Effective fall 2016, RU–N to the TOP will provide the following to RU–N’s undergraduate students who qualify:

• All Newark residents who gain admission and whose household adjusted gross income (AGI) is $60,000 or less will be offered scholarships covering 100 percent of undergraduate tuition and fees (after federal, state, and external scholarships have been awarded).

• Admitted students who are transferring to RU–N after earning an associate’s degree from a New Jersey county college, and whose household AGI is $60,000 or less, will be offered scholarships covering 100 percent of undergraduate tuition and fees (after federal, state, and external scholarships have been awarded).

• All students admitted to RU–N’s innovative Honors Living-Learning Community will receive 100 percent residential scholarships covering the full cost of room and board.

RU–N long has been known as an engine of opportunity for Newarkers and New Jerseyans who are first-generation college-going students, first-generation Americans, and students from hardworking families of modest means. Chancellor Nancy Cantor believes the new financial aid initiative strengthens that tradition significantly in ways that speak directly to challenges facing Newark and New Jersey today, as well as communities everywhere. “Our city, state, and nation need to increase educational attainment to both strengthen our democracy and compete in today’s global economy.”

“Our city, state, and nation need to increase educational attainment to both strengthen our democracy and compete in today’s global economy…”

–Chancellor Nancy Cantor
**SCHOLARSHIP**

**Rutgers University–Newark Faculty Recognized for Their Scholarship**

by Lawrence Lerner and Ferlanda Fox Nixon

During fall semester 2015, many Rutgers University–Newark faculty members received both internal and external honors and accolades. Here’s a highlight of four.

In October, Lee Slater of the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences (EES) was appointed a Henry Rutgers University Professor in geophysics, and Patrick Shafto, associate professor of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, RU–N’s first Henry Rutgers Term Chair in data science. Henry Rutgers University Professorships and Term Chairs were created under the Rutgers system Strategic Plan to assist in recruiting and retaining distinguished faculty.

Lee Slater (left) and Patrick Shafto

Slater has held several leadership posts within EES, including graduate program director and chairperson. In his research, he uses geophysical imaging methods to investigate the structure and processes occurring in the shallow subsurface of the earth commonly known as the “critical zone,” a living, breathing, constantly evolving boundary layer where rock, soil, water, air, and living organisms interact. Slater is using such imaging to better understand the transformation of groundwater contaminants and how best to remediate them.

Shafto has research interests in the intersection of computer science, psychology, and education. He runs a Cognition and Data Science Lab, which is developing tools to facilitate human learning and decision-making, while also advancing machine learning. He is a co-principal investigator of a project funded under the Chancellor’s Seed Grant Program that uses data science to understand how emotion interacts with learning in children’s play.

In November, Henry Rutgers University Professor A. Van Jordan won the prestigious 2015 Lannan Literary Award for poetry. Bestowed by the Lannan Foundation since 1989, the Lannan Literary Award recognizes writers who have made significant contributions to English-language literature. Jordan was the sole winner for 2015.

A. Van Jordan

Jordan, who teaches in RU–N’s MFA in Creative Writing Program and English department, is the author of four collections of poetry; *Rise* (2001), which won the PEN/Oakland Josephine Miles Award; *M-A-C-O-L-I-D* (2005), which was listed as one of the Best Books of 2005 by *The London Times*; *Quantum Lyrics* (2007); and *The Cineaste* (2013). Jordan’s work also was selected for the anthology *Best American Poetry 2013*. He also participates in the Writers at Newark Mentors Program, where students and faculty of RU–N’s MFA in Creative Writing Program partner with Newark high schools to facilitate the exploration of the writings of visiting authors.

In December, the Modern Language Association (MLA) selected Sadia Abbas, associate professor of RU–N’s Department of English and the Program in Women’s and Gender Studies, as a co-winner of the MLA Prize for a First Book for *Abbas conceived and coordinates the Beyond Islamophobia and the Postcolonial Questions and Performance lecture series.*

Hail and Best Wishes to the Class of 2016 by Carla Capizzi

On May 18, Rutgers University–Newark’s 2016 commencement ceremony will take place at Prudential Center. During the ceremony, RU–N will bestow upon renowned actor, radio personality, author, and humanitarian Wendell Pierce an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree, while human rights activist Radhika Coomaraswamy will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Pierce will deliver the main commencement address.

Chancellor Nancy Cantor and Provost Jerome D. Williams will preside over the ceremony.

A hooding ceremony for the Graduate School will take place May 12; Lorenzo Davide, CEO of the Community Chest, will be the keynote speaker. Rutgers Business School doctoral and master’s degree recipients will be honored separately on May 20; Robert Falcon, EVP and CFO of Prudential Financial Inc., will deliver remarks. Rutgers Law School will hold its convocation on May 27; Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, will be the featured speaker.

A native of New Orleans, Pierce developed his prodigious talent as an actor through education, going from a regular public high school, to arts magnet school, to Juilliard. Throughout his career, he has used his talent to draw attention to the pressing issues of urban America, most famously through his work on *The Wire*, a critically acclaimed television show and the inspiration for both a recurring course and a lecture series at RU–N. Pierce also founded a nonprofit organization to help his hometown recover from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, which also is the subject of his recently published book, *The Wind in the Reeds: A Storm, A Play, and the City That Would Not Be Broken*.

Coomaraswamy is revered around the world for serving as a moral voice and independent advocate to build awareness and give prominence to the rights and protection of boys and girls affected by armed conflict, as well as the rights of women and children generally. She served as the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict from 2006 to 2012 and the U.N.’s first Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, from 1994 to 2003. She was a lead author on a major U.N. global study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security. The report has been widely praised for significantly elevating discussions to strengthen policies protecting women and children, especially in times of conflict.

**Commencement-At-A-Glance**

**Rutgers University–Newark Commencement** (2,085 graduates)

Newark College of Arts and Sciences, University College, Graduate School, Rutgers Business School (undergraduate), School of Criminal Justice, School of Public Affairs and Administration

Prudential Center

Wednesday, May 18, 9 a.m.

Graduate School PhD and MFA Hooding Ceremony

Paul Robeson Campus Center

Thursday, May 12, 3 p.m.

Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick (graduate programs)

(765 graduates)

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Friday, May 20, 4 p.m.

Rutgers Law School (190 graduates)

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Friday, May 27, 10 a.m.
Frank Askin, Distinguished Professor of Law, Robert E. Knowlton Scholar, and Director of the Constitutional Rights Clinic by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

A 1966 alumnus of Rutgers Law School, Frank Askin has spent the last 50 years dedicated to the practice of law and the pursuit of legal scholarship at his beloved alma mater. And on July 1, 2016, the Rutgers University-Newark community will bid a fond farewell to Askin as he retires from a long and rewarding career.

"I'm one of the fortunate ones," says Askin. "What I do for a living is more like a hobby for me than a job."

It's easy to build an impressive résumé when you truly enjoy what you do; in that vein, Askin's accomplishments are many. He has served as a volunteer attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union throughout all his career; handled riot litigation in the late 1960s that included lawsuits filed against the city of Newark for discriminatory hiring practices of firefighters and law enforcement officers; and established the Constitutional Litigation Clinic at Rutgers Law School in 1970.

Since the inception of the Constitutional Litigation Clinic, now known as the Constitutional Rights Clinic, approximately 20 students enroll each semester and learn all aspects of litigation: interviewing skills, case assessment, legal research and writing, and ethical responsibilities. Under his sage tutelage as founding director, two generations of former students now contribute to society as public interest attorneys.

Askin's support of the clinic goes much deeper than the teaching and training he provides to students. In 2010 he and his wife of 56 years, Marilyn Askin (a Rutgers Law School alumna ’70 and a former law school adjunct faculty member), gave Rutgers Law School a gift of more than $115,000 to create an endowment to support the law school’s clinical program. Six years later, the value of the fund is nearly $1 million. To honor the Askins for their dedication to the law school and clinical education and training, this spring Rutgers Law School will name its clinical wing the "Frank and Marilyn Askin Clinical Wing" during a formal reception. Also during the reception, Mr. Askin will receive the Rutgers Award, the university’s highest honor, in recognition of his unique and lasting contributions to Rutgers and its stakeholders.

It has been an enviable run for Mr. Askin. But as he says good-bye to one hobby, he welcomes another. Presently, the Askins play Bridge on weekends only. When they retire and move to Florida, it will become a daily avocation.

Upon their retirement, the Askins will leave the “family business” in very capable hands. One of their sons, Jonathan, also an alumnus and former teaching instructor of Rutgers Law School, is the director of the Law and Technology Clinic at Brooklyn Law School and teaches law and technology as a visiting professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Christina Strasburger, Department Administrator for the Department of African American and African Studies and Department of History by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

When Christina Strasburger graduated from Rutgers University-Newark in 2000 with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and criminal justice, she aspired to be a counselor. Instead she accepted a temporary, full-time, administrative position in RU-N’s Department of Psychology and has been a devoted RU-N staff member for nearly 16 years since then.

Nearly three-quarters of her time at RU-N has been spent as the department administrator for the Department of History and the Department of African American and African Studies, where she oversees a staff of seven—one administrative assistant and six student employees. In addition to her managerial responsibilities, she plans public programs, from lectures to musical and dance performances, and serves as an academic adviser for students majoring in both departments.

"While I didn’t start off planning to be an administrator, I know that’s where I’m supposed to be," Strasburger reflects. "My current role provides many opportunities for me to collaborate with and support people in ways that are deeply meaningful."

For example, as an academic adviser, Strasburger assists students with course planning, registration, and academic counseling. She also directs them to the various services RU-N has to offer, and whenever necessary, advocates on their behalf.

"What I love most about my job is working with the students, especially helping them to realize their goals. RU-N students are smart, creative, and appreciative. Every year, on Commencement Day, I celebrate and take pride in their successes," she smiles. Strasburger identifies as bi-racial and recognizes that she struggled with her identity while growing up. Not surprisingly, both professionally and personally, Strasburger gravitates toward activities that allow her to help individuals achieve a sense of belonging, particularly youths. In addition to supporting faculty and advising students in her departments, she also advocates for members of the LGBTQ community.

Strasburger is an active volunteer of the Newark LGBTQ Community Center and is one of the leads on the Queer Newark Oral History Project, which received a $75,000 award in 2015 under the Chancellor’s Seed Grant Program to interview and preserve the history of the full diversity of members of Newark’s LGBTQ community. Seeking to improve the work environment of her colleagues, she also co-chaired RU-N’s Staffing for the New Mission Action Team, which made recommendations to enhance talent management, professional development, staff recognition, communication, and staff voice/empowerment.

When she’s not volunteering or assisting others, Strasburger spends time with Eric (the boy-next-door she started dating 20 years ago and ultimately married in 2003) and Dexter, her pet Yorkie. She also enjoys amateur photography, art exhibits, dance and musical performances (especially jazz and hip hop), comedy shows, and off-Broadway plays.
The award-winning Rutgers University–Newark documentary, The Once and Future Newark, takes viewers on a tour of some of Newark’s most famous locations, selected for their broad cultural, social, and historical significance. Originally issued in 2006, Rutgers University–Newark reissued the DVD in 2015, and it now includes extended footage of the late Rutgers Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor of History Dr. Clement A. Price speaking about the culture, history, people, and promise of the city.

Long overshadowed by its close proximity to New York City, the treasures and history of Newark have remained hidden to many. Part travelerogue, part documentary, and part history lesson, The Once and Future Newark engages viewers’ interest for personal exploration and discovery of New Jersey’s largest city. Price taught urban history, public history, African-American history, and the history of New Jersey for more than three decades at Rutgers University–Newark. Named Newark city historian in 2014, decades at Rutgers University–Newark. price was celebrated for decades as a historian, teacher, mentor, author, friend, citizen, neighbor, collaborator, patron of the arts and humanities, public servant, and public intellectual. He was an advisor to leaders at the university and at all levels of government, up to and including the White House. Infused with Price’s warmth and his affection for Newark, the DVD is available for educational purposes from the Clement A. Price Institute on Ethnicity, Culture and the Modern Experience, www.ucis.rutgers.edu/icone. It also may be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLR2A47SFCDMEBAAAE

GS-LSAMP Receives National Recognition

In September 2015, the Garden State Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (GS-LSAMP) was honored as a “Bright Spot in Hispanic Education” by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. Rutgers University–Newark is the lead institution in the GS-LSAMP consortium of several northern New Jersey colleges that provide academic support to minority students through tutoring, peer-led learning, internships, community engagement, and research opportunities. Since 2009, GS-LSAMP has exceeded its goal of doubling the number of minority students who earn their bachelor’s degrees in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and continues to promote the representation and achievement of underrepresented students. The White House Initiative recognized GS-LSAMP for its commitment to ensuring access and success for Hispanic students, as evidenced by GS-LSAMP’s 64 percent increase in the number of Latinos/as graduating in STEM fields. As a Bright Spot, GS-LSAMP met the White House Initiative’s four criteria: impact a significant number of Latinos/as; support one of four key educational priorities: early learning, college access, college completion, or STEM education; measurably improve educational outcomes for Latinos/a students; and demonstrate its impact through measurable goals and data.

Five New Jersey community colleges, all of which are “Hispanic Serving Institutions,” are associate members of the GS-LSAMP and are designated the “Northern New Jersey Bridges to the Baccalaureate (B2B) Program.” The collaboration of the GS-LSAMP and B2B works to establish stronger pipelines for minorities in STEM fields from high schools and community colleges into four-year institutions.

The Once and Future Newark Reissued with Extended Footage

Esquilin comes to RU–N from Columbia University where she served as the director for Intercultural Resources and Social Justice Programs in the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Esquilin’s experience is deeply rooted in community building, curriculum development, strategic planning, and social justice education that will greatly benefit the HLLC.

Esquilin’s appointment was timed with the beginning of the second semester for HLLC’s first inaugural cohort of 50 students. Next year, the HLLC will have 60 additional students, and is expected to eventually house upwards of 500 undergraduates.
The Class of 2016

by Jade McClain

Thousands of fascinating students are graduating from Rutgers University–Newark this year. Here’s an introduction to a few of them.

**The Class of 2016 by Jade McClain**

**Onyedikachi Aligbe**

College of Arts and Sciences

In 2012, Onyedikachi Aligbe came to the United States from Nigeria to pursue her dreams of attending Rutgers University–Newark like her older sisters who were drawn to RU–N for its extensive research opportunities.

In 2016, the College of Arts and Sciences and Honors College senior now dreams of one day returning to Nigeria to share her knowledge of medicine and science for the improvement of Nigeria’s health care systems. Aligbe says that many health facilities in Nigeria lack the foundations in biological research that have allowed for medical advancements in countries like the United States, where patients have access to potentially life-saving treatments.

Aligbe’s goal after graduation is to continue her biological research and earn her M.D. in gynecology in the United States.

“I see it as a responsibility to take that [knowledge] back to Nigeria and do something productive with it,” Aligbe said.

During her time at RU–N, Aligbe has successfully maintained a 4.0 GPA, despite the demands of a 10-hour weekly commute, a position at the Office of Academic Services, her lab work conducting research on cancer, and her pre-med studies shadowing a pediatrician.

Aligbe says that she will begin applying to medical schools in May, and will spend the next year continuing her research and job shadowing at Foundation Pediatrics.

With a promising future, Aligbe wants to encourage incoming students to follow their passion and ignore stereotypes and naysayers.

“If you know what you want, don’t ever let what anyone else is saying distract you.”

**Andreas Economou- Ellison**

School of Criminal Justice

Andreas Economou- Ellison is driven to protect people. This drive is the reason he serves as a volunteer firefighter in his spare time. It’s the reason he interns with the State Police in the Intelligence Analysis Crime Unit and learns about domestic and foreign threats in RU–N’s Homeland Security Fellowship. It’s the reason that he is pursuing a career in law enforcement.

“I want to play a role in our nation’s security and protect the people in this country. A career in law enforcement would allow me to devote my time and efforts to making a positive impact,” Economou- Ellison said.

When Economou- Ellison came to RU–N, he had no doubt that he wanted to join law enforcement, and so he enrolled in the School of Criminal Justice. As a student, he chose to forego summer and winter breaks in favor of taking more classes. His commitment to his education is what allowed him to convert his psychology minor into a second major – a source of great pride for Economou- Ellison.

Economou- Ellison will earn his bachelor’s degree in May, but won’t have much time to rest before continuing his accelerated program to earn a master’s degree in criminal justice, which he will receive in December 2016.

Although he has his eyes on the future, Economou- Ellison can’t help but reflect on the memories of his undergraduate years.

“It’s been a long journey. I’ve enjoyed my education here and was always learning new things. I’ll miss the people and this institution,” he says.

**Sonali Shah**

Rutgers Business School

Sonali Shah may have a few months left before graduation, but she is breathing easy knowing that a full-time position awaits. In June 2016, Shah will begin working as a tax associate for PricewaterhouseCoopers where she interned last summer.

Shah’s offer comes at the conclusion of a busy four years as a Rutgers Business School (RBS) Honors College student. Shah double-majored in accounting and supply-chain management and enjoyed success in both fields with a first-place win in the Institute for Supply Management national case competition on the heels of her internship. Shah was one of an RBS trio that emerged victorious in last semester’s competition and cites that victory as her greatest RU–N achievement.

“Supply-chain management is my passion and accounting is something that I have always wanted to learn how to do,” Shah said.

During her time at RBS, Shah joined organizations like Women BUILD (Business Undergraduates in Leadership Development) and the mentoring program TeamUp, which have helped her grow into a more confident, assertive young professional. Shah says that her experiences transformed her from a shy first-year student who avoided networking opportunities, into someone who embraces them – recently serving as a board member for an RBS supply-chain meet and greet committee.

After graduation, Shah looks forward to becoming a certified public accountant with the goal of eventually opening her own tax practice.

**Omar Bareentto**

Rutgers Law School

I knew that Newark was definitely a city on the rise and it’s something that I wanted to be a part of. With its close proximity to New York City, and Philly in the other direction, it seemed like an ideal place,” said Omar Bareentto, a Rutgers Law School third-year student.

When Bareentto enrolled at the law school, Newark quickly became his home, and his peers became his family. The Minority Student Program (MSP) was Bareentto’s first experience with the school and has been his strongest source of support ever since. Through MSP Bareentto not only received a comprehensive orientation to law school, but

developed significant and lasting relationships with MSP alumni and his fellow members.

Bareentto’s law school career began with an impressive start when he earned a diversity fellowship at the prestigious law firm of McCarter & English and has continued to flourish as he crafted an impressive résumé. Currently, he interns at the Attorney General’s Office in the Civil Rights Division and is pursuing a government fellowship at the Eagleton Institute of Politics. He is also involved in a host of organizations, including the Association of Black Law Students, the Muslim Law Students Association, and the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

After graduation, Bareentto will work for the law firm Holland & Knight in business and corporate tax law, but is also very interested in labor and employment issues.

“The workplace is a very important place in everybody’s lives and I would love to be involved, whether it’s settling disputes or creating a friendlier environment for people,” Bareentto said.
Investing in Our Spaces and Places

by Jade McClain

2015 was a transformative year for Rutgers University–Newark with improvements throughout campus and new developments on the horizon. Initiated by needs articulated by the RU–N community in the strategic plan, massive upgrades and development projects were launched to “elevate the quality of the university; increase the attractiveness and usefulness of its spaces for students, faculty, staff, and visitors; and further brand the campus and buildings as ‘Rutgers University-Newark.’”

One such development is the recent opening of the 15 Washington Street building, which rebounded from an uncertain fate after a 15-year vacancy. The building underwent an $85 million renovation and has become a residential space for more than 300 undergraduate and graduate students and the new home of Chancellor Nancy Cantor.

During the summer of 2015, RU–N devoted $1 million to technology upgrades, including the installation of new HD projection screens, upgraded computers, and approximately 700 new internet access points – providing indoor high-speed internet service and achieving the fastest outdoor Wi-Fi in the country. An additional $1 million was dedicated for cosmetic improvements to classrooms, dining halls, residence halls, and administrative buildings with the installation of new carpeting and furniture, fresh coats of paint, and general upgrades.

On University Avenue, bulldozers and cranes signal the development of the Life Sciences II building, a space that will advance RU–N’s reputation as a teaching and research center with modern chemistry and biology research labs, a lecture hall for collaborative learning, and “entrepreneurial science” research labs, where faculty can establish practical solutions to global issues.

Additional construction projects include the building of Express Newark, the Alumni House, and the Honors Living-Learning Community residential building. Express Newark is one of several developments that will occupy the former Hahn’s building and will serve as an arts hub designed to cultivate artistic expression by facilitating public scholarship and community engagement among RU–N faculty, staff, and students with community partners and residents of Newark and Greater Newark. The Alumni House is a former Newark mansion on the corner of Central Avenue and Washington Street that ultimately will host RU–N alumni. The HLLC residential community will be a space for approximately 500 HLLC undergraduates with dining, recreational, and academic facilities. The building will be located on the current Center for Law and Justice parking lot and is expected to open in 2018.

Honors Living-Learning Community Increases Higher-Ed Access, Redefines ‘Honors’

The new Honors Living-Learning Community at Rutgers University-Newark is preparing students to tackle some of the world’s most pressing problems – poverty, socioeconomic immobility, discrimination, and health disparities.

The HLLC, which began in fall 2015 with 30 students, will expand to 60 students next year and continue to grow until it has upwards of 500 students in a residential community focused on “Local Citizenship in a Global World.” The HLLC has been co-led and co-developed by Shirley M. Collado, RU–N’s executive vice chancellor and chief operating officer, and Sherri-Ann Butterfield, senior adviser to the chancellor and senior associate dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. They envisioned an honors initiative that challenged traditional workflows for “honors” and merit and that emphasized college access and success through a cohort model in which students live and learn together to become change-agents in their communities.

“Unfortunately, access to high-quality education within the United States has not been available equally to all. First-generation students, low-income students, and a variety of other student populations often face real structural barriers to college admission and degree completion,” said Marta Esquilin, the inaugural associate dean of the HLLC.

The HLLC is committed to eradicating those barriers and providing students with the tools to succeed, Esquilin said. All HLLC students receive a residential scholarship and supplementary assistance for tuition and fees, in addition to a multifaceted support system that includes mentors, financial and academic advisers, and peer support.

“We are the first HLLC students, and we have a responsibility as the social justice learning community to exemplify what that means and what social justice is,” said Stephanie Avila of Paterson, New Jersey, a first-year student in the Newark College of Arts and Sciences (NCAS).

“I want to emphasize how impressed I was with the HLLC students, and their ability to grasp complex material,” said Lindsey McDougle, assistant professor at the School of Public Affairs and Administration. McDougle’s “Introduction to Social Justice” course addressed topics ranging from rape culture in the United States to racial disparities in the excessive use of force by police officers.

Daniel Hernandez of Hawthorne, New Jersey, a first-year student in the School of Criminal Justice, credits the HLLC with exposing him to a positive community in which he feels empowered to make a difference. Hernandez said, “What we’re doing here is special. It’s unique, it’s not something that you see every day, and it’s definitely something that you want to be a part of.”

RU–N’s New Financial Aid Initiative

RU–N to the TOP and the HLLC are part of the university’s broader commitment to increase educational attainment through the Newark City of Learning Collaborative. This citywide initiative aims to increase postsecondary attainment among Newark residents from 17 percent to 25 percent by the year 2025 by engaging more than 60 public, private, and nonprofit entities from Greater Newark in collaborative programming to strengthen pathways to college.