



December 31, 2015

Dear NJASCU Board Members and Secretaries to the Boards of Trustees:

Happy New Year!

Below are recent articles with a focus on the Garden State, and higher education from around the country. If your institution has any news that you would like to share, please feel free to send it to us for inclusion in our distribution.

### **The Counterfeit High School Diploma**

New York Times Editorial  
December 31, 2015

Teachers unions and other critics of federally required standardized tests have behaved in recent years as though killing the testing mandate would magically remedy everything that ails education in the United States. In reality, getting rid of the testing requirement in the early grades would make it impossible for the country to know if anything children were learning from year to year.

### **Division of Student Life at Rowan University Recognized Nationally for Programming Promoting Campus Safety**

NJ.com (Promoted by Rowan University)  
December 30, 2015

Through innovating programming and services, as well as partnerships with other departments and divisions university-wide, the Division of Student Life at Rowan University has made the safety of Rowan students a hallmark. Now, the division - which includes 21 different departments from Residential Learning to the Wellness Center to the Office of Social Justice, Inclusion and Conflict Resolution (SJICR) - has been recognized nationally for its comprehensive efforts.

**Universities Race to Nurture Start-Up Founders of the Future**

New York Times  
December 29, 2015

It may have sufficed to offer a few entrepreneurship courses, workshops and clubs, but undergraduates, driven by a sullen job market and inspired by billion-dollar success narratives from Silicon Valley, now expect universities to teach them how to convert their ideas into business or nonprofit ventures.

**As Graduation Rates Rise, Experts Fear Diplomas Come Up Short**

New York Times  
December 26, 2015

It is a pattern repeated in school districts across the country - urban, suburban and rural - where the number of students earning high school diplomas has risen to historic peaks, yet measures of academic readiness for college or jobs are much lower. This has led educators to question the real value of a high school diploma and whether graduation requirements are too easy.

**New Jersey School District Eases Pressure on Students, Baring an Ethnic Divide**

New York Times  
December 26, 2015

New Jersey School District of West Windsor-Plainsboro struggles with the issue of pressure-cooker academic environment and the effects on the student - an issue faced by higher education faculty and administrators throughout the state.

**Faculty from New Jersey Colleges Honored with Inventor Fellowships**

NJBiz.com  
December 23, 2015

The National Academy of Inventors announced its fellows for the 2015 calendar year earlier this month. The list of 168 featured seven faculty from four different New Jersey institutions for higher learning.

**Website Ranks New Jersey Colleges**

NJBiz.com  
December 23, 2015

Niche.com compiled rankings of the best colleges in New Jersey for 2016.

Reviewing assessments of 1,713 colleges, the Niche website includes a feature allowing the colleges to be grouped by state. Half of each assessment is based on academics and a value grade, worth 25 percent each. Other lesser-weighted factors include professor grades, student surveys, diversity and athletics, among others.

**China to Limit Programs Preparing Students for College Abroad**

EducationDive.com

December 21, 2015

New Jersey higher education institutions with special ties to China may feel particular concern with this recent Chinese government initiative. It has stopped approving new international programs and is moving to make existing programs less attractive and accessible for families because of location and price.

### **Rutgers Looks to Boost Affordability**

The Record (NorthJersey.com)

December 21, 2015

Local community college graduates stand to benefit from an initiative that will make it less costly for them to earn a four-year degree from Rutgers University. Officials at Rutgers-Newark announced last week that they are targeting transfer students with two-year degrees and all students from their host city with a guarantee of free tuition and fees as long as their adjusted gross household income is \$60,000 or below.

### **Three Reasons for Those Hefty College Tuition Bills**

New York Times

December 20, 2015

The following is NJASCU Executive Director Michael Klein's Letter to the Editor in response to the above NY Times Column.

To the Editor: Re: "Three Reasons for Those Hefty College Tuition Bills" (The Upshot, December 20): By focusing on private, nonprofit colleges, N. Gregory Mankiw overlooked the situation facing public institutions of higher education, where the vast majority of undergraduates (over [76 percent](#)) are enrolled. Over the past 20 years, tuition and fees have risen substantially, [114 percent](#) at public four-year institutions and [65 percent](#) at public two-year colleges, while overall public enrollment expanded [34 percent](#). During that same time, educational appropriations from state and local governments per full-time student at public institutions dropped almost [\\$1,400](#). Stronger institutional support from state governments is key to keeping college affordable for most students in the U.S.

### **N.J. Democrats: We Can Rev Up State's Ailing Economy**

NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

December 15, 2015

State Senate Democrats said they will offer a slate of bills, to be introduced in the next legislative session, that are aimed at reviving New Jersey's economy by expanding pre-k and college scholarships, cutting retirement income taxes and improving New Jersey's transportation network. Among other things, the proposals would create more scholarships for high-performing high schoolers who stay in New Jersey to attend county colleges and four-year public universities. Senator Sandra Cunningham (D-Hudson) said New Jersey needs to stop the flow of New Jersey's high school graduates to out-of-state colleges. Four of 10 of the state's high school graduates leave the state for college, she noted.

*(NJASCU NOTE: However, 93 percent of first-time students at public four-year degree granting institutions were state residents [Fall 2012] - only Texas has a better in-state record. Thus, the institutions are anticipating the NJ bond funding that will help grow capacity and keep even more NJ students at NJ colleges and universities.)*

### **The Lie About College Diversity**

New York Times  
December 12, 2015

The Supreme Court listened anew last week to arguments about affirmative action in higher education, and we heard yet again about the push by colleges to assemble diverse student bodies.

### **Interactive Map: On the Trail of New Jersey's Tax-Exempt Properties**

NJ Spotlight  
December 11, 2015

From colleges and government offices to military installations, properties that don't pay taxes cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars. New Jersey's heavy reliance on property taxes to fund local government and schools is problematic for many reasons - especially when a municipality can't tax a large percentage of those properties.

Nearly 13 percent of all property in the state was exempt from paying taxes last year, an analysis of the Department of Community Affairs' Abstract of Ratables shows. That's a total of \$145 billion in schools, government offices, parks, military sites churches, cemeteries, hospitals, and other nonprofit locations off the tax rolls. It also includes some private businesses, such as JP Morgan Chase Bank in Jersey City, the owner of the new Panasonic site in Newark, and Burlington Coat Factory in Florence, that are getting tax breaks in the name of economic development.

The exemptions are so big, that if every one of those paid property taxes at the current average rate, it would generate an additional \$4 billion on top of the \$27 billion levied for local, county, and school purposes in 2014.

### **Count New Jersey Tenure Reform be Affected by New Federal Law?**

NJ Spotlight.com  
December 11, 2015

Over the many months that New Jersey debated and finally enacted a new teacher-tenure law, one of the common refrains regarding its more stringent teacher-evaluation requirements was that the standards were in line with federal mandates. That changed yesterday, when President Barack Obama signed the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and sent into oblivion the No Child Left Behind Act - and, with it, almost any federal role in teacher education; no more federal requirements for using uniform models to judge teachers, no more demands that student test scores be factored into those ratings. But exactly what it means for New Jersey is an open question.

If you have not subscribed to "Daily Headlines" from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (a daily news service) and are interested, you can sign up at <http://www.aascu.org/policy/publications/subscriptionform/>. We have found "Daily Headlines" to be well targeted to the interests and needs of higher education leaders and decision makers. It includes national and state

news, so you will see important stories from New Jersey media outlets on a regular basis.

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<https://www.facebook.com/NJASCUorg>

Thank you,

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