



# KNIGHTLY NEWS

STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION UPDATES

This communication aims to provide updates on accomplishments, current projects, and personnel and operational changes.



Welcome to the October 2024 edition of Knightly News, where we shine a light on student academic success and retention. As midterms are here, remember that tackling academic challenges doesn't have to be spooky! Support is all around you from our dedicated faculty, staff, and administrators. I want to ensure that no one feels ghosted when it comes to accessing resources like tutoring, advising, and other academic program services. Together, we can brew up strategies that lead to higher retention and student success. Wishing you all a productive and spirited Halloween and midterm season filled with academic treats, not tricks!

Best Regards,

Jonelle Knox Ed.D.

Assistant Provost (Academic Affairs) – Student Success & Retention



## DR. LEE HAGAN AFRICANA STUDIES CENTER



The Dr. Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center participated in the annual Black Student Welcome event, hosted by NJCU's Black Alumni, Administrators, Faculty, Students, and Staff Organization (BAAFSSO). The powerful event celebrating connections across the African diaspora. In his speech to students, Lewis Spears reflected on the importance of meaningful introductions, support, peer-to-peer encouragement throughout their journey at NJCU and beyond.

In partnership with Boys & Girls Club of Hudson County, Center for Student Persistence and Success, fraternity and sorority life, and Men of Color Initiative (MOCI), the Dr. Lee Hagan Center participated in a voter registration drive on September 17, 2024. Local youth, including Spears' sons, assisted in registering voters for the November 5th election. Don't forget to get out and vote! #Vote2024!

On September 26, 2024, the Dr. Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center hosted a "Chat & Chew" lunch with faculty and students. The informal gathering fostered great conversations about the center's mission, upcoming initiatives, and opportunities for involvement. The center looks forward to continuing these conversations and finding additional collaboration opportunities!







## UNIVERSITY ADVISEMENT CENTER

The University Advisement Center launched the Fall 2024 semester with a successful Advisement Week. The UAC collaborated with academic chairs and faculty to hold a Major/Minor Fair that connected students to academic programs, while the Career Success Panel, co-hosted with the Center for Career and Professional Development, offered valuable career guidance.

Another highlight was the Academic Success Fair, where students explored campus support services and enjoyed a popcorn bar, giveaways, and fun activities. One student remarked, "This was a great experience and helped me so much!"

NJCU is excited to welcome Ms. Vivianne Jimenez as the new Director of the University Advisement Center. The UAC looks forward to continuing its support for Gothic Knights by offering comprehensive academic services!



## MEN OF COLOR INITIATIVE



The Men of Color Initiative (MOCI) has had an exciting and impactful start to the semester! Students participated in a Breast Cancer Awareness Walk, showing solidarity and support for those affected by breast cancer. Additionally, On October 8, 2024, MOCI hosted an exclusive Sneaker Lab Workshop in collaboration with Travis Scott's Cactus Jack Foundation, and The Center for Student Persistence and Success provided students with hands-on experience in sneaker design and innovation within the fashion and streetwear industry.

Jaylen Johnson, Senior IT Manager at R1 RCM and owner of a cybersecurity consulting company, led a discussion on cybersecurity career opportunities for MOCI participants. He also offered paid internships to those interested in gaining hands-on experience in the field.

Enrollment for MOCI continues to grow, and program leadership is currently preparing a year-in-review document, expected to be released by the end of the Fall 2024 semester.







## GEAR UP/COLLEGE BOUND

The GEAR UP program kicked off the fall with a field trip to the Howard vs. Morehouse HBCU football game at MetLife Stadium. For many 10th-12th graders, it was their first college football experience, made even more exciting by a win for Howard and a feature on the Jumbotron. This trip will connect to lessons on the history of HBCUs, culminating in a future visit to Howard University.

GEAR UP has also seen significant growth, enrolling over 50 new students since the end of the summer program and reaching capacity with a waiting list. During National GEAR UP Week, the program introduced a parent association network, participated in a Hispanic Heritage Month art exhibit, and held its 2nd Annual GEAR UP Banquet, where a current student, parent, and alumnus were honored. The Program's GEAR UP week banquet was recognized by NCCEP, an organization and partner to the U.S. Department of Education that strengthens the pathway to college for underserved students through system partnerships between K-12 districts, colleges, businesses, community-based organizations, and other governmental agencies.

The fall program launched with more than 200 students attending classes in math, science, and ELA, followed by workshops and team-building activities led by college mentors. This year for the first time, the program held an Instant Decision Day, where students and parents completed applications and received immediate enrollment decisions.



## TRiO Learning Community [TLC]



At the start of the fall semester, TRIO Champions participated in the "Get Fin Lit" experience led by Gianna Bown (The Money Cheerleader). In this interactive session, students set short- and long-term goals, developed a plan to gain relevant skills, learned how to recover from setbacks with a positive mindset, and gained insights into the importance of maintaining good credit.

In October, TRIO collaborated with the Center for Career and Professional Development, STEM NJCU, and the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation to offer students a chance to visit Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. They also explored internship opportunities across various fields, gaining valuable career insights.

On October 11, 2024, NJCU hosted the first-ever statewide TRIO Student Support Services meeting, bringing together program directors from across New Jersey to strengthen support for TRIO students. President Andres Acebo attended the event, offering words of encouragement to the attendees.





## YOUTH CORPS



### **YOUTH CORPS WELCOMES NEW COMMUNITY PARTNER AND CELEBRATES GRADUATE SUCCESSES**

Youth Corps is excited to welcome Guazabara Insights as its newest community service partner! Joining our long-standing collaborators, *Let's Celebrate Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen* and the *Gothic Rack and Pantry*. Guazabara Insights brings renewed energy to the program's community outreach initiatives. Students and staff in the program are committed to completing a minimum of 10 hours of community service each week. Recent projects have included planting in the community garden at Let's Celebrate and collaborating with MustArt of Guazabara to create a mural, using art to revitalize local neighborhoods.

The program also proudly recognizes the achievements of recent graduates, who earned advanced certifications through NJCU's Adult and Continuing Education Department and other local programs. Amongst these accomplishments by recent graduates include certifications as a Professional Life Coach, a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant, and the completion of AutoCAD courses.

For more information about the Youth Corps program and our upcoming projects, please contact us at [njyouthcorps@njcu.edu](mailto:njyouthcorps@njcu.edu). Our temporary office is located in Rossey Hall, Room 509.



### **LEARNING COMMONS AND TUTORING**

We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Kristina Harb will be joining us as the Interim Associate Director for the new Learning Commons, officially starting on November 4, 2024. The Learning Commons will replace The HUB, which previously provided in-person academic support services to students. Located on the 1st floor of the library, The Learning Commons will offer academic support services independent of The Writing Center, further expanding our resources to foster student success.

In her role, Dr. Harb will oversee the development and management of tutoring services, ensuring that students receive the support they need to thrive academically. Dr. Harb's office will be in room 106 of the library, and more details on The Learning Commons' hours of operation and updated services will soon be available on the NJCU website. We are excited to welcome Dr. Harb and look forward to the positive impact she will bring to the NJCU community!

