

2021

Annual Report



**New Jersey Association of
State Colleges and Universities**

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OUR MISSION

To represent member institutions, advocate for higher education as a public good, and communicate the collective value of the state colleges and universities in serving the public interest and the State of New Jersey.



A Letter from Our Chairman

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to deliver the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities' (NJASCU's) 2021 Annual Report. We will not only remember this past year in the context of ongoing challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also for the unwavering persistence of our trustees and college and university presidents to push forward and return to as much of a "normal" college experience as possible. From launching surveillance testing programs and vaccination campaigns, to delivering course content in new ways, and continuing to put the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff at the forefront—2021 proved to be another great example of our member institutions' ability to adapt, work together, and deliver high-quality education under extraordinary circumstances.

Among last year's key highlights, NJASCU was proud to welcome the fifth President of Ramapo College of New Jersey, Dr. Cindy Jebb, who joined Ramapo after 39 years of distinguished military service. Dr. Jebb, a Brigadier General, most recently served as Dean of the Academic Board at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

NJASCU also pushed forward in its organizational goals this past year. Building on the Association's hiring of Executive Director Gene Lepore in 2020, Associate Director Morganne Dudzinski joined the organization. The new, streamlined team hit the ground running on policy, advocacy, and enhancing the visibility of the organization. In close collaboration with the colleges and universities, NJASCU's notable successes included significant gains in the fiscal year 2022 State budget; beneficial changes to the State College Contracts Law; and the public release of an impact study that highlighted the economic and community benefits of our member institutions.

Despite this recent progress, we know our work is never done. Access, affordability, and financial stability continue to guide our advocacy efforts. This fall, the statewide Garden State Guarantee program will begin at the four-year public colleges, adding to the free college programs already offered at several NJASCU institutions. State investment in operating and capital support also remains a top priority for the Association.

I am confident that together, we will continue to meet challenges head-on and strive to strengthen the public higher education sector in the State. I thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Sincerely,

A.J. Sabath, Chairman
NJASCU Board of Trustees

A Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear friends and colleagues,

I am honored to deliver the 2021 Annual Report of the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU). The past year has been an opportunity for our member institutions to highlight their resilience, resourcefulness, and dedication to their students in the face of an ongoing pandemic. We will take with us the many lessons that we have learned from our pandemic experience, chief among them is that our institutions are stronger when they learn from each other and work together.

In the past year, NJASCU released its economic impact report, *Lifting Up Students and Communities, Strengthening the State Economy*. This document illustrates that NJASCU's institutions, both individually and collectively, play a critical role in their communities and the State of New Jersey. The report found that NJASCU institutions generate \$6.1 billion, supporting 36,000 jobs in the State. The study also calculated that the institutions have a 16:1 multiplier effect on State funds invested, with each \$1 million in State dollars producing \$16 million in State economic activity. Perhaps most importantly, it speaks to the role of our institutions as vehicles of economic mobility for students.

NJASCU also made great strides working with Governor Murphy, Higher Education Secretary Dr. Brian Bridges, and the Legislature last year. We are about to embark on the first year of the monumental Garden State Guarantee program, which guarantees free or significantly reduced tuition to students with the greatest financial need. We worked with our legislative partners to enact legislation to provide institutions greater flexibility in procurement under the State College Contracts Law, and were successful in advocating for historic investments in public institutions of higher education in the fiscal year 2022 State budget. This included the Legislature's additional \$35 million appropriation aimed at increasing TAG awards for students attending public four-year institutions and improving equity in the distribution of funds. It also appropriated an additional \$22 million to increase operating aid for institutions who have historically received less funding per student.

In addition to welcoming Ramapo College President Cindy Jebb, NJASCU also brought on a new Associate Director, Morganne Dudzinski, who previously served as Director of News and Public Affairs at Monmouth University. Morganne brought with her a wealth of experience in higher education, advocacy, and legislative policymaking, which allowed her to make immediate contributions to NJASCU.

As we look ahead, we aim to build on the successes of the past year. NJASCU will continue to foster collaboration among its members and advocate for sustained investment in our institutions so that they are well equipped to serve their students. We will work together with policymakers to advance policies that preserve and improve access to and affordability of our institutions. I am confident that NJASCU will succeed in its efforts and meet the new challenges of the coming year.

Sincerely,

Gene Lepore, Executive Director
NJASCU

In Remembrance

Dr. Robert A. Altman

1943 - 2022



We fondly remember our colleague and friend, Dr. Robert (Bob) Altman. Dr. Altman served honorably as a member of The College of New Jersey's Board of Trustees for over 15 years. He also previously served as Chair and most recently as Vice Chair of the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities' Board. His passion, dedication, and enthusiasm for higher education were unmatched. He will be dearly missed.

Leadership



A.J. Sabath, Trustee
Ramapo College of New Jersey
Chair, NJASCU



Deceased
Dr. Robert A. Altman, Trustee
The College of New Jersey
Vice Chair, NJASCU



Dr. Kemi Alli, MD, Trustee
Thomas Edison State University



Madeleine Deininger, Trustee
Stockton University



Frederick L. Gruel, Trustee
William Paterson University



Carlos Lejniaks, Trustee
New Jersey City University



Linda Lewis, Trustee
Kean University



Dr. Kathryn Foster, President
The College of New Jersey



Dr. Merodie A. Hancock, President
Thomas Edison State University



Dr. Richard J. Helldobler, President
William Paterson University



Dr. Sue Henderson, President
New Jersey City University



Dr. Cindy R. Jebb, President
Ramapo College of New Jersey



Dr. Harvey Kesselman, President
Stockton University



Dr. Lamont Repollet, President
Kean University

Staff

Eugene Lepore

Executive Director

Gene works with member institutions' presidents and senior leadership to develop the organization's policy agenda and objectives. He is responsible for publicly articulating the organization's positions to the State's key policy makers and stakeholders. In 2021, Gene was named to ROI-NJ's Higher Education Influencers list.

Gene previously served as Deputy Executive Director and Director of Budget and Fiscal Analysis for the New Jersey Senate Majority Office. He has well over a decade of experience in the Legislature having joined the Senate Majority Office in 2006. During his tenure in the Senate Majority Office, he advised the Senate President and members of the Democratic Caucus on policy, shepherded major legislative policy initiatives, and managed staff and legislative operations.



Morganne Dudzinski

Associate Director

Morganne assists the Executive Director in developing, proposing, and advocating for state higher education policy recommendations on behalf of NJASCU's seven member institutions. She also coordinates the association's communications and media relations.

Morganne has nearly a decade of experience working in public policy, advocacy, and media relations in New Jersey. She previously served as the Director of News and Public Affairs and spokesperson at Monmouth University. Before that, Morganne worked as the Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs for JerseyCAN, a statewide education advocacy nonprofit. She also held the positions of Director of Constituent Affairs and later Legislative Director for former state Sen. Jennifer Beck, where she worked on the senator's policy agenda and also supported Sen. Declan O'Scanlon, who was a member of the General Assembly at the time.



Member Institutions



By the Numbers

NJASCU's seven member institutions collectively serve over 60,000 students.

56,440

UNDERGRADUATES*

*Data from fall 2020.

6,644

GRADUATE STUDENTS*

*Data from fall 2020.

22,488

**PELL GRANT*
RECIPIENTS**

*Federal, need-based financial aid for undergraduates. Data from 2019-20 academic year.

14,905

TAG GRANT* RECIPIENTS

*NJ's need-based financial aid program. Data from 2019-20 academic year.

12,600

**BACHELOR'S DEGREES
AWARDED IN 2019-20**

2021 Accomplishments

FY22 BUDGET

Successfully advocated to Legislature for:

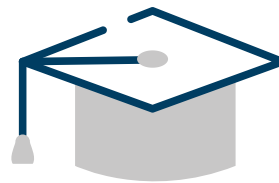
- Increased base funding for NJASCU institutions with low funding per full-time equivalent student
- An additional \$35 million for Tuition Aid Grants (TAG)



Released impact study illustrating NJASCU institutions' economic and community contributions to the State of New Jersey.

Featured in:

- InsiderNJ
- Politico NJ
- ROI-NJ
- NJ Business Today
- SHEOO e-newsletter



Published op-ed in NJ Spotlight on the importance of the Tuition Aid Grant budget increase and advocating for award increases for the four-year public colleges.

S-4043

Led advocacy efforts for amendments to the State College Contracts Law (signed in Jan. 2022).

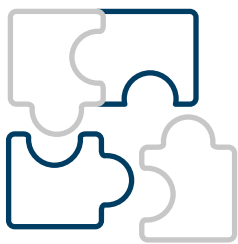
The law:

- raises the statutory threshold for certain public bidding;
- permits bidder disqualification due to prior negative experience;
- adds exemptions to the public bidding requirement;
- and establishes a process for a cooperative pricing system.

2021 Accomplishments

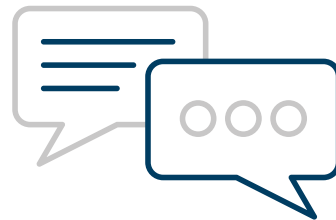


Collaborated with NJASCU institutions, the Secretary of Higher Education, and HESAA on elements of the Garden State Guarantee program and as a member of the Outcomes-Based Allocation (OBA) Work Group.



Regularly convened NJASCU professional groups, including:

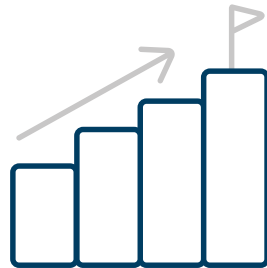
- Presidents
- Government affairs staff
 - Organized inaugural fall retreat, which included presentations and panel discussions with Congressional and legislative staff, OSHE, and various subject matter experts.
- Provosts
- CFOs
- Technology transfer/research commercialization group



Provided policy expertise and feedback on legislation, including:

- supporting higher education capital investment from American Rescue Plan funds;
- securing exemption from the Responsible Collective Negotiations Act;
- preserving institutional autonomy through trustee training bill amendments;
- collaborating with the Educational Facilities Authority to modernize their statute and provide additional resources to colleges;
- partnering with the NJ Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to make a Praxis requirement bill for educator prep programs less costly; and
- successfully advocating for the inclusion of State colleges in design-build contracts.

Looking Ahead



In the year ahead, NJASCU looks forward to working with member institutions on initiatives that will strengthen the public higher education landscape in New Jersey, including:

- Collaboration with the Administration and Legislature on the fiscal year 2023 budget proposal to ensure adequate support for NJASCU institutions.
- Engaging legislators on revisions to public-private partnership legislation.
- Identifying opportunities for institutions to share resources/staff/contractors to reduce overhead costs.
- Continuing to build the association's visibility through media, events, etc.
- Serving as a resource and partner in the successful rollout of the Garden State Guarantee program.