

2025-2026

Annual Report



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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.



Letter from the Chairman

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

It has been an honor to serve as Chairman of the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU) during my first year in this role. Over the past year, I have seen firsthand the extraordinary commitment of our presidents, trustees, faculty, staff, and students to advancing public higher education and creating opportunities for students throughout New Jersey.

The 2025–2026 fiscal year brought both progress and change for higher education in our state. NJASCU continued to advocate for policies that support student success, affordability, institutional sustainability, capital investment, and the long-term strength of our regional public universities.

This year also marked a significant milestone as Kean University and New Jersey City University (NJCU) completed their historic merger on July 1, establishing Kean Jersey City as Kean's newest campus. The merger reflects a continued commitment to student opportunity, institutional strength, and the communities both institutions serve. As part of this transition, we also extend our sincere appreciation to NJCU President Andrés Acebo and Trustee Carlos Lejnieks for their service as NJCU's representatives on the NJASCU Board. We are grateful for their engagement, leadership, and contributions to the association and for the perspective they brought to our collective work. Their service helped strengthen NJASCU during an important period of change, and we are grateful for the time and commitment they shared with our association.

Over the course of the past year, our members continued to demonstrate the power of collaboration. Ramapo College and Thomas Edison State University signed a Letter of Intent to develop new academic pathways, while The College of New Jersey partnered with Mercer County Technical Schools on a new dual enrollment pathway in artificial intelligence and robotics. As a TCNJ trustee, I am particularly proud to see the College building connections between K–12 education, higher education, and New Jersey's future workforce. These efforts reflect what makes our association—and our member institutions—so valuable: bringing together distinct missions and expertise to create new opportunities and strengthen public higher education.

Collectively, NJASCU's institutions serve over 60,000 students annually, prepare graduates for New Jersey's workforce, and provide pathways to opportunity in communities across the state. As we look ahead, NJASCU will remain committed to advocating for a public higher education system that is accessible, affordable, innovative, and responsive to the needs of our students, employers, and communities.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to **Executive Director Jennifer Keyes-Maloney** for her leadership, dedication, and tireless advocacy on behalf of our members. Her work has been instrumental in advancing the association's priorities, strengthening our collective voice, and ensuring that the interests of New Jersey's regional public universities remain at the forefront of policy discussions.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as Chairman and for the many people who makes NJASCU's work possible. I look forward to all we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

Kevin Drennan
Chairman
New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am pleased to present the Association's 2025–2026 Annual Report. The past year has been one of continued growth, collaboration, and change for NJASCU and for public higher education across New Jersey. I remain deeply grateful for the leadership of our Board, the engagement of our campus presidents and trustees, and the partnership of colleagues across our members who make NJASCU a strong and effective voice for New Jersey's senior public colleges and universities.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to **Board Chairman Kevin Drennan** for his leadership, counsel, and commitment. His experience in public service and higher education has helped guide the association as we have worked to strengthen the role of our institutions within New Jersey's broader educational, workforce, and economic landscape. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to **Associate Director Morganne Dudzinski**, whose dedication, expertise, and strategic insight continue to be essential to our work. We were proud to have NJASCU represented by Morganne on Governor Sherrill's Transition Team as a member of the Jobs, Opportunity, and Prosperity for All policy team.

Throughout the last year, NJASCU's advocacy efforts emphasized the importance of predictable operating support, greater investment in deferred maintenance and capital, and financial aid policies that ensure students can attend the institution that best suits their needs. We continued to advocate for improvements to the Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) program to include summer coursework and expanded support for adult learners. At the same time, we elevated the significant capital and deferred maintenance challenges facing our institutions and the need for a sustained state partnership to ensure that our facilities remain safe, modern, and competitive.

NJASCU also continued its role as both a convener and a resource for our members. We launched a weekly member bulletin to provide timely updates on state and federal policy developments, higher education news, upcoming events, and other issues affecting our institutions. The bulletin has enhanced our ability to keep members informed in a rapidly changing environment, while creating another avenue for sharing information, opportunities, and developments from across our campuses.

At the federal level, a changing policy environment reinforced the importance of providing institutions with timely information and a coordinated voice. NJASCU engaged on issues affecting financial aid, workforce programs, graduate and professional education, international students, accountability, and other federal policies with significant implications for our campuses and students.

As we look to the year ahead, our focus is clear: NJASCU will continue to advocate for the resources and policies our institutions need to serve students effectively; strengthen collaboration among our member institutions; pursue opportunities for shared services, research, and workforce partnerships; and demonstrate the indispensable role senior public colleges and universities play in New Jersey's future.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to NJASCU's mission. I am proud of what we have accomplished together and energized by the opportunities ahead.

Jennifer Keyes-Maloney
Executive Director
New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities

Leadership



Kevin Drennan, Trustee
The College of New Jersey
Chair, NJASCU



Madeleine Deininger, Trustee
Stockton University
Vice Chair, NJASCU



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



Dr. Diane Campbell, Trustee
Thomas Edison State University



Frederick L. Gruel, Trustee
William Paterson University



Carlos Lejnieks, Trustee
New Jersey City University



Linda Lewis, Trustee
Kean University



Andrés Acebo, President
New Jersey City University



Dr. Michael Bernstein, 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

Jennifer Keyes-Maloney

Executive Director

Jenn works with member institutions' presidents and senior leadership to develop the organization's policy agenda and objectives. She is responsible for publicly articulating the organization's positions to the State's key policy makers and stakeholders.

Jenn previously worked as the Associate Vice President for Government and Community Relations at The College of New Jersey, where she served as a liaison between the College and government officials, legislative bodies, and administrative agencies to advocate for the college's interests and secure vital funding. Prior to her role at the College, she served in key positions within the New Jersey Department of Treasury and before that as Assistant Director of Governmental Relations at the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.

Jenn also currently serves as a councilwoman in Ewing Township.



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. In 2023, Morganne was named to InsiderNJ's Insider 100: Millennials List.

Morganne has 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.

50,000

UNDERGRADUATES*

Fall 2025 (IPEDS Data as of June 15, 2026).

10,800

GRADUATE STUDENTS*

Fall 2025 (IPEDS Data as of June 15, 2026).

21,648

**PELL GRANT*
RECIPIENTS**

*Federal, need-based financial aid for undergraduates. Data from 2024-25 academic year.

15,390

TAG GRANT* RECIPIENTS

*NJ's need-based financial aid program. Data from 2024-2025 academic year.

11,000+

**BACHELOR'S DEGREES
AWARDED IN 2024-2025**

2025-2026 Accomplishments

FY2027

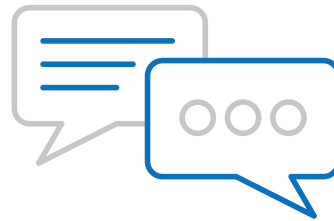
Successfully advocated for the inclusion of **\$70 million** in operating aid via the Outcomes-Based Allocation (OBA) formula as well as the restoration of **\$20 million** in Summer Tuition Aid Grants (TAG) in the state budget.



Implemented a weekly e-newsletter to keep members informed on advocacy, policy, and news.



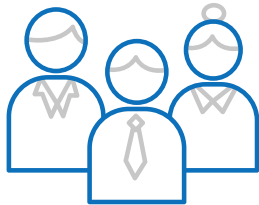
Served on the Governor-Elect's Transition Team, offering policy recommendations to the Jobs, Opportunity, and Prosperity for All Policy Action Team.



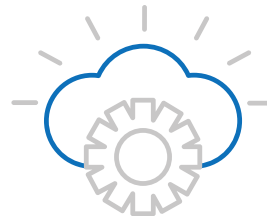
Provided policy expertise and feedback on legislation, including:

- recommendations regarding licensure of out-of-state institutions;
- recommendations on automatic enrollment and acceptance of credits for certain exams;
- securing key flexibility for institutions around use of the Attorney General for legal representation;
- amendments to legislation on the student transfer process between two- and four-year institutions;
- support of a permanent FAFSA requirement for high school students;
- insight on deferred maintenance funding practices across the nation, including potential funding sources to address future needs in New Jersey;
- key recommendations to legislation establishing a taskforce on Higher Education Governance and Funding;
- and the impact of federal policy changes on NJASCU schools.

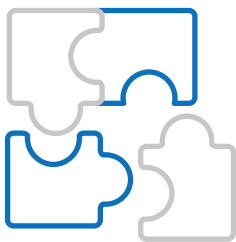
2025-2026 Accomplishments



Hosted annual events including legislative day at the State House and the Presidents' Retreat; attended AASCU on the Hill in DC.



Served on the steering committee for the NJ Higher Education Mental Health Summit and the NJ Manufacturing Education/Training Committee; panelist for higher education conference at Stockton.



Regularly convened NJASCU professional groups, including: Presidents, government affairs staff, provosts, and humanities deans.



Represented member institutions in policy discussions with:

- New Jersey's Federal Delegation;
- Governor's Office;
- NJ Assembly & Senate Leadership;
- NJ Treasury;
- The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education;
- New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority;
- New Jersey Economic Development Authority; and
- New Jersey Alliance for Action, among others.



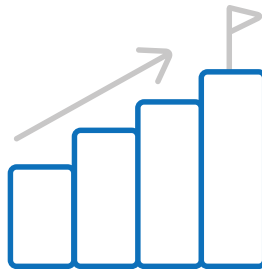
Hosted key meetings and policy forums, welcoming state leaders such as the:

- NJ Chief Operating Officer
- Secretary of Higher Education
- Lieutenant Governor
- Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Legislative leadership
- Congressional representatives

Advocacy in Action



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 forthcoming "Strategic Insights for New Jersey Higher Education: Mapping the Future" report, as well as the FY2028 budget proposal to ensure adequate support for NJASCU institutions;
- Continuing to engage legislators and the Governor's office on support for capital and deferred maintenance at public colleges;
- Continuing to cultivate relationships with the Governor, Executive Team and legislators;
- Comprehensively communicating, advocating and responding to federal policy changes impacting NJASCU schools;
- Working to advance policy changes that would make higher education public-private partnership projects more feasible;
- Collaborating with business and affiliated associations/entities to drive home investment in higher ed;
- Identifying opportunities for institutions to share resources, staff, and/or contractors to reduce overhead costs; potentially hosting a first-ever "Shared Services Summit"; and
- Continuing to build the association's visibility through media, advocacy days, etc.