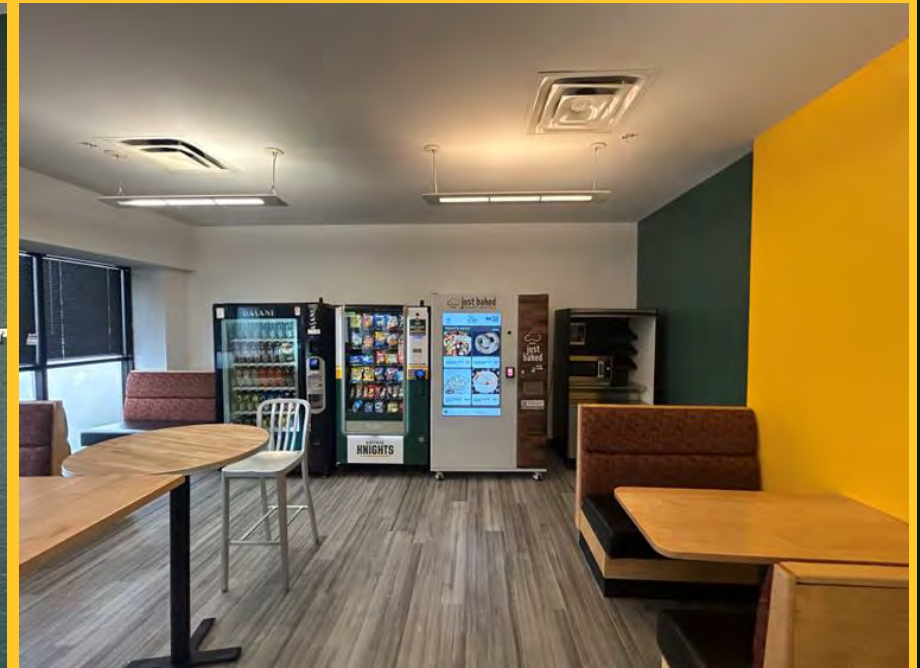
078





# WEST CAMPUS VILLAGE – LOUNGE / DINING HALL PROJECT - AFTER

079





# WEST CAMPUS VILLAGE – LOUNGE / DINING HALL PROJECT - COMPLETED

08Q



# HEPBURN HALL – MARGERET WILLIAMS THEATER – RENOVATIONS

081



**Project Budget**  
**\$275,000**

- ◆ Replacement Seat Cushions
- ◆ Repairs to Seating Mounting
- ◆ Replacement Carpet Runners



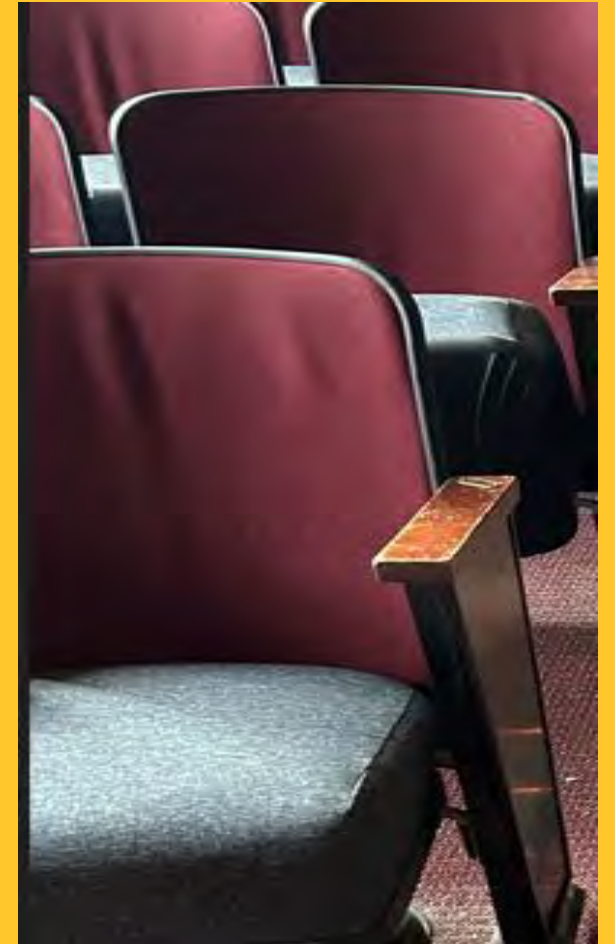
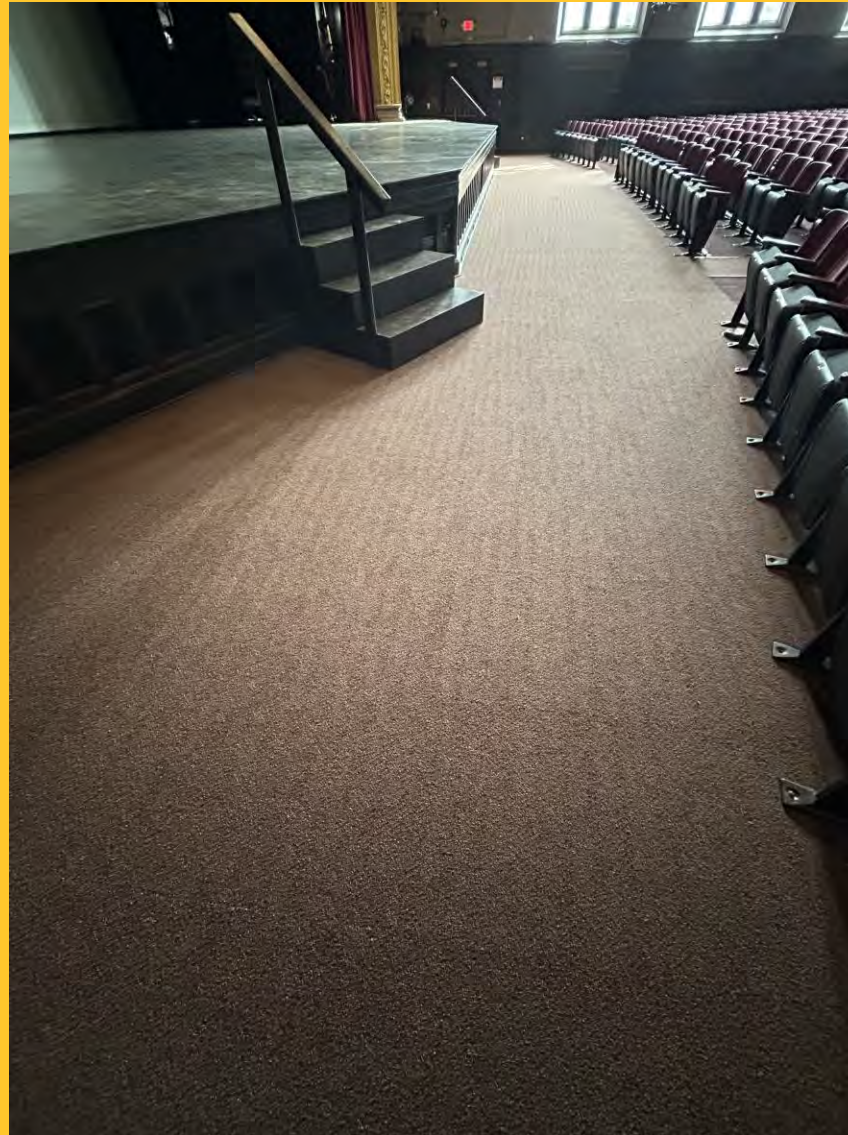
# HEPBURN HALL – MARGERET WILLIAMS THEATER - RENOVATIONS - BEFORE<sup>082</sup>





# HEPBURN HALL – MARGERET WILLIAMS THEATER - RENOVATIONS - AFTER

083





# HEPBURN HALL 207 - UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS OFFICE

084



**Project Budget  
\$160,000**

- ❖ Furniture
- ❖ LVT Flooring
- ❖ Upgraded led lighting,
- ❖ Light switches
- ❖ Wall receptacles w/  
USB charger ports
- ❖ HVAC Unit
- ❖ Painting
- ❖ Ceiling tiles



# HEPBURN HALL 207 - ADMISSIONS OFFICE - BEFORE

085





# HEPBURN HALL 207 - ADMISSIONS OFFICE - AFTER

086





# KARNOUTSOS HALL - CLASSROOM K-648

087



**Project Budget \$6,500**

- ❖ LVT Flooring
- ❖ Painting
- ❖ Re-purposed Seating from Grossnickle Hall



# KARNOUTSOS HALL - CLASSROOM K-648 - BEFORE

088





# KARNOUTSOS HALL ROOM 648 - AFTER

089





# VODRA HALL ROOM 143 – YOUTH CORPS – OFFICES AND CLASSROOM PROJECT



**Project Budget \$50,000**

- ❖ LVT Flooring
- ❖ Painting
- ❖ Electrical
- ❖ LED Lighting
- ❖ Window Shades
- ❖ Office Cubicles and Desk
- ❖ Re-purposed student desks from Grossnickle Hall



# VODRA HALL – YOUTH CORPS – OFFICES AND CLASSROOM PROJECT

091





# GSUB - PARKING GARAGE - REPAIRS PROJECT - PENDING

092



- ❖ Phase 1 project budget est. \$1,000,000
- ❖ Phase 1 pending contract award
- ❖ GSUB Garage is a 5-yr plan est. \$5,000,000



# ENGINEERING, HVAC, & MAINTENANCE



**Before & After Pics**



**Department of Facilities and Construction Management  
Division of Administration and Finance**



# ENGINEERING / BOILER – UNDERGROUND STEAM LINE REPAIRS & REPLACEMENTS

094



**Project Budget**  
**\$500,000**

**Condensate and return  
piping from GSUB  
Garage to Hepburn Hall  
Steam Plant.**





# ENGINEERING / BOILER – UNDERGROUND STEAM LINE REPAIRS & REPLACEMENTS



## Underground Steam Leak by Vodra Hall





# ENGINEERING / BOILER – UNDERGROUND STEAM LINE REPAIRS & REPLACEMENTS

096



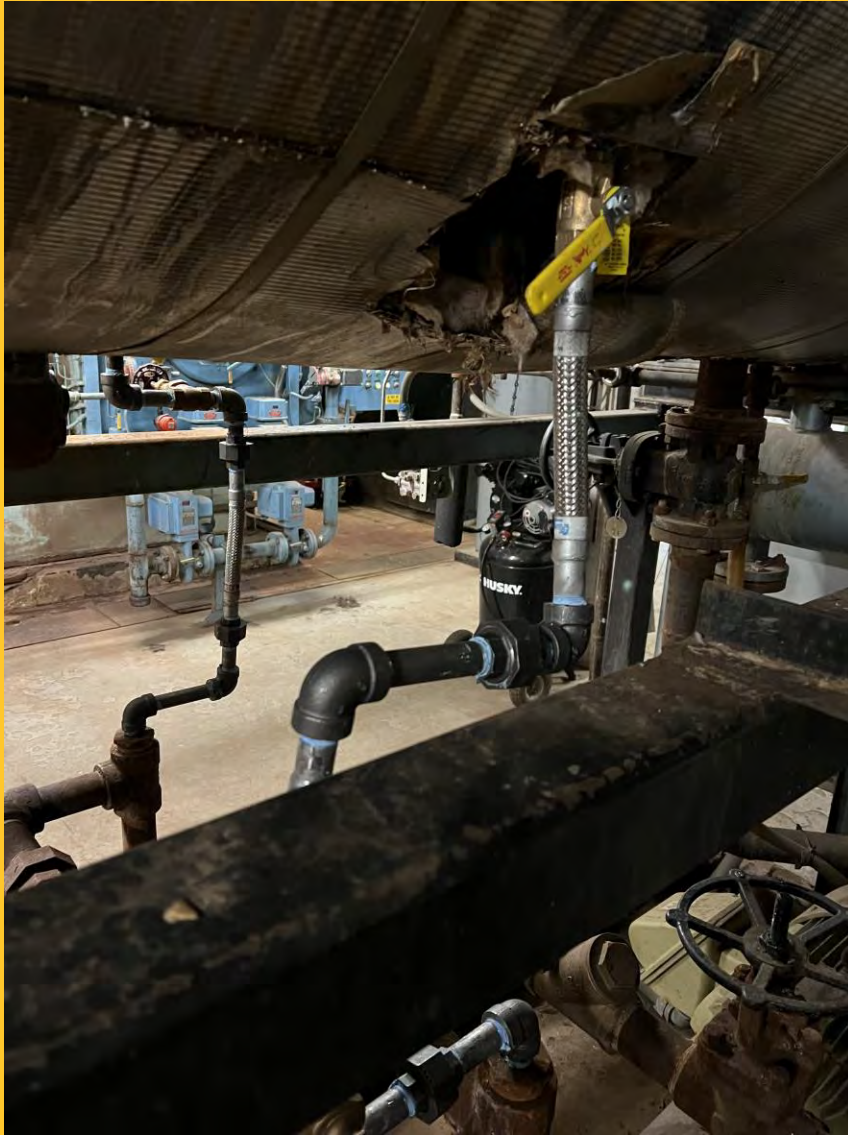
## Underground Steam Leak by Rossey Hall





# ENGINEERING / BOILER PLANT – DEAERATOR TANK REPLACEMENT

097





# ENGINEERING / BOILER PLANT – DEAERATOR TANK REPLACEMENT

098





# ENGINEERING / BOILER PLANT – HIGH PRESSURE BOILER TUBE REPAIRS

099





# ENGINEERING / BOILER PLANT – HIGH PRESSURE BOILER TUBE REPAIRS

109





# ENGINEERING / BOILER PLANT – HIGH PRESSURE STEAM BOILER – RENTAL

101



NJCU is required to operate (3) working boilers. Lead, lag, & backup.

We only have (2) working steam boilers, that are aged and require constant repairs.

Rental was installed to prevent failures and meet insurance requirements.

We are in the process of installing a brand "new" HP steam boiler - completion date Oct 2025.



# HEPBURN HALL – ENGINEERING – HIGH PRESSURE STEAM BOILER PROJECT <sup>102</sup>





# ENGINEERING / BOILER - PHYSICAL PLANT - UPDATES

103





# ENGINEERING / BOILER - UPSTAIRS MECHANICAL ROOM - CONCRETE REPAIRS & FLOOR COATING



**Project Budget \$60,000**

- ❖ **Concrete Repairs**
- ❖ **Waterproofing and Epoxy Coating**



# ENGINEERING / BOILER PLANT - RESTROOM REMODEL

105



**Before**



**After**

**Project Budget \$8,600**

- ◆ **Shower stall**
- ◆ **Toilet**
- ◆ **Plumbing**
- ◆ **Sink**
- ◆ **Lighting**
- ◆ **Painting**
- ◆ **Floor coating**



# GROSSNICKLE HALL – HVAC CHILL WATER & HEATING LINES - BEFORE

106





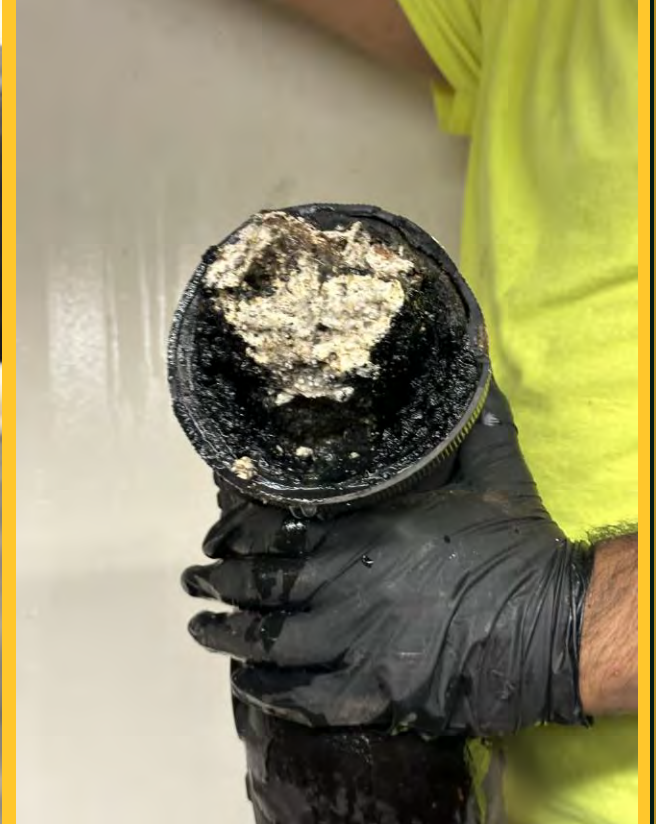
# GROSSNICKLE HALL – HVAC CHILL WATER & HEATING LINES - AFTER

107





# MISCELLANEOUS HVAC LINES AROUND CAMPUS





# GROSSNICKLE HALL - HVAC CHILL & HOT WATER PUMPS - BEFORE

109





# GROSSNICKLE HVAC CHILL & HOT WATER PUMPS - AFTER

119





# ROSSEY HALL – CHILLER RENTAL

111



Rental was required due to the catastrophic failure of Rossey Hall's HVAC absorption chiller a few years ago

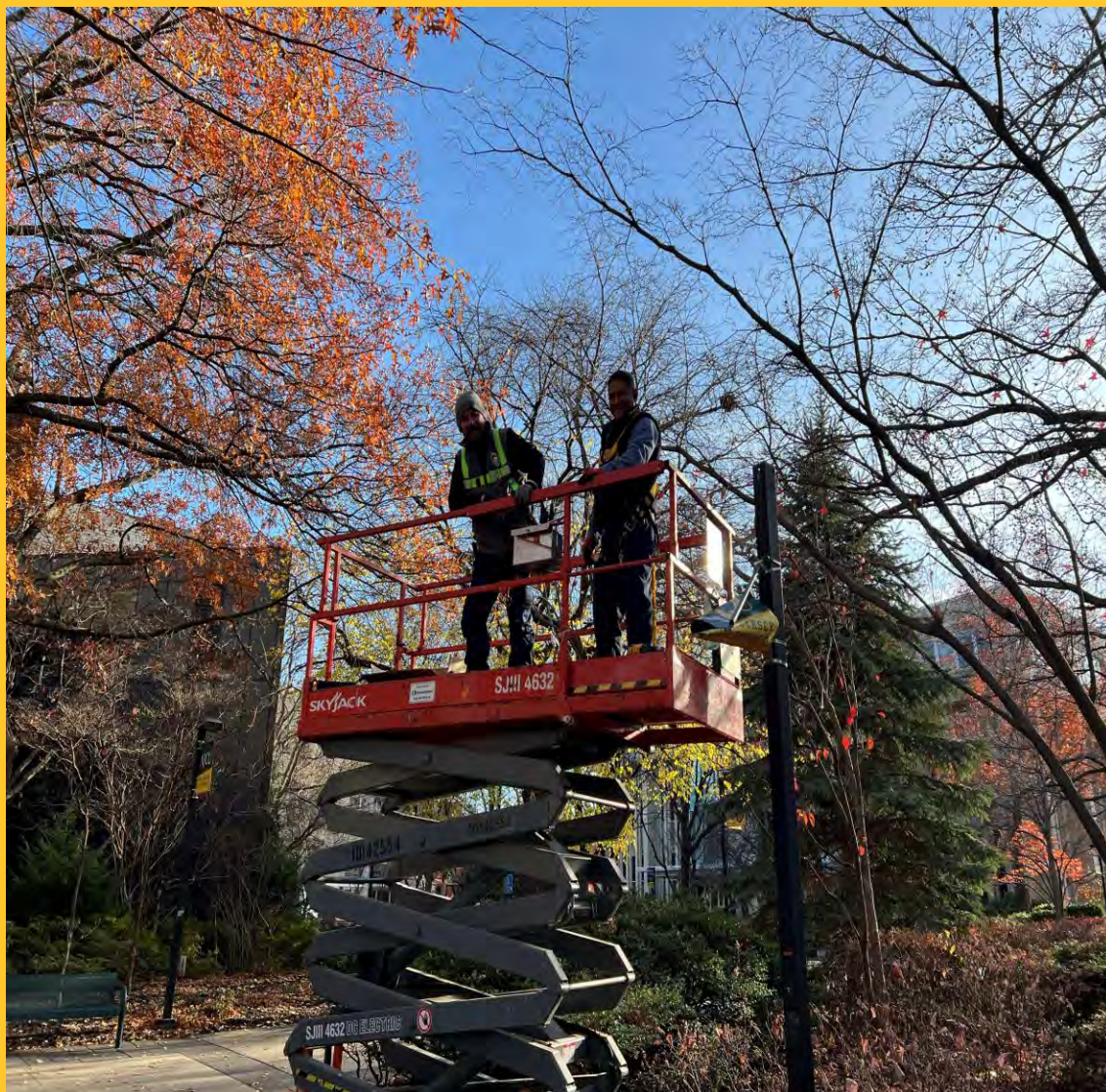
We are in the process of installing a brand "new" electric chiller, completion date May 2025.





# MAINTENANCE – CAMPUS - EXTERIOR LED LIGHTING UPGRADES

112



## “Lighting the path to the future of NJCU”

- ❖ A lighting feasibility study was completed in 2023 with a total cost of \$275,000. which included the tower.
- ❖ The DFCM maintenance team has been upgrading the exterior lighting at less than 10% of vendor cost to date.





# MAINTENANCE – CAMPUS - EXTERIOR LED LIGHTING UPGRADES

113





# MAINTENANCE – CAMPUS – EXTERIOR LED LIGHTING UPGRADES

114







**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**



**Coming Soon: Campus Beatification  
Landscaping and Custodial Services**



## **Collaboration Between AFT Local 1839 and the New Jersey City University (NJCU) Administration**

As President of AFT Local 1839, I am proud to reflect on the strong and productive partnership we have developed with the administration of New Jersey City University (NJCU). Our collaboration has been essential in strengthening both the academic mission and the fiscal vitality of our institution. Together, we have navigated challenges, leveraged opportunities, and prioritized the needs of our faculty and students.

### **Labor Relations and Communication**

1. **Regular Labor-Management Meetings:** Establishing a consistent schedule for meetings to discuss faculty concerns, negotiate terms, and enhance communication.
2. **Collective Bargaining Agreements:** Successfully negotiating and enforcing contracts that address salary, benefits, job security, and working conditions for faculty.
3. **Grievance Procedures:** Collaborating on a transparent and efficient grievance process that ensures faculty concerns are addressed fairly and promptly.
4. **Timely Payment of Union Dues:** We collaborated to address the timely payment of Union dues, which was impacted by an unexpected technology issue with the payroll system.

### **Faculty Support and Development**

5. **Workplace Safety Initiatives:** Joint efforts to develop and implement safety protocols and measures to ensure a safe working environment for faculty and staff.
6. **Faculty Health and Wellness Programs:** Collaborating on initiatives that promote faculty health and wellness, addressing mental health, stress management, and work-life balance.
7. **Professional Development Funding:** Securing funding for faculty to pursue professional development opportunities, enhancing their skills and job satisfaction.
8. **Mentorship Programs:** Establishing mentorship initiatives to support new faculty in their professional growth and integration into the university community.
9. **Promotion Procedures:** We agreed to minor modifications of the promotion procedures to include clarifications.



### **Strategic Planning and Development**

10. **Academic Master Plan and Strategic Enrollment Plan:** Collaborating on each, which incorporate the key tenets of a SWOT analysis.
11. **Strategic Student Development and Community Engagement Plan:** Aiming to enhance student success and foster meaningful connections between the university and the surrounding community.
12. **Retention and Recruitment Strategies:** Collaborating to develop strategies that attract and retain talented faculty members, including competitive compensation and benefits.
13. **Emphasis on Service:** Incentivizing university service among faculty and staff in support of student success and enrollment stabilization.

### **Organizational Structure and Oversight**

14. **Fiscal Monitor and External Consultants:** Conducting joint meetings with the fiscal monitor and external consultants to collaboratively assess institutional fiscal concerns.
15. **Middle States Accreditation:** Labor participation in Middle States accreditation meetings.
16. **Board of Trustees:** Assignment of one full-time faculty representative to the Board.

### **Employment Stability and Adjustments**

17. **Job Security Protections:** Working together to create policies that protect faculty from arbitrary dismissal and ensure job security.
18. **Retrenchments:** Minimizing the number of faculty and professional staff retrenchments and rescinding several of them.
19. **Reassignments:** Collaborative work in the reassignment of several retrenched faculty to professional staff positions.
20. **Leaves of Absences:** Collaboratively reviewing faculty requests for leaves of absence.
21. **Sabbatical Leaves:** Reviewing sabbatical leave options for potential individual extensions.

### **Additional Agreements**

22. **Paid Leave Bank:** MOA on an equitable and improved system that allows employees to donate their unused paid leave to a central pool.

**23. MOA on Shared Labor-Management Vision:** See attached.

In conclusion, our effective and robust collaboration with the administration at New Jersey City University (NJCU) has never been more crucial. As we navigate the complexities of fiscal challenges facing higher education, our shared commitment and unified vision for the importance of NJCU stand as a noteworthy example for other institutions. Together, we demonstrate that through partnership and dialogue, we can not only weather these storms but also emerge stronger, ensuring that our university continues to thrive and serve our students and community with excellence.

**Sincerely,**

Dr. William Calathes

President, AFT Local 1839



**Memorandum of Understanding for Shared Vision for Student Success  
between New Jersey City University and AFT Local 1839**

**WHEREAS**, AFT Local 1839 is an invaluable stakeholder and partner in supporting the mission and success of New Jersey City University (NJCU);

**WHEREAS**, NJCU and its leadership appreciate and acknowledge our AFT Local 1839 community members' ongoing work, support, and efforts to affirm a shared vision for student success as a primary pillar of NJCU's recovery and renewal;

**WHEREAS**, with this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), NJCU commits to considering, discussing, and integrating the spirit, intent, ideas, and concepts set forth in this MoU in the official NJCU recovery, renewal, and strategic plan; and

**WHEREAS**, integrating the shared vision for a strategic plan, documented herein, into any future, official and documented NJCU recovery and renewal and strategic planning is part of NJCU's ongoing commitment and requirement to engage all NJCU stakeholders, including the AFT Local 1839, pursuant to Middle States Commission on Higher Education Standard I: Mission and Goals, Criterion 1. Criterion 1 provides in pertinent part that "[a]n accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: 1) clearly defined mission and goals that: a) are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement."

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that NJCU and AFT Local 1839 have proudly come together to enshrine a shared commitment and vision for good faith labor relations that recognize a student-first mission inures to the benefit of all NJCU stakeholders.

**Shared Governance and Accountability Goals**

**Goal #1: Invigorate University's Oversight and Accountability**

Objective 1.1: Fill vacancies on the Board of Trustees (BOT) with mission-engaged individuals that reflect the disparate experiences and diversity of NJCU students.

Method: NJCU's administration and AFT Local 1839 continue to communicate this need to state officials and legislators.

**Goal #2: Streamline Administrative Procedures and Structures**

Objective 2.1: Further streamline organizational footprint of institutional units and the administration of those units.

Method: Identify potential mergers within academic units.

Method: Review administrative expenses to ensure balance of administrative costs to administrative needs.

### **Goal #3: Enhance Shared Governance and Labor/Management Engagement**

Objective 3.1: Increase faculty/staff and bargaining units' input in University's decision-making processes.

Method: Add faculty/staff representatives to the BOT.

Method: Increase opportunities for the public (including students and employees) to address the BOT during public sessions with longer time allotments.

Method: Implement regularly scheduled meetings among administrators and the bargaining units' leaders and executive committees.

Method: Hold both university-wide and college-wide town hall meetings with extended Q&A components at least every semester.

Method: Implement surveys such as The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Satisfaction Survey, biannually, and publicly announce to all employees all the results.

Objective 3.2: Incentivize university service among faculty and staff in support of student success and enrollment stabilization.

Method: Prioritize the retention of faculty, staff, and librarians as essential to the functioning of the university and the achievement of student success.

Method: Update reappointment, promotion and range-change processes for faculty/staff that increase service as criterion, and which also includes the announcement of a valid number of promotion and range-change opportunities.

Objective 3.3: Foster a diverse teaching and learning environment for a diverse community and a culture that values, respects, welcomes, and promotes a sense of belonging for members of our campus and our community.

Method: Continue to require accessible training in key areas of diversity and university compliance.



Method: Increase the visibility and role of NJCU's Diversity Team, especially in all hiring processes.

### **Shared Student and Academic Success Goals**

#### **Goal #4: Emphasize Teaching and Learning as the Central Mission of NJCU**

Objective 4.1: Emphasize successful teaching and student success as the primary requirements for faculty reappointment, promotion, and range adjustments.

Method: The Division of Academic Affairs will regularly communicate the prioritization of NJCU's traditional and historic emphasis on teaching and learning.

Method: NJCU's Center of Teaching and Learning will base its programming on data to focus its efforts on student academic success and retention.

#### **Goal #5: Stabilize Admissions and Retention**

Objective 5.1: Align the personnel, policies, and practices with NJCU's status as the longest-standing minority and Hispanic-serving institution with the most socioeconomically diverse student population of all New Jersey public universities with an emphasis on first-generation success.

Method: Develop policies and practices to promote diversity in hiring and retaining faculty and staff. Include the data regarding hiring and retention of faculty and staff in the institutional assessment framework to review annually for continuous improvement.

Method: Invest in programming related to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice.

Objective 5.2: Increase student applications and yield for degree and certificate Programs.

Method: Encourage faculty to participate in high school and college fairs/visits as part of their university service, and recognize this work in the reappointment and promotion process.

Method: Provide student applicants and their families with the contact information of faculty in the applicants' intended/possible major.

Method: Promote annual graduate enrollment workshops within departments to examine admission, yield, and retention data. Use results of workshops to map out strategic enrollment plans for graduate education.

Method: Base resource decisions on data related to enrollment, retention, and student success.

Objective 5.3: Increase admission of transfer students.

Method: Realign NJCU's general education program with state-wide community college general education programs.

Method: Market NJCU as the most supportive transfer university in New Jersey.

Objective 5.4: Establish and enhance articulation agreements.

Method: Implement The Aspen Institute Hudson Promise/Connect Model with Hudson County Community College (HCCC).

Method: Replicate The Aspen Institute transfer model with other community colleges.

Objective 5.5: Identify and develop recruitment plans for some of NJCU's compelling and unique programs.

Method: Review the academic portfolio as part of the development of the academic master plan. Make decisions regarding resources for recruitment based upon the plan.

Objective 5.6: Develop strategic plan to grow graduate enrollment.

Method: Analyze performance of graduate programs in relation to state and national competition. Invest in programs based upon market potential.

Method: Establish partnerships with schools and businesses to ensure that graduate programming is responsive to current labor needs.

Method: Establish robust pipeline between the university's non-credit programming and graduate programming.



Objective 5.7: Increase faculty and staff engagement in recruitment and retention of first generation, lower-income, underrepresented, and nontraditional students that comprise the majority of NJCU's student population.

Method: Increase opportunities for Open House Events.

Method: Ask faculty from specific academic programs to write letters/texts to applicants for their academic programs.

Objective 5.8: Establish faculty-student relationships when students first arrive on campus.

Method: Include and expect faculty from all departments as part of university service expectations to participate in new-student and transfer student orientations.

Objective 5.9: Promote credit and non-credit offerings to non-traditional students.

Method: Develop shared databases for credit and non-credit programming.

Method: Include non-credit programming in the strategic enrollment plan.

Method: Ensure that course schedule meets the needs of non-traditional students.

#### **Goal # 6: Establish student retention as the highest priority in student success initiatives.**

Objective 6.1: Provide flexible course schedules and additional locations.

Method: Increase availability of independent study options for juniors and seniors.

Method: Make dual-course schedules available in several departments.

Method: Increase availability of online courses for 300 and 400 level courses.

Objective 6.2: Increase the availability of online services/events.

Method: Include a virtual component in the orientation programs for incoming students.

Method: Offer online tutoring and counseling support.

Method: Provide online resources for graduate students.

Objective 6.3: Increase mentorship and academic/career advisement within Academic Departments.

Method: Develop co-advising model at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Provide professional development to faculty and staff regarding mentoring. Acknowledge advising and mentorship in the considerations for reappointment, promotion, and range adjustments.

Objective 6.4: Increase faculty awareness of and engagement in departmental/programmatic admissions and retention performance.

Method: Involve faculty in workshops each semester where they review admission, retention, and performance data of students in their programs. Document efforts regarding continuous improvement related to enrollment, retention, and academic success.

Objective 6.5: Increase engagement with students' support community.

Method: Develop regular communication to keep students engaged and informed through webinars, emails, and in-person meetings.

Objective 6.6: Facilitate easy transportation to/from campus.

Method: Provide additional and varied transportation methods to/from campus.

Method: Explore partnership with Jersey City and possible grants to provide support for students' transportation needs.

Objective 6.7: Work with the State to facilitate the partnership with Complete College America.

Method: Host summit regarding the needs of NJCU students.

Objective 6.8: Emphasize economic mobility mission to underrepresented student population and promote campus/community engagement.

Method: Modify campus signage to include at least Spanish and English messaging.



Method: Collect data using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and use data as part of continuous improvement process.

Objective 6.9: Promote a safe and welcoming environment on campus.

Method: Prioritize principles of universal design (access) in maintaining points of access to campus/buildings and within learning spaces (e.g. elevators, electronic doors).

Method: Ensure access to computer labs and other resources according to student needs.

Method: Ensure conditions within classrooms and labs are conducive to learning.

## **Goal #7: Increase Graduation Rate**

Objective 7.1: Decrease time from admission to graduation.

Method: Revise general education program to facilitate learning and the availability of courses.

Method: Increase the availability of summer and winter session courses and encourage students to enroll.

Method: Make students aware of the following: (1) the varied costs attached to extending the number of years to degree completion, and (2) the opportunities, financial and otherwise, that are afforded when the degree is completed.

Method: Coordinate summer course offerings with community college partners for interchangeable transfer credits.

Method: Increase assessment and the availability of life-experience credits.

Method: Ensure that course schedule meets the needs of nontraditional students.

Objective 7.2: Implement academic tracking and early warning systems to provide academic support as needed.

Method: Increase use of Civitas system among faculty and staff.

Method: Implement the "Building Engagement and Attainment for

Minority Students (BEAMS).”

Method: Increase the use of Learning Community Model and incentivize faculty to participate.

Objective 7.3: Increase academic support services.

Method: Increase hours of HUB availability including evening, telephone and virtual support.

Method: Permit faculty to hold virtual office hours as part of their advising, including evening and weekends, to meet our students' scheduling demands.

Method: Increase writing support by reestablishing the Writing Center. Include the formal training of students who support the Writing Center.

Method: Implement embedded tutoring, intense tutoring, and credit recovery opportunities.

Method: Increase the use of intervention models such as OSP and ASCEND.

Method: Explore opportunities to incorporate professional tutoring within the HUB.

Objective 7.4: Increase faculty training around student support and related-services.

Method: Incentivize departments demonstrating significant improvements related to student retention.

Method: Identify key indicators of risk for students dropping out and develop and implement interventions to prevent dropout.

Method: Increase faculty awareness of student behaviors that indicate when a student is unlikely to continue.

Objective 7.5: Revise academic programs and courses as needed to increase student success while maintaining high academic standards.

Method: Examine courses with high percentages of D/W/F/IN grades and, when appropriate, incorporate academic scaffolding.



Method: Provide training for faculty and departments about pedagogy intended to increase student success in challenging courses.

#### **Goal #8: Decrease Students' Financial Challenges**

Objective 8.1: Decrease the cost of materials/books for students.

Method: Increase adoption of open-source texts and materials.

Objective 8.2: Increase on-campus work opportunities for students.

Method: In addition to work-study program, provide increased employment opportunities for students in and around the university.

Objective 8.3: Increase paid cooperative education and internship opportunities.

Method: Identify additional cooperative education positions that provide financial compensation.

Method: Identify grants that can supplement financial compensation for internship opportunities.

Objective 8.4: Increase scholarship and grant opportunities.

Method: Provide retention grants to mitigate financial hardships for students who are in good standing and making progress in their majors.

Method: Provide resources and guidance for students and their families about scholarship and grant opportunities.

Method: Work with the Foundation to enhance a student emergency fund to support students who experience emergencies that may result in their having to leave mid-semester.

#### **Goal #9: Increase Student Support Services**

Objective 9.1: Provide an enhanced social services support network for students.

Method: Have governmental social service agencies hold "office hours" on campus. Designate a faculty/staff member as the coordinator of Community Support Social Services.

Method: Increase peer mentoring, skill building, leadership building, career preparation, counseling (including program to address mental

health), affordable medical care, and financial literacy (including scholarship opportunities and financial aid application assistance) services.

Objective 9.2: Increase job placement services for current students and for alumni including support for those who did not graduate.

Method: Provide life-time free access to NJCU career center, writing laboratory, library, and all on-campus sports events.

Method: Provide students with labor force information and windows into possible careers.

Method: Offer skills workshops to train students in high demand skills.

Method: Provide more career exposure in undergraduate programs, including relevant on campus employment.

Method: Consider embedding certificates in degree programs.

Method: Provide a free maker-space or an innovation hub to support entrepreneurial skills.

Method: Offer unique experiences that can help students imagine different career opportunities.

Method: Ensure that on-campus jobs include a career training component.

Method: Increase students' understanding of how their academic learning and career development are intertwined and inseparable elements of the student experience.

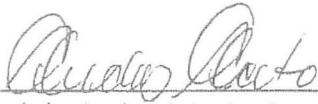
Method: Establish a Mentoring Network that provides insights and connections to help students make their career dreams a reality.

Objective 9.3: Increase current student engagement with NJCU alumni concerning job opportunities and careers.

Method: Alumni office will collect and provide academic departments contact information of graduates from their majors for the last 5-10 years.

\*\*\*SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS\*\*\*





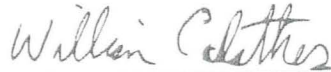
Andrés Acebo, Interim President  
New Jersey City University

Date: 4/4/23



Barbara Hildner, President  
AFT Local 1839 (NJCU)

Date: 4/4/23



Dr. William Calathes, Chief Negotiator  
AFT Local 1839 (NJCU)

Date: 4/3/23



# NJCU

## THE POWER OF PLACE 2024



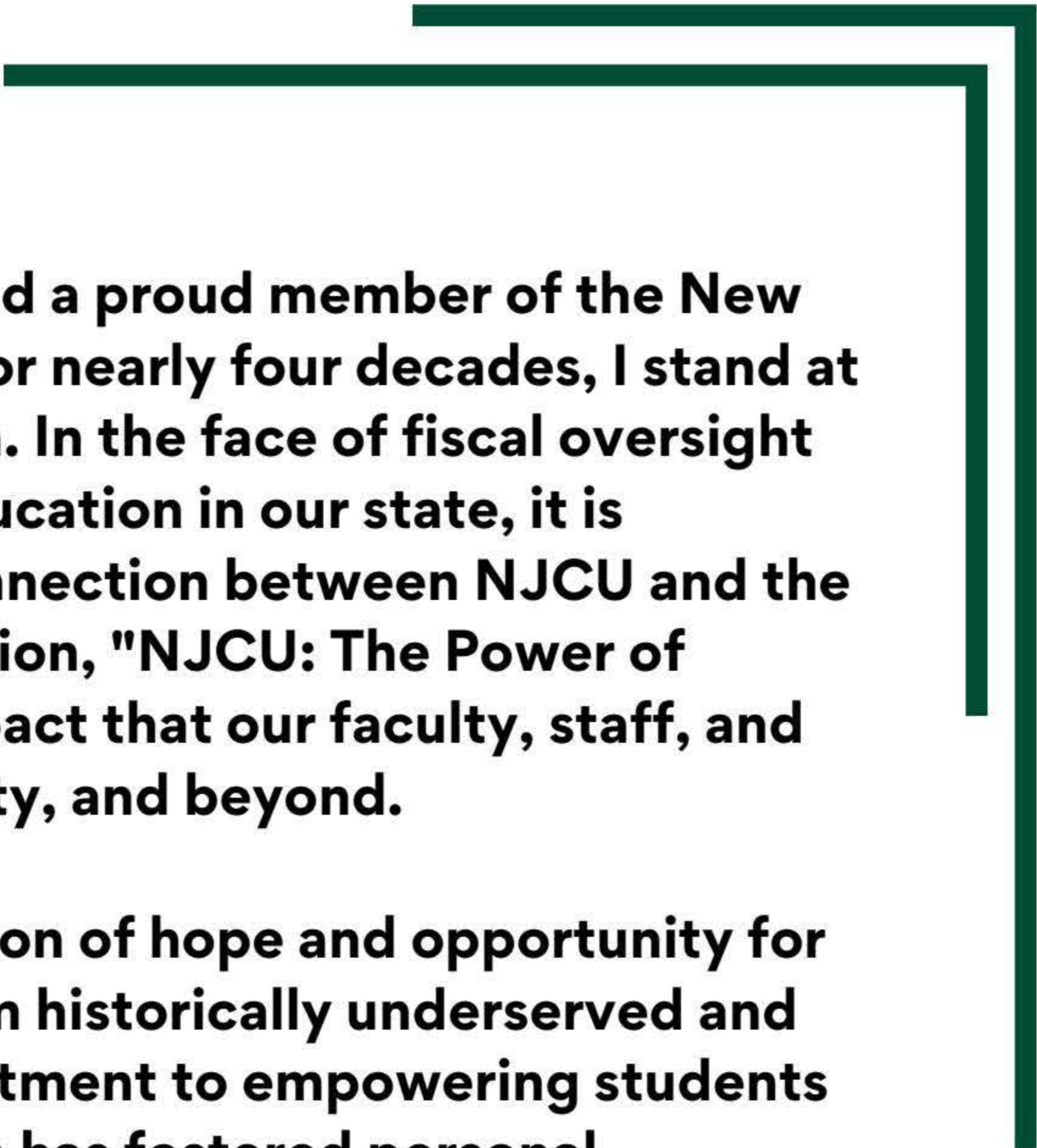
## AFT 1839



# MESSAGE FROM AFT 1839 PRESIDENT, WILLIAM CALATHES







**As the Union President of AFT Local 1839 and a proud member of the New Jersey City University (NJCU) community for nearly four decades, I stand at a pivotal moment for our beloved institution. In the face of fiscal oversight and the potential restructuring of higher education in our state, it is essential that we reaffirm the invaluable connection between NJCU and the vibrant communities we serve. This publication, "NJCU: The Power of Place," seeks to illuminate the profound impact that our faculty, staff, and students have on Jersey City, Hudson County, and beyond.**

**For almost a century, NJCU has been a beacon of hope and opportunity for countless individuals, particularly those from historically underserved and underrepresented backgrounds. Our commitment to empowering students through accessible, equity-driven education has fostered personal, professional, and civic development that uplifts not just individuals but entire communities. As we navigate uncertain waters, it is crucial to highlight how our institution embodies this mission in tangible ways. This report showcases some of the stories and initiatives that exemplify our connection to the region. From innovative courses that address community challenges to unique advisement programs tailored for local residents, NJCU is more than an educational institution; we are a partner in community progress. The voices of our students, who share their transformative experiences and aspirations, serve as a powerful reminder of why NJCU is indispensable to our region's socio-economic mobility.**

**As we advocate for the future of NJCU, we invite community members and decision-makers to recognize the critical role we play in fostering a more equitable society. Together, we can ensure that NJCU not only survives but thrives, continuing to serve as a transformative force in the lives of our students and the broader community. Let "NJCU: The Power of Place" be a testament to our enduring legacy and our unwavering commitment to our mission. It is time to amplify our voice, celebrate our achievements, and champion the irreplaceable impact of New Jersey City University.**

**In solidarity,  
Dr. William Calathes President, AFT Local 1839  
Professor of Criminal Justice, NJCU**



# 2024 A GREAT START FOR NJCU

The faculty, librarians, and professional staff are deeply committed to supporting our students and look forward to working with them in 2024 and beyond.

We have over 1,200 new students for Fall 2024, with more than half of them coming from Hudson County. Additionally, students from 20 of New Jersey's 21 counties are joining us. This includes an increase of 8% in freshmen and a rise of more than 10% in transfer students compared to 2023.

University Admissions participated in 321 recruitment events during the 2023-24 academic year, including high school visits, community college transfer sessions, and various community outreach events. We're excited to welcome both our new and returning students!

NJCU is ranked among the Top 10 in the U.S. and #1 in New Jersey for Social Mobility[1]. It is also the most ethnically diverse college[2] and one of the most affordable[3] universities in the state. We take pride in providing our students and community with a high-quality, affordable education.

1. CollegeNET
2. US News and World Report
3. Northjersey.com





# INNOVATIVE TEACHER INTERNSHIP LOWERS FINANCIAL BARRIERS FOR FUTURE TEACHERS



**One of the most daunting challenges for aspiring teachers in the U.S. is paying for college, especially during unpaid internships and student-teaching experiences, which are essential components of teacher preparation.** While these internships provide valuable, mentored classroom experience, they have traditionally come with a tuition bill. Over the past four years, NJCU faculty member Dr. Michelle Rosen has developed an innovative solution for local students and schools—the New Jersey City University Teacher Intern Program (NJCU TIP)—which is being hailed as a national model.

**NJCU TIP offers College of Education students the opportunity to work alongside experienced teachers in real classrooms—while getting paid.** Future teachers gain valuable classroom experience in K-12 schools through our partnerships with 11 schools in Hudson and Essex Counties. These students work directly with individual and small groups of K-12 students, eventually progressing to whole-classroom instruction. This is a unique opportunity to learn from seasoned educators across grades K-12 while completing their teacher education programs. Data shows a 90% completion rate for NJCU students who participate in the program.

By providing a working wage and hands-on experience aligned with their career goals, the program helps eliminate barriers for preservice teachers. Interns can begin working as early as their freshman year, allowing them to develop essential skills and instructional strategies that will position them as highly qualified future educators. This innovative, one-of-a-kind program not only creates a pipeline for future teachers but also offers valuable instructional support to K-12 classrooms.





## COLLABORATION WITH NASA FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN JERSEY CITY

**Dr. Moitrayee Chatterjee, an Assistant Professor in the Computer Science Department at NJCU, has been awarded a prestigious NASA grant to establish the Collaboration with NASA for Artificial Intelligence in Jersey City at NJCU.**

This grant will engage NJCU students in cutting-edge research and educational activities focused on developing Reinforcement Learning algorithms tailored for autonomous exploration of outer space. Reinforcement Learning, a specialized area within Artificial Intelligence (AI), enables AI systems to learn and adapt based on environmental feedback.

The grant facilitates a close collaboration with Dr. Russell Carpenter, Deputy Project Manager at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, who will act as a subject matter expert and mentor to the students at NJCU. This partnership will enhance students' career readiness by providing opportunities to network with and be inspired by experts from NASA.

**This grant is particularly impactful as it supports AI research in traditionally underserved areas, emphasizing the importance of ethical and effective AI systems as they become increasingly integral to our society. Kudos to Dr. Chatterjee.**



# URBAN SCHOOL LEADERS PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE



Three of our Educational Technology Leadership doctoral alumni are **leading as innovative school principals in our urban schools:**

**Dr. Atiba Buckman (Ed.D., Cohort 9), Principal of Malcolm X Shabazz High School in Newark,** opened the first Newark Board of Education Makerspace, the second largest in Newark. This space is designed for all students and will support STEM programs, the Robotics Club, and non-traditional learners. We're excited to see the great things that will happen there!



**Dr. Martha Osei-Yaw (Ed.D., Cohort 2), Principal of PS #30 in Jersey City,** led her school to earn the eMerge STEM Initiative Award for making a positive impact on the environment. Congratulations, Dr. Osei-Yaw!



**Dr. Peter Mattaliano (Ed.D., Cohort 5), Principal of Mahatma K. Gandhi School PS #23 in Jersey City,** secured a Verizon Innovative Schools Grant for his school. The grant provided two labs equipped with 3D printers, Virtual Reality technology, and a range of other high-tech tools. Peter is a proud MA and Ed.D. alumnus in Educational Technology from NJCU, and also earned his principal's certificate and BA in Special Education from NJCU.



# TELLING THE TRUTHS OF HUDSON COUNTY'S LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY



**This year marks the release of the LGBTQ+ Oral History Project, a digital repository dedicated to documenting and sharing the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community in Hudson County from the 1950s to the present.** Launched in 2021, the project is a collaboration between Dr. Jennifer Musial, Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies in the Department of Gender, Africana, and Latin American Studies, and the Hudson Pride Center.

With New York City historically serving as a hub for queer life in the United States, the adjacent, working-class communities of Hudson County have played a significant yet often overlooked role in shaping the broader LGBTQ+ narrative.

These interviews were conducted by students at New Jersey City University, many of whom are from Hudson County and identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. The project provided a unique opportunity for intergenerational exchange; students were eager to learn from the experiences of older generations while the elders were equally curious to hear about the lives and perspectives of younger members of the community.

The archive can be accessed at <https://hudsoncountyqueerhistory.omeka.net/>

***"IT WAS AN HONOR TO GET THIS PROJECT STARTED ALONGSIDE DR. MUSIAL. THIS ARCHIVE IS VITAL IN SHARING THE STORIES OF QUEER ELDERS WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE HAD THEIR VOICES ELEVATED OTHERWISE. BEING ABLE TO HELP IN THE PROJECTION OF THEIR VOICES AND STORIES HAS BEEN ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF MY COLLEGE CAREER."***

**-- ANNA TRACHSLER, A SENIOR CO-MAJORING IN HISTORY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION WITH A MINOR IN WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES.**



# GETTING PEOPLE WHAT THEY NEED



**At NJCU, we are committed to supporting the whole student** and are especially proud of our efforts to provide essential resources and services to our community, including clothing, food, and more.

Through the Gothic Knight Food Pantry, we offer food and hygiene items to students and their families, serving an average of 100 families per semester and 60 families during the summer.



The Gothic Rack provides professional attire for interviews, career fairs, networking events, and the workplace, helping students succeed in their careers and professional development.

We take pride in our unique responsibility to support our students in all aspects of their growth. NJCU student groups, Youth Corps, and students from A. Harry Moore School contribute to the success of these centers, working alongside staff to serve their peers and the community.



# CREATIVITY AND INCLUSION FOR HUDSON COUNTY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS



**For the past 10 years, NJCU's Educational Technology Department has hosted a Maker Day professional development event for Hudson County teachers.** This year, the event was reimagined as the STEM Carnival of Inclusion, where carnival games were adapted for students of all abilities. Over 40 teachers from the region participated in the session, using everyday items to create engaging, educational projects.

The event was made even more special through collaboration with the faculty and students of A. Harry Moore School. It was a day filled with fun, learning, and community-building. A. Harry Moore is NJCU's College of Education laboratory school, serving students with severe and multiple disabilities since 1921. Over the past 20 years, the Educational Technology Department has also partnered with A. Harry Moore on initiatives such as the Assistive Technology Certificate, the Assistive Technology Working Group, and others.



# SERVING HUDSON COUNTY YOUTH

**NJCU is one of New Jersey's thirteen New Jersey Youth Corps program centers and the only one in Hudson County.** The Youth Corps program has provided personal and professional development to thousands of young adults in Hudson County, ages 16-25.

Youth Corps offers a second-chance opportunity for out-of-school youth in Hudson County. Students participate in academic and certification classes three days a week during 16-week cohorts to prepare for their high school equivalency exams.

In addition to academics, Corpsmembers engage in service learning within their communities. For over a decade, they have contributed to the Let's Celebrate Food Pantry at 46 Fairview Avenue in the Bergen-Lafayette Neighborhood of Jersey City, gaining on-the-job experience while addressing food insecurity. Youth Corps students have also volunteered at other local organizations, such as MedShare in Secaucus and the Jersey City Department of Public Works, and they assist on campus at the Gothic Knight Food Pantry.

Through community service, social-emotional learning, and academic efforts, Corpsmembers create new pathways for setting and achieving attainable goals. Some Youth Corps graduates have even gone on to become NJCU students themselves. The success of the program is made possible by a dedicated team of staff, including Director Nikketa Pressley-Walsh, Program Coordinator Melinda Estrada-Anderson, Counselors/Academic Instructors Asad Faison and Jashae Stewart, and Career Transition Coach/Job Developer CJ Diggs.



**"NJ YOUTH CORPS HAS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT PART IN MY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY. IT WAS AN HONOR TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND THE CORPSMEMBERS. I WITNESSED THEIR LIVES CHANGING UNDER OUR GUIDANCE."**

**-- DOUGLASS BAILEY, FORMER CREW LEADER/ACADEMIC INSTRUCTOR NOW STEM ACADEMIC ADVISOR AT THE UNIVERSITY ADVISEMENT CENTER AT NJCU.**



# GRADUATE EDUCATION FOR HISPANIC AND LOW-INCOME STUDENTS



**NJCU has been awarded a three-million-dollar federal grant to support professional career pathways for Hispanic and low-income students.** The first year of the grant will provide \$600,000, with funding expected for a total of five years. The grant was developed under the leadership of Dr. Muriel Rand, Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, and Dr. John Grew, Interim Director of Research, Grants, and Sponsored Programs and Professor of Biology.

**The grant will expand opportunities for underrepresented students to pursue professional careers that require advanced degrees.**

Specifically, it will help establish a Master's in Social Work program and micro-credentials in Multicultural and Multilingual Services. Additionally, the grant will enhance the curriculum of NJCU's doctoral programs in Educational Technology Leadership and Civil Security Leadership, making them more culturally responsive and inclusive.





# STUDENTS PROTECTING HUDSON COUNTY'S ECOSYSTEM

**Starting in Spring 2024, students in Dr. Allison Fitzgerald's Life and Nature course explored and supported the local watershed.**

This course focuses on Urban Ecology, examining how urban development—such as the growth of buildings, roads, and infrastructure—transforms the natural watershed.

In partnership with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection Watershed Ambassadors, Hackensack Riverkeeper, and Liberty State Park (LSP), students were guided by local Ambassador (and NJCU alum!) Katya Del Mundo. Through this collaboration, students gained hands-on experience with five key projects aimed at mitigating the effects of urbanization:

1) Rain Garden Plantings: Working with LSP educators, students cleared ground, planted native flora, and learned how plants can help improve drainage by acting as natural filters.

2) Invasive Species Removal: Due to increased travel and shipping in urban areas, invasive plants and animals often enter local watersheds. Students participated in the removal of Porcelain Berry weed in Liberty State Park, helping to restore the local ecosystem.







3) Building Bird Boxes: The loss of salt marshes near urban estuaries leads to a significant decline in migratory bird habitats. These salt marshes are vital biodiversity hotspots, crucial to global ecosystems and migratory patterns. By building bird boxes with Jersey City Birds and LSP educators, students helped provide nesting habitats for swallows in Caven Point and Lincoln Park.

4) Stream Assessment: Urban streams often face pollution from oils, road runoff, and excess nutrients, which can overwhelm these waterways, particularly during heavy rainfall, leading to flash floods. Students participated in a statewide stream assessment, collecting data for long-term analysis of how small urban streams are impacted by these pollutants.



5) Plastic Litter: Many urban areas are burdened by trash, particularly plastic waste from food packaging, household litter, and other sources. When street garbage cans overflow or people dump debris into natural spaces, this waste ends up in the watershed. Students collaborated with Hackensack Riverkeeper to catalog litter collected and clean up Mill Creek Park in Secaucus, finding that plastic made up the largest portion of the litter.

Students in the course not only learned about the topic and one way to mitigate it, but they also did a thorough literature search for recent experiments and documents and put together a database of local organizations engaging in this type of research and mitigation. All materials were made available to the public and shared with our partners.

All material can be viewed here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/NJCUforEnvironment>



# ENGAGING WITH JERSEY CITY'S SENIOR COMMUNITY —GIVING AND LEARNING

**Community Engaged Learning (CEL) courses focus on addressing special issues and applying course concepts through collaboration with**

**community partners.** In two sociology courses on aging, students explore mental health, cognitive challenges, healthcare, social programs, and housing issues affecting the senior population.

**NJCU Sociology students have worked closely with Jersey City senior facilities and the Jersey City Division of Aging,** gaining hands-on experience through senior interviews, educational programming, and by coordinating cognitive and psychologically stimulating activities, among other initiatives.

This work is led by Dr. Jennifer A. Pax, a faculty member in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work-- “One of my greatest pleasures is teaching Community Engaged Learning courses where students and I collaborate on projects with the City of Jersey City Senior Centers.”



**NJCU STUDENTS SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

***“I LOVED WORKING WITH THE AGING POPULATION BECAUSE THEY ARE SO FRIENDLY TOWARD PEOPLE.”***

***“I BELIEVE THAT TALKING WITH MRS. B HELPED ME IMPROVE MY COMMUNICATION ABILITIES. IT WAS HELPFUL TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE ON TOPICS FOR MORE INTIMATE INTERACTIONS WITH THE AGING POPULATION.”***

***“I NEVER THOUGHT THAT I WOULD BE OPEN TO WORKING WITH THE AGING POPULATION, BUT MY EXPERIENCES CHANGED BIAS AND STEREOTYPES THAT I HELD AGAINST THE AGING.”***

***“THE AGING POPULATION HAVE SO MANY INTERESTING STORIES AND EXPERIENCED SO MUCH HISTORY. I LEARNED FROM THE SENIORS ABOUT JERSEY CITY ACROSS THE DECADES.”***





# SERVING THE MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS IN HUDSON COUNTY AND BEYOND



**Hudson County, known for being one of the most diverse counties in both New Jersey and the United States, serves a broad range of ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students in its schools.**

**The Multicultural Leadership Department at NJCU has been instrumental in supporting local school districts in providing differentiated learning for multilingual learners.**

Through targeted ESL and Bilingual certification programs, the department addresses the unique needs of each district.

Many Hudson County school districts, including Jersey City, Union City, and Guttenberg, face challenges in staffing their ESL and Bilingual classrooms with qualified, certified teachers. In response, **the Multicultural Leadership Department has partnered with these districts to offer ESL and Bilingual/Bicultural Endorsement programs through various grants, helping to ensure that classroom teachers are equipped to support multilingual learners effectively.**

The Jersey City School District is preparing to launch its fifth cohort of the Dual ESL/Bilingual Endorsement program, following the successful completion of the fourth cohort, where all participants earned eligibility for ESL and Bilingual/Bicultural Teaching Certifications. Additionally, the department collaborates closely with districts like Union City, where hundreds of teachers have successfully completed the dual certification program and are now fully certified in ESL and Bilingual Education.

Across New Jersey, the demand for qualified, fully certified ESL and Bilingual teachers is rapidly increasing, while the shortage of such educators continues to grow. The Multicultural Leadership Department at NJCU is helping to address this urgent need by providing professional development opportunities and vital support for both teachers and multilingual learners.



**NJCU's Office of Military & Veterans Services plays a vital role in supporting and guiding our military community on campus.** As a centralized hub, we raise awareness about the unique needs of our student population, ensuring they experience a smooth transition into academic life. We work closely with service members, veterans, and their dependents, offering assistance in academics, access to supportive services, and advocacy to help them succeed.



## SERVING HUDSON COUNTY VETERANS WHO HAVE SERVED US



In addition to supporting our on-campus military community, we partner with various local organizations to bring essential services directly to campus. **We also provide education for our faculty, staff, and students to increase understanding of the specific needs of our military and veteran populations.** Our goal is to guide, encourage, and celebrate the many contributions they make to enrich the NJCU community.



# STUDENTS, ALUM, AND FACULTY SHOWCASE NEWARK'S RICH MUSICAL LEGACY

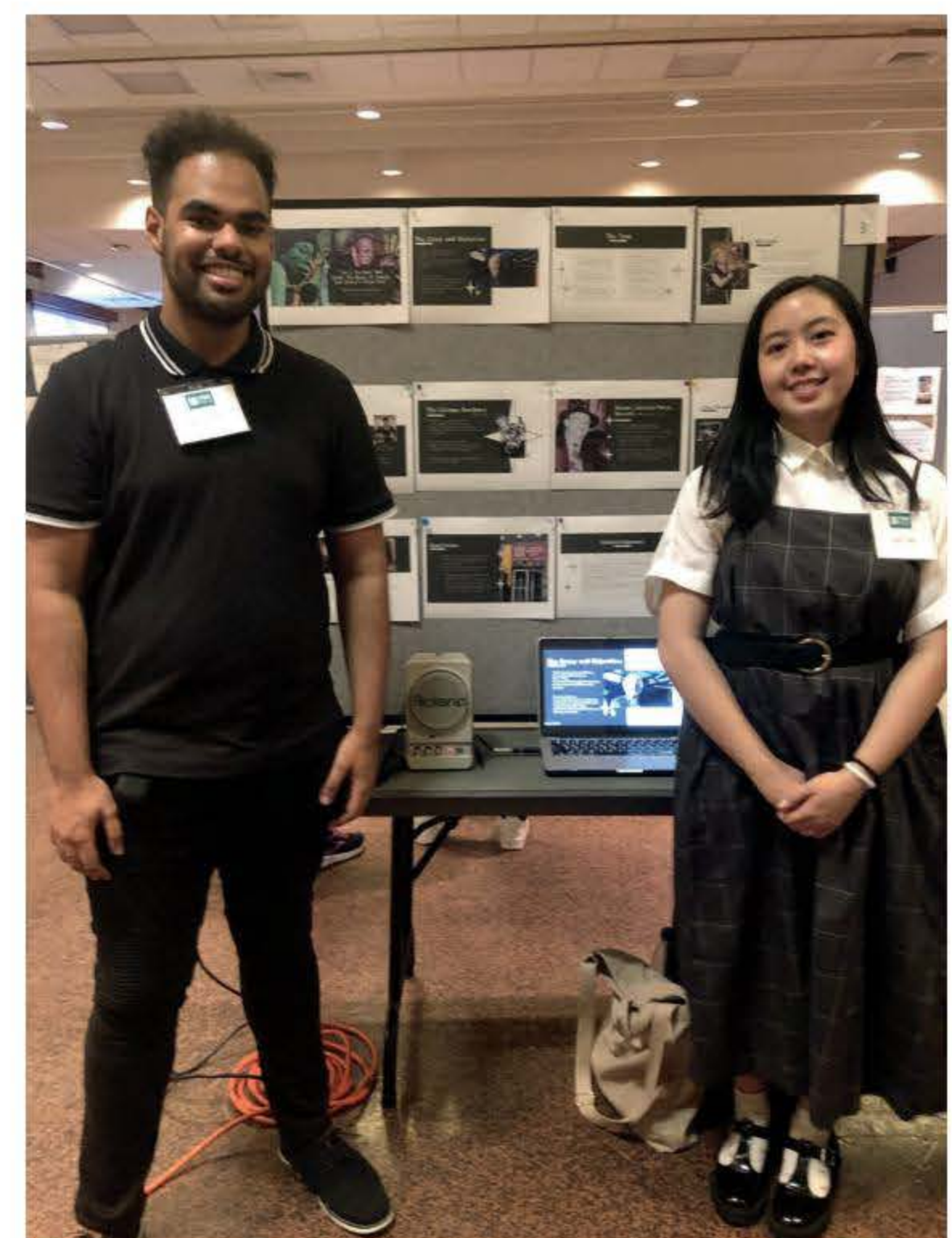
During Summer 2024, NJCU Media majors Leigh Issac and Kendry Hilario worked as research interns on the documentary *Can't You Hear That Sound?* under the guidance of Professor Joel Katz through the Title V Grant program. The film explores the rich legacy of Black music from Newark, NJ.



Newark's music history is filled with iconic artists such as Whitney Houston, Sarah Vaughan, Queen Latifah, Wayne Shorter, James Moody, Woody Shaw, Dionne Warwick, Gloria Gaynor, George Clinton, Lauryn Hill, Redman, Lords of the Underground, choreographer Savion Glover, and MacArthur Award-winning composer Tyshawn Sorey.

*Can't You Hear That Sound?* was conceived by Junius Williams, a Newark civil rights attorney and community activist. As Executive Producer, Williams enlisted Professor Katz in 2023 to co-produce and co-direct the project. Also joining the team were Brian Timmons (NJCU Media Arts, 1999), who served as Director of Photography, and Ryan Morales (NJCU Media Arts, 2023), who was part of the crew.

Leigh and Kendry made invaluable contributions to the project, locating archival materials, including photos, maps, films, and other documents. They conducted multiple research visits to the Newark Public Library's Research Division, the Rutgers Jazz History Archive, and the Newark Historical Society. Both students plan to continue working on the project through the Office of Cooperative Education.





# NJCU STUDENTS WORKING WITH HUDSON COUNTY JUDGES AND COURTS

Understanding the American judicial system, basic constitutional protections, and related governmental processes is a crucial educational objective for college students, regardless of their major. **By immersing students directly in courtroom settings and connecting them with key court actors—judges, attorneys, and court personnel—these processes come to life, fostering a deeper, more meaningful learning experience.**



Dr. Esther Nir has developed an innovative Community Engaged Learning Court Program for Honors Program and Criminal Justice students. **In collaboration with Hudson County Assignment Judge Jeffrey Jablonski and former Hudson County Assignment Judge Peter Bariso, hundreds of students have had the opportunity to visit Hudson County courts to observe real courtroom proceedings, interact with judges in their chambers, and engage in question-and-answer sessions with various court actors.**

In addition, students have participated in mock trials held in Hudson County courtrooms, with a Superior Court judge presiding. These mock trial participants have worked directly with judges to refine their advocacy skills and received hands-on guidance in structured workshop settings.

These experiences have played a key role in demystifying the court system, promoting student interest in civic engagement, and building essential public speaking and critical thinking skills.



# CREDIT FOR WORKING KNOWLEDGE

**For Fall 2024, New Jersey City University has made a bold commitment to support adult learners in our community by introducing a comprehensive Prior Learning Credit policy for both undergraduate and graduate coursework.**

A newly hired Prior Learning Credit Specialist will provide dedicated support to help students convert their prior knowledge, skills, and professional experience into college credits. This ensures that students receive credit for what they've already learned outside of the traditional classroom.

Additionally, students now have the opportunity to take ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency exams in over 100 languages, earning credits that can be applied toward General Education requirements or count toward graduation.

We have also implemented a robust portfolio submission process, allowing students to have their professional experiences and certifications evaluated for potential academic credit. These Prior Learning Credit opportunities align with our mission to enhance transferability by reducing the number of credits required for graduation, removing barriers, and supporting diverse learning pathways.





# REACHING ALL STUDENTS



The TRiO Learning Community (TLC) program is a federally funded initiative under the Student Support Services (SSS) program, dedicated to fostering academic success and providing comprehensive academic support. Serving up to 175 students at NJCU, the TLC program is specifically designed for first-generation students, those from low-income backgrounds, and students with disabilities. TRiO offers a range of opportunities for academic development, helps students meet essential college requirements, and plays a key role in motivating and guiding students toward the successful completion of their higher education journey.



***TRIO HAS PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN MY ACADEMIC JOURNEY, PROVIDING THE GUIDANCE, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES I NEEDED TO NAVIGATE THE CHALLENGES OF COLLEGE LIFE. THE PROGRAM HAS HELPED ME IN COUNTLESS WAYS-FROM OFFERING PERSONALIZED ASSISTANCE TO CONNECTING ME WITH OPPORTUNITIES THAT HAVE STRENGTHENED BOTH MY ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL GROWTH. WHAT I APPRECIATE MOST IS THE GENUINE CARE AND DEDICATION TRIO DEMONSTRATES TOWARD THEIR STUDENTS' SUCCESS. IT GOES BEYOND JUST ACADEMICS; IT'S A TRUE INVESTMENT IN OUR OVERALL WELL-BEING AND FUTURE.***

**-CAROL SWAIN  
STUDENT AMBASSADOR  
TLC ACADEMIC COACH**



# LEE HAGAN AFRICAN AMERICAN CENTER: A BEACON OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURE IN JERSEY CITY AND BEYOND



As a cornerstone of New Jersey City University, the Lee Hagan African American Center plays a vital role in serving the needs of Black students and the larger Jersey City community. Under the leadership of Director Lewis Spears, the Center has become a hub of programming that connects NJCU with its surrounding neighborhoods, fostering a strong relationship between the University and the community it serves. Through various events and initiatives, the Center continues to reinforce NJCU's commitment to being an indispensable resource for Jersey City, Hudson County, and beyond.

## **Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony: A New Beginning**

In February 2024, NJCU proudly hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the official opening of the Lee Hagan African American Center as a space dedicated to the cultural, educational, and political needs of the Black diaspora. This event was more than a ceremonial occasion—it was a clear message to community stakeholders within NJCU and the broader Jersey City area that the Center is here to stay.



Attendees included University leadership, local officials, and members of the Black community, all united in their excitement to witness the unveiling of a space designed to uplift and support Black students. The ceremony underscored NJCU's role not just as an academic institution, but as a committed community partner, addressing the diverse needs of its population.

By fostering collaborative relationships with stakeholders across education, government, non-profits, and business sectors, NJCU demonstrated its continued importance as a unique and indispensable institution for the city and the surrounding region.

## **Exploring Legacy: Celebrating the Black Diaspora**

Following the ribbon-cutting, the Center hosted its inaugural "Exploring Legacy" event in April 2024, offering students, faculty, and the greater community a rare opportunity to connect with the Black diaspora through the Center's resources. This week-long series of workshops, panels, and cultural celebrations explored the rich history, struggles, and triumphs of Black communities worldwide.



The event served as a powerful reminder that the legacy of the African diaspora is not just a historical one, but continues to shape contemporary culture, art, and academia. It was a celebration of the ongoing influence of the Black community, both locally and globally, and an affirmation of the Center's mission to support, inspire, and engage.



## **Juneteenth Flag Raising: Honoring Black Contributions**

The momentum continued with the Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremony, a resounding success that celebrated the invaluable contributions of Black Americans to the fabric of the United States. This event brought the community together in a meaningful way, reminding everyone that the fight for justice, equality, and recognition of Black achievements is ongoing. The flag raising itself served as both a visual and symbolic representation of NJCU's commitment to recognizing and promoting Black excellence.

In conjunction with the ceremony, NJCU partnered with the citywide "All About Us" Juneteenth celebration, where students from the Men of Color Initiative, led by Director Lenny Williams, participated in the festivities. For eight hours, the celebration featured food trucks, vendors, guest artists, ritual celebrations, historical discussions, political announcements, and much more. This collaboration between NJCU and the broader Jersey City community showcased the University's active involvement in local cultural events and its ongoing role in promoting Black heritage and pride.

## **Connecting Youth and Careers Through the "Getting to Know NJCU" Series**

Over the summer, the Lee Hagan African American Center hosted the "Getting to Know NJCU" series, offering local youth a valuable opportunity to explore career pathways in higher education and beyond. Young men from the NAACP's Youth Program, led by the organization's President, visited NJCU to learn about career opportunities and engage with faculty and professionals across various fields.

The program also extended to a local non-profit, "She Is Incorporated," an all-girls group, which visited the University to explore important campus spaces such as the Speicher-Rubin Women's Center for Equity and Diversity, the Counseling Center, and the Art Department. Each space was led by inspiring women leaders—Venida Rodman, Danielle Bachant, and Courtney Chambers—who shared their expertise and experiences with the young girls.

This initiative underscores NJCU's commitment to fostering both academic and social growth for youth in Jersey City. By connecting young people, particularly young men and women of color, with influential mentors and academic professionals, the Lee Hagan African American Center aims to inspire the next generation of leaders from underserved communities.

## **A Unique and Indispensable Support for the Region**

The Lee Hagan African American Center is much more than a cultural hub for Black students at NJCU—it serves as a bridge between the University and the surrounding community. Through meaningful programs, educational opportunities, and spaces for dialogue, the Center solidifies its role as an indispensable resource for Jersey City and Hudson County.

From honoring Black history to engaging youth in career exploration, NJCU demonstrates its unwavering commitment to empowering Black communities, both on campus and beyond. As the Center grows, so does NJCU's impact in the region. Under the leadership of Director Lewis Spears, the University's community-based initiatives will continue to thrive, ensuring NJCU remains at the forefront of cultural, academic, and social progress.



# GIVING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS A COLLEGE ADVANTAGE

**The Dual Enrollment Program at New Jersey City University (NJCU) offers qualified high school students the opportunity to earn both college and high school credits simultaneously, allowing them to get a head start on their higher education while still in high school.** This program provides an excellent opportunity for students to take college-level courses, either at their high school or at one of NJCU's campuses, giving them a challenging and rewarding academic experience.

One example of NJCU's successful partnerships is with University Academy Charter High School (UACHS), where college-ready seniors have been taking the first-year English composition course, ENGL 100, since the fall of 2015. These students complete the course over the entire academic year and receive college credit for their work. Not only does this program save students both time and money, but it also offers them a valuable introduction to the expectations of college-level coursework.

The partnership was initiated by Dr. Caroline Wilkinson, and it has continued to thrive since its inception. In the program's early years, Dr. Wilkinson co-taught the course alongside a UACHS instructor. Today, she and the NJCU English Department collaborate closely with the high school instructor on curriculum development and pedagogy, while the instructor teaches the course. This collaboration has proved to be a successful model, fostering mutual learning between NJCU and the high school.

In addition to University Academy, NJCU has established Dual Enrollment agreements with several other high schools and districts, including:

- Belleville High School (Professional Security Studies courses)
- Hudson County Schools of Technology (Music, Dance, and Theater courses)
- Innovation High School (English, History, Math, and Biology courses)
- Jersey City Board of Education (Modern Language and Career and Technical Education courses)
- Jose Marti STEM Academy (Chemistry and Psychology courses)
- North Bergen High School (Computer Science and Math courses)
- Union Catholic High School (History and Math courses)
- Union City High School (Math courses)
- University Academy Charter High School (English courses)
- Washington Township Public Schools (Professional Security Studies courses)

Through these partnerships, NJCU's Dual Enrollment Program helps students get a head start on their college education, saving them both time and money while providing them with an enriching and academically rigorous experience.





# STUDENT SUCCESS: DEVELOPING A GENERATION OF LEADERS

**Kudos to Ashley Lemon, Victor Delvalle, Malvanie Williams, and the Center for Leadership and Engagement for their ongoing dedication to organizing, mentoring, and supporting students as they discover their voices and navigate their path toward adulthood.**

The annual Student Leadership Retreat in January is a signature event where students from across the campus gather to learn, celebrate, and prepare for the upcoming semester. Over the course of two days, the retreat features guest speakers, special events, and team-building activities designed to inform, inspire, and motivate our students.

Each summer, a workshop retreat is also held for members of the Student Government Association, the Student Activity Board, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Knights Student Media, and Class and Student Organization Officers. During this retreat, students engage in activities that help them better understand their strengths, responsibilities, and opportunities at NJCU. They benefit from workshops and mentorship provided by professional staff and faculty.

This diverse group of students represents high schools throughout Hudson County, contributing to the rich, dynamic community at NJCU.





# STUDENTS RESEARCH ECOLOGICAL METHODS TO PROTECT FROM SUPER STORMS

**From June 2023 through August 2024, students under the mentorship of Dr. Allison Fitzgerald participated in an exciting research collaboration with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) employees, researchers from NY/NJ Baykeeper, the Urban Coast Institute, and NJ Sea Grant.** The students conducted research at the JJ Howard Marine Lab in Sandy Hook, gaining invaluable hands-on experience in marine science and environmental research.

The focus of the experiment was on understanding how invertebrate diversity can impact oyster restoration efforts, with direct implications for enhancing shoreline protection against flooding. The study centered on Oyster Castles, which are commonly used in Living Shorelines—a method designed to mitigate the effects of catastrophic flooding, such as the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy and subsequent hurricanes.

Throughout the project, students worked closely with staff from NOAA, Baykeeper, and the Urban Coast Institute, participating in all aspects of the research process. Their hard work culminated in presentations at both local and national conferences, where they shared their findings and experiences.

This research opportunity was made possible through a grant from NJ Sea Grant and NOAA, which aims to increase diversity and inclusion in marine science internship programs.





# ACCOUNTING FOR CAREER SUCCESS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE



**Over the past several years, the Accounting Department at NJCU has successfully placed an average of 30 students each year into accounting firms, including top-tier firms like the Big Four as well as other national firms.** Thanks to the department's strong relationships with these organizations, students benefit from annual on-campus recruitment events that offer valuable networking opportunities. As a result, many accounting majors secure full-time positions before they even graduate.

One highlight of these partnerships is the PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) annual dinner, held at Fire and Oak at the Westin Hotel in Jersey City. This event invites NJCU alumni currently working at PwC, new interns, and NJCU faculty to connect and build networks. Will Eaves, a PwC partner and member of the NJCU Foundation Board of Directors, was also in attendance. The dinner allowed students and staff to gain insights into PwC's work culture while expanding their professional networks.

In addition to corporate partnerships, the Accounting Department prepares students for hands-on experience through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. In collaboration with HOPES CAP, Inc., a local nonprofit, students receive specialized training to assist low-income individuals with tax preparation. Through this initiative, students not only gain practical skills in tax filing but also make a meaningful impact in the local community by helping residents of Hudson County.

This program not only equips students with real-world tax preparation experience but also fosters a sense of social responsibility and professional growth, preparing them for successful careers while giving back to the community.



# ACCOUNTING FOR SUCCESS...

## David Franza '24



When faced with finding the next step in my academic journey, no matter how much I searched the best option always boiled down to NJCU. They don't just offer a quality B.S. and M.S. program in Accounting but have a multitude of knowledgeable professors who are consistently available in class and office hours ready to help you with any questions you might have.

Being part of this University's Accounting Program also allows students to establish connections with recruiters from Big Four companies such as Deloitte, PWC, KPMG, and other notable companies such as EisnerAmper.

I am proud to say that I received my full-time offer from Ernst & Young and am set to start the winter of 2025 as an associate in their Enterprise Risk Consulting service line. Thanks to opportunities and connections made available to me at NJCU I've been able to lay the foundation to continue building a successful future.

## Andres Pinargote '23

Enrolling in New Jersey City University's Accounting program has been an incredibly rewarding decision for my career. As an undergraduate, I had the privilege of being involved with advisors and professors that had equipped me with the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful career in the world of finance and accounting. Through my academic career, I was able to obtain several internships within the field of taxation that played a pivotal role in honing my skills and transforming me into a competitive accountant.

It was the exceptional support and approachability of the faculty and advisors that truly set this institution apart. As a first-generation student, I had many challenges and questions that some of my professors reassured me with answers and guidance. Advisors like Michael O'Neill, Joshua Iannuzzi, and Mildred Altamirano stood out for their unwavering commitment to my success.

Thanks to my education and experience, I now work at PwC as a tax associate in New York! I am a proud NJCU alumni and will always wear my green hoodie everywhere I go.





## ...STORIES FROM RECENT ALUM

### Patrice Withy '23

NJCU has built a strong foundation for my career. In 2020, at the peak of COVID 19, I made one of the toughest decisions of my life - returning home to the US after having spent several years in the Caribbean. It was a difficult decision because on the one hand I was eager to pursue my academic goals. On the other hand though, I wrestled with the thought of leaving my eight-year-old daughter behind.

So, I eventually left to begin my academic journey at NJCU, where I enrolled in the B.S./M.S. Bridge Program in Accounting. From September 2020 and for the next 3 years, NJCU became that proverbial survival kit. With tools ranging from solid relationships with amazing professors, staff, and students, to networks of golden opportunities I thought only existed in the ivy league world (lol). Those tools opened real doors!!

I landed an internship with the #1 Accounting/Auditing firm in the world - Deloitte. I became NJCU's first Accounting Club President and served as a NJCU Student Senator...and 'to put the icing on the cake', so to speak, I am now an Audit & Assurance Staff at Deloitte.



### Raymond Garcia '22, '23

Throughout the duration of my five-year higher education experience, I had the pleasure of being a student here at New Jersey City University's School of Business.



Upon admission and acceptance to this collective, I quickly learned that the opportunities and resources available were all at arm's reach because of the foundation set before me. My drive paired with the immense support network that exists within our Career Services Center at our School of Business allowed me to develop the knowledge, skill set, network and experience that I carry today. Through the different volunteering, apprenticeship, and internship opportunities I had the pleasure of partaking in, I've been provided with the opportunity to exercise both my personalism and professionalism.

As a result, I've earned my role as a Digital Assurance and Transparency Associate at Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP (PwC) within the New York Metropolitan market. Believe me when I share with you that the education and experience offered here within our University will support you in attaining and accomplishing your greatest aspirations!



# COMMUNITY RESEARCH THROUGH URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY



Urban Anthropology at NJCU had not been taught for many years until **it was revived in 2022 as part of the University's initiative to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion through redesigned course offerings.** The course, now with a Community Engaged Learning (CEL) focus, allows students to conduct research projects in collaboration with local non-profits.

In 2022, students worked with Sustainable Jersey City, conducting interviews about community gardens in Jersey City, gaining firsthand experience in urban research and community engagement.

The following year, students continued their work with local history by conducting oral history interviews for the Museum of Jersey City History. The interviews focused on the diverse neighborhoods of Jersey City and its rich history. The course's professor, Dr. Bill Westerman, also contributed by conducting interviews with notable community figures, including retired NJCU Art Department faculty member Ben Jones, Jersey City Diversity Officer Dr. Floyd Jeter, and former Jersey City Mayor Marilyn Roman.



# GRADUATE STUDENTS THRIVE AT NJCU



**As the only public university in Hudson County, NJCU has a sacred and urgent mission to support the growth of individuals in our community, especially as they advance in their professional and adult lives after earning a bachelor's degree.**

Our alumni, as well as those new to the NJCU area, deserve access to opportunities for career advancement, particularly in leadership roles across education, business, health professions, and social services. We are committed to providing quality, affordable, and accessible education that opens doors to new possibilities.

**Moreover, nationwide, the largest growth in the graduate student population is occurring among Black and LatinX students. In this context, NJCU plays a critical role in serving these communities and helping them achieve their goals.**

In May 2024, 439 graduate students across 30 programs earned their Master's and Doctoral degrees, with programs as diverse and relevant as Accounting, Special Education, Criminal Justice, Health Administration, and Educational Technology Leadership.

When working professionals engage with our courses, connect with faculty, and apply their learning, they contribute directly to local schools, businesses, and social services. By empowering our students, we help them make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around them.



# NJCU STUDENT LEADERS ATTENDED DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

**Two student leaders—Iris Gonzales and Samantha Jaipersuad—had the unique opportunity to experience politics on the national stage by attending the 2024 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois.**

Gonzales and Jaipersuad were among just 15 students nationwide selected to report live from the event through the Civic Influencers Program.

Iris Gonzales, a senior from Lyndhurst, New Jersey, and a graduate of Lyndhurst High School, is majoring in Political Science. She was recently elected Vice President of Internal Affairs for the Student Government Association (SGA). In addition, Gonzales interns at NJCU's Speicher-Rubin Women's Center for Equity and Diversity and is an active member of F.E.L.A. (Federación de Estudiantes Latino Americanos).

Samantha Jaipersuad, a junior from South Plainfield, New Jersey, and a graduate of South Plainfield High School, is pursuing a major in Philosophy with double minors in Pre-Law and Political Science. Jaipersuad also serves as the President of the NJCU Mock Trial Team.





# NJCU AND THE POETRY OF OUR CITY

**Ann E. Wallace, Jersey City resident and Professor of English, was appointed Poet Laureate of Jersey City for 2023-2024. Dr. Wallace is a poet, essayist, public speaker, and Long COVID advocate.**

The Poet Laureate serves as an ambassador for poetry, representing the artistic spirit of Jersey City while fostering public appreciation for the literary arts. This role involves a variety of responsibilities, including poetry readings, workshops, special projects, and collaborations with local and national organizations to inspire and engage people through the power of poetry.



The Jersey City Arts Council evaluates nominations for Poet Laureate, including creative excellence and community impact. The Jersey City Arts Council sends finalists' names and supporting recommendations to the Mayor of Jersey City, who recommends the Poet Laureate nominee to City Council. The Poet Laureate is appointed to a two-year term by resolution from City Council.

For Dr. Wallace, pain, disability, and disease have inspired and informed her work over the past three decades as a poet, essayist, memoir writer, and literary scholar of illness narratives and trauma studies. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, she and her teenage daughter were infected early, and Dr. Wallace soon became one of the nation's first long haulers. She felt an urgency to record her experience. She wrote daily poems through the worst of her severe COVID and continued writing through three years of debilitating chronic illness. This body of work was recently published in her new collection, *Days of Grace and Silence: A Chronicle of COVID's Long Haul* (Kelsay Books, 2024), with a celebratory book launch at Art House Productions in April.

Dr. Wallace's work on Long COVID—both poetry and prose—has appeared in a wide range of venues, including dozens of literary journals, popular media including *Huffington Post* and *USA Today*, and academic journals and collections. She has given readings and talks across the country, has appeared on national media, and serves as a patient representative on the NIH RECOVER Initiative on Long COVID. Her work and media links are available online at [AnnWallacePhD.com](http://AnnWallacePhD.com).

As Poet Laureate, Dr. Wallace launched *The WildStory: A Podcast of Poetry and Plants* for the Native Plant Society of New Jersey in 2023. She hosts and produces the monthly show with master gardener Kim Correro, creating space for lively conversations about the natural world that bring art and science together. The highly acclaimed roster of guests have included Barbara Kingsolver, Ross Gay, Camille Dungy, Doug Tallamy, Margaret Renkl, and many others. *The WildStory* is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and elsewhere.



## A. HARRY MOORE SCHOOL IS SUCCEEDING WITH NJCU



It was a bleak September 2019 when the previous NJCU administration announced that it would be closing A. Harry Moore, the NJCU laboratory school for students aged 3-24 with severe and multiple disabilities that had been serving Jersey City and the area for a century. **Sadly, the NJCU administration did not believe that supporting the school was worth it, and the Board of Trustees concurred. AFT 1839 strongly disagreed.**

Compounding the school's problem, the building was deemed unsafe for occupancy days after this announcement, and the students, teachers, supplies, and equipment were partially moved to temporary classrooms at Regional Day School across town. A few months later, this vulnerable population of students, along with the rest of the world, was hit with the Covid pandemic. Teachers and parents had to stretch their imaginations and resources to provide education and therapeutic services remotely, as teaching materials and equipment were scattered between homes, their temporary classrooms, storage spaces, and their condemned school building.

**Yet they persisted.** In this chaos, the teachers and staff provided a quality education for their students. Moreover, the advocacy of parents, staff, teachers, students, AFT 1839, Vice President for A. Harry Moore Patricia Holzman, and AFT 1839 President Barbara Hildner was tireless.





President Hildner fiercely lobbied the NJCU Trustees, the Jersey City Board of Education, the Jersey City Council, and the Mayor's Office, along with other politicians and community members. She was a constant presence and voice at meetings and town halls across the city—always fighting for the students, teachers, and families of A. Harry Moore—in compelling and dignified prose.

Thanks to this advocacy and the support of the Jersey City Board of Education, A. Harry Moore was given a second chance and has been thriving. The original building has been refurbished, and enrollment has grown. Jason Jusino, the principal since 2020 and NJCU alum and current doctoral candidate, has reinvigorated the spirit and operations of the school and community. The teachers are doing the work that has made them local heroes and national models. The students are flourishing.

Starting in Fall 2024, A. Harry Moore began its state-of-the-art facility on the first floor of NJCU's Grossnickle Hall. This space is designed to educate the older students in the school for occupational and life skills and provide more room in their original building for their growing pre-k program. This new facility has a store, simulated living spaces, and other rooms to build their work and life skills.

Our partnership with A. Harry Moore is one of our points of pride and a commitment worth fighting for!





# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND



September was a busy month at NJCU! The University launched a Civic Engagement and Election Leadership Certificate through the Center for Leadership and Engagement at NJCU. **Over Summer 2024, Dr. Louise Stanton, Jeff Dessources, and Dr. Jennifer Musial met with a community partner, the Hudson County Election administrators. During the meetings, Jeff had an idea—a certificate program. He developed a micro-credential that will result in students earning a digital badge and being inducted into the Leadership Honor Society.**

Students will earn the certificate if they participate in election-oriented civic engagement such as voter registration drives, poll work, and leadership workshops. Among the community partners are Jersey City Councilperson Mira Prinz-Arey, the Hudson County Board of Elections County Clerk Junior Maldonado, Clerk of the Board of Elections Michael Harper, and Superintendent of Elections Maryanne Kelleher.

During 2024 Constitution Day Celebrations—Drs. Stanton and Musial delivered remarks on the Constitution and voting. Jeff announced the NEW Certificate. We also invited guests—the highlight was NJCU’s own senior, Samantha Jaipersaud, who is a Philosophy Major/Prelaw Minor and President of the NJCU Mock Trial Team. She shared her experiences as a Civic Influencer at the DNC convention in Chicago this past summer. Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams, who serves on the Board of New Jersey Institute for Social Justice Civic Influencers and a member of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Civic Engagement, presented this opportunity through a competition. Two NJCU students were selected. A total of 15 Civic Influencers attended, NJCU had 2 spots!!

Dr. Ellis-Williams’ goal is to find ways to move from theory to practice and help facilitate collaborations with civic engagement.



Democracy organizations seeking volunteers also presented at Constitution Day. They included: Assatta Mann, Senior Community Organizer, Institute for Social Justice-NJ, the VOTE16 campaign to enable 16-year-olds to vote, Isaac Jimenez, VoteForALL-NJ, recruiting for the campaign to enable non-citizen voting, and Theo Dassin, Students for Strengthening American Democracy (an initiative of Lawyers Defending American Democracy).

At the start of the fall semester, students at New Jersey City University, including members of Greek organizations and the NJCU Men of Color Initiative, partnered with The Boys & Girls Clubs of Hudson County for a voter registration drive on campus.

In September, Dr. Louise Stanton, an NJCU Political Science Professor and lawyer, engaged with Jersey City residents on voting rights at the Jersey City Public Library—Earl Morgan Branch.

Postcarding is an activity that takes place in NJCU classrooms. Students for Voting Justice, a campaign of the Center for Common Ground (in VA), undertook a postcarding campaign to “get out the vote” (GOTV) (non-partisan GOTV in voter suppressed states). NJCU students decorated the postcards that will be mailed to voters in Pennsylvania. This is a non-partisan GOTV activity.

Furthermore, Dr. Musial's students engaged in one of three projects:

- a) voter registration drives in Jersey City's West Side neighborhood,
- b) Ward Walks with Councilmember Prinz-Arey's office to inform voters about the voting process to correct misinformation, or
- c) civic influencing via social media by creating Instagram posts and TikTok videos that provide information about voting deadlines.





# UNDERGRADUATE SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM GIVES STEM STUDENTS AN ADVANTAGE

**NJCU has offered summer internships to undergraduate students majoring in STEM programs since 2000 through support from federal agencies. In 2024, NJCU extended summer internship opportunities to undergraduate students majoring in arts and humanities programs.** These internships provided on-campus employment to more than 500 students over 24 years and yielded many high-quality presentations at local, regional, and national conferences.

Participation in a summer internship enables students to conduct original research and contribute to creative works under the supervision of faculty mentors. Participants engage in authentic scholarship, work with state-of-the-art technologies, and communicate their findings and works to their professional communities at local, regional, and national conferences. The goal of the internship program is to prepare students for postgraduate study and careers in their respective fields.

This year's program began with an orientation on May 28 and concluded on August 1 with a program of presentations. The students diligently worked on their research and project topics during the 10-week internship program alongside their mentors. In 2024, four federal grants supported 42 student interns and 19 faculty mentors.





## FUTURE LEADERS SUPPORTED BY LOCAL LEADER



**The Center for Career and Professional Development at NJCU proudly hosted the FLY (Finding the Leader in You) Program for the second consecutive year.** Facilitated by the Competitiveness Mindset Institute, the FLY Program equips students with essential soft skills for leadership development and career readiness in the workplace. Each year, students apply to participate in this week-long training. The top-performing students are awarded scholarships, while all participants receive a certificate of completion and attend a recognition ceremony.



## NJCU SUPPORTS THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN NEW JERSEY



**The Guarini Institute at NJCU has worked closely with the Mexican and Mexican American community in New Jersey since it facilitated the official agreement between NJCU and the Consulate General of Mexico in 2021.**

Among the outcomes of the agreement, a mobile consulate has periodically offered services such as birth certificates, passports, and information on health services to Mexican and Mexican American families on the main campus. Also, representatives of the community have participated in events during Hispanic Heritage Month, and a distinguished member of the Mexican American community, Lilia Rios, co-founder of “La Providencia,” joined the Advisory Board of the School of Business.

In addition, initiatives to advance commercial relations between Mexico and New Jersey have been facilitated by the Institute, resulting in high-level meetings and trips to Mexico by representatives of state agencies. In September 2024, the Guarini Institute at NJCU hosted and sponsored the conference “New Jersey-Mexico Business Conference.” Organized jointly with the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce Northeast Chapter and the Consulate General of Mexico in New Brunswick, the conference brought together a dynamic group of business executives, representatives from New Jersey’s economic development agencies, community leaders, and faculty. The discussions highlighted the potential for growth through strengthened supply chains and partnerships between Mexican companies and New Jersey businesses. Beyond business, the event also addressed the critical role of universities in fostering workforce development.



# SUMMER SCIENCE PROGRAM FOR LOCAL KIDS

**Since 1997, the award-winning Proyecto Science summer enrichment program at New Jersey City University has unlocked Jersey City students' curiosity and strengthened their skills across science, technology, engineering, and math.**

Directed by STEM educator Dr. Samantha Kozar, this intensive 6-week program welcomes 7th graders through 10th graders for an immersive on-campus experience. This summer, NJCU welcomed over 250 students to the program.

Through hands-on lab work, innovative projects, and college-level coursework, students grow their capabilities in biology, chemistry, physics, algebra, calculus, computer science, and more while forming friendships that last a lifetime. Generous support from partners like Jersey City Board of Education, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Novartis Pharmaceuticals helps make this enrichment opportunity possible.

Passionate NJCU students and alumni work closely with participants as teachers and mentors. The program culminates in a Capstone presentation where students showcase their academic growth and newly expanded visions for college and future careers.





# WORKING WITH LOCAL REFUGEE COMMUNITIES



**NJCU students have worked with local refugees and recent asylees through the class, Refugees and Forced Migration, offered at the University by Dr. Bill Westerman since 2016.** As a community-engaged learning (CEL) class, students have had the opportunity to work with two community organizations supporting recent arrivals: First Friends of New Jersey and New York, which provides support for detained and formerly detained immigrants and refugees, and Church World Service, a refugee resettlement agency. First Friends was co-founded by Dr. Westerman in 1999.

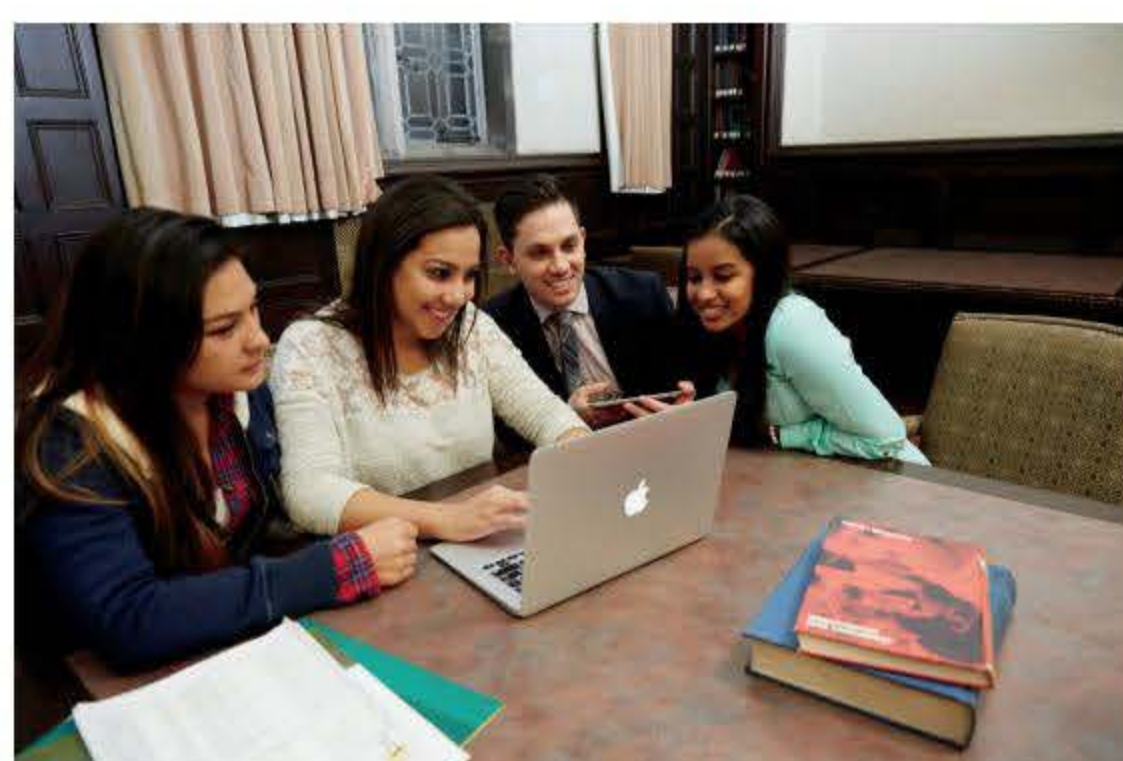
Through this course, one student, Rania Jaludi, herself an immigrant from Jordan, interned at Church World Service, eventually being hired there full-time as a refugee caseworker while pursuing her MSW at Rutgers. Another student, Theresa Ibrahim, created access to a phone-based translation service for recently arrived women from Egypt as her class project. Biology major Omar Kanaan, a refugee from Syria, took the class and traveled to Greece with other sociology students for a study trip, funded by a federal State Department grant, on social work with refugees – his first trip outside the U.S. since getting his U.S. citizenship – where he and other immigrant and first-generation students researched and interacted with medical and mental health professionals serving refugee communities. Social work lecturer Emerson Silva was a social work intern for First Friends as an undergraduate, long before joining the NJCU faculty in 2022.



# BECOMING THE MOST TRANSFER FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY IN NEW JERSEY

**In its 2024-2028 Strategic Enrollment Plan, New Jersey City University has made a bold commitment to becoming the most transfer-friendly university in New Jersey.** By Fall 2024, we are proud to report significant progress, with a nearly 30% increase in transfer enrollment for both the Spring and Fall 2024 semesters. This achievement is the result of a focused and collaborative effort by NJCU's dedicated faculty and staff across four key development areas.

In 2023, NJCU enacted a sweeping reform of its General Education requirements, garnering over 95% approval. This reform aligns our General Education curriculum more closely with those of New Jersey's community colleges, ensuring that nearly every General Education course completed at a community college will transfer seamlessly into NJCU. Not only will these courses count toward graduation, but they will also satisfy specific or substantially similar requirements at NJCU. This reform eliminates barriers for students transitioning from community colleges, allowing them to continue their academic journeys at NJCU without the added stress of redundant coursework. Although primarily designed to support transfer students, these changes also benefit all current and prospective students. No other university in New Jersey has made such a strong commitment to ensuring the academic success and progress of its students.



In December 2023, New Jersey City University and Hudson County Community College (HCCC) launched a groundbreaking institution-to-institution transfer partnership. The HCCC/NJCU CONNECT Program offers nearly 50 unique pathways, linking HCCC degrees to NJCU's bachelor's and master's programs.

Through dual admission, students are enrolled at both institutions simultaneously, gaining the benefits of NJCU's campus life. This includes access to on-campus housing, participation in NJCU programs, and essential student services such as the Gothic Knight Food Pantry and the Children's Learning Center (CLC), which offers drop-in childcare for students with children.

In July 2024, NJCU expanded its commitment to accessible higher education by signing a similar partnership with Essex County College. This collaboration provides the same transfer-friendly pathways and services, broadening opportunities for students seeking to further their academic careers. Initially, the partnership includes 40 unique pathways, with plans to grow the number of programs in the coming months.

These partnerships are designed to ensure seamless transferability, eliminating barriers to higher education and providing students with a clear and affordable path to earn their degrees. By opening doors to affordable, high-quality education, these initiatives aim to empower students and help them build a better future.



# LOCAL MUSICIANS GET THREE-DAY WORKSHOP FROM GRAMMY WINNING FACULTY



**Martha Mooke, a Music Professor at NJCU and 2024 Grammy Award-winning musician, hosted a dynamic 3-day symposium for local musicians and music educators.** Joining her was Rahzel, the legendary beatbox artist and former member of the iconic band The Roots. The workshop provided a unique opportunity for participants to explore new musical ideas, techniques, and technologies, blending diverse cultural traditions and musical styles.

The symposium offered a comprehensive learning experience, including one-on-one coaching, ensemble sessions (both large and small), and hands-on workshops featuring electric string instruments and cutting-edge music technology. For local music educators, it was also an opportunity to earn professional development credits while gaining insights into innovative approaches and methods from world-renowned experts in the field.

Professor Mooke is a trailblazer in the world of electric violin, recognized internationally for her exceptional artistry, music advocacy, and forward-thinking educational initiatives. She has collaborated with musical legends such as David Bowie, Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel, and Barbra Streisand. This symposium is just one example of how Professor Mooke continues to engage with and enrich the NJCU community, bringing her expertise to inspire the next generation of musicians and educators.



# A. HARRY MOORE AND AFT 1839 CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN

**October 31st was a day filled with treats—and even more treats! NJCU's campus was decorated in celebration for the students of A. Harry Moore.** Professional staff in Hepburn Hall joined in the fun by decorating their offices and handing out candy to our costumed trick-or-treaters.

AFT 1839 also made a big impact with their participation, offering large Hershey bars during the Trunk or Treat event in the parking lot. Dozens of AFT 1839 members came together to make this a special day for the children, creating a festive and memorable experience.

Special recognition goes to AFT 1839 Vice President Dr. Patricia Holzman and the entire faculty and staff at A. Harry Moore for their dedication and hard work—not only on Halloween, but every day.





# BUILDING BRIDGES: COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS AT NJCU THROUGH UNION-ADMINISTRATION PARTNERSHIP

**In 2024, New Jersey City University (NJCU) and AFT Local 1839 demonstrated a steadfast commitment to collaboration during challenging financial times, establishing a model for union-administration partnerships in higher education.** Led by AFT Local 1839 and Interim President Andres Acebo, we forged a Memorandum of Understanding for Student Success, reinforcing our shared commitment to advancing the University's mission while prioritizing the well-being of both students and faculty.

Our efforts have focused on several key areas of progress, including strengthening labor relations through regular meetings designed to foster open communication, address faculty concerns, and ensure efficient and timely contract negotiations. A transparent grievance process has been implemented to ensure that faculty voices are heard and respected at every level.

In addition, we have taken significant steps to support faculty development. These include initiatives to enhance workplace safety, promote overall health and wellness, and secure funding for professional development opportunities. We've also refined promotion procedures to ensure greater fairness and support for faculty advancement.







Strategic planning has been a cornerstone of our collaboration, resulting in the development of both an Academic Master Plan and Strategic Enrollment Plan that assess our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Together, we are focused on recruitment and retention strategies that not only prioritize student success but also help attract and retain talented faculty.

Our commitment to fostering strong community ties is reflected in our active involvement with the broader community, including ensuring union representation on the President’s Community Advisory Council. This collaboration strengthens our connection to the community and reinforces our shared commitment to shared governance.



In addition, we have worked closely with a fiscal monitor and engaged faculty in the Middle States accreditation process, ensuring that our collective interests are well represented in governance decisions. Through the efforts of AFT Local 1839, we successfully secured a full-time faculty representative on the Board of Trustees, further solidifying our dedication to shared governance.



To enhance job security, we have developed policies that protect faculty from arbitrary dismissal and mitigate the potential impacts of retrenchment. Our joint review of leave requests and sabbatical options underscores our ongoing commitment to faculty well-being and work-life balance. Additionally, we have made significant improvements to the Paid Leave Bank system, enabling employees to donate unused leave to support their colleagues in need.

Through these collaborative efforts, AFT Local 1839 and NJCU have demonstrated that partnership and shared responsibility lead to positive outcomes—strengthening both the academic environment and the fiscal stability of the institution. As we continue to navigate challenges, securing ongoing support is critical to ensuring that NJCU can effectively serve and empower our diverse community.



## UNION LEADERSHIP OF AFT 1839

WILLIAM CALATHES, PRESIDENT  
CHRISTOPHER SHAMBURG, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
PATRICIA HOLZMAN, VICE PRESIDENT, A. HARRY MOORE SCHOOL  
ROBERT DOWD, VICE PRESIDENT, ADJUNCT FACULTY  
JOHN LASKI, VICE PRESIDENT, FULL-TIME FACULTY  
RUTH ORTIZ, VICE PRESIDENT, PROFESSIONAL STAFF & LIBRARIANS  
JOHN DONNELLAN, TREASURER  
BARBARA HILDNER, GRIEVANCE CHAIR  
JOE MOSKOWITZ, CHIEF NEGOTIATOR  
RECORDING SECRETARY, ALLISON THORNTON  
ISABEL CASAIS, CHAIR FOR CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS & SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE  
RUBINA VOHRA, CHAIR FOR COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE)  
MOITRAYEE CHATTERJEE, UNION REPRESENTATIVE AT LARGE  
ALLISON THORNTON, UNION REPRESENTATIVE FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF  
  
COUNCIL OF NEW JERSEY STATE COLLEGE LOCALS (CNJSCL) DELEGATES:  
WILLIAM CALATHES, JOHN LASKI, MELANIE MCDONALD, JOSEPH MOSKOWITZ,  
ANNA SCANNIELO, RUBINA VOHRA, YUFENG WEI, LING YANG,  
AND MINGSHAN ZHANG  
  
HUDSON COUNTY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL (HCCLC) DELEGATES:  
CHRISTOPHER SHAMBURG AND YUFENG WEI  
  
WEBMASTER/SOCIAL MEDIA, ALLISON THORNTON

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# THE POWER OF PLACE



# **Consent Agenda**



**TO:** Board of Trustees and Ex Officio Members

**FROM:** Andrés Acebo, Interim President

**Cc:** Luke Visconti, Board Chair

Roberta Lee, Board Secretary

Millie Peralta, Chief of Staff

Monica de los Rios, Esq., University Counsel

Joseph P. Baumann, Jr., Esq., Special Counsel

Henry J. Amoroso, State Monitor

**DATE:** February 18, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Executive Summary of Consent Agenda Resolutions

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The consent agenda resolutions presented for your consideration are integral to ensuring the continued operational and strategic success of New Jersey City University (NJCU). A summary of each resolution is provided below:

1. **Personnel Actions** – Approval of faculty and staff reappointments, civil service reclassifications, temporary-to-permanent transitions, and new hires across various academic and administrative units to support NJCU's workforce needs and in compliance with pertinent labor agreements.
2. **Bid Waiver for SPH Consulting Group** – Approval of a bid waiver for SPH Consulting Group to continue providing expert advisory services necessary for compliance with the OSHE Transition Plan and the development of a substantive letter of intent with a potential partner institution in compliance with the April 2024 OSHE Transition Plan effective February 1, 2025.
3. **Bid Waiver for Kessler PR Group** – Authorization of a bid waiver to continue engaging Kessler PR Group for strategic communications services, ensuring NJCU's compliance with and effective implementation of the OSHE Transition Plan on a month-to-month basis effective February 16, 2025.
4. **West Campus Housing LLC Budget** – Approval of the 2025 operating budget for West Campus Housing LLC, authorizing reimbursements and reconciliations in accordance with trust indenture provisions.
5. **Monetization of 275 West Side Avenue** – Approval to proceed with the monetization of University-owned property to align with NJCU's financial and strategic objectives, with oversight from the Executive Committee and guidance from CBRE and Special Counsel.
6. **Reauthorization of Project Labor Agreement (PLA)** – Extension of NJCU's PLA with the Hudson County Building and Construction Trades Council, reinforcing the University's commitment to fair labor practices, local workforce development, and student internship opportunities in the construction sector.



7. **Conferral of Degrees** – Authorization for the conferral of degrees at the May 28, 2025, commencement ceremony, including honorary degrees for Ambassador Julissa Reynoso Pantaleón and former U.S. Senator George S. Helmy.

These resolutions reflect NJCU's ongoing commitment to sound financial stewardship, institutional sustainability, and student success. I appreciate your attention to these matters and welcome any questions you may have ahead of our meeting.





**Board of Trustees  
Public Session**

**PCNG Committee  
Agenda**

**1. Personnel | Compensation Topics**

- **Faculty and Staff Personnel Actions**
  - Faculty Reappointments
  - Professional Staff Reappointments
  - Managerial Salary Adjustment, Regular Appointments, Temp to Perm and Temporary appointments
  - Professional Staff Temporary to Permanent
  - Professional Staff Reappointments
  - Managerial Temporary Appointments
  - Temporary -to-Permanent Appointments
- **New Hires**
  - New Hires: Faculty, Managerial and Professional Staff & Temporary Appointments





Board of Trustees  
Public Session

**Faculty Candidates for Reappointment  
Group 1 – Distribution Date: October 1, 2024**

**Faculty to the 7<sup>th</sup> Year and Tenure (Effective: September 1, 2025)**

1. Dr. Addullah Al-Hayajneh, Assistant Professor, Professional Security Studies
2. Dr. Juste Codje, Assistant Professor, Professional Security Studies
3. Dr. Nelda Ephraim, Assistant Professor, Nursing
4. Dr. Jennifer Pax, Assistant Professor, Social Work
5. Dr. Lijun Ruan, Assistant Professor, Accounting

**Faculty to the 6<sup>th</sup> Year (Effective: September 1, 2025)**

1. Dr. Moitrayee Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, Computer Science

**Faculty to the 5<sup>th</sup> Year (Effective: September 1, 2025)**

1. Dr. Lauren Johnson, Assistant Professor, Sports Management
2. Dr. Jonathan Rosen, Assistant Professor, Professional Security Studies

**Professional Staff Candidates for Reappointment for July 1, 2025**

**Professional Staff for Reappointment Consideration (Currently on 5 Year)  
(Eligible for a Multiyear Reappointment up to 5 Years: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2030)**

1. Mr. Paul Gargiulo, Professional Services Specialist 1, University Communications and Marketing
2. Ms. Elaine Gargiulo, Professional Services Specialist 1, University Advisement Center
3. Ms. Angela Arriaza- Jarquin, Professional Services Specialist 2, Academic Affairs
4. Ms. Luceand Cuba Rivera, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Registrar
5. Ms. Sarah Ambrose- Roman, Professional Services Specialist 1, Dean of Art and Science

**Professional Staff for Reappointment Consideration (Currently on 4 Year)  
(Eligible for a Multiyear Reappointment up to 4 Years: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2028)**

1. Ms. Sachie Tsumura-Tmart, Professional Services Specialist 1, Admissions

**Professional Staff for Reappointment Consideration (Currently on 4 Year)  
(Eligible for a Multiyear Reappointment up to 3 Years: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2028)**

1. Mr. Malvanie Williams, Professional Services Specialist 2, Campus Life





**Board of Trustees**

**Public Session**

**Professional Staff for Reappointment Consideration (Currently on 3 Year)**

**(Eligible for a Multiyear Reappointment up to 3 Years: July 1, 2025- June 30, 2028)**

1. Ms. Anna Carhart, Assistant Director 2, Music, Dance & Theater
2. Ms. Tricia Koufodontis, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Child Care Center
3. Mr. Thomas Lee II, Assistant Director, Athletics
4. Ms. Ashley Pais, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Athletics
5. Mr. Jason Roque, Professional Services Specialist 2, Media Arts Center
6. Ms. Theresa Spataro, Professional Services Specialist 2, Dean of Professional Studies
7. Mr. Anthony Tuesta, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Athletics
8. Ms. Peter Vincent, Professional Services Specialist 4, Athletics
9. Mr. Leonard Williams, Professional Services Specialist 2, Academic Affairs
10. Ms. Jazmin Zegarra, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Office of Specialized Services

**Professional Staff for Annual Reappointment Consideration (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026)**

1. Ms. Emily Alequin, Professional Services Specialist 2, College of Professional Studies
2. Ms. Samantha Amorino, Prof Services Specialist 4, College of Professional Studies
3. Ms. Deatra Ashley, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Dean School of Business
4. Mr. Douglass Bailey, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, University Advisement
5. Mr. Ronald Baines, Assistant Director 2, Athletics
6. Ms. Stephanie Burbano, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, TRIO
7. Ms. Evelin Candelario, Assistant Director 2, Admissions
8. Ms. Julieanne Castillo, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Admissions
9. Mr. Alan Cruz, Assistant Director 3, Pre-College Program
10. Mr. Robert Dailey, Professional Services Specialist 4, English (grant funded)
11. Ms. Damarys Escoto, Professional Services Specialist 1, Counseling Center
12. Mr. Jason Estevez, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Athletics
13. Ms. Barbara Etheridge, Assistant Director 3, College of Education
14. Mr. Asad Faison, Professional Services Specialist 4, Youth Core
15. Ms. Madeline Fermin, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Admissions
16. Mr. Jorge Fernandez, Professional Services Specialist 2, Admissions
17. Ms. Kelly Francisco, Professional Services Specialist 4, Admissions
18. Ms. Strawberry Gallagher, Professional Services Specialist 4, Registrar
19. Mr. Darwin Garrido, Professional Services Specialist 4, Residence Life
20. Ms. Hannah Gavin, Professional Services Specialist 4, Athletics
21. Mr. Steven Haber, Professional Services Specialist 2, University Advisement
22. Ms. Cindy Gerez, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Financial Aid
23. Ms. Anne Kathryn Gonzales, Professional Services Specialist 4, Admissions
24. Mr. Andre Grant, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Financial Aid
25. Mr. Brendan Guzman, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Athletics
26. Mr. Barry Hart, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Athletics
27. Ms. Carol Hope Grant, Professional Services Specialist 4, International Programs
28. Ms. Manica Jacques, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, University Advisement Center
29. Ms. Evana Lyka Jornales, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Financial Aid
30. Ms. Stacey Kanga, Professional Services Specialist 1, Admissions
31. Mr. Keyon Kennedy, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Financial Aid





**Board of Trustees  
Public Session**

32. Mr. Thomas Krychkowski, Professional Services Specialist 1, Admissions
33. Ms. Shamara Lannaman, Professional Services Specialist 1, Admissions
34. Ms. Nicole Leibowitz, Professional Services Specialist 2, Admissions
35. Ms. Ashley Lemon, Assistant Director 3, Campus Life
36. Ms. Tania Martins, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Admissions
37. Ms. Sarah McGough, Professional Services Specialist 4, Career & Professional Development
38. Ms. Karla Mejia, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Athletics
39. Ms. Adriana Mendez, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, University Advisement Center
40. Ms. Ashley Merchant, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, University Advisement
41. Mr. Hiram Miranda, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Admissions
42. Ms. Shruthi Nambala, Professional Services Specialist 4, Admissions
43. Ms. Sarah Najdi, Professional Services Specialist 4, Opportunity Scholarship Program
44. Ms. Krystalie Ortiz, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Admissions
45. Mr. Richard Pepin, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Registrar
46. Ms. Nikketa Pressely- Walsh, Assistant Director 1, Youth Corps.
47. Ms. Jennifer Rak, Professional Services Specialist 4, Office of Specialized Services
48. Mr. Jordan Robinson, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Athletics
49. Mr. Christian Rodriguez, Professional Services Specialist 1, Counseling Center
50. Ms. Mabel Sanchez, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Financial Aid
51. Ms. Joeline Sanders, Professional Services Specialist 4, Dean of Education
52. Ms. Rebecca Sanders, Professional Services Specialist 4, ORGSP
53. Mr. Jahshae Stewart, Professional Services Specialist 4, Youth Corps
54. Mr. Sohaib Talat, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Registrar
55. Mr. Carlos Tejeda Urena, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Admissions
56. Ms. Andrea Tider, Professional Services Specialist 4, Dean School of Business
57. Mr. Kevin Torres, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Financial Aid
58. Ms. Kimora Wade, Professional Services Specialist 3 SA, Admissions
59. Ms. Kaitlyn Watson, Professional Services Specialist 4, Institutional Effectiveness
60. Ms. Kimberly D. Williams, Professional Services Specialist 4, Admissions

**Managerial Staff Regular Appointments**

1. Amanda McGee, Confidential Assistant to the Provost  
Vice President, Academic Affairs  
Salary: \$103,000.00  
Effective: 12/02/2024 – *Regular Appointment*

**Managerial Staff Temporary to Permanent Appointment**

1. Danielle Bachant, Director  
Counseling Center  
Salary: \$105,359.26  
Effective: 12/15/2024 -*Regular Appointment*





**Board of Trustees  
Public Session**

**Managerial Temporary Appointments**

1. Esther Nir, Interim Dean of Professional Studies  
Dean of Professional Studies  
Salary: \$182,108.25  
Effective: 12/2/2024

**Professional Staff Temporary to Permanent Appointment**

1. Keyon Kennedy, Professional Services Specialist 3 - Student Financial Services Coordinator for Outreach  
Financial Aid  
Salary: \$64,760.85  
Effective: 12/16/2024 -*Regular Appointment – Selected via Search Committee*

**New Hires**

**Faculty Temporary Appointments**

1. Maria Montanez, Assistant Professor  
Nursing  
Salary: \$93,722.87  
Effective: 2/1/2025

**Managerial Staff Regular Appointments**

1. Alexi Agramonte, Associate Bursar  
Bursar's Office  
New Salary: \$93,000.00  
Effective: 12/16/2024
2. Kelly Linden, Director  
Human Resources  
Salary: \$150,000.00  
Effective: 1/27/2025

**Professional Staff Temporary Appointment**

1. Sakshi Chauhan – Professional Services Specialist 4  
Nursing  
Salary: \$53,277.47  
Effective: 1/21/2025





**Board of Trustees  
Public Session**

2. Hillary Sosa, Preschool Teacher – Professional Services Specialist 4  
Childcare Center  
Salary: \$55,940.32  
Effective: 1/13/2025

**Note:**

1. As of the last Board meeting held on December 9, 2024



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY  
RESOLUTION APPROVING A BID WAIVER FOR SPH CONSULTING GROUP**

**WHEREAS**, Pursuant to the New Jersey State Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:64-52 et seq. ("Statute"), New Jersey City University ("NJCU" or "University") must advertise for bids on all contracts for goods and services which exceed \$110,900, except under circumstances specified in the Statute where bids may be waived; and

**WHEREAS**, Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56(a)(1), a contract or agreement may be made, negotiated, or awarded by resolution at a public meeting of NJCU's Board of Trustees ("Board") without public advertising if the contract or agreement involves professional services; and

**WHEREAS**, The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education ("OSHE") issued an April 2024 Transition Plan ("Transition Plan") mandating NJCU's selection of a partnership option and the development of a substantive letter of intent with a partner institution; and

**WHEREAS**, The expertise and experience of SPH Consulting Group is necessary to ensure compliance with the OSHE Transition Plan and to facilitate the partnership process effectively and in a timely manner; and

**WHEREAS**, SPH Consulting Group has previously provided expert advisory services to NJCU in furtherance of its transition and compliance efforts, and their continued engagement is critical to maintaining continuity and expertise in the University's efforts to fulfill OSHE's requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, The Board has determined that the engagement of SPH Consulting Group constitutes a professional services contract, thereby qualifying for a bid waiver under N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56(a)(1); and

**WHEREAS**, the President in consultation with the Executive Committee and the State Monitor reviewed and recommended the approval of a bid waiver for SPH Consulting Group for the amended and continued engagement necessary to ensure compliance with OSHE's Transition Plan;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Board of Trustees of New Jersey City University hereby approves the bid waiver for SPH Consulting Group and authorizes the University President, Chief Financial Officer, or their designees to enter into a contract with SPH Consulting Group for the amended and continued expert engagement to support the University's compliance with OSHE's Transition Plan; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Board directs the University administration to take all necessary and appropriate steps to formalize the agreement and ensure the efficient and effective execution of the required partnership option selection and the development of a substantive letter of intent with a partner institution.

Adopted this 24th day of February, 2025, by the Board of Trustees of New Jersey City University.



# **FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER FOR NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY:**

**Reaching A Letter-of-Intent  
and  
the Definitive-Partnership-Agreement**

**From**



**CONSULTING GROUP**  
**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN**  
**HIGHER EDUCATION**

January 17, 2025

<https://sphconsultinggroup.com/>  
[@ConsultingSPH](#)



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## A. INTRODUCTION

In May 2022, the New Jersey City University [NJCU] was forced to file a fiscal emergency because of a reported structural deficit of \$22MM. Not unlike many other institutions of higher education, NJCU was facing a significant decline in enrollment. The challenges of this situation were compounded by excess debt which was brought on by a variety of factors not the least of which several decisions regarding the acquisition of property, and poor investments in programs that failed to produce the required results. Moreover, campus facilities suffered from years of neglect and a near complete absence of required maintenance. At the same time, NJCU had accrued significant long-term debt and had exhausted its ability to identify additional capital to render all the repairs required to ensure a viable campus operation. This situation prompted passage of P.L. 2023, c.115 which required public institutions of higher education to submit an annual fiscal monitoring report and authorized the Secretary of Higher Education to appoint a state monitor. In August 2023, Dr. Henry Amoroso, a New Jersey attorney and Seton Hall professor of legal studies was appointed as NJCU's fiscal monitor. Dr. Amoroso completed a "Fiscal Accountability Plan" which was designed to achieve a turnaround of NJCU's financial instability. The plan provided 11 recommendations, one of which suggested consideration "for NJCU to reconstitute as Jersey City College, a campus of a larger mission-aligned system with its own chancellor and attendant support, integrated into a larger system or institution."

To explore various options for NJCU to re-position itself in this new model, an RFP was issued on May 31, 2024. SPH Consulting (SPH) responded to this RFP and In August 2024, the firm was engaged to study, analyze and provide recommendations regarding the evolution of NJCU from its current state to an operationally viable and fiscally sound institute of higher education serving the unique needs of Jersey City and its surrounding region. The engagement began in August 2024, and concludes six months later, January 31, 2025, per the instructions of the original RFP (Addendum #2, "*The scope of work as determined will need to be completed by January 2025*"). SPH produced a comprehensive assessment of NJCU's current state of the schools' academic programs, support services, business systems, facilities and financial position. This work was all done through a lens of how-to best position NJCU to ensure its ability to continue meeting its mission in higher education.

Among its recommendations, SPH concluded that NJCU's best and only path forward was to join with a larger institution through some type of partnership, most likely achieved through a merger. During its engagement, SPH screened a number of potential candidates. Following, an RFP was issued by NJCU and statements of interest were received. NJCU leadership is at the point of evaluating all such proposals and determining which of these proposals offers the best option for long term sustainability and student service for the NJCU campus.

Next steps, if a partner is selected include: (1) negotiating a formal letter-of-intent (LOI); (2) defining a process that results in a new relationship and the Definitive Partnership Agreement (DPA); (3) managing the complex implementation process of bringing this relationship to fruition; and (5) managing the associated communications. In turn, the potential strategic partners will be exploring with the State the possibility and mechanisms for assistance with resources and funding.

In this setting, SPH has been asked to provide the following proposal which would extend the company's engagement with NJCU to facilitate the above work. The proposal which follows will describe how we envision this process to unfold and how we can engage all parties to enable a positive result.



## B. ABOUT SPH CONSULTING GROUP

### 1. Firm name and address

- **Tellurian Global, LLC (d/b/a SPH Consulting Group)**
- 2461 Mountain Vista Dr., Vestavia, AL 35243
- Emails:
  - o [Office@tellurianglobal.com](mailto:Office@tellurianglobal.com)
  - o [Office@sphconsultinggroup.com](mailto:Office@sphconsultinggroup.com)
- Telephones:
  - o +1 (833) 575-1888, ext. 2
  - o +1 (706) 305-0383 (direct)

### 2. About SPH Consulting Group

SPH Consulting Group (SPH; “the Consultant”) is ready to serve as the partner of choice for advising, guiding, and assisting college and university governing boards, executives, and policymakers as they consider major future-oriented institutional restructuring strategies, including strategic partnerships, mergers, acquisitions, consolidations, and planned closures. SPH provides a variety of services that will help ensure full and complete consideration of the strategic options for major institutional restructuring available to higher education leaders and, when it is the right decision, the successful execution and implementation of the chosen strategy.

SPH is a team of experienced higher education experts who have actively and directly managed to success these types of major restructuring events, as well as strategic planning and new development initiatives that institutions of higher education face in today’s climate. SPH consultants understand and know how to navigate the complexity, unique requirements, and sensitivities that mergers and consolidations in higher education require. This unique knowledge is based on a mix of experience, learning and research.

SPH Consulting Group (SPH) is a d/b/a/ of Tellurian Global, LLC, a company founded by Hispanic American higher education leader, Ricardo Azziz. The company is designated as an official Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) through the Southern Region of the National Supplier Development Council (NMSDC). SPH is compliant with all NJ regulations regarding operating in the state.

SPH Consulting Group was established by Ricardo Azziz, a recognized thought leader in mergers, consolidations, acquisitions, strategic partnerships and other major restructuring in higher education. Ricardo’s book *‘Strategic Mergers In Higher Education’* (JHU Press, 2019); contributions to the TIAA Institute (*‘Mergers in Higher Education: A proactive strategy to a better future?’* in 2017, and *‘Critical competencies for leading major institutional restructuring in higher education (aka Big Scary Change)’* in 2023), and his regular column (*‘Merger Watch’* in *Higher Ed Dive*) are widely used as reference materials for the subject. His next book, *‘Leading Existential Change in Higher Ed: Mergers, Closures and Other Major Institutional Restructuring’* will be published shortly (JHU Press, 2024).



## C. PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

During the next 6 months (February 1, 2025 to July 31, 2025), NJCU (“the Client”) will need to; (1) decide on the selection of a strategic partners; (2) define the parameters of the new relationship, if one is chosen; (3) reach a mutually agreeable LOI; (4) continue to define the nature of the relationship; (5) achieve the definitive partnership/merger agreement; (6) communicate with stakeholders; and (7) obtain the approval of state, regional, federal, and specialty regulators. Simultaneously, NJCU and its chosen strategic partner will have to engage a diverse group of key stakeholders in this process, including the state of New Jersey legislature, the Governor’s office, campus communities, including students, faculty, staff and alumni, and the local community, all on the way to consummating the partnership. The process is long, complex and will test the leadership, staff, faculty and student body as the school’s direction and new identity are determined.

Once a partner is chosen and the LOI is complete, the two organizations will need to engage in an even more complex process that produces: (1) a Definitive Agreement; (2) a commitment from the State of New Jersey that determines the amount of financial support it will provide to this new entity; (3) a process for obtain final approval of accreditors, and; (4) a detailed plan that enables the two organizations to merge into a single operating entity. SPH has been part of and supported similar processes between different institutes of Higher Education. We offer our assistance to enable this work in the proposed scope of work that follows.

For purposes of this proposal, the work has been divided into 2 additional phases of work, considering **PHASE 1** as the completed Due Diligence part of the engagement (Aug. 1, 2024-Jan. 31, 2025).

**PHASE 2 – Reaching the LOI** – Complete and gain approval for a Letter of Intent (LOI); begin drafting the post-LOI to DPA plan; assist with associated communications; and continue to provide guidance and advise to NJCU board and executive, and state officials.

**PHASE 3 – Initiate the Process towards the DPA** – Provide guidance on the development of the DPA; begin drafting potential the post-DPA plans; continue to assist with associated communications; and continue to provide guidance and advise to NJCU board and executive, and state officials.

SPH proposes to bring its considerable experience to bear, in support of the leadership of NJCU as it pursues a strategic merger with whichever organization it ultimately determines to be the most suitable partner. We detail each of these phases below, although we recognize that much will arise during the actual process that is unexpected and that will need to be dealt with.

### **PHASE 2 – Reaching the Letter-of-Intent (LOI)**

During PHASE 2, SPH will facilitate a process through which NJCU can select a preferred institution with which it will partner with or, if so chosen, merge into a single organization and operating entity. SPH will work with NJCU’s leaders to engage key stakeholders and produce the following deliverables:

1. Assist and, where appropriate, facilitate decision-making regarding the final selection of a strategic partner.
2. Facilitate and advise on the negotiation of a (binding/non-binding) LOI.
3. Draft a post-LOI to Definitive Partnership Agreement (DPA) timeline and milestone plan.
4. Assist CEO and executive staff with engagement (oral and written) of key groups, including Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), New Jersey (NJ) Governor’s office, NJ State legislature, US



Department of Education, accreditors, Board and its executive committee, banks, creditors, and campus and community stakeholders.

5. Assist and, where appropriate, facilitate the development of post-LOI negotiations plan.
6. Provide advice on communications, as needed, coordinating with other consultants (e.g. Kessler PR) and NJCU staff, as necessary.

### **PHASE 3 – Initiative the Process Towards the Definitive Partnership Agreement (DPA)**

During PHASE 3 of this engagement, SPH will continue the work initiated during the completion of the LOI. Deliverables during PHASE 3 of the engagement will include the following:

1. Facilitate and advise on the negotiation leading to the DPA.
2. Initiate planning for the post-DPA implementation phase, including helping draft a high level post-DPA timeline and milestone (Gantt chart) to reach full partnership approval.
3. Advise NJCU leadership and support the preparation and submission of a Complex Substantive Change Application, if needed, to Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).
4. Provide guidance to NJCU to ensure that its current MSCHE reaccreditation self-study is not disrupted, while facilitating any parallel work on a potential complex substantive change application.
5. Continue to provide advice on communications, as needed, coordinating with other consultants (e.g. Kessler PR) and NJCU staff, as necessary.

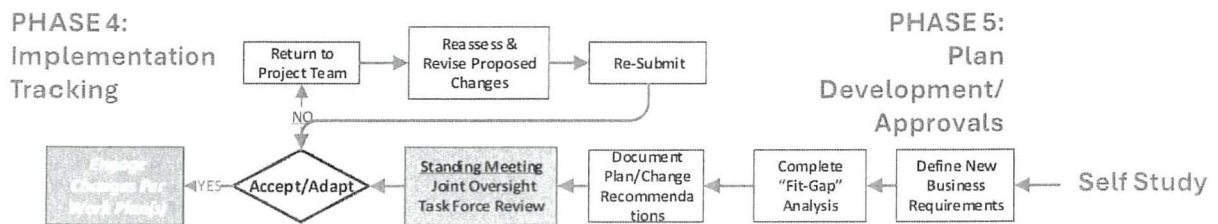
We should note that as we plan for PHASE 2, we can be relatively sure as to the timeline, tasks, key deliverables and next steps. Regarding PHASE 3, however, the time frame regarding deliverables concerning this part of the work becomes less clear and, in any event, any estimates assume an appropriate level of action and engagement by the Client and their chosen partner.

We also would like to note that while SPH can advise and guide the drafting of the LOI and DPA, these documents will also require expert legal review before final execution, the cost of which is not included in this proposal.



## D. FUTURE STEPS

- Operational implementation and integration.** Once a definitive (DPA) agreement is completed and signed, and implementation planning is underway, the work of integrating the two organizations begins (PHASES 4 & 5, see **Figure**). This will include execution of all actions necessary to complete the transaction successfully. SPH can assist with this process, if desired.



- Developing and managing an effective and targeted communication strategy.** A thoughtful, comprehensive, and effective communication plan is critical to ensure the success of any institutional-level transaction or restructuring effort. A comprehensive and meticulously crafted communication strategy targeting key stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the broader community associated with both institutions will need to be developed. In subsequent phases of the transaction the communication plan will align with the public announcement date and the transaction's effective date, ensuring a cohesive and synchronized communication approach. The communication strategy will encompass a range of essential deliverables, including press releases, email blasts and Q&As, a merger web site with FAQ page, open forum webinars, and staff media training, as needed. SPH can assist with this process, working with other designated consultants and NJCU staff, if desired.



## E. PROPOSED CONSULTING TEAM

SPH Consulting Group offers a consulting team with over 120 years of combined experience in higher education, strategic planning, and business transactions, including mergers and acquisitions. The proposed project will be managed by the following team.

**NOTE:** While we also note the specific roles that each team will perform below, we should note that the work of SPH is truly carried out in a team manner, constantly leveraging the entirety of the team's expertise, in coordination and collaboration with NJCU leadership. Other SPH advisors and consultants may be engaged as needed, depending on their expertise.

**Ricardo Azziz, MD, MPH, MBA, Principal, SPH Consulting Group (Lead Consultant)** – With over twenty-five years



of leadership experience, throughout his career Ricardo Azziz has been actively engaged in ensuring institutions reach their greatest potential. He served as president of Georgia Health Sciences University, leading the merger and alignment of various clinical entities to create the state's only public academic health system, now August University Health System. He also led the merger of Georgia Health Sciences University and Augusta State University that resulted in Georgia Regents University (now Augusta University), serving as founding president. He served as Chief Officer for Academic Health and Hospital Affairs for the State University of New York (SUNY) system administration, overseeing a more nearly \$4 billion portfolio, including all medical, dental, optometry, nursing, and other health professions schools, and associated hospitals. Dr. Azziz also served as member of the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC), and as founding director of the SUNY Hispanic Leadership Institute, a unique initiative aimed at enhancing the capacity of emerging higher education leaders to serve as university and college executives and presidents.

Ricardo is a sought after thought leader in the arenas of higher education governance and administration, university/college presidency, change management, institutional restructuring, diversity, equity and inclusion, leadership development, and academic health. Among other venues, he has written for, and his work has been cited by, the Huffington Post, TIME magazine, the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, the Atlanta Constitution, Forbes, US News & World Report (USNWR), The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, the Atlanta Business Chronicle, University Business (UB) Magazine, and more. He is lead author of *'Mergers in Higher Education: A Proactive Strategy to a Better Future?'* published by the TIAA Institute (2017) and *'Strategic Mergers in Higher Education'*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press (2019), and authors a regular column in Higher Ed Dive, 'Merger Watch'. He is completing *'Leading Big Scary Change: Major Institutional Restructuring in Higher Education'* for the TIAA Institute (Summer 2023) and *'Leading Mergers and Institutional Restructuring in Higher Education'* for Johns Hopkins University Press (Summer 2024).

Ricardo is the founder of the non-profit *Foundation for Research and Education Excellence (FREE Foundation)* and founder and director of the *Center for Higher Education Mergers & Acquisitions (CHEMA)* at the *FREE Foundation*. Ricardo is on the faculties of the University at Albany, SUNY and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and a fellow of the Rockefeller Institute of Government. Dr. Azziz leads the SPH Consulting Group to ensure that our clients and partners receive the individualized attention and support they require to ensure the successful consideration, partner vetting, identification and negotiation, and implementation of the desired restructuring opportunity.

**ROLE:** Ricardo will provide general oversight for the entire project, coordinate the team's efforts, working with NJCU leadership, assist with vetting potential strategic partner institutions, assist with the drafting of the LOI and DPA, and communicate regularly with NJCU and state leadership.





**Richard Katzman, MPA, Senior Consultant, SPH Consulting Group (Co-Lead Consultant)**

– Richard is a highly experienced senior-level executive with an exemplary track record leading strategic operations and delivering top-flight results across varying business sectors including healthcare and academic medicine. From for-profit to the not-for-profit sector, Richard has successfully directed strategy and business development, department and system level operations, and finance. He has directed sizable teams in the delivery of highly efficient and cohesive operations, the development and management of complex budgets, and the implementation of mission critical information systems. In addition, with an eye towards the future and how markets evolve, Richard brings years of experience in strategy and business development including deep experience negotiating a wide range of mergers, acquisitions, and other service-related agreements. Beyond a wide range of service agreements and contracts, Richard has also successfully handled acquisition transactions totaling \$4.5 billion. Richard brings to every business opportunity and engagement, 30+ years of experience and a deep commitment to quality, efficiency, and excellence.

**ROLE:** *Rich, along with Ricardo, will provide general oversight for the entire project, coordinate the team's efforts, working with NJCU leadership, assist with vetting potential strategic partner institutions, assist with the drafting of the LOI and DPA, and communicate regularly with NJCU and state leadership.*

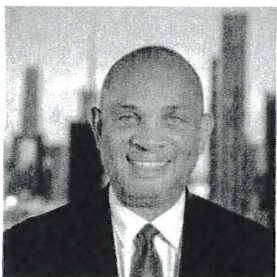


**Karla Leeper, PhD, MBA, Senior Consultant, SPH Consulting Group (Co-Lead Consultant)**

– Karla is a nationally recognized expert in strategic communication for higher education, health care and non-profits. Over the course of her more than 30 years of leadership she has developed successful, context driven, data informed communication strategies to implement reorganizations, realignments and mergers in professional organizations, public school districts, non-profit health care organizations and three universities. In 2015 she led the effort to create and launch the new brand identity for Augusta University and Augusta University Health, which was recognized with the Council on Advancement and Support of Higher Education's Gold Award. Dr.

Leeper has received awards for her work in building high performing teams, public advocacy, diversity, student success and teaching. She is currently the Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communication and Public Affairs at the University of Kansas. Prior to coming to Kansas Dr. Leeper was the Vice President for Operations at Augusta University and the Vice President for Board and Executive Affairs at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

**ROLE:** *Karla will assist with the drafting of the LOI and DPA, and the related communication strategy. She will also assist in the development of post-DPA implementation plans.*



**George Bradley, PhD, Advisor, SPH Consulting Group (Consultant)**

George works with organizations and individuals on contemporary issues in education, statistical analysis, and strategic planning. George previously served as President of Paine College, one of the nation's leading HBCUs, and has held faculty and administrative posts at numerous institutions of higher education where his administrative acumen has led to increases in funding and the overall growth and development of diverse programs. With George's guidance institutions of higher education have increased their focus on strategic planning, and improved quality control measures. The South Carolina Legislature recognized George for his commitment as a

teacher, administrator, author, and researcher in the field of education for more than two decades with a Lifetime of Service concurrent resolution.

**ROLE:** *George will be responsible for assisting in the analysis of the potential partner proposals and providing input to the LOI and DPA.*



**James Hagler, DPA, Consultant, SPH Consulting Group (Consultant)** – With over 12 years of experience in higher education as both a faculty and staff member, James has been involved in the evolution of departments and programs through consolidation. He started with then-Macon State College (MSC) in Recreation and participated in the consolidation of MSC with Middle Georgia College creating Middle Georgia State University (MGA) in the first series of consolidations by the University System of Georgia (USG). Working in Athletics and Recreation throughout this process, James participated in combining departments, mascot selection, mascot naming, mascot, and logo designs.



After the changes were complete, he led the school to and through the licensing process for the new institution. He also was part of the team which worked through the change of Athletic Associations from the NJCAA and club sports to the NAIA, adding sports on two separate occasions, and completing annual reports for different groups to include: the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC), USG, NAIA, Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC), Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA), and many others. James is currently a faculty member at MGA in the School of Business heading up the Sports Management program. His doctoral thesis examines consolidation in the USG and is entitled: A Success Story? An Exploration of the Consolidation Efforts in the University System of Georgia.

**ROLE:** *James will be responsible for the analysis of athletic programming and student life related to the initiative (NJCU and potential partners), the LOI, and the DPA.*

**Habsy Herrera, MS, Financial Analyst Associate, SPH Consulting Group (Associate)**

Habsy Herrera is a financial analyst originally from Mexico with experience in finance and business development for small businesses. She holds a dual master's degree in International Business and in Finance. With a background across industries and businesses, she brings a blended perspective to financial analysis and business strategy.

**ROLE:** *Habsy will assist in coordinating the administrative and analytic tasks required throughout the engagement.*





## F. FEE PROPOSAL

SPH offers a fixed fee proposal that is driven by an estimate of hours required, team participation, and the complexity of the work and deliverables. Based on the scope and deliverables identified in Section C, our standard fee structure, and the consulting team identified, our usual fee would be \$24,500 per month.

However, taking into consideration that NJCU is a prior client and the knowledge that SPH has already garnered regarding NJCU and its potential partners, SPH is happy to provide a 25% discount to our regular rates, i.e. \$18,375 per month.

**Considering the work plan suggested above, SPH proposes an initial 6-month engagement through July 31, 2025 at a rate of \$110,250 for this period (Feb, 1, 2025 through July 31, 2025), with the option of extending the engagement on a month-to-month basis if the parties view this as beneficial, desired, and of value.**

If NJCU chooses to engage SPH on a project basis, payment would entail one-third (1/3) be made at the signing of the agreement, another one-third (1/3) within 60 days of signing the agreement, and the remainder at the completion of the engagement.

Travel and other direct expenses are reimbursed monthly, on an actual cost basis. Pre-approval of estimated costs of direct expenses will be obtained from the Client.

The Client shall pay Consultant via check or electronic bank transfer no later than 30 days after the receipt of Consultant's invoices.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY  
RESOLUTION APPROVING A BID WAIVER FOR KESSLER PR GROUP FOR CONTINUED  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES THAT IS ORIGINAL AND CREATIVE IN NATURE**

**WHEREAS**, Pursuant to the New Jersey State Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:64-52 et seq. ("Statute"), New Jersey City University ("NJCU" or "University") must advertise for bids on all contracts for goods and services which exceed \$110,900, except under circumstances specified in the Statute where bids may be waived; and

**WHEREAS**, Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56(a)(1), a contract or agreement may be made, negotiated, or awarded by resolution at a public meeting of NJCU's Board of Trustees ("Board") without public advertising if the contract or agreement involves professional services; and

**WHEREAS**, The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education ("OSHE") issued an April 2024 Transition Plan ("Transition Plan") mandating NJCU's selection of a partnership option and the development of a substantive letter of intent with a partner institution; and

**WHEREAS**, The expertise, experience and communications services of Kessler PR Group is necessary to ensure, among other things, effective communications of NJCU's compliance with and implementation of the OSHE Transition Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the engagement of Kessler PR Group constitutes a professional services contract, thereby qualifying for a bid waiver under N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56(a)(1); and

**WHEREAS**, the continued engagement of Kessler PR Group shall be on a month-to-month basis commencing February 16, 2025, and not to exceed the fiscal year end of June 30, 2025.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Board of Trustees of New Jersey City University hereby approves the bid waiver for Kessler PR Group and authorizes the University President, Chief Financial Officer, or their designees to enter into a contract with Kessler PR Group; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Board directs the University administration to take all necessary and appropriate steps to formalize the agreement and ensure the efficient and effective execution of the required partnership option selection and the development of a substantive letter of intent with a partner institution.

Adopted this 24th day of February, 2025, by the Board of Trustees of New Jersey City University.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REIMBURSEMENTS AND RECONCILIATION OF  
THE 2025 WEST CAMPUS HOUSING, LLC OPERATING BUDGET**

**WHEREAS:** New Jersey City University (“University”) is the manager and operator of West Campus Housing, LLC (“WCH”); and

**WHEREAS:** The University, as a part of the management and operation of WCH, is to provide for a WCH operating budget; and

**WHEREAS:** The University incurs costs in the management and operation of WCH, as reflected in the WCH operating budget (attached); and

**WHEREAS:** Section 4.6(b) of the applicable Trust Indenture allows for the disbursement by the Trustee of operating expenses for WCH from the Receipts Fund upon receipt of the approved WCH annual operating budget; and

**WHEREAS:** It is in the interest of the University to be reimbursed for costs associated with the management and operation of WCH; and

**WHEREAS:** The Trustee requires approval by the Board of Trustees of the University (“Board of Trustees”) of the 2025 operating budget, which includes furniture and equipment replacement costs, to disburse funds to the University; and

**WHEREAS:** The University requests that the Board of Trustees approve the 2025 WCH operating budget, which includes furniture and equipment replacement costs; and be it

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Trustees of New Jersey City University, on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025, does hereby approve the 2025 WCH operating budget.

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Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
February 24, 2025



West Campus Housing LLC  
Operating Budget Pro Forma  
Fiscal Year 2024-25

Fiscal Year	2024-25
	Budget (in Thousands)
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	
Housing Revenue	
AY Revenue	4,715
Summer	100
University Subsidy	650
<b>Subtotal Housing Revenue</b>	<b>5,465</b>
University Support	
Contributed Services	130
RA Meal Plan	60
<b>Subtotal University Support</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>5,655</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	
Personnel	
Security	60
Housekeeping	75
Residence Life	210
<b>Subtotal Personnel</b>	<b>345</b>
Contract Services & Programming	
Facilities Repair and Maintenance	400
Utilities	335
Cleaning Services	200
Marketing and Leasing	20
Professional Fees	100
Residence Life Programming	30
Audit/Rating/Trustee fees	25
<b>Subtotal Contract Services &amp; Programming</b>	<b>1,110</b>
University Support	
Contributed Services - Administrative	130
RA Meal Plan	60
<b>Subtotal University Support</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>1,645</b>
<b>Net Operating Income Before Interest</b>	<b>4,010</b>
<b>Debt Service</b>	
Interest	2,142
Principal	1,110
<b>Total Debt Service</b>	<b>3,252</b>
<b>DSCR</b>	<b>1.233</b>
<b>Furniture and Equipment Replacement Budget</b>	
Furniture	140
Other	10
<b>Total Furniture &amp; Equipment Replacement</b>	<b>150</b>



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY  
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MONETIZATION OF 275 WEST SIDE AVENUE**

WHEREAS, New Jersey City University (“University”) is committed to ensuring the strategic and fiscally responsible stewardship of its assets in alignment with its mission and long-term sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the University owns the property located at 275 West Side Avenue (“Property”), and the Board of Trustees has determined that the monetization of the Property is in the best interest of the University to support its financial health and strategic initiatives; and

WHEREAS, CBRE, as a recognized expert in real estate advisory services, has been engaged to provide professional appraisal and representation in the monetization process to ensure that the transaction is conducted in a manner that maximizes value and adheres to best practices in real estate transactions; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of ensuring that all terms and conditions of the transaction comply with applicable laws and regulations, and that the University’s legal interests are fully protected through the review and approval of all agreements by University Counsel as to form and legality; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees desires to provide the President of the University with the authority necessary to complete the transaction, while ensuring appropriate oversight by the Executive Committee of the Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of New Jersey City University hereby authorizes the monetization of the Property under such terms and conditions as shall be deemed appropriate and in the best interest of the University; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the President of the University to take any and all necessary steps to effectuate the transaction, including but not limited to engaging CBRE for expert advisory services, executing agreements, and undertaking any due diligence required to complete the monetization process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Committee of the Board shall provide oversight of the transaction, including reviewing and approving key terms and conditions to ensure alignment with the University’s financial and strategic goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all transaction documents shall be reviewed and approved by University Counsel as to form and legality prior to execution; and

Adopted this 24th day of February 2025, by the Board of Trustees of New Jersey City University.

Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
February 24, 2025



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY  
RESOLUTION REAUTHORIZING THE PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENT WITH THE  
HUDSON COUNTY BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL**

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey City University ("NJCU" or the "University") is committed to fostering economic opportunity and ensuring that its construction projects contribute to the economic vitality of Hudson County and the broader community; and

**WHEREAS**, NJCU recognizes the critical role that the Hudson County Building Trades play in ensuring fair wages, high-quality craftsmanship, and a safe working environment on large-scale construction projects; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 2023, NJCU became the first public university in the State of New Jersey to ratify a Project Labor Agreement ("PLA") with the Hudson County Building and Construction Trades Council, which ensures that all University construction projects exceeding five million dollars (\$5,000,000) are completed using union labor; and

**WHEREAS**, the PLA was an early initiative of the Interim President, underscoring NJCU's ongoing commitment to partnering with Hudson County community leaders and providing economic opportunities for the diverse and local workforce through the University's construction initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, the Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") associated with the PLA further establishes a program wherein NJCU students are able to participate in internship and/or externship opportunities, providing meaningful hands-on experience in the construction and skilled trades sectors; and

**WHEREAS**, the continuation of this agreement aligns with NJCU's mission to advance economic mobility, workforce development, and social impact in its surrounding communities; and

**WHEREAS**, upon the recommendation of the President, the Board of Trustees has determined that the reauthorization of this PLA agreement is in the best interest of NJCU, its students, and the broader Hudson County community;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NJCU Board of Trustees hereby reauthorizes the Project Labor Agreement with the Hudson County Building and Construction Trades for an additional two-year period to expire January 1, 2027, reaffirming the University's commitment to economic inclusion, fair labor practices, and the advancement of its students through internship and externship opportunities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President of the University, or their designee, is authorized to take all necessary and appropriate steps to implement and administer the PLA and associated MOU, ensuring that NJCU continues to serve as a model for public universities across the state in fostering equitable economic development.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY  
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CONFERRAL OF DEGREES**

**WHEREAS:** The Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of New Jersey City University (“University”) is authorized to grant diplomas, certificates and degrees; and

**WHEREAS:** The faculty and administration of the University will review the credentials of candidates for professional diplomas, baccalaureate degrees, master’s degrees and doctoral degrees to be awarded at the 2025 commencement exercises and will certify that the candidates have met the requirements for diplomas and degrees; and therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Trustees on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025, does hereby authorize Interim President Andres Acebo to confer professional diplomas, baccalaureate degrees, master’s degrees and doctoral degrees at the May 28, 2025, commencement exercises; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That authorization is hereby given to President Acebo to award degrees *honoris causa*, in keeping with past practice and university senate protocol, to Ambassador Julissa Reynoso Pantaleón and former U.S. Senator George S. Helmy for their outstanding individual accomplishments that provide inspiration to our graduates at the commencement exercises on May 28, 2025.

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Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
February 24, 2025