



# MSCHE 2027 Self-Study Design

July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2025

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# 1. Institutional Overview

## *1.1 College Profile*

Chartered in 1927, New Jersey City University (NJCU) opened in 1929 as the New Jersey State Normal School at Jersey City. It was renamed New Jersey State Teachers College at Jersey City in 1935, Jersey City State College in 1958, and adopted its present name and university status in 1998. NJCU consists of the School of Business, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Education, and College of Professional Studies and is part of New Jersey's public system of higher education.

NJCU is in Jersey City, New Jersey, with a satellite site in the Jersey City financial district at Harborside that houses NJCU's School of Business. The main campus occupies a 46-acre urban site, accessible via public transportation and is located less than 30 minutes from both New York City and Newark.

In 1963, Jersey City State College partnered with Jersey City to establish the A. Harry Moore Laboratory School as a demonstration site for its special education program. The school serves students ages 3 to 21 who are classified as preschool disabled, learning and language disabled, autistic, or multiply disabled, and is recognized for its expertise in educating students with low-incidence, high-need disabilities. In Fall 2024, NJCU expanded this partnership through the launch of the Life Independence and Future Transitions (LIFT) program, a comprehensive initiative designed to equip high school and adult transition students with special needs, aged 15-21, with the tools necessary for a successful transition. The LIFT program is housed in a newly renovated 12,326 square-foot facility on the first floor of Grossnickle Hall and features five specialty instructional rooms, including a culinary arts room and a consumer and family science room. Plans for expansion to the second floor are currently underway.

The university is organized into three administrative divisions: Academic Affairs (inclusive of Enrollment Management and led by Dr. Donna Breault, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs), Student Development and Community Engagement (led by Erin McCann, Vice President), and Administration and Finance (led by Brian Kirkpatrick, Vice President). Each division contributed to the development of the Integrated Strategic Plan 2024-2028, which comprises three major planning documents: the Academic Master Plan (AMP), the Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP), and the Student Development and Community Engagement Plan (SDCEP). The integrated plan is structured around four institutional priorities: student success and retention, community engagement, a culture of continuous improvement, and financial stewardship.

NJCU is a public, Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) and federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), classified as a Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs institution under the Carnegie Classification. It is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and operates under all applicable state and federal regulations governing public higher education institutions. NJCU is governed by a governor-appointed Board of Trustees ("Board"), which includes representatives of students, faculty, and alumni, and is led by Interim President Andrés Acebo, J.D.

The university has been recognized for its commitment to social mobility and student access, with a student body that consistently ranks among the most ethnically diverse in the region. It has been recognized for its role in advancing educational access and mobility. The university was ranked No. 1 in New Jersey and No. 19 nationally in the 2024 CollegeNET Social Mobility Index, marking its second consecutive year in the national Top 20. It is also consistently recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a Top Performer on Social Mobility among public institutions in the region.

## *1.2 Mission*

The 2020 MSCHE Self-Study Team Report advised NJCU to assess its mission partly due to a new emphasis on athletics, global programs, and an expansion in Monmouth County. In January 2023, an Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee was formed, which consisted of 14 members, including faculty, staff, students, and administrators, from various areas of the university. The committee undertook a qualitative and quantitative data gathering process to refine the institution's mission. This process prioritized broad input, gathering perspectives from students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni.

The data revealed recurring themes focused on student prioritization, fostering diversity and inclusion, emphasizing transformative education, and deepening community engagement. These themes were used to revise NJCU's mission statement, which was finalized in August 2023 after incorporating feedback from committee members and the broader university community. It was reviewed and approved by the University Senate and received final approval by the Board in February 2024.

NJCU subsequently unveiled refreshed mission and vision statements, published in both English and Spanish. Both center NJCU as a place-based institution, committing the institution to the betterment of Jersey City and Hudson County.

### **Mission Statement**

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

### **Misión**

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

### **Vision Statement**

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

### **Visión**

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

After the mission refresh was finalized, NJCU began developing its 2024-2028 strategic plan, a three-part integrated document comprising the AMP, SEP, and SDCEP. The AMP was developed over the course of Fall 2023 through a structured, inclusive planning process. The plan's goals were first articulated using the results of the Spring 2023 Mission Refresh Survey. In Fall 2023, stakeholders—including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and business partners—engaged in a multi-step process: a campus-wide survey, an asynchronous town hall with over 350 comments, a multi-day Gallery Walk to prioritize key performance indicators, and a culminating in-person workshop on November 9, 2023. That workshop brought together over 90 participants to finalize goals, key organizational actions (KOAs), key performance indicators (KPIs), strategies, and resource implications. The proposed costs of implementing the plan were

subsequently reviewed by a leadership team including the President, Provost, CFO, Deans, Assistant Provosts, and faculty representatives. A similar process was subsequently followed to create the SEP and SDCEP.

### *1.3 Main Programs of Study*

NJCU offers academic programs across four colleges: the Maxwell College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Professional Studies, the School of Business, and the Deborah Cannon Wolfe College of Education. The most enrolled undergraduate programs are Psychology, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Biology, and Management. At the graduate level, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Special Education, School Nursing, and Organizational Management and Leadership (MBA) have the highest enrollment. Enrollment in programs such as Cybersecurity, Exercise Science, and Business Analytics & Data Science has increased in recent years. The university also offers the Ed.D. in Educational Technology Leadership, which is currently the largest doctoral program. The distribution of programs aligns with NJCU's mission by focusing on fields with strong employment demand in health, education, business, public service, and STEM.

### *1.4 Student Populations*

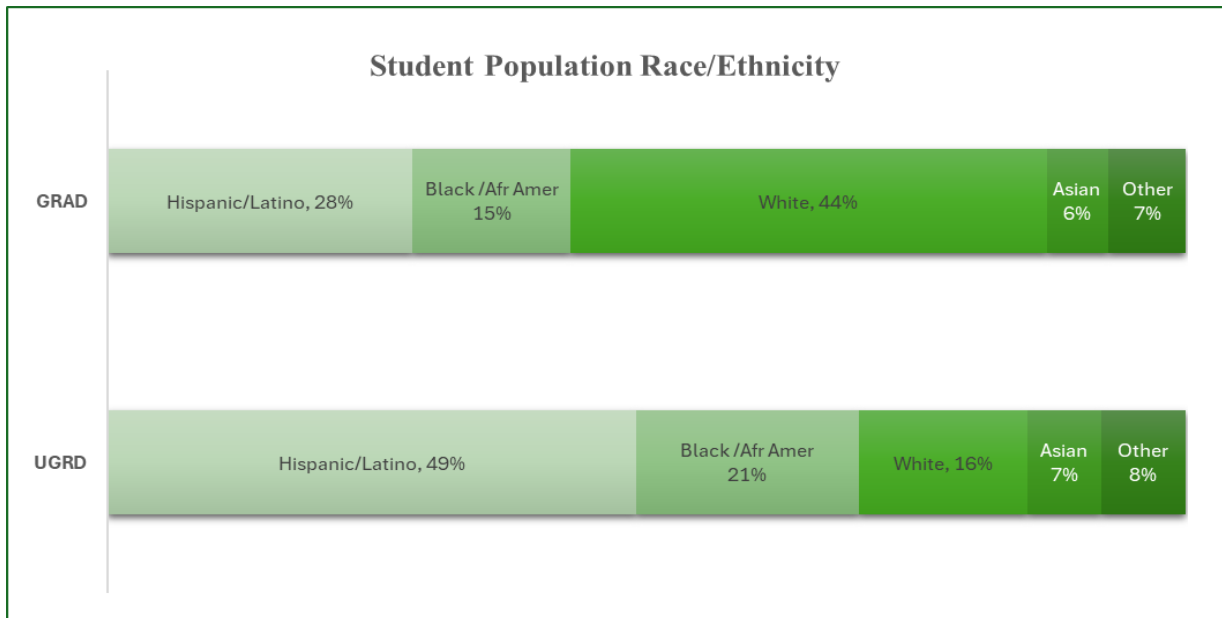
NJCU serves a diverse population of undergraduate and graduate students. With a student body (as recorded in Fall 2024) of approximately 3,871 undergraduate students and 1,558 graduate students.

Nearly 49% of NJCU's undergraduate population identifies as Hispanic/Latino, 21% as Black/African American, 16% as White, and 6% as Asian. 56% of undergraduates are female and 44% are male. Approximately 77% of all undergraduate students who were first-generation reportedly received Pell grants, while 57% of all undergraduate students enrolled in Fall 2024 received Pell grants.

The retention rate (fall over fall) of first-time, full-time, degree seeking undergraduates is 65% (as recorded in Fall 2024), while the retention rate for first-time, part-time degree seeking undergraduates is 31%.

The graduate student population reflects similar diversity: 28% identify as Hispanic/Latino, 15% identify as Black/African American, 44% as White, and 7% as Asian. 76% percent of graduate students are female and 24% are male.

Figure 1. Student Population Race/Ethnicity for Graduate (GRAD) & Undergraduate (UGRD)



Additional information on student population and outcomes is made available to the public on the NJCU Institutional Effectiveness webpage, which is updated on an annual basis and reflects reported historical data for our student population.

### *1.5 Financial Exigency: Before and After*

Since the university's last self-study in 2020, NJCU has experienced a period of financial exigency followed by substantial institutional restructuring and revitalization. On June 27, 2022, the Board declared a financial emergency. That same day, President Sue Henderson resigned. Following her resignation, the Board appointed Jason Kroll to serve as Acting President, a role he assumed in June 2022 and from which he announced his intention to resign in November 2022. The Board subsequently appointed Executive Vice President and University Counsel Andrés Acebo to serve as Interim President, effective January 17, 2023.

#### 1.5.1 MSCHE Actions

Following the declaration of financial exigency, NJCU submitted multiple Supplemental Information Reports (SIRs) to MSCHE and hosted a Follow-Up Review Team site visit. Each submission addressed standards specified by the Commission and responded to ongoing developments in institutional finance and governance. As of the present submission, MSCHE has found NJCU to be in

compliance with the relevant standards, and Commission actions have acknowledged the university's responsiveness and progress.

A timeline of MSCHE Engagements (2022-2025):

- August 11, 2022: MSCHE requests first SIR (no standard cited) following Governor Murphy's calls for investigation into NJCU's finances.
- August 25, 2022: NJCU submits first SIR.
- December 19, 2022: MSCHE requests second SIR concerning Standard II & VI.
- March 1, 2023: NJCU submits second SIR.
- August 28, 2023: NJCU submits third SIR updating prior materials related to Standards II and VI; requested due to delays in site visit scheduling.
- October 2-3, 2023: MSCHE Follow-Up Review Team conducts on-site evaluation.
- November 16, 2023: MSCHE requests fourth SIR concerning Standards VI and VII.
- December 13, 2023: NJCU submits fourth SIR concerning Standard IV.
- March 1, 2024: NJCU submits fifth SIR on Standards VI and Standard VII.
- April 29, 2024: MSCHE requests sixth SIR concerning Standard VI.
- May 27, 2024: NJCU submits sixth SIR concerning Standard VI.
- September 30, 2024: NJCU submits seventh SIR concerning Standard VI & VII.
- January 16, 2025: MSCHE requests eighth SIR concerning standard IV.
- February 25, 2025: NJCU submits eighth SIR.

Further details are available in the corresponding Commission actions, MSCHE's Statement of Accreditation Status website, and institutional submissions.

### 1.5.2 Academic Program Rightsizing

In response to the declaration of financial exigency in 2022, NJCU initiated a significant reduction of its academic portfolio to address financial challenges and align its offerings with institutional mission and market demand. At the time, NJCU maintained 101 undergraduate programs, 67 master's programs, and three



doctoral programs—exceeding the program counts of larger institutions like Rowan University and Rutgers-Newark. This extensive portfolio strained administrative resources, led to low-enrolled courses, and hindered students' timely degree completion. The university identified internal competition among overlapping programs as a contributing factor to enrollment challenges. Guided by principles focusing on mission alignment, market demand, and financial margins, in December 2022, Academic Affairs proposed sunseting 37% of its academic programs to ensure long-term sustainability and enhance student success. This proposal was ratified by the Board on February 21, 2023.

### 1.5.3 Leadership and Organizational Restructuring

Following the declaration of financial exigency in June 2022, NJCU began a reorganization of its leadership and administrative structure to align operations with institutional priorities. On November 14, 2022, the university announced a reduction in executive divisions from six to four, a number later reduced to three. Over the following two years, NJCU also consolidated its academic departments to twenty-eight and restructured leadership roles to reduce duplication and improve coordination.

Several key leadership appointments occurred during this period. Andrés Acebo, J.D., was appointed Interim President effective January 17, 2023, and his contract was subsequently extended through June 2026. Dr. Donna Breault was named Interim Provost and Senior Vice President on September 28, 2022. Brian Kirkpatrick was appointed Chief Financial Officer on May 20, 2023. In July 2024, Erin McCann was named the inaugural Vice President of Student Development and Community Engagement.

### 1.5.4 State Support and Oversight

During this period, NJCU came under increased state oversight and received \$24 million in stabilization funding over several years to support its recovery and revitalization efforts. In May 2023, prompted by a public call from Governor Phil Murphy, the New Jersey Office of the State Comptroller issued a formal audit detailing the governance and financial challenges that contributed to the crisis. On September 1, 2023, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) appointed a State Fiscal Monitor with authority to oversee fiscal management, budgeting, and staffing functions. In March 2024, the Monitor released a Fiscal Accountability Plan establishing mandatory benchmarks and corrective actions. The following month, the Secretary of Higher Education issued a Transition Plan

affirming these recommendations and outlining the process for the Monitor's withdrawal.

### 1.5.5 Enrollment Stabilization

Since Fall 2019, NJCU's total enrollment has declined by 31.7%, from 7,949 to 5,429 students in Fall 2024. The decline has been more pronounced at the undergraduate level. These enrollment losses reflect the combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent retention challenges, and academic rightsizing. A turning point came when all enrollment-related functions were reorganized under the leadership of Interim Provost, Dr. Breault. Under this new leadership structure, NJCU launched a coordinated strategy to reverse the downward trend. In Spring 2024, the first semester following this reorganization, the university recorded increases in new graduate, first-time freshman, and new transfer enrollment.

A central component of this strategy has been the revitalization of NJCU's transfer infrastructure. Beginning in 2023, NJCU implemented a series of transfer-focused initiatives designed to expand access and improve degree completion. The General Education curriculum was restructured to align with the General Education Foundation for New Jersey's community colleges, and partnerships were strengthened with regional two-year institutions. Most notably, NJCU launched the HCCC | NJCU CONNECT Program, modeled on ADVANCE, the nationally recognized dual-admission initiative between Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and George Mason University. These changes have positioned NJCU as one of the most transfer-friendly institutions in the state and contributed to double-digit growth in new transfer enrollment in Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025, with projected gains in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026. Administrative functions related to transfer evaluation, dual enrollment, and prior learning assessment were consolidated under the Transfer Resource Center, which was expanded and formally incorporated into the Registrar's Office.

### 1.5.6 Real Estate

Since the declaration of financial exigency, NJCU has completed several major financial transactions designed to reduce expenditures and improve long-term financial viability. These included the decision to exit the Fort Monmouth lease, determined to be misaligned with NJCU's institutional mission, which is projected to reduce annual costs by \$1.2 million. The university also completed the sale of the Claremont and Hampshire properties, generating over \$9 million

in net proceeds, and entered into a \$5.2 million leaseback agreement for the Honeywell lot. Concurrently, NJCU resumed targeted capital investments necessary for operational stability, including the replacement of the HVAC chiller in Rossey Hall, installation of a new high-pressure steam boiler in Hepburn Hall, and the launch of a five-year plan to repair and maintain the university's parking garage.

### 1.5.7 Merger with Kean University

A central recommendation of the Monitor's report, endorsed by the Secretary of Higher Education, was for NJCU to identify a fiscally sound New Jersey public institution with which to merge. In response, NJCU issued a Call for Proposals in late 2024. On March 5, 2025, following a competitive review process, the NJCU Board voted to proceed with a strategic merger with Kean University. A Letter of Intent was signed on May 15, 2025. Under the terms of the agreement, Kean University will assume control of NJCU, which will become an additional location of Kean. Kean University will serve as the continuing legal and academic entity for U.S. Department of Education and MSCHE purposes. NJCU plans to submit the Complex Substantive Change Preliminary Review Form to MSCHE by August 29, 2025. This proposed transaction falls outside the scope of the present self-study.

### 1.5.6 Financial Progress Recognized

These measures have collectively been recognized by independent credit agencies. Fitch Ratings affirmed NJCU's BB+ rating in November 2024 and revised its outlook from "Negative" to "Stable." Moody's Investors Service revised NJCU's outlook from "Negative" to "Stable" in February 2024 and from "Stable" to "Positive" in May 2025, the most recent upgrade occurring during a time when Moody's has downgraded the entire Higher Education sector. NJCU is projected to achieve a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2025, and institutional liquidity has stabilized. At the time of submission, Fiscal Year 2026 projections are not available.

## 1.6 Retention and Persistence

Since the last self-study in 2020, first-year retention at NJCU declined from 77% to 65% in Fall 2024. The largest decreases were among Black students (from 76% to 57%) and Hispanic students (from 77% to 66%). In response, NJCU identified student success as a core institutional priority. Each component of the Integrated

Strategic Plan includes defined Key Performance Indicators and Organizational Actions related to retention and persistence. The university has implemented a series of reforms across academic support, administrative structure, student development, and equity-focused programming, with the goal of stabilizing retention, increasing persistence, and improving degree completion.

### 1.6.1 Student Development and Holistic Support

In Spring 2024, NJCU restructured the Office of Student Affairs into the Division of Student Development and Community Engagement. This new division prioritizes holistic student development, focusing on removing sociological barriers to graduation such as food and housing insecurity, mental health and wellness, and the need for mentoring and community engagement. Two senior leaders—a Vice President and Associate Vice President—were appointed to lead this work.

The SDCE Plan, released in December 2024, outlines institutional strategies for addressing food and housing insecurity, mental health, and first-generation student support. Related initiatives include the relaunch of the Care & Concern Student Intervention Committee, the Presidential Fireside Chat Series, and expanded accommodation services. In October 2024, NJCU launched the Center for Student Persistence and Success (CSPS), which houses the PROMISE Scholars Program, the Office of First-Generation Student Initiatives, and the Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (BIDE) Committee.

### 1.6.2 Academic Support and Policy Reform

In 2023, the university appointed an Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention and consolidated SOAR and ASCEND programs under the Advisement Center. The Learning Commons was established in 2023 as a centralized hub for tutoring and academic coaching, with services extended through summer terms. Revisions to grading policies on incompletes and withdrawals provided greater flexibility for students experiencing personal or academic disruption. In Fall 2024, the university introduced guaranteed scheduling for required courses and began covering textbook costs. With OSHE funding, NJCU launched a ReUp program in Spring 2024 to support returning stop-out students, offering book vouchers, transportation assistance, childcare support, and Saturday advising hours.

### 1.6.3 Targeted Equity Initiatives

NJCU has expanded programming for historically underserved populations. The Men of Color Initiative was restructured in 2023 to include peer mentoring and academic coaching. The university is one of three New Jersey institutions partnered with TheDream.US, providing scholarships and support services for undocumented students. Title III STEM grants support persistence in gateway courses through supplemental instruction, advising cohorts, and peer mentoring.

### 1.6.4 Curriculum Reform

NJCU students have faced structural barriers to academic progress in the form of gateway course bottlenecks, particularly in English, Mathematics, and General Education requirements. These obstacles disproportionately affected first-generation, transfer, and underprepared students, many of whom were placed into non-credit remedial courses that did not count toward degree completion. As a result, students experienced delayed entry into major coursework, extended time-to-degree, and lower rates of persistence in the first year.

In April 2023, NJCU approved a new General Education program that addresses these longstanding challenges. The revised structure aligns with the General Education Foundation for New Jersey's Community and County Colleges and offers students greater flexibility in meeting degree requirements. General Education requirements were broadened to include major-embedded courses, reducing redundancy and credit loss. The framework also simplified these requirements, making it easier for students to understand and navigate the curriculum.

As part of this overall effort, NJCU eliminated non-credit-bearing remedial coursework in English and Mathematics. Foundational writing and quantitative reasoning courses were redesigned as credit-bearing gateway offerings with integrated academic support. Students now enroll directly in degree-applicable courses, with targeted assistance delivered through tutoring and academic support services coordinated through the Learning Commons and Writing Center.

## *1.7 External Partnerships*

As part of its broader institutional revitalization and in alignment with its role as an anchor institution, NJCU has significantly expanded its external partnerships to create affordable and mission-consistent pathways to degree completion and employment. These partnerships have served not only to advance student success but also to strengthen NJCU's long-term financial sustainability in the

wake of fiscal exigency by driving targeted enrollment growth.

Strategic transfer partnerships with community colleges have been central to this effort. In December 2023, NJCU and Hudson County Community College (HCCC) launched the HCCC|NJCU CONNECT program, which now supports more than 50 transfer pathways and offers wraparound services, including residential access and academic support. In July 2024, NJCU and Essex County College (ECC) initiated the Essex|NJCU Express Transfer Program to provide joint admission and curriculum-aligned pathways. Most recently, in October 2024, NJCU signed a dual admissions agreement with Mercer County Community College (MCCC), further advancing its role as a preferred destination for community college transfer students.

At the secondary level, NJCU has expanded its collaboration with the Jersey City Board of Education to support early college and arts-focused education. In November 2024, the university signed an articulation agreement to strengthen visual and performing arts pathways and agreed to lease two floors of Grossnickle Hall to the Jersey City School of the Arts, generating approximately \$1 million in annual revenue.

Workforce-aligned partnerships have further reinforced the university's mission to serve the region's economic needs. In January 2024, NJCU signed an MOU with the Jersey City Police Officers Benevolent Association to support degree completion for working police officers. In February 2023, NJCU entered into an agreement with the Hudson County Building Trades Council to ensure union labor on major capital projects and create internship opportunities for students pursuing careers in the trades.

Finally, NJCU launched the Affiliates Program in Summer 2025. This initiative offers a 20% tuition discount on eligible credit-bearing programs to members of participating organizations, including alumni, local organizations, and community partners. By fostering these partnerships, NJCU aims to expand educational opportunities for underserved populations, support workforce development, and generate additional revenue streams. The program complements existing collaborations, such as the Memoranda of Understanding with the Jersey City Police Officers Benevolent Association and the Jersey City Board of Education, by providing tangible benefits that encourage continued engagement with the university.

## *1.8 Conclusion*

Taken together, these partnerships exemplify NJCU's strategy of recovery

through mission and investing in pathways that reflect both institutional priorities and local need. Through this MSCHE Self-Study, NJCU seeks to evaluate its progress in achieving institutional goals as outlined in the Integrated Strategic Plan and to identify areas for improvement. The period under review spans from July 1, 2020, through July 1, 2025.

## 2. Institutional Priorities

NJCU's integrated Strategic Plan was built upon four strategic pillars, which represent NJCU's four institutional priorities:

- IP1: Advance student success and retention,
- IP2: Strengthen community engagement,
- IP3: Promote a culture of continuous improvement, and
- IP4: Ensure fiscal responsibility.

Table 1: Description of Institutional Priorities

Institutional Priority	Description
IP1 Advance Student Success and Retention	Focus on empowering students with academic programs that provide a clear path to employment and career growth, prioritize transfer-friendly policies, and offer comprehensive support systems. We aim to consistently increase completion rates, support mentorship through research and internships, and cultivate an inclusive environment where justice, equity, and inclusion are fundamental to all learning experiences.
IP2 Strengthen Community Engagement	Emphasize NJCU's role as a community-oriented institution that integrates civic responsibility and community engagement into academic disciplines. We commit to being the bachelor's degree completion institution of choice for Hudson County residents, enhancing partnerships, and supporting programs that respond to workforce needs both locally and globally. We strive to provide noncredit programs that meet market demands, creating an impactful presence within the community.
IP3 Promote a Culture of Continuous Improvement	Commit to a data-driven approach that continuously evaluates and enhances our academic offerings, support services, and institutional processes. Through analyzing the higher education marketplace, strategically responding to market forces, and focusing on program ROI, we aim to create a dynamic and responsive environment that strengthens NJCU's identity, attracts diverse students, and improving educational outcomes.
IP4 Ensure Fiscal	Prioritize investment in academic programs and services that promote long-term financial stability, increase enrollment, and ensure high retention and placement rates. By focusing on the

Responsibility	sustainability of the academic portfolio and ensuring each program aligns with market needs and yields high returns, we strengthen NJCU's fiscal foundation to support student success and institutional growth well into the future.
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### *2.1 Institutional Stakeholders and Institutional Priorities*

The strategic pillars were developed through the collaborative and inclusive process to refresh the university's mission statement described above. Throughout the process of refreshing the mission, recurring themes like student success and community engagement emerged. These themes were selected by senior leadership to establish the four strategic pillars upon which the subsequent integrated strategic plan was built.

### *2.2 Alignment of Institutional Priorities with NJCU's Mission*

NJCU's institutional priorities were developed through a collaborative process to refresh the university's mission. As a result, the priorities align closely with NJCU's mission:

**Table 2: Elements of the Mission Statement**

Elements of the Mission Statement	IP1	IP2	IP3	IP4
Accessible and Equity-Driven Education	X		X	X
Holistic Student Development	X	X		X
Diversity and Inclusion	X	X		X

### *2.3 Alignment of Institutional Priorities with NJCU's Strategic Goals*

The goals contained within NJCU's AMP, SEP, and SDCE Plans are designed to align closely with NJCU's four strategic pillars. Each goal is crafted to support these pillars and ensure that the university's initiatives contribute directly to these core priorities.

For instance, goals emphasizing labor market-relevant programs, transfer-friendly policies, and enhanced completion rates focus on student success and retention. Goals related to civic and community engagement in academic



disciplines, as well as responsive workforce development programs, support community engagement. Goals targeting program investment, return on investment analysis, and response to labor market demands underscore a culture of continuous improvement by ensuring NJCU remains responsive and adaptive in its offerings. Finally, fiscal responsibility is reinforced through goals that prioritize sustainable programs with high enrollment and placement rates, ensuring the university's financial health while supporting academic excellence. This alignment guarantees that the SEP and AMP contribute strategically and meaningfully to NJCU's overarching mission and institutional priorities.

**Table 3: Alignment of AMP Goals with Institutional Priorities**

Goals	IP1	IP2	IP3	IP4
AMP 1: Prioritize academic programs that provide jobs where students can use their degrees	X	X	X	
AMP 2: Emphasize civic and community engagement within all academic disciplines	X	X	X	
AMP 3: Ensure a community of care for all NJCU students, including faculty and staff involvement in student success	X		X	
AMP 4: Ensure that principles of justice, equity, and inclusion are taught and applied across all curricular and co-curricular programs and services	X	X	X	
AMP 5: Ensure that every student can be mentored through research, internships, or other educational experiences	X	X	X	
AMP 6: Ensure that environmental conditions are optimized for teaching and learning	X		X	
AMP 7: Ensure that curricular content and degree offerings are responsive to the needs of the labor market	X	X	X	
AMP 8: Strengthen and develop academic programming that demonstrably provides opportunities for students to attain economic mobility	X		X	
AMP 9: Invest in academic programming that yields persistent and high levels of enrollment, retention, student learning, applicable licensing scores, and career placement	X		X	X
AMP 10: Ensure long term financial sustainability of the academic portfolio			X	X

**Table 4: Alignment of SEP Goals with Institutional Priorities**

Goals	IP1	IP2	IP3	IP4
SEP 1: Be the bachelor's degree completion institution of choice for Hudson County residents		X	X	X
SEP 2: Be the most transfer-friendly public university in New Jersey	X	X	X	X
SEP 3: Consistently increase completion rates year-over-year for all students	X		X	X
SEP 4: Provide the most labor-market relevant graduate programs for underrepresented professionals in New Jersey		X	X	X
SEP 5: Provide relevant and engaging workforce development that focuses on the needs of a global workforce		X	X	X
SEP 6: Understand and analyze the higher education marketplace in terms of competing university program offerings			X	X
SEP 7: Strategically respond to market forces for undergraduate, graduate, and noncredit programming			X	X
SEP 8: Strengthen our identity by providing student support services throughout the student life cycle	X		X	
SEP 9: Drive program investment decisions according to program return on investment (ROI)			X	X
SEP 10: Increase and diversify non- credit programming to respond to workforce needs in New Jersey		X	X	X

**Table 5: Alignment of SDCEP Goals with Institutional Priorities**

Goals	IP1	IP2	IP3	IP4
SDCEP 1: Serve and advocate for NJCU's dynamic student community, including historically underserved and underrepresented, first general students, foreign born, commuters, adult, and non-traditional students.	X	X		
SDCEP 2: Strengthen student development by creating a culture of collaboration across campus through community engagement and student and academic support services to realize a cohesive approach to student success	X	X	X	

SDCEP 3: Provide all students with access to the necessary support services and resources to thrive academically, professionally and personally.	X		X	
SDCEP 4: Cultivate a campus culture with a supportive and accessible framework for mental health and wellness	X		X	
SDCEP 5: Increase inter and intra mentoring relationships between students, faculty, staff, and community members	X	X	X	
SDCEP 6: Ensure a university-wide campus environment for students to explore and develop their personal and professional identities	X		X	
SDCEP 7: Implement universal design principles in all campus spaces and activities to ensure an inclusive environment for students with disabilities and other diverse needs	X		X	
SDCEP 8: Provide resources and opportunities for students to enhance their personal growth and develop key soft skills	X		X	
SDCEP 9: Create the preeminent student-athlete experience in Division-III College athletics	X	X	X	

## Alignment of Strategic Pillars with MSCHE Standards

Table 6: NJCU Strategic Pillars & MSCHE Alignment

MSCHE Standards for Accreditation	IP1	IP2	IP3	IP4
I. Mission and Goals	X	X		
II. Ethics and Integrity	X			X
III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	X			X
IV. Support of the Student Experience	X	X		
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	X		X	
VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement			X	X
VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration	X			X

## 3.Self-Study Outcomes

### MSCHE

1. Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation (Fourteenth Edition) and provides evidence by Standard in alignment with the Evidence

Expectations by Standard.

2. Leverage periodic assessment through each standard, using assessment results for continuous improvement and innovation to ensure levels of quality for constituents and the attainment of the institution's priorities, mission, and goals.
3. Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process, including analysis of a range of data, including disaggregated data, to ensure students are appropriately served and institutional mission and goals are met.

#### NJCU's Selected Outcome

1. Utilize the self-study process to support the implementation of NJCU's integrated strategic plan.

## 4. Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

The Steering Committee consists of the self-study Co-Chairs, Senior Leadership, University Senate Leadership, Union representatives, and Co-Chairs of each Working Group. The Committee is tasked with collecting information regarding the university's compliance with MSCHE Standards and Requirements of Affiliation. This involves gathering data from academic units, campus offices and centers, and subsequently organizing and analyzing the information to produce clear, concise summaries.

The Steering Committee will promote collaboration among the Working Groups to identify connections between related areas that are critical to the Self-Study Report, while also preventing duplication of effort. During regular meetings, the Committee will highlight shared areas of inquiry and potential overlaps, discuss the Working Group progress and concerns, and ensure effective communication across groups. The Committee will also share the best practices with the Working Groups, fostering open discussions and analysis of the institution's compliance with their assigned standards.

Furthermore, the Steering Committee will keep the university community updated on its progress through established communication channels and will solicit feedback as necessary and useful.

#### *4.1. Self-Study Steering Committee Members*

1. Scott O'Connor, Assistant Provost for Academic Programming, Co-Chair
2. Ling Yang, Associate Professor of Accounting, Co-Chair
3. Ruth E. Ortiz, Senior Analyst and Accreditation Liaison Officer, Co-Chair
4. Andres Acebo, Interim President
5. Donna Breault, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs
6. Mark Sullivan, Assistant Vice President for Operations and Strategic Initiatives
7. Brian Kirkpatrick, VP for Finance and Administration
8. Erin McCann, VP for Student Development and Community Engagement
9. John Donnellan, University Senate President
10. Hanae Haouari, University Senate Vice President
11. Barbara Hildner, Professor of English, AFT representative
12. Scott McKenzie, CWA representative
13. Christopher Shamburg, Professor of Educational Technology
14. Mary McGriff, Associate Dean, College of Education
15. Nava Cohen, Assistant Professor of Accounting
16. Jennifer Aitken, Director, Specialized Services and Supplemental Instruction
17. Zhimin Wang, Associate Professor of Finance
18. Navin Saiboo, Registrar
19. Joshua Fausty, Professor of English
20. Pia Stevens Haynes, Dean of Students, Office of the Dean of Students
21. Yufeng Wei, Associate Professor of Chemistry
22. Wanda Rutledge, Dean, Graduate Studies; Adult and Continuing Education
23. EunSu Lee, Professor of Management
24. Hasson Gordon, Budget Director
25. Michael Krantz, Associate Professor of Professional Security Studies
26. Joy L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Student Persistence
27. Cinthia Diaz, Assistant Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations

#### *4.2 Self-Study Working Groups: Standards*

Working Groups are organized around the seven MSCHE Standards of Accreditation. Each Working Group is co-chaired by a faculty member and an administrator. Co-Chairs were selected from a pool of volunteers (survey) based on their experience and background. Members of each Working Group were chosen based on the recommendations of the Co-Chairs and the Steering Committee, taking into account their institutional commitment and professional expertise.

#### *4.3 Charges to all Working Groups*

The Self-Study Report will be developed by the Working Groups including two Co-Chairs of each group and four to seven additional members. Faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders will participate in this process. The Working Groups are responsible for identifying and analyzing evidence, drafting a chapter of the Self-Study, and supporting their narratives and assertions with evidence as well as organizing the Evidence Inventory. Their work involves reviewing all documents and assessing institutional data to determine NJCU's compliances with the specific Standard of Accreditation in alignment with NJCU's Mission and Institutional Priorities.

The Steering Committee meetings facilitate collaboration between Working Groups, promoting open discussions to identify shared areas of focus and minimize unnecessary duplication of effort. The self-study Co-Chairs will provide continuous support to the Working Groups, helping them evaluate and assess standards and priorities.

The Self-Study Steering Committee Co-Chairs will also meet regularly with the Working Groups over the next two years, starting in Spring 2025, to communicate updates and requirements. The key performance timeline will be updated and shared with the Steering Committee regularly and posted on Teams for the MSCHE self-study. Drafts of their Self-Study chapters will be submitted to the Steering Committee.

Co-Chairs of Each Working Group will be responsible for:

- Coordinating the group's work,
- Ensuring timely submission of chapter drafts,
- Meeting with the Steering Committee monthly, and
- Representing their group to the campus community.

Additionally, each Working Group will appoint members to specific roles:

- Archivist: Manages and organizes documents and evidence collected by the group and identifies gaps in the Evidence Inventory.
- Writer: Compiles contributions into a cohesive chapter that follows the provided Style Requirements.
- Analyst: Ensures the group's work aligns with the Evidence Expectations by Standard Guidelines to meet MSCHE evaluation standards.

Alternatively, the group may choose to distribute responsibilities collaboratively

among members. All Working Group members are expected to contribute actively to the drafting of their assigned Self-Study chapter.

#### 4.4 Working Group Specifics

##### Working Group I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Working Group 1	
<b>Standard 1:</b> <b>Mission and Goals</b>	<b>Co-Chairs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christopher Shamburg, Professor of Educational Technology</li> <li>• Mary McGriff, Associate Dean, College of Education</li> </ul> <b>Members:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ira Thor, Associate Vice President for University Communications and Marketing and Chief Communications Officer</li> <li>• Stacey Kanga, Director, First Year Admissions and Operations</li> <li>• Beimnet Teclezghi, Professor of Mathematics</li> <li>• Jason Martinek, Assistant Provost, Faculty and Staff Development</li> <li>• Student, Graduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> <li>• Student, Undergraduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> </ul>

##### Lines of Inquiry

1. How effectively does NJCU align its retention strategies and student success initiatives with its mission and goals?
2. How effectively does NJCU foster meaningful community engagement that aligns with its mission and strategic goals, and to what extent do these efforts have mutual benefit?
3. How effectively does NJCU integrate a process of continuous improvement to assess and refine its mission and goals?
4. How effectively does NJCU allocate its resources to align with its mission and goals?
5. How effectively does the refreshed mission reflect the institution's current

priorities and strategic goals?

## Working Group II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Working Group II	
Standard II: Ethics and Integrity	<p><b>Co-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nava Cohen, Assistant Professor of Accounting</li> <li>• Jennifer Aitken, Director, Specialized Services and Supplemental Instruction</li> </ul> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strawberry Gallagher, Assistant Director of Educational Partnerships/Dual-Enrollment</li> <li>• Rosen Michelle, Professor of Literacy Education.</li> <li>• Lourdes Sutton, Dean, the College of Education</li> <li>• Mike O'Neill, Assistant Professor of Accounting</li> <li>• Edie Delvecchio, Associate VP of Business Services</li> </ul>

### Lines of Inquiry

1. How effectively does NJCU ensure that policies and practices promoting student success and retention are fair, transparent, and faithfully implemented?
2. How effectively does NJCU ensure mutual respect, trust, and truthful representation in its community partnerships?
3. How effectively does NJCU use its continuous improvement processes to ensure that planning, assessment, and decision-making remain aligned with institutional commitments and are conducted with transparency and accountability?
4. How effectively does NJCU's approach to financial stewardship ensure that resource allocation is transparent, responsible, and faithful to its mission and strategic goals?
5. How effectively does NJCU ensure that its refreshed mission and core values are aligned, and that policies are applied transparently and faithfully to fulfill strategic goals?



## Working Group III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Working Group III	
Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	<p><b>Co-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zhimin Wang, Associate Professor of Finance</li> <li>• Navin Saiboo, Registrar</li> </ul> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anna Scanniello, Administrative Assistant, Fire Science Dept</li> <li>• Jen Luciano, Associate Dean of Students</li> <li>• Isabel Casais, Assistant to the Dean, Graduate Enrollment, School of Business</li> <li>• Zui C. Lee, Associate Professor of Marketing, Director of General Education</li> <li>• Student, Graduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> <li>• Student, Undergraduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> </ul>

### Lines of Inquiry

1. How effectively do NJCU's academic programs, across all levels and modalities, ensure rigorous and coherent learning experiences that promote student retention and success?
2. How effectively do community engagement opportunities, such as service learning or internships, integrate with academic programs?
3. How effectively does NJCU continuously assess and improve academic programs across all learning modalities and program levels?
4. How effectively does NJCU allocate resources to support the development and delivery of academic programs and learning experiences across all levels and modalities?
5. How effectively is NJCU's refreshed mission informing the design and delivery of academic programs and learning experiences across all modalities and levels?

## Working Group IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Working Group IV	
Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience	<p><b>Co-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua Fausty, Professor of English</li> <li>• Pia Stevens Haynes, Dean of Students, Office of the Dean of Students</li> </ul> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristina Harb, Interim Associate Director, Learning Commons</li> <li>• Jonelle Knox, Assistant Provost, Student Success &amp; Retention</li> <li>• Lydia Rodriguez-Carte, Director of Financial Aid</li> <li>• Theresa Spataro, Program Assistant, College of Professional Studies</li> <li>• Student, Graduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> <li>• Student, Undergraduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> </ul>

### Lines of Inquiry

1. How effectively does NJCU articulate its policies and processes in the following areas: financial aid awarding, academic foundations/remediation or supplemental instruction, persistence and retention, degree completion (transfer process, post-degree completion placement), analysis to assess trends and challenges in student achievement data—to improve outcomes for all student populations?
2. How effectively does NJCU implement its policies regarding transfer credit evaluation, including those awarded via experiential learning, non-academic learning, competency-based assessment and/or other alternative approaches?
3. How effective are NJCU's policies in safeguarding student information and records?
4. How often does NJCU assess its services that are offered by third-party providers? How effective are these services to/for the student community?
5. How effectively does NJCU assess the effectiveness of its student support

services (with appropriate metrics and evaluation)? How effectively does the institution implement the results of the analysis?

6. How effective is NJCU in ensuring that athletics, student life and our extra/co-curricular entities are regulated by the same academic, fiscal and administrative policies as all other areas of the university?

## Working Group V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Working Group V	
Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment	<p><b>Co-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yufeng Wei, Associate Professor of Chemistry</li> <li>• Wanda Rutledge, Dean, Graduate Studies; Adult and Continuing Education</li> </ul> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elizabeth Hickey, Data Analyst, College of Education</li> <li>• Ana Aponte, Assistant Dean of Students</li> <li>• Caroline Wilkinson, Associate Professor of English</li> <li>• Emily Alequin, Assessment and Accreditation Specialist, CPS</li> <li>• Jason Plaksin, Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator, SoB</li> </ul>

### Lines of Inquiry

1. How effectively does NJCU state its expected institutional learning outcomes (undergraduate, graduate and for each degree or program) and the interrelationship with relevant educational experiences (i.e., internships, community engagement, etc.) and the university's mission?
2. How effectively does the university a) define its student learning outcomes and establish defensible standards for assessing the students' achievement of the goals, b) articulate how we prepare students for careers, post-graduation success (economic, social, etc.) and further education—in alignment with the institution's mission, c) support and sustain assessment of the learning outcomes and communicate the information to university stakeholders.
3. How effectively does NJCU use disaggregated data to examine/improve student learning outcomes, student achievement, and institutional and program-level educational effectiveness?

4. How effectively does NJCU evaluate the assessment of services that are delivered by third-party providers (if applicable)?
5. How effectively does NJCU evaluate its assessment policies and processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness?

## Working Group VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Working Group VI	
Standard VI: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement	<p><b>Co-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EunSu Lee, Professor of Management</li> <li>• Hasson Gordon, Budget Director</li> </ul> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Grew, Executive Director, Office of Research Grants &amp; Sponsored Programs</li> <li>• Sabrina Lopes, Registrar</li> <li>• Lijun Ruan, Assistant Professor of Accounting</li> <li>• Jeffrey Dessources, Assistant Vice President, Campus Life &amp; Community Engagement</li> <li>• Erica Seitzman, Program Assistant, Music, Dance and Theatre</li> <li>• Patrick Bartole, Director, Facilities and Construction Management</li> </ul>

### Lines of Inquiry

1. How effectively does NJCU align the budgeting process with the new mission and goals?
2. How effectively does NJCU provide adequate resources to support student success and retention?
3. How effectively does NJCU assess the effectiveness of its financial planning in driving continuous improvement?
4. How effectively does NJCU assess its community engagement programs, particularly in terms of resource management and long-term planning?
5. How effectively does NJCU ensure the alignment of its fiscal responsibilities with long-term financial sustainability?

## Working Group VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals, in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with a related entity, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Working Group VII	
Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration	<p><b>Co-Chairs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Krantz, Associate Professor of Professional Security Studies</li> <li>• Joy L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Student Persistence</li> <li>• Cinthia Diaz, Assistant Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations</li> </ul> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melissa Faulkner, Director, Center for Career and Professional Development</li> <li>• Joseph Moskowitz, Professor, Politic Science</li> <li>• Michael Arbitblit, Assistant Registrar, Transfer Resource Center</li> <li>• Patricia Altomonte, Associate Vice President, Finance</li> <li>• Donna Piscopo, Administrative Assistant, University Senate</li> <li>• Mark Sullivan, AVP Operations and Strategic Initiatives</li> <li>• Student, Graduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> <li>• Student, Undergraduate (will be selected in Fall 25)</li> </ul>

### Lines of Inquiry

1. How effectively does NJCU ensure that governance practices are aligned with NJCU's mission and strategic goals?
2. How effectively does NJCU's governance practices support and improve student success?
3. How effectively does NJCU's governance practices support community engagement?
4. How effectively does NJCU's governance practices promote a culture of continuous improvement?
5. How effectively does NJCU's governance practices promote financial stewardship and fiscal responsibility?

## 5. Guidelines for Reporting

This section outlines the expectations for documenting and presenting the findings from our self-study process. The goal is to ensure that the final report is concise, comprehensive, and aligned with MSCHE Standards.

Each committee's report should adhere to the following guidelines:

- It should address the assigned standard, noting the institution's compliance, highlighting NJCU's strengths/successes in this area, and identifying areas for improvement.
- All findings should be supported by evidence and/or data (i.e., surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.) and should acknowledge any limitations or challenges presented in the collection of the reporting process. For more information regarding the necessary data, please contact the Office for Institutional Effectiveness.
- The submission should be "readable" (i.e., clear and without the overuse of area-specific language). The use of charts, grids, tables, etc., is strongly encouraged.
- It should be aligned with NJCU's Mission Statement and institutional priorities. More specifically, it should highlight the ways that the university has successfully met the MSCHE Standard, while authentically acknowledging the areas for growth/improvement.
- The final copy of your report should include the headers and subsections (see the Working Groups Report Template), to make the report accessible and readable by our stakeholders.

### *5.1 Documents for Submission (Working Groups)*

Each Working Group will submit a preliminary first chapter draft to the Steering Committee Co-Chairs in early Fall 2025; (see MSCHE Self-Study Timeline section for more detail), so that the Steering Committee and its Co-Chairs can review, provide feedback and ensure that the entire report reads uniformly. Additionally, each group will submit a second draft at the end of Spring 2026; the university's feedback must be included in this document. The final draft, which will be completed by the Co-Chairs, will be submitted in Fall 2026 to the Steering Committee.

## *5.2 Working Groups Report Template*

Each working group will provide a draft no longer than ten (10) single spaced pages and the report should be structured as follows:

### 1. Organization by Lines of Inquiry

The chapter should be clearly structured around the Lines of Inquiry. Each criterion and/or sub-criterion of the assigned standard must be explicitly mapped to one or more Lines of Inquiry to ensure focused analysis and alignment.

### 2. Identification of Standard

Clearly state the Middle States Standard under review at the beginning of the chapter.

### 3. Compliance Assessment

For each criterion and/or sub-criterion, provide an evaluative judgment of the institution's level of compliance using the following three-point scale:

- 1 - Not in compliance
- 2 - Approaching compliance
- 3 - In full compliance

### 4. Compliance Overview

Summarize NJCU's overall compliance with the standard, organized by individual criteria and/or sub-criteria. Highlight key findings and patterns in the evidence.

### 5. Areas of Recommendation

Identify any recommendations for improvement, based on gaps, weaknesses, or opportunities for development observed during the review.

### 6. Areas of Commendation

Highlight good practices and strengths.

### 7. Evidence Reference List

Provide a comprehensive reference list of all evidence sources cited in the narrative. All sources should be clearly labeled and included in the shared Evidence Inventory.

## 6. Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

The final Self-Study Report will be organized into the following components:

### Executive Summary

A concise overview of the institution's key findings, major themes, and areas of strength and improvement as demonstrated across the seven standards. It will highlight institutional priorities, major changes since the last self-study, and the institution's readiness for reaffirmation of accreditation.

### Introduction

This section will provide institutional context, including NJCU's mission, history, demographic profile, governance structure, and major institutional developments since the last self-study. It will explain the self-study approach, the organization of the process, and the structure of the report.

### Chapters 1-7: MSCHE Standards for Accreditation

Each chapter will address one of the seven standards for accreditation. Each chapter will include:

1. An evaluative narrative responding to the standard and its criteria.
2. Evidence aligned to each criterion.
3. Analysis of strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement.
4. Connections to institutional priorities (as outlined in the AMP, SEP, and SDCEP).
5. Summary statements of compliance and institutional effectiveness.

### Conclusion

The conclusion will synthesize institutional strengths and areas requiring continued attention. It will reflect on the self-study process, summarize institutional readiness for future challenges, and identify plans for ongoing improvement and assessment beyond the self-study.



## 7. Self -Study Timeline (2024-2028)

Fall 2024	
September	Steering Committee Co-Chairs and WG Co-Chairs identified/invited
October	Steering Committee Co-Chairs attend MSCHE Self-Study Institute
August 2024 - November 2024	Office for Institutional Effectiveness organizes Evidence Inventory for start of WG's review
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Steering Committee Meeting
November	Co-Chairs attend MSCHE Self-Study Institute
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	Steering Committee Members MSCHE Conference
December 12 <sup>th</sup>	Steering Committee Meeting
December	Co-Chairs draft Self-Study Design
Spring 2025	
January	Co-Chairs draft Self-Study Design
February 12 <sup>th</sup>	Steering Committee Meeting
February 14 <sup>th</sup>	ALO submits Self-Study Design to MSCHE
April 21 <sup>st</sup>	MSCHE VP Liaison Self-Study Preparation Visit to NJCU campus
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	WGs begin to meet and are provided an overview of MSCHE self-study processes, scope of work, charge (to begin work)
May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Steering Committee Meeting
Summer 2025	
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Evidence list and initial examination submitted by each WG. GAP Analysis (Submission #1)
June 10 <sup>th</sup>	Senior Leadership Meeting (updates on Self-Study Design & GAP analysis)
June 16 <sup>th</sup>	Steering Committee Meeting
June 26 <sup>th</sup>	The final revised version of Self-Study Design with incorporated

	feedback from MSCHE VP Liaison submitted to MSCHE by ALO
July 3rd	WGs analyze data and submit progress reports including a gap analysis. (Submission #2)
July TBD	Steering Committee Meeting
August 5 <sup>th</sup>	Draft of progress report with Gap Analysis AND Recommendations by each WG (Submission #3)
August TBD	Steering Committee Meeting
Fall 2025	
September 3rd	WGs first chapter draft due to Co-Chairs
September 17th	Steering Committee Co-Chairs provide feedback
October TBD	Steering Committee Meeting
October 15 <sup>th</sup>	WG chapter draft with incorporated feedback from Steering Committee Co-Chairs. Chapter drafts circulated to full Steering Committee
November 14th	Steering Committee provides feedback to WGs on draft chapters
December	Steering Committee Meeting
December 21 <sup>st</sup>	WG submit drafts with incorporated feedback
Spring 2026	
January 30th	Steering Committee Co-Chairs assembled drafts into the first full report.
February - March	NJCU Community feedback process on draft report.
May 18th	WGs update drafts with community feedback and submit to Steering Committee Co-Chairs
Summer 2026	
June 31st	Steering Committee Co-Chairs submit new draft of full report with updated WG chapters.
July - August	Steering Committee reviews final draft

September - October	Steering Committee Co-Chairs make final edits on Self-Study DRAFT incorporating Steering Committee feedback
November -December	Cushion (supplementary time for additional reviews or action needed)
December (latest)	DRAFT NJCU self-Study due to Evaluation Team Chair
Spring 2027	
February	Evaluation Team Chair provides feedback to NJCU
March - May	NJCU finalizes the Self-Study (incorporated chair feedback)
Summer 2027	
June	FINAL NJCU Self-Study due to MSCHE
Fall 2027	
September	MSCHE site visit preparations
October	MSCHE Team campus site visit
November	Evaluation Team submits report to NJCU
December	NJCU submits written response to MSCHE
Spring 2028	
January - March	MSCHE internal process of Evaluation Team report review and Commission voting
April	MSCHE notifies NJCU of committee review & decision

## 8. Communications Plan

Transparency and engagement are essential for the success of the self-study process and will be supported through consistent communication. The communication plan outlines the target audiences, methods of communication, and timelines. Beginning the process a year in advance, the self-study timeline covers Fall 2024 through Spring 2028. It serves as a guide for the Steering Committee and its Working Groups to gather feedback from institutional stakeholders and keep them informed about key developments in the self-study process. The key audiences for this communication include students, faculty, staff, the Board, alumni, and the broader community. The final external audience is the Middle States Commission.

The Steering Committee will provide updates on Self-Study throughout the entire process, beginning with the launch of self-study activities in Fall 2024 through to

the final stages with the Commission's decision communicated to NJCU in Spring 2028. Communication will take both formal and informal approaches, utilizing multiple methods such as discussions during meetings, emails, and websites. Several channels and platforms will be used, including:

- Campus meetings and communications by Working Groups
- Open meetings by the Steering Committee
- Postings on the NJCU Accreditation Self-Study 2027
- Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums
- Student Government Organization meetings
- Board of Trustee meetings
- Strand vising and postings across campus

Stakeholder feedback will be gathered through a survey following the distribution of the first Self-Study Report draft, with responses regularly monitored by the Steering Committee Co- Chairs in Spring 2026. The Community and Steering Committee feedback will be incorporated into the final draft by Fall 2026. The communications strategic overview is included below.

### *8.1 Communication Plan Timeline*

Purpose	Audience	Methods	Timing
<b>2024-2026</b>			
To inform audiences about the launch of the self-study, begin selection and identification of self-study Co-Chairs and working group members.	NJCU Community, (Administration, Board, Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Senate Meeting</li> </ul>	Fall 2024
To continually share data, documents, and research results for the self-study process and communicate in a secure, transparent, and meaningful manner.	Steering Committee members and Working Group members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle States Self-Study website</li> <li>• NJCU Teams Folder</li> <li>• Periodic meetings</li> <li>• Email</li> </ul>	Spring 2025 through Spring 2026
To update campus audiences about the ongoing process of self-	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li> <li>• Student Government</li> </ul>	Spring 2025 through

study and the MSCHE Liaison Visit.		<div>Organization meetings</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Academic Affairs Open Forums</li><li>Institution-wide communications</li><li>Social Media Outlets</li></ul>	Spring 2026
	Faculty, administration, and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li><li>Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums</li><li>Institution-wide communications</li></ul>	
	Alumni and community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li><li>University strategic Communications</li><li>Social Media Outlets</li></ul>	
	Board and other relevant governance bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li><li>Steering Committee &amp; Leadership Team</li><li>Board of Trustee Committee Meetings</li><li>University strategic communications</li></ul>	
2026-2027			
To gather feedback on the Self-Study draft	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Campus-wide Qualtrics survey (electronic distribution)</li></ul>	February 2026 through March 2026
To inform the community about collective feedback and results	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Campus wide email</li><li>NJCU Self-Study 2027 Website</li></ul>	April 2026 through June 2026
	Board and other relevant governance bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Steering Committee &amp; Leadership Team meetings</li></ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board of Trustee Committee Meetings</li><li>• Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums</li></ul>	
To update the community on the progress and status of the final Self-Study draft	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University strategic communications</li><li>• Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums</li><li>• Student Government Organization meetings</li></ul>	Fall 2026
	Board and other relevant governance bodies (Senior leadership, Steering Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scheduled Meetings to present final updates on Self-Study Report</li></ul>	
2027-2028			
To inform the community of the assigned Evaluation Team Chair; the submission of the Self-Study draft to Team Chair for review and evaluator feedback	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li><li>• University strategic communications</li><li>• Student Government Organization meetings</li><li>• Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums</li></ul>	Spring 2027
	Board and other relevant governance bodies (Senior leadership, Steering Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scheduled Meetings to present final updates on Self-Study Report</li></ul>	

To notify the community of NJCUs final submission of the Self Study report (with incorporated evaluator feedback)	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li> <li>• University strategic communications</li> <li>• Social Media Outlets</li> </ul>	June 2027
	Board and other relevant governance bodies (Senior leadership, Steering Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled Meetings</li> </ul>	
To inform the community of scheduled upcoming MSCHE site visit and begin overall preparations for the team visit.	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li> <li>• University strategic communications</li> <li>• Student Government Organization meetings</li> <li>• Social Media Outlets</li> <li>• Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums</li> </ul>	September 2027 - October 2027
	Board and other relevant governance bodies (Senior leadership, Steering Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled Meetings</li> </ul>	
To Inform the community about the results of the site visit and response to MSCHE evaluation.	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li> <li>• University strategic communications</li> <li>• Student Government Organization meetings</li> <li>• Social Media Outlets</li> <li>• Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums</li> </ul>	November 2027- December 2027

	Board and other relevant governance bodies (Senior leadership, Steering Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduled Meetings</li> </ul>	
To inform all constituents of MSCHE committee review and reaccreditation decision	NJCU Community (Faculty, staff, students, alumni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NJCU Self-Study 2027 website</li> <li>University strategic communications &amp; campus wide posts</li> <li>Senate meetings and Academic Affairs Open Forums</li> <li>Social Media Outlets</li> </ul>	April 2028
	Board and other relevant governance bodies (Senior leadership, Steering Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduled Meetings</li> </ul>	

## 9. Evaluation Team Profile

Individuals with the following expertise and background would be well-suited to serve on the MSCHE Evaluation Team for NJCU:

- Experience with public, urban, four-year, Minority-Serving Institutions
- Experience with institutions serving first generation and economically disadvantaged students
- Experience with institutions with a primarily commuter population
- Experience with financially challenged institutions
- Experience with institutions experiencing extensive state government oversight on public higher education
- Experience with unionized environments



NJCU's peer institutions in the MSCHE region include:

- CUNY Staten Island
- CUNY York College
- CUNY Medgar Evers College
- Rutgers University - Camden

NJCU's aspirational institutions in the MSCHE region include:

- Ramapo College
- Montclair State University
- CUNY Brooklyn College
- CUNY City College
- Rutgers University - Newark

Some institutions in and around New Jersey that present potential conflict of interest are:

- Kean University
- Montclair State University
- William Paterson University
- St Peter's University

Largest Enrolled Programs:

- Business, Management, Marketing
- Health Professions
- Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting
- Psychology
- Biology
- Computer and Information Science
- Education

## 10. Strategy for Addressing Annual Institutional Update Indicators and Metrics

NJCU's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) is the lead team supporting the Self Study process at the university. The OIE team provides data and information

regarding the Annual Institutional Update and metrics, not only to MSCHE, the US Department of Education, and to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education of New Jersey, but also to senior leadership at NJCU. As part of the Self Study process, the Working Groups will be given access to all Middle States Annual Institutional Updates, all reported IPEDS data, and other regularly recurring reporting. They will have multiple opportunities to discuss institutional data with the OIE team.

## 11. Evidence Inventory Strategy

OIE has built an online workspace for the MSCHE Evidence Inventory and is populating it with documents mentioned in the MSCHE Evidence Expectations by Standard document. Any additional requests for evidence from the Working Groups will be submitted to the OIE and the evidence will be uploaded to the existing Evidence Inventory workspace. The OIE functions as a Logistics Support Working Group. During the two plus years of work on the Self Study all uploads will be to the internal NJCU portal (built in Microsoft Teams). When the final draft of the Self Study is approved, prior to submission, the final set of evidence will be uploaded to the MSCHE portal. Evidence will be named with a file name that indicates the relevant standard (e.g. S1 NJCU Strategic Plan.pdf). The supporting evidence will primarily be from what is listed in the Evidence Expectations by Standards document that MSCHE provides.

## 12. Strategy for Identifying Self-Study Site Visits

The main campus of NJCU on John F. Kennedy Boulevard in Jersey City and the satellite campus at Harborside in downtown Jersey City are the only two locations where NJCU offers on-site classes, programs, and services.