

2022-2023

# Annual Report



# Table of Contents

- Chairman's Letter.....03
- Executive Director's Letter.....04
- Leadership.....05
- Staff.....06
- Member Institutions.....07
- By the Numbers.....08
- 2022-23 Accomplishments.....09, 10
- Looking Ahead.....11

## 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 Members and Friends of the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities,

I am delighted to present to you the 2022-2023 Annual Report of our esteemed association, which reflects the collective achievements of our member institutions over the past year.

First and foremost, I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to the new leadership that has joined our ranks. Maria Falca-Dodson, Trustee of The College of New Jersey; Andrés Acebo, Interim President of New Jersey City University; Dr. Joe Bertolino, President of Stockton University; and Dr. Michael Bernstein, Interim President of The College of New Jersey, will undoubtedly bring fresh perspectives, dedication, and expertise to our association.

As we welcome new leaders, we must also express our deepest gratitude to those who have diligently served our association and its member institutions. Former Presidents Dr. Harvey Kesselman of Stockton University and Dr. Kate Foster of The College of New Jersey have provided exemplary dedication and leadership that has launched our association on an upward trajectory. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their tireless commitment to our shared goals.

One of the most significant achievements over the past year has been the resounding success in securing additional operating aid for our member institutions in both the fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 state budgets. After years of advocating for increased support, we have finally begun to witness a positive shift. This accomplishment demonstrates the power of collective action and the strong advocacy efforts of our association in championing the interests of our institutions and students. It also shows the willingness of state leaders to invest in a sector that remains vital to our workforce and economy.

Looking ahead, we understand that in order to best serve our diverse student populations and fulfill our unique institutional missions, we must continuously seek innovative ways to optimize resources and deliver high-quality education. Through our collaborative efforts, we will navigate the challenges that lie ahead while preserving the values that define our member institutions.

The higher education landscape in New Jersey and across the nation is facing complex and evolving challenges. As an association, we stand ready to engage in statewide discussions about the sector and contribute to the ongoing dialogue on strengthening higher education. Our collective expertise and dedication position us to play a crucial role in shaping the future of education in our state.

In closing, I express my gratitude to all of you for your unwavering commitment to the association. Your passion, dedication, and vision are the driving forces behind our achievements, and I am excited to see the continued progress we will make together. As we move forward, let us remain steadfast in our pursuit of excellence and our shared commitment to advancing higher education for the benefit of all.

A.J. Sabath  
Chairman, NJASCU Board of Trustees

# A Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am honored to present to you the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities' (NJASCU's) 2022-2023 Annual Report. First, I must thank our board members and our institutions' presidents for their unwavering support of our organization and its mission. Because of our shared belief that we are stronger when we work together, NJASCU has established itself as a prominent voice in New Jersey higher education policy.

Over the course of the year, we worked with state policy leaders to strengthen our colleges and universities and improve student outcomes. Perhaps one of our proudest accomplishments has been the increased funding for public higher education in the state budget. In consecutive years, we successfully advocated for over **\$32 million** to boost institutions with low funding per student and over **\$70 million** to help address major compensation increases for our labor force. We also worked with institutions facing fiscal challenges to secure crucial stabilization funds that will provide operating support while they implement sustainability plans.

NJASCU has also continued to serve as an essential partner and resource to state policymakers. We collaborated on key initiatives, including the Governor's Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages, transparency and accountability for higher education institutions, student mental health and wellness, and Tuition Aid Grants for summer sessions. We also provided testimony and counsel to the newly formed Special Joint Committee of Higher Education. Through NJASCU, our institutions will have a seat at the table as the State considers any major policy changes with regard to its public institutions.

In addition, the association continues to serve as a convener, bringing together our institutional leaders on a regular basis to build consensus, share best practices, and identify opportunities for collaboration. As the national and state higher education sector evolves in the face of new challenges and demographic realities, NJASCU encourages dialogue and cooperation among our members. We believe that collaboration and resource sharing will position our institutions to navigate this increasingly turbulent higher education landscape. We also facilitate cooperation with non-member institutions. Over the past 18 months, NJASCU institutions have engaged in a partnership with Rutgers University to increase access to technical expertise on research commercialization and intellectual property. In 2023, this partnership helped open the door to a joint research grant application with Rutgers and Princeton. The grant, offered by the National Science Foundation, seeks to enhance the role of higher education institutions in regional innovation ecosystems—a worthwhile endeavor that NJASCU is proud to take part in.

As we look ahead, NJASCU remains committed to the concept of higher education as a public good that advances socioeconomic standing, stimulates communities, and fosters innovation. This idea will be the foundation of our work in the years to come as we represent our institutions and advocate on their behalf. Again, thank you for your commitment, passion, and dedication to the association, its mission, and most importantly, our students.

Gene Lepore  
Executive Director, NJASCU

# Leadership



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



**Madeleine Deininger, Trustee**  
Stockton University  
Vice Chair, NJASCU



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



**Maria Falca-Dodson, Trustee**  
The College of New Jersey



**Frederick L. Gruel, Trustee**  
William Paterson University



**Carlos Lejniaks, Trustee**  
New Jersey City University



**Linda Lewis, Trustee**  
Kean University



**Andrés Acebo, Interim President**  
New Jersey City University



**Dr. Michael Bernstein, Interim President**  
The College of New Jersey



**Dr. Joe Bertolino, President**  
Stockton University



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



**Dr. Richard J. Helldobler, President**  
William Paterson University



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



**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. He was also named to Insider NJ's Top 100 Policymakers List in 2022 and 2023.

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.

**52,304**

**UNDERGRADUATES\***

\*IPEDS data from fall 2021.  
Includes full and part time.

**9,136**

**GRADUATE STUDENTS\***

\*IPEDS data from fall 2021.  
Includes full and part time.

**19,775**

**PELL GRANT\*  
RECIPIENTS**

\*Federal, need-based financial aid  
for undergraduates. Data from 2020-  
21 academic year.

**14,426**

**TAG GRANT\* RECIPIENTS**

\*NJ's need-based financial aid program.  
Data from 2020-2021 academic year.

**10,000+**

**BACHELOR'S DEGREES  
AWARDED IN 2022**



# 2022-2023 Accomplishments

## FY23 BUDGET

Successfully advocated for:

- Restoration and increase to operating aid funding floor per full-time equivalent student totaling **\$32.5 million**;
- additional \$5 million for Tuition Aid Grants (TAG); and
- additional state-funded positions.



Formalized a partnership with Rutgers Innovation Ventures to provide technical support to NJASCU institutions on research commercialization and intellectual property.

## FY24 BUDGET

Successfully advocated for:

- An additional **\$70.5 million** in operating aid via the Outcomes-Based Allocation (OBA) formula;
- TAG funding for summer coursework; and
- full funding of the Garden State Guarantee as a student aid program.



Hosted policy leadership at NJASCU meetings, including:

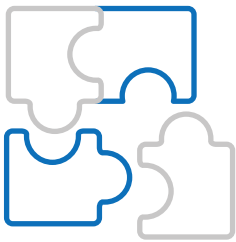
- Senate President
- Assembly Speaker
- Senate Majority Leader
- Secretary of Higher Education

# 2022-2023 Accomplishments



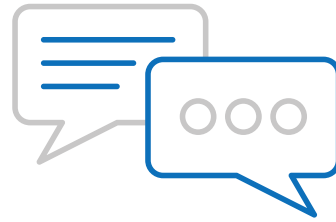
Represented NJASCU at external events, including:

- Press conference at Kean University with U.S. Sens. Menendez and Booker;
- government relations panel hosted by the NJ Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators; and
- a State of Higher Education Conference for administrators.



Regularly convened NJASCU professional groups, including:

- Presidents
- Government affairs staff
- Provosts
- CFOs
- Technology transfer/research commercialization group



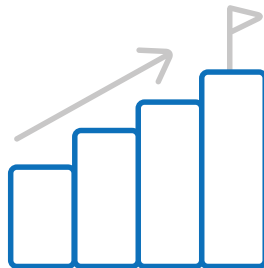
Provided policy expertise and feedback on legislation, including:

- supporting FAFSA completion for high school students;
- securing amendments to trustee training and other higher education oversight bills;
- collaborating with the executive branch and teacher college leadership on edTPA elimination;
- successfully advocating for amendments to transcript withholding legislation; and
- shaping teacher shortage legislation.



Collaborated with student designers to produce the association's new logo.

# 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:

- Collaborating with the Administration and Legislature on the fiscal year 2025 budget proposal to ensure adequate support for NJASCU institutions.
- Engaging legislators and the Governor's office on capital funding for public colleges.
- Contributing to ongoing dialogue with state policymakers on the future of higher education in the State.
- Identifying opportunities for institutions to share resources, staff, and/or contractors to reduce overhead costs.
- Continuing to build the association's visibility through media, events, etc.