

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



Welcome to the Fall 2024 Semester!



This past summer has been an exciting time at New Jersey City University, and the Student Retention and Success Division of Academic Affairs has been working diligently to enhance student success and retention efforts. I am incredibly proud of our dedicated staff, whose commitment to serving and supporting students has made a positive impact on our community.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the students, faculty, staff, and administrators who contributed to a successful and rewarding summer. The hard work has set the stage for what promises to be a productive and successful academic year. Let's continue to build on this momentum as we move forward together. Let's Go Gothic Knights!

Jonelle Knox Ed.D

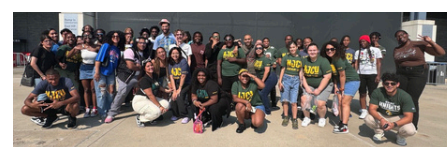
Assistant Provost (Academic Affairs) – Student Success & Retention

GEAR UP/COLLEGE BOUND

Following a search for the Director of Pre-College – GearUp/College Bound, we are pleased to announce the permanent appointment of Alan B. Cruz III to the position. A two-time NJCU graduate, Alan previously served as Assistant Director and counselor for the GearUp/College Bound program. In his role as Assistant Director, Alan played a key role in ensuring the program's compliance with NJ state requirements and in increasing program enrollment by more than fifty percent. Alan B. Cruz III earned a master's in marketing and a Bachelors in Sports Management from New Jersey City University.

Over the summer, Alan and the GearUp/College Bound staff welcomed over 225 students in grades 7-12 from target schools, marking one of the largest groups in the program's history. Additionally, more than twenty students participated as the first cohort in a dual enrollment class, earning course credit in Introduction to Biology from NJCU. With this new appointment, Dr. Jonelle Knox, Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention, will conclude his role as Acting Director.

Please join us in congratulating Alan on his new position as Director of Pre-College – GearUp/College Bound!





UNIVERSITY ADVISEMENT CENTER

In a previous announcement, it was shared that Francis Liang and Vivianne Jimenez would co-lead the UAC's daily operations, with Sandy Checo assisting with special projects and reviewing UAC operations. Francis Liang and Sandy Checo have since accepted new positions outside of NJCU. As a result, Vivianne Jimenez has agreed to take on the interim role of leading the UAC center's daily operations.

We are pleased to announce the hiring of two new advisors, Ashley Merchant and Cheyenne Medina. Additionally, Douglas Bailey, formerly with Youth Corps, and Steve Haber, previously an ESL faculty member, have joined the UAC as advisors. Updated information on assigned advisors is available on the [University Advisement Center](#) website. Please join us in welcoming Ashley and Cheyenne to NJCU and in congratulating Doug and Steve as they transition to their new roles in the UAC! We are currently searching for a permanent Director for the University Advisement Center and hope to have the search completed in the Fall 2024 semester.

Pilot Summer Bridge Program

In July and August, NJCU launched a pilot Summer Bridge Program designed to support incoming freshmen who might struggle to achieve academic success. This year 100 students participated in the Summer Bridge Program. The program targeted students who are ineligible for NJCU's access programs (OSP/EOF, TRIO). It offered participants a chance to engage with college faculty, administrators, peers, and staff, while also familiarizing them with the various support services available at NJCU.



Implementation of WU Grade

In the Spring 2024 semester, New Jersey City University introduced the WU (Unofficial Withdrawal) grade, a change approved by both the faculty senate and the SACC committees. Faculty can now assign this grade as one of the final grades for students at the end of the semester. Preliminary data indicates that the introduction of the WU grade has led to an increase in the number of students meeting academic standards and a decrease in those failing to meet satisfactory academic progress required for financial aid eligibility.

The implementation of the new WU grade has led to some confusion regarding when to use the Incomplete (INC) grade versus the WU grade. For further clarification on the appropriate use of these grades, please refer to the guidance previously provided by Academic Affairs. Additionally, Dr. Knox will offer further training on these grading options during the Fall 2024 semester.

We would like to thank the University Senate for their support of this important change, which is already showing positive results for NJCU students. This collaboration exemplifies how faculty and administration can work together, embracing the principles of shared governance to implement operational improvements that enhance student success and retention.

LEE HAGAN AFRICANA STUDIES CENTER

In the Spring semester of 2024, the Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center at NJCU reopened under the leadership of Lewis Spears, a Jersey City native deeply engaged with the local community.

The center's mission is to advance academic excellence, cultural knowledge, and social responsibility, focusing on issues crucial to the empowerment of people across the African Diaspora. To enhance its programming, the center is actively seeking collaboration opportunities throughout the university. If you have any recommendations or ideas for programming or potential collaborations, please reach out to Lewis Spears. The center operates part-time, with general hours available on its website. Please join me in welcoming Lewis Spears to NJCU!



MEN OF COLOR INITIATIVE



In August 2023, NJCU launched the Men of Color Initiative (MOCI), led by Leonard "Lenny" Williams, to support men of color in achieving higher engagement and academic success. Initial data from IE/IR shows that minority males involved in the program are outperforming those who are not. During the 2024 academic year, the program enrolled and engaged over 100 students. We are pleased to report that more than 30 MOCI students have achieved Dean's List status!

For the 2024-2025 academic year, there are plans to expand the Men of Color Initiative (MOCI) to support even more students. A "Year in Review" document is currently being developed to showcase the accomplishments of the program's inaugural year at NJCU. Additionally, Dr. Jonelle Knox has established the Dr. Jonelle Knox Scholarship through the NJCU Foundation. The scholarship will be awarded to two MOCI participants who demonstrate service, financial need, and academic achievement.

The first scholarships are anticipated to be granted in the Spring 2025 semester. Please join me in congratulating Lenny and the Men of Color Initiative students on their accomplishments in the inaugural year of operations!

YOUTH CORPS

During the 2024 academic year, New Jersey City University's Youth Corps program, under the leadership of Nikketta Pressley-Walsh, NJ Youth Corps Director, secured several public and private grants. These grants have significantly enhanced the program's ability to support individuals aged 16-25 who are working towards their High School Equivalency diploma (HSE). One grant has allowed the program to expand its services, offering students paid internships, advanced training opportunities, and essential resources such as transportation, laptops, and uniforms.

Additionally, in the spring, the City of Jersey City awarded Youth Corps a grant to host a community-wide event aimed at raising awareness about the opioid crisis among young people.

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of students enrolling in the undergraduate program at NJCU after earning their HSE, as well as those taking classes offered by the Adult and Continuing Education department. Stay tuned for updates on additional ways NJCU will continue to support both College Bound and Youth Corps students starting in the Fall 2024 semester.

Please join me in congratulating Nikketta Pressley-Walsh, Melinda Estrada-Anderson, Asad Faison, Jahshae Stewart, and Charles Diggs for their exceptional achievements and successful grant efforts during the 2024 academic year.





TRiO Learning Community [TLC]

TRIO (TLC), a federally funded program, provides supportive services to first-generation students, income-eligible students, and those with documented disabilities throughout their undergraduate enrollment. TLC has been serving NJCU students for over 26 years. In July, NJCU submitted a grant extension application to continue offering services through the TRIO SSS grant.

In August, Jeramiah Lyons joined the TRIO staff as Program Assistant. Jeramiah holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations from St. John's University. During his first week, he participated in TLC's Summer Engagement and Leadership Retreat, which took place at Camp Green Lane in Green Lane, PA, with staff and 21 TLC students. The retreat aimed to foster an environment where participants felt valued by their peers and to help overcome barriers to social belonging.

Opportunity Scholarship Program - EOF

The Opportunity Scholarship Program-Educational Opportunity Fund (OSP-EOF), located in the Professional Studies Building, Room 329, welcomed 135 new scholars for the Fall 2024 semester. This cohort comprised 69 incoming freshmen, 31 transfer students, and 35 current NJCU students who had not previously received EOF support.

Incoming freshmen participated in three distinct programs: a 5-week Summer Academy, a 3-day Summer Institute, and a pilot 2-day experience for post-traditional students. The pilot program catered to individuals who graduated from high school four or more years ago, offering virtual support tailored to their needs.

During the 5-week Summer Academy, all students successfully completed LTED 160: Languages of Power and Social Justice, earning 3 college credits. They also attended math and writing workshops designed to enhance their academic skills. Topics covered included during the workshops included social justice, domestic abuse, and the social implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI). EOF/OSP is currently accepting new eligible students.

To learn more and apply, please visit [here](#).

