

“UCNJ — A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY,
GROWTH, AND COMMUNITY.”

—**Victor M. Richel**
*Chairman,
UCNJ Board of Trustees*



2026
ANNUAL
REPORT

JULY 2025 – JUNE 2026



TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY... ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

UCNJ THROUGH THE DECADES



The College has been providing excellent and affordable educational opportunities to Union County residents for more than 90 years, transforming our community, one student at a time.

1933: Union County Junior College opens on October 16 as an “emergency junior college” with evening classes at Abraham Clark High School in Roselle.

1934: Dr. Hubert Banks Huntley becomes the first chief administrator of Union County Junior College.

1935: Dr. Charles G. Cole succeeds Dean Huntley and is considered the first “President.”

1936: Union County Junior College is established as a non-profit institution governed by a Board of Trustees.

1936: The College changes its name to Union Junior College (UJC).

1940: Basketball is the only varsity sport at UCNJ. The '39/'40 girl's basketball squad captures first place in the “Powderpuff League.” This is the first championship for a UJC Team.

1941: The College begins offering day courses on Sept. 1 and continues to use the laboratories at Abraham Clark High School.

1942: UJC is housed at Grant School, called the “Old Lady of Holly Street,” and rents the space from the Cranford Board of Education.

1944: To better accommodate returning veterans from WWII, the College creates a Veterans Study Center and changes the academic year from two semesters to one divided into four quarters.

1944: Dr. Kenneth Campbell MacKay succeeds Dr. Cole as president.

1948: For less than \$56,000, the Board of Trustees authorizes the purchase of 56 acres from the Dreyer family in Cranford. A decade later it becomes the home of the Cranford Campus.

1949: Elizabeth General Hospital begins its affiliation with the College in the training of nurses. Later, Muhlenberg Hospital joins the partnership. Elizabeth General is now Trinitas School of Nursing and Muhlenberg Hospital Nursing School is now JFK Medical Center Muhlenberg Harold B. and Dorothy A. Snyder Schools. Both still operate cooperative programs with the College.

1959: The Nomahegan Building is completed in July and the College moves its operations to the 48-acre campus in Cranford.

1967: The word “Junior” is dropped, and the College is officially known as Union College.

1968: Dr. MacKay steps down and is succeeded by Dr. Kenneth W. Iversen, who serves as president until 1974.

1970: The College begins holding classes in Elizabeth at the Bayway Community Center and the Elizabeth YMCA on Aug. 5.

1970: The College begins offering classes in Plainfield on Sept. 2.

1973: The MacKay Library opens on the Cranford Campus.

1974: Dr. Saul Orkin becomes president and serves until his death in 1983.

1982: Union College merges with the Union County Technical Institute and Union County College is established on Aug. 17.

1983: Dr. Derek N. Nunney is named president.

1990: Dr. Thomas H. Brown becomes president.

1991: The Campus Center, now known as the Victor M. Richel Student Commons, opens on the Cranford Campus.

1992: The College purchases the Courier News Building in Plainfield and begins offering courses in the newly renovated two-story building.

1992: The Elizabeth Campus opens on Sept. 1. The former Elizabethtown Gas Company building is named the Sidney F. Lessner Building.

1995: “The Pavilion” opens at the Cranford Campus with a new Fitness Center and the Executive Education Center.

1999: The Annex Building is completed in Plainfield and houses instructional space for the American Sign Language and the Emergency Medical Technician/ Paramedic programs.

2002: Trinitas School of Nursing moves to the Elizabeth Campus.

2009: Thanks to the support of the Union County Board of County Commissioners, the College opens the \$48 million Elizabeth I. Kellogg Building at 40 West Jersey Street in Elizabeth on Sept. 29.

2010: Dr. Margaret M. McMenamin, the College's eighth and first female president, begins her tenure on July 1.

2013: The College revamps its mission statement to “Transforming Our Community... One Student at a Time,” to accurately reflect the nature of the environment at the three campuses.

2015: The new Health Sciences Building, the former Thul Auto Parts Building, opens at the Plainfield Campus on Oct. 20.

2016: After two years of construction, the Helen E. Chaney Student Services Center opens in the new two-story Student Development Building at the Cranford Campus. This project was made possible thanks to the support of the Union County Board of County Commissioners and the Union County Improvement Authority.

2016: The Annex at the Plainfield Campus reopens after damages caused by a 2012 fire and includes a new information commons, cafeteria, bookstore, and faculty offices.



continues on the inside back cover...



This year's annual report is dedicated to a prolific figure at UCNJ: Board of Trustees Chairman Mr. Victor M. Richel. His leadership, vision, and stewardship over the past forty years have left a lasting mark on the UCNJ community. Mr. Richel has transformed the lives of thousands of UCNJ students with his generous spirit, commitment to education, and belief in the future of the College. We thank him for his longtime service and support that has resulted in the UCNJ of today: a national leader among community colleges.

This year, the Aspen Institute for Community College Excellence named UCNJ as a semifinalist for the 2027 Aspen Prize. UCNJ was only one of 25 institutions honored with this recognition. This is in part due to the hard work and dedication of our students, who continue to shine both inside and outside of the classroom.

Katherine Jovel, of Elizabeth, was selected to receive the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, a highly competitive award that provides up to \$55,000 per year to support recipients in completing their bachelor's degrees.

The College began construction on the new Physical Education Center (PECK), a state-of-the-art facility that will support 14 sports teams. The PECK will serve as a student resource and event venue, capable of hosting major campus events right here in the Owl's Nest.

The Union County College Foundation continues to support key initiatives that have tremendous positive impact on our students, including food insecurity, gateway math completion, last-dollar financial support for graduating students, and the emergency relief fund. We thank our generous donors who continue to help us transform our community, one student at a time.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Union County Board of County Commissioners, as well as members of the College's Board of Trustees and Governors. These transformative leaders provide advocacy, leadership, and investment in the next generation of UCNJ graduates. Thank you for your partnership.

With a strong legacy and as we look toward the future, we remain committed to expanding student access, advancing success, and improving economic mobility. The result of decades of dedicated leadership remains evident in the lives of our students and in the future we are shaping together.

Margaret M. McMenamini

Dr. Margaret M. McMenamini
President, UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ



“AT UCNJ, WE BELIEVE
IN THE POWER OF
EDUCATION TO
CHANGE LIVES.”

—**Victor M. Richel**
*Chairman,
UCNJ Board of Trustees*



HIGHLIGHTS

TOP STORIES

Breaking Ground on PECK Facility 4

Students Flip the Script on
President McMenamin 10

VICTORIES THROUGH EDUCATION

Jack Kent Cooke Scholars Inspire
Next Generation of Students 17

UCNJ Students Earn Life-Saving
First Aid Certification 21

MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Wrestling Program Reaches
Historic Milestones 28

Supporting Students Beyond the Owl's Nest 31

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY

Chairman Richel Receives
Prestigious ACCT Award 35

Bipartisan Civility Tour Stops at UCNJ 37

MISSION THROUGH GIVING

One Million Dollar Gift Provides a
Transformational Future for UCNJ Students 46

Honor Roll of Donors 56-57

VISION IN ACTION

Summary and Outlook 58



Shown above are stickers provided to students during "welcome week" and used for recruitment mailing campaigns.



Three-Peat: UCNJ Recognized as a Semifinalist for the 2027 Aspen Prize

UCNJ has once again been recognized as a semifinalist for the 2027 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, marking the third consecutive time the College has earned this distinction. Selected from more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide, UCNJ is among the semifinalists recognized

for achieving high and improving levels of student success.

Awarded biennially, the Aspen Prize honors institutions demonstrating exceptional performance across six

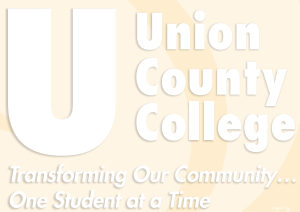
key areas: teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, transfer and bachelor's attainment, workforce success, broad access, and equitable outcomes for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds. The winner will be announced in spring 2027.

This continued recognition reflects the collective efforts of the UCNJ community and its unwavering commitment to advancing student success.



Creating something new in 1982

On August 17, 1982, a merger between the private two-year Union College and the public Union County Technical Institute established Union County College, which became a public, open access institution providing affordable higher education to the residents of Union County. That day, the newly created Union County College adopted its first budget: \$15,013,793 based on 6,283 students with full-time tuition costing \$600 a year and \$25 per credit. Something else noteworthy about that day? Someone who is still deeply involved in the leadership of the College was present: Victor M. Richel. As a founding board member in 1982, he has served the College for almost 45 years – making an indelible mark on Union County and, more specifically, UCNJ.



Breaking Ground on PECK Facility

In fall 2025, the College broke ground on the Physical Education Center (PECK), a state-of-the-art facility that will support its 14 sports teams.



The PECK will feature basketball courts, a wrestling room, weight training areas, an eSports arena, modernized fitness spaces, a therapy room, and academic classrooms. Anticipated for completion in mid-2027, the PECK will serve as a dynamic student resource and event venue, capable of hosting major campus events, including indoor Commencement ceremonies.



JACK KENT COOKE FOUNDATION

Katherine Jovel Awarded Prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship

Congratulations to Katherine Jovel, of Elizabeth, who was selected to receive the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, one of the nation's most competitive awards for community college students. The scholarship provides recipients with up to \$55,000 per year for up to three years to complete their bachelor's degrees at accredited four-year institutions across the United States.

Ms. Jovel is majoring in business and is a member of both the Union Honors Program and the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF). During her time at UCNJ, she has served as a tutor in the Academic Learning Center, Treasurer of the College's Dance Club, a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK), and participant in the 2025 Princeton Transfer Scholars Initiative (TSI) cohort. She plans to continue her studies in economics and pursue a career centered on advocacy, economic mobility, and expanding educational opportunity for underserved communities.

Selected from a highly competitive pool of more than 1,300 applicants nationwide, Cooke Scholars are recognized for exceptional academic achievement,

leadership, perseverance, and demonstrated financial need.

Selected from a highly competitive pool of more than 1,300 applicants nationwide, Cooke Scholars are recognized for their exceptional academic achievement, leadership, perseverance, and financial need. Ms. Jovel is also a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Union Honors Program.

UCNJ students Libni Vizcaino and Sabrina Da Silva were also recognized as semifinalists for the scholarship. Ms. Vizcaino, a public administration major from Roselle, completed internships with Senator Cory Booker and Assemblywoman Linda S. Carter. Ms. Da Silva, a psychology major from Roselle Park and an EOF student, serves as a tutor and is a member of Psi Beta. She also participated in Princeton University's TSI summer program.



Congrats!!

WINTER COMMENCEMENT CELEBRATES MORE THAN 700 GRADUATES



UCNJ's Winter Class of 2026 celebrated Commencement at the historic Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway. The ceremonies honored graduates earning associate degrees in Arts, Science, and Applied Science, as well as certificates and certificates of achievement. President Dr. Margaret M. McMenamin served as the Presiding Officer.

Student speakers included Theo Hamadallah of Westfield and Rosebertine Michel of Union. The Alumni Prize, awarded to graduates with the highest grade-point average, was presented to Juan Alvarez and Sophia Mencia. The Abdallah-Thomas Memorial Award, established in memory of UCNJ alumni, recognizes graduating students who have demonstrated strong engagement in campus life and a commitment to community service. This year's recipients were Juline Placide and Rosebertine Michel.



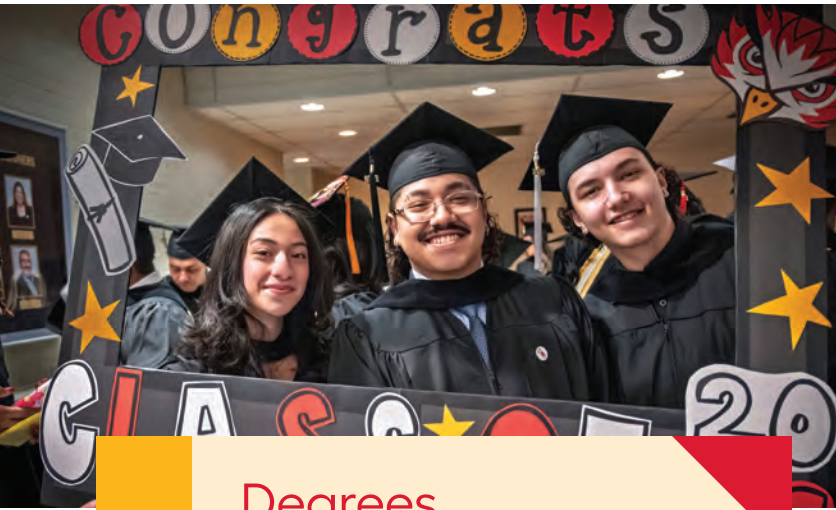
Victor M. Richel: A Lifetime of Leadership, Philanthropy, and Community Service

For decades, Chairman Victor M. Richel has stood among New Jersey's most respected civic and business leaders, with an influence extending far beyond UCNJ. While widely recognized for his leadership in higher education, his broader legacy has been defined by business innovation, philanthropy, healthcare leadership, and an unwavering commitment to community service.

Among the most prestigious recognitions bestowed upon Mr. Richel is the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, awarded to him in 1999. The national award celebrates individuals whose accomplishments in business, public service, education, healthcare, and philanthropy embody the spirit of the American dream while honoring cultural heritage and community impact. He also received the Christopher Columbus Humanitarian Award and the Caritas Award from the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth in recognition of his compassion, charitable leadership, and commitment to improving lives.

Healthcare leadership has also become a defining part of Mr. Richel's public service. As Chairman of the Board of RWJBarnabas Health Trinitas Regional Medical Center, he has helped advance healthcare access and institutional growth throughout the region. In recognition of his leadership, the New Jersey Hospital Association named him 2018 Hospital Trustee of the Year.

Together with his wife Andrea, Mr. Richel established the Richel Family Foundation in 2000, helping expand educational opportunity, healthcare access, and community services throughout Union County and New Jersey. What distinguishes Mr. Richel is not simply the number of honors he has received, but the enduring consistency of his service. Across banking, healthcare, philanthropy, and civic leadership, he has remained deeply committed to strengthening institutions that improve lives and expand opportunity for future generations.



Degrees Conferred by Type

Total: 1478

- Associate in Science (876) **59.3%**
- Associate in Arts (428) **29.0%**
- Associate in Applied Science (116) **7.8%**
- Certificate Programs (50) **3.4%**
- Certificate of Achievement (8) **0.5%**



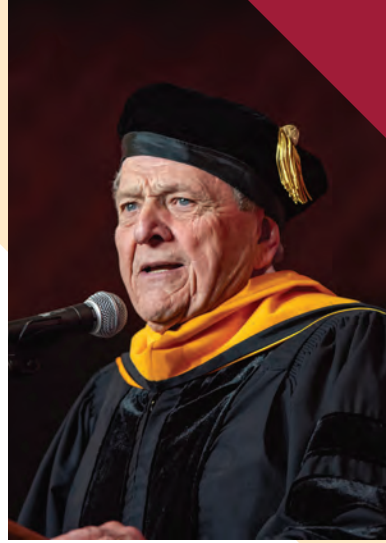


SPRING COMMENCEMENT SOARS TO PRUDENTIAL CENTER

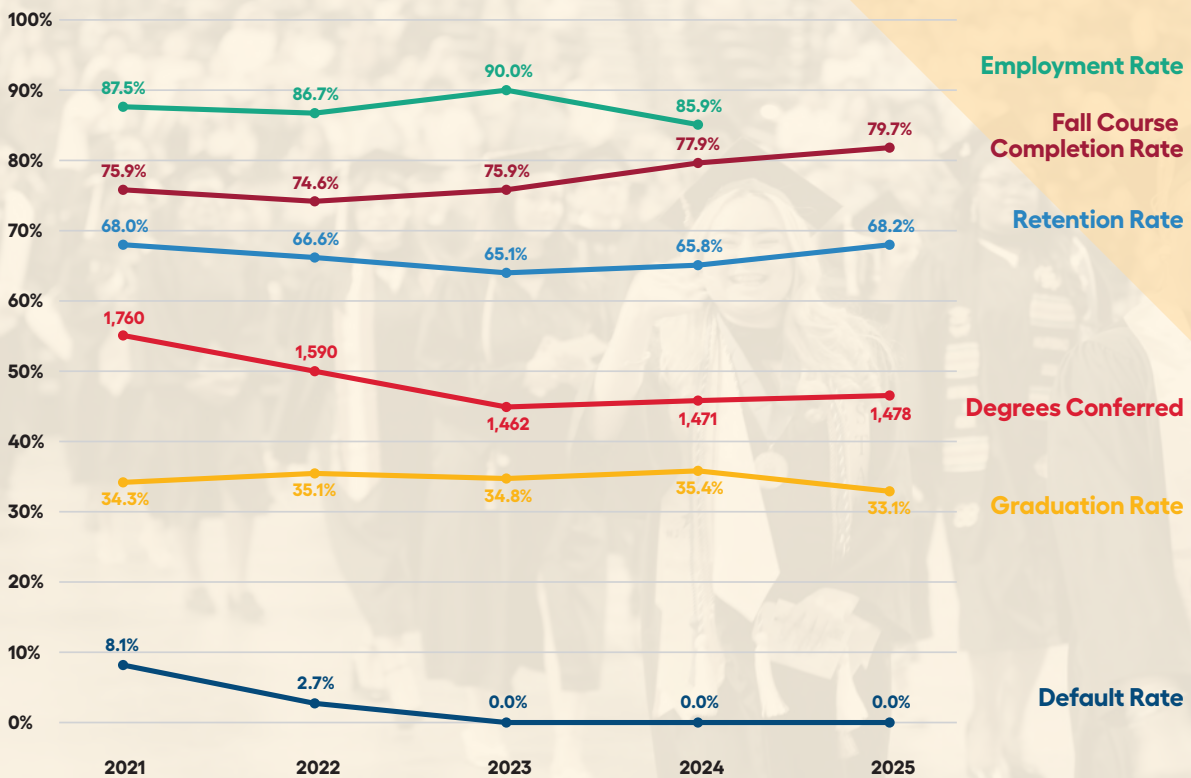
This year, the UCNJ community celebrated Spring Commencement beyond the Owl's Nest, gathering at the Prudential Center in Newark for what many consider the College's most cherished day of the year. Xavier Hernandez, of Elizabeth, served as the student speaker.

The Alumni Prize was presented to Libni Nivar Vizcaino from Roselle and Javon M. Scott from Hillside. The Post-Day Memorial Award was presented to Lara Demetrio from Cranford, Hamza Sheikh from Union, Maria Paula Ureña from Summit, and Katherine Jovel from Elizabeth.





Key Performance Indicators



UCNJ Faculty

Total: 578

Gender

Female **305**

Male **273**

Status

Full-time **67**

Part-time **511**

Academic Specialists **29**



Open House Welcomes Students to the Owl's Nest

UCNJ's annual Open House welcomed more than 600 visitors to the Cranford Campus, offering prospective students and their families an immersive introduction to campus life. Attendees explored academic programs, destination venues aligned with their areas of interest, athletic opportunities, and financial aid options.

The event featured engaging sessions with College deans, faculty, and current students, along with guided campus tours. Throughout the day, representatives from Admissions, Financial Aid,

and the Community College Opportunity Grant program were available to answer questions and highlight the wide range of opportunities available at the College.

Expanding access this year, the Admissions team also introduced Discovery Days at the Elizabeth and Plainfield Campuses, providing additional opportunities for students to explore programs offered at those locations. These events continue to engage a broad audience, including high school graduates, adult learners, and transfer students.



Students Flip the Script on President McMenamín



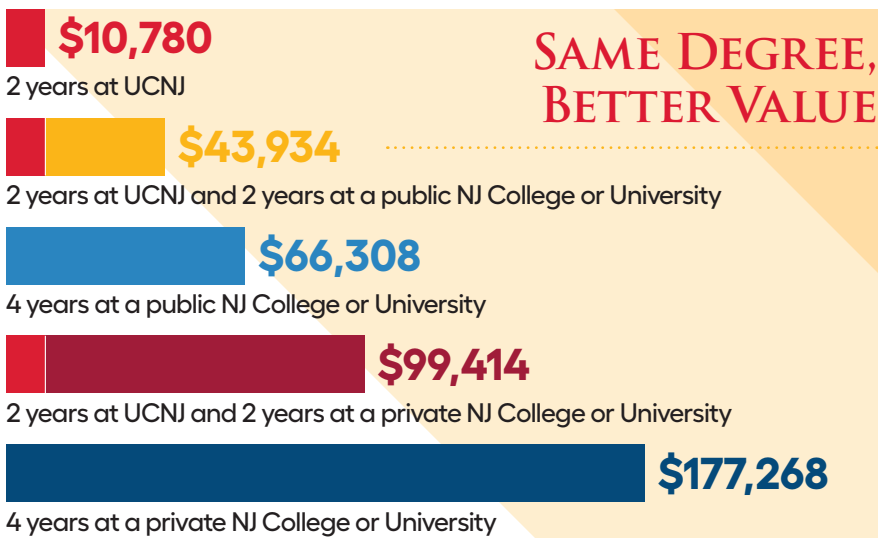
Throughout the year, President McMenamín engages distinguished guests on her program, *Inside the College*. For the first time, UCNJ students Irene Tabares Granada, a visual arts major, and Thalia Lavache, a health science major, stepped into the role of guest hosts to interview the President.

In preparation, the students conducted research on President McMenamín's tenure at the College and reviewed past interviews to thoughtfully

shape their questions. During the conversation, they explored her path into higher education, the experiences that have influenced her leadership, and key milestones throughout her presidency. The interview offered a unique and engaging perspective, providing viewers with insight into Dr. McMenamín's vision, her enduring commitment to student success, and the values that continue to guide the College forward.

Transforming Our Community, One Campus at a Time

In the 1980s, the College sought to expand its presence in the urban centers of Union County, specifically Elizabeth and Plainfield. A key component was identifying a location for the Campus. At the time of this expansion, Elizabethtown Gas was looking to leave Elizabeth. How would Union County College acquire such a structure in a prime location? Vic Richel was a vice president at Elizabethtown Gas at the time, as well as a board member for the College. He was committed to expanding educational opportunities in Union County. It was under his leadership that Elizabethtown Gas gifted its building in Elizabeth to the College. The building reopened in January 1992 and was named for Sidney F. Lessner, the first Board of Trustees Chair after the 1982 merger that created Union County College. In the more than 30 years since the formalization of the Elizabeth Campus, it has become the home to two flagship programs: the cooperative program with the RWJBarnabas Health School of Nursing and the Institute for Intensive English.



Chairman Victor M. Richel and Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage at the Kellogg Ribbon Cutting.

40 Years of Impact: Academic Learning Center Continues to Empower Student Success

This year, the College's Academic Learning Center (ALC) celebrated 40 years of advancing student success and academic achievement. For four decades, the ALC has served as a cornerstone of student support, offering free peer-to-peer tutoring across the Cranford, Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Virtual Campuses. Employing more than 50 tutors annually, the ALC's staff consistently demonstrate high levels of academic excellence within their respective disciplines.

The demand for these services underscores their impact. In the past year, the ALC

recorded nearly 65,000 student visits and more than 74,000 hours of tutoring. To meet this need, the ALC provides a comprehensive range of services, including online tutoring, writing support, and specialized academic workshops, collectively supporting students across more than 150 courses.

UCNJ's ALC has also distinguished itself as a leader in the field. In 1998, it became the first community college in New Jersey to earn certification from the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), a recognition it has maintained

continuously for more than two decades.

Looking ahead, the ALC is expanding its impact through the integration of innovative artificial intelligence workshops, and advanced training for tutors, ensuring its services remain at the forefront of educational support. Beyond academic assistance, ALC tutors serve as mentors and role models, playing a vital role in fostering a culture of belonging and reinforcing the College's commitment to student success.



ACADEMIC LEARNING CENTER | 40th ANNIVERSARY | 1985-2025



A Championship Day of Giving: 34th Annual Golf Outing Sets a New Standard

The Union County College Foundation hosted the 34th Annual Golf Outing at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club. This year's event marked a record-setting day for one of the UCNJ's most anticipated traditions. Over 250 golfers, guests, and volunteers gathered for a full day of hitting the links and philanthropy, coming together to raise more than \$250,000, the highest total in the event's history.

As the Foundation's signature Spring fundraising event, proceeds from the day on the links give the Foundation the resources necessary to continue to provide students with scholarships and support services through key initiatives such as Nourish the Future, Operation Graduation, and Student Emergency Relief. A highlight of the event was the inspiring keynote address by UCNJ alumnus Matthew R. Nazzaro (UCNJ '04) who serves as Cranford Chief of Police and is a member of the College's Board of Governors. He discussed the critical foundation that UCNJ provided for him to grow his career.

Swing for Scholarships
at the 34th Annual
Union County College Foundation

GOLF OUTING 2026

Monday, April 27 at

fiddler's elbow

A Day on the Links. A Lifetime of Good.

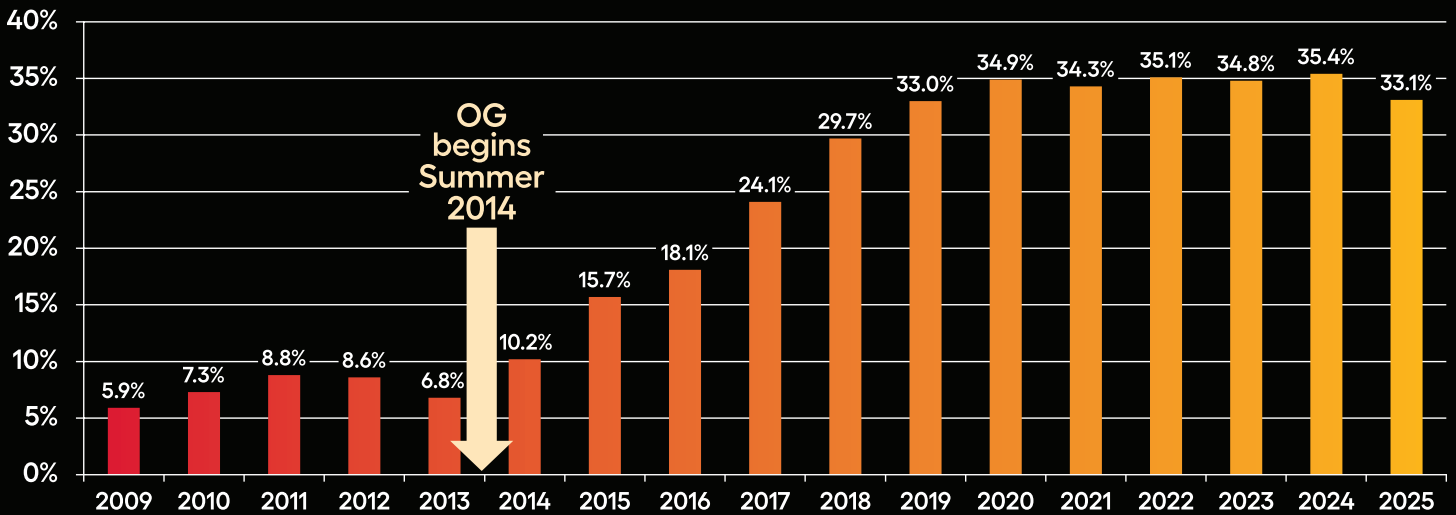


Your support will be such a great help – not only will it help me financially, but it is also motivating me to keep pushing forward, knowing there are generous people in the world who believe in students like me and want to see us succeed.

—Yvette Brown
Louise Yobalem Scholarship



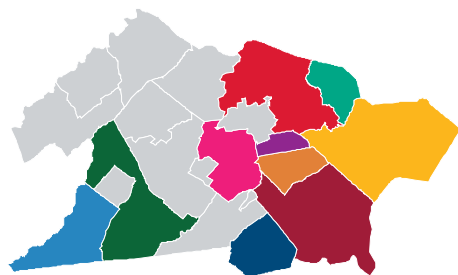
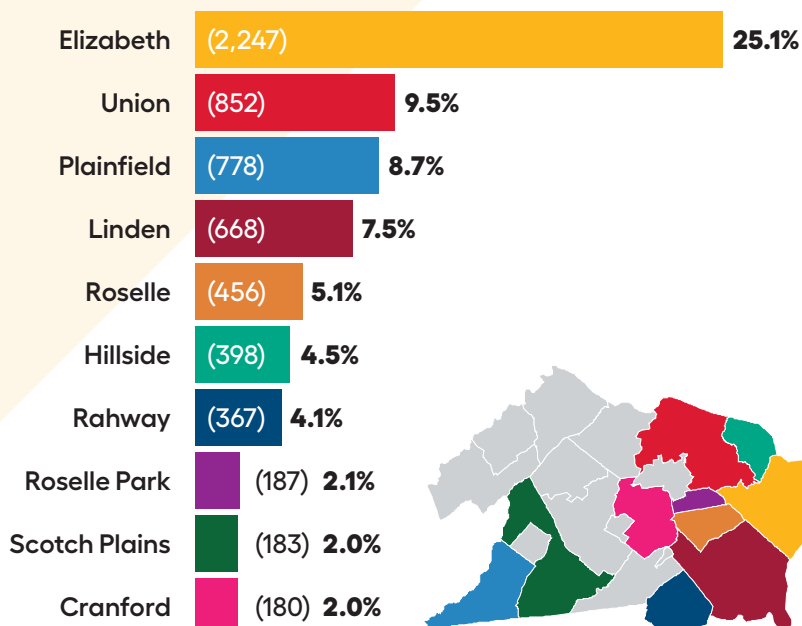
UCNJ Graduation Rates



The UCNJ graduation rate has more than quintupled. Additionally, the College went from having the lowest graduation rate in NJ to exceeding both the state and national average. Student success is UCNJ’s priority — the development of *Operation Graduation* and similar initiatives support the College’s Mission to transform our community, one student at a time.

Union County Towns with Largest Enrollment

These ten towns account for 70.7% of the College’s annual enrollment



Union County, NJ

County Residency

Union	7,065
Essex	713
Middlesex	546
Not a NJ resident	155
Somerset	106
Hudson	98
Monmouth	71
Morris	46
Bergen	37
Passaic	23
Ocean	17
Hunterdon	17
Burlington	16
Mercer	11
Warren	5
Camden	5
Sussex	4
Atlantic	1
Gloucester	1
Information not available	1

Grand Total 8,938



VICTORIES THROUGH EDUCATION

Honors Societies Celebrate Academic Excellence

UCNJ continues to foster a strong culture of academic excellence and leadership development through honor societies, each recognizing outstanding achievement across different disciplines at the College.

The College's largest and most active honor society, the **PHI THETA KAPPA (PTK)** Iota Xi Chapter, promotes scholarship, leadership, and service among high-achieving students. To be eligible for membership, students must complete at least 12 credit hours of coursework, maintain a minimum 3.6 GPA, and demonstrate engagement in service activities. This spring, the chapter welcomed more than 250 new members during its induction ceremony.

The Iota Xi Chapter continues to distinguish itself at both the regional and international levels. At the Middle States Regional Conference and PTK Catalyst International Convention, the chapter earned recognition for excellence in programming, leadership, and service, receiving multiple honors for its College Project, Honors in Action initiative, and overall chapter achievement.

UCNJ students were also recognized through discipline-specific honor societies that highlight academic achievement and professional development.

The **PSI BETA** Chapter at UCNJ inducted new members in recognition of excellence in psychology. Psi Beta promotes scholarly engagement in psychology through research opportunities, conferences, workshops, and community service, helping students deepen their understanding of the field.

The College also welcomed new members into the **CHI ALPHA EPSILON** honor society, which recognizes high-achieving students in Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) and similar academic support programs. Membership is extended to students who demonstrate sustained academic success and community engagement, reflecting the organization's mission to celebrate perseverance and achievement among developmental program scholars. Nineteen students were inducted into Chi Alpha Epsilon this year.

In addition, **DELTA ALPHA PI** inducted new members in recognition of academic excellence among students with documented disabilities. Members are selected based on academic performance, engagement with support services, and are recognized at two induction ceremonies each year. This year, fifteen students were inducted into Delta Alpha Pi.



Archival Research Establishes the Robert F. Hand Memorial Scholarship

Students in UCNJ's History 290 course are bringing local history to life through hands-on archival research and community engagement. This year, their work centered on preserving and documenting the legacy of Cranford Patrolman Robert F. Hand, using primary sources, oral history, and historical analysis to document and preserve Patrolman Hand's legacy.

The project began when student Leah Aguanno connected with Mary Flesher, who encouraged the class to explore materials related to her father's life and service.

From there, students conducted an oral history interview and examined available records and community accounts, gaining firsthand experience in historical documentation and storytelling. Their research coincides with the 50th anniversary of Patrolman Hand's passing, which led to the class partnering with the Union County College Foundation to establish the Robert F. Hand Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship will support students with financial need, extending the impact of their archival project beyond the classroom and into the lives of future UCNJ students.



Summer Scholars attend Princeton TSI Program

Eleven students participated in Princeton University's Transfer Scholars Initiative (TSI) summer program, representing the largest group of UCNJ students selected for the program to date. Students had the opportunity to take two for-credit Princeton courses at no cost and engage

with Princeton faculty, staff, and students while accessing campus resources comparable to those available to Princeton undergraduates.

The eleven TSI Scholars include:

- Astin David, from Rahway, computer science major
- Vinit Shah, from Avenel, chemistry major
- Sabrina Da Silva, from Roselle Park, psychology major
- Katherine Jovel, from Elizabeth, business major
- Katherine Gonzalez, from Elizabeth, health science major
- Nevaeh Boyd, from Roselle Park, psychology major
- Kelly Constante Yanzapanta, from Plainfield, business major
- Diya Patel, from Iselin, health science major
- Javon Scott, from Hillside, computer science major
- Juan Pablo Vega Rojas, from Roselle Park, computer science/engineering major
- Vincent Zeferino, from Elizabeth, history major



**PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY**



JACK KENT COOKE FOUNDATION

Jack Kent Cooke Scholars Inspire Next Generation of Students

Transfer Scholarship, which provides recipients with up to \$55,000 per year to complete their bachelor's degrees.

The session featured UCNJ alumni and Cooke Scholars Odudu Ekpenyong ('25), Junaid Ilyas ('23), and Carine Medellus ('23), who shared insights into the application process and offered guidance on how to build a strong and competitive application.

Their firsthand experiences provided valuable perspective for prospective applicants. Eight UCNJ students have earned a Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, and transferred to prestigious four-year institutions across the country debt-free.



UCNJ alumni returned to the Owl's Nest to inspire the next generation of student scholars. The College hosted an information session for current students interested in applying for the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate

KAPLAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

UCNJ Student Named Kaplan Leadership Scholar

Kelly Constante Yanzapanta, of Plainfield, has been selected as a Kaplan Leadership Program (KLP) scholar. She is one of only 12 students recognized in the tri-state area for this leadership opportunity and the eighth student from UCNJ. The KLP supports students at two-year schools who demonstrate strong academic achievement, leadership potential, and financial need.

Kelly is a first-generation college student who is pursuing a degree in business. She is actively involved in numerous clubs and programs at the College, serving as

Committee Leader of Public Relations for Phi Theta Kappa, Vice President of the Humane Society Club, and Secretary of the Teachers of Tomorrow Club. She also helps her peers as a tutor in UCNJ's Academic Learning Center. Over the summer, Constante Yanzapanta participated in Princeton University's Transfer Scholars Initiative.





Chairman Richel Honored with Doctoral Degree

At their Spring 2026 Commencement, Kean University awarded UCNJ Board of Trustees Chairman Victor M. Richel with an honorary doctorate. The Kean University Board of Trustees approved this honor in recognition of Mr. Richel's leadership in higher education, public service, and the long and successful partnership between UCNJ and Kean University under his chairmanship. Mr. Richel now joins his wife, Andrea Lepree Richel, as a proud Kean graduate – although a few years apart! Congratulations, Dr. Richel, on this well-deserved recognition!

Students Present Research at Middle States Conference

UCNJ students showcased their academic excellence on a national stage at the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Annual Conference in Philadelphia. Six students from the STEM and Social Sciences, Business, and History Divisions presented their research through three poster sessions, sharing their work with higher education leaders and peers from across the country.



The student presenters included Sydney Feminello, Rosbertine Michel, Christian Moss, Hamza Sheikh, Timothy Terrad, and Vincent Zeferino, who demonstrated the importance of undergraduate research at UCNJ. Through this opportunity, they gained professional experience while representing the College at a national conference.



College Selected to Join Aspen Institute College Excellence Program's Unlocking Opportunity

UCNJ was selected to join the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program's Unlocking Opportunity network, a national initiative focused on improving student outcomes by aligning academic programs with in-demand careers and clear transfer pathways to bachelor's degrees. As part of this expanded network, UCNJ joined 54 community colleges nationwide in a three-year effort to strengthen program design, enhance student advising, and ensure that students

graduate with credentials that lead to meaningful employment or successful transfer to four-year institutions.

Through participation in Unlocking Opportunity, the College is enhancing current academic programs, set measurable goals, and implemented research-based strategies to increase student enrollment and completion in fields that lead to transfer and career outcomes. By collaborating with peers and national

leaders, the College is advancing strategies that will improve completion rates and position students for long-term success.





Institute for Intensive English Students Celebrate at Completion Ceremony

Each year, the Institute for Intensive English (IIE) celebrates its students with a biannual completion ceremony, held on the Elizabeth Campus. Led by Dean of the Elizabeth Campus and IIE Dr. Elizabeth Ramos and Assistant Dean of IIE Elizabeth Schade, the event celebrated the accomplishments of more than 100 students who successfully completed the program.

The IIE program provides students with comprehensive English language instruction designed to support their academic, professional, and personal goals. Through immersive coursework focused on reading, writing, speaking, and listening, students build the skills and confidence needed to succeed in college-level studies and in today's global workforce. For many participants, the program serves as a critical pathway to further their education at UCNJ and beyond.



Research Students Present at New Jersey Academy of Sciences

UCNJ research students showcased their academic excellence at the 71st Annual Meeting of the New Jersey Academy of Sciences (NJAS). The annual event brought together students and researchers from across the state to present projects, exchange ideas, and engage with the scientific community. This year, the College was represented by four student research teams spanning multiple disciplines, including green chemistry, game design, biology, and molecular biology. Students Almeida Samedjina Racine earned third place in the Natural Sciences category for her work in molecular biology. She was mentored by Biology Academic Specialist Dr. Yohan Kim. In addition to presenting their own research, all participating students also served as judges for the Junior Academy poster sessions, evaluating projects presented by high school students across various scientific disciplines.





Fueling Student Entrepreneurship

UCNJ continued to foster innovation and entrepreneurial thinking through the 4th annual Pitch Competition, where students presented original business ideas for the opportunity to secure funding and bring their concepts to life. Supported by the Union County College Foundation, the competition provides students with both the resources and real-world experience needed to turn ideas into viable ventures.

In preparation for the event, participants engaged in hands-on workshops led by the College's Business Center, gaining practical skills in business development, market research, and effective pitching. These sessions helped students refine their ideas and build confidence ahead of presenting to a panel of industry professionals.

Finalists delivered their pitches before a panel of judges from the business community, who evaluated each proposal based on creativity, feasibility, and overall impact. This year's winners included:



FIRST PLACE LDJ Industries

— check photo, left to right: Elena Jensen, Sharon M Dimbo, Brittany Lubintus



SECOND PLACE JOGO: Pickup Soccer Near You — Alex Rodríguez Barrabozza

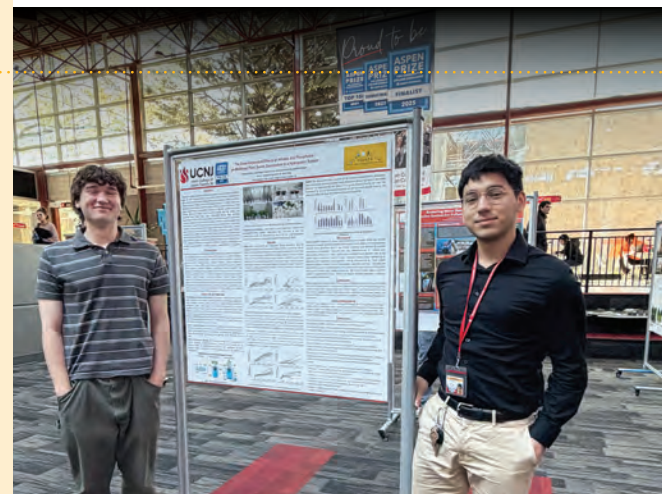


THIRD PLACE Swimwear Security Device — Isabella Cabrera

STEM Research Day

More than 100 UCNJ students presented their work at this year's Research Day held in the Victor M. Richel Student Commons. Through poster presentations, students shared research spanning a wide range of disciplines, including the use of artificial intelligence in mental health therapy, natural approaches to pollution remediation, and data integrity in astrophysics.

The event provided students with an opportunity to communicate their findings to classmates, faculty, staff, and administration. The program also featured a keynote address by Dr. Stephen Burley, Founder and Director of the Institute for Quantitative Biomedicine, whose remarks underscored the importance of research in advancing scientific discovery and improving lives.





New Doctors in the Nest

Dr. Donnell Clement, the Assistant Dean of Assistant Dean of Advising, Career, and Transfer, has earned his doctorate in Education in Educational Leadership from Rowan University. His dissertation was “The Interactions between Academic Advisors and Part Time African American Males in a One Stop Enrollment Center: A Case Study” Dr. Clement earned his master’s degree in Higher Education Administration from Abilene Christian University and his bachelor’s degree in Mass Communications from Delaware State University. Congratulations to Dr. Clement!



Dr. Michelle Luis, the Director of Curriculum and Assessment, has earned her doctorate in Education in Educational Leadership from Farleigh Dickinson University. Her dissertation was “Strength in Support: Tailoring Athlete Support Programs for Division III Female-Identifying Student-Athletes” Dr. Luis earned her master’s degree in Human Behavior and Organizational Psychology and her bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and Teaching from Kean University. She also graduated with an associate degree in Early Childhood Education and Teaching from UCNJ. Congratulations to Dr. Luis!



Dr. Theodora Sergiou, the Assistant Dean of Social Sciences, Business, and History, has earned her doctorate in Education in Educational Leadership from Monmouth University. Her dissertation was titled “Business Faculty and Students’ Beliefs Regarding the Impact of Higher Education Learning at a Community College.” Dr. Sergiou earned her master of business administration

from Rider University and her bachelor’s degree in business administration and English Literature from Georgian Court University. Congratulations to Dr. Sergiou!



UCNJ Students Earn Life-Saving First Aid Certification

Students in UCNJ’s Sports in Society course, taught by Associate Professor of Business Marc Postiglione, gained hands-on, life-saving skills through completion of a Basic First Aid certification. All 24 students in the class successfully earned their Basic Life Support credentials, achieving certification in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and AED (automated external defibrillator) use after passing a comprehensive final assessment. Endorsed by the American Heart Association, the certification equips students with essential skills

they can apply in both their professional paths and everyday lives.



Supporting the Next Generation of Nurses

In 2012, the College honored the longstanding generosity and commitment of Board of Trustees Chairman Victor M. Richel and his wife Andrea through the dedication of the Andrea and Victor M. Richel Family Foundation Center for Education and Nursing, in the College’s Kellogg Building in Elizabeth. The dedication celebrated the Richel Family Foundation’s continued support of educational opportunity and healthcare workforce development in Union County.

The Center continues to support students enrolled in UCNJ’s Cooperative Nursing Program, offered in partnership with RWJBarnabas Health School of Nursing. Through the program, students earn both a Diploma in Nursing and an Associate of Science degree upon successful completion of the curriculum. More than a decade after its dedication, the Andrea and Victor M. Richel Family Foundation Center for Education and Nursing continues to reflect the Richel family’s belief in the transformative power of education and their enduring commitment to supporting future generations of healthcare professionals.

RECOGNIZING CHAIRMAN RICHEL



Nursing Programs Support Workforce Needs Amid Ongoing Nursing Shortage

licensure examination for Practical Nurse certification. The program is marked by a traditional pinning ceremony, during which faculty formally recognize students' transition into the nursing profession.

by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and approved by the New Jersey State Board of Nursing, the program ensures students are well prepared for professional practice. Completers are formally recognized through a combined graduation and pinning ceremony, during which they take the International Pledge of Nursing and participate in the symbolic Nightingale lamp lighting.

UCNJ also partners with RWJBarnabas Health through the School of Nursing Cooperative Nursing Program, which allows students to earn both a Diploma in Nursing and an Associate of Science degree upon completion. Accredited

UCNJ offers a range of nursing education pathways designed to prepare students for meaningful careers in healthcare, from entry-level practical nursing to advanced cooperative degree programs. Across all programs, students are equipped with the clinical

experience needed to deliver high-quality patient care in diverse healthcare settings.

Students receive instruction rooted in compassion and clinical competence, and upon completion are eligible to take the NCLEX-PN



Sonography Program Celebrates Graduates



The College proudly recognized the accomplishments of students in the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program during a special ceremony held in the Roy W. Smith Theater. The event brought together graduating students, faculty, and families to celebrate this important milestone, highlighted by a traditional candle lighting and pinning ceremony.

Offered in partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health's JFK Muhlenberg Harold B. and Dorothy A. Snyder School of Nursing and Medical Imaging, the program provides students with the knowledge and clinical experience needed to succeed in the growing healthcare field. Upon completion, graduates earn an Associate in Science degree jointly conferred by both institutions.



EMS Program Honors Distinguished Leadership

UCNJ's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program continues to prepare the next generation of first responders while celebrating the dedicated leadership that has shaped its success. Students in the EMS program benefit from comprehensive, hands-on training that includes ambulance ride-along hours, providing critical real-world experience in emergency response. Students train using advanced resources, including lifelike manikins, a simulation ambulance, and a fully equipped road ambulance to build technical skills and critical thinking in high-pressure scenarios. Upon completion, graduates are eligible to sit for the National Registry examination.

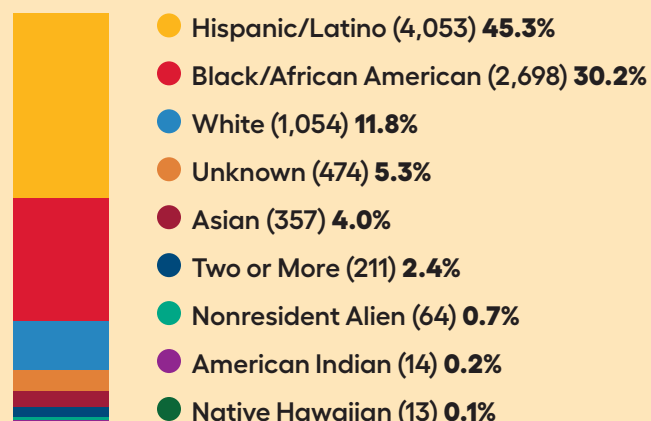
The program's continued success is guided by the leadership of EMS Program Director Laurie Sheldon, who was honored with the 2025 EMS Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award. Since joining the College in 2005, Professor Sheldon has prepared thousands of EMTs, developed continuing education programs, and instilled the values of safety, empathy, and teamwork in her students. Her impact extends beyond the classroom, with more than 40 years of service in her local squad as a line officer, executive board member, and instructor.

Fall 2025 Cohort Top 10 Enrolled Majors

These UCNJ programs of study account for 75.1% of our first-time full-time enrolled students

Health Science	(338) 28.0%
Business	(140) 11.6%
Liberal Arts	(90) 7.5%
Psychology	(67) 5.6%
Criminal Justice	(65) 5.4%
Biology	(63) 5.2%
Engineering	(61) 5.1%
Computer Science	(28) 2.3%
Business Management	(27) 2.2%
Early Childhood Elementary Education	(27) 2.2%

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



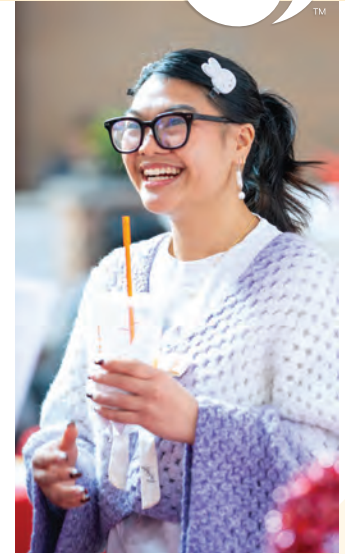
Pell Eligibility

Fall 2025

All Students	(4,559) 51.0%	(4,379) 49.0%
Cohort	(747) 61.9%	(460) 38.1%

● Pell Eligible ● Not Pell Eligible

MOMENTS THAT MATTER



The Office of College Life

The Office of College Life fosters a vibrant campus community by promoting co-curricular events and organizations that enrich the college experience and support student growth at UCNJ.

Throughout the year, the Office of College Life hosts a variety of trips to provide students with opportunities to explore new environments, learn about different cultures, and create lasting memories with their peers. Trips hosted this year include:

- American Dream Mall
- Campus tours at four-year institutions across New Jersey
- *Death Becomes Her* musical and Bryant Park visit
- New York Mets Game
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Red Bulls Soccer Game



With more than 35 clubs and organizations for students to join, students have the opportunity to explore their interests, build leadership skills, and form meaningful connections beyond the classroom. This year's club highlights include:

- **ASL Club** hosted a first ever Sign Language Karaoke on campus, so all student participants signed their songs instead of singing.
- **Computer Science & Cyber Security Club** and **Engineering Club** worked together to win a robotics competition at Essex County College
- **Gaming Society** created a Game Show Day event and hosted four interactive game shows for student participants.
- **Women's Empowerment Club** hosted a self-care event to help students de-stress at the end of the semester.



The Office of College Life has developed multiple opportunities throughout the academic year for students to impact local communities. Students can earn service hours by participating in these volunteering opportunities, enhancing their impact on their community beyond UCNJ. The Office of College Life and students supported:

- Best Friend Dog and Animal Adoption
- Blood Drives
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hartshorn Arboretum & Bird Sanctuary
- Out of the Darkness Walk for Suicide Awareness
- Union County Boys & Girls Club
- Wagner Farm's Giving Garden



UCNJ Welcomes Students to the Nest

“Welcomefest” and “Winterfest” are collaborative events held at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters across the Cranford, Elizabeth, and Plainfield campuses. Led by the Office of College Life, these signature events foster a strong sense of community and belonging among UCNJ students. They also spark interest in the diverse programs, services, and engagement opportunities at the Office of College Life.

Signature events include annual involvement fairs where clubs and departments table to showcase resources, promote upcoming events, and connect students to opportunities across campus. Each semester, Scooping Out Success adds a fun twist to engagement, with Deans serving ice cream while departments contribute unique toppings, creating a midday sweet treat for students to enjoy as they learn about campus services.



Student Leaders Attend Retreat

The Office of College Life brought 30 student leaders to a leadership retreat designed to introduce club leaders to their roles and strengthen the College community. Over the course of two days, students participated in a variety of activities that encouraged teamwork, communication, and self-reflection. Students engaged in lessons focused on the role of peer educators, the socio-ecological model, and effective communication strategies.



THE PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE OF THE OWLS

PAST

In 1933, campus life was simple and spirited at Union County Junior College. Athletics played a prominent role in UCNJ's early identity, often drawing more attention than academics. By 1934–35, the College supported baseball, basketball, tennis, and track. The basketball program became the leading sport, earning state championship honors in 1935 and steadily building a strong program. The rifle team also found success, winning four of five contests by 1936, while track claimed a championship in May 1935. Other sports including badminton, fencing, swimming, horseback riding, table tennis, and women's basketball all contributed to a lively athletic culture. The College also offered students the opportunity to play football and wrestling.

PRESENT

Today, UCNJ Athletics continues to build momentum through competitive success, national recognition, and the leadership of dedicated coaches and student athletes. Currently under the leadership of Director of Athletics Marbely Montas (UCNJ '07), also a former UCNJ student-athlete, hall of fame member, and seven-time Region XIX Coach of the Year for Women's Basketball, UCNJ Athletics hosts 14 sports, including a DII women's basketball program. In 2025, the Owls celebrated a remarkable "Year of Champions," highlighted by multiple championship performances and teams competing at the highest level of competition. Numerous teams earned their bid to the championship including Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Wrestling, Men's Volleyball, and Golf. UCNJ Athletics also expanded its presence in emerging sports, with the Esports and Men's Volleyball programs. Together, these achievements reflect a department that is thriving in the present, combining competitive excellence, student-athlete development, and a growing national footprint.

FUTURE

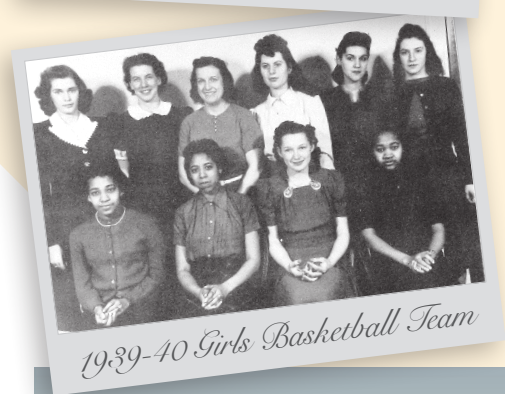
Looking ahead, UCNJ Athletics is entering an exciting new era with the transformation of the Physical Education Center (PECK) on the Cranford Campus. Through a \$35 million renovation project led in partnership with the Union County Improvement Authority, the existing 42,000-square-foot facility will be modernized into a high-tech, state-of-the-art space designed to support athletics, academics, and community engagement. Once completed, the reimagined PECK building will serve as the central hub for athletics and student life at UCNJ, providing upgraded athletic spaces, enhanced training and competition areas, and improved technology infrastructure to support student-athlete success. The project reflects Union County's continued investment in higher education and the future of UCNJ. As construction progresses, the modernization represents more than a facility to upgrade, it signals a commitment to growth, innovation, and providing student-athletes with the environment and resources needed to thrive for years to come.



1939-40 Rifle Team



1948-49 Mens Basketball Team



1939-40 Girls Basketball Team



Go Owls!



Owls Tailgate Brings Community Together for Big Win

The UCNJ community came together for the Owls Tailgate, enjoying an afternoon of food, games, and giveaways in support of the Baseball team. The celebration set the stage for an exciting matchup as the Owls hosted Delaware County Community College at Shane Walsh Baseball Field.

UCNJ delivered a standout performance, securing a 14-3 victory in front of an energized crowd. Adding to the festivities, UCNJ Director of Purchasing Mark Anderson threw out the ceremonial first pitch, marking the start of a memorable day for the Spring sports season.



Men's Volleyball Captures Back-to-Back Region XIX Titles

The Men's Volleyball team delivered another standout season, earning the NJCAA Region XIX Championship for the second consecutive year. Building on that momentum, the Owls then went on to claim the district title and advanced to the national stage, finishing fifth overall in the country. Under the leadership of Head Coach Kevan Pidgeon-Hammock, the team compiled an impressive 24-8 record. Setter Ethen Lugo was named Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) Player of the Year.





The Ring That Sparked a Championship

In 2009, the College celebrated a historic milestone as the Men's Soccer Team captured the College's first-ever national championship. The journey to the title was marked by strong community support and leadership, including the presence of Board of Trustees Chairman Mr. Victor M. Richel.

Prior to the championship, Mr. Richel attended the team's send-off pep rally, where he shared a symbolic gesture of encouragement: he lent team captain Gregory Pogorzelski his own 2003 championship ring for good luck. On November 14, the Owls secured a 1-0 victory over Richland College to win the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division III National Championship.



Wrestling Program Reaches Historic Milestones

UCNJ's Wrestling program achieved a breakthrough season, recording the first winning dual meet record in program history with an impressive 7-4 finish. The team built on that success with a strong showing at the Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) Championships, earning a second-place finish. UCNJ also made its presence known on the national stage, sending a program-record six student-athletes to compete at the NJCAA Wrestling Championships.

Wrestler Joshua Baeza earned All-District honors for the second consecutive year, recording back-to-back 20-win seasons. He was joined by Vincent Capone and Chris Gomez, who were also named to the All-District Team for their standout performances. Salvatore Randazzo earned Scholar All-American



honors for the second consecutive year, becoming just the second student-athlete in program history to achieve back-to-back recognition. Vincent Capone also received Scholar All-American honors, underscoring the team's commitment to academic success.

GSAC Champs in the Nest

The UCNJ Women's Basketball team captured the Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) Championship, finishing the season with a 25-24 overall season. Leading the way was Jasmine McKay, who earned GSAC Player of the Year honors for her standout performance on the court. Head Coach Jaleel Taylor was also recognized for his leadership, being named GSAC Coach of the Year.

Following the season, Jasmine McKay and Zakiyyah Lindsey



were both named to the All-GSAC First Team and earned All-Region First Team recognition. Cianna Papineau was also recognized for her contributions, earning a spot on the All-GSAC Second Team.





EOF Hosts English and Math Summer Institutes for Incoming Students

Nearly one hundred incoming EOF (Educational Opportunity Fund) Summer Scholars were accepted into the English and Math Summer programs to become acclimated with the college atmosphere,

attend credit and enrichment classes with professors, and learn about all that EOF has to offer. As the institutes ended, students had the opportunity to earn 3 or 4 credit hours toward their degree.

In addition to the academic assistance promoted by these institutes, summer excursions were also offered to enrich the social aspect for the students.



Let's Listen to HER Story

The EOF teamed up with UCNJ's American Association for Women in Community Colleges chapter, bringing students and staff together to listen to the experiences and advice of women in leadership positions at the College. This panel focused on women's empowerment inside and outside of the workplace, ways to advocate on a daily basis, and to support and uplift other women around them.



Wild 4 Wellness

Each semester, the Wellness Committee hosts “Wild 4 Wellness”, a bi-annual wellness fair that promotes student health, wellness, and social well-being. The Committee invites different members of the College community, including YWCA of Union County, Urban League of Union County, Social Recovery Center, and many more, as well as various departments at UCNJ to help inform students of the resources available on campus and in the community.



UCNJ wellness CENTER



Safe Driver Competition



This year, the UCNJ HootHealth Peer Leaders participated in the CRASH Project, which was led by the Brain Injury Alliance of NJ, along with several other New Jersey colleges to compete on creating a safe driving awareness program. The HootHealth Peer Leaders, led by Social Worker Victoria Caprello, invited the Cranford Police Department to facilitate

a safe driver competition using alcohol impairment goggles to complete an obstacle course in the Victor M. Richel Student Commons. Out of 10 participating institutions, UCNJ was recognized for developing the top overall CRASH project, earning a \$3,000 award that will be reinvested into future campus traffic safety initiatives.

From Hoot to Hounds

Every semester, the Office of Social Work Services facilitates therapy dog visits to support students dealing with stress. This year, therapy dogs were brought to the Cranford, Elizabeth, and Plainfield Campuses for students to enjoy and interact with certified animals. New this year, the Office of Social Work Services and Universal Accessibility Services also facilitated a Puppy Yoga event on the Cranford Campus, which included two yoga sessions led by Doggy Noses & Yoga Poses and JKRC Animal Rescue, who brought four puppies for students to interact with during yoga. Events like Puppy Yoga help students manage stress, strengthen their sense of connection to campus, and support their overall well-being, which contributes to improved focus and academic success.



Fuel Your Future: Supporting Students Beyond the Owl's Nest



As part of the College's commitment to post-completion success, UCNJ continues to expand programming that supports students beyond graduation. The Fuel Your Future programming focuses on preparing graduates for successful transfer transitions and continued career support and resources, ensuring that support extends well beyond their time at UCNJ.

Fuel Your Future events address key elements of the transfer journey, including understanding transfer shock, navigating financial aid and scholarship opportunities, identifying the right institutional fit, and strengthening application materials. Workshops also emphasize continued alumni engagement by connecting graduates with networking opportunities, career guidance, and institutional resources that remain available after graduation.

Expanding Opportunity Through Partnerships

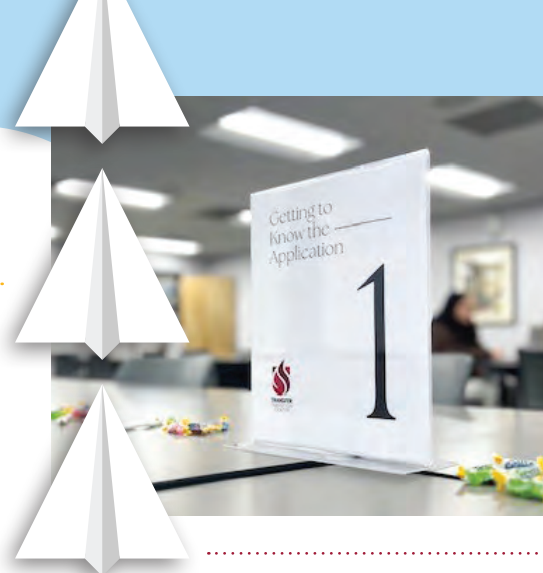
UCNJ's partnership with the Transfer Scholars Network offers students a warm introduction to highly selective institutions committed to meeting full demonstrated financial need. As part of the first Dream Big College Tour, eighteen students traveled to Massachusetts to visit Amherst College and Williams College, reinforcing the message that UCNJ students belong in some of the nation's most competitive academic environments.



Recently graduated alumni returned to campus to participate in the Fuel Up: UCNJ Alumni Mini-Conference, which provided networking opportunities, breakout learning sessions, and career development resources designed to support alumni as they navigate early career and post-transfer pathways.

During the Fall, the Transfer Transition Workshop Series provided targeted guidance through a sequence of interactive sessions designed to help students prepare for the next stage of their academic journey. Workshops included Finding Your Fit, Getting to Know the Common Application, Essay Writing for Applications and Scholarships, Funding Your Future, and a Transfer Transition Experience Alumni Panel, where graduates shared their experiences transitioning to four-year institutions.

In Spring 2026, the series continued with additional sessions focused on navigating transfer applications, strengthening essays, understanding financial aid strategies, and preparing students for the academic and social transition to a new institution.



Amplifying Alumni Voices

The College launched Hoot's Eye View, an alumni podcast that highlights the experiences and achievements of UCNJ graduates. Through candid conversations with alumni, the podcast showcases the impact of the College on students' academic and career trajectories while strengthening the connection between alumni and current students.

Together, these initiatives reflect UCNJ's continued commitment to supporting students not only while they are enrolled, but throughout their transfer journeys, career development, and lifelong connection to the College.



*Rev. Dr. Jeanette Goodson
(UCNJ '90)*



Celebrating Heritage and Community

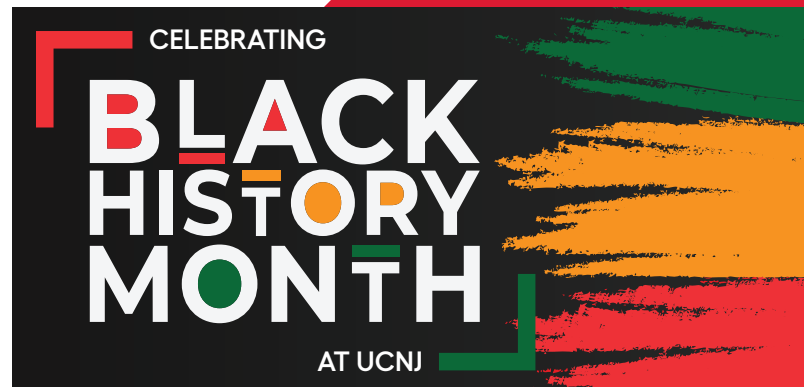
UCNJ celebrated the opening of Hispanic Heritage Month in September with a festive kickoff event that brought together students, faculty, staff, and community members in recognition of the rich cultural traditions that shape the College community. This year's national theme, *"Collective Heritage: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future,"* highlighted the importance of honoring cultural roots while empowering future generations to succeed.

The keynote speaker was alumna Silvia Jaramillo-Regaldo (UCNJ '20), who shared reflections on the vital contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities. Following the ceremony, guests gathered in the Richel Student Commons for a lively cultural celebration featuring music

and dance performed by Los Nueve Del Sabor.

The College commemorated the start of Black History Month in February with an opening ceremony to reflect on the enduring legacy and contributions of Black Americans. This year's theme, *"100 Years of Black History,"* encouraged the College community to honor the past while recognizing the ongoing impact of Black leadership, culture, and achievement in shaping society.

Among those in attendance was Union County Board of County Commissioner Lourdes M. Leon, who joined campus leaders and community members in celebrating the significance of the occasion. The ceremony was hosted by UCNJ Navigator Justin



Newell (UCNJ '17), who shared reflections on the value of mentorship and highlighted his professional relationship with Executive Director of Public Safety Joseph Hines.

This was followed by a panel discussion exploring the meaning and evolution of Black history over the past century. The ceremony concluded with a student

performance by Nehomie Vilbrun, who recited the poem *"We Wear the Mask"* by renowned poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, and a choral reading led by Dr. Joyce Maxwell, Associate Professor of English.



Undergraduate Student Attendance

Total 8,938

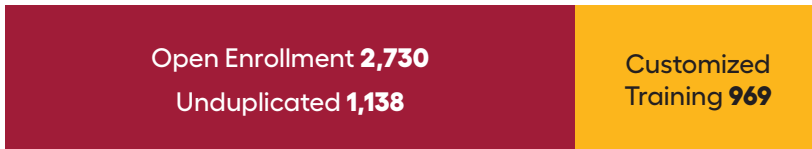
Fall 2025



Non-Credit Students Served

FY 2025

Number of Registrations



Unduplicated Students Enrolled

FY 2025



Student Enrollment

by Age Group and Enrollment Status

Fall 2025

Age	Full-time	Part-time	Total	% of Total
< 18	30	126	156	1.7%
18-19	1,633	474	2,107	23.6%
20-21	1,023	809	1,832	20.5%
22-24	559	929	1,488	16.6%
25-29	356	921	1,277	14.3%
30-34	160	593	753	8.4%
35-39	90	401	491	5.5%
40-49	87	487	574	6.4%
50-64	37	194	231	2.6%
65+	0	29	29	0.3%
Unknown	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	3,975	4,963	8,938	100%



Establishing the Victor M. Richel Student Commons

In 2005, UCNJ formally recognized the extraordinary leadership and service of Board of Trustees Chairman Mr. Victor M. Richel by dedicating the Student Commons on the Cranford Campus in his name. Announced during the 13th Annual Gala of the Union County College Foundation, the tribute came as a surprise and marked a significant moment in the College's history.

Since its dedication, the Victor M. Richel Student Commons has served as a central hub of student life, reflecting Mr. Richel's enduring commitment to student success and engagement.

At the time of the dedication, Mr. Richel expressed his deep appreciation for the honor and reaffirmed his belief in the College's mission, noting that the work of the institution is ultimately "all about the students." Today, that legacy continues, with the Commons standing as a lasting symbol of his dedication to the students and community that UCNJ serves.

RECOGNIZING CHAIRMAN RICHEL

PLC

The President's Leadership Council (PLC) is comprised of leaders from across the College's divisions who share current initiatives, updates, and plans from their respective departments. They discuss the College's institutional priorities: enrollment & value, innovation & sustainability, inclusion & belonging, and student success & post-completion.



THE PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Dr. Margaret M. McMenam
President

Lester T. Bosea
Registrar

Dayne Chance
Executive Director of Financial Aid

Dr. Nicole D. Cippoletti
Dean of Scotch Plains & Virtual Campus

William E. Dunscombe
Dean of Plainfield Campus & Allied Sciences

Dr. Demond T. Hargrove
Vice President of Student Development

David M. Hawes
Director of Facilities

Joseph Hines
Executive Director of Public Safety

Dr. Lisa R. Hiscano
Executive Director of Continuing Education & Workforce Development

Dr. Charnette Hockaday
Dean of Students

Jacqueline A. Jarosz
Assistant Controller

Dr. Sara N. Lacagnino
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Vincent J. Lotano
Associate Vice President of Operations

Dr. Maris Lown
Executive Vice President & Provost

Dr. Marva R. Mack
Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Success

Dr. Melinda C. Norelli
Dean of Social Sciences, Business, & History

Dr. Bernard A. Polnari
Vice President for Administrative Services

Titilola Price
Chair of the Governance and Leadership Council

Dr. Elizabeth A. Ramos
Dean of Elizabeth Campus & Institute for Intensive English

Beatriz Rodriguez
Dean of College Life & Athletics

Douglas E. Rouse
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Dr. Melissa R. Sande
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of Humanities

Dr. Roseminda N. Santee
Dean of RWJBarnabas Health School of Nursing

Dr. Jaime M. Segal
Assistant Vice President of External Affairs & Secretary of the Boards

Dr. Faraz Siddique
Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics

Marlene M. Sousa
Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Lauren Swierc Falkowski
Dean of Curriculum & Assessment

Dr. Marlene White
Associate General Counsel & Executive Director of Procurement

Dr. Eric D. Winch
Chief Information Officer

Dr. Andrew S. Ziner
Executive Director of Institutional Research



ROOTED IN COMMUNITY

National Spotlight: Chairman Richel Receives Prestigious ACCT Award

UCNJ Board of Trustees Chairman Victor M. Richel received the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) 2025 Northeast Regional Award for Trustee Leadership at the 56th Annual ACCT Leadership Congress in New Orleans. Chairman Richel is a community leader, philanthropist, and businessman. He has been a member of the UCNJ Board of Trustees for more than

40 years and has served as Chairman for 30 years. Mr. Richel also serves as Chairman of the Board of RWJBarnabas Health Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth. In 2021, he received the ACCT Trustee Leadership Award for the Northeast Region for the first time. Congratulations, Mr. Chairman, for this well-deserved recognition.



From left: AVP of External Affairs & Board Secretary Dr. Jaime Segal, Board of Governors member Mary M. Zimmermann (UCNJ '01), Chairman Richel, President McMenamin, Board of Governors member John Richel, EVP & Provost Dr. Maris Lown, NJCCC President Dr. Aaron Fichtner.



From left: Asst. Dean of Student Success Dr. Duane Reid, AVP of External Affairs & Board Secretary Dr. Jaime Segal, Commissioner Leon, EVP & Provost Dr. Maris Lown, Chairman Bodek, President McMenamin, Dean of the Scotch Plains & Virtual Campus Dr. Nicole Cippoletti, VP of Institutional Advancement Doug Rouse, and VP of Student Development Dr. Demond Hargrove.



County Commissioners Recognize UCNJ with Aspen Resolution

In January 2026, the Union County Board of County Commissioners presented President McMenamin with a resolution honoring UCNJ for being named as one of the

top community colleges in the country by the Aspen Institute, making the College eligible to apply for the \$1 million 2027 Aspen Prize. Chairman Joseph C. Bodek and immediate past

Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon presented the resolution. UCNJ was previously named an Aspen Prize finalist for 2025.

The College's Advocates

UCNJ is indebted to advocates in the County, in Trenton, and in Washington D.C. for their unwavering support and their commitment to education.

State and federal elected officials provide valuable support to the College. From Federal Pell Grants and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education funding to New Jersey Tuition Assistance Grants, the Community College Opportunity Grant, and NJ STARS, these programs provide critical financial assistance. The College thanks them for their support!

United States Senate

Senator Cory Booker
Senator Andy Kim

United States House Of Representatives

Representative Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07)
Representative LaMonica McIver (NJ-10)
Representative Rob Menendez (NJ-08)
Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12)

New Jersey Governor

Governor Mikie Sherrill
Lieutenant Governor Dr. Dale G. Caldwell

New Jersey Legislature, District 20

Senator Joseph P. Cryan
Assemblywoman Annette Quijano
Assemblyman Ed Rodriguez

New Jersey Legislature, District 21

Senator Jon M. Bramnick
Assemblyman Vincent M. "Vinnie" Kearney
Assemblyman Andrew Macurdy

New Jersey Legislature, District 22

Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari
Assemblywoman Linda S. Carter
Assemblyman James J. Kennedy

New Jersey Legislature, District 28

Senator Renee C. Burgess
Assemblyman Chigozie U. Onyema
Assemblywoman Cleopatra G. Tucker



UCNJ Leaders Advocate for Community Colleges at National Legislative Summit

UCNJ Trustee Brian Campbell (UCNJ '95), Student Representative Marisol Ramos-Rodriguez (UCNJ '25), and UCNJ's AVP of External Affairs & Board Secretary Dr. Jaime Segal accompanied President McMenamin to the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) 2026 National Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C.

During their visit, they had the opportunity to meet with the offices of elected officials including U.S. Senators Cory Booker and Andy Kim and U.S. Representatives Bonnie Watson Coleman, Thomas H. Kean Jr., Rob Menendez, and LaMonica McIver. The meetings focused on advocating for current issues facing community colleges.

Thank you, Congresswoman Watson Coleman

During congressional visits at the ACCT NLS in Washington D.C., members of the New Jersey delegation took the opportunity to thank Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman for her years of service before her retirement at the end of the year. Dr. Aaron Fichtner from the New Jersey Council of

County Colleges presented the Congresswoman with a glass acorn made by the students in the Glass Education Center at Salem Community College. Thank you, Congresswoman, for your service to the residents of NJ-12 and the entire State of New Jersey.



Bipartisan Civility Tour Stops at UCNJ

UCNJ hosted the second stop of Senator Jon Bramnick (NJ-21) and Senator Joseph Cryan's (NJ-20) Civility Tour in the Roy W. Smith Theater. The two senators came together to talk with College students about civility in politics, while promoting a more civil tone in political discourse. The event was moderated by Dr. Jaime Segal, Assistant Vice President of External Affairs & Board Secretary. The senators debated about topics such as healthcare, climate change, gun control, and immigration issues. Following their discussion, UCNJ students asked the senators questions and created an open forum for discussion.



From Campus to Capitol: UCNJ Students Attend HACU Capitol Forum



Leaders from UCNJ participated in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Annual Capitol Forum in Washington, DC, joining peers from Hispanic-Serving Institutions nationwide to engage policymakers and advance federal higher education priorities. Representing UCNJ were President McMenamín, a member of the HACU Governing Board; Dr. Segal, AVP of External Affairs and Board Secretary; and students Evelyn Barros and Irene Tabares, both of Elizabeth.

During the forum, the delegation met with the offices of Cory Booker and LaMonica McIver (NJ-10) to advocate for policies that expand access, strengthen student success, and support the mission of Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

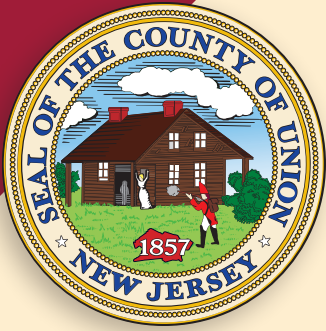


President McMenamín Receives Two Awards

Dr. Margaret McMenamín was recognized with two honors that reflect her sustained leadership and impact at UCNJ. She received the 2025 Union County Lifetime Achievement Award from Scouting America in recognition of her stewardship, community engagement, and longstanding service to the region. She was also named to the List for the second consecutive year, recognizing her as one of New Jersey's most influential leaders in education.

Since becoming president in 2010, Dr. McMenamín has led the College with a consistent focus on expanding access, strengthening student outcomes, and advancing opportunity for the communities it serves.





THE UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

There is no stronger partner to UCNJ than the Union County Board of County Commissioners. Their sustained support allows the College to keep tuition affordable while continuing to invest in the future. In addition to critical operating support, the Commissioners fund capital improvements that modernize aging facilities and expand access to state-of-the-art labs and learning environments. This combination of affordability and quality ensures students can access a high-impact, career-focused education.

Their investment also extends directly to students. The Commissioner Scholars Program provides financial support to high-achieving students with demonstrated need, while the Senior Scholars Program offers residents age 60 and over the opportunity to take courses at no cost.

Beyond funding, the Commissioners are active partners in the life of the College. Their regular presence at campus events reflects a deep commitment to students and to the broader community that UCNJ serves.



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Chairman



Rebecca L. Williams
Vice Chair



James E. Baker, Jr.



Michèle S. Delisfort



Lourdes M. Leon



Alexander Mirabella



Stanley J. Neron



Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded



Joseph Signorello III

*Committed to
Our Community*



THANK YOU, COMMISSIONERS!

UCNJ held their annual Board of School Estimate hearing, which allocates county funding for the College. In attendance were UCNJ Board of Trustees Chairman Victor M. Richel and Trustees George A. Castro II and Brian Campbell (UCNJ '95) and Union County Commissioner Chairman Joseph C. Bodek and Commissioners Stanley J. Neron and Kimberly Palmieri-Mouled.

Nearly 30 UCNJ credit and non-credit workforce students were also present to

personally thank the commissioners for their generous support, which allows the College to maintain low tuition and high-quality programming. The hearing confirmed more than \$16 million in operating funding and \$5 million in capital support, underscoring the County's ongoing commitment to students, facilities, and the mission of UCNJ. The College community is deeply grateful for this partnership and the lasting impact it has on student success.



Congresswoman McIver Visits Cranford Campus

Congresswoman LaMonica McIver (NJ-10) toured UCNJ's Cranford Campus with President McMenamin. During the visit, she explored the Academic Learning Center and Innovation Center and observed an honors philosophy class in session. Congresswoman McIver also toured the Helen E. Chaney Student Services Center, meeting with staff to learn more about the College's student support programs. The visit concluded

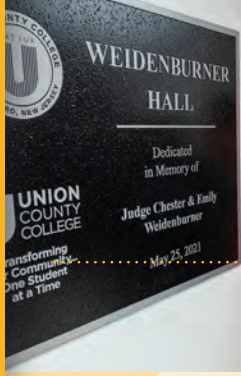
with a student meet and greet, highlighting UCNJ's ongoing investment in student success and its impact on the broader community.

The College extends sincere thanks to Congresswoman McIver for taking the time to engage with students, faculty, and staff and for her support of higher education in New Jersey.

A Legacy of Impact: County Supports Scholars at UCNJ

In 1999, with the support of then-freeholder and now-Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari, the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders (now the Union County Board of County Commissioners) launched the Freeholder Scholars Program (now the Commissioner Scholars Program) which covers tuition for eligible Union County residents. It assists residents who have a minimum 3.0 GPA and family income of \$95,000 or less. This program has supported 230 students with more than \$550,000.

RECOGNIZING CHAIRMAN RICHEL



UCNJ Dedicates Weidenburner Hall in Honor of Largest Single Donation

In 2021, UCNJ dedicated Weidenburner Hall in honor of the nearly \$2.7 million donation by the estate of UCNJ alumnus Bruce Weidenburner. Formerly known as the Humanities Building, the building was renamed in recognition of this

generous gift from Mr. Weidenburner, the single largest individual donation in the Foundation's history. As a lifelong resident of Linden, Mr. Weidenburner developed his family's scholarship to help Linden High School graduates receive a college degree.

New Commissioners Visit UCNJ!

Newly elected Commissioners Stanley J. Neron and Joseph Signorello III joined President Margaret M. McMenamin for a tour of UCNJ's Cranford Campus. During the visit, Commissioner Signorello explored the College's facilities and programs firsthand. Dr. McMenamin highlighted key destinations including the Academic Learning Center, Innovation Center, Helen E. Chaney Student Services Center, Bloomberg Business Center, and the Union Scholars Wall, showcasing the College's

commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and student success.

Both Commissioners took office in 2026. Commissioner Neron served 12 years on the Elizabeth Board of Education, including serving as Board President in 2025, while Commissioner Signorello previously served as Mayor of Roselle Park.



From left: VP Institutional Advancement Doug Rouse, Executive Director of Continuing Education & Workforce Development Dr. Lisa Hiscano, Chairman Bodek, Commissioner Kimberly Palmieri-Moudeh, and AVP of External Affairs & Board Secretary Dr. Jaime Segal.



UCNJ Supports Chairman Bodek

Members of UCNJ leadership attended the January 2026 Union County Employer Legislative Committee (ELC) meeting, featuring Union County Commissioner Chairman Joseph Bodek as the keynote speaker. Chairman Bodek shared his priorities for 2026 and engaged attendees in a Q&A, providing insight into county initiatives and fostering dialogue between local government and the community.

Students and Staff March in Union County St. Patrick's Day Parade

More than 100 students, faculty, and staff proudly represented UCNJ at the 29th Annual Union County St. Patrick's Day Parade. The procession was led by President Margaret McMenamín. She proudly served as Grand Marshal of the Parade in 2015.



Dr. McMenamín Speaks at Union County ELC Meeting



From left: Foundation Board member Eran Ryan, AVP of External Affairs & Board Secretary Dr. Jaime Segal, Executive Director of Continuing Education & Workforce Development Dr. Lisa Hiscano, Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi, President McMenamín, Mayor of Union Township Patricia Guerra-Frazier, Northfield Bank Senior Vice President Angie Tsirkas, Asst. Program Director Employee Engagement Katrina James-Pellam, VP of Institutional Advancement Doug Rouwe, and Board of Governors member Stephen F. Hebl, Esq. (UCNJ '75).

President McMenamín served as the speaker at the February 2026 meeting of the Union County Employer Legislative Committee (ELC). In her remarks, Dr. McMenamín highlighted UCNJ's Mission and key initiatives, with a focus on partnerships and programs that support the local business community. She emphasized the College's ongoing commitment to helping residents achieve social and economic mobility through education and workforce development.

UCNJ is managed by a Board of Trustees and Board of Governors comprised of volunteer community members who give generously of their time and expertise for the benefit of the College.

UCNJ's board members advocate for the mission of providing a high-quality, affordable, and accessible education to all Union County residents.

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Miguel A. Figueredo

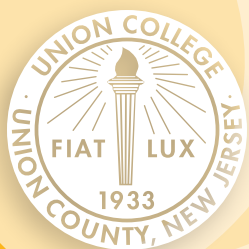
Miguel A. Merino

Daryl Palmieri

Emily L. Root, MA, CCC-SLP

Kamran Tasharofi, M.D.

Marisol Ramos-Rodríguez
(UCNJ '25)
Student Representative



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(UCNJ '95)



George A. Castro, II



Daniel J. Connolly



F. Jim Della Sala



Miguel A. Figueredo



Miguel A. Merino



Daryl Palmieri



Emily L. Root, MA, CCC-SLP



Kamran Tasharofi, M.D.



Marisol Ramos-Rodríguez
(UCNJ '25)
Student Representative



UCNJ supports the UCVTS Global Logistics Academy

Board of Trustees Chairman Richel and President McMenammin attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the Union County Vocational Technical School's (UCVTS) Academy for Global Logistics, which is located at the College's Scotch Plains Campus. The Academy is dedicated to preparing students for

careers in global commerce, with a focus on logistics and supply chain management. Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari (LD-22), Asw. Linda Carter (LD-22), Union County Commissioner Chairman Joseph C. Bodek, Vice Chair Rebecca L. Williams, and Commissioners Lourdes M. Leon and Kimberly Palmieri-Moude, as

well as Trustee & UCVTS Board member Daryl Palmieri and Foundation Board member & UCVTS Board member Phyllis Mirabella were in attendance to cut the ribbon.



Welcome, New Board Members!

UCNJ welcomed four new members to its boards:

- Emily Root, of Westfield, was appointed to the Board of Trustees by the Union County Board of County Commissioners. Ms. Root is a former member of the Westfield Town Council and has a speech therapy practice in Berkeley Heights.
- Kathy Fitzpatrick (UCNJ '75), of Westfield, joined the Board of Governors. Ms. Fitzpatrick is a successful business woman and entrepreneur.
- Bob Sloan, of Westfield, was appointed to the Board of Governors. Mr. Sloan attended UCNJ in the 1970's. He was an executive with AT&T FirstNet, serving as Chief Operating Officer and is now a technology consultant.
- Lisa Vecchione (UCNJ '03), of Springfield, joined the Board of Governors as an appointee from the College's Alumni Association. She is an active volunteer in the community.



From left: Asst. Program Dir. Employee Engagement Katrina James-Pellam, Program Director - Allied Health Programs Monique Braithwaite, Dir. of Cont. Ed. & Workforce Dev. Dr. Lisa Hiscano, Dean of Elizabeth Campus Dr. Elizabeth Ramos, VP Academic Affairs Dr. Sara Lacagnino, Assoc. Dir. Cont. Ed. & Workforce Dev. Maritza Batista, Asst. Dean of Student Success Dr. Duane Reid, Exec. Dir. Cont. Ed. & Workforce Dev. Marlene Loff, Dean of College Life Beatriz Rodriguez, and AVP External Affairs & Board Secretary Dr. Jaime Segal.

UCNJ Supports Elizabeth State of the City

UCNJ staff attended the Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce's annual Elizabeth State of the City, where Mayor J. Christian Bollwage delivered his address reviewing the city's accomplishments over the past year. During

his remarks, the Mayor highlighted several UCNJ achievements, including the College's status as a finalist for the 2025 Aspen Prize and its recognition among the Top 25 Community Colleges for the 2027 Aspen Prize.



From left: Chairman Richel, Kathy Fitzpatrick, Lisa Vecchione, Emily Root, Bob Sloan, and President McMenammin.



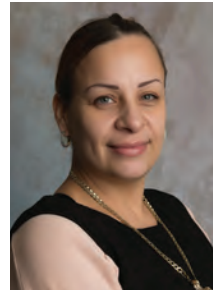
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(UCNJ '11)



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Edward J. Hobbie, Esq.



Gary S. Horan



Richard J. Malcolm



Carl J. Napor



Matthew R. Nazzaro
(UCNJ '04)



Paul T. O'Neill, Esq.
(UCNJ '84)



Sandra D. Rice



John Richel



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Lisa Vecchione
(UCNJ '03)



Allan L. Weisberg



Hugh C. Welsh



Mary M. Zimmermann
(UCNJ '01)



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Kamran Tasharofi, M.D.
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Rafael J. Betancourt, Esq.*
John M. Toriello*

* Member of this committee by virtue of status as Board Chair or Vice-Chair



UNION COUNTY
COLLEGE
FOUNDATION



One Million Dollar Gift Provides a Transformational Future for UCNJ Students

The Union County College Foundation is proud to recognize an extraordinary act of generosity from longtime supporter Freda Brown, whose \$1 million gift represents one of the largest single donations in

Foundation history. For years, Mrs. Brown has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to student success. In recognition of her early leadership and philanthropy, the College's Paramedics Program proudly

bears the Brown Family name. Now, in honor of this historic \$1 million investment, the Union Honors Program will be renamed the Freda and Robert Brown Honors Program at UCNJ, ensuring that their legacy will inspire generations of high-achieving students to come.

This most recent investment builds on that legacy and elevates it to new heights. Mrs. Brown's transformational gift will have a profound and far-reaching impact by supporting a new Transfer Scholarship for graduating students in the Honors Program, and strengthening the Foundation's Operation Graduation Fund. Because of Mrs. Brown's vision and generosity, countless students will cross the graduation stage, enter meaningful careers, and give back to the very communities that supported them.

“Your generosity has given me more than just financial assistance—it has reminded me that there are people who believe in my potential and want to see students like me achieve their goals. I look forward to the day when I, too, can help future students pursue their dreams.”

—Oksana Bilousova
Ethel M. Heim – A Friend of the College Scholarship



NEW ANNUAL & ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS – FY 26

Abuelo Jose “Pepe” Farina Memorial Scholarship

Awarded to first-generation students who are in UCNJ’s Honors Program. Preference given to students who demonstrate financial need.

Costa Scholarship for Dreamers in STEM

Awarded to students who are majoring in one of the STEM disciplines and have minimum GPAs of 3.5. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate financial need.

Donna J. Del Vecchio Memorial Scholarship (Endowed)

Awarded to new or existing PTA students. Returning students must have a 2.0 or better GPA. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate financial need.

Edward D. Harding Scholarship

Awarded to a full- or part-time student majoring in Health, Science, Biology or any medical related field. Recipient must have a B or higher GPA. Preference will be given to a student who demonstrates financial need.

Freda J. Valli Scholarship

Awarded to a full- or part-time student in a liberal arts/humanities curriculum or degree program. Recipient must have a minimum 3.0 GPA at UCNJ or a 3.0 high school GPA for a freshman or newly entering student. Preference will be given to students who are the first generation in their family to go to college and who demonstrate financial need.

Olga Ritter Endowed Scholarship for Survivors & Heroes

Awarded to a full- or part-time student for tuition, fees, or books. Recipient must have a minimum 2.5 GPA at the time of application. Recipient must either be an immigrant to the United States who has overcome significant obstacles and challenges, or an individual who has stepped up and provided significant aid to an immigrant in need. Student must complete either the FAFSA form or the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application.

Regina E. & John P. Maxwell Scholarship

Awarded to full- or part-time humanities or social sciences students who have a B- or higher GPA. Preference will be given to first-generation students who demonstrate financial need.

Robert F. Hand Memorial Scholarship

Awarded to a full- or part-time student pursuing any major. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate financial need.

The Dr. Armand Lamberti Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship

Awarded to a full- or part-time student majoring in early child elementary education or A.A. education. Student must have a B or, preferably, higher GPA. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate financial need.

The Matt Toriello Memorial Scholarship

Awarded to a full-time student who is sober and actively participating in a recovery program, including but not limited to AA or NA. Student can be incoming or returning, but must have completed no more than 60 credits and must have a minimum 3.0 GPA if a returning student. Preference will be given to a student who demonstrates financial need.

“*Thanks to this award, I can focus more on my studies without the constant stress of financial burdens, which has already improved my mental health and academic performance.*”

—Sonya Cuquej
Ceinwen Bergen Memorial Scholarship



UNION COUNTY
COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

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	Mike Smith (UCNJ '88)
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*Scholarship Donor

The Westfield Foundation Makes a Transformational Investment in Student Success

This year, the Foundation was honored to receive a \$200,000 grant from the Westfield Foundation in support of four key strategic initiatives that advance student success at UCNJ.

This generous investment strengthens the Foundation's ability to address both academic and basic needs barriers that can delay or derail degree completion. Funding supports the following initiatives:

Nourish the Future ensures students have reliable access to food and other essential resources, helping stabilize basic needs so students can focus on their studies.

Math Momentum provides targeted academic support to help students complete gateway math courses and stay on track toward graduation.

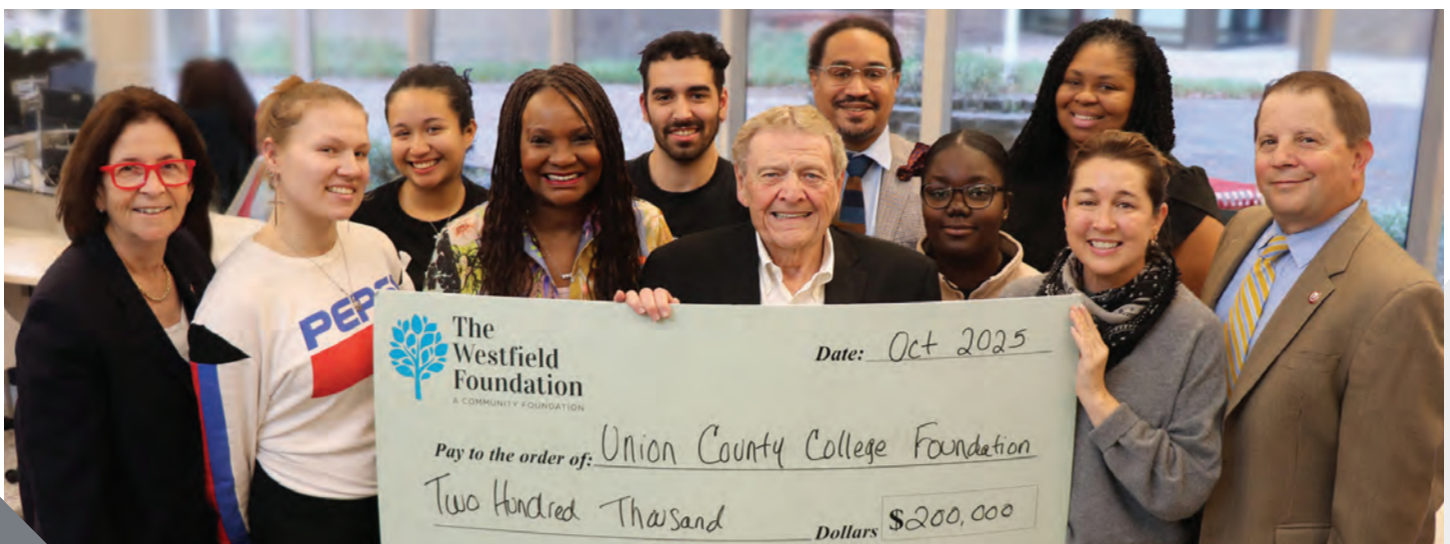
Operation Graduation offers last-dollar financial assistance to students who

are close to completing their degrees but face small funding gaps that could prevent timely graduation.

Student Emergency Relief Fund delivers rapid financial support to students experiencing unexpected crises, preventing temporary hardships from becoming permanent setbacks.

Together, these initiatives reflect a comprehensive approach to persistence and completion. The Westfield Foundation's support strengthens the infrastructure behind these efforts, allowing the Foundation to respond strategically and effectively to student needs.

The Foundation is deeply grateful for this partnership and for The Westfield Foundation's continued commitment to expanding opportunity and investing in the success of UCNJ students.





Leading by Example: Faculty and Staff Investing in Student Dreams

At UCNJ, the strength of the College’s Mission is reflected in the generosity of the community.

Over the past year, employee giving has continued to grow, reinforcing a powerful culture of philanthropy across the College. From participating in Foundation events, to contributing through payroll deductions, and establishing named scholarships, employees have invested in the promise and potential of UCNJ students. Their support has provided critical “last-dollar” assistance, helping students stay enrolled, graduate on time, and move forward with confidence.

Employee leadership has also played a vital role in advancing the Nourish the Future campaign. Recognizing that food insecurity remains one of the most pressing barriers to academic achievement, faculty and staff have engaged as advocates and donors, ensuring that students have reliable access to nutritious meals and essential resources. Their commitment sends a clear message: at UCNJ, student well-being is a shared responsibility. Together, the College community will continue to remove barriers, expand opportunity, and empower students to achieve their dreams.

“ I come from a family of four, with my father and me as the only sources of income. This award helps us manage the rising cost of education and allows me to save for the next step of my journey, transferring to a top-tier four-year university. ”

— Juan David Castano
Costa Scholarship for Dreamers in STEM

A Capital Campaign of Success

In 2005-2006, Union County College surpassed a level of fundraising never before achieved by a New Jersey community college. The Partnership for the Future Endowment and Capital Campaign surpassed the \$7,500,000 goal announced in October of 2003. This included a transformational pledge from the Kellogg family of \$2,500,000. In recognition of their generosity, the new building planned for the Elizabeth Campus was named in honor of their mother, Elizabeth I. Kellogg.

The Campaign successfully concluded on December 31, 2006 exceeding its \$7.5 million goals by 7%, raising a total of \$8,005,732 for scholarship endowments and equipment for the Elizabeth I. Kellogg Building under construction on the Elizabeth Campus.

This record-breaking capital campaign was successful under the leadership of Board Chairman Victor M. Richel, who helped to foster donations and pledges. His connections and longtime presence in Union County were invaluable to this campaign.

RECOGNIZING CHAIRMAN RICHEL



INVESTING *in the* FUTURE



▲ +9.32% 992.32 ▲ +0.22% 374.22 ▲ +1.05% 154.21 ▲ +8.55% 2.11

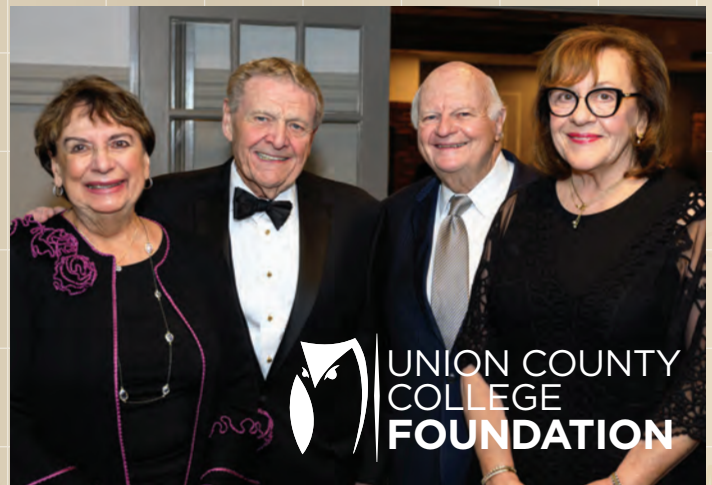
Leadership That Invests in the Future: Chairman Richel and Northfield Bank Headline 33rd Annual Gala

The Union County College Foundation hosted its 33rd Annual Gala, bringing together community leaders, alumni, faculty, and friends for an inspiring evening dedicated to student achievement. The event proved to be one of the most successful in recent memory, raising more than \$225,000 to strengthen the Foundation's work and expand its impact on students across UCNJ.

The evening's highest honor, the Fiat Lux Award, was presented to UCNJ Board of Trustees Chairman, Victor M. Richel, in recognition of his extraordinary leadership and enduring commitment to the College. Mr. Richel's influence has been transformational. As Chairman, he has championed innovation, strengthened institutional governance, and consistently elevated student success as the College's guiding priority. His steadfast support

of the Foundation has helped fuel initiatives that remove barriers to graduation, expand opportunity, and ensure that students have the resources they need to thrive. His leadership has not only shaped the College's direction, but also has inspired a culture of investment in UCNJ students' futures. The Foundation also proudly recognized Northfield Bank as the 2025 Corporate Partner of the Year.

A committed community partner, Northfield Bank continues to demonstrate the power of corporate philanthropy in driving educational access and economic mobility for UCNJ students.



“ *Your support has encouraged me to remain dedicated and motivated, and it has strengthened my belief in the power of generosity and education. Your kindness has made a lasting impact on my life. It reminds me that acts of generosity can shape someone's future, and I hope to one day offer the same support to others in need. Thank you once again for believing in me and for investing in my success.* ”

—Arogundade Olabisi
Robert M. Gray Memorial Scholarship

Greiner Family Creates a Powerful Transfer Pathway for UCNJ Graduates

Established through the generosity of Chris and Stacy Greiner, the Greiner Launch Scholarship is a new transfer scholarship that will provide two UCNJ students with \$10,000 per year for two years as they continue their education at either Rutgers University or New Jersey Institute of Technology. By helping to bridge the financial gap that often accompanies transfer, the scholarship ensures that talented students can move forward with confidence and focus on achieving their academic and professional goals.

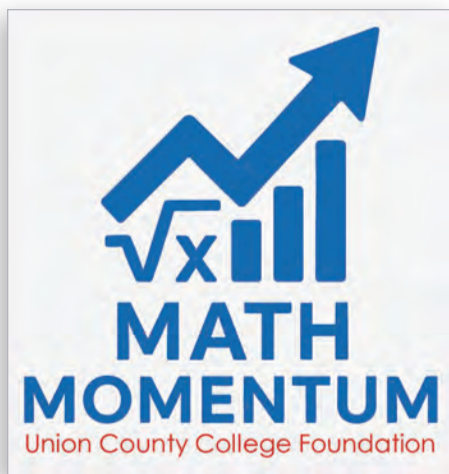
The Greiners were inspired to create this opportunity after attending UCNJ's commencement ceremony. As they listened

to President McMenamin, Chairman Richel, and the student speaker, Mr. and Mrs. Greiner were moved by the life-changing impact of a UCNJ education and the students' desire to build brighter futures for themselves and their families.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Greiner are proud graduates of state universities themselves. They understand firsthand the value of an affordable, high-quality public education and the doors it can open. In selecting Rutgers and NJIT as partner institutions for this scholarship, they are creating a pathway for some of UCNJ's highest-achieving students to continue their journeys at leading public universities in New Jersey.



Math Momentum Campaign Raises Over \$150,000 to Accelerate Degree Completion



In alignment with UCNJ's Reform Agenda, focusing on improving math completion rates, the Foundation launched the Math Momentum campaign this year. Thanks to the generosity of donors and partners, the campaign raised more than \$150,000 to advance this critical priority.

Gateway math courses remain one of the most significant roadblocks to graduating on time. Students who delay completion of required math classes often experience setbacks that can extend their time to obtain a degree, increase costs, and, in

some cases, lead to dropping out altogether. Conversely, students who complete their math requirements in their first year of college are far more likely to persist and finish their degrees.

The Math Momentum campaign was designed to strengthen and expand the College's work in this area by providing philanthropic support for targeted incentives, student engagement strategies, and academic support that all help to encourage timely math completion.

“As a nursing student, this scholarship has helped relieve the financial stress of tuition and fees, allowing me to fully focus on my coursework and clinical training. With your support, I am one step closer to achieving my goal of becoming a registered nurse and serving my community with compassion and dedication.”

*—Eve Borgella
Alumni Association
Part-Time Student
Scholarship*





UNION COUNTY COLLEGE FOUNDATION NOURISH THE FUTURE



Strengthening Student Success with Nourish the Future

The UCNJ community believes that no student should have to choose between their education and their next meal. Through the leadership of the Union County College Foundation, the Nourish the Future campaign continues to address food insecurity and helps to ensure that students have reliable access to the nutrition they need to succeed.

Food insecurity remains one of the most significant barriers to academic progress for students. Recent campus survey data continues to underscore the urgency of this work:

- 52% of UCNJ students reported worrying that their food would run out before they had money to buy more
- 64% reported eating less than they should because of financial constraints
- 52% indicated they had gone hungry due to lack of food or financial resources

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of donors, faculty, staff, and community partners, the Nourish the Future campaign has continued to build momentum. This year, the initiative has helped strengthen the College's Food Insecurity Program, ensuring that campus food pantries remain stocked, emergency meal support is available, and students have access to essential resources that allow them to focus on completing their degrees.

“ I am truly honored and deeply appreciative of your generous support. I have continued to think of Mrs. Del Vecchio throughout my progress. Her story has pushed me to fight when I believed I was overwhelmed and stressed with this program. Hearing her experience has inspired me and continues to as I near the end of my schooling. I will never forget about her even when I end my journey at school and will carry it into my career. ”

—Jaley Nunez
Donna J Del Vecchio Scholarship



A Decade of Impact: 10th Annual Close the Gap Raises Nearly \$70,000

The Union County College Foundation proudly celebrated its 10th Annual Close the Gap Reception, marking a decade of impact, partnership, and unwavering commitment to student achievement at UCNJ.

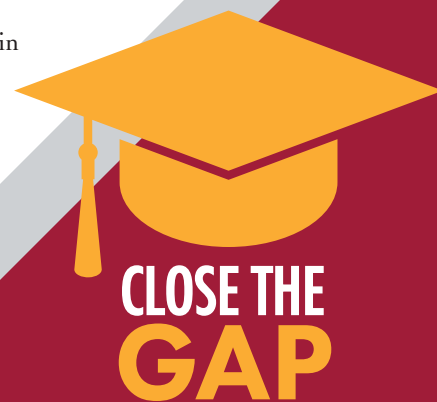
This milestone year proved to be one of the most successful yet, raising nearly \$70,000 to strengthen the Foundation's ability to remove barriers, respond to urgent student needs, and keep students on track to graduation.

Proceeds from the event help sustain scholarships, provide emergency assistance, and support critical initiatives that empower students to persist and complete their degrees. Since its inception, the Close the Gap initiative has raised nearly \$600,000.

A highlight of the evening was the recognition of two exceptional leaders whose dedication has profoundly shaped the College and its Foundation. Deborah

Enix-Ross, Esq., Chair of the Foundation Board, was honored with the Distinguished Volunteer of the Year award. As one of the three visionary women who launched the Close the Gap campaign a decade ago, Mrs. Enix-Ross helped turn a bold idea into a lasting movement. UCNJ President Dr. Margaret M. McMenamini received the Beacon of Light Award in recognition of her transformative leadership and enduring commitment to student success. Under her guidance,

the College has continued to elevate access, innovation, and inclusion, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive.



A Family's Promise to the Next Generation of PTA Students

When Donna J. Del Vecchio graduated from UCNJ in 1982 with a Physical Therapy Assistant degree, she carried a mantra that shaped her life: Education + Effort = Success. This belief guided Donna's journey as she earned her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree and became a women's health specialist, dedicated to her patients' well-being. Known for making everyone feel valued, she worked tirelessly to help others realize their potential through the power of education.

Following her tragic passing, her husband, Guy Del Vecchio, and her family made a \$300,000 commitment to the Union County College Foundation to honor her legacy. Their generous gift expands the existing endowed scholarship for Physical Therapist Assistant students and establishes a new PTA Student Support Fund. While scholarships ease the burden of tuition, this new fund addresses critical non-tuition barriers: transportation, textbooks, and licensure preparation.

This investment reflects Mr. Del Vecchio's understanding that success requires both opportunity and perseverance. By providing flexible resources for students navigating financial challenges, the DelVecchio family ensures aspiring professionals can graduate and begin careers dedicated to healing.

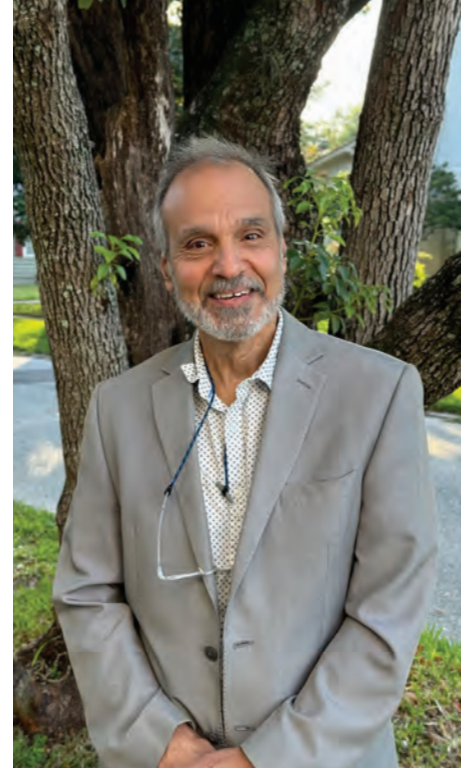


Dr. Libertazzo: A Legacy of a Second Chance

Dr. Michael Libertazzo, Class of 1975, reached out to share a story that reflects the College's Mission. His journey began at a difficult moment in his life. Just out of high school and not making the best choices, he found himself incarcerated. Yet even in that challenging chapter, education opened a door that would change everything. Through the Union County Jail Division of Rehabilitation, Dr. Libertazzo earned his degree at UCNJ, which was transformative for his career and his life. Dr. Libertazzo went on to complete his doctorate in Counseling Psychology at Rutgers University.

In gratitude for the role UCNJ played in reshaping his life, Dr. Libertazzo has made a remarkable \$300,000 gift to the Union County College Foundation. In recognition of his generosity and legacy, the Psychology program at UCNJ will be named in his honor.

Dr. Libertazzo's gift will support the development of a new transfer scholarship, creating pathways for students who seek to continue their studies and achieve their academic goals. In addition, a portion of the funds will strengthen his existing endowment at UCNJ, ensuring sustained support for future generations of students.



Expanding Access Through Opportunity

In 2023, an economic impact study confirmed the benefit that UCNJ provides for graduates and for the greater community in Union County. Annually, the College applies for federal and state grant and funding opportunities to maintain stable tuition and fees from year to year, an approach guided by leaders like Chairman Richel, whose dedication to the College helped expand access to higher education and support student success. Chairman Richel consistently advocates for programs and partnerships that strengthen the College's impact on the community.

When New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy announced the Community College Opportunity Grant providing free tuition for qualifying students, UCNJ was among the 13 community colleges selected for the pilot program. This was a testament to the strong foundation built through years of committed leadership and service. These strategic initiatives continue to benefit Union County residents today.

For every **\$1** students invest in their education at UCNJ, they receive **\$5.10** back in higher future earnings...
a 19% rate of return.

Learn more at
www.ucc.edu/impact



Your generosity means more to me than I can fully express, and it has already made a meaningful difference in my educational journey. As a first-generation college student, pursuing higher education has always been a personal goal. My parents were never able to finish college, and their experiences have motivated me to work hard and create new opportunities for myself. Receiving this scholarship helps relieve some of the financial pressure I face while working two jobs to pay for my tuition and expenses. Your support allows me to focus more on my coursework and stay on track toward my long-term goals.

—Maya Kukielko
Sherry Heidary Scholarship

Accelerating the Pace of Student Success!



Your generosity and support changes lives, and we proudly stand alongside you in that shared mission. Thank you for believing in our students — and for helping transform their dreams into reality.

Brittney [Signature] Carolyn [Signature]



HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

May 12, 2025 – March 1, 2026

Ensuring that students have every resource available to excel in the classroom, the Foundation is charged with raising the vital funds to support the most vulnerable students. Between new scholarships, corporate donors, alumni engagement, special events, and the specific campaigns developed and supported by the Foundation, over the past 10 years, the Foundation has been able to invest over \$10 million in direct student support.

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 Denise Young
 Mary Zago
 Stephen Zajac
 Jodi Zaleck
 John Zawowsky Jr.
 Ligny Zayas
 Mary & Alan Zimmermann
 Susan Zinkgraff
 Dr. Andrew Ziner
 Gloria Zuniga
 Jazmin and Ruben
 Macedo Zuniga
 Robert Zuniga

Thank You
 for Accelerating the
 Pace of Student Success!



UNION COUNTY
 COLLEGE
 FOUNDATION



SUMMARY & OUTLOOK

UCNJ made strides in advancing its Mission by prioritizing affordability, enhancing financial transparency, and aligning operations with emerging trends in higher education. These efforts reflect an institution-wide commitment to student access, fiscal responsibility, and long-term sustainability.

Key accomplishments this year included:

- **Balancing the College Budget:** Through disciplined financial planning and cross-departmental collaboration, the College achieved a balanced budget while continuing to invest in institutional priorities.
- **Implementing a New Tuition Structure:** A redesigned tuition framework was introduced. This initiative reduces tuition for out-of-county students as a strategy to remain regionally competitive and expand access.
- **Lowering Student Parking Fees:** Recognizing the financial pressures on students, parking rates were reduced to provide relief for learners.
- **Eliminating the Transcript Fee:** The removal of the transcript fee reflects the College's commitment to eliminating administrative barriers and supporting student mobility, transfer, and career readiness.
- **Centralizing Marketing Functions:** The College centralized its marketing activities to ensure greater standardization, strengthen brand consistency, and drive cost containment. This change supports more efficient use of resources while enhancing the College's institutional visibility.

These initiatives underscore the College's ongoing commitment to student-centered planning, operational excellence, and responsible fiscal stewardship.

Contextualizing Within Higher Education Trends

The College's financial strategies continue to reflect evolving national and regional trends in higher education. Community colleges, in particular, are navigating:

- **Increased demand for affordable, workforce-aligned education,** driving growth in adult learners, short-term credentials, and career pathways.
- **Rapid integration of technology and AI,** reshaping instruction, student services, and administrative operations.
- **Greater competition and financial strain across the sector,** reinforcing the need for adaptability and operational efficiency.

By aligning its strategies with these trends, the College is strengthening its ability to support student success, respond to workforce needs, and maintain long-term financial stability.

Outlook for FY27 and Beyond

UCNJ will continue aligning fiscal operations with institutional strategy and long-term sustainability.

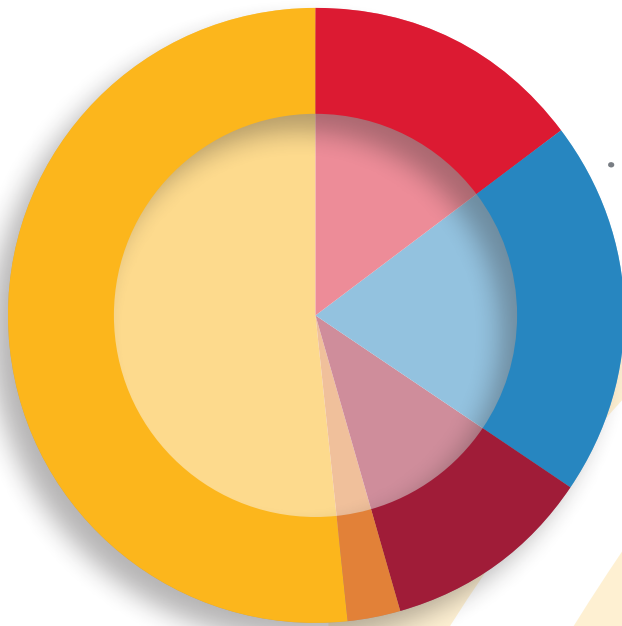
Key priorities include:

- **Expansion of holistic advising through the Owl Flight Plan,** strengthening guided pathways, improving student navigation, and increasing retention and graduation rates.
- **Exploration of diversified revenue opportunities,** including expanded grant funding and strategic partnerships.
- **Focused efforts to improve completion outcomes,** with targeted investments in academic support, advising, and data-informed interventions to accelerate time to degree.
- **Continued investment in basic needs support,** including food insecurity initiatives, recognizing their critical role in student persistence and success.
- **Strategic adoption of artificial intelligence and technology,** enhancing instruction, student services, and administrative efficiency while preparing students for an evolving workforce.

As higher education continues to evolve, UCNJ is well-positioned to navigate change with a focus on innovation, equity, and financial stewardship.

BUDGETED REVENUE BY SOURCE

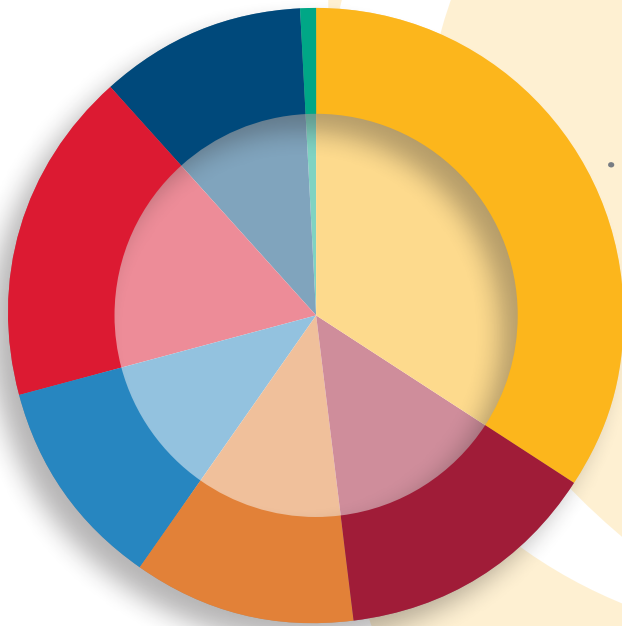
For Year End June 30, 2026



- **Tuition & Fees & Other Operating Revenue (51.7%)**
42,692,095
- **County Appropriations (19.8%)**
16,338,124
- **State Appropriations (14.8%)**
12,261,198
- **Transfer from Net Plant (11.0%)**
9,130,527
- **Other Income (2.7%)**
2,246,384
- Total (100.0%)**
82,668,328

BUDGETED OPERATING EXPENSES

For Year End June 30, 2026



- **Academic Support (34.4%)**
28,412,143
- **Institutional Support (17.4%)**
14,478,589
- **Employee Benefits (13.9%)**
11,476,739
- **Plant (11.7%)**
9,636,306
- **Student Development (11.1%)**
9,140,827
- **Depreciation Expense (10.8%)**
8,956,208
- **Interest on Capital Related Debt (0.7%)**
567,516
- Total (100.0%)**
82,668,328

UCNJ UNION COLLEGE OF UNION COUNTY, NJ BUDGET FY 2026

Fundable Credit Hours (1)	198,673
Fundable FTE Students	6,622

Revenues:

Tuition, net of waivers	\$39,117,678
Course Fees	1,778,317
Other User Fees	1,796,100

Total Academic Revenues 42,692,095

Expenditures:

Academic Services	28,412,143
Employee Benefits	11,476,739
Facilities Operation & Maintenance	9,636,306
Administration	5,036,259
Student Development	9,140,827
Information Distribution Ops (IT)	6,130,830
College Relations & Publications	1,600,358
Institutional Support	1,711,142
Depreciation Expense	8,956,208

Total Academic and Administrative Expenditures 82,100,812

Operating (Loss) from Academic Mission (39,408,717)

Appropriations:

State Appropriations	12,261,198
County Appropriations	16,338,124

Total Appropriations 28,599,322

Other: Net Income (Loss)

Workforce Devel, CEWD (net)	14,206
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Non-Credit Education (net):

Career/Custom Training (net)	70,869
Personal & Youth Enrichment (net)	6,679

Other Income:

Parking Fee Income, net of related expense	176,250
Bookstore Commission	50,000
Kellogg and Lessner Lease Income	409,500
Food Service Commission	60,000
Miscellaneous Other	208,880
Interest Income	1,250,000
Interest related to Capital Improvements	(567,516)

Total Other Net Income 1,678,868

Transfer Net Plant to Operations 9,130,527

Contribution to Net Position & Other Non-Current Fund Expenditures (0)



UCNJ

Union College of
Union County, NJ

FIAT LUX

Our Mission is to empower students to achieve their goals by providing access to high quality and affordable higher education. As a comprehensive community college, we provide career programs, transfer programs, developmental education, and lifelong-learning opportunities, with a focus on excellence. This Mission is sustained through the College's unwavering commitment to the transformational strength of a diverse campus community and an equitable and inclusive learning and work environment for all.

UCNJ is New Jersey's
Community College

...continued from the inside front cover

- 2017:** In March, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Site Visit Team comes to the College for the official accreditation review. The College receives notification that the accreditation is reaffirmed in June.
- 2018:** A major renovation of the lower level and first floor of the Lessner Building at the Elizabeth Campus is completed.
- 2018:** An Innovation Center is established at the Cranford Campus to provide students with the opportunity to learn current technologies such as coding, virtual reality, and using 3D printers.
- 2018:** The College publishes its first Undergraduate Research Journal and builds a Student Research Lab to provide dedicated space for ongoing research projects.
- 2019:** UCNJ establishes a respiratory care program at the Plainfield Campus.
- 2019:** The College is named a Top 150 U.S. Community College by The Aspen Institute for the first time and is eligible to compete for the 2021 \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
- 2019:** Major renovations to the Health Sciences Building in Plainfield are completed.
- 2020:** COVID-19 hits the U.S. and forces the College, and all educational institutions in New Jersey, to move operations and instruction remote during the Spring 2020 semester. Operations return to campus in July. Fall classes are offered remote live, online, and face-to-face.

- 2020:** Dr. McMenamain is named the Marie Y. Martin Community College CEO of the Year by the Association of Community College Trustees.
- 2021:** A major renovation of the Roy W. Smith Theater is completed.
- 2021:** Weidenburner Hall is dedicated in honor of a \$2.7 million donation by alumnus Bruce Weidenburner, which is the largest single donation in Union County College Foundation history.
- 2021:** For the second consecutive time, the College is named a Top 150 U.S. Community College by the Aspen Institute and is eligible to compete for the 2023 \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
- 2022:** The College's Scotch Plains Campus is re-opened as a destination campus and re-imagined as a University Center and home to the College's virtual campus.
- 2022:** In April, the College is named as one of 25 semifinalists for the 2023 \$1 million Aspen Prize. UCNJ is the only college in New Jersey to be named as a semifinalist.
- 2022:** In May, UCNJ hosts its first in-person Commencement in 2.5 years, since before the pandemic. It is also the first time in a decade the ceremony is held on the Cranford Campus.
- 2022:** On July 1, Union County College changes its name. The College becomes UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ.
- 2022:** At the College's Founders Day Ceremony in October, the new logo is revealed to the UCNJ community.

- 2023:** For the first time, two UCNJ students are selected for the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. UCNJ now has had eight graduates who have received this prestigious award.
- 2025:** UCNJ is the first community college in New Jersey to film an episode of "The College Tour," a streaming program on Amazon Prime, Apple TV, and more which features the stories of 10 UCNJ students.
- 2025:** The College celebrates its 90th anniversary in October with the dedication of a gazebo and a prohibition-era themed party on the lawn outside of the Victor M. Richel Commons.
- 2024:** In June, the College is named as one of 10 finalists for the 2025 \$1 million Aspen Prize. This is the first time the College has been recognized as a finalist. UCNJ is the only college in New Jersey and the only one in the Northeast to be named as a finalist.
- 2025:** In February, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Site Visit Team comes to the College for the official accreditation review. The College receives notification that the accreditation is reaffirmed in June.
- 2025:** The Academic Learning Center (ALC) celebrates 40 years of supporting students. The ALC offers free peer-to-peer tutoring on the Cranford, Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Virtual Campuses.

- 2025:** Union County Improvement Authority, Union County, and UCNJ break ground on the College's new Physical Education Center (PECK) building at the Cranford Campus, a modern athletic facility that will support UCNJ's 14 NJCAA teams.
- 2026:** In April, the College is named as one of 25 semifinalists for the 2027 \$1 million Aspen Prize. UCNJ is the only college in New Jersey to be recognized as a semifinalist.





 **UCNJ** Union College of
Union County, NJ
CRANFORD | ELIZABETH | PLAINFIELD | SCOTCH PLAINS | VIRTUAL CAMPUS

1033 Springfield Avenue | Cranford, New Jersey 07016
www.ucc.edu

ASPEN PRIZE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE aspenschools.org	ASPE PRIZ FOR COMMUNI COLLEGE EXCELLE aspenschools.org	ASPE PRIZ FOR COMMUNI COLLEGE EXCELLE aspenschools.org	ASPEN PRIZE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE aspenschools.org
TOP 150 2021	SEMIFINALIST 2023	FINALIST 2025	SEMIFINALIST 2027