RU-N Adopts New Framework for Engaging Alumni by Karin Pitt

Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) has joined Citizen Alum, a network of more than 30 higher education institutions that seeks to engage alumni not merely as potential “donors,” but as a collective body of “doers” – innovators and allies in education. Launched in 2011 at the University of Michigan by Julie Ellison, Citizen Alum emphasizes ways for alumni to work collaboratively with senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students to forge intergenerational connections, reframe approaches to public engagement, undertake participatory research, encourage civic experiments, and implement promising models for community problem-solving.

“Our participation in Citizen Alum correlates well with our strategic priorities, especially our endeavor to invest in our faculty, students, and staff and our desire to leverage our diversity and build civic dialogue,” stated Irene O’Brien, RU-N’s vice chancellor for development. While alumni typically are construed as boosters, O’Brien points out that the Citizen Alum approach encourages multi-faceted relationships, engaging alumni to leverage their professional and civic expertise, as well, to benefit current students.

To spearhead its efforts with Citizen Alum, RU-N has appointed Quintus Jett to be the director and research fellow. Formerly an assistant professor of the Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration, Jett’s extensive background in multiple disciplines (e.g., engineering, the humanities and sciences, business management, and public administration) and his roles as professor, researcher, and published scholar make him uniquely suited to pioneer this full-time initiative.
SCHOLARSHIP

$2 Million in Seed Grants Awarded to Collaborative Projects  by Karin Pitt

In the fall, the Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) Chancellor’s Strategic Seed Grant Initiative Committee completed its second round of grants, awarding a total of $2 million to 34 RU-N schools, institutes, centers, administrative offices, and community partners. Individual awards ranged from $20,000 to $100,000.

Criteria for selection included addressing one or more of the priorities in the RU-N strategic plan; integrating one or more existing programs, centers, or institutions; and providing support for graduate and professional fellows. Illustrative projects include the support of the Center for Experimental and Behavioral Public Administration (CEBPA), establishment of the Rutgers Cognitive Science Center (RCSC), and creation of a paid youth advocate position. CEBPA is an initiative that conducts online surveys and studies focused on government transparency, efficiency, accessibility, and perception to improve the design and delivery of public services, especially in Newark and other urban areas. Rutgers faculty, students, and other scholars facilitate the research through two voluntary sample panels: CivicPanel, comprised of citizens, and PSRPanel, a community of public service professionals. Research analyses and interdisciplinary scholarship by faculty, fellows, and guest speakers (through conferences and other collaborative endeavors) aid in CEBPA’s overall development of theories and methods in experimental and behavioral public administration.

The nascent RCSC will blend the fields of psychology, philosophy, linguistics, data science, brain imaging, and neuroscience to concentrate on the complexities of brain function. RCSC will sponsor a lecture series that features diverse, world-renowned, cognitive scientists each month. It also will develop a website to share information and promote events related to cognitive science. The center will support student-faculty research projects for both graduate and undergraduate students as well as offer more relevant course options and introduce a graduate program. To foster community connectivity, RCSC will extend summer internships to high school students and host outreach talks.

The Rutgers Child Advocacy Clinic, the Rutgers Criminal and Youth Justice Clinic, and the Rutgers Center for Gender, Sexuality, Law and Policy (CSSLP) will share the skills and talents of a youth advocate to better serve young people involved in foster care and/or juvenile justice systems. The advocate will act as a mentor to the clients of each clinic; participate in relevant local and statewide events; serve as a liaison to the media; collaborate with community-based entities to expand services in education, employment, and housing for system-involved youths; and provide support to graduate fellows of CSSLP and the Rutgers University-Newark Center on Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice.

The day’s $1 million have been allocated to more than 80 projects under the Chancellor’s Strategic Seed Grant Initiative since May 2015. In March, the 2017-18 Chancellor’s Seed Grant Request for Proposals was published. Awardees will be announced in May, and those selected will receive funding of up to $60,000 for one year.

Congratulations to the Class of 2017!  by Karin Pitt

On Wednesday, May 17, Rutgers University-Newark’s (RU-N) 2017 commencement ceremony will take place at the Prudential Center. Eboo Patel, chief executive officer of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), is this year’s speaker and will receive an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Arthur James Hicks, program director of the National Science Foundation’s Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP), will receive an Honorary Doctor of Science degree. Chancellor Nancy Cantor and Provost Jerome D. Williams will preside over the ceremony.

IFYC is a global network that promotes a critical mass of interfaith leaders across higher education to work collectively to change world views on religion. IFYC partners with college campuses to build successful models of interfaith support and collaboration through intergroup dialogue. World-renowned for promoting intercultural understanding, Patel was appointed by President Barack Obama to help create the White House Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge. This initiative is active at more than 250 colleges and universities nationwide with more than 50,000 people involved in interfaith service and engagement programs. His many awards include the 2013 Sander Tessler Award for Moral Courage and Service to Humankind and the 2012 Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize.

Hicks is recognized for his endless collaborations with LSAMP, the United States Congress, and more than 600 colleges, universities, and partner alliances to strengthen the quality and quantity of underrepresented minority students with college degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Because of Hicks’s strong leadership of LSAMP, more than 509,000 underrepresented minority students have earned bachelor’s degrees in STEM. For his efforts, Hicks has won numerous awards and honors including a Faculty Award of Science and Technology from the White House Initiative on Black Colleges and Universities in 1988 and the 2005 Emerald Honor from the Science Spectrum.

The Graduate School’s hooding ceremony will take place on Tuesday, May 16. Cheryl M. de la Rey, vice chancellor and principal of the University of Pretoria in South Africa, will be the keynote speaker. The Rutgers Business School Graduate Convocation will occur Friday, May 19, at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and Steve Forbes, chair and editor-in-chief of Forbes Media, will address the graduating class. Rutgers Law School will hold its convocation on Friday, May 26, and the Honorable Patty Shwartz, a judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, will be the speaker.

COMMENCEMENT-AT-A-GLANCE

Rutgers University-Newark Commencement (2,259 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 17, 9 a.m.

Graduate School PhD and MFA Hooding Ceremony
Paul Robeson Campus Center
Tuesday, May 16, 3 p.m.

Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick (graduate programs) (770 graduates)
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Friday, May 19, 4 p.m.

Rutgers Law School (202 graduates)
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Friday, May 26, 10 a.m.
Consuella Askew, Director of John Cotton Dana Library by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

It might be difficult for some to imagine a mild-mannered librarian punching, jabbing, and delivering a mean upper cut in a boxing gym. But that’s exactly what Consuella Askew, director of the John Cotton Dana Library, does three times a week to bolster her physical and mental health.

“‘It’s important to maintain an active lifestyle,’ Askew reflects, a practice she grew to appreciate after years of watching her mother struggle with Parkinson’s disease.

During her more sedate workdays at Dana Library, Askew oversees 31 faculty and staff, focused on fostering a ‘user-centered library in the 21st century.’ Since joining the library in 2014, she and her team have implemented several initiatives to enhance the user experience.

Launched in October 2015, the library’s technology loan program allows students to borrow mobile devices like tablets and DVD players for up to 12 hours. A student may use the device offsite so long as it is returned before its rental term expires. Laptops will be added to the program as soon as funding permits.

The spaces within Dana Library have been upgraded, refreshed, and modified, too. To create the solitude many students expect in a library setting, Askew designated part of the first floor as a silent study area where she reduced the number of group study rooms and installed multiple one-person study pods.

During the 2017-18 academic year, there will be a mini ribbon-cutting to celebrate the consolidation of rooms 213E and 213F into one large graduate group study room. Dana Library typically stays open longer than graduate labs, so graduate students will be able to continue their studies at Dana Library in their own space when their labs power down.

“There are many more improvements to come,” Askew proudly shares. Until then, she will continue to enjoy reading (no surprise there) and the four seasons of the Garden State, especially its winters, with her husband and 11-year-old son.

A product of the South, where she was born and raised in Orange County, North Carolina, surrounded by tobacco fields, Askew confesses to love snow.

Following the legacy of attending historically black colleges and universities established by her parents and sister, Askew earned her bachelor’s degree from Spelman College. She obtained a master of library and information studies from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and a doctoral degree in higher education from Florida International University.

Askew gives her sister and cousin credit for her career choice. With 26 successful years of librarianship under her belt, she’s fortunate to have had the right coaches in her corner to help her land a knockout.

Thomas J. Hopkins, Assistant Dean/Director of the Career Development Center by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

For sure you should make it a priority to become well-acquainted with Thomas Hopkins, assistant dean/director of the Career Development Center (CDC) located in Hill Hall. CDC is the one-stop-shop for career planning and decision-making for students, and its list of services is long and impressive.

“We help students decide on suitable majors and minors and to understand the realities of their professional aspirations. We administer vocational tests. We facilitate workshops on résumé- and CV-writing, interviewing skills and strategies, and researching job opportunities and academic pursuits. We post internship, co-op, and entry-level job opportunities and host on-campus career fairs. We offer a lot and are here to support students and help them succeed,” notes Hopkins, who has spent nearly 30 years at RU-N as a career counselor.

CDC’s staff of six professionals caters to matriculated RU-N undergraduate and graduate students other than those pursuing a juris doctor from the law school or master of business administration from the business school. The latter two have their own career development services. CDC also provides services to RU-N alumni.

For Hopkins, the most rewarding aspects of his job are contacts with students and RU-N alumni he has counseled and their gratitude and appreciation for his guidance. For some, he helped to discover a new path. For others, he provided reassurance to stay the course. For all, he offered a compassionate ear, years of experience, and a wealth of knowledge.

Hopkins recalls a time when he had to resort to “family counseling” and consult with a parent to ensure a student was making the right decision for the right reason.

“Students should do what they love, not necessarily what their parents want them to do. I’m here to help when those desires conflict.”

When he’s not devoting his time to CDC and RU-N students and alumni, Hopkins shares life’s slower moments with his longtime companion, Judy. An outdoorsman at heart, Hopkins enjoys relaxing walks with their dog, Erin, and trips to the Finger Lakes Region of New York, where he tours its many wineries and breweries. He also appreciates reading an intriguing novel and inspiring biography when time permits.

A native of Bayonne, New Jersey, where he still resides, Hopkins received his bachelor’s degree in sociology from St. Peter’s University in Jersey City and master’s degree in counseling and educational psychology from New Jersey City University.
Chancellor’s Commission on Diversity and Transformation

Established in 2015 by Chancellor Nancy Cantor, the Rutgers University-Newark Commission on Diversity and Transformation serves as a dynamic and intentional action group focused on institutional change. Leveraging RU-N’s diversity, the commission aims to generate knowledge and suggest actions to create curriculum, scholarship, initiatives, places, and spaces for both intragroup solidarity and intercultural engagement.

In January, the Chancellor’s Commission on Diversity and Transformation welcomed five new student members.

Mohammed Abdelghany is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in nonprofit and public administration at the School of Public Affairs and Administration and is interested in political operations.

Anthony Chaver is majoring in finance at Rutgers Business School and wants to launch a career in investment banking.

Keila Aramboles is a graduate student at the School of Public Affairs and Administration and currently works for Newark Public Schools.

Arisleidy Nunez is a senior in the joint BA/MPA program at the School of Public Affairs and Administration and is majoring in both public and nonprofit administration and political science.

Claudia Saavedra is an undergraduate student at the School of Public Affairs and Administration and will be joining the commission in September 2017.

Appointments

Sherri-Ann Butterfield, senior associate dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences and senior adviser to the chancellor, will be the new executive vice chancellor at Rutgers University–Newark, effective August 1. Butterfield has served in key leadership roles at RU-N since 2001, when she joined the faculty in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. She received her bachelor’s degree from Yale University and master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Michigan.

In January, Timothy K. Eatman joined Rutgers University–Newark as the inaugural dean of the Honors Living-Learning Community and associate professor of urban education in the College of Arts and Sciences. Eatman comes to RU-N from Syracuse University where he served as associate professor of higher education. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a master’s degree from Howard University, and a bachelor’s degree from Pace University.

In the fall Rutgers University–Newark welcomed Brian Phillips Murphy as the new director of the Honors College and associate professor of history in the College of Arts and Sciences. Prior to Rutgers, Murphy served eight years at Baruch College, where he was associate professor of history. Murphy earned his undergraduate degree at Haverford College and his doctoral degree at the University of Virginia.

Khalif Sharrieff is Rutgers University-Newark’s manager of special events and programs. He joined Rutgers in 2009 as the lead counselor of the Rutgers Future Scholars program and most recently served as the assistant director of facilities and special events. Sharrieff obtained his bachelor’s degree from Bloomfield College and master’s degree from RU-N’s School of Public Affairs and Administration.

In the fall, Gloria T. Walker joined Rutgers University–Newark as the inaugural director of alumni engagement and the Alumni Center. Walker began her career at Rutgers in 2010 as an academic advisor. In 2015 she became the manager of special events and programs. She earned her bachelor’s degree from the College of Saint Elizabeth and her master’s degree from Montclair State University.

Save the Dates: Rutgers Day, Alumni Weekend, are April 28-29

Success breeds success, and in the case of Rutgers Day, it has led to the creation of a new annual tradition at Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N). Last year was the first time RU-N hosted its own on-campus Rutgers Day festivities, and the event was so successful that Rutgers Day at RU-N is now as much a part of campus life as commencement and Homecoming.

Rutgers Day 2017 will take place April 29 and again will celebrate both the long-established traditions of Alumni Weekend and the newer festivities of Rutgers Day. Activities will be held on Norman Samuels Plaza, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This free, public event will showcase RU-N’s research initiatives, student life, and academic programs through exhibits, games, performances, and demonstrations. Local food vendors also will be on site to satisfy a variety of cravings. The day will include live performances on the Big R stage in front of John Cotton Dana Library.

Visit rutgersday.rutgers.edu for a schedule of activities.

Alumni Weekend will kick off on Friday, April 28, with law school reunions for the classes of 1957, 1962, 1967, 1977, 1987, 1997, and 2007. On Saturday, April 29, events for all schools and classes will include a young alumni happy hour, a reception, a pinning ceremony, networking, campus tour, and Rutgers Day activities on the Norman Samuels Plaza.

To register for Alumni Weekend and see the full event schedule, visit alumni.rutgers.edu/s/896/alumweekend/2016/interior.
Thousands of fascinating students are graduating from Rutgers University–Newark this year. Here’s an introduction to a few of them.

Wayne Chen
Rutgers Business School (RBS)

For Wayne Chen, earning an MBA is a way to a new goal: impacting lives for the better. After earning a degree in pharmacy and working for nearly eight years in the field, he decided he wanted to broaden his outreach. “As a pharmacist, you touch one person’s life at a time,” Chen explains. “When you work in the industry itself, you can do a lot more, for more people.”

So he entered the RBS MBA in Pharmaceutical Management Program to have more of an impact on people’s lives. Along the way Chen has been co-president of the Pharmaceutical Management Club, vice president for education in the Rutgers Association of Marketing and Strategy, a senator in the Student Governing Association, and a blogger (AskapharmD).

These accomplishments, along with his academic record, led to Chen being named an RBS Industry Scholar for the pharma program, a select honor. He receives a full scholarship for tuition and fees, and an internship, and attends seminars and on-site programs at pharmaceutical facilities.

Through this scholarship Chen completed an internship at Johnson & Johnson, where he will work full-time to market products that help broaden the power of your dreams. That advice got Lasso through Newark’s Eastside High School, where she simultaneously earned her high school diploma and her associate’s degree from Essex County College (ECC) through ECC’s Early College program.

The psychology major is a member of the highly competitive Honors College, as well as the Golden Key International Honour Society, the world’s largest collegiate honor society.

Through the RU-N Jumpstart internship program, Lasso works with pre-school children at the ECC Child Development Center, helping them develop their social skills. She also interns at Newark’s Broadway House for Continuing Care.

She loves working with little ones so much that Lasso plans to make that her life’s calling after earning her master’s degree in social work; she already has been accepted into Rutgers’ MSW program for the fall.

When she walks down the aisle this May, it will be Lasso’s third commencement march since 2015, following her high school and ECC graduations. Her delighted parents, who have attended her previous ceremonies, will be at the Prudential Center to again cheer her accomplishments.

Bernadette Carter
School of Public Affairs and Administration

It took Bernadette “B” Carter almost 24 years to return to college. The first time around, Bernadette followed her bliss and earned an associate’s degree in electronic data processing, which she has put to use in her job as unit computing manager at Rutgers Law School.

Now her passion is helping people; she already helps the homeless through the organization she founded six years ago, B About It Cares. The group provides meals, clothing, toiletries, and blankets to the homeless at Newark and New York City’s Penn Stations. She also is trying to establish a ministry for the homeless at her church.

Carter has loved her nearly 20 years working at the law school, but after retirement, she plans to use what she learns through her BA/MPA degree to help others. She’ll receive her undergraduate degree this May and complete her MPA in 2018.

She credits her daughter, Jamila Sinkler, an RU-N psychology major, as her inspiration for returning to college. Carter’s advice to Sinkler is worth sharing: “College is a blueprint for the rest of your life, so choose your major wisely. Choose something you’re passionate about and you’ll do well and be happy in your career.”
National Coalition of Four Women-Led Colleges, Universities Cultivates Bold Leaders by Carla Capizzi

At four U.S. colleges and universities distinguished by their visionary women presidents, 40 college women are being cultivated to be leaders of their generation in advancing civil discourse around issues of equity and inclusion. They are the vanguard of the national BOLD Women’s Leadership Network, a cutting-edge leadership development and scholarship program for college women from diverse backgrounds. Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) serves as the lead collaborator among the four, which includes California State University, Fullerton, California; Middlebury College, Vermont; and Smith College, Massachusetts. Each BOLD Scholar is awarded up to $25,000 in scholarships annually and provided with faculty mentorship, community-building and networking opportunities, an international travel experience, and leadership development. Working together in cohorts of 10, BOLD Scholars at each institution collaborate to produce transformative campus initiatives that foster a culture of inclusion and interconnectedness. Envisioned and founded by Shirley M. Collado, RU-N executive vice chancellor and chief operating officer, BOLD is funded by The Pansycat Foundation, a private foundation established to honor Helen Gurley Brown, the longtime editor of Cosmopolitan magazine. Upon graduation, each woman will be eligible to apply for a “Helen Gurley Brown Fellowship” to fund employment at an organization that embodies BOLD’s values.

Says Collado, "In the spirit of Helen Gurley Brown’s life, BOLD Scholars can be visionary in their efforts to transform themselves and their communities for the better.” The BOLD campuses have launched the two-year pilot program that aims to sustain opportunities, relationships, and experiences for these young women leaders to leverage their individual identities and strengthen their collective ability to effect positive social change on their campuses. Nationally, BOLD Scholars will benefit from the cultivation of an intergenerational support network of BOLD students, staff, college administrators, and presidents, and professional women leaders from diverse backgrounds and sectors. The BOLD Women’s Leadership Network currently has selected 30 junior women – 10 each at California State, Fullerton, and Middlebury and Smith Colleges – and 10 first-year women at RU-N, where BOLD Scholars are also part of the Honors Living-Learning Community, a transformative college access and success program that also has an immersive approach. This spring, the BOLD women leaders are set to grow to 70, with RU-N and California State Fullerton recruiting an additional 10 BOLD Scholars who are incoming transfer students from community colleges, and Smith and Middlebury Colleges each selecting an additional five BOLD Scholars from their current class of sophomore women.

RU-N Adopts New Framework for Engaging Alumni …from cover

A staunch proponent of publicly engaged scholarship, Jett marries his research interests in organizations and innovation with his analytical ability to implement projects that address societal issues. Most notably, he developed a community-based volunteer program to help hasten the recovery of the Gentilly district of New Orleans, Louisiana, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Employing academic theories in organization and management sciences, Jett mobilized an intergenerational group of students, academics, and community residents to document methodically the storm’s local devastation and expedite public and private recovery efforts. Honored to lead this initiative, Jett intends to use RU-N’s unique social ties with the city of Newark to activate alumni and inspire them to tell their stories, share their many ways in which an alumni can engage — whether by visiting the soon-to-open RU-N Alumni Center on the corner of Central Avenue and Washington Street, where Citizen Alum will be housed; attending events hosted at Express Newark and the newly opened Barnes & Noble College bookstore in the Hahne’s building; or mingling at Clement’s Place, Newark’s newest jazz club at 15 Washington Street. Jett invites others to join the Citizen Alum movement by contacting him at qjett@rutgers.edu to learn more.