Dear NJASCU Colleagues/Friends:

Welcome to this week’s edition of NJASCU’s “Noteworthy” compilation of a feature story, advocacy report, and news item(s), reflecting the interests and happenings among New Jersey's senior public colleges and universities.

We would love your feedback and suggestions. Please keep sending press releases, many of which will be included in our "Noteworthy" compilation.

Thank you,

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NJASCU Features

State Plan for Higher Education

Gov. Phil Murphy and Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis on March 26, 2019 announced the release of "Where Opportunity Meets Innovation: A Student-Centered Vision for New Jersey Higher Education." Below is the link to the entire plan, a link to NJ Spotlight’s reporting on the plan, and NJASCU’s statement on the plan.

https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/stateplan.shtml

Higher Goals for Higher Ed
www.NJSpotlight.com

For the first time in more than 13 years, New Jersey has a plan for improving higher education in the state. It includes enhancing college affordability, creating work opportunities, ensuring safe and supportive campuses, and prioritizing student voices in decision-making processes. And university professors and faculty members are prepared
Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis and Gov. Phil Murphy have released a new "student-centered vision" for higher education in New Jersey that they say will not only make college costs more transparent and improve life on campus for students across the state, but will also help keep talented young people living and working in New Jersey. The goal, Murphy said, is to achieve the target set by former Gov. Chris Christie of "65 by '25" - meaning that 65 percent of working New Jerseyans will have earned a college degree or certification by 2025.

"Today, New Jersey’s great colleges and universities set course to make our state the hub for American innovation and economic opportunity," Murphy said at the announcement at Rutgers, Newark on Tuesday. "This goal is nothing short of reclaiming our state’s mantle as the global leader in innovation and I firmly believe that anyone can find their place in that economy."

The plan - which comes with no price tag - lays out a "Student Bill of Rights," a set of 10 commitments that they say should be provided to every student in the state. Those rights include fee-free college prep programs for high schoolers, partnerships between colleges and the state to meaningfully reduce higher education costs, and a network of support for students to make sure they graduate. Read more.

NJASCU Comment on the State Plan for Higher Education

The New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU), comprising nine New Jersey senior public higher education institutions, is most appreciative of the commitment from the Governor, the Secretary of Higher Education and the Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) to a vibrant, responsive, and high-quality higher education community in New Jersey.

With a focus on developing a student-centric state plan for higher education that will provide an affordable and accessible path to postsecondary education for all residents of New Jersey, the Secretary has engaged in a journey of listening to and gathering information from a wide swath of stakeholders. She and her team held hearings, made public presentations, conducted surveys, and participated in numerous meetings to obtain input from thousands of individuals, whose comments have been synthesized into the State Plan for Higher Education.

Pleased that the plan acknowledges the value of a four-year education to the individual, New Jersey, and society as a whole, all the NJASCU institutions look forward to working with the Governor and the Secretary to continue our mission of providing a superior, cost-effective, attainable four-year education and beyond. We are particularly gratified that two of our presidents - Stockton President Harvey Kesselman and Rowan University President Ali Houshmand - were asked to assume leadership roles in two (Student Success and Affordability, respectively) of the five working groups that will be tasked with coming up with strategies to achieve the goals of the Higher Education Vision.

William Paterson University Launches Bachelor's Degree in Disability Studies - the First of its Kind in New Jersey
An innovative new bachelor’s degree - the first in New Jersey - will be launched by William Paterson University in Wayne next fall to meet the growing demand across all industries for professionals who understand the needs of those with disabilities.

The multidisciplinary program - among the first 20 undergraduate degree programs in the country - proactively explores the nature and meaning of disability as a social construct instead of a medical deficit, and will examine laws, policies, culture and history as a way to de-stigmatize disease, illness, and impairment across all areas of society.

According to a 2015 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one out of every five adults in the U.S. has a disability, with the rate of disability on the rise, because of an aging population and increases in chronic health conditions.

"As the number of individuals with disabilities increases, there is a growing demand for graduates who are well-prepared to work directly with individuals with disabilities across the lifespan within an academic framework that will help to remove the physical, legal, and attitudinal barriers that have continued to marginalize individuals with disabilities from fully participating in society," said Amy Ginsberg, dean of William Paterson University’s College of Education, which will house the new program. "We are excited to be the first university in New Jersey to offer such an important new degree."

The program draws from multiple disciplines in order for students to view issues of disability through their own experiences and potential career interests. The program, which builds on WPU’s very popular minor launched in 2017, includes required courses in anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and public health, and electives from those disciplines as well as disability studies, kinesiology, and sociology. Students will study topics such as lifespan development, the philosophy of justice, and ethical issues in disability studies.

In addition to preparing graduates for careers in direct support of individuals with disabilities, such as in education and human services, the disability studies degree will prepare students for careers or graduate studies in interrelated fields such as law, public health, public policy, government, business, law enforcement, mental health counseling, and social work.

Courses will be offered in multiple formats, including fully online, hybrid, and in-person in order to accommodate the needs of many different students and faculty.

A required civic and community engagement course embedded in the program will help students explore the concept of social justice through active participation in community organizations that serve individuals with disabilities. The program will also include a study abroad option through the university’s international exchange agreement with Windesheim University in the Netherlands, which is currently also developing a diversity program.

Chelsea Clinton to Speak, Sign New Book at Kean University
NJASCU Quicktakes

Best-selling author Chelsea Clinton will speak about her
Best-selling author Chelsea Clinton will speak at Kean University on April 4 to promote her new children’s book, Don’t Let Them Disappear, and threats to endangered animals during a special lecture event and book signing on Thursday, April 4 at Kean University.

The event is co-sponsored by the Lesniak Institute for American Leadership and Kean’s Distinguished Lecture Series and is open to the public. Tickets are required and are now on sale at kean.edu/lectureseries.

Former State Sen. Raymond J. Lesniak, who established the institute, will moderate a discussion with Clinton about the alarming rate at which endangered animals are disappearing around the globe and what the public can do to help solve the problem. Senator Lesniak’s institute advocates for several core causes, including animal welfare.

"Chelsea Clinton’s book, Don’t Let Them Disappear, is a marvelous presentation to young children of the importance of humans treating animals humanely and of the recognition of their value as fellow inhabitants on Earth," said Sen. Lesniak. "It’s an honor for New Jersey, which was the first state in the nation to ban ivory transactions to save elephants from poachers and to ban imports of trophies of endangered species, to host a forum and a book signing with Chelsea Clinton."

Ms. Clinton’s lecture is the latest presentation in Kean’s Distinguished Lecture Series, which has brought notable public figures such as historian Jon Meacham, journalist Bob Woodward, and most recently filmmaker Abigail Disney and evangelical minister the Rev. Robert Schenck to campus to discuss some of the most pressing issues in today’s society.

"We are honored to have Chelsea Clinton come to our university and talk about the work she has done as a children’s book author but also as an activist and leader," said Dawood Farahi, PhD, Kean’s president. "It’s a fantastic opportunity for our students and others to hear from a person who grew up on the world stage and is now making a difference around the globe."

Ms. Clinton, the only child of former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State and U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, has written several children’s books, including The New York Times bestselling picture book She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World. She is the vice chair of the Clinton Foundation, where she works on initiatives that empower the next generation of leaders.

Ms. Clinton partnered with acclaimed author and illustrator Gianna Marino on Don’t Let Them Disappear. Kean University is the second stop on her book tour and her only stop in New Jersey. The book introduces young readers to a selection of endangered animals, including rhinos and pandas, and shares what makes them special and what we can do to help them survive.

The event will begin at 6 p.m. on April 4 at the Wilkin’s Theatre on Kean’s Union campus. The conversation with Sen. Lesniak and Ms. Clinton will be followed by an audience Q&A session and a book signing.

This is a ticketed event. Students with valid ID from any college or high school can purchase a student ticket directly from the Wilkin’s Theatre box office during normal box office hours.
Office hours. These student tickets will not include complimentary copies of the book. Other guests must buy their tickets online. Guests will receive one complimentary book per ticket transaction and are able to purchase additional books as well.

Doors open at 5 pm. Guests are encouraged to leave ample time for parking and to consider taking mass transit to campus. The Union train station is a short walk to the theater.

NJASCU Advocacy Alert

Relieving Polluted Runoff
www.NJSpotlight.com

A decade-long battle to give local governments a tool to deal with storm runoff - the state’s biggest source of pollution for streams, rivers, and bays - ended on March 18, 2019 with Gov. Phil Murphy signing a bill without fanfare that will do just that.

The legislation (S-1073/A-2694) permits municipalities and other entities to set up utilities that could impose fees - dubbed a “rain tax” by opponents - on parking lots and other impervious surfaces to fund improvements to failing storm water management systems.

Aging storm water systems, typically poorly maintained, have long been recognized as the largest source of contamination of state waters. With heavy rains, the runoff from impervious areas mixes with pesticides, oils, and other pollutants to foul the water or exacerbate flooding.

By creating storm water utilities, local governments could use the funds to address a problem that has been projected to cost as much as $16 billion to fix. New Jersey becomes the 41st state to adopt this approach to widespread flooding and water-quality problems.

"With storm water runoff becoming an increasingly prevalent problem, frequent flooding is polluting waterways and causing millions of dollars of damage, snarling traffic, threatening drinking water, and even endangering lives," said Ed Potosnak, executive director of the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters.

But critics argued the bill adds another bureaucratic expense at the local level. Besides business lobbyists, most Republican lawmakers voted against the measure.

"This law adds yet another tax on our already overburdened residents and businesses, though there is no language to define how much people will be charged, how the funds will be collected, or how the funds generated by it will actually address storm water systems," said Raymond Cantor, a vice president of the New Jersey Business & Industry Association.

NJASCU’s comments on the substance of the law:

- The statute is vague on its standards and implementation.
- The storm water fee may be imposed by various county or municipal entities. It will be imposed on real property and should be “reasonable.”
- It is based on the amount of storm water running on a property.
While many believe it will be based on impervious surfaces such as parking lots and roofs, it is not so limited and could be applied to lawns as well.

There are "credits" that are to be given for existing storm water facilities on a property and how well they function. It is not clear how that will be determined or how high the credits may be.

The fee is intended to cover the cost of a host of storm water and related issues; thus, it is fairly broad in intent and potentially costly in its application.

The Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Board of Public Utilities and the Department of Community Affairs is required to create guidance to assist local governments in implementing the utilities and the fees. However, the guidance is not mandatory, and the local governments are free to ignore it.

There are no exemptions in the law and it is likely to apply to all properties, including colleges and universities, churches, all other non-profits, government agencies, as well as industrial, commercial, and residential properties. It is like a fee for wastewater or drinking water. Everyone pays.

There is also no appeal process as there is for property taxes.

However, creation of the utility and implementation of the fee is optional for each county and municipality. This now becomes a town, county by county issue.

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**Noteworthy: NJASCU Colleges and Universities**

**William Paterson University Dean Kara Rabbitt is Honored to be Named American Council on Education Fellow**

Kara Rabbitt, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at William Paterson University, has been named an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow for academic year 2019-20. She is one of 39 Fellows selected from across the country following nomination by the senior administration of their institution and a rigorous application process.

"Dr. Rabbitt will join a class of Fellows from various colleges and universities around the nation," said Richard J. Helldobler, president of William Paterson University. "She will learn with and from them, as well as from a number of higher education leaders, several of whom will serve as her mentors. I wish Dr. Rabbitt great success in her Fellowship year."

Established in 1965, the ACE Fellows Program is designed to strengthen institutions and leadership in American higher education by identifying and preparing faculty and staff for senior positions in college and university administration through its distinctive and intensive nominator-driven, cohort-based mentorship model. More than 2,000 higher education leaders have participated in the ACE Fellows Program over the past five decades, with more than 80 percent of Fellows having gone on to serve as senior leaders of colleges and universities.

"The ACE Fellows Program epitomizes ACE’s goal of enriching the capacity of leaders to innovate and adapt, and it fuels the expansion of a talented and diverse higher education leadership pipeline," said ACE President Ted Mitchell. "Each year I am impressed by how many former Fellows are named to prominent leadership roles, which makes it even more exciting to meet each new cohort. I’m left wondering, 'Where will these Fellows end up?'"
Orsted Signs Research Partnership with Rowan University
www.NJBiz.com

Orsted U.S. Offshore Wind signed a memorandum of understanding Wednesday with Rowan University to allow the company to support offshore wind engineering clinics for students, and collaborate with them on research opportunities.

The memorandum was signed at Rowan's annual Faculty Research Day, which showcases and honors research, scholarship and creative activity at the university’s three campuses.

Orsted submitted an application for its Ocean Wind project to the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities in December 2018 to develop the first offshore wind farm in the state. The announcement for the award is expected from the NJBPU in summer 2019.

Two William Paterson University Professors Win Awards for Most Promising New College Textbooks
NJASCU Quicktakes

Tom Heinzen, professor of psychology at William Paterson University (WPU), and Kathleen Odell Korgen, WPU professor of sociology, are two of 10 authors nationwide to receive the 2018 Most Promising New College Textbook award for their new books from the Textbook and Academic Authors Association (TAA).

"We're very proud to have Professors Heinzen and Korgen win awards for their textbooks, one of which included student participation," said Kara Rabbitt, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. "It is a well-earned recognition (which occurred in early March) for their scholarship and research."

Dr. Heinzen, with coauthor Wind Goodfriend, assistant dean of graduate studies at Buena Vista University, received the Most Promising New Textbook (College) award for Social Psychology, 1st ed., Sage Publishing. In the book, Drs. Heinzen and Goodfriend use brief, entertaining case stories to illustrate the historical context and evolution of major theories within the field of social psychology.

Dr. Korgen, with coauthor Maxine P. Atkinson, professor of sociology at North Carolina State University, received the Most Promising New Textbook (College) award for Sociology in Action, 1st ed., Sage Publishing.

In Professor Korgen's book, four William Paterson students contributed to the book’s "Sociologists in Action" feature found in the "Understanding Socialization" chapter. As the book’s "Sociologist in Action" in the "Experiencing Health, Illness and Medical Care" chapter, Tyesha Crawford, a William Paterson student who won the 2018 Campus Compact award, shared her story of improving community health by beautifying the Lou Costello park in Paterson, NJ. Sociology in Action is written to inspire students to do (rather than just talk) sociology through real-world activities designed to increase learning, retention, and engagement with course material.

The awards will be presented during an awards luncheon at TAA's 32nd Annual Textbook and Academic Authoring Conference in Philadelphia, PA on June 14, 2019.

Ramapo Hosts NJ Council for Exceptional Children (NJCEC) Conference - Ramapo
More than 500 educators from across the state attended the New Jersey Council for Exceptional Children (NJCEC) Spring 2019 Conference held at Ramapo College of New Jersey. The all-day event is the premier special education conference for New Jersey.

"This was an incredible turnout for this conference. This really shows the dedication and commitment of special education teachers," said Julie Norflus-Good, Director of the Masters of Arts in Special Education program at Ramapo College. She also serves as President of the NJCEC.

"The NJCEC community encompasses so many diverse and extraordinary children, families, and educators. This collaboration is tremendous and impacts the lives of many," she added. "I am so grateful for the college's support of the NJCEC."

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**Noteworthy: New Jersey Issues**

**Moody's: State Tax Revenue Growth Must Quicken to Meet Budget Targets**

New Jersey's finances are in such worrisome condition that the state would need to see steep, double-digit growth by the end of tax season in April if it hopes to recover from the current economic slump, according to a report Thursday from Wall Street analyst Moody’s Investor Service.

The state's revenues were coming in well short of 7.5 percent growth called for in the 2019 budget signed last summer, held down mainly by weakness in income tax collections, the Treasury Department said in January.

Growth is now projected to be 5.5 percent by the Murphy administration, the treasury announced earlier this month. But Moody’s said the income tax revenue would need to grow at least 17 percent through the end of the 2019 fiscal year, which ends June 30.

The report notes the considerably high-performing corporate business tax, which increased by 2.5 percent this year.

"It is uncertain whether New Jersey will achieve that growth, although some improvement in April is likely, given the shift in payment timing due to federal tax law changes that took effect in 2018," the report reads.

Treasury officials argued that the slump has been because of taxpayers' behavior changes following the 2017 federal tax cuts.

Most of the taxpayers who would pay in December to take advantage of the unlimited state and local tax federal tax deduction lost the incentive to do so once the deduction was capped at $10,000, the treasury said.

That money will come into the state's coffers by April, and lawmakers will learn in May if those predictions came to be true, when State Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio testifies before the budget committees.
Gov. Phil Murphy will have to consider even more spending cuts, on top of the roughly $1.1 billion in savings the budget calls for, if the numbers fall through, Moody’s said.

"As we have said, we are taking a measured approach and monitoring state revenues very closely, Gross Income Tax (GIT) returns in particular. The two-month GIT dip we saw in December and January has ended and we believe it was primarily attributed to historical changes in taxpayer behavior due to the federal government capping the SALT (state and local) tax deduction," Jennifer Sciortino, director of communications at NJ's Office of the Treasurer.

"At the time of the Governor’s Budget Address, we adjusted our Gross Income Tax and Sales Tax revenue projections downward for FY19, but are forecasting a roughly $327 million increase in total revenue collections over what was certified in July due to strong growth in corporate tax revenues," she added.

**Noteworthy: National Issues**

**President Trump Signs Executive Order on Campus Free Speech and Transparency**
www.InsideHigherEd.com

President Trump on March 21, 2019, signed an executive order on campus free speech and college transparency.

The order directs 12 grant-making federal agencies to coordinate with the Office of Management and Budget to certify that colleges receiving federal research funds comply with existing federal law and regulations that touch on free academic inquiry. The order does not apply to federal student aid programs.

The document also directs the Education Department to publish program-level data in the College Scorecard on measures of student outcomes, including earnings, student debt, default rates and loan repayment rates, the official told reporters.

It also directs the department to submit policy recommendations to the White House on risk-sharing proposals for colleges that participate in the federal student loan program.

**The Admissions Process to Colleges and Universities is Overwhelming and Discourages Low-Income Students from Applying**
www.NYTimes.com

A documentary to be screened on Capitol Hill next month ... Chronicles the experience of low-income students navigating college admissions ... Right now, the system feels like it is crafted to keep low-income students like us out of college. If it is, it’s working: only nine percent of people from the lowest income quartile receive a bachelor’s degree by the age of 24, compared to 77 percent for the top income quartile.

**Admissions Scandal is Bad, but More Scandalous is the Underfunding of Public Universities**
www.NJSpotlight.com
Op-ed by Michael Klein, former NJASCU executive director and current interim director of Stockton University's William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy.

Operation Varsity Blues, while lurid, isn't the biggest problem in higher education in the United States. The underfunding of public colleges and universities is ... There are many ways to look at the admission scandal and glean something about higher education in the United States. You could choose the influence of athletics, the vulnerability of standardized tests to cheating, or the overall advantages of wealthy families. I want to focus on the big picture of college opportunity and redirect the conversation to how we strengthen public colleges and universities, expand access, and lower the anxiety over college admissions and paying for college.

**AASCU Statement on President Trump’s Executive Order on Free Speech and Higher Education**

"As institutions of higher learning, the nation’s state colleges and universities have a fundamental commitment to free expression and the unfettered pursuit of the truth. In addition, as state entities, public institutions are fully subject to the strictures of the First Amendment and the protection of free expression within the guidelines set forth by the Supreme Court. The president’s Executive Order does not - and cannot - add to or subtract from our pre-existing obligations under the Constitution or the commitment of our institutions to the advancement of knowledge through the promotion of free speech and academic freedom.

Beyond addressing free speech, the president’s Executive Order also includes a series of proposals related to federal financial aid programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA). While we welcome a deliberate policy conversation on the issues referenced in the Executive Order, the proper vehicle for making federal policy on these topics is a legislative reauthorization of HEA and the enactment of a new statute, not a unilateral order from the White House. We look forward to working in a bipartisan fashion with Congress and the administration to improve on current law through the reauthorization process that is already underway in both chambers."

**Federal Prosecutors Charged Dozens of People, Including Hollywood Actresses and Top Coaches, in a Large-Scale College Admissions Bribery Scandal**

Federal prosecutors charged dozens of people on Tuesday in a major college admission scandal that involved wealthy parents, including Hollywood celebrities and prominent business leaders, paying bribes to get their children into elite American universities.

Thirty-three parents were charged in the case and prosecutors said there could be additional indictments to come. Also implicated were top college coaches, who were accused of accepting millions of dollars to help admit students to Wake Forest, Yale, Stanford, the University of Southern California and other schools, regardless of their academic or sports ability, officials said.
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See what's happening on our social sites: