

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

Message from the Provost

Welcome to spring semester and the February 2022 edition of *Academic Connections*. In response to what now appears to an endemic Covid-19 virus in our world, we began the first two weeks of the term in remote modality. In our now fifth semester of pivoting and remaining flexible, as I write this note we are poised to return to in-person teaching for what I hope is the remainder of the spring term. We have accomplished a great deal over the course of very stressful months (now years), which speaks to the resilience of every single person in our university community. The hard work continues. This semester at NJCU, we face financial challenges that should involve all of us in finding solutions. Academic Affairs is essential to the solution. How? By focusing our attention on attracting and retaining students at NJCU. Declining enrollment has been a major contributor to the financial strain on our community. Of course, we are not alone. Enrollments are moving downward nationally partly as a result of the pandemic, and we are not immune to the demographic shifts affecting our region. Our student population is disproportionately affected by these shifts. However, we can do more to make sure that we retain the students that come to study and learn with us. Our current 4-year graduation rate is 18%. This is, in a word, unacceptable. Please join me this spring semester in focusing on doing what we can to move this abysmal statistic. The ACE (American Council on Education) Learner Success Lab is beginning its work this semester – a cross-divisional effort by Academic and Student Affairs – to address the ways we can retain students and shorten the time-to-degree. Three subcommittees have been formed that include representation of faculty across the Colleges and School, as well as administrators and professionals in Enrollment, Admissions, and Student Life. The three areas of focus include: 1) the development of a Center for Teaching Excellence that will encompass how best to grow professional development for faculty in inclusive pedagogy as well as more robust online teaching; 2) curricular reform, including examining the high DWF gateway courses and understanding the barriers to progressing through them in a timely way, and looking at our curricular maps to ensure seamless movement through programs that also ensure a sense of belonging; 3) wrap-around services for students, to find solutions to the myriad of barriers that continue to disproportionately affect our students. The latter work has been on-going in our division of Student Affairs, where so many dedicated professionals are engaged every day. The work on curricular reform is absolutely essential, and will be newly driven by our data. Data tells a story – if we ask and re-ask questions and look at what it's telling us, I think we can collectively move toward solutions. We hope that each department on campus will look at its own data this semester – at enrollment and completion trends – and engage in dialogue to identify where we can improve. It will take time; this is hard work. I ask for a collective effort to move the needle together.

Please enjoy the February newsletter. For those of you who attended the MLK Day celebration via Zoom (held in hybrid format to accommodate Covid precautions), you experienced an incredible presentation from Ms. Ilyasah Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz, an alumna of NJCU. Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, Director of the Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center, created a beautiful program to honor Dr. King and the work that continues in his spirit and name. Ms. Shabazz delivered an impassioned address to our community that was followed by a dialogue with Dr. Scruggs in which Malcolm X as father and activist came to life for us. I want to thank all those who made the event possible.

I wish you all an energizing semester. Please take time out for yourself for self-care so that you can experience all that our community offers for intellectual and creative growth. Please share with us what you would like to see in future newsletters. This is a way for us to showcase the work being done on campus and repair some of our fractured existence during the pandemic. The Office of the Provost supports your efforts, despite all the challenges around us. Our collective intellectual work is our beacon.

Tamara

THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

Celebrating the Resilience of the African Diaspora



2022-2024

The Lee Hagan Center Africana Studies Center proudly celebrates Black History Month 2022

Our Upcoming Events

Week 1 Celebrating Our Ancestors

WED.
2/2

Black History Month Opening Ceremony & Flag Raising
 Speaker—Dr. Jermaine McCalpin, Chair, African & African American Studies, NJCU
 2PM- 4PM Hepburn Hall 202/Gothic Lounge
 To register email: hagancenter@njcu.edu

THUR.
2/3

"Interrogating the African Diaspora in Latin America"
 Speaker—Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center, NJCU
 11:30 AM-12:30 PM (Zoom)
 Register at: <https://bit.ly/31BJgZG>

Week 2 Celebrating Our Creativity

THUR.
2/10

Using the Arts for Social Justice
 Speaker—Professor Ayvaunn Penn, Departments of Theatre and Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, Columbia University/Texas Christian University 1PM-2PM (Zoom)
 Register at: <https://bit.ly/35seEeT>

Week 3 Celebrating Our Commitment to Protecting and Uplifting Our Communities

TUES.
2/15

Owning our Narratives
 Panel discussion featuring Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center, Dr. Jermaine McCalpin, Chair, African & African American Studies, NJCU and Dr. Trina Yearwood, Associate Dean, School of Education, Queens College, City University of New York 2PM-3:30 PM (Zoom)
 Register at: <https://bit.ly/3rUfKrb>

Week 4 Celebrating Our Individual Selves

TUES.
2/22

Black Women's Experiences
 Open Forum Moderated by Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center and Venida Rodman-Jenkins, Speicher-Rubin Women's Center for Equity and Diversity 3PM-4:30 PM (Zoom)
 Register at: <https://bit.ly/3tWeFlw>

WED.
2/23

Intersections of Race and Sexuality (LGBTQI)
 Speaker—Stephanie Mills, Director of Programs, Hudson Pride Center 2PM-3PM (Zoom)
 Register at: <https://bit.ly/3AySZwS>

THUR.
2/24

Black Men's Experiences
 Panel discussion featuring Professor Ansley LaMar, Professor of Psychology, NJCU, Mr. Jeffrey Dessources, Director of Center for Leadership & Engagement, NJCU Mr. Thyquel M. Halley, Student Government Association President, NJCU and Mr. Sean Thomas, Moderator 12:30 PM-2PM (Zoom)
 Register at: <https://bit.ly/3o1omeO>

Week 5 Future Forward

MON.
2/28

Black History Month Closing Discussion/Hagan Center's 33rd Birthday

Black NJCU administrators and students discuss the future of their groups and the Hagan Center

Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center, Black Alumni, Administrators, Faculty, Students & Staff Organization (BAAFSSO), Black Student Union, and Student Government Association (SGA)

12PM (Zoom)

Register at: <https://bit.ly/3tWf07M>

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Music, Dance and Theatre Department Events:

IGNITING THE IMAGINATION: *An evening of music and exploration of David Bowie's creative process*

- Saturday, February 12th 8:00 pm NJCU School of Business (Lecture Hall)

Music of Brazil and the Americas

- Saturday, February 26th 8:00 pm Margaret Williams Theatre

For more information, please visit <https://www.njcu.edu/community/center-arts/music>

Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies Event:

"Interrogating the African Diaspora in Latin America."

Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, Director of the Lee Hagan Africana Studies

- Thursday, February 3rd 11:30 am- 12:30 pm GSUB Room 129

New Jersey Campus Compact Event: 2022 EngageNJ Student Conference THRIVE and Opportunity Fair

Saturday, February 26th

Middlesex College
2600 Woodbridge Ave,
Edison, NJ 08837

For more information, please visit

<https://www.njcampuscompact.org/student-conference-2022>

2022 STUDENT CONFERENCE
THRIVE
TEACH HELP REVOLUTIONIZE INSPIRE VOLUNTEER ENGAGENJ

The past two years in particular have shown us just how interconnected we are – when a global pandemic strikes, we have to respond as a collective in order to all move on; if we want to fight climate change, we have to think about it as a whole planet problem. No-ONE can THRIVE unless we take action to ensure EVERY-ONE can THRIVE.

February 26th, 2022
at Middlesex College

**Please note that Middlesex College requires that everyone wears a mask while indoors at all times regardless of your vaccination status.

For more information:
[Click here](#)

MARCH EVENTS SAVE THE DATE

Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies Events:

15 Consejos: A Guide for Latinx Students to Succeed in College

Book party with author and NJCU alum Alvert Hernandez

- Tuesday, March 1st 11:30 am-1:00 pm GSUB Room 129

HSI Battle of The Brains

Austin, TX. Sponsored by Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU).

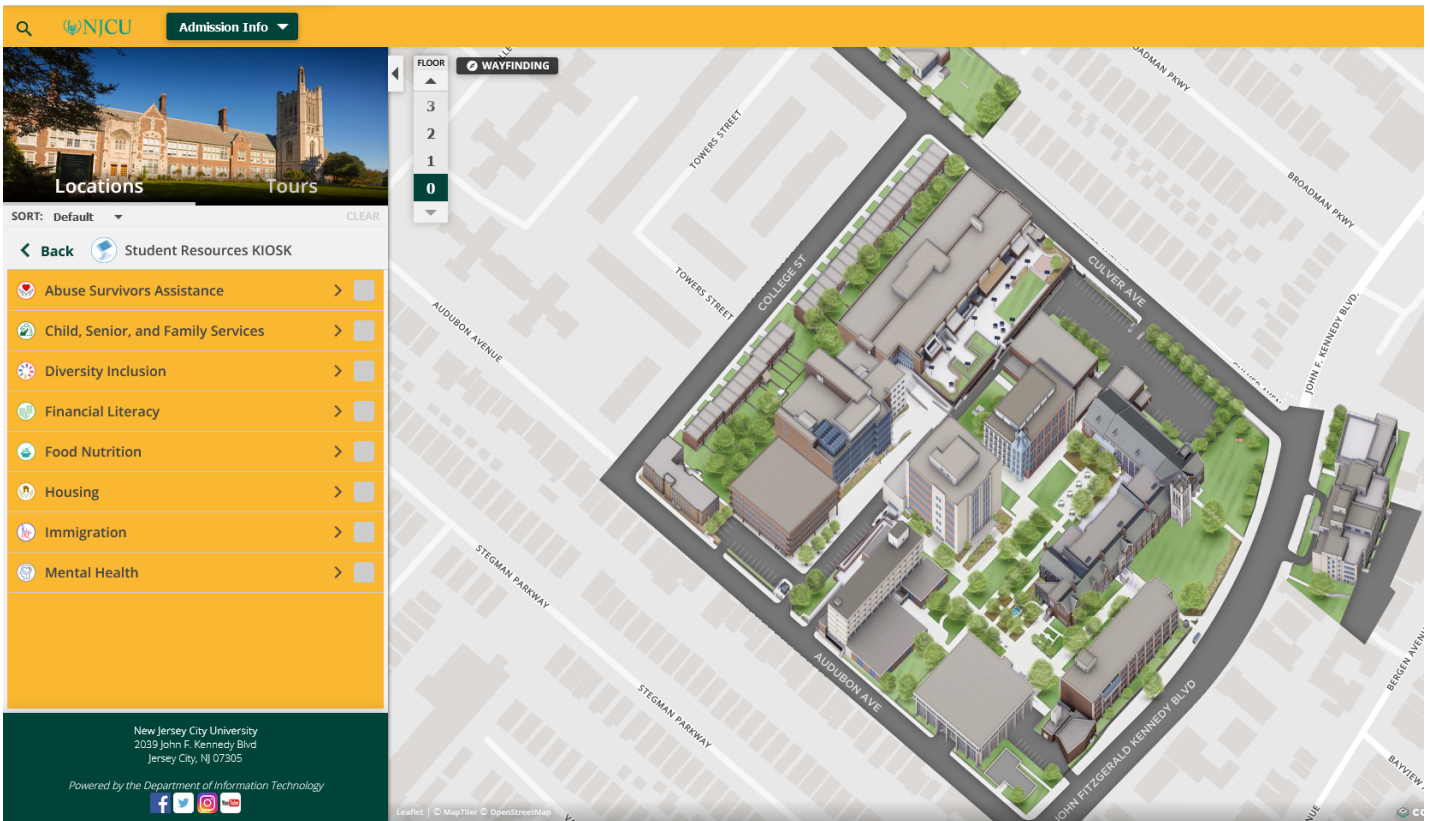
- Tuesday, March 8th - Saturday, March 12th

For more information contact faculty member Dr. Medina at jmedina7@njcu.edu

The NJCU Kiosk Project

The NJCU Community Center, developed and managed by Saul Petersen in Academic Affairs and Jodi Bailey and Barbara Ruggieri in Student Affairs, is designed to remove all barriers to resources such as food and housing, nutrition and hygiene, professional clothing, mental health counseling, financial literacy, and supports for undocumented people. One of the Community Center’s key projects is the KIOSK. The purpose of the KIOSK is to place resources at the fingertips of students, regardless of where on campus they are, through a searchable, online, mobile-friendly kiosk. This interactive map is searchable visually by type of resource, such as financial literacy, food nutrition, or mental health. As a “Wayfinder” app, it will even direct students to the office location using GPS. The kiosk itself was developed through a large partnership between Saul Petersen as kiosk designer for the Community Center, and students in two Community Engaged Learning (CEL), General Education courses taught in Spring 2020 by Drs. Jennifer Musial in Women’s and Gender Studies (WGST 110 Diversity and Difference), and Bill Montgomery in Earth & Environmental Science (EESC 325 GIS for the Urban Community). The project is indebted to the efforts of folks in IT, especially Gary Gordon and Rob Romero, as well as the Concept 3D app development team. The map is available on the NJCU website and mobile app but is also located as a physical kiosk, in this case an iPad on a stand, outside the NJCU Community Center on the first floor of GSUB, with more kiosks popping up during the year across campus.

To learn more, please visit <https://www.njcu.edu/student-life/campus-services-resources/community-center/njcu-kiosk>



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

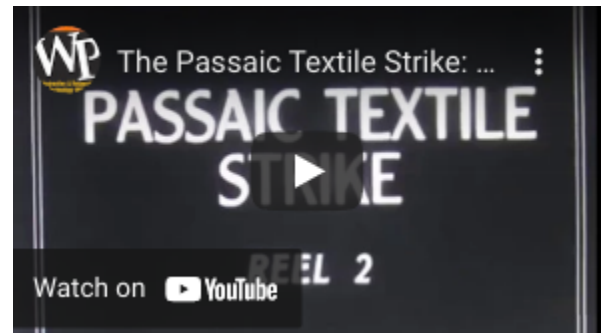
Dr. Jacob Zumoff and The Red Thread: The Passaic Textile Strike

Dr. Zumoff's expertise in 20th century U.S. labor history is evident in his recently published book *The Red Thread: The Passaic Textile Strike* (Rutgers University Press, 2021). As he explained, he was interested in educating the local population about an event that took place in the Passaic area, including Passaic, Clifton, and Garfield. In January 1926, workers in the Passaic wool factories organized a strike to protest wage cuts, increased work hours and lay-offs. For more than one year, women, men and children stood on picket lines protesting their working conditions. The seven-reel silent film (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0gr8H-VHyQ>) *The Passaic Textile Strike* contributed to national awareness of the working conditions within the factories. Although the strike failed, it is remembered for being one of the American Communist Party's earliest efforts to organize the unskilled labor force.

Dr. Zumoff serves as chair of the History Program. He teaches American, European and Latin American History. His current research is focused on the Latin American Labor Movement and Communism in the America's in the 1920's.



Dr. Jacob Zumoff
Chair of the History Department



PUBLICATIONS

Psychology

- Kofler, L., Zhang, W., & Gao, Y. (2022). Psychopathic Traits and Conduct Problems in Children: Effects of Collective Efficacy, Heart Rate, and Sex. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 1-17.
- Nomura, Y., Zhang, W., & Hurd, Y. L. (2021). Stress in pregnancy: Clinical and adaptive behavior of offspring following Superstorm Sandy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 1-11.
- Gao, Y., & Zhang, W. (2021). Reward processing and psychopathic traits in children. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, 12(4), 339-346.
- Aushev, V. N., Li, Q., Deyssenroth, M., Zhang, W., Finik, J., Hurd, Y. L., ... & Chen, J. (2021). Placental gene network modules are associated with maternal stress during pregnancy and infant temperament. *The FASEB Journal*, 35(10), e21922.

RECAP: THE 33RD ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION & AWARDS

The 33rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration & Awards featured Keynote Speaker Ilyasah Shabazz, Professor, Author, and Daughter of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, '71 NJCU alum.



Photo Caption: (Right) Keynote Speaker Ilyasah Shabazz, Professor, Author, and Daughter of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, '71 NJCU alum & (Left) Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, Assistant Professor, African & African American Studies Director, Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center



Photo Caption: Keynote Speaker Ilyasah Shabazz, Professor, Author, and Daughter of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, '71 NJCU alum

Presented by the Dr. Lee F. Hagan Africana Studies Center

THE 33RD ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION & AWARDS

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE: CHOOSING COMMUNITY OVER CHAOS

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 19
10:00-11:15 A.M.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
SKYLINE ROOM

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

ILYASAH SHABAZZ
PROFESSOR, AUTHOR, AND DAUGHTER OF MALCOLM X AND DR. BETTY SHABAZZ, '71 NJCU ALUM

NJCU
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NJCU's Mellon Faculty Fellows in CEL

NJCU's Ethnic Studies and Digital Humanities Working Group will launch February 1, 2022. The group, which consists of Mellon Faculty Fellows in Community-Engaged Learning (CEL), invites the community to engage in readings, conversations, and workshops at the intersection of Digital Humanities and Ethnic Studies. The group will meet the first and third Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. For more information or to join the group, please contact Dr. Sonya Donaldson at sdonaldson@njcu.edu.

New LATI Center Affiliates and Partners:

Please join the LATI Center in welcoming new faculty affiliates Dan Julius, Jason Martinek, Jorge Medina, Nelson Montoya, Martha Mooke, Ellen Quinn, Tracy Riley, Jonathan Rosen, and Natoschia Scruggs, as well as new staff affiliates Andy Acebo, Kathleen Quinlan Banks, Gail Fernandez, Adrián Franco, Ángel González, Nancy Gomez, and Nelson Rodriguez. They have also added the Center for Leadership and Engagement, the Guarini Institute for International Education and Economic Mobility, the Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as official key institutional partners. If you would like to recommend any other colleagues or units for affiliation, please contact the LATI Center.

Office of the Provost

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HOW TO SEND NEWS AND SUBMISSIONS

Please send faculty achievements and departmental events to Academic Affairs at academicaffairs@njcu.edu.

Next *Academic Connections* will appear on Friday, March 4th. Submission of news deadline is **Friday, February 18th**.