

FIRST BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING BACK IN PERSON: UNIVERSITY FINANCES, ENROLLMENT OUTLOOK, AND MORE

by Haresh Oudhnarine - Editor-in-Chief

The NJCU Board of Trustees had its first in-person meeting since the pandemic began in a fairly empty lecture hall at the School of Business. Even though it was in person, four board members attended the meeting through Zoom.



Board members during the February 22 Board of Trustees meeting.
Photo by Haresh Oudhnarine.

Some people questioned why there wasn't a virtual option for the public to attend the meeting, which was held at 2:30 in the afternoon on February 22.

Thyquell Halley, the president of the Student Government Association and a voting student trustee on the board, addressed the inconvenience of not having a Zoom option available for the public. Halley said, "I think we should be more mindful and cautious about the time and location where we are holding our Board of Trustees meetings." At least one faculty member also questioned this earlier in the day.

Halley also said, "I want to address the board publicly and just say that we should do a better job. I sit here disappointed in the board and the leadership of the board."

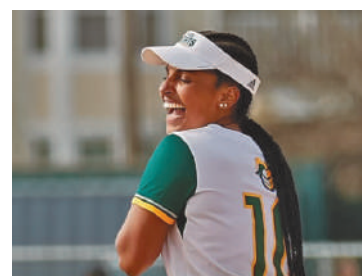
Board member James A. Jacobson explained that the reason the meeting was held at the School of Business was to accommodate for the pandemic. The Board of Trustees webpage notes that public meetings will be held on the main campus at 6 pm "unless otherwise indicated."

Andres Acebo, secretary to the board and chief

of staff to President Sue Henderson, said that it was announced at the September board meeting that this one would be in person.

Acebo said the board meetings are typically coordinated a year in advance with the schedules of the board members. Acebo said, "The date, location, and method of this meeting was coordinated, taking everyone's schedules into account. Even prior to the pandemic, there were practices where trustees who had very busy schedules

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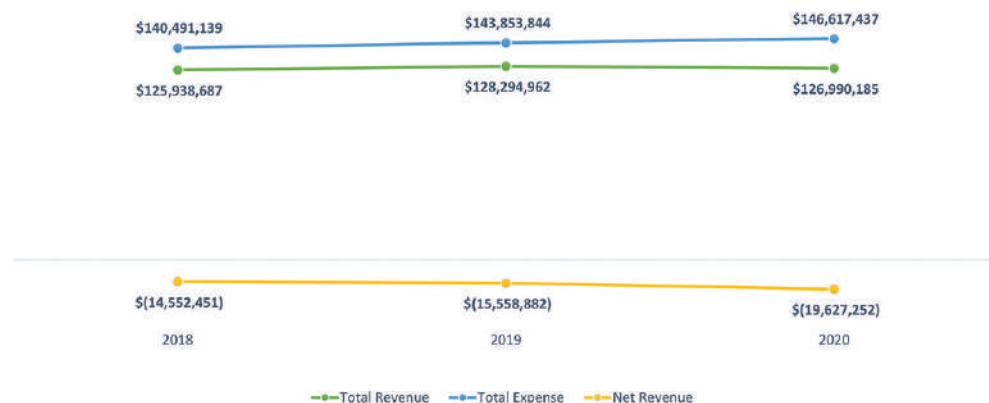
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Total Revenue, Expense & Net Revenue



A graph from the rpk “academic efficiencies” presentation showing NJCU’s structural deficit.

were permitted to call in or using the technology of the day, Zoom, to facilitate that even more so. Your point is well taken that we should be more mindful on how we engage the campus.”

Other topics discussed included a deficit at the university, enrollment predictions for next year, and diversity projects. This was also the first board meeting since the vote of no confidence against Henderson in late September. The Board of Trustees is the highest governing body at NJCU. Early in the meeting, board chairman Joseph F. Scott pointed out that all of the board members are “volunteers.”

The Financial Status of the University

Concern about NJCU’s fiscal status has been a major topic of conversation on campus in recent months. It was one of the driving components for the vote of no confidence against Henderson from the University Senate.

Jim White, the chief financial officer (CFO), said during the board meeting that as of January 31, the university has a deficit of roughly \$1 million. In simple terms, a deficit means that NJCU is spending more money than it is bringing in.

In 2020, NJCU has a notable deficit of \$19.5 million.

In late November, the rpk GROUP also reported on the \$19.5 million deficit from 2020, a figure confirmed by the CFO. (The rpk GROUP is a consulting firm that was hired by NJCU to do an efficiency study on the university for \$210,000.)

When it comes to finances, the AFT Local 1839 union, which represents many professors and employees at NJCU, hired Red Maple Economics to “assess the financial stability” of the institution. Red Maple corroborated the \$19.5 million deficit from 2020. They said they were unable to report on the 2021 fiscal year without the 2021 financial statements.

The rpk Study

According to rpk, the deficit grew by more than \$5 million over the three years they studied (2018 to 2020). Rpk also called NJCU’s situation a “structural deficit” because there have been consistent decreases in the school’s net position.

Katie Hagan, a senior associate for rpk, said during the “academic efficiencies” presentation in late November, “Because the institution lost money, everybody is going to lose money because we have to spread that operational costs across all departments, so you’re gonna see everyone ending up in the negative

because the institution overall is in the negative.”

Rpk said that half of the indirect spending in 2020 was from athletics, enrollment management, and the School of Business. Hagan said, “Those are the three biggest areas. I will say that those things are not necessarily negative things. Just because they cost more doesn’t mean it was a bad investment. It is just important institutionally to make sure you’re tracking those return on investments.

“If you are spending more on enrollment, are you getting more students? Are you getting a different type of student? Are those students staying longer? Are they retaining better or are they completing at a better rate? Those sorts of things.”

At the “administrative services” presentation in mid-January, rpk said that NJCU was able to balance its budget for the first time in six years with the help of government pandemic funding. The report said that without the additional government funding for COVID, the university would still have a \$19 million deficit.

Henderson’s “Fall 2021 Update” stated, “In 2021, NJCU utilized additional COVID funding of \$21.7 million including scholarships, direct student support and lost revenue.”

Rpk also said that NJCU has double the number of managers compared to similar-sized institutions.

The firm made many recommendations during the “administrative services” report for how NJCU can make improvements.

After the vote of no confidence against Henderson, NJCU put out a statement on September 28 which said that the university had a \$6 million surplus on June 30, 2021, which was the last day of the fiscal year.

The Future of the University

In the past few years, NJCU experienced a downward enrollment trend and negative impacts from the pandemic.

In the February “Academic Connections” newsletter sent to faculty members, Provost Tamara Jhashi said that NJCU’s four-year graduation rate of 18 percent is “unacceptable” and that faculty members join her in working toward finding solutions. Jhashi also said that the American Council on Education’s Learner Success Lab will be working with NJCU this semester to address retention and shorten the “time-to-degree.”

Since Henderson became president, the four-year graduation rate increased substantially from 7 percent in 2014 to 18 percent in 2021.

Regarding the financial future of NJCU, White said during the board meeting that it is difficult to predict where the university will be by the end of the 2022 fiscal year (June 30), but that it is likely that there will be a break-even or slight surplus.

Barbra Hildner, an English professor and president of the AFT union, spoke towards the end of the meeting. She cited that William Paterson University fired roughly 40 percent of its faculty due to financial challenges. Hildner said that she is glad NJCU is moving in the opposite direction and not firing faculty members. She said that faculty are important and it is “counterproductive to limit faculty.”

Speaking with Hildner after the meeting, she said, “I have great hope for the university” and that she wants the university to make better decisions as it embarks on its second century in a few years.

The Enrollment Outlook

NJCU is not the only college that has had enrollment challenges. It is an issue that many colleges and universities are facing, primarily because there are simply fewer people who are college-aged in the United States than years prior.

Ben Rhodin, the vice president for enrollment management, gave a report on enrollment projections for the next school year. Undergraduate enrollment is on tracking 6 percent ahead of 2021 this time last year, with graduate enrollment being up by about 5 percent, according to Rhodin.

Rhodin explained that NJCU has been doing more recruitment in the Hudson County area as well as introducing new strategies to attract more out-of-state students. He said that in 2022, the university will be monitoring the locations where students are interested; so far, a majority are from the east coast with some in the mid-west.

In 2021, Rhodin said that enrollment was down by around 8 percent compared to 2020. He also said that the Garden State Guarantee will take effect in Fall 2022 which will provide financial assistance for students whose family income is up to \$80,000. NJCU students have the lowest family income of all New Jersey four-year institutions, according to Rhodin.

According to the data on the NJCU website, undergraduate enrollment has seen decreases every year for the past six years, from 6,663 students in 2016 to 5,262 students in 2021.

The Red Maple report pointed out that enrollment challenges on top of expansion efforts from the university added to its financial strain.



NJCU’s School of Business, located in Downtown Jersey City, is where the Board of Trustees was held. Photo by NJCU Marketing and Communications.

Other Updates

There was no mention of the vote of no confidence against Henderson.

The next Board meeting will be on April 25. This will include the tuition and fees hearing for the next school year. Acebo noted that this does not indicate there will be another tuition increase, but that it will be discussed.

During the meeting, Henderson presented a university update that included student success initiatives, notable achievements from athletics, and upcoming events from the Music, Dance, and Theater program, Joffrey Ballet, the Center for the Arts, and more.

Henderson said that there will be a report coming in April with updates on how the university is adapting the recommendations from rpk.

There have been workshops from rpk with department chairs and deans.

Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Angel Gonzalez, gave a report on Black and Latinx student success initiatives. This included opportunities for student engagement, a campus-wide push to celebrate diversity, alumni mentors, and more.

Board chairman, Joseph F. Scott, said, “Student success is our number one priority” during his report at the start of the meeting.

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL: *THE YEAR OF REDEMPTION*

by Charles Villanueva - Contributing Writer

The New Jersey City University women's softball team is gearing up for a new season, one that will hopefully put last year's memories behind them.

The 2020-2021 campaign for the Lady Knights was a horrid one. The team ended up with a record of 0-19. The last time the team laced up their cleats was in early May 2021. The game was a part of the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Tournament and ended with a gut-wrenching loss to Rutgers-Camden with a score of 2-1. The loss was the conclusion to a season that was filled with troubles for the team.

Sophomore Mariah Villanueva, a Jersey City native and a second-year starter for the team, remembers the season as being "depleted by injuries and COVID-19 protocols; it was tough to deal with. A lot of people had to step up."

Despite her first season being a tough one, Villanueva is optimistic about her second season and said that the team is in a better space than last season. When asked about the expectations surrounding this season, Villanueva said, "We as a team are extremely excited about the season, over the offseason we have been building team chemistry and participating in a lot of team bonding. We feel like we have been labeled as the underdog of the NJAC and we want to go out and prove them wrong."

With newfound chemistry and players returning from injuries, the team is hoping to make amends this season. "We have our whole team returning, and we are all looking to make an impact on the field right away," Villanueva said.



Alissa Bikowski (31-left) and Mariah Villanueva (10-right). Photo courtesy of NJCU Athletic Communications.

Fifth year coach Ashley Martinez said, "This is the most talented group of girls we have had at this program, yes, we have always had one or two really talented players but collectively this year is the year with the most talent, the 0-19 record does show a lot of losses but in the course, we took a lot of wins mentally and helped us prepare for this season. Last year started off rough for us, three of our pitchers started the season on the COVID protocol list, but we put that behind us and the rough season helped us create our team culture, overall, we are in a better place mentally and are hungry to come out and play not only for us but for the community that supports the team."

Senior Alissa Bikowski, a South Amboy native and starting utility player for the team also spoke about how tough last year was and how the team was ready to turn the page on the past. Bikowski said, "This program is a good one, last year does not define who we are as a team."

When speaking to Bikowski about the last game the team played, she said, "It was a tough loss, which was decided in the 7th inning, we were so close. A lot of us were so emotional after the loss."

"We are healthier than last year; we got a new strength and conditioning coach who has been working hard making sure that we are prepared for the upcoming season and mentally we feel great, we have done a lot of bonding with each other and getting to know each other on and off the field," Bikowski added.

The Lady Knights begin their season on March 7 with spring scrimmages. April 2 will be a doubleheader home event and first NJAC conference games. The irony is that the Knights' first conference games will be against the same team that ended their season last year, Rutgers-Camden.

CREATING HISTORY ONE MATCH AT A TIME

by Charles Villanueva - Contributing Writer



Individual photo of sophomore co-captain Sandy Guerrero (West Orange native) with her family/friends in the background. Photo Courtesy of NJCU Athletic Communications/Prescod Media.



The NJCU Women's Wrestling team. Photo Courtesy of NJCU Athletic Communications/Prescod Media.

The women's wrestling team made history in early February for being the first collegiate team in New Jersey to host a women's wrestling match.

NJCU went up against East Stroudsburg University (ESU), a familiar opponent. The teams previously met on November 14 in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania with NJCU winning by a score of 24-22.

The historic match was held at the John J. Moore Athletics and Fitness Center. Regardless of the outcome, the women's wrestling team competed valiantly in front of a large home crowd on February 6. It was an outstanding performance by two teams that have received votes in the NCAA Women's National Wrestling Association Top 15 poll. The final score was 28-14 in favor of ESU, but NJCU performed admirably, and the day was historic not only for the women's wrestling team, but for the entire NJCU community.

Naomi Henry, a sophomore from Brooklyn, New York, has joined the NJCU women's wrestling team. She said, "The tournament was such an amazing moment. Women's wrestling is the fastest growing sport in the country, and we are actively participating in its growth and development, so it's very heartwarming and something I take pride in."

Wrestling is primarily associated with men; however, women now have more opportunities to participate and excel in the sport. NJCU has done an excellent job of adding new athletic programs; women's wrestling is a relatively new at the university. Even though it was launched in May 2019, the team did not compete in its first season until 2021-22 due to COVID protocols.

NJCU is one of the first colleges in New Jersey to offer a women's wrestling program, creating a space for female wrestlers all over the state and to be able

to compete at a collegiate level. New Jersey City University has a history of being innovative in terms of athletic programs, including being the first to field an NCAA Division III women's bowling team.

Henry also said, "I have never been a part of anything so special, I am truly blessed to have an amazing coaching staff and exceptional teammates, we have spent so much time trying to build together and have been there for each other every step of the way."

"I am genuinely happy to be a part of such an amazing team, and I am truly excited to see what is in store for the future of this program and for women collegiate wrestling across the state of New Jersey and the entire metro area," Henry said when asked how she feels about being a part of the team.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SCRAPBOOKING

by Julie Marie Frances DeVoe - Copy Editor

Junk-journaling is a hot new trend, but for me, it has brought some calmness from my busy days. In my eyes, it is merely the combination of scrapbooking and journaling.

People can make their spreads around a certain theme while others use scraps of paper, stickers, and various washi tapes. Depending on the design, it can take a couple of hours to a few days. When they are finished, some upload them onto their social media sites such as TikTok and Instagram, and they end up going viral.

There are many websites to get supplies from such as Amazon and Etsy. I recommend the scrapbook aisles in Hobby Lobby and Michael's. This way you can see exactly what you are getting compared to buying something online and risk it being something else.

If you wish to start junk journaling, you will need the following:

- **Hardcover journal:** A blank journal from a bullet journal company such as Leuchttorn or Artist's Loft (Michael's) where they have dots, grids, lines, and blank pages. It can also be a sketchbook but make sure that you place anything 3D (such as stickers or rhinestones) carefully, so the book seam does not break.

- **Various scrapbook sheets:** Ask a family member or anyone local if they are selling or getting rid of scraps of scrapbook paper. Part of this is tearing paper to create ripped edges.

- **Craft scissors:** A pair that differs from your traditional kitchen scissors or fabric scissors. I learned in fashion

school that you should never use scissors meant to cut fabric for paper.

- **Various stickers:** These are great to match your spread's theme. I noticed that some creators use stickers to completely cover something they placed down because they did not like how it looked.



Junk journal spread.
Photo by DeVoe.

- **Glue:** You will need a glue stick or glue adhesive to make sure that your paper scraps are securely attached to your journal.

- **Washi Tape:** Great for making decorative frames around the pages.

- **Hole punch:** Giving the journal spreads a Victorian style look by hole punching multiple scraps of paper and string them together to create a little book.

- **Pens and Markers:** Can be simple as black or can be in different color. Suggested brands are Micron and Tombow. I use the fine tip pens and markers in the artist section.

I journaled in the past to vent because I did not want to be judged or ridiculed for what I wrote. I wanted a personal space that would not be intruded on, since one of my siblings found my diary when I was 10, showed my mother what I wrote, and I felt that my privacy was invaded. It may be why I have not finished a single journal in my life.

I got into junk journaling in late-December, and I feel that it calms my anxiety down. I get so wrapped up in expressing my creativity that I shut the world out. It is a healthy alternative to what I used to do when I was overly stressed and did not know how to handle it.

Lastly, I have scrapbooked but not enough to where I can make these brilliant spreads. I had a scrapbook around the age of 10, it was made of wood and had horse embellishment on it. It consisted of pages dedicated to activities from group therapy involving horseback riding (with a horse named Star) and swimming at a lake. That was my only completed scrapbook.

The main point of junk journaling is to just have fun with it and play around with different aesthetics. You do not have to be an artist; you just need to be open to where your creativity will lead and allow yourself the opportunity to de-stress.

GETTING INVOLVED: CLUBS AND ORGS ON CAMPUS



Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. Greek Students dancing at the fall 2021 Green & Gold Day. Photo by David Wilson.

Here's a list of all the clubs under the Student Government Association at NJCU:

ASBMB:

Standing for Advocating Success and Beyond, Advocating Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. The ASBMB gives students opportunities to collaborate in hands-on projects, build a career path into science and medical fields, and expand their social networks. Making science fun and passionate for future generations. Instagram: @njcuasbmb.

ASEZ (Saving the Earth from A to Z):

This organization is an international network established by high school and university students from the World Mission Society Church of God. This is a welcoming environment for members to learn how to be leaders, join volunteer opportunities, and Bible seminars. The

ASEZ are part of several focus projects. Their mission qualities are unity, friendship and diverse acceptance among all races, religions, and socioeconomics. Instagram: @Asezeastcoastusa and Website: www.asez.org.



The ASEZ Club at the spring 2022 Green & Gold Day. Photo courtesy of SGA Marketing.

Biology Club:

This club is focused on career fields related to biology, medicine, and health, but still inclusive to other science subjects. Volunteering, charity, and resume building are part of this club's initiative to expand societal relations and skills. Instagram: @njcubioclub, biologyclubnjcu@gmail.com, Twitter: @njcubioclub

Black Student Union (BSU): The BSU is designed to educate and inform the student body about the African diaspora. The BSU is also created to celebrate and uplift our Black student body. Instagram: [bsunjcu](https://www.instagram.com/bsunjcu).

Chemistry Club:

A chapter/branch of the American Chemical Society, this club focuses on engaging students in chemistry-related opportunities for careers, activities, and developing critical skills. Instagram: @njcuchem.



The Dance Club at the spring 2022 Green & Gold Day. Photo courtesy of NJCU Marketing and Communications/Paul Gargiulo.

CRU:

A Non-Denominational Christian Organization, their goals are to empower students and encouraging participants to spread and share positivity. College life can be stressful and tedious, CRU is here to help relieve and soothe student minds through the Fellowship of the Word. CRU meetings are in GSUB 217, Mondays at 4 PM. Instagram: @njcucr

DANCE Club:

Whether you are a skilled dancer, want to be, or just love to dance no matter what, this is the club for you and your rhythmic spirits, come and dance your stress away. Instagram: @Danceclub_njcu.

Drea(ME)rs:

A supportive and empowering space for undocumented, immigrant, and refugee students to provide knowledge and confidence to traverse society without feeling disadvantaged. Their objectives are: (1) Educating on societal and legal inequalities, (2) educational, legal, and other financial resources, (3) Guide students towards opportunities and becoming citizens. Follow Instagram @njcudreamers.

Environmental Club:

If you care about the planet, are an activist, want to spread a greener environment, this is the club for you. The Environmental club will also help students build effective resumes while learning how to initiate good changes. Their three main objectives are education, advocacy, and volunteerism. Instagram: @njcu.enviroclub, Email: njcuenviroclub@gmail.com.

Film Club:

Are you interested in Acting, Writing or Filmmaking? This new club is a for students of any major who is interested in making films. Whether you have experience or not, the club's goal is to make sure everyone learns how to make good films as a group. Email the president with any questions at twarren@njcu.edu. Instagram @njcufilmclub

Gothic Curls Club:

This club seeks to teach curly-haired individuals to embrace natural selves. Gothic Curls provide tips, styling techniques, workshops, giveaways, and resources regarding hair-care maintenance and safety. Instagram: @njcugothiccurls.

Health Science Student Organization (HSSO):

This organization consists of a flexible network of students pursuing the healthcare industry while also working with other departments and clubs on the campus. The HSSO's mission involves building members into leaders to unify



Students at the fall 2021 Green & Gold Day. Photo by David Wilson.

their communities while maintaining a strong network. Instagram @njcu_hssso.

LGBTQI+ Alliance:

The objectives of the LGBTQI+ Alliance is to expand safe and social environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Questioning/Queer, Intersex and Asexual students. The Alliance raises awareness, celebrating pride, and servicing activists' events while countering social issues. Instagram: @njcualliance, njcualliance@gmail.com



The LGBTQI+ Alliance at the spring 2022 Green & Gold Day with SGA president, Thyquel Halley. Photo courtesy of SGA Marketing.

Muslim Student Association (MSA):

MSA was founded by Muslim students from various backgrounds who wanted to provide a safe space for Islamic teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. Islam is a religion that spreads words of open-mindedness and love. The MSA's objectives: (1) Facilitate a strong Muslim community, (2) Provide and maintain educational, social, and spiritual resources, (3) counteract harmfully racist and stereotypical ideas about Islam in American society, (4)

expand awareness about global current events. Instagram @njcumsa.

Positive Mind Club:

This club is built on the foundation of raising awareness for mental health, wanting to give students a safe place to discuss what contributes to the detrimental factors to our minds and emotions. Positive Mind is focused on developing workshops for students and staff to make up for the lack of resources

in Jersey City, especially for young adults suffering alone. More of their goals involve creating fun events, hands on experiences, and leadership training while promoting education. Instagram: @njcu_positivemindclub21.

Pre-Dental Club:

The Pre-Dental club exists to build and guide a community of future dentistry professionals. They will provide preparation and research for dental schools, the Dental Admission Test (D.A.T.), introduce guest speakers and mentors who will expose students to various career and volunteer.

Pre-Med Club:

For students following the medical and healthcare fields, this club will help provide resources, establish connections between members and build networks within the medical community. This club will introduce internships, volunteering, research, prepare students transitioning into graduate school, provide resume workshops, and mentorships. Their mission is to build up future healthcare workers with a passion for service. Instagram: @njcupremed.



The Pre-Dental Club at the spring 2022 Green & Gold Day. Photo courtesy of NJCU Marketing and Communications/Paul Gargiulo.

Swim Club:

This is one of the newest clubs at NJCU for students who enjoy swimming at are looking to boost their skills in the water. Instagram: @njcu_swimclub.

Test Prep Club:

Founded and designed by President Izzet Semih Ozkaya from the ground up, Test Prep is here to guide and provide students with empowerment, free resources, and an environment of good vibes to study proficiently. They will introduce hundreds of members to their study souls (study buddies), launch workshops with high school students to prepare them for the pros and cons of college life and prepare you for test such as MCAT, LSAT etc. Soon to come is their own website and student club app. Test Prep is leveling up this year. Instagram: @smhozkayaa, @testprepnjcu.

Undergraduate Student Research Club:

This club focuses on learning, discussing, and applying research skills in science, English, psychology, and other disciplines. Instagram: @usrc.njcu, usrc.njcu@gmail.com

Student Government Association:

The SGA is a group of elected student leaders that provide a platform for concerns, ideas and voices from the campus community. They contribute to clubs and organizations. Their mission included inclusion, access, support, community involvement, and student well-being. Instagram: @sganjcu.

Student Activities Board:

The SAB plans diverse programs of cultural, social, educational, and recreational activities across campus. Instagram: @sabnjcu



The Test Prep Club at the spring 2022 Green & Gold Day. Photo courtesy of SGA Marketing.



The Undergraduate Student Research Club talking to a student at the spring 2022 Green & Gold Day. Photo courtesy of NJCU Marketing and Communications/Paul Gargiulo.



The Student Government Association. Photo courtesy of SGA Marketing.

This list was compiled by Nick Felix, Features Editor. If you have a club that is not listed here, please contact him at nfelix@njcu.edu.

CITIZENS' GUIDE TO ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE & HEALTH POLICY



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ANGELA MCKNIGHT
**ASSEMBLYWOMAN &
FOUNDER/CEO OF ANGELA
CARES**

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4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

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THE DESTRUCTIVE LEGACY OF JANUARY 6TH

by Grace Perez - News Editor



Scenes from the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the United States Capital. Photo by Dakota Santiago

It's known now as the "big lie;" the idea that Donald Trump perpetuated the idea among his supporters that the only way his campaign would lose this election would be if there was interference from his opponents. Trump's infamous quote saying, "...make sure your vote gets counted. Make sure because the only way we're going to lose this election is if the election is rigged" created the foundation for a new way of thinking that placed doubt upon the United States' voting system.

Creating a loss of confidence in the voting system allowed Trump to put the blame of his failure not on himself but instead on the government for unfairly targeting him. This positioned him as a martyr who only wanted to "keep America great." But by perpetuating mistrust in the voting system and our own representatives, Trump's "Big Lie" has significantly larger effects than just influencing this election. In fact, the consequences were seen soon after when groups of armed terrorists surrounded the Capitol building in an attempt to sway the results. An insurrection such as this leaves many to wonder, what will happen next?

Trump's term in office created a ground for these white supremacists' ideals to fester and build momentum. Since the beginning of his administration, Trump has created a safe place for right wing extremists in the United States. In 2019, emails between Trump and his senior advisor for policy and chief speechwriter, Steven Miller, were published. In these emails, Miller expresses robust support for many extreme white supremacist concepts, including the "great replacement" theory, race science, and eugenics. Going further, Miller blamed immigrants for crime and even praised the Confederacy. To put in plain terms, a senior advisor to the President of the United States supported ideas which greatly resemble white supremacist and Nazi propaganda.

Among the people involved in the attack on the Capitol - which led to the death of five Americans - white supremacist and right-wing terrorist groups played a huge role. Militia groups that spouted right wing rhetoric used the January 6th riots as an opportunity to recruit and enlist more individuals for their cause. Militias such as the Proud Boys showed up to

events claiming to "keep order" such as providing security for Mike Pence and Roger Stone or detaining protestors. Right wing militia groups threatened the security of our country which we saw all too well during the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville in 2017 when private militias outgunned and outmanned the actual police force. Time after time these right-wing militias have deterred and prevented police from actually enforcing law and order.

In the United States, white supremacist violence has been drastically increasing. Since 2015, there have been 267 plots or attacks involving right wing extremists resulting in 91 fatalities (Washington Post). Right wing extremism began gathering momentum shortly after the election of former President Barack Obama in 2008.

The use of social media has contributed greatly to the rise of white supremacy. An example of social media's effect on the right-wing agenda is Taylor Michael Wilson who, on October 22, 2017, pulled the brakes on a train, carrying a handgun and a pocket knife. After a struggle with a train conductor, Wilson was restrained.



Scenes from the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the United States Capital. Photo by Dakota Santiago

Later, Wilson stated to a deputy that he “was going to save the train from black people”. It was later found that Wilson had deeply immersed himself in right wing propaganda through social media.

The white supremacist agenda has found a place in the larger anti-government agenda, and Trump’s position in office

provided this movement an ally. Now that Trump’s presidency has come to an end, the FBI and Department of Homeland Security have significantly increased their efforts to combat the new wave of white supremacy in the U.S. However, the spark in the white supremacist movement still lives on. As Representative Jamie B. Raskin

(D-Md.), who held oversight meetings during 2019 on the federal response to rising white supremacist violence, said, “Any expert is going to tell you that this is the most serious security threat to the American people today. And yet we don’t have any good description of the magnitude and dimensions of the problem.”

Gothic Knight Ally Safe Zone Program

Promoting
Queer-Inclusive
Community



Ally Training



Students, Staff,
and Faculty
Welcome!

LUNCH WILL
BE SERVED!

Friday, March 18

10 AM - 2 PM, GSUB 312

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LOCAL PAN-AFRICAN GROUP UPLIFTS COMMUNITY

AN INTERVIEW WITH NJCU ALUMNI NEVIN PERKINS

by Melina Quispe - Social Media Manager



Build More Unity during a community event. Photo Courtesy of BMU.

Nevin Perkins is an NJCU alumni and is one of the founders of Build More Unity. The organization has educated and helped many individuals, specifically in Jersey City and Newark. They have involved the community in their activism and have made a positive impact on people's lives. Build More Unity has organized programs without the help of corporations or government entities. They are independent and continue to serve and stand with the community. Check them out @BuildMoreUnity on Instagram and Twitter!

Q: How did Build More Unity start?

A: Build More Unity formerly known as Black Men United was created in April of 2019 by a few NJCU students, myself included. We were originally looking to form a club/organization on NJCU's campus that consisted of Black men. Some of our goals and objectives were community organizing and organizing for black students on campus. We were discouraged from creating an organization of black men and were told that we would not be able to do so. It was quote on quote I guess constricting in terms of social identity

in terms of who could participate and who could not. [NJCU has a policy that requires all clubs under the Student Government Association to be inclusive of all students regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, etc.] This was very discouraging for us initially. But we really liked the idea, and we were really strong suited towards it, so we decided to be an actual community organization instead of a club on campus. A few of our early members had tried to be a part of the black student union or tried to resurrect the black student union. Most of the programs that we saw from advocacy organizations weren't necessarily pushing the needle for us as much as we would have liked. Ultimately, us being discouraged led us into becoming a community organization.

Q: What has Build More Unity done for the community since it started?

A: In the past two years through our "survival distribution program", we have given out thousands of items of clothes to the less fortunate. This includes care packages of essential resources in terms of now more recently Covid resources and hygiene products. We have partnered with an organization that does

a weekly meal program aside from our survival distribution programs. We have organized community clean-ups. At the beginning of our organization, we have gotten behind some issues that have faced the city council. We have worked to organize and advocate through that lens. A few things have taken place in Jersey City in terms of police violence. We have been in the front lines of those issues to advocate for fairer situations and advocating for justice for those harms. We have also held educational lectures in the general community where we have talked about Pan Africanism and black politics. We also had another program that we had going on for six to eight months with a business called Whealth Kitchen in Journal Square. This was around the time the pandemic just dropped. We were doing a rent relief program so we would raise about 500 dollars for a family in need and every month we would give that amount to the family. Then Whealth Kitchen would supply the family with meals for the month and we would raise the proceeds by having a community event. Poets, artists, or musicians could come to perform on our live stream program at Whealth Kitchen. People who were watching the event or paid attention to the promotion of the event could donate to the proceeds of rent relief. This went on for 8 months at the beginning of the pandemic.

Q: Did the families start to get back on their feet once the help was given to them?

A: Definitely, we kept in contact with a few different families. Some are still struggling but some we were able to help at real crucial moments. Some

obviously avoided houselessness with this program.

Q: Is homelessness a systemic issue?

A: It is definitely a systemic thing. In New York, there are more available homes than there are homeless people. The issue of homelessness or houselessness isn't an individual failure it is a state failure. Even now on a smaller scale such as Jersey City, there is so much vacant property and so much land that can be built on. This land can be built on for adequate, affordable, or free housing for people to get back on their feet. It is just not being built. It is kind of one of those things where Capitalism continues houselessness so that the working class has somewhere to look and say okay I do not want to be there, so I have to go to my job every day.

Q: How is Build More Unity funded? How does the program sustain itself?

A: The funds we get to maintain our programs or distribute our resources come straight from the community themselves. So, we have the commonly known Cash app, Venmo, and things like that. Then if we are having a program on our flyer that information is on our flyer or our bio. People who have seen us and been around have elected themselves to donate regularly to keep our programs going. Recently, we have been in conversation and talking about designing merchandise for ourselves. Not necessarily to build a brand but just to be able to sustain ourselves. So that okay if we have merch our merch can fund some of our programs and things like that. We are kind of against government-sanctioned funding. If the majority of our funding comes from the state apparatus, then we are limited on what we can say or do. That is why we try to be completely funded by the community.

Q: What kind of businesses are allowed to donate to Build More Unity?

A: We do not seek funding from big businesses that abuse laborers and capital. We do not seek to receive grants, resources, or donations from big corporations. We do from local businesses with whom we have partnerships. When Storm Ida happened, we were going around, and we were emptying damages from businesses' basements. As well as homeowners' basements to help them out with that labor. We would get a bunch of folks from the organization together and we did it for a few different businesses here in Jersey City. Now those businesses are a part of the people that regularly donate to us.

Q: Do you think that Build More Unity has educated or inspired other advocates?

A: I would like to think so. We work closely with other organizations here in Jersey City that have done really great work. Other individuals in the community have told us that we have inspired them to tap in and do some more groundwork that is more in tune with the community's needs. So, yeah, I would say we have.

Q: What figures of African descent have inspired you and other founders of Build More Unity to keep going?

A: Well, I would consider myself a Malcomist. Malcolm X changed my life. I read his autobiography when I was 14 and I didn't really take it in for what it was at that age. Then I read it a few years ago and it completely changed my life. For the organization at large Malcolm is definitely one of those figures as well as Assata Shakur. Her stance on liberation and her work is something we really respect. Kwame Nkrumah, one of the founders of Pan Africanism, W. E. B.

Dubois another one of the founders of Pan Africanism. Build More Unity is a Pan African organization by the way. Marcus and Amy Garvey were the founders of the UNI which was the largest Neco Association ever created. I think they were at 27 million members at its height. There is not a lot of people that I would say we look up to now. The climate of higher-up activism gets very democratic, and capitalism influences it, so it is hard to tell who is genuine or not. But those are definitely some of the historic people that we hold dear.

Q: What plans does Build More Unity have for 2022?

A: We hope to secure an actual space. We hope to build more relationships with organizations that are doing similar work like us and have similar politics as us. We hope to establish a door-to-door program where we do political education and check-ins with the community. Actually, getting on the ground and visiting neighbors to let people know that hey this organization is here. We want to let them know that we are offering certain programs and furthering our outreach. We also want to grow our membership in 2022.



Nevin Perkins and other members of Build More Unity. Photo Courtesy of BMU.



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