



NEW JERSEY

# Association of State Colleges and Universities

150 West State Street, Trenton NJ 08608

Phone (609) 989-1100

**QuickTakes!**

## NJCU President is Panelist at *NJ Spotlight* Roundtable – “Preparing High Schoolers for College and Career”

July 1, 2019



Sue Henderson, President of New Jersey City University

In the second NJ Spotlight’s 2019 “Defining the Diploma” series of roundtables, the June 18 discussion looked at private and public sector job paths for New Jersey graduates. New Jersey City University President Sue Henderson was among the policy, college and business leaders addressing the issue of what skills graduates need to succeed beyond high school.

Since the movement for education standards and testing took off in the 1980s and 1990s, the issue has centered on what exactly students should know and be able

to do to succeed beyond high school. But that has been a moving target. Especially in recent years, the skills and knowledge expected of high school graduates have shifted.

How are schools and the state dealing with these changing expectations? What are the consequences for students who go to college? And could there be a better connection between K-12 education and New Jersey’s wide array of businesses and employers – from small family shops to major corporations?

These questions were addressed in the June 18 discussion, that began with a Keynote Address by Mike Cohen, president of Achieve Inc., Washington, DC, discussed the past quarter century for the standards movement in the country and how states are addressing the resulting policy and political challenges. One of his main takeaways was that before a state can impose standards and testing to evaluate those standards, the state must have a clear idea of the purpose of the testing – i.e., to measure student achievement or to evaluate teacher performance.

---

[www.njascu.org](http://www.njascu.org)

*The College of New Jersey  
Kean University  
Montclair State University*

*New Jersey City University  
Ramapo College of New Jersey  
Rowan University*

*Stockton University  
Thomas Edison State University  
William Paterson University*

Dr. Henderson focused on what NJCU was doing to create a pathway for the students to meaningful employment and/or continued academic studies post-bachelor's degree. Dr. Henderson noted, "New Jersey City University believes that money should not be an obstacle to higher education, and our student financial aid programs are designed to help students manage tuition costs." She continued, "Our comprehensive needs-based student aid program makes higher education a reality for many students – in fact, 75% of our undergraduate students receive financial aid. To make higher education a reality for students who would otherwise be unable to attend, New Jersey City University provides more than \$20 million in financial aid annually."

In 2016, NJCU launched the Debt-Free Promise Program, designed to make college education accessible and affordable for New Jersey residents who are pursuing their first undergraduate degree as incoming full-time freshman students.

The goal of the program is to eliminate the need for students to take out loans to cover the cost of tuition and fees. All New Jersey residents who are admitted to NJCU from high school and attend full-time, with a family household income of \$60,000 or less, will be offered a scholarship in lieu of having to take out a loan (after federal and state financial aid is awarded).

"NJCU students already graduate with the lowest rate of indebtedness (tuition and fees) of any other public college in New Jersey. The NJCU Debt-Free Promise Program seeks to ensure that every student graduate with a clean financial slate by eliminating the need to take on unnecessary debt so that they can begin their professional careers unencumbered by financial burdens," said Dr. Henderson.

She noted that from an academic perspective, NJCU offers several [support programs](#) designed to help students succeed at the university by developing their information literacy, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and study skills, as well as mentoring students with learning disabilities.

Sophomores, juniors, and seniors can also gain valuable experience for their future careers through NJCU's [Cooperative Education Program](#), which combines classroom learning with practical experience in the work place. Students may choose from a wide range of employment opportunities to enhance both their academic classroom experience and their professional career skills.

NJ Spotlight's John Mooney moderated the panel that included in addition to Dr. Henderson:

Linda Eno, Assistant Commissioner, NJ Department of Education

Dr. Aaron Fichtner, President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges, and former New Jersey Labor Commissioner

Gene C. Waddy, Chief Executive Officer, [Diversant](#)

Event sponsors – [Pearson](#), [ETS](#), and [Public Consulting Group](#) – helped make this event a reality at no cost to the attendees. More “Defining the Diploma” events will take place this fall.

Below is NJTV’s video of the forum  
<https://youtu.be/4AfjUNuECIU>