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WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT

23





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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last year in this space, I wrote about the many ways in which William Paterson University is adapting to and leveraging the accelerating pace of change in higher education, including the implementation of our current, three-year Strategic Plan. This plan packs a lot of ambitious goals into a shortened timeline, and I am pleased to share news of some of the great progress that has been made on the five pillars during the first year as context for the other accomplishments documented in this 2022-23 Annual Report.

With the launch and tremendous growth of WP Online in recent years, the University is serving more adult students than ever. Our adult learner pillar focuses on further growing and more fully supporting this population at William Paterson. An updated transfer credit policy has already produced a corresponding increase in transfer enrollments in the fall 2023 semester, and a new career-focused professional development program for adult learners focuses additional attention and resources on these students' ultimate goal, whether advancing their career or launching a new one.

Our alternative credentials and certificates pillar aims to develop new, more flexible offerings for all student populations, including stackable credentials that traditional undergraduates can earn on their way to a bachelor's degree and ones that working professionals can use to advance current careers or launch new ones. Toward that end, we have formalized the process for departments and colleges to develop new offerings, which has helped bring forth 19 new undergraduate certificates, with more in the pipeline, about half of which can be completed by students within their first two years.

Our pillar focused on increasing undergraduate student retention has been advanced by focusing on providing proactive financial aid and other support resources that can remove the kinds of roadblocks that cause students to stop out. This year, for example, we launched Student Success Teams, which provide incoming students with comprehensive support and guidance networks, including professional advisors, faculty mentors, financial aid counselors, career coaches, and others.

When it comes to decolonizing the University, in addition to curriculum reviews led by the Faculty Senate and thorough review of our hiring practices, including, in particular, in University Police,

we are also looking closely at opportunities in other, perhaps less obvious areas where inequities may exist. For example, are student scholarships, grants for faculty and staff, and internships and mentorships for students all pursued, awarded, and supported in truly equitable ways? Asking these important questions will help us improve past policies and practices and implement new ones with the aim of being a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive institution.

Our progress on these pillars will allow us to better serve our mission, which, thanks to our work under the Strategic Plan, is expressed more fully by our newly adopted Mission Statement:

William Paterson University as a proud diverse community, designated as a public Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution, creates transformative academic and extracurricular experiences leading to meaningful careers, and promotes economic and social mobility. We empower our students through intentional and holistic support systems within flexible, innovative, and inclusive environments. Our graduates will power the New Jersey economy and beyond, thriving professionally and personally through a commitment to community engagement and social justice.

The past year's highlights contained in these pages speak to our success in fulfilling this important promise to William Paterson students.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Helldobler, PhD, President

William Paterson University



I. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic Initiatives and Highlights

Over the past five years, under the leadership of President Richard J. Helldobler, the University has accelerated the strategic development and implementation of academic initiatives that build upon opportunities and emerging trends in higher education. These include the growing demand for online learning, particularly by adult learners, as well as for those seeking advanced degrees that are flexible in terms of delivery models and that meet the changing demands of the marketplace.

The University's leadership role in expansion into these markets has led to significant increases in fully online programs and online degree enrollment, which has grown from no such students in spring 2020 to 3,648 students in fall 2023, currently representing one-third of the student body.

During the 2022-23 academic year, the University continued to focus on programs designed to meet demand both from traditional on-campus students and those seeking degrees online.

The University announced a major academic initiative prior to the start of the fall 2023

semester: the establishment of a School of Nursing within the College of Science and Health. A leader in educating New Jersey's healthcare workforce since 1966, William Paterson has invested in growing its healthcare programs to meet the significant need for nurses and public health professionals, as well as increased demand for online learning by adult learners and those seeking advanced degrees via flexible delivery models.

The University's nursing program, offering degrees on the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, has grown to become one of the largest in the state. Since 2019, enrollment in nursing degree programs has surged. Undergraduate nursing enrollment has more than doubled, from 431 students in 2019 to 1,058 students as of fall 2023, and graduate enrollment has tripled, from 190 in 2019, to 713 students in fall 2023.



Minerva Salinas Guttman, EdD, RN, APN, with more than five decades of experience in nursing both regionally and internationally, was named founding associate dean of the School of Nursing. Most recently, Guttman served as the Ferguson Endowed Chair in the Henry P.

SCHOOL OF NURSING
WILLIAM PATERSON
UNIVERSITY

Becton School of Nursing and Applied Health at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

For traditional undergraduates, the University launched a new bachelor's degree program in social work, with 38 students in the major as of fall 2023, to meet the increasing demand for social workers in the region. The University is currently pursuing national accreditation for the program from the Council on Social Work Education and is currently in pre-candidacy status, the Council's first accreditation benchmark.

In addition, William Paterson launched a bachelor of arts degree in public relations to prepare students for rewarding careers in public relations, social media, event promotion, global strategic communication, and advocacy-related fields. The degree is available both in person and fully online through WP Online. In addition, students have the option to pursue an accelerated 4 +1 program where students earn a bachelor of arts degree in public relations followed by a master of arts in professional communication in five years.

The University also launched a bachelor of science degree in applied business analytics. Integrating math, technology, statistics, and business domain expertise, the curriculum addresses emerging challenges such as optimization, machine learning, AI, marketing analytics, data mining, databases and data warehousing, applicable to careers in finance, healthcare, digital marketing, cybersecurity, and project management. This degree is also available both in person and fully online through WP Online.

The University's fully online degree platform, WP Online, expanded its portfolio of programs to include seven new online bachelor's degrees that launched during fall 2022. In addition to

**WILLIAM
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UNIVERSITY**

WPOnline

the bachelor of arts in public relations and the bachelor of science in applied business analytics, new programs include the bachelor of arts in sociology and bachelor of science programs in accounting, finance, global business studies, and information technology. In addition, the University launched two fully online undergraduate certificates in diversity, equity and inclusion and human resource management.

At the graduate level, three master of education programs launched in WP Online this year—school library media, teacher of students with disabilities, and reading specialist— along with graduate-level certificate programs in teacher of students with disabilities and school supervisor.

Overall, the University now offers 55 fully online degree programs in business, education, the humanities and social sciences, and healthcare. For fall 2023, 3,648 students were enrolled in WP Online programs, compared to 2,759 in fall 2022, an increase of 37 percent over the previous year and 64 percent over fall 2021 enrollment of 1,765.

In addition, the bachelor's degree in leadership and professional studies, which launched in fall 2021, enrolled 75 students, exceeding the goal of 35. Designed specifically for adult learners, this highly flexible program is designed to help them return for a degree and build on professional knowledge and earned credits.

The University launched a new bachelor of arts program in early childhood education for paraprofessionals, designed to expand the number of certified teachers in New Jersey. It offers working paraprofessionals a 60-credit program in which they can earn a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. Courses meet in the afternoons, evenings, and on Saturdays, as well as online to accommodate the schedule of a working paraprofessional. Clinical experience requirements are met within the paraprofessional's workplace.

A new, fully online, interdisciplinary cannabis studies program for undergraduate students and the general public launched in spring 2023. Completion leads to a certificate in cannabis studies, well-positioning students for employment with regulatory groups, public health departments or organizations, medical bodies, and cannabis firms. In addition, the Cannabis Research Institute launched two online, noncredit, self-paced courses designed for pharmacists and medical practitioners that result in a professional certificate.



ASHA

The names of the University's popular bachelor's and master's degree programs in communication disorders were changed to speech-language pathology, which is now the most common name for this type of program nationally. The graduate program in speech-language pathology was successfully reaccredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) through 2029.

The University continues to expand opportunities for students to earn stackable credentials, such as certificate programs embedded within the curriculum that can provide them with career-relevant skills. On the undergraduate level, the University added 10 new such programs: User Interface and User Experience Research; User Interface and User Experience Design, Professional Writing, Sports Journalism, Podcasting, Essential Mathematics for Data Analytics, Business Budgeting and Reporting, Data Skills for the New Economy, Human Resource Management, and Spanish Bilingualism.

The University marked a major milestone in the history of jazz education during 2023: the 50th anniversary of its internationally renowned Jazz Studies Program. Founded in 1973, the program was one of the first degree programs in jazz studies in the nation, offering a unique emphasis on small group playing and improvisation. Jazz majors come to William Paterson from across the United States and all corners of the world to study with the program's artist/faculty of world-class, New York-area jazz professionals, including current director Bill Charlap, a Grammy Award-winning pianist.

Through the years, students have won numerous awards in the most prestigious national and regional jazz competitions, including the *Downbeat* magazine Student Music Awards and the Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival. Numerous alumni have launched stellar careers as solo touring and recording artists, collaborating with some of the legends of jazz.

In celebration of the anniversary, numerous performances of the University's Jazz Room series highlighted the program's impact, including a tribute concert to the program's inaugural director, the great bandleader, composer, and cornetist Thad Jones, on



Rufus Reid, Bill Charlap, and David Demsey

March 28, 2023, featuring works from William Paterson's Thad Jones Archive, and a tribute to the program's leadership by Charlap,

retired director and bassist Rufus Reid, the WP Jazz Orchestra, and program alumni, on April 23, 2023.

The history of the famous Silk Road, its connection to the silk industry in Paterson during the 1900s, and its role in the development of China and the United States in culture, education, art, industry, and commerce since the 18th century, were explored during a two-day international symposium, "Across Time and Space: The Silk Road and the Silk City," in October 2022

hosted by the University's Center for Chinese Art. The event featured academic presentations, discussions, and art exhibitions designed to offer a fresh look at the historical orientation of the Silk Road and the "Silk City" of Paterson.



Consul General Huang Ping of the Chinese Consulate General

Nishikant Satam, chemistry; Latifa Sebti, special education; and Jameelah R. Wright, teacher education, joined the University in fall 2023 as the 2023-25 class of pre- and post-doctoral fellows through the University's Pre-Doctoral Fellows Program. The program, which launched with a cohort of four fellows in fall 2021, is designed to advance diversity in higher education by supporting doctoral or terminal degree candidates from underrepresented backgrounds as they launch academic careers and complete their dissertations or degree requirements. In addition, two pre-doctoral fellows from the first cohort, Steven Jones, psychology, and Soohyun (Ashley) Lee, management, marketing, and professional sales, have been appointed as assistant professors at the University following their fellowships.

The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences held its 11th annual multidisciplinary conference, "Access USA: Generational Change and the Evolving American Dream" in October 2022. The event focused on how today's students

gain access and transform institutions of power within education, the criminal justice system, and the media, as they seek to attain the American



Julissa Arce, keynote speaker

dream. Julissa Arce, a best-selling author and social justice and immigrant rights advocate, gave the keynote address, "Access to the American Dream: The Myth of Assimilation."

More Than \$12 Million Secured in Grants

During the 2022-23 academic year, the University received more than \$12.3 million in funding from federal, state, and local government sponsors. Grants supported faculty and academic initiatives in a variety of areas, ranging from individual faculty research and projects to programs focused on education and outreach, providing significant resources that support the University's role as a comprehensive institution in its region and state. Other grants provided funding for student support initiatives. The University also received \$42.4 million in funding for facilities projects (see pages 19-20).

William Paterson University, with support from federal legislators including U.S. Representative Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11), received \$1 million in federal funding to support students whose finances were heavily impacted by COVID-19. The University requested strategic community funding from the federal government via our legislators

in Washington, who supported the request from inception and ensured the institution's needs were met. Rep. Sherrill visited the campus in April 2023 to announce the funding and joined President Richard Helldobler and a group of University students for a discussion of the personal challenges they have faced and the campus resources from which they have benefited.

The College of Education was awarded \$1.6 million to launch a project that strives both to diversify New Jersey's teaching workforce and place well-prepared diverse teachers in the schools of high-needs communities. The University was one of 12 nationwide to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Augustus F. Hawkins Grant program, which points to a strong, diverse teaching base as fundamental to closing student achievement gaps across the country. Through the project, the College of Education will recruit students from underrepresented populations as teacher candidates and will provide them with intensive and individualized academic support, as well as flexible and integrated pathways to professional certification and licensure, clinical experiences coupled with paid employment through substitute teaching or paraprofessional roles, and guidance from in-district mentors-in-residence—thanks to partnerships with five high-needs school districts in the area: Bloomfield, Clifton, Haledon, Passaic, and Paterson.

The University received a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS), which will help give students affordable access to the new Child Development Center on campus. The grant provides subsidized childcare costs for low-income student parents of children ages two-and-a-half through eight, with CCAMPIS-eligible parents paying just 25 percent of the cost.

In addition, David Ferrier, director of accreditation and educational innovation, was awarded \$249,999 from the N.J. Department of Education for the Education Pioneers for Paterson program. A partnership between the University and the Paterson Public Schools, the project will enact innovative and effective strategies that tap into the significant strengths of Paterson as a diverse community to improve hiring practices in the school district in support of a more diverse workforce. The grant will implement teacher certification program support of minority candidates through the hiring process, with financial and academic support for minority teacher candidates, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and experienced practitioners in career and technical education (CTE) fields. The initiative also includes professional development focused on justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion and the creation of a minority teacher support network.

The University received a three-year, \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Community Earmark Scholarship Program for our new School of Nursing.

Gladys Vega, professor of languages and cultures; Carrie Hong, professor of educational leadership and professional studies; and Maria Tajes, professor of languages and cultures, received a five-year, \$2.86 million U.S. Department of Education Literacy for Empowerment in English and Spanish (LEES) grant to improve literacy instruction and equitable access to content learning for dual language learners. The grant will support 100 pre-service and in-service teachers in their pursuit of bilingual education certification and strengthen preschool literacy programs in partner school districts in Clifton, Hackensack, Passaic, and Paterson.

The Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center was awarded a \$462,000 Mental Health in Higher Education: Community Provider Partnership and Professional Development Grant funded through the Federal American Rescue Plan Act. The grant program allows higher education institutions to develop partnerships and expand professional capacity to meet the direct and unique mental health needs of their students, with a distinct focus on traditionally underrepresented student populations, which were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The University will use the funds to establish mental health partnerships within the community to enhance services for students, including professional development, psychiatric services, intensive outpatient care, and group programs, as well as to establish a sensory/relaxation room in the Cheng Library.

Marianne Sullivan, professor of public health, received a \$240,039 award from the National Science Foundation to examine children's environmental health (CEH) science and science-based regulatory policy. Sullivan will conduct research on the development and enactment of children's environmental health (CEH) science and science-based regulatory policy at the federal level in the United States from the late 1980s to the present.

Michael Griffiths, professor of environmental science, received a \$359,865 grant from the National Science Foundation for a project titled "Collaborative Research: Constraining cloud and convective parameterizations using paleoclimate data assimilation." Griffiths and his collaborators will seek to develop more realistic representation of cloud and convective processes and better improve simulations of past and future climates.

Carrie Hong also received a \$168,280 grant from the U.S. Department of Education Fulbright Group Projects Abroad program to support "Enriching Education through Cross-Cultural Exploration: Learning from Technology and Pedagogy Innovations in South Korea."

Nicole Davi, professor of environmental science, was awarded \$69,986 under the N.J. Sea Grant program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to study the impact of tropical cyclones on and climate resilience of maritime forests in New Jersey.

Lydia Albuquerque, professor of nursing, received \$52,386 from the New Jersey Department of Health to develop partnerships with organizations to implement and evaluate evidence-based strategies to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease in high-burden populations and communities within New Jersey.

Balmurli Natrajan, professor of anthropology, Michael Gordon, professor of psychology, and Djanna Hill, professor of community and social justice studies, received a \$50,000 grant from the Passaic County Department of Human Services to evaluate existing services and programs administered through the department and its allied partners with a special focus on mental health services utilized by children, youth, and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in transition out of the children's system of care, as well as provide an updated needs assessment.

Pei-wen Winnie Ma, professor of psychology, received a \$10,000 grant from the Paterson Public Schools for a project titled "Promoting positive cultural adjustment and career development of recent immigrant students: A culturally responsive school-based intervention." The project will assist students and their families with the transition to school in the United States, including language barriers and peer relationships, through sessions provided by bilingual WP master's and/or doctoral students in clinical counseling psychology

The University received a 2023 National Endowment for the Arts Grants for Arts project award of \$25,000 for a collaborative project between the Department



Keynote speaker Alice Hammel speaks to arts teachers

of Music, the University Galleries, and University Performing Arts in support of broader access to the arts for special needs populations. The multi-discipline Arts Accessibility Project provided support for several events during the spring 2023 semester, including performances by artists with disabilities, arts activities for people with special needs, and a day-long Arts Teacher Professional Development Retreat featuring workshops with clinicians who specialize in interpreting art for neurodivergent thinkers and for educators in the areas of choral and instrumental music, art education, and theatre education.

Lucia McMahon, professor of history, received \$5,500 from the Friends of Dey Mansion Foundation via the Passaic County Department of Cultural and Historic Affairs for a public history course partnership with Dey Mansion Washington's Headquarters in Wayne, an important local landmark that played a critical role during the Revolutionary War.

Academic Courses and Opportunities

The University continued to provide students with academic offerings that challenge them in the classroom and that provide them with opportunities to use the skills they have learned and apply them in real-world situations.



Voice students sing Korean language songs

Twenty-five University music students presented a concert of Korean-language songs in November 2022 thanks

to the virtual tutelage they received from students at Cheongju University in South Korea. During the fall 2022 semester, the voice students connected with students at Cheongju University who are majoring in Korean language education. Through a series of virtual meetings, the WP students learned the diction, interpretation, and poetic understanding of Korean songs they were assigned, which provided an opportunity for Cheongju students to both improve their instructional skills as Korean language teachers and practice their English. The performance project was made possible by a three-year grant to William Paterson from Korean Studies Promotion Service "SEED Grant"—Seed for Engagement, Education, and Development of Korean Studies at William Paterson University. The concert was live-streamed and posted on YouTube, where it has earned more than 3,100 views and was covered by more than a dozen South Korean media outlets.

A group of new first-year students were able to get acclimated to both the campus and their majors in the College of Science and Health through their participation in the ASPIRE (Access to STEM Pathways through Integrated Research and Engagement) Summer Bridge Program, made possible through a \$4.99 million U.S. Department of Education grant. The program supports Hispanic students and low-income students pursuing degrees in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), who are about to start their freshman year or who are transferring to William Paterson from community colleges. Incoming freshmen spent two weeks on campus

prior to the fall 2022 semester, exploring scientific topics, taking part in various soft skills and professional development workshops, and receiving vital information to improve writing, note-taking, and study skills. Transfer students from community colleges took part in a four-week summer research experience under the tutelage of faculty in the College of Science and Health.



Professor Michael Peek, biology, and ASPIRE students

Bela Florenthal, professor of marketing and management, launched the "Spread Kindness" project as part of her Marketing Management and Marketing Research courses in 2019. Students in the classes are required to perform acts of kindness—intentional, selfless acts toward another human, animal, or nature without a foreseeable reward to the performer except for feeling good. The goal: learn about the principles of marketing while also having an impact on student wellbeing. This year, the project moved beyond campus to two cohorts of students at Butler High School in a dual-enrollment course, Principles of Marketing, developed by Florenthal and taught by Butler High's Lisa Chestnutt.

The College of Education's Aspiring Educators program, launched in 2021, continued to expand. The program aims to diversify the state's teaching workforce through a partnership with high school students from underrepresented backgrounds—rising juniors and seniors who are interested in teaching as a profession. Students in the program complete a summer college course taught on campus; after their mornings in class, they spend their afternoons working on campus as instructors in WP's Summer Youth Program—providing them both a stipend and valuable, relevant experience teaching children. Tuition for the course, for which the high school students earn three University credits, is covered by the partner school districts and a state-funded minority teacher development grant. In summer 2023, 49 high school students participated in the program, an increase of more than 60 percent over the previous year's enrollment of 18 students.

Students conducted important research on campus. Students working in the lab of Kelly Healey, professor of biology, conducted research on drug-resistant fungal pathogens that cause disease and, for at-risk patients, death. Students explored the impact of various drugs on these fungal pathogens, gaining valuable research skills and techniques that can help them gain an advantage in the job market or when applying to graduate school.

In addition, nearly 80 Honors College students presented their final projects during Honors Research events during the fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters. Each student enrolled in the Honors College completes a senior research or creative project in one of 11 tracks, mentored by a faculty member. In addition, 99 first year honors students enrolled in Honors 1000 Research Seminars, which introduce students to research, presented their research during the fall 2022 Honors Research Day.

Other students gained valuable experiences through internships in their chosen field. For example, Fernando Tavares Leon '23 was hired full-time on campus through a grant from AmeriCorps for an internship with the University's Transition Program for area high school students ages 18-21 with learning disabilities. Tavares Leon, who majored in psychology and disability studies with a minor in sociology, started as a volunteer as part of his disability studies coursework, stayed on as a volunteer, and became the program's first paid intern.

Faculty and Staff News and Achievements



Martha Witt, professor of English, was awarded a Fulbright Scholar Fellowship that brought her to Ilhéus, Brazil during the spring 2023 semester. Witt worked on a draft of a novel titled *The Truth Lies Between*, which is partly set in Ilhéus and based on her mother-in-law's life. She also

collaborated with an English professor at Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC), located in Ilhéus, to translate select poems by African-Brazilian writer Lívia Natália and taught a graduate creative writing workshop.

Pamela Brillante, professor of special education and disability studies, was appointed to the New Jersey Special Education Advisory Council. The council, established by the New Jersey Department of Education and required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, provides policy guidance on special education and related services for children with disabilities in New Jersey. Members are appointed for a minimum two-year term which can be renewed for a maximum of three terms.



Lydia Albuquerque was named a 2022 American Academy of Nursing Fellow. She was one of 250 distinguished nurse leaders from across the U.S. and 17 other countries selected for the honor based on their outstanding contributions to nursing, health care, and advancing the public's health.



Ana Cristina Siqueira, associate professor of management and director of the Center for Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the University's Cotsakos College of Business, was included on New Jersey business publication ROI-NJ's 2022 higher education influencers list, honoring the people, programs, and facilities that have greatest influence and impact. She was named among the "Best Leaders in Entrepreneurship."

Photographs by Robin Schwartz, professor of art, were featured in the fall 2023 "Voyages" issue of the *New York Times Magazine*. Schwartz traveled to Seoul, South Korea, where she photographed the city's animal cafes, known for a whole panoply of exotic beasts: snakes, sheep, raccoons, meerkats, prairie dogs, arctic foxes, wallabies, hedgehogs, parrots, and many more.



Darlene Russell, professor of educational leadership, was selected to serve as editor of the academic journal *ProudFlesh: The New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics, & Consciousness*, which recognizes, celebrates, and propagates the work of scholars of the African diaspora around the globe.

Ali Mir, professor of management, received a Bright Idea Award, sponsored by the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University. Mir was the lead author of a paper titled "Racial Capitalism and Student Debt in the U.S." that was published in *Organization*, a highly rated journal in the discipline of management. His manuscript was identified as one of the top 10 from 144 publications submitted and was included in the 21st annual volume of *Publications of New Jersey's Business Faculty*.

Robb Rehberg, professor of kinesiology, in his sixth season as an Athletic Trainer Certified (ATC) spotter for the National Football League, was named one of the league's senior medical advisors. As a senior medical advisor, Rehberg is involved in many areas of player health and safety, including game day medical operations and emergency preparedness and training. He also provides support to the league's medical committees—primarily the Head, Neck and Spine Committee and Musculoskeletal Committee. He worked as a spotter for his fourth consecutive Super Bowl in 2023.



Robert Laud and Stephen Betts, both professors of management, and Bruce Diamond, professor of psychology, received a Distinguished Research Award from the Institute for Global Business Research for their study that measured students' materialistic ideations against their academic majors. In their research, the three professors discovered a shift in values contrary to

previous academic research in this arena, determining that students across academic disciplines are now just as materialistic in their views as business students, which the professors say is likely a response to the country's shifting economy.

Michele Cascardi, professor of psychology and a dean's fellow in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, was selected for the 2023 HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) Leadership Institute at Bridgewater State University, a highly selective and prestigious leadership program for women in education.



Sandra Foley, DNP '19, a clinical nursing instructor and current president of the New Jersey State Nurses Association, was one of seven honorees statewide selected as a 2023 *NJBIZ* Healthcare Heroes honoree in the Nurse of the Year category. The awards recognize excellence, promote innovation, and

honor the efforts of individuals and organizations making a significant impact on the quality of health care in New Jersey.

Carol Frierson-Campbell, professor of music, was awarded a 2023-24 Fulbright U.S. Scholar award to continue her research on music making. The specific details on the project and its location are still to be determined.



Zhiyuan Cong, professor of art, a Chinese-born artist who is internationally known as a master of Chinese arts, received a special honor: an art museum named after him was established in his hometown of Bencha, a famous ancient town in Jiangsu Province, China. The Zhiyuan Art Museum, which opened in June 2023, was physically constructed around Cong's childhood home there, and includes a permanent exhibition dedicated to his life and distinguished career, with memorabilia, photographs, furnishings, and a selection of his artworks.



The Zhiyuan Art Museum; inset: Professor Zhiyuan Cong

Geoffrey Keezer, adjunct professor of jazz studies, won a 2023 Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition for his composition "Refuge," on his newest album, titled *Playdate*. Keezer teaches jazz piano and coaches one of the University's 24 small jazz groups.

A research paper co-authored by climate scientist Nicole Davi predicts that devastating effects of climate change will hit an environmentally pivotal area on Earth substantially sooner than previous estimates. Her research, published in *Communications Earth & Environment*, points to a likely "tipping point" as soon as the year 2050 in the circumpolar boreal region—the most extensive biome on the planet—which accounts for about one-third of global annual forest productivity.

A study led by Michael Griffiths and Martin Becker, professors of environmental science, showed that the gigantic Megalodon, or megatooth shark, was warm-blooded. Their research on the Megalodon, which lived in the world's oceans from 23 million to 3.6 million years ago and measured about 50 feet in length, appeared in the peer-reviewed journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The professors used fossil teeth to determine that the Megalodon's body temperature was much higher than previously thought.



A Megalodon shark tooth

Babita Srivastava, adjunct professor of business, was awarded the William R. Waters Research Grant to research the infection and mortality rate of COVID-19 in women in India. The William R. Waters Research Grant was established in 1999 in honor of William R. Waters, editor of the *Review of Social Economy* for many years and president of the Association for Social Economics in 1987.

The latest documentary by Vincent Parrillo, professor *emeritus* of sociology, *Paterson: A Delicious Destination*—a look at the City of Paterson through restaurants past and present—was an official selection of the 10th annual Northeast Film Festival. The documentary, Parrillo's fifth film on Paterson, was shot by William Paterson University staff, including Rod Holliday, production coordinator, who served as technical director and assistant producer.



A script by Gina Guerrieri, professor of communication, titled *Enduring Freedom*, was a semifinalist in the 2023 Bluecat Screenplay Competition. The script was also selected for the 2022 American Screenwriting Conference.

Gihan "Gigi" Mohamed, assistant professor of educational leadership and director of our doctoral program in educational leadership, and Cara Berg,



Gihan "Gigi" Mohamed

business librarian and co-coordinator of user services, along with colleagues at five other New Jersey colleges and universities, received the 2023 New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) College and University Section Research Award and the American

Association of School Librarians (AASL)

Research Grant, presented by the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) for their cooperative research study, "First years' information literacy backpacks: What's already packed or not packed?", published in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*. The study examined whether first-year college students who have had previous interactions with library resources and instruction in high school are ready for the rigors of college research. The authors discovered that first-year college students who had high school librarians providing resources and instruction felt better prepared for academic research.



Cara Berg

Neil Grimes, education and curriculum materials librarian, received the Association of College & Research Libraries 2023 Conference Scholarship for mid-career librarian.

Paul VonDohlen, professor of mathematics, received the 2022 Stephanie Sloyan Award for Distinguished Service from the Mathematics Association of America, New Jersey Section.



Christopher Herbert, associate professor of music, received a 2022 National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship at LancasterHistory, a collection of books, archival documents, artifacts, and other research resources that cover nearly 300 years of life in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Mary Ellen Levine, professor of nursing, received the 2023 President's Award from the New Jersey Emergency Nurses Association.

Aileen Torres, professor of psychology, received the 2023 Foundation Training Directors Scholarship from the American Board of Professional Psychology. The American Board of Professional Psychology serves the public by promoting the provision of quality psychological services through the examination and certification of professional psychologists engaged in specialty practice.



Three faculty were honored for excellence during the University's 2023 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony. David Weisberg, professor of music, received the 2023 Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award, Neil Kressel, professor of psychology, received the 2023



Professor David Weisberg, Professor Neil Kressel, and Professor Carrie Hong

Faculty Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Expression Award; Carrie E. Hong, professor of educational leadership and professional studies, received the 2023 Faculty Excellence Award for Service.



Wartyna Davis, dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, was selected to participate in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Millennium Leadership Initiative.

The prestigious institute is designed to diversify and enrich the American college presidency and recruits and prepares Black, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Indigenous, LGBTQ, and women leaders from senior-level positions in higher education who aspire to be campus presidents or chancellors.

Five University employees—Dr. Jill Guzman, director of the Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center; Sgt. LaWanda Walker-Roney, supervisor of the Community Policing Unit and student patrol staff, University Police; James Shelley, director of physical plant operations; Joseph Alaya, director of enterprise information systems; and Cindy Gennarelli, director of early childhood education innovation and director of the University's Child Development Center—were among those honored by Governor Phil Murphy for their exceptional performance and service at a New Jersey State Employee Recognition Day (SERD) Award Ceremony in Trenton in May 2023. The ceremony was held to recognize and honor state government employees for their outstanding contributions, a work ethic that inspires accomplishment, and their commitment to excellence in public service.

II. STUDENT SUCCESS

The University remains critically focused on student success and making an impact on the lives of its students who are changing the social fabric of New Jersey, the region, and the nation. During the 2022-23 academic year, William Paterson was strategically focused on serving its many student populations—undergraduate, graduate, and adult learners—by offering a wide range of course options, including in-person, hybrid, and online, as well as a full range of student support initiatives.

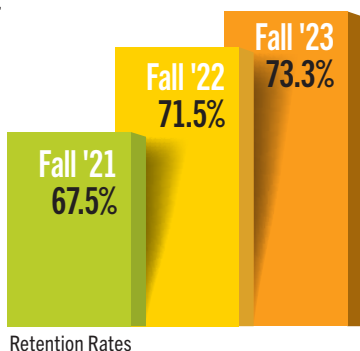
Enrollment and Degree Completion Highlights

William Paterson saw a gain in the enrollment of full-time, first-time freshmen for the incoming Class of 2027 in fall 2023 with an increase of 8.5 percent, including students from all 21 counties in New Jersey, as well as 21 states and 20 countries. In addition, the number of new transfer students rose 16.8 percent, while the number of new graduate students increased 16.2 percent.

Overall, William Paterson's total enrollment for fall 2023 grew to 10,821 students, an increase from the fall 2022 enrollment of 9,919 students. However, main campus full-time undergraduate enrollment, the University's most significant source of revenue, continued to decline. The University enrolled 4,347 full-time undergraduate students, compared to 4,712 in fall 2022. Overall graduate enrollment was 2,960 graduate students.

The retention rate for main campus full-time first-year students continued its positive trend, increasing to 73.1 percent for fall 2023 from 71.5 percent in fall 2022 and 67.5 percent in fall 2021.

In addition, first-year retention increased in several tracked cohorts, including women, Hispanic, and commuter students. The University provided targeted interventions by professional advisors in the Advisement Center, as well as integrated supports within the Will. Power. 101 program, including specific assistance around barriers to registration, connection to academic and other supports to improve academic performance, funding support for students to purchase books and/or computers as needed, and curriculum in support of academic and other key skills development.



Additional growth was fueled by WP Online, the University's fully online degree platform, which launched in 2020. With two start dates for WP Online during the fall semester, enrollment grew to 3,648 students enrolled for fall 2023 compared to an enrollment of 2,759 students for fall 2022, an increase of 32 percent. WP Online students accounted for one-third of total enrollment for fall 2023.

In addition, high school dual enrollment grew to 1,198 for fall 2023, compared to 553 students in fall 2022, a gain of 116 percent. This continued growth comes after a new approach to this program was adopted in 2018, and the institution now enrolls students at 22 high schools across the region.

The six-year graduation rate fell to 47.7 percent from a rate of 55.9 percent for the previous cohort. The University's four-year graduation rate rose slightly to 27.7 percent from 26.1 percent for the previous cohort, and 29 percent in 2021. These graduation rates are likely a continuing consequence of the pandemic.

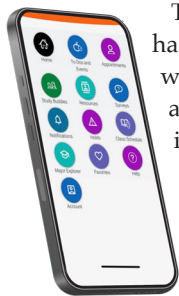
As enrollment challenges continue, the University has launched numerous strategies to diversify its enrollment, including reaching out to adult learners. During 2022-23, William Paterson engaged with a state-wide initiative to reengage adults who had begun college in the past but stopped out for personal or financial reasons. The effort yielded more than 100 former University students to return to William Paterson by fall 2023. New Jersey views this "some college, no degree" population as a key demographic for state economic growth and equity goals.

In addition, for fall 2023, the University merged International Student Services with International Admissions to form the new Office of International Services under the Division of Enrollment Management. This new Office of International Services has been tasked with the ambitious goal of increasing international enrollment to at least 5 percent of the main campus population over the next three years, which would mean an additional 412 international students—more than tripling their presence on campus.

Student Success Support and Initiatives

William Paterson University understands what students need to succeed and how to guide them to successful careers and lives. The institution has built an innovative and comprehensive system of support focused on academics, career development, and campus life, customized to meet students' individual needs.

As of the fall 2023 semester, all first-year students now have an assigned Student Success Team—direct, consistent contacts including a financial aid counselor, professional advisor, and career coach—to guide and support them through graduation. As sophomores, their success team expands to include a faculty mentor from the students’ intended academic major. This team-based approach is designed to support coordinated solutions for student needs, build relationships, and ensure that every student has direct access to critical University resources and support.



To enhance that support, the University has deployed Navigate, a digital tool that will be the primary channel for students and their team members to share and track information, get urgent questions answered, and schedule appointments when more in-depth conversations are required.

During the 2022-23 academic year, nearly 4,700 students used Navigate to schedule and track 23,532 appointments overall, including 11,000 advising appointments, 650 office hour sessions with faculty, and 8,600 hours with tutors for academic help, counselors to resolve financial aid matters, and more. In addition, usage was 57 percent above the usage for the next highest peer institution that implemented the platform in the same timeframe.

The University also moved the Office of Academic Achievement and the Office of Academic Success and Student Transitions to the Division of Student Development, under the leadership of Vice President Miki Cammarata. This reorganization better aligns these offices to provide a holistic approach to student support, which is central to the institution’s strategy moving forward.

Another new support initiative is the establishment of an Office of Parent and Family Relations within the Division of Student Development. The office, which launched in summer 2023, provides comprehensive resources and programs for parents and families in order to enhance their understanding of the university experience and facilitate appropriate opportunities for them to assist their student in transitioning into college, thriving while attending, and earning a degree and positive post-graduation outcome.

An initial project for the office was the deployment of a William Paterson Family Portal in July 2023, designed to serve as a primary communication vehicle for parents and families. Since its inception, the portal has registered a total of 1,196 users, 625 of whom are family members



of first-generation students. Since its inception, 50 percent of users have actively engaged with the portal by opening, viewing, or clicking on content. Upcoming programs of the office include a Real Talk Series, where parents and families can come together with members of the WP community for conversations on various topics of interest and to discuss how they can best support their student’s success.

The University’s Will.Power. 101 and 102 success courses for first-year students, taught by professional advisors, continue to successfully provide students with the specific advice and support they need as they transition to college, covering such topics as study skills, time management, and choosing a major, while also introducing them to campus resources.

To support adult learners, the Center for Degree Completion and Adult Learning (DCAL) works with returning students on securing credit for prior learning (CPL) through testing, portfolio assessment of related work experience, and credit equivalency options for professional training and credentials. DCAL worked with academic units across the University last year to expand established credit equivalency pathways for returning students with professional credentials, with options to receive course credit for learning completed outside the classroom by submitting licenses, certifications, and/or professional work transcripts.

Other Student Development Initiatives



The expanded Pioneer Food Pantry

To increase support for students struggling with food insecurity, the Pioneer Pantry moved to a larger, more accessible space prior to the start of the fall 2023 semester. The new

space allows for an expanded inventory of products, including perishables such as milk and eggs, which are stored in a refrigerator newly donated by the Food Bank of New Jersey. The pantry is also offering extended daily hours thanks to a VISTA volunteer. During the 2022-23 academic year, 373 individual students used the pantry for a total of 1,341 visits.

To support students who might be unable to afford professional business attire, the University established a Career Closet. Located in the Machuga Student Center, the Career Closet provides students with a range of new and gently used business casual and professional clothing options they can access for important professional events like job interviews, internships, career fairs, conferences, and more.

The Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center sought to enhance services for students by piloting a drop-in service during scheduled hours for both health and counseling during spring 2023, resulting in 159 patient visits. Ninety-five percent of surveyed students indicated interest in using the services again. For fall 2023, drop-in hours expanded to all-day coverage five days a week for both health and counseling visits. The center also hired a new coordinator of clinical outreach to support drop-in service for counseling patients.

To promote wellness and raise awareness of mental health and local resources, a Mental Health Awareness Walk was held on campus in October 2022. The educational and interactive event, coordinated by Community Policing, was a collaborative initiative involving several campus departments and community partners, including Student Diversity and Inclusion, Hospitality Services, Campus Activities, Service, and Leadership, Veteran and Military Affairs, Student Transitions, Counseling, Health, and Wellness, Residence Life, Student Development, and Every Mind Matters.

Student Honors and Achievements

During the 2022-23 academic year, William Paterson provided opportunities for students to participate in undergraduate research and other scholarly and creative activities with faculty, as well as in a variety of civic, extracurricular, and athletic activities, earning honors and accolades.



WPSC-FM students celebrate their awards

The University's radio station, 88.7 WPSC-FM/Brave New Radio, was a finalist for the 2023 Marconi Award for Best College Radio Station of the Year by the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). This marked the fifth time the radio station was nominated for the Best College Radio Station award, which it won in 2018 and 2021. In addition, the station won three awards from seven nominations in the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Awards, including Best On-Air Personality and Best Program Director, Vont Leak, and Best Community Outreach Event, for "Flag Football Fundraiser," Maura Perez-Hernandez and Jacob Chalfant.

Students from William Paterson's television station, WPTV-6 television, won two awards from six nominations in the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System



Vont Leak

Awards. Students Vont Leak, Johan Yamoza, Isabel Birritteri, Calvin Richey, Marissa Banks, Alyssa Figueroa, and Justis Gregg won Best Variety Program for "Very Late with Vont Leak, and Samory Rose won Best Sports Program for "WP Sports Desk."

Tyler Sanchez '24 was one of 30 college students nationwide selected for the American Heart Association's Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Scholars Program, which supports promising undergraduate students who are committed to diminishing health inequities in Latino communities. Through the HSI Scholars Program, students are paired up with a mentor in their field that provides them with research experience, and attend healthcare conferences, leadership skills workshops, and cultural competence training. A biology major pursuing a pre-medical professions concentration, Sanchez spoke about his William Paterson experience and the importance of scholarship support at the 2022 Scholarship Dinner on campus in November.

Five William Paterson voice students were accepted into summer 2023 opera music festival programs in Europe. Alejandro De Los Santos, Owen Gavigan, and Austin Sidito attended the Prague Summer Nights Festival in Tabor and Prague, Czechia. The trio studied voice with famous pedagogues and performed opera scenes in Czech. De Los Santos, who attended for the second straight year, performed the title role in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*; Gavigan and Sidito were both cast in the role of Antonio in the same production. Viviana Kaszubski and Allysya Totten were accepted to the Assisi Music Festival, held in Assisi, Italy. Both performed in various scenes and concerts in some of Italy's basilicas, cathedrals, and other historical, culturally rich spaces in Assisi and nearby cities.



Alejandro De Los Santos



Seven William Paterson students participated in a four-week summer study abroad program at Ewha University in South Korea in summer 2022 that offered a variety of learning opportunities as well as transferrable credits to William Paterson. The trip was supported by the SEED program funded by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and Korean Studies Promotion Service of the Academy of Korean Studies.

Amirah Elayan '22, who graduated *summa cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in English, was nationally recognized with the third place Prize in Ethics in the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity's prestigious annual

contest. The Foundation, created by the late Elie Wiesel soon after he was awarded the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, aims to combat indifference, intolerance, and injustice through international dialogues and youth focused programs that promote acceptance, understanding, and equality. Elayan was honored for her essay, “The Moral Dilemma of Living.”



Nicholas Wilkerson

Nicholas Wilkerson '23, a communication major, visited the White House in October 2022, along with former communication professor Rob Quicke, where he met with top officials, and interviewed Vice President Kamala Harris for a segment that aired on WPSC 88.7 FM, Brave New Radio—the University’s non-commercial radio station that airs in northern New Jersey and southern New York State. Wilkerson, who served as WPSC FM’s event and promotions director, and Quicke were invited to the White House as part of a group of students, faculty, and staff from across the United States in honor of World College Radio Day.

Alexis Bennett '22, a *summa cum laude* graduate with a bachelor’s degree in management, was selected for the Peace Corps. Bennett headed to Ghana in January 2023 for two years of service as a Community Health Extension Agent, working to raise rural communities’ average health standards through community-centered education initiatives.

Research by Bhavya Yalamanchili '23 was published in the *Journal of Consumer Health* alongside the work of seasoned researchers and professors across the nation. This was Yalamanchili’s sixth journal publication as a WP student. A nursing major who completed the Honors College track in public health, she worked on her senior thesis under the guidance of public health professors Marianne Sullivan and Corey Basch, producing a qualitative study on how chronic pain is presented and discussed on TikTok.



Emily Martinez '24, an Honors College student majoring in political science with minors in legal studies and philosophy, was one of 20 students nationwide to be accepted to a prestigious pre-doctoral summer program, the American Political Science Association’s Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI). Established in 1986, the RBSI is an intensive five-week program intended to simulate the graduate school experience, aiming to inspire and prepare undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue doctoral study in political science.



Kimberly Perez-Lucero and Melissa Zea, master’s degree students in clinical and counseling psychology,

each received prestigious American Psychological Association 2022-23 Minority Fellowship Program awards. Both graduate students are Latinx, first-generation college students involved in William Paterson’s school-based program in Paterson to give back to the community. Perez-Lucero received the APA’s award for Services for Transition Age Youth, designed for students whose training prepares them to provide mental health services to transition-age youth, ages 16 through 25, and their families. Zea received the APA’s Interdisciplinary Minority Fellowship Program award for graduate students who commit to significantly improving the quality of care provided to ethnic and racial minorities who have a mental or co-occurring mental and substance use disorder.



Three William Paterson University student groups—the William Paterson University Jazz Orchestra and two other jazz ensembles—celebrated the 100th birthday of Thad Jones, the late trumpeter, bandleader, arranger, and founding director of the University’s Jazz Studies Program, during performances at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola/Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City on March 28, 2023. The ensembles, three of the 26 jazz groups that are the core of William Paterson’s historic Jazz Studies Program, performed music written by Thad Jones held in the Thad Jones Archive on campus as part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Jazz Studies Program during 2023.

Racha Ahmad '23 was selected as the student speaker for the University’s 2023 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony on May 31 at the Prudential Center in Newark. She earned a bachelor’s degree in English literature and political science, *cum laude*. Ahmad, a refugee, came to the United States in 2014 from war-torn Syria with her mother, Stani Hajdi '23—who earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting at the same ceremony—and three younger siblings; her father, who remained behind in Syria with his ill father, finally arrived in the U.S. two weeks before Commencement.



Stani Hajdi and Racha Ahmad

Emely Cosme, MBA '23, and Ashly Pauly, MS '23, delivered the graduate student addresses at the 2023 Graduate Commencement Ceremonies on May 18 in the Sports and Recreation Center on campus. Cosme, who earned a master of business administration degree, spoke at a ceremony for graduates of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the Cotsakos College of Business. Pauly, who earned a master of science degree in exercise and sport studies, spoke at the ceremony for graduates of the College of Education and College of Science and Health.



Emely Cosme

Rebecca Gilliland '23, who earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology and minors in criminology and criminal justice and sociology, *summa cum laude*, was named the 2023 "Outstanding Senior" by the William Paterson University Alumni Association. Gilliland was actively engaged with numerous campus organizations and projects during her four years at William Paterson. She was one of six recipients of the 2021 Changebuilder Scholars Award through New Jersey Campus Compact for her outstanding involvement in civic engagement on campus and relaunched the University's chapter of Her Campus, a women-focused online media hub that offers writing, networking, and an inclusive safe space/ community for students, among numerous other activities.

A selection of artworks by 16 William Paterson graduate students pursuing master of fine arts degrees were on view in an exhibition space in Chelsea in New York City in July 2023. The exhibition, titled *Shifting*, featured artworks in a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, video, and animation.



The women's basketball team advanced to the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Tournament quarterfinals and the Eastern Conference Athletic Conference (ECAC) Tournament semifinals. Renee Wells was named Women's Basketball Rookie of the Year by the NJAC.

Second baseman Colin Lombardo was selected as an all-American for the second straight year, garnering spots on the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA)/Rawlings All-America Second Team and D3baseball.com All-America Third Team. Lombardo added first-team all-region and all-conference awards to his season tally.

Football linebacker Nazier Wright garnered a spot on the D3football.com All-America Fourth Team, as well as the All-Region Second Team and All-NJAC First Team. He was



also named NJAC Football Defensive Player of the Year.

Football running back Nazir Dale was named NJAC Offensive Rookie of the Year.

Baseball outfielder Dan Carter, field hockey midfielder Megan Hoopes, softball pitcher Jaelynn Miller, and baseball first baseman Carson Weis were all-region honorees.



Baseball catcher Steve Yelin was named the ABCA/Rawlings National Position Player of the Year, the first Pioneer to earn that award in program history. Also a member of the ABCA/Rawlings All-America First Team and D3baseball.com All-America Second Team, Yelin was a first-team all-region and all-conference honoree.

Women's swimmer Carly McDaniel established new school records in the pool in the 50 butterfly (26.17) and 100 individual medley (1:02.14).

Thirty-nine Pioneers earned selections to their sports' respective College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-District Teams, while 66 were named to the Academic All-NJAC Team.

The women's basketball, men's swimming and diving and women's swimming and diving programs earned team academic awards from their respective national coaches associations. A total of 26 Pioneers were named to their sports' respective all-NJAC teams.

In the Division I American Collegiate Hockey Association, senior ice hockey team member Adam Marvin finished #2 in the nation in total assists (44) and #6 in the nation in total points (69) and freshman ice hockey team member Thomas Swartwout finished #5 in the nation in total goals (30).

The bowling team finished the regular season ranked #11 in the United States Bowling Congress collegiate rankings and #1 in the collegiate club rankings.

Diversity and Inclusion

William Paterson University prides itself on its status as a majority-minority institution, serving students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Federally recognized as both a Minority-Serving Institution and a Hispanic-Serving Institution, with approximately 63 percent students of color and 30 percent who identify as Latino/a/x, the institution is changing the social fabric of New Jersey, preparing students for leadership roles in the state and their communities. The University is one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in its region, according to U.S. News & World Report's *Best Colleges 2024*.

A land acknowledgement statement, acknowledging that the University is located on the traditional lands of



The Thunderbird American Indian Dancers

the Lenni Lenape people, was instituted for the fall 2022 semester. In addition, the second Monday of October was designated as “Indigenous People’s Day” at

William Paterson; a special ceremony was held on October 10, 2022 on Shea Center Plaza featuring a performance by the Thunderbird American Indian Dancers to honor and celebrate native peoples and their culture.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion implemented several programs and events that demonstrated a commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion across the University.

Career readiness served as the focal point as the office encouraged students to complete the Social Justice Leadership Badge through online diversity training and participation in social justice-highlighted events. Two hundred eighty-two students submitted Social Justice Leadership Badge surveys, with 94 percent indicating that events they attended “reinforced the importance of talking across differences about issues that affect members in our community.” Continued partnerships with the Career Development Center offered support for students to highlight their diversity training on their resumes, and to strengthen opportunities for securing competitive internships and jobs.



The 4th annual “Conocimiento” day conference in April 2023 had 220 participants with support from more than 15 clubs, organizations, offices, and departments. As the University continues to grow as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, this experience provided space for discussion and testimonials around Latino/a/x cultural resilience, migration, community action, and organizing. Several students contributed a hand-painted mural which was later featured in the Center for Latinidad in the John Victor Machuga Student Center on campus.

The Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion continued to offer cultural, educational, and social experiences through the coordination and support of over 100 programs and events such as Courageous Conversations, theme celebration keynotes and programs, LGBTQIA+ focused events, mentorship/academic support programs, affinity group graduation ceremonies, and more. Over 2,300 students participated in at least one program facilitated by Student Diversity and Inclusion.

Gender and sexuality resources remained a priority with the expansion of the LGBTea+ Mentorship program managed through the Center for Diversity and



Inclusion. This program offers a queer-centered approach for peer mentorship with the goal of connecting students who identify within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum with diverse faculty, staff, alumni, and students while also providing support for self-exploration, personal goals, and professional development.

For the second straight year, William Paterson was nationally recognized for being among the top LGBTQ-friendly campuses in 2023 by the Campus Pride Index, a national listing of LGBTQ-friendly colleges and universities. The University earned a score of 4.5 out of a possible 5.

To provide the University with information on equity and diversity work across the campus, an institutional equity and diversity website was launched on the William Paterson website. The website includes the University’s new land acknowledgement, relevant policies, and news of various campus equity and diversity initiatives, as well as links to related offices and initiatives.

Career Development Initiatives and Activities

The University launched new initiatives and enhanced activities designed to help students develop skills that will help them achieve career success following graduation. Eighty-four percent of graduates are employed or in graduate school within six months after graduation, six percent higher than the national average.



President Helldobler with Pesce mentors and mentees

The Pesce Family Mentoring Institute, completing its ninth year, continued its efforts to pair successful alumni and local business

professionals with select undergraduate students. During the 2022-23 academic year, the Institute arranged 297 mentor/mentee matches, approximately the same as the previous academic year, and increased the number of alumni mentors, who now comprise 55 percent of the program’s mentors. Forty-four percent of the mentees identified as first-generation college students. Data for Class of 2022 graduates who participated in the Institute

indicate that 97 percent secured employment or headed to graduate school following graduation.



Alumni (at table) Sara Jones '00 and Adam Beder '99 speak to students on campus at a Healthcare Industry Careers Forum

A healthcare industry panel, coordinated by the Career Development Center, the College of Science and Health, and the Office of Institutional Advancement, brought William Paterson alumni with decades of experience in their roles with major New Jersey healthcare institutions to campus to offer their insights on opportunities and challenges in the industry, as well as their advice to University students seeking to enter the field. Based on its success, the three areas plan to continue to collaborate through SHINE (Science and Health Industries Network for Excellence), a networking initiative designed to connect students with WP alumni in specific industries for panel discussions and networking beginning in fall 2023.

In addition, the Center partnered with the Cotsakos College of Business to present a three-day Career Outlook and Industry Networking Bootcamp in November 2022. The program offered opportunities for students and recent graduates to build career readiness skills and develop connections with industry professionals from across the country. The free program featured more than a dozen business leaders, including alumni Kevin Lenahan '90, member of the University Board of Trustees and executive vice president and chief business and strategy officer for Atlantic Health Systems, and Rich Geraffo '85, vice president, Americas Sales, Amazon Web Services, who participated in industry-focused fireside chats and panel discussions, daily keynote presentations, and networking.

The Career Development Center successfully continued its efforts to expand student usage of Handshake, the University's career management system. Usage increased to 82 percent of enrolled students, from 77 percent of enrolled students the previous year. In addition, there was a significant expansion in student access to available positions. For example, 73,136 full-time and part-time job opportunities and internships were posted in the system, compared to 55,339 in the previous year. Student job applications on Handshake increased by 45 percent to more than 9,000 total applications.

In addition, the Center saw continued high student engagement in areas such as one-to-one appointments with Career Development Center staff, and attendance at events and career fairs. The Center hosted seven large-scale recruiting events/job fairs, including a new Mega Job and Internship Fair in March 2023. The Mega Fair was the largest career fair to date with 130 employers and 605 students in attendance. Other focused job fairs included a Part-Time Job Fair, a Fall Job and Internship Fair, a Meet the Firms Fair, a Marketing and Public Relations Fair in partnership with the Department of Communication and the Cotsakos College of Business, a Green-A-Fair focused on sustainability jobs in partnership with Campus Activities, Service and Leadership and the Department of Environmental Science, and a Public Relations and Communication Alumni Mixer. Overall, more than 1,400 students attended these events, a 65 percent increase over last year, with 265 employers, a 27 percent increase.

The Center partnered with multiple programs and campus constituents to deliver career readiness programs and workshops, including Will. Power. 101/102, the Educational Opportunity Fund Summer Program, Athletics, the Honors College, Veteran and Military Affairs, the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and the Cotsakos College of Business.

The Center's Career Communities program, which launched in summer 2021, was updated and integrated within the University's Student Success Teams in partnership with Academic Advisement and Academic Affairs. Students have the opportunity to choose among seven different career communities organized by industry as a means to better assist them in expanding their awareness of career paths, solidifying career goals, identifying job opportunities, and expanding their network.

The Center revamped its Career and Professional Success Digital Badge for students and added a virtual asynchronous version. The badge, offered as part of the WP Leads Digital Badge Program administered by Campus Activities, Service, and Leadership, helps students discover key career readiness skills aimed at helping them navigate and prepare for the professional world. During the academic year, 1,486 students participated in one or more of the badge modules.

The Peace Corps and William Paterson jointly launched a new undergraduate certificate program called Peace Corps Prep. Combining targeted coursework with hands-on experience, the program builds the competencies needed for students to go on to be strong Peace Corps volunteers or other intercultural fieldworkers. The program is jointly housed in the Career Development Center and Office of Campus Activities, Service and Leadership.

III. ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

The University concluded a very successful year in terms of fund-raising in support of student success, including growth in annual giving. The Office of Alumni Relations provided numerous opportunities for alumni to engage with the institution, working closely with partners throughout the campus.

Fundraising Tops \$4.5 Million

Overall, fundraising greatly exceeded expectations. The University raised \$4.59 million, 32 percent more than projected. This included nearly \$715,000 raised for annual giving, the highest in University history. Annual giving continues to increase year over year, predominantly due to the increase of and focus on annual named scholarships of \$1,000 or more.

The endowment grew to \$26.4 million, a 91.3 percent increase in the last five years, and the scholarship endowment grew to nearly \$20 million, an increase of over 129 percent in the last five years. More than 730 scholarships were awarded for the 2022-23 academic year, providing more than \$1.46 million in student support.

Total assets of the Foundation grew from \$42.01 million to \$45.7 million this fiscal year due to improved market conditions and fundraising efforts.



William Paterson received a transformative gift of nearly \$1 million from the estate of Carol Mathew LeBeau '45 to support undergraduate and graduate students who are studying to be special education teachers. LeBeau had loyally donated between \$5 and \$7 to the institution

annually starting immediately after she graduated and continuing until she died, making her a member of William Paterson's Heritage Society, which recognizes individuals who give to the University for 20 years or more, no matter the giving level. The Carol LeBeau Scholarship will live on in perpetuity and will provide a scholarship distribution to WP students every year.

The University also received a transformative bequest intention from a loyal friend, Marie Wormel, and her late husband, George Hicks, that will support the William Paterson Living Jazz Archives in the future and in perpetuity. In addition, William Paterson received a significant bequest intention from Alumni Executive Council member Dr. Michael D. Santoro and his wife, Maureen P. Santoro, that will support an endowed scholarship in their names and also provided future support for the already established Skull and Poniard Endowed Scholarship.

Through a generous gift of \$250,000 from the Martini Foundation, the University celebrated the naming of the Martini Family Electronic Resource Center in the David and Lorraine Cheng Library on February 7, 2023. The Center provides study and learning workspaces and computer access to the William Paterson community during all hours the library is open. The Center serves as a busy campus hub with the most elaborate lab/electronic



President Helldobler (second from left), the Hon. William J. Martini (seventh from left) and others at the ribbon-cutting for the Nicholas Martini Family Electronic Resource Center

resource space on campus. With this gift, an endowment was also established to provide ongoing electronic upgrades in perpetuity.

As part of the University's Giving Tuesday fundraising initiative, Provost Joshua Powers led a group of faculty, staff, alumni, and students



Provost Powers and other hikers on the summit of High Mountain

on a hike to the 800-foot summit of High Mountain in High Mountain Park Preserve adjacent to the campus in support of the Provost Powers Student Emergency Support Fund. The fund provides support for full-time or part-time students in good academic standing, who are experiencing an unexpected financial hardship, to help them reach their goal of graduating.

The University celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Jazz Studies Program at the 32nd Annual Legacy Gala. Alumnus James Terrile '87, partner, Capital Group; Grammy Award-nominated jazz bassist Rufus Reid, former director of William Paterson University's Jazz Studies Program; late WP Professor *Emeritus* Martin Krivin, founder of the Jazz Studies Program; and New Jersey public radio station WBGO, which champions jazz to a worldwide audience, were honored on April 20, 2023. The Legacy Awards honor those who exemplify the leadership of the institution's namesake, William

Paterson, by demonstrating strong support for public higher education in the state of New Jersey, and generosity to others through philanthropic leadership.



President Helldobler with the 2023 student Legacy Scholars

Alumni Engagement

The Office of Alumni Relations and the Alumni Association continued to collaborate with campus partners to find ways for the University's nearly 85,000 alumni to become meaningfully engaged in the life of the University, including volunteer opportunities, programs, engagement experiences, philanthropy, and communication.

Numerous alumni connected with students, faculty, and staff during more than 45 in-person and virtual engagement opportunities. Overall, attendance increased nearly 6 percent over the prior year; participation by first-time alumni attendees increased 7 percent, a very positive sign, although numbers have not quite returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Virtual lifelong learning opportunities featuring faculty, campus partners, and alumni speakers on research and/or current topics included a career webinar in partnership with the Career Development Center on LinkedIn tips and tricks; an Entrepreneurial Fireside Chat in collaboration with the Cotsakos College of Business titled "Designing, Growing, and Financing a Socially Responsible Business," and the MLK Day of Civic Engagement Conference and Day of Service Keynote Address in partnership with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

The Class of 1973 celebrated their 50th reunion by participating in the Undergraduate Commencement ceremony on May 31 at the Prudential Center in Newark, along with a reunion luncheon and campus tour the following day. Forty-four members of the class joined the luncheon, 13 attended Commencement and 18 attended the campus tour. The Classes of 1970, 1971, and 1972 were inducted into the Pioneer Society, which recognizes and celebrates alumni who graduated 50 years ago or more.



The Class of 1973 at Undergraduate Commencement

Alumni and friends in the Washington, DC area gathered for a cocktail reception in April 2023 at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, DC. Those in attendance had a chance to hear the latest University news from President Helldobler and connect with fellow Pioneers living in the area. Alumni who gathered at the event represented a wide range of graduation years, spanning from 1973 to 2021. With nearly 1,500 alumni and friends living in the Washington, DC region, the WP in DC Alumni Network continues to grow.



Fourteen hundred alumni, family, and friends returned to campus for Homecoming and Family Day on October 29, 2022. Events included a pre-game tailgate and a Pioneer Carnival. In addition, pre-game tailgates were held prior to each home game during the 2022 football season which drew alumni, families, faculty, staff, and community members.



Homecoming and Family Day 2022

Numerous alumni were engaged in the life of the campus through service as mentors for the Pesce Family Mentoring Institute, classroom guest speakers, members of the University's Board of Trustees, Foundation Board, Alumni Executive Council, and College Advisory Councils, and as panelists for College-specific and University events.

Alumni, as well as WP faculty and staff, continued to connect with each other and enjoy books focused on social justice and other topics through the WP Virtual Book Club. The book club continued the theme of "Social Justice: Learning and Building Community Across Differences" for the 2022-23 academic year, and currently features more than 400 members, 33 of whom were new this past year. The program is a partnership with the University's Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity.

IV. CAMPUS COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENTS

Facilities and Construction Highlights

The University began the implementation of Workday as the institution's new cloud-based system for Human Resources, Payroll, and Finance, replacing the current administrative software, Banner. Workday's more user-friendly processes will streamline many everyday



operations to increase administrative efficiency, as well as provide better and more relevant real-time insights for business decisions. Funding of \$639,000 for the project has been allocated by the State of New Jersey. A WP Workday Change Management Team is in place and working on the project, with cutover to the new system projected for January 1, 2024.



Wayne Dining Hall

Following a major renovation, Wayne Dining Hall opened for the fall 2022 semester. The modern facility features 10 themed food stations; an inviting, colorful interior with a wall of windows;

USB charging ports, and a selection of seating options including restaurant-style booths and high-top tables designed to support community engagement. Other features include a hydroponic garden where rows of fresh herbs and lettuces are grown and utilized in the various menu items.

Another major facility, the Child Development Center, opened in the 1800 Valley Road Building on September 6, 2022. The CDC, which is designed to meet a well-documented need for childcare in Passaic County, is an important investment for the campus community and for the region. The 1800 Valley Road building also includes offices and classrooms for the School of Continuing and Professional Education, as well as



The Child Development Center

offices for the Office of Sponsored Programs, the Center for Degree Completion and Adult Learning, and the Office of Transfer Programs and Special Sessions.



A rendering of the athletics fieldhouse renovation and expansion project

Construction will begin in fall 2023 on an addition and renovation of the athletics fieldhouse, an initiative designed to provide the institution's student-athletes with the resources they need to compete and succeed at the highest level. The project, slated for completion in August 2024, includes a 4,000-square-foot addition to the existing facility. It will include a student-athlete-specific fitness center, featuring strength training and cardio areas, with roll-up glass garage doors facing Wightman Stadium. It will also feature an expanded athletic training facility; individual locker rooms for field hockey, softball, and women's soccer; and a renovation of the existing football and baseball locker rooms. William Paterson fields 13 NCAA Division III intercollegiate teams and currently has 300 student-athletes.



A rendering of the Sports and Recreation Center project

A major renovation and expansion of the Sports and Recreation Center will launch in January 2024 thanks to \$40 million in funding through the Education Facilities Authority recommended by the Office of the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education and approved by the New Jersey legislature. The project will dramatically improve and expand key instructional resources, as well as sports and recreation facilities. It will include a two-story, 88,000-square-foot addition that will nearly



Another rendering of the Sports and Recreation Center expansion

triple the overall size of the building to accommodate a new Wellness Center and significant new classroom and lab space for Nursing, Kinesiology, and Exercise Science programs, in addition to a new fitness center, natatorium, and locker rooms. Existing space will be renovated to create a new training room and Sports Therapy and Rehabilitation Instructional Lab.

In addition, the University received approximately \$2.3 million for technology infrastructure and modernization, with a special focus on upgrading campus Wi-Fi. Completed information technology upgrades included increased internet bandwidth and speed and enhanced system security protection.

Sustainability

William Paterson's sustainability programs continue to have a significant impact, with campus initiatives focused on conservation, efficiency, and education. The University's 3.3 MW solar panel installation, among the largest at a four-year U.S. institution, currently supplies 12 percent of campus energy needs. Over the past two decades, while increasing the size of the campus by 47 percent, the University has lowered consumption of electricity by 30 percent, natural gas by 50 percent, and carbon emissions by 1350 tons.

Strategies for reducing energy usage include food waste composting, energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems, recycling initiatives, resource conservation, and electric vehicle charging stations, among others. A new initiative set to launch with the fall 2023 semester will focus on collecting plastic bags and plastic film at designated collection locations around the University.

William Paterson received a \$24,000 Clean Fleet Grant from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to support the installation of four additional electric vehicle (EV) charging



stations on campus – two at College Hall and two at the WP Parking Garage. WP was the only university to win an award during this recent round of grants. As use of EVs grows, the University is growing charging capacity, which will now number 15 chargers located across campus.

The University's longtime dedication to environmental sustainability was recognized by The Princeton Review, which included William Paterson in its new *Guide to Green Schools 2023*.



A Green A-Fair and Expo was held on April 19, 2023 in the University Commons Ballrooms to mark Earth Day. The event, sponsored by Campus Activities, Service, and Leadership, Career Development, the Department of Environmental Science and the Green League, featured volunteer, job opening, and civic engagement opportunities.

Wellness Days



Wellness Days 2022

For the first time, on the recommendation of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association, two wellness days, October 13 and 14, were

integrated into the fall 2022 semester calendar to provide a break for students from their academic responsibilities and support mental health. No classes were held and no assignments were due.

In addition, faculty and staff could take part in various on-campus and virtual training sessions and events on topics related to mental health and wellness. Among the offerings for faculty and staff were facilitated discussions about promoting student well-being and practicing everyday mindfulness, guided in-person classes on meditation, laughter yoga, and writing for wellness, and self-directed workshops available via LinkedIn Learning and the EAP/ESI Training Center. Other activities included organized games in the Sports and Recreation Center and a fall harvest display workshop on Speert Green.

Through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded to nursing professor Brenda Marshall, approximately 20 faculty and staff and four undergraduate students took part in an all-day certification course in Mental Health First Aid, taught by Marshall and nursing faculty Faith Atte and Maria Elena Holguin.

Employee Development

The University's Summer Learning and Development Program, now in its fifth year, continued in 2023, built around the theme "Managing a Growth Mindset through Process Improvement." The program was developed to provide an opportunity for administrators and professional staff to advance their personal and professional development. Learning was focused in four areas: Business Process Improvement – Workday; Accountability – Goal Setting; Leadership – Focus and Application; and Process Improvement – Technological Savvy. Following an opening assembly in Shea Center on June 28, the program ran for six Wednesdays, from June 28 through August 9. All sessions were offered online.

More than 450 employees took part in 33 facilitated sessions, including numerous workshops focused on the changeover to Workday, the institution's new cloud-based system for Human Resources, Payroll, and Finance, which will be deployed as of January 2024. In addition, participants engaged in more than 2,000 hours of independent learning.

Also among the offerings was Impact Players, a hands-on program based on a book by best-selling author and researcher Liz Wiseman designed to help employees contribute at their fullest and show leaders how they can raise the level of play for everyone on the team. Members of the University Cabinet completed the workshops, along with 15 other managers and professional staff members. An additional cohort of staff is expected to participate in the program during September 2023.

The Office of Human Resources spearheaded the selection of five staff members for recognition by Governor Phil Murphy for their exceptional performance and service at a



Joseph Alaya, Dr. Jill Guzman, Sgt. LaWanda Walker-Roney, Cindy Gennarelli, and James Shelley.

New Jersey State Employee Recognition Day (SERD) Award Ceremony in Trenton on May 11, 2023. The five employees honored were: Dr. Jill Guzman, director of the Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center; Sgt. LaWanda Walker-Roney, supervisor of the Community Policing Unit and student patrol staff, University Police; James Shelley, director of physical plant operations; Joseph Alaya, director of enterprise information systems; and Cindy Gennarelli, director of early childhood education innovation and director of the University's Child Development Center.

The honorees were chosen from a pool of campus nominees based on the following criteria: outstanding effort, consistent quality performance and contributions to the department/agency above and beyond the call of duty; innovative thinking, taking initiative, identifying organizational efficiencies and effecting cost savings; a demonstrated commitment to the citizens of the state and the clients they serve; demonstrated willingness to share knowledge, teach others, and work as part of a team; and representing the State of New Jersey with the highest standards of professionalism and ethics.

V. PUBLIC RECOGNITION

The University expanded its public visibility and enhanced its institutional identity through a wide array of honors and activities, including continued significant recognition for social mobility, notable events, and by achieving positive media coverage on a variety of platforms.

Rankings

The University remains a national leader in making an important impact on students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In U.S. News & World Report's 2024 edition of *Best Colleges*, William Paterson ranked no. 21 of 166 regional universities in the northern United States in terms of social mobility—that is, how well schools graduate students with exceptional financial need. William Paterson ranked in the top 5 percent of 1,414 institutions in the country in the 2022 Social Mobility Index, created by CollegeNet to measure the extent to which a college or university educates more economically disadvantaged students at lower tuition and graduates them into good-paying jobs.

In addition, the University's rankings in the 2024 edition of *Best Colleges* also include significant gains in other categories. The University moved up six spots, to no. 69 from no. 75 of 166 institutions, in the Best Regional Universities-North category, marking its highest ranking in recent years. The ranking builds on last year's gains, when William Paterson moved up 15 spots from no. 90.

William Paterson University was also named to the U.S. News' Best Values Schools list in the 2024 *Best Colleges* edition; the ranking factors academic quality and cost after accounting for total expenses and financial need. The University was ranked no. 58, up nine spots from last year's ranking of no. 67 in the Regional Universities-North category. In addition, the University was included on the Top Public Regional Universities-North and Best Colleges for Veterans lists and was nationally ranked for its undergraduate nursing, business, and psychology programs.

U.S. News & World Report ranked the University as tied for no. 5 of the same 166 northern regional universities in the category of "campus ethnic diversity," which identifies colleges where "students are most likely to encounter undergraduates from racial or ethnic groups different from their own."

For the second straight year, William Paterson was nationally recognized for being among the top LGBTQ-friendly campuses in 2023 by the Campus Pride Index, a national listing of LGBTQ-friendly colleges and

universities. The University earned a score of 4.5 out of a possible 5. The Campus Pride Index is an overall indicator of institutional commitment to LGBTQ-inclusive policies, programs, and practices.

For the 13th year in a row, William Paterson University has been recognized in the *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*, honoring those institutions that are implementing best practices and policies to recruit, develop and support student veterans, with the goal of providing them the tools they need to successfully move into the next chapter of their lives.



For the 15th consecutive year, William Paterson University's Cotsakos College of Business was included in *The Princeton Review's* guide to the top graduate business schools, which ranks programs across the nation based on graduates' career outcomes, admissions selectivity, student surveys, and academic rigor, among other factors. Cotsakos College of Business programs are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International, the longest-serving global accrediting body for business schools that offer undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees in business and accounting.

Honors and Accolades

On April 8, 2023, the University welcomed U.S. Representative Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11) to campus, where she participated in a presentation ceremony for the \$1 million in federal COVID relief funding she helped secure for William Paterson students. She also participated in a panel discussion with eight WP students about ways to better support college students in completing college and earning degrees.



U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill and President Helldobler with WP students



Gov. Philip D. Murphy, President Helldobler, and Brigadier General Lisa Hou

President Helldobler accepted a “We Value Our Veterans” Community Award from Governor Philip D. Murphy and Brigadier General Lisa Hou, Adjutant

General and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, on November 11, 2022 on behalf of William Paterson, at a ceremony at the New Jersey Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial in Holmdel. The award recognized the contributions of the University’s many student, faculty, staff, and alumni veterans, as well as the work of everyone who supports them on campus and in the community, including WP’s Office of Veteran and Military Affairs.

President Helldobler was included on the 2022 *NJBIZ* Education Power 50 list of education leaders from across New Jersey. The list includes the most influential educators conducting vital research and training a new generation of leaders. He was also named to business publication *ROI-NJ*’s Higher Education Influencers list in the category of “Most Influential Presidents.”

William Paterson was named a “Healthcare Hero” by *NJBIZ*. The *NJBIZ* Healthcare Heroes awards program was created to recognize excellence, promote innovation and honor the efforts of individuals and organizations making a significant impact on the quality of health care in New Jersey. The award was based on nominations, which were reviewed by a panel of independent judges, and recognizes individuals and organizations across 12 categories. William Paterson was recognized for its leadership in educating New Jersey’s healthcare workforce, including its investment in growing its healthcare programs to meet the significant need for nurses and public health professionals, as well as increased demand for online learning by adult learners and those seeking advanced degrees via flexible delivery models.

In addition, the University was selected as a 2023 *NJBIZ* Leader in Digital Technology honoree. William Paterson was the only higher education institution to be recognized among 23 organizations and 25 individuals for this award, which recognizes companies and individual innovators who have demonstrated excellence in technology and leadership. The University was honored for its advancements in online learning, including the adult learning market.

The University’s bachelor of science program in professional sales was recognized in the category of

“Most Unique/Innovative Class or Program” and its Cybersecurity Research Lab was noted as a “Best Campus Improvement” in *ROI-NJ*’s Higher Education Influencers list. The list honors the people, programs, and facilities that have the greatest influence and impact at their institutions and within the business community.



William Paterson won three Educational Advertising Awards including a Gold Award for a website refresh of academic department webpages featuring career outcomes; a Silver Award for the University’s Spirit Branding Campaign; and a Merit Award for a web refresh of the academic search page. The web refresh included the wholesale remaking of department homepages to shift the emphasis from inputs to career, salary, and learning outcomes. As a result of these changes, three-quarters of the pages have seen an average increase of 15 percent in the amount of time visitors spend on them. The Spirit Branding Campaign ranged from the introduction of new mascot Pio and WP’s first-ever spirit song to extensive branding and promotional efforts.

Commencement



Gov. Murphy speaks at Undergraduate Commencement

Governor Murphy gave the keynote address and received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree at the 2023 Undergraduate

Commencement Ceremony held on May 31 at the Prudential Center in Newark. This year marked the University’s 200th Commencement ceremony.

During his address, the governor paid tribute to the hard work and determination of the Class of 2023. “Many of you are the first in your families to go to college. Many of you are immigrants or the children of immigrants,” he noted. “And many of you worked your way through school – holding down jobs and supporting your families, while also somehow finding the time to study and go to class. In normal circumstances, that alone would be an incredible achievement, but the last few years have not been normal. Halfway through your academic career, a pandemic hit and it kicked us all in the teeth.” However,

he continued, “In the face of all this turmoil, the choices you have made fill me with hope for our future because you have chosen to get involved and do something about the world around you.”



Also at the ceremony, Dr. Jill Guzman, director of the Counseling Health, and Wellness Center, was awarded the President’s Medallion for her contributions to the campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alumni from the Class of 1973 were present at the undergraduate ceremony along with members of the Pioneer Society, which consists of alumni who graduated at least 50 years ago.

Graduate Commencement ceremonies were held for master’s and doctoral degree candidates on May 18 in the Sports and Recreation Center on campus. Overall, more than 2,300 bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree candidates were recognized at the University’s Commencement events. All ceremonies were livestreamed, providing the opportunity for families and friends to watch.

Media Visibility

Faculty and staff members continued to provide their expertise to regional, national, and international media outlets on a wide array of topics.

An essay by President Helldobler written for the new book, *LGBTQ Leadership in Higher Education*, was adapted for publication in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The article, titled “Not All College Presidents Are Straight White Men,” focuses on his experience during a college presidential search prior to coming to William Paterson. He was also quoted extensively in a NorthJersey.com story about affirmative action.

Two members of the Class of 2023—student Commencement speaker Racha Ahmad and her mother, Stani Hajbi, who both came to the United States as refugees from war-torn Syria, were featured nationally on *NBC News with Lester Holt*. They were also featured on News 12 News Jersey, PIX 11 News, and in a front-page story in the *The Record* which also ran online with a video and photo gallery.

A feature in *Downbeat* magazine, “William Paterson Jazz Swings @ 50,” focused on the 50th anniversary of the University’s internationally acclaimed Jazz Studies Program in 2023, and included an interview with David Demsey, professor of music and coordinator of the program.

On Election Day in November 2022, Guillermo de Veyga, vice president for strategic initiatives and university relations, served as a political analyst during

WCBS-TV’s news coverage of the the mid-term elections. He participated in live interactions on election night and the following morning with the news anchors and as part of panel discussions.

Local business publication *ROI-NJ* featured a class taught by Bela Florenthal, professor of marketing and management, that includes an “Acts of Kindness” project.

Journalism professor Nicholas Hirshon was featured in an article in *The Athletic* about the New York Islanders hockey team and its modern reboot of its once-reviled “fisherman” logo. The publication called Hirshon “the greatest authority” on the topic; he is the author of the 2018 book, *We Want Fish Sticks: The Bizarre and Infamous Rebranding of the New York Islanders*. Hirshon was also quoted in *The Record/NorthJersey.com* and other Gannett-owned newspapers and news websites regarding how artificial intelligence could change the face of journalism and on the journalistic/historic importance of the famous “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus” editorial in the movie *Miracle on 34th Street*.



Biology professor Joe Spagna spoke to WCBS-TV New York and was quoted in *The Record/Northjersey.com* about efforts to kill lanternflies. The story also appeared in several newspapers owned by *The Record’s* parent company, including the *Burlington County Times*, the *Asbury Park Press*, and the *Daily Journal*.



Corey Basch

Public health professor Corey Basch was quoted in a story for the *Asbury Park Press* and *The Record/NorthJersey.com* about the increase in COVID cases and masking recommendations.

Education professor Julie Rosenthal was quoted in a story for *The Record/NorthJersey.com/USA Today Network* about the 75th birthday of the classic children’s story *Goodnight Moon*. Nursing professor Claire Donaghy’s global work with Operation Smile was featured in *The Record/Northjersey.com*. Also, Bill Charlap, director of jazz studies, was interviewed on CNN’s *The Source with Kaitlan Collins* and was quoted in a feature in *The Record/Northjersey.com* about the death of music legend Tony Bennett. The latest film by professor *emeritus* Vince Parrillo, about Paterson restaurants past and present, was featured in *The Record/NorthJersey.com*. Psychology professor Bill Indick was quoted in a column in *The Record* about pop culture’s latest focus on “doomsday” culture.



Bill Charlap

Community Events and Connections

The School of Continuing and Professional Education expanded its career and life transition program for students ages 18 to 21 with learning disabilities to more than a dozen local school districts. As of fall 2022, students were accepted from Clifton, Nutley, Butler, Indian Hills, and River Dell Regional school districts, along with continuing participating school districts Wayne, Hackensack, Hawthorne, Lakeland, Manchester, Montville, Passaic Valley, Ramsey and Teaneck.

William Paterson successfully hosted the Passaic County Career Resource Event & Job Fair at 1600 Valley Road in August 2023 for the first time since 2019. More than 400 WP students, alumni, and other attendees interacted with more than 60 employers, including NJ Transit, Johnson & Johnson, PSE&G, Old Dominion, and Hackensack Hospital, as part of the institution's ongoing commitment to supporting students, alumni, and the local community in their career development. The event was a collaboration between the University and partners from New Jersey, Passaic County, and local municipalities.



Fran Lebowitz



Michael Eric Dyson

The University continued to offer a wide range of music, art, and other cultural events for the community, including two speakers as part of the 41st season of the Distinguished Lecturer Series: best-selling author, academic, ordained minister, and radio host Michael Eric Dyson, one of the nation's foremost thinkers on race, who spoke on October 27, 2022, and author and cultural commentator **Fran Lebowitz**, who brought her trademark caustic wit and humorous New York sensibility to campus on February 22, 2023.



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