WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY



Annual Report 2025

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President's Message



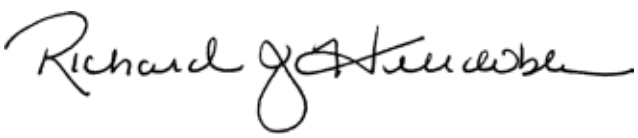
Many of William Paterson University's accomplishments over the past three years stem directly from our success at devising and implementing the bold Strategic Plan which draws to a close with the end of the 2025 calendar year. I am proud to report that we have made great advances on all five pillars of the 2022-2025 plan, including: increasing the adult undergraduate and graduate student populations on both main campus and WP Online; expanding alternative credential offerings and enrollment; reducing student attrition with new resources like dedicated Student Success Teams for each student; expanding resources to help ensure that the diversity of our students is reflected in the faculty and staff, curriculum, and other components of the WP experience; and implementing a new mission statement that accurately captures the educational needs of the population we serve.

The success of this plan, in terms of both process and outcomes, has positioned William Paterson well for a new Strategic Plan 2026-2031 to carry us forward. The University community has spent much of the fall 2025 semester engaging with the Strategic Plan Central Committee, under the leadership of co-chairs Dr. George Kacenga, vice president for enrollment management, and Dr. Amy Ginserg, dean of the College of Education. Faculty and staff across Colleges and departments, the Board of Trustees, Student Government Association, Foundation Board, Alumni Executive Council, and College Advisory Councils are all providing feedback on the five frames upon which the five-year plan will be built: Access and Affordability in Higher Education; Strategic Growth and Collaboration; Enhancement of Academic Offerings and Support Services; Infrastructure and Technological Advancement; and Building Community, both internally and externally. I am confident that the result by the close of the spring 2026 semester will be an ambitious and attainable plan that will serve our students well and prepare them for the rapidly evolving demands of the job market and world into which they will graduate.

As I mark my eighth year as the eighth President of William Paterson, this is clearly a very different institution than it was when I joined the University. From the launch of WP Online to our aggressive moves into the adult market and the expansion of degree and alternative credential programs that are highly attuned to job market needs, we have been willing to take calculated risks that have paid off. As a result, we are now the largest producer of MBAs in the state. We are also the largest producer of nurses in northern New Jersey and the largest on any single campus in the state, and our new Recreation and Health Sciences Center, currently under construction with $40 million in State funding, will further enhance our position as one of New Jersey's leading educators across the allied health fields.

For all the change, however, we remain at heart a student-centered University that empowers and transforms lives and communities. The foundation of this vital mission is the great work of our students, faculty, and staff, supported by the generous and strategic philanthropy of many alumni, friends, and government, corporate, and foundation partners, all of which is reflected in the pages of this *2025 Annual Report*.

Sincerely,

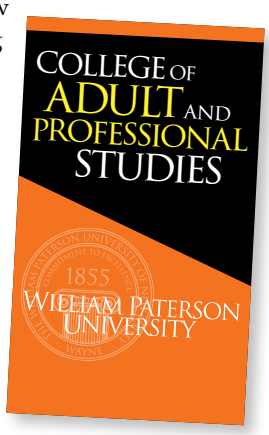


Richard J. Helldobler, PhD, President
William Paterson University

I. Academic Excellence

Academic Initiatives

Through strategic, long-term planning and proactive, nimble responsiveness to changing market trends in higher education, William Paterson University continues to successfully deliver academic initiatives designed to meet the needs of its diverse and dynamic student population. These include programs for undergraduate and graduate students; on-campus and online programs for adults seeking degree completion and for those seeking advanced degrees, and programs specifically aligned with evolving industry needs. These include the MBA program, through which the University awarded more degrees than any other institution in 2024; its nursing program, now the largest enrollment on any single campus in New Jersey; and a growing portfolio of undergraduate and graduate certificate programs that provide a variety of critical workplace skills.



The University—a leader in New Jersey in enrolling and graduating adult learners—transformed its School of Continuing and Professional Education into a College of Adult and Professional Studies, effective July 1, 2024, to provide innovative approaches to meeting the specific needs of adult learners, including credit for prior learning (CPL) through testing, portfolio assessment of related work experience, and credit equivalency options for professional training and credentials.

The college also provides a wide range of wraparound support services, onboarding for returning adult learners, and targeted programming related to career supports, well-being, and academic resources. An innovative "Peer Career Learning" cohort experience, offered through the college, helps adult learners build peer networking connections and career readiness skills, while supporting opportunities to earn credit for prior learning.

The University's leadership role in expansion into these markets has led to significant increases in fully online programs and online degree enrollment. Since July 2020, online enrollment—graduate and undergraduate combined—has grown from zero to 4,249 students as of fall 2025, currently representing more than one-third of the total student body. In addition, the University's adult learner population, both on-campus and online, has expanded to 6,460, over half of total enrollment.

WP Online, the University's fully online program platform, continued to expand its portfolio of degree programs. During the 2024-25 academic year, on the undergraduate level, the University launched programs in journalism and information technology with a track in cybersecurity. On the graduate level, new online programs include the master of arts in teaching in secondary education and the master of arts in teaching in secondary education-alternate route. Graduate level certificates were added in reading specialist, teaching students with disabilities-alternate route, secondary education, and secondary education-alternate route.

New WP Online programs scheduled to launch in fall 2025 include the master of arts in teaching with a concentration in elementary education K-6, traditional and alternate route; graduate certificate programs in elementary education K-6, traditional and alternate route; teacher of students with disabilities, alternate route; educational technology; and early literacy specialist; and on the undergraduate level, the bachelor of science in management with a track in supply chain management.

Overall, the University now offers 56 fully online degree programs and 20 certificate programs in a wide range of fields including business, healthcare, education, the humanities, and the social sciences.

For traditional undergraduate students, the University launched bachelor of arts degrees in film, television, and audio, and in journalism, as well as a track in cybersecurity within the bachelor of science degree program in information technology and a track in supply chain management within the bachelor of science program in management.

On the graduate level, the University launched a master of science degree in computer science. The program is designed to equip students with a robust foundation and keen interest in computer science for careers in areas such as software development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and data science. It also prepares graduates who wish to pursue further studies at the doctoral level. To accommodate the needs of working professionals, all classes are scheduled during evenings and weekends and include a hybrid schedule option.

A major initiative focused on expanding opportunities for students to earn stackable credentials continued, as numerous academic departments developed certificate programs embedded within the curriculum that can provide them with career-relevant skills.

On the undergraduate level, the University added 23 new such programs: audio broadcasting; business

analytics; corporate accounting and reporting; corporate entrepreneurship and innovation; digital animation; digital marketing; entrepreneurship and sustainable chemical technologies; entrepreneurship, innovation, and community engagement; esports management; forensic psychology; game design; integrated marketing communication; logistics for a global economy; management accountant; marketing analytics; marketing research; mindfulness and wellness; professional sales; responsible management; small business entrepreneurship; social media marketing; supply chain logistics; taxation; and television broadcasting.

At the graduate level, the University added new certificate programs in corporate communication management, social media strategy, strategic marketing communication, secondary education, secondary education-alternate route, and reading specialist.

William Paterson University now boasts the largest nursing student enrollment in the northern half of New Jersey, as well as the largest among the state's public regional universities and the largest on any single campus in New Jersey. As of the fall 2025 semester, nursing enrollment stands at more than 2,600 students across the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Specifically, since 2019, undergraduate nursing enrollment has tripled, from 431 students to fall 2025 enrollment of 1,244 students. During the same time frame, graduate nursing enrollment has nearly quintupled, from 190 to 924 students in fall 2025. More than 60 percent of nursing students are people of color.



In addition, William Paterson awarded more MBA degrees than any other New Jersey institution in 2024, according to data newly compiled by state business journal *NJBIZ*. Flexible scheduling options and innovative degree concentrations have fueled MBA enrollment growth by 75 percent in the past four years. The number of William Paterson MBA graduates increased to 291 for 2024, ahead of Rutgers-Newark and Montclair State.

William Paterson earned designation as one of the nation's "Research Colleges and Universities" in a newly created classification by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Council on Education. The new classification recognizes master's-level institutions across the nation for their contributions to academic research and development without offering large numbers of doctoral programs. At the University, faculty research often includes undergraduate students working alongside their professors in laboratories across campus, making research presentations at industry conferences, and joint



The nursing simulation lab

authorship on their professors' academic journal articles. In addition, grants and contracts in recent years have tripled, from approximately $4 million in 2018 to more than $13 million in revenues in 2024-25.

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB) reaffirmed the Cotsakos College of Business's status as an AACSB-accredited undergraduate and master's- level business program for the next six years. This is the fourth time the College's programs have been reaccredited since initial accreditation in 2005. Only 6 percent of business schools worldwide carry this accreditation, considered the "hallmark of excellence" in business education.

In addition, the University's Child Development Center earned accreditation from the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the highest level of accreditation in the field. After a rigorous 18-month review process, the Center, which is housed in William Paterson's College of Education and serves children from ages two and a half through kindergarten, was granted NAEYC accreditation for five years.

The bachelor of social work program earned full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education. The University awarded its first-ever bachelor's degrees in social work to 21 graduates at the institution's 2025 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony on May 20. William Paterson launched the degree program in fall 2022 to meet the increasing demand for social workers in the region.

The University dedicated a plaque in Raubinger Hall commemorating campus protests in 1969 that led to the establishment of the Black Studies program on campus. The program was aunched due to the advocacy of Black students on campus in the late 1960s, including several pivotal days of protests in May 1969 when members of the Black Students Union held sit-ins. After meetings with the Black Students Union, then-President James Karge Olsen and other administrators agreed to the immediate formation of a Black Studies program in fall 1969—the only program in University history that was developed due to student demand. Originally launched as a minor, that program grew into a bachelor of arts degree in Black Studies, and the formation of a Department of Black Studies. The plaque dedication was part of a Black Alumni Celebration weekend designed to highlight the establishment of the University's academic programs focused on the experiences and contributions of people of African descent.

The University celebrated the 10th anniversary of its doctor of nursing practice (DNP) program with a special reception for program graduates hosted by the School of Nursing in May 2025. Since 2014, 74 students have graduated from William Paterson with the DNP credential. The highest-level clinical degree in nursing, the doctor of nursing practice degree prepares advanced practice nurses who already hold master's degrees to be clinical scholars and nurse leaders recognized for outstanding patient care outcomes.

The University hosted more than 200 top artificial intelligence (AI) higher education and industry experts who participated in the 12th Annual New Jersey Big Data Alliance (NJBDA) Symposium, the state's premier conference for big data and AI, on May 16, 2025. The


2025 doctor of nursing practice graduates at their Commencement ceremony


Chinese artist Yun Gao during a live painting demonstration

symposium, titled "Empowered by AI: Innovation and the Rise of the Augmented Workforce," focused on the transformative power of AI, showcasing how it empowers workers to unlock unprecedented levels of creativity, innovation, and impact. The event provided opportunities for information sharing, networking, research, and discovery of how intelligent technologies are transforming the workplace.

William Paterson formed a partnership with the Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra (RSO), a regionally based, auditioned orchestra located in Ridgewood, New Jersey. The partnership brings a high-quality orchestral concert series to campus and provides music students with the opportunity to improve their instrumental skills by rehearsing and performing with a full-size, high-quality community orchestra. Students selected to participate also performed with the RSO during their regular four-concert 2024-25 season in Ridgewood. Kyunghun Kim, the RSO's artistic director, served as an adjunct professor of music, teaching and mentoring the students selected to participate.

A group of 16 New Jersey educators, including teachers from New Jersey schools and William Paterson University students and faculty, spent four weeks in South Korea, funded by a U.S. Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad grant. Led by Carrie Eunyoung Hong, professor of literacy, and Kyung-Hyan Angie Yoo, professor of communication, the group explored pedagogical and technological innovations in South Korean educational settings to enhance their teaching practices.

The University Galleries, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and Cheng Library collaborated on a year-long project designed to increase universal awareness of the Armenian Genocide. The initiative included two exhibits, *The Armenian Genocide: One Family's Story*, on view in Cheng Library, and *Before, After: Reflections on the Armenian Genocide*; several lectures; and a daylong conference on post-memory, documentation, and cultural resilience.

The Center for Chinese Art hosted several events, including a lecture and live Chinese painting demonstration by Yun Gao, a renowned Chinese artist, that was part of the University's Distinguished Visiting Artist Series. The center also hosted the **6th Chinese and American Art Faculty Exhibition and Symposium,** "*Convergence and Coalescence*," a two-day event presented by Middle Tennessee State University and the Chinese American Art Faculty Association.

The 13th Annual CONTEXTS Multidisciplinary Conference, presented by the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, explored the theme of Youth Rights and Student Wellbeing during a daylong event in October 2024. Laura Quiros, associate professor of social work and child advocacy at Montclair State University, gave the keynote address, "Youth and Trauma-filled Spaces of Joy." Among the panelists was Dr. Jill Guzman, DNP, director of the University's Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center, who addressed the critical need for robust support systems on college campuses.

More than $13 Million Secured in Grant Funding

During the 2024-25 academic year, the University garnered $13 million in funding from federal, state, and local government sponsors. Grants supported faculty and academic initiatives in a variety of areas, ranging from individual faculty research and projects to programs focused on education and outreach, providing significant resources that support the University's role as a comprehensive institutional resource in its region and state. Additionally, grants provided funding for student support initiatives.

William Paterson's Aspiring Educators program was awarded a transformative $583,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

(NJDOL) Office of Apprenticeship's Pre-Apprenticeship in Career Education (PACE) program. The funding supports a major expansion of this innovative initiative aimed at building a diverse pipeline of future K-12 teachers. Now in its fifth year, the Aspiring Educators program introduces high school students—particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds—to the teaching profession through a mix of classroom instruction and hands-on experience.

William Paterson is one of only two institutions of higher education in the state to receive awards under the state's pilot Global Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (Global EIR) program, funded through the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. With a targeted focus on driving innovation and entrepreneurship in the field of generative artificial intelligence (AI), this economic development initiative leverages WP's expertise to create pathways for international entrepreneurs to stay in the state to grow their startups. Melissa Rosario, regional director of the New Jersey Small Business Development Center at William Paterson, is the principal investigator.

In addition, Johanna Prado, director, degree completion and adult learning, was awarded a $100,000 grant from the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to support the "Some College, No Degree"/WP Integration Initiative: Pathways to Success" project for fiscal year 2025.

Jason Silva, associate professor of sociology, received a three-year U.S. Department of Justice award of $523,900 in collaboration with Adam Lankford, professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of Alabama. The researchers will develop a database of U.S. mass shooting cases from 2000 to 2023 and seek to advance understanding of attack-related motives, timing, digital behavior, and opportunities for prevention.

Nicole Davi, professor of environmental science, was awarded a $249,796, three-year grant through The College of New Jersey via the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for the "Trees for Schools" program, which will fund the planting of native trees and the creation of shaded outdoor learning and gathering spaces across campus.

Michael Griffiths, professor of environmental science, was awarded a three-year, $220,934 grant from the National Science Foundation for "Collaborative Research: Speleothem constraints on decadal to orbital scale hydroclimate variations in Mainland Southeast Asia."

David Ferrier, director of accreditation and educational innovation in the College of Education, was awarded a one-year, $259,906 grant from the New Jersey Department of Education under the Paraprofessional Competitive Grant program.

Rahi Abouk, professor of economics and director of the University's Cannabis Research Institute, was awarded a National Science Foundation-funded award through Spelman College for $39,659 to develop his research on the origins of disparities in access to physicians among white and Black Americans in the early 20th century. He also received a subaward from RAND for $83,482 to conduct a research study on cannabidiol policy and its impacts on broader substance use. Abouk, along with longtime research partner Dr. David Powell at the University of Pennsylvania (formerly at RAND), will study how medical cannabidiol (CBD) access, through policy changes and dispensary openings, alters opioid use, alcohol use patterns, and poisoning deaths involving alcohol and opioids.

Jason Wicke, professor of kinesiology, and Samantha Rueter '12, DNP '23, assistant professor of nursing, were awarded $130,000 by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for a two-year study on how women's biomechanics change during pregnancy. Using the Human Motion Lab at William Paterson, of which Wicke is director, the professors will scientifically capture changes to the size of women's bodies over the course of pregnancy and analyze how those changes affect the women's movement.

Lydia Albuquerque, associate professor of nursing, was awarded $52,380 from the N.J. Department of Health to support her project, "Virtual Peer Support PLUS Fitbit to Increase Physical Activity." Her research program is focused on identifying behavioral changes to reduce heart disease and diabetes within at-risk populations in Newark.

Kendall Martin, professor of biology, was awarded a $59,149 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through a project led by Dr. Samuel J. Martins at the University of Florida. The research seeks to solve critical organic agricultural issues, priorities, and problems through the integration of research, education, and extension activities.

Quay Davis, associate director, professional certificates and training, was awarded $941,860 in funding from the N.J. Department of Labor and Workforce Development Fund to support professional certifications and alternate credentials in several industries, including healthcare, logistics and distribution, food and beverage, and finance.

Donna Minnich Spuhler, director of Campus Activities, Service, and Leadership, was awarded a $56,250 grant from the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to support the WP Hunger-Free Campus initiative to aid students dealing with food insecurity.

Casey Mathern, director, University Galleries, received a National Endowment for the Humanities award of $9,998 toward preservation of approximately 200 works on paper held in the University Galleries' poster and print collection. She also received a National Endowment for the Arts award for $60,000 for a multidisciplinary

art program in collaboration with University faculty in science and music. The project will engage New Jersey K-12 students in climate change learning opportunities and artwork through hands-on workshops and fieldwork at Sandy Hook Gateway National Recreation Area.

The University was selected for the second consecutive year to receive a grant from the Mexican government, via the Consulate of Mexico, which is intended to improve the educational attainment of students from Mexico and students of Mexican origin. The Mexican government's IME Becas grant program, designed with the support of Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, funds higher education or adult education for Mexican students abroad. Through the program, the University matches the Consulate's award, thereby doubling the amount of scholarship money available. This year's grant is $13,000.

Academic Courses and Opportunities

The University provided students with academic offerings designed to challenge them in the classroom as well as experiential learning opportunities through which they could use the skills they learned and apply them in real-world settings.

Nine William Paterson students learned about the psychology of travel in a 2025 spring break trip to Puerto Rico as part of a one-credit Honors College course, People, Culture, and Community of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The course, taught by Michael Gordon, professor of psychology and interim director of the Honors College Cognitive Science Track, was designed to introduce students to phenomena associated with traveling that are known to affect a person's well-being and mood regulation. The course focused on helping students use travel planning to support their own well-being in the years ahead.

Eight William Paterson students had the opportunity to deepen their writing through cross-cultural engagement, field-based learning, and reflective practice as part of a creative nonfiction honors course taught by Martha Witt, professor of English and director of the Honors College Performing and Literary Arts Track. The course, Writing Brazil: A Creative Nonfiction Journey, ran during the spring 2025 semester and was followed by a supplemental three-week study abroad component in the coastal city of Ilhéus in northeastern Brazil, including a trip to Salvador. The students participated in writing workshops taught by Professor Witt at the Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC) and were partnered with English-speaking UESC students (Brazil Buddies) to explore—through writing—themes of identity, culture, and memory.

Five William Paterson students—all biology majors pursuing the pre-medical professions track—had the opportunity to get real-world exposure to various medical disciplines during a five-week job shadowing program at St. Joseph's Health. The program, which grew out of conversations between St. Joseph's Health and the University's Career Development Center, provided the students with direct access to five different areas of the hospital: the intensive care unit, pharmacy, emergency department, and medical surgical unit at St. Joseph's University Medical Center in Paterson, and the physical therapy department at St. Joseph's Wayne Medical Center, adjacent to the WP campus. Students were able to learn about the different roles and daily responsibilities and expectations of positions in these areas, giving them an understanding of what it takes to be successful in healthcare, clarify career pathways, and build opportunities to navigate and network through the St. Joseph's healthcare system.

High-profile speakers involved in the music industry—all William Paterson University alumni—shared their advice and insights on the current state of the business with the University's students as part of the Music Management Seminar taught by Steve Leeds, head of NEO Entertainment Consultants and former vice president of talent and industry relations for Sirius XM. Lectures featured Christian Johnson '04, a music catalog specialist at Netflix; Joe Riccitelli '85, owner, Gold'n Retriever Entertainment; Rob Fusari '08, a Grammy Award-winning, multi-platinum music producer, songwriter, music executive, and artist; Tom Hefter, MM '02, lead for marketing and analytics at Ticketmaster; and BK Kirkland '70, a renowned radio personality who hosts the BK Kirkland Experience for Rattle Radio and was program director of The Groove on Sirius XM.


Students during the Honors College course trip to Puerto Rico

Another performing group, the William Paterson Chamber Winds, presented two performances of

"Symphonic Storytime," a multimedia, sensory-friendly program, on campus in March 2025. The sensory-friendly family concerts, featuring a visual and musical experience with projected images and animated video, were designed to be welcoming and inclusive for those on the autism spectrum or with other sensory or cognitive needs. The performances gave the University's music students, especially those seeking careers in music education, an opportunity to prepare sensory-friendly concert programming and incorporate pedagogies that are inclusive of neurodiverse learners.

The Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra (RSO), ensemble-in-residence at William Paterson, spotlighted a number of talented University music students during its spring concert on March 25, 2025. The program featured an orchestral arrangement of "Quiet Lady," a jazz composition by the late Thad Jones, the great trumpeter, composer, arranger, and founding director of the University's Jazz Studies Program. The arrangement, including lyrics, was written by Logan Friedman, a master's degree student in jazz arranging at William Paterson. In addition to Friedman, who performed on bass, University jazz students Kyra Cioffi, vocals; Rose Drown, alto saxophone; Leon Hsu, piano; and Hunter Allison, drums; were featured during the concert. The RSO, a regionally based, auditioned orchestra located in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and William Paterson formed a partnership in fall 2024 designed to expand WP's orchestral offerings and connect the University's students with the acclaimed RSO organization and its member musicians.

William Paterson was at the forefront of an unprecedented initiative to bring together students across the country and the world to report on the 2024 presidential election. Through Student News Live, a global coalition of high school and college journalism programs co-founded by Nicholas Hirshon, professor of journalism and advisor of the University's nationally recognized chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, University students participated in covering the election in a 24-hour online broadcast simulcast by iHeartRadio and PBS News Student Reporting Labs. Specifically, WP students produced a 30-minute television program featuring interviews with three journalists about political mis/disinformation that aired on the Student News Live broadcast on Election Day. WP was the only participating institution from New Jersey.



The Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra performs in Shea Center


A graduate student works with a client in the Speech and Hearing Clinic

William Paterson's state-of-the-art Speech and Hearing Clinic continued to give the University's master's degree students in speech-language pathology hands-on learning opportunities while serving as a regional resource for a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic services for those with communication delays or disorders. Clients who range in age from 18 months to 88 years come to the clinic with many different needs including developmental speech and language disorders; fluency issues; autism; voice disorders; apraxia of speech; issues related to stroke, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's disease, and dementia; and those seeking assistance with accent modification and gender-affirming voice therapy. Master's degree students spend three semesters there working with clients in small groups led by licensed, certified speech-language pathologists who serve as clinical educators, thus preparing them for subsequent externship placements at area medical centers, rehabilitation facilities, and schools.

Faculty and Staff Awards and Accomplishments

Francisco Díaz, associate vice president for student development, received two 2025 Mena Valdez Awards—the Outstanding Senior Student Affairs Officer Award and the Outstanding Service Award—presented by the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Latinx/a/o Knowledge Community. The Outstanding Senior Student Affairs Officer Award is presented to a senior student affairs officer who has provided advice and energy to the Latinx/a/o Knowledge Community that advanced the organization's success, provided leadership and guidance, and been an inspiration to new student affairs professionals. The Outstanding Service Award recognizes the dedication and service of a NASPA member in promoting the profession of student affairs, students, and the Latinx/a/o Knowledge Community overall, serving as a mentor and exuding a passion and dedication to advocating for the success of Latinx/a/o individuals in higher education.

Melissa Rosario, regional director of the New Jersey Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at WP, was nominated as a 2025 INNOVATE100 Honoree. The annual INNOVATE100 initiative, developed by Innovation+, highlights and elevates innovation leaders from all sectors across New Jersey. Rosario was recognized in the Community Leaders category.

Nicholas Hirshon, associate professor of journalism, was elected president of the Deadline Club, the New York City chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, for 2025, the group's centennial year. Hirshon is only the second professor elected to this role, among the most prestigious leadership positions in journalism.

Robb Rehberg, professor of kinesiology, was elected as a Distinguished Fellow in the Athletic Training Academy, part of the healthcare industry's National Academies of Practice. Rehberg was selected for his noteworthy contributions to the field of athletic training, his leadership, and his advocacy efforts that have shaped interprofessional practice. Rehberg, who also works as the senior medical advisor and director of game day medical operations for the National Football League, served as editor for the sixth edition of his book *Sport First Aid*, a coach's guide to the treatment and prevention of injuries.

Chriss Williams, a professor of film and chair of the Department of Communication, received a 2025 Individual Artist Finalist Award from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts in the category of playwriting/screenwriting. Williams was recognized for his original script, *The Twelve*. He also was inducted into the New Jersey BMX Hall of Fame in October 2024.

Eight William Paterson University employees—Neil Grimes, education and curriculum materials librarian; Cindy Gennarelli, director, Child Development Center and Early Childhood Innovation; Margaret Renn, director, Office of Field Experiences; Susan Stanfield, professional services specialist, College of Education; Anna Baiata, executive director, Office of Sponsored Programs; Melissa Petrosi, associate director, undergraduate admissions; Kathleen Torsney, professor of psychology and director, master's degree program in clinical and counseling psychology; and Jorrdin Miller, office administrator, Child Development Center—were among those honored by Governor Phil Murphy for their exceptional performance and service at a New Jersey State Employee Recognition Day (SERD) Award Ceremony in May 2025. The ceremony was held to recognize and honor state government employees for their outstanding contributions, a work ethic that inspires accomplishment, and their commitment to excellence in public service.

Daria Napierkowski, MSN '99, DNP, chair of the Department of Nursing, was selected as a 2025 *NJBIZ* Healthcare Heroes honoree. The awards recognize excellence, promote innovation, and honor the efforts of individuals and organizations making a significant impact on the quality of healthcare in New Jersey. Napierkowski was honored in the Education category.

Bill Charlap, professor of music and director of the Jazz Studies Program, was among the honorees at the 92NY Gala on May 19, 2025. Charlap was honored for his 18-year artistic leadership of 92NY's Jazz in July series and its impact on New York City's jazz landscape. In June 2025, he released his latest recording, *Elemental,* with vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater; the duo performed at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, California as part of the Blue Note Jazz Festival. Charlap performed with the Bill Charlap Trio during two-week engagements at the Village Vanguard and Dizzy's Club in New York City, as well as concerts in Chicago, Miami, and Switzerland.

Racine Emmons-Hindelong, professor of kinesiology, was named a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine.

Peter McGuinness, professor of music, was named 2024 Outstanding Jazz Educator of the Year by the New Jersey Association of Jazz Educators. He also celebrated the release of *Mixed Bag*, the fourth CD by his professional 17-member Pete McGuinness Jazz Orchestra, with a live performance at Birdland jazz club in New York City on May 25, 2025.

Mary Genuino, assistant professor of nursing, received the 2025 Nursing Excellence Award from the Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey.

Carlee Denholtz, assistant professor of public health, received the 2025 Policy Action Institute Scholarship from the American Public Health Association.

Betty Kollia, professor of speech-language pathology, received the 2025 Distinguished Professional Service Award from the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Hannah Carr, assistant professor of music, served as artistic director of the "Cantigas" Women's Choir, a non-profit organization based in Hudson County, New Jersey, which won a Bronze Medal at the 2025 Preveza International Choir Competition.

Claudia Goldstein, professor of art history, published her second book, *Beuckelaer and the Art of Dining: Northern Painting, Food, and Social Class in Early Modern Italy*. Beuckelaer was a Flemish painter who specialized in large-scale paintings of food markets and kitchen scenes, popularizing the still life genre.

Nancy Weiner, assistant director of access and information services at the Cheng Library, served as co-editor for two books: *Developing Student Engagement Opportunities in Higher Education* and *Innovations and Challenges in Student Engagement in Higher Education*.

Joanne Cho, professor of history, served as co-editor of two books: *Korean Culture in the Global Age: K-Pop, K-Drama, K-Film, and K-Literature* and *German Speaking Refugees in Asia, 1930-1950. Shelter from the Storm?*

Eric Steinhart, professor of philosophy, authored *Contemporary Paganism*, which focused on the current religious landscape in the West and the emergence of new Pagan religions.

Mathematics professor David Nacin released his second book, *The Group Theory Puzzle Book*, an introduction to group theory, the building block of abstract algebra that arises in almost every branch of mathematics and the sciences.

Ana Cristina Siqueira, associate professor of management, served as co-editor of the book *Sustainability Management: A Systems Approach*.

Payton MacDonald, professor of music, released a new album, *Live in Philadelphia 2.23.25*. He also published a new work, Three Marimba Etudes, Vol. 2.

Thomas Y. Owusu, professor of urban studies and geography, authored *The Transnational Migrant in North America*.

Michael J. Thompson, professor of political science, authored *Descent of the Dialectic: Phronetic Criticism in the Age of Nihilism*.

Neil Kressel, professor of psychology, released his latest book, *The Psychology of Religion: A Social Force,* which examines the psychology of religion and spirituality.

Aileen Torres, professor of psychology, edited *Child Abuse and Neglect: Culture, Research, and Theory.*

A book by Pamela Brillante, professor of special education, titled *Universal Design for Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom*, was released in a Chinese language translation.

Thomas Fallace, professor of teacher education, released his book *You Are Not a Kinesthetic Learner: The Troubled History of the Learning Style Idea*.

Navyug Gill, assistant professor of history, received the Henry A. Wallace Award from the Agricultural History Society for his book, *Labors of Division: Global Capitalism and the Emergence of the Peasant in Colonial Panjab*, which traces the invention of a peasantry in the context of colonialism.

Matthew Crick, professor of communication, was recognized at the 2025 Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival, where his short film, *The Last Musician*, earned the award for Best First Short Film.

Photographs by Robin Schwartz, professor of art, were included in several exhibitions, including "The Tree of Life: A Love Letter to Nature," Photo Vogue, Milan, Italy; "The Pet Show," a traveling exhibition curated by Fotografiska Art Museum and on exhibit in Bentonville, Arkansas; Shanghai, China; and Beijing, China; and "Rescued Foxes Find Refuge in Minnesota," World Report Award Documenting Humanity, Lodi, Italy.

Works by Eileen Foti, assistant professor of art, were included in "Wall of Wings," a group exhibition in Port Fairy and Wodonga, Australia, and in "War and Peace 2025," an online exhibition.

Carl Patrick Bolleia, a pianist and assistant professor of music, performed throughout the metropolitan area, including concerts at Symphony Space, the DiMenna Center for Classical Music, and The Juilliard School in New York City.

II. Student Success

The University continued to successfully execute on strategic decisions leading to significant overall enrollment growth, including high school dual enrollment, graduate students, and stand-out leadership in adult learning.

Enrollment and Degree Completion Highlights

Overall, William Paterson's total enrollment for fall 2025 grew to 12,527 students, the largest overall enrollment since 1980 and an increase from fall 2024 enrollment of 11,896. William Paterson welcomed more than 1,000 students to the Class of 2029 for fall 2025, including students from 17 counties in New Jersey, 14 states, and 14 countries. In addition, the number of new transfer students rose 8.68 percent. Overall enrollment grew 5.27 percent.

Main campus full-time undergraduate enrollment fell slightly. The University enrolled 4,249 such undergraduate students, compared to 4,298 in fall 2024. Overall graduate enrollment was 3,574 graduate students, an increase of 4.17 percent.

The retention rate for main campus full-time first-year students continued its positive trend, increasing to 74.8 percent for the fall 2024 cohort compared to 74.4 percent for the fall 2023 cohort and 73.3 percent for the fall 2022 cohort. In addition, first-year retention increased in several tracked cohorts, including EOF, men, first-generation, white, and Hispanic students. The University provided targeted interventions by professional advisors in the Advisement Center, as well as integrated supports within the Will. Power. 101 program for first-year students, including specific assistance around barriers to registration, connection to academic and other supports to improve academic performance, funding support for students to purchase books and/or computers as needed, and curriculum in support of academic and other key skills development. Other targeted initiatives include expanded supplemental instruction for high-difficulty courses, and providing weekly, peer-led study sessions.

Additional growth was fueled by WP Online, the University's fully online degree platform, which launched in 2020. With two start dates for WP Online during the fall semester, enrollment grew to 4,528 students enrolled for fall 2025, compared to 4,258 students enrolled for fall 2024 and enrollment of 3,648 students for fall 2023. WP Online students accounted for approximately 36 percent of total enrollment for fall 2025.

In addition, high school dual enrollment grew to 2,162 students for fall 2025, a 26.8 percent increase over enrollment of 1,440 students for fall 2024. This continued growth comes after a new approach to this program was adopted in 2018, and the institution now enrolls students at 46 high schools in 30 school districts across New Jersey.

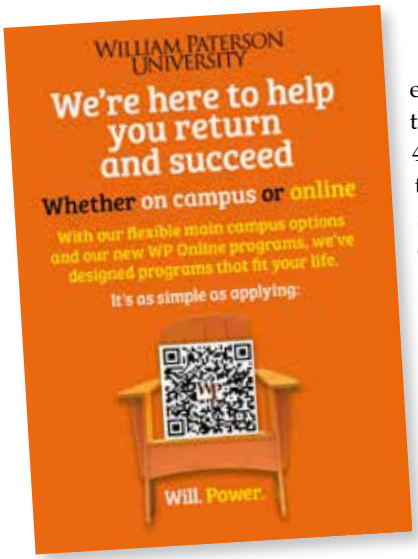
The six-year graduation rate rose slightly to 44.3 percent from a rate of 43.9 percent for the previous cohort. The University's four-year graduation rate also rose to 35.5 percent from 30.9 percent for the previous cohort.

The University continued to leverage its vibrant marketing campaign focused on highlighting elements of the institution's brand and identity, including the innovative support system provided for students through the Student Success Teams, as well as career readiness, access and affordability, active learning, and



a commitment to diversity and inclusion. The campaign, created in partnership with Ologie, a national marketing and branding agency that specializes in higher education, positions William Paterson as a "Powerhouse for Personal Progress" that is launching the workforce of the future. During 2024-25, the campaign included billboard, train, bus, and airport ads, along with a comprehensive range of digital advertising targeted to prospective undergraduate and graduate students, including adult learners.

William Paterson continued to participate in a state-wide initiative, "ReUp," that began in fall 2023 to reengage adults who had begun college in the past but stopped out for personal or financial reasons. New Jersey views this "some college, no degree" population as a key demographic for state economic growth and



equity goals. For fall 2025, the University enrolled 45 new students under this initiative, with 176 students continuing their enrollment.

The University's unit focused on Degree Completion and Adult Learning (DCAL) in the new College of Adult and Professional Studies works with returning students on securing credit for prior learning through testing, portfolio assessment of related work experience, and credit equivalency options for professional training and credentials. DCAL worked with academic units across the campus to expand opportunities for credit for prior learning (CPL) through non-credit-to-credit equivalencies aligned with the American Council on Education's national standards and portfolio assessments of professional experiences. DCAL staff work one-on-one with adult learners to facilitate the processes of applying college credits toward their degrees through credit by examination, course challenge exams, credit from professional training programs, and portfolio assessment of prior, non-college learning that can include work experience and more that might equate to college credit.

During the 2024-25 academic year, WP awarded 3,785 CPL credits to 703 distinct students, accelerating degree completion and increasing success rates by more than 10 percent; transfer students who earned CPL persisted or graduated at a rate of 91 percent, compared to 79 percent for those who did not.

Undergraduate online programs are also supported by a wrap-around Student Success Team through WP Online Student Success, which provides one-on-one academic advising to online adult learners, including dedicated financial aid counseling and continuous monitoring of evolving scheduling, student support, and advisement needs. The dedicated success team's work in support of adult learners has resulted in continually increasing student success rates, which stand at 77.5 percent for the fall 2024 cohort in fall 2025, 3 percent higher than for in-person students, whereas persistence rates in online programs generally run 10 to 20 percent lower than in-person students nationally.

The University's Office of International Services has launched an expansive plan to increase international enrollment to at least five percent of the main campus population by 2027. Efforts have yielded positive results, with 3,172 applications received from international students for the fall 2025 semester, a gain of 53.7 percent over the previous year. However, due to ongoing visa restrictions for international students and a lack of available visa appointments, many interested applicants were unable to complete their enrollment. Currently, there are 238 international students from 54 countries enrolled at the University.

Student Success Support and Initiatives

William Paterson University's innovative and comprehensive system of student support focused on academics, career development, and campus life—customized to meet students' individual needs—continued to show positive results during the 2024-25 academic year.

As of the fall 2024 semester, all first-year and second-year students were assigned a Student Success Team—a financial aid counselor, a professional adviser, and a career coach—to provide direct, consistent contacts who will guide and support them through graduation. In addition, the success team for sophomores, which had been initiated in fall 2023, expanded to include a faculty mentor from the students' intended academic major in fall 2024. Academic coaches were added to the teams in spring 2025. This team-based approach is designed to support coordinated solutions for student needs, build relationships, and ensure that every student has direct access to critical University resources and support.

The Navigate platform, which the University uses for management, data, and outreach to students, continues to be an effective tool for providing student support. During the 2024-25 academic year, nearly 4,700 students used Navigate to schedule and track 23,532 appointments overall, including 11,000 advising appointments, 650 office hour sessions with faculty, and 8,600 hours with tutors for academic help, counselors to resolve financial aid matters, and more. In addition, usage of this important tool was 57 percent above the usage for the next highest peer institution that implemented the platform in the same timeframe.

The Office of Parent and Family Relations provided comprehensive resources and programs for parents and families focused on understanding the university experience and facilitating their students' transition to college. The office expanded its Real Talk Series, holding 11 events focused on specific topics relevant to student success, such as support for neurodivergent students, student mental health and wellbeing, the housing process, Commencement preparation for families, and financial literacy, among others. Held in conjunction with other offices on campus, the program provides a space where families can ask questions and get to know University personnel and the resources that they offer students. Gatherings are recorded when possible and available for viewing.

In addition, use of the William Paterson Family Portal, deployed in July 2023, continued to grow. Designed to serve as a primary communication vehicle for parents and families, the portal had 5,482 registered family members in fall 2025, double the 2,733 members of fall 2024. Overall, 58 percent of users have actively engaged with the portal by opening, viewing, or clicking on content; engagement is at 60 percent for families of first-year students, and 75 percent for Spanish-speaking families.



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

The Pioneer Pantry continued to provide vital support for students struggling with food insecurity. Usage of the pantry increased significantly during the 2024-25 academic year; 717 individual students used the pantry, up 54 percent from the previous year, for a total of 3,273 visits, an increase of 112 percent from the year before. A Hunger-Free Campus grant of $56,250 from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education provided funds that allowed the University to expand the pantry's operating hours, purchase an additional refrigerator, and purchase more perishable food such as meat, fish, dairy, eggs, and fresh produce. The grant also supported the purchase of NJ Transit bus tickets to assist students with SNAP benefits to access local grocery stores, as well as installation of a ramp for accessibility. Through a partnership with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, the pantry orders free food on a bi-weekly basis.



A student volunteer stocks shelves in the Pioneer Pantry

In addition, with support from the Hunger-Free Campus grant, the University launched a comprehensive Swipe Out Hunger program that combined student meal plan donations with grant-funded meal supports. Through the GET app, 127 students collectively donated 360 meals from their own plans. To further expand access, working in partnership with Hospitality Services and Aramark, grant funds were used to purchase 50 five-meal plans. Together, these resources enabled the University's social worker to distribute a total of 104 five-meal plans to students experiencing food insecurity. The program will continue in the 2025-26 academic year.

The Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center (CHWC) enhanced its services for students through several initiatives. The Center continued to offer William Paterson students free and immediate access to online mental health through Uwill, a leading student mental health teletherapy and wellness platform. The service is provided through a first-in-the nation partnership between Uwill and the State of New Jersey. CHWC serves as the William Paterson liaison to Uwill and CHWC counselors are available to provide referrals, instruction, and training to members of the campus community on how to use the web-based application. Students can choose a therapist based on their preferences including availability, gender, language, ethnicity, and specialty, as well as a time that fits their schedule, with day, night, and weekend options.

In addition, through a Mental Health in Higher Education: Community Provider Partnerships and Professional Development Grant from the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), CHWC worked with UberHealth to provide more than 150 rides to students, enabling them to attend off-campus mental health and medical healthcare appointments.

The Student Relaxation Lounge, which opened in spring 2024 in the David and Lorraine Cheng Library on campus, has recorded more than 5,427 visits from 2,164 different students since its inception. The new

wellness space, funded by the OSHE Mental Health in Higher Education grant, is designed for students who are seeking a quiet place on campus to relax and destress and is especially targeted to the University's neurodiverse population and students in need of relaxation and coping strategies. Eighteen relaxation programs were held in the space during the 2024-25 academic year, with 12 additional programs scheduled for the fall 2025 semester. The lounge features a relaxation area, a meditation area, and a telehealth room, and is open to all registered students.

Student Honors and Achievements

William Paterson student journalists were at the forefront of Student News Live, an initiative co-founded by Nicholas Hirshon, associate professor of journalism, that brought together students across the country and the world to report on the 2024 presidential election. This global coalition of high school and college journalism programs covered the election in a 24-hour online broadcast simulcast by iHeartRadio and PBS News Student Reporting Labs. As part of the project, senior Alexander Felix and first-year student Julia Menn traveled to Washington, D.C. on Election Day, where they reported live from the White House.



Students Julia Menn and Alexander Felix, who reported for Student News Live

The University's radio station, 88.7 WPSC-FM/Brave New Radio, won the 2024 Marconi Award for College Radio Station of the Year, presented by the National Association of Broadcasters and considered the highest honor in radio. This marks the third Marconi Award and seventh top 5 finish for WPSC-FM, which took home the title of Best College Radio Station in 2021 and Non-Commercial Station of the Year in 2018.

The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), the foremost organization for students interested in the public relations and communications fields across the globe, added William Paterson University to its network of chapters worldwide. This affiliation grants WP faculty and students access to the extensive professional development, educational resources, and scholarships provided by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). William Paterson's chapter will be supported by University public relations professor Jungyun Won as faculty advisor. WP alumnus Logan J. Williams '08, senior vice president and executive director at Golin, and Christina Forrest, vice president of Violet PR, will serve as the group's professional advisors.



Student members of WP's chapter of PRSSA

A team of seven William Paterson University students, all majors in computer science and information technology, placed in the top five percent of more than 4,800 teams in the 2025 National Cyber League (NCL) Cybersecurity Competition. The competition, which provides participants with real-world cybersecurity challenges, is designed to help students develop and demonstrate their skill in areas such as open-source intelligence, cryptography, password cracking, log analysis, network traffic analysis, web application security, and forensics. The WP team, all members of the student Networking Club, were Divine Dickson-Uwakwe, Mia Herrera, Wilton Lizardo, Bibek Neupane, Amaury Polanco, John Sam-Bruce, and Amil Uddin. Kiho Lim, associate professor of computer science, served as the team's coach.

Lucia Gambuzza, a January 2025 graduate with a master's degree in business administration in marketing, was the recipient of a Graduate Merit Award scholarship from the Executive Women of New Jersey. The scholarships support non-traditional women who are returning to school after several years, changing careers, or overcoming socioeconomic barriers.

Alaena Merrill '25, who earned a bachelor of arts degree in early childhood education and liberal studies, *summa cum laude*, was selected as the student speaker for the 2025 Undergraduate Commencement ceremony at the Prudential Center in Newark. Merrill received both the Class of 2025 College of Education Dean's Undergraduate Award for her excellence as an education major and the Patricia Ripmaster Award, recognizing her outstanding academic performance in liberal studies.

Carmine Coscia '25, who earned a bachelor of science degree in finance technology and a minor in computer information systems, *summa cum laude*, was named the 2025 "Outstanding Senior" by the William Paterson University Alumni Association. A member of

the University's Honors College, Coscia completed the Business Honors Track, for which he wrote an honors thesis focused on the development of a comprehensive business plan for a B2B chemical industry startup. A dean's list student throughout his University career, Coscia served as president of the Student Investment Club, vice president of the Data Analytics and Science Club, and treasurer for the Honors College Club. A mentee in the University's Pesce Family Mentoring Institute, he was involved in numerous community service activities, including the MLK Day of Service, Rise Against Hunger, and the Pioneer Pantry. Coscia served as a technical consultant in the Global Business and Finance Institute in the Cotsakos College of Business, where he worked with students and faculty to provide training in business-related software programs.

Sabrina Madsen, a human resource advisor at Signify, served as the graduate student speaker at the Graduate Commencement ceremony for the Costakos College of Business. She earned a master of business administration degree in human resource management in January 2025.

Gianna Labiento, who earned a master of science degree in materials chemistry, spoke at the Graduate Commencement ceremony for the College of Science and Health. A 2023 graduate of William Paterson with a bachelor's degree in chemistry, she is the first in her family to earn an advanced degree.

Dave Saunders, who earned a master of fine arts degree in visual arts, spoke at the Graduate Commencement ceremony for the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the College of Education.

Rory Stansfield, a junior majoring in speech-language pathology, was elected as a student representative to the Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC) for the 2025-26 academic year. In this role, Stansfield, who serves as a member of the NRHC Executive Board, will be involved in planning the organization's 2026 annual conference. The first William Paterson student elected to this position, Stansfield is active in the Honors College as a peer leader and office assistant. She is enrolled in the Cognitive Science Honors Track and is working toward presenting her own research prior to her graduation in May 2027.

Three William Paterson University student groups—the William Paterson University Jazz Orchestra and two other small jazz ensembles—performed at Dizzy's Club/Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City on April 1. Internationally acclaimed pianist Bill Charlap, director of William Paterson's Jazz Studies Program, joined the WP Jazz Orchestra, under the direction of David Demsey, professor of music and coordinator of jazz studies, for the first set. The second set featured two William Paterson University small groups, the WP Joe Henderson-Kenny Dorham Ensemble, directed by Charlap, and the WP Jazz Vocal Workshop and soloists, directed by Pete McGuinness, professor of music. The ensembles represent three of the 29 jazz groups that are the core of William Paterson's historic Jazz Studies Program, currently in its 52nd year.



The WP Jazz Orchestra at Dizzy's/Jazz at Lincoln Center

Four WP jazz majors—Kyra Cioffi, Joseph Foglia, Nate Tota, and Aiden Woods—won scholarship awards in the 2025 New Jersey Jazz Society (NJJS) Scholarship Competition. William Paterson students won four of the six available scholarships awarded this year. The NJJS Juried Scholarship Competition was initiated in 2022, with $1,000 and $500 scholarships awarded for instrumental performance and composition. A vocal performance category was added this year. The competition is open to all New Jersey college students currently enrolled in an undergraduate music program and to New Jersey residents currently enrolled in an out-of-state undergraduate program.

Artwork by 20 William Paterson graduate students pursuing master of fine arts degrees were featured in an exhibition at Mana Contemporary in Jersey City. The exhibition included artwork in a variety of media, including painting, animation, digital media, and traditional sculpture. The annual end-of-year exhibition provides an opportunity for the students to showcase the works they created during the past year. Participating students were Julian Alvarez, Patrick Baj, Jules Bulkley, Lauren Cedeno, Jessica Dutschmann, Richard Franco, Sharon Gurecki, Serena Henderson, Dave Kawelec, Anna Kuhn, Joshua Lopez, Jennifer Luzzi, Malakzad Makhmalbaf, Daija McNeil, Dave Saunders, Julia Seastrand, Christian Tavis, Ashley Villarreal, James Wandel, and Ally Zonzini.

Jazz students Misha Mendelenko, MM '25, a guitarist, and Jared Spears '26, a jazz studies and performance major and a drummer, were part of the Jeremy Pelt Quintet, headed by the renowned trumpet player and adjunct professor of music, that performed in Llubjana, Slovenia during the spring 2025 semester.

The women's basketball team advanced to the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Tournament Championship final. The Pioneers finished the season with 19 wins overall, the most for the program since the 2012-13 season, and 14 league victories, the most since 1999-00.

Women's basketball player Brianna Smith garnered spots on the Metropolitan Basketball Writers Association All-Third Team and All-New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Second Team.

Men's basketball player Andre Wells, baseball player Dylan Santos, and women's basketball player Renee Wells earned spots on the All-NJAC Honorable Mention list.

The women's volleyball team claimed the regular season NJAC title. Senior Paola Molina was named NJAC Volleyball Defensive Player of the Year for the second consecutive season. Graduate student Hope Arce-Reed and sophomore Cecilia Miller were selected to the All-NJAC First Team, while Molina and sophomore Abby Houpt were second-team picks. Head Coach Kevin



The women's volleyball team at the WP Spirit Rock

Rodgers and assistant coaches Tiffani Causing and Bill Le were named NJAC Volleyball Coaching Staff of the Year for the second straight season.

Men's soccer players Diego Navas and Matthew Escobar garnered spots on the All-NJAC Men's Soccer Second Team. Navas also secured a selection to the ECAC Men's Soccer All-Second Team.

Women's soccer players Julia Fiorito, Hailey Nelson, and Erin Clark were named to the All-NJAC Women's Soccer Honorable Mention list.

Football linebacker Samod Wingo earned a spot on the ECAC Football All-Second Team as well as the All-NJAC First Team. Knasir Alston and Nolan Epps collected second-team all-conference recognition, while Quamire Green and Jojo Kirby were named to the All-NJAC Honorable Mention list.

Juniors Carly Horn and Allison Ochs, and freshmen Julia Dennehy, Julia Menn, Lauren Rennie, Sofia Russell, and Josefine Vierhout were named to the 2024 National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) Division III National Academic Squad.

The WP men's and women's swimming and diving teams received the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America (CSCAA) Scholar All-America Award for the fall 2024 semester.

The William Paterson Pioneer baseball, volleyball, and women's swimming and diving teams all received team academic awards from their applicable national coaches' associations following the conclusion of the spring 2025 semester based on their accomplishments in the classroom.

Thirty-nine Pioneer athletes earned selections to the College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-District Team in their respective sports.

Eighty-nine Pioneers were named members of the 2024-25 Academic All-NJAC Team.

Diversity and Inclusion

William Paterson, which is federally recognized as both a Minority-Serving Institution and a Hispanic-Serving Institution, is proud of its status as a majority-minority institution, serving students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. More than 60 percent of its students are students of color and approximately 30 percent identify as Latino/a/x. The University continues to be one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in its region, according to U.S. News & World Report's *Best Colleges 2026*.

A variety of new diversity and inclusion initiatives were implemented during the 2024-25 academic year, including the appointment of Darlene Russell, professor of educational leadership and professional studies, as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Faculty Fellow. Russell, in collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning, has been working with faculty across the University on reviewing and revising course syllabi, course content, and teaching practices using the Faculty Senate's Blue Ribbon Inclusive Teaching Task Force Report as a guide. In addition, faculty are considering more deeply the historical and cultural contexts for teaching their content area, including techniques and theories of origin of their fields' terminology.

In an effort to foster diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging across the campus community, a model was established for faculty and staff to create and participate in affinity groups—groups of individuals with specific shared identities or interests who wish to meet and advocate for meaningful change at the institution. The initiative is designed to help promote a culture of equity and inclusion, as well as provide opportunities for frank and open discussion and communication between such groups and the administration.

In February 2025, the University implemented a Religious Inclusion Policy to recognize and support diverse community members who observe a variety of different faith traditions. The policy, which applies to faculty, staff, and students, outlines procedures for accommodations such as excused absences, deadline extensions due to religious observance, as well as the importance of consulting the calendar of religious holidays when planning meetings, events, and speakers to avoid scheduling activities that conflict with religious holidays or observances.

The Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion, which oversees the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, the Black Cultural Center, and the Center for Latinidad, continued to lead initiatives focused on fostering diversity and inclusion efforts among the student population.

A key program of the office was support for the Social Justice Leadership Badge, which provides students with an opportunity to learn strategies to create a fairer and more just world. Students earn the badge through participation in a variety of social justice-focused events, as well as online diversity training. More than 1,250 students participated in online diversity training facilitated by Student Diversity and Inclusion, and 73 students completed the badge during the 2024-25 academic year. Continued partnerships with the Career Development Center offered support for students to highlight their diversity training on their resumes, and to strengthen opportunities for securing competitive internships and jobs.

The 6th annual "Conocimiento" day conference was held in April 2025, with the theme of celebrating joy as an act of resistance. As the University continues to grow as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, this experience provided space for discussion and testimonials around Latino/a/x cultural resilience, migration, community action, and organizing. A cultural talent show during common hour highlighted student dancers, singers, and poets, who all shared pieces of their various Latino/a/x identities. The afternoon session featured several students who participated in an engaging panel where they discussed their Latinx community, identities, histories, and experiences. This was followed by an art exhibition showcasing student artwork related to mental health, healing, and community resilience. The conference concluded with an inspiring keynote address featuring Natalie Munoz, host of the Azucar TV YouTube series, sponsored in partnership with the Tinker Foundation and the Latin American and Latino Studies Program Lecture Series.

The Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion continued to offer cultural, educational, and social experiences through the coordination and support of more than 100 programs and events such as theme celebration keynotes and programs, LGBTQIA+ focused events, mentorship/academic support programs, affinity group senior recognition ceremonies, and more. New programs included a Hispanic Heritage Month Gala, a visit to the African American Museum in Philadelphia, and a Women's Empowerment Brunch.



A Latin alumni celebration on campus



New initiatives included the inaugural Middle Eastern Heritage Celebration, including an Arabian Cookout, a Hillel Chocolate Seder, and an Arab cultural event. The office also launched Create and Connect, a weekly event that provided students with the opportunity to pursue a craft or artistic activity within one of the multicultural centers.

Gender and sexuality resources remained a priority. The LGBTea+ Mentorship program offers a queer-centered approach for peer mentorship with the goal of connecting students who identify within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum with diverse faculty, staff, alumni, and students while also providing support for self-exploration, personal goals, and professional development. Seventeen mentors supported 30 mentees through the program.

Career Development Initiatives and Activities

Initiatives and activities designed to help students develop skills that will help them achieve career success following graduation are having a demonstrated impact. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 86 percent of the Class of 2023 are employed or in graduate school within six months after graduation, five percent higher than the national average of 81 percent.

During the fall 2024 semester, the University launched a major initiative, the PowerPaths Career Experience Program, an innovative experiential learning model that affords every student a significant hands-on experience that will prepare them for post-graduation success. Required for all students beginning with the Class of 2028, the program offers a variety of pathways to help them gain valuable hands-on experience and develop essential skills.

Students can select experiential courses within their academic curriculum to fulfill the requirements, which might include a hands-on project, fieldwork, or a civic engagement activity. They can also take the opportunity to gain experience outside of class through a for-credit or non-credit internship, a short-term experience such as a job simulation, job shadowing experience, or a micro-internship. The program provides opportunities and experiences that are accessible and attainable for all students—reducing or removing barriers such as transportation or scheduling conflicts with existing employment, that are often deterrents for underserved and low-income students.

The Pesce Family Mentoring Institute, completing its tenth year, continued its efforts to pair successful alumni and local business professionals with select undergraduate students. During the 2024-25 academic year, the Institute arranged 367 mentor/mentee matches, a 20 percent increase over the previous academic year, and increased the number of alumni mentors, who now comprise 64 percent of the program's mentors. Fifty-six percent of the mentees identified as first-generation college students. Data for Class of 2023 graduates who participated in the Institute indicate that 98 percent secured employment or headed to graduate school following graduation.



The Pesce Family Mentoring Institute's annual dinner



A SHINE event featuring alumni allied health professionals

The Career Development Center, the College of Science and Health, and the Office of Institutional Advancement, again collaborated on SHINE (Science and Health Industries Network for Excellence), a networking initiative launched in fall 2023 and designed to connect students with WP alumni in specific industries for panel discussions and networking. During the 2024-25 year, the program featured two programs: a panel of alumni employed in allied health professions such as physical therapy, speech therapy, and sports performance, and a panel of women in technology who discussed their careers.

In fall 2024, Career Development partnered with the Cotsakos College of Business (CCOB) to launch an industry field trip program. Through the program, an employer partner hosts a one-day field trip to provide students with an inside look at the organization and network with professionals and WP alumni. Students from CCOB visited Gallo and Deloitte. The Center expanded the Industry Field Trip program to all University colleges and in spring 2025 hosted field trips to the NJ Courts and Hamilton Partnership for Paterson, with trips to Merck and Cohn Reznick planned for fall 2025.

In addition, the Center saw continued high student engagement in areas such as one-to-one appointments with Career Development Center staff, and attendance at events and career fairs. The Center hosted several large-scale recruiting events/job fairs, including a Mega Job and Internship Fair in March 2025, which saw an increase of 15 percent in attendance over the prior year. Other focused job fairs included a new Student Worker Job Fair, a Fall Internship Fair, a Meet the Firms Fair, a Marketing and Public Relations Fair in partnership with the Department of Communication, a Cotsakos College of Business Networking Night, an Education Interview Day and Fair, and a Healthcare Career Fair.

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

The Center's Career and Professional Success Digital Badge for students, offered as part of the WP Leads Digital Badge Program administered by Campus Activities, Service, and Leadership, helps students discover key career readiness skills aimed at helping them navigate and prepare for the professional world. During the academic year, 4,019 badge credits were awarded for the program's different badge modules.



Professionals from Deloitte speak to students at a Career Development Center event

III. Advancement and Alumni Engagement

Fundraising

Fundraising was highly successful in support of student scholarships and initiatives that support faculty and students. The University raised nearly $5.3 million, 96 percent of the goal of $5.5 million, and continued to grow its endowment, which provides significant support for students through scholarships and other initiatives focused on financial need.

The endowment grew to $31.27 million (unaudited), a 104.3 percent increase in the last five years, and the scholarship endowment, a subset of the total endowment, grew to nearly $23.7 million (unaudited), an increase of 129 percent in the last five years. Nearly 770 scholarships were awarded in the 2024-25 academic year, with over $1.7 million in available donor scholarship/student support.

Total assets of the William Paterson University Foundation reached $59.6 million, a 9.7 percent increase over the previous year, and a 79.3 percent increase over the last five years due to fundraising efforts and market conditions.

A ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony was held for the Pioneer Athletics Fieldhouse on September 20, 2025. More than 300 alumni, faculty, staff, student-athletes, and friends of the institution attended the event, during which the University honored the lead donors to the Pioneering Champions Campaign, which raised funds in support of the fieldhouse addition and renovation project. In recognition of a $250,000 donation from Stephen Adzima '75, a former Pioneer football player and member of the William Paterson Alumni Association Athletic Hall of Fame, the University named the Stephen Adzima Strength and Conditioning Center in his honor. The gift establishes an endowed fund for ongoing support of the fieldhouse. In addition, in recognition of a $200,000 gift from the Estate of Alan J. Anderson '81, William Paterson named the Alan J. Anderson '81 Baseball Locker Room in his honor.

As part of the University's Giving Tuesday fundraising initiative, Provost Joshua Powers led his annual Trek for Success in support of the Provost Powers Student Emergency Support Fund. Provost Powers led a group of faculty, staff, alumni, and students on a hike from the main campus to the 1800 Valley Road building through High Mountain Park Preserve. The fund provides support for full-time or part-time students in good academic standing who are experiencing an unexpected financial hardship to help them reach their goal of graduating.

Alumni Greg Makowski '81, founding partner and managing member of CFS Investment Advisory Services, LLC and Dawn Makowski '80, president of AL Alexander Agency, an independent insurance agency; Bill Duffy, head of cataloging and metadata for the David and Lorraine Cheng Library at William Paterson and



The ribbon-cutting for the renovated and expanded Pioneer Athletics Fieldhouse



From left, Valley Bank representatives Dorothy Kahlau, Patricia Davino, and Justin Black '03; President Richard J. Helldobler; alumni Dawn '80 and Greg '81 Makowski; and WP librarian Bill Duffy at the Legacy Awards Gala

a member of the William Paterson Foundation Board; and Valley Bank, a regional consumer and commercial bank, were honored at the William Paterson University Foundation's 34th Annual Legacy Award Gala on April 24, 2025. The Legacy Awards honor those who exemplify the leadership of the institution's namesake, William Paterson, by demonstrating strong support for public higher education in the state of New Jersey, and generosity to others through philanthropic leadership.

Approximately 350 students, alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and administrators attended the 26th Annual Scholarship Luncheon on November 15, 2024. In addition to a keynote speech by student Joshua McCollum, recipient of the Alice Waldron Endowed Scholarship, the Future Educator Annual Scholarship, and the Vincent N. Parrillo Endowed Scholarship, remarks were read on behalf of Dorothy Hennings, who supports the Barbara M. Grant Endowed Scholarship, Barbara M. Grant Endowed Science Scholarship, and the George and Dorothy Hennings Endowed Science Scholarship.

Alumni Engagement and Philanthropy

In fiscal year 2025, the Office of Alumni Relations and the Office of Annual Giving were transformed into the Office of Alumni Engagement and Philanthropy (AEP). The office, along with the Alumni Association, continued to collaborate with campus partners to find ways for the University's nearly 92,000 alumni to become meaningfully engaged in the life of the University, including volunteer opportunities, programs, engagement experiences, philanthropy, and communication.

To shine a light on Pioneer alumni who embody the mission and values of the University, AEP launched a new 50 Alumni Under 50 program. The initiative featured 50 remarkable alumni from a variety of fields who are having a meaningful impact and demonstrating the many ways that a William Paterson degree is a springboard to success in their careers, communities, and lives. Ten honorees were recognized each month on the University website beginning in November 2024 and continuing through March 2025, and all alumni were recognized during a campus reception in June 2025.

Former Pioneer standouts Vera Blazevska '17, MS '19, women's swimming; Floriana Borova '14, women's basketball; Morgan Dunlap '04, softball; and Jack Lipari '04, baseball; and the 1982-83 Pioneer women's tennis team, along with retired athletic director Sabrina Grant, became the newest inductees into the William Paterson University Alumni Association Athletic Hall of Fame when they were enshrined at an event on campus on January 25, 2025. In addition, William Joosten '66, MA '69, was honored as the University's first Pioneer of Distinction recipient at the Hall of Fame event.

Numerous alumni connected with students, faculty, and staff during more than 60 in-person and virtual engagement opportunities. Examples include the second annual Baseball Beefsteak in March 2025, with nearly 70 alumni in attendance; a Football Feast and Reunion in August 2025; a career panel focused on allied health in November 2024; a women in tech event in March 2025, and an alumni event at a New York Yankees game in September 2025.

The Class of 1975 celebrated their 50th reunion by participating in the Undergraduate Commencement ceremony on May 20 at the Prudential Center in Newark, where they joined in the academic procession, following the new graduates into the arena, and received special recognition from President Helldobler during the ceremony.



The Class of 1975 at the Undergraduate Commencement ceremony

The following day, May 21, members of the class returned to campus for a 50th Reunion Luncheon, where they were able to reconnect with classmates, reminisce with friends, and reflect on their experience at William Paterson. President Helldobler, Provost Powers, and members of academic leadership and the Institutional Advancement team also joined the celebration. After lunch, attendees had the opportunity to take a shuttle tour of campus and witness the many exciting changes that have occurred since their time at William Paterson.



WP cheerleaders at a tailgating event

A record-breaking crowd of more than 2,500 alumni, family, and friends returned to campus for Homecoming and Family Day on November 9, 2024. Events included a pre-game tailgate and a Pioneer Carnival with food, games, musical performances by WP students, giveaways, and activities for all ages. The day kicked off with a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony for the new WP Spirit Rock on Speert Green. Located in front of Grant Hall, the large orange WP monument places one of the University's iconic logos at the heart of the main campus and has quickly become a popular gathering spot. In addition, pre-game tailgates were held prior to several home games during the 2024 football season, which drew alumni, families, faculty, staff, and community members.

More than 130 alumni, guests, and members of the University community attended the Pioneer Society Luncheon, held on April 16, 2025. The event celebrates alumni who graduated from William Paterson more than 50 years ago. During the luncheon, members of the Class of 1974 were inducted as the newest members of the society.

WP2: William Paterson Women Pioneers, an initiative designed to provide educational, leadership, social, and cultural programs for University alumnae, continued to generate positive alumni engagement. Two sold-out events were held during the academic year, including a Wellness for Women event in February 2025, and a Speed Networking Event in July 2025.

Alumni, friends, and *emeriti* faculty members living in Florida had a chance to connect with William Paterson and one another during two events held in March 2025. Gatherings were hosted on the west and east coasts, in the Sarasota and Boca Raton areas, respectively. President Helldobler participated in both events and shared the latest University news and updates. In addition, Greg and Dawn Makowski hosted an informal private lunch at their home in Singer Island on March 19. Collectively, many Florida alumni and friends continued a tradition of supporting the Florida Alumni Endowed Scholarship, which is awarded in perpetuity annually to a student who resides in or has lived in Florida. With the reorganization of the Office of Alumni Engagement and Philanthropy and with University strategic funding, building regional chapters across the country will be a key priority.

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

Alumni, as well as WP faculty and staff, continued to connect with each other and enjoy books focused on social justice and other topics through the WP Virtual Book Club. The book club continued the theme of "Social Justice: Learning and Building Community Across Differences" for the 2024-25 academic year. The program is a partnership with the University's Office of Employment Equity and Diversity.


The ribbon-cutting for the WP Spirit Rock in November 2024

IV. Campus Community Enhancements



The WP Spirit Rock on the Speert Green lawn

Campus Pride and Beautification

The University launched a signature initiative to extend the institution's Powerhouse of Progress brand to the physical campus to engage prospective students and enhance campus pride and spirit.

A large orange WP monument was installed on the Speert Green lawn near Grant Hall prior to the start of the fall 2024 semester. Known as the WP Spirit Rock, the iconic logo sculpture is located at the heart of the main campus and is meant to serve as a natural gathering spot for the campus community as well as enhance both the recruitment process and alumni engagement efforts.

The 6.5-foot rendering of the WP sits on a large limestone-faced platform that celebrates a rock that was located nearby at the center of the campus for more than 50 years. The rock was a favorite gathering place for students and alumni and the phrase, "I'll meet you at the Rock," is warmly remembered by many of alumni, and documented on a plaque on the platform.

The project was supported in part by a generous gift provided specifically for campus beautification from the estate of the late Edward Skurna '61, MA '69, a member of the William Paterson Heritage Society. It was formally dedicated as part of the University's 2024 Homecoming and Family Day festivities on November 9, 2024.

The University's vibrant and distinctive brand was also integrated into several common spaces, designed to resonate with prospective students and their families as they visit campus and to build pride for the campus community. Popular University images, especially Pio, the William Paterson mascot, and increased use of the institution's signature orange were added to entryways in the Machuga Student Center, Shea Center, and select residence halls. A large image of Pio was incorporated into the Student Center steps outside the campus bookstore.

Other enhancements include a large, bold Powerhouse of Progress graphic that was added to the Speert Hall Lobby, along with other bright WP images in the Student Center. The food court was renamed the Pioneer Food Court, featuring images from WP athletics teams. Additional WP banners were placed on campus, along with orange Adirondack chairs around the campus, which have been popular with students.

Campus Facilities Master Plan

The campus participated in the development of an updated Campus Facilities Master Plan designed to provide a stronger vision for supporting sustainable growth and modernization. The draft plan integrates and aligns strategic goals for academic, administrative, and recreational spaces and includes a detailed roadmap for future campus development, expanded pedestrian pathways, and enhanced campus connectivity. Faculty, staff, and students attended a University-wide Town Hall at which they provided feedback about proposed projects and initiatives, including "11 Big Ideas," such as relocating the Cotsakos College of Business and the College of Education back to main campus, repurposing spaces for modern teaching needs, and creating a primary campus entrance. The plan is expected to be finalized during the 2025-26 academic year.



New branding in the Speert Hall lobby



A rendering of the Recreation and Health Sciences Center project

Facilities and Construction Highlights

The University launched a major project designed to support WP's leadership in allied and behavioral health. Thanks to $40 million in funding through the Education Facilities Authority recommended by the Office of the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education and approved by the New Jersey legislature, the institution began construction on a transformation of the existing Sports and Recreation Center into the Recreation and Health Sciences Center, which will become a hub for the academic programs offered by the Department of Kinesiology, along with construction of a new wellness center and a natatorium.

The overall facility will be enhanced with a new 55,000-square-foot, two-story extension, doubling the size of the existing facility. It will provide classrooms, laboratories, and other related spaces for the University's bachelor's degree programs in sports medicine, sport management, exercise physiology, and physical education, and master's degree programs in athletic training, exercise physiology, and sport administration.

It will also house the University's Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center, with a new modern health clinic featuring a dedicated women's health center, a lab and pharmacy, and examination and counselor rooms, and a flexible space for group activities; a state-of-the-art 25-yard natatorium, and a multipurpose academic gym. Completion is slated for June 2027.

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



The Pioneer Athletics Fieldhouse athletic training room



The Stephen Adzima '75 Strength and Conditioning Center

New Community Policing offices were built in Speert Hall to better support campus safety initiatives and foster collaboration between Campus Police and the University community.



The community policing office in the Student Center

In addition, the University was awarded a $249,000 Trees for Schools grant, which will fund the planting of native trees and the creation of shaded outdoor learning and gathering spaces across campus.

Sustainability

William Paterson's sustainability programs continue to have a significant impact, with campus initiatives focused on conservation, efficiency, and education.

New initiatives included the launch as of fall 2024 of a fully electric campus shuttle bus fleet, the first among New Jersey's colleges and universities. The fully electric shuttle buses reduce greenhouse gas emissions and set a new standard for sustainable transportation in higher education. The new shuttles are 100 percent electric with zero carbon emissions and boast the latest technology and whisper-quiet rides—excellent for the environment as well as passengers' safety and comfort. They also offer real-time GPS tracking via an app and onboard Wi-Fi, making commuting across campus easier and more efficient for all travelers. The vehicles' exteriors have been wrapped with fun, WP-spirited graphics that feature the University mascot Pio "waving" from a window, plenty of Pioneer orange, and the Will. Power. motto.



Pio and President Helldobler with a new electric shuttle bus

To conserve water, the University has installed waterless urinals, reflecting a shift toward more sustainable facility management, and provided bottle filler water stations to reduce single-use plastic waste and encourage the use of reusable water bottles among students and staff. In addition, the institution has embraced waste reduction strategies. Through comprehensive recycling programs, including solid waste, organic waste composting, and waste-to-energy recycling, a significant portion of waste is diverted away from landfills. Educational campaigns encourage the campus community to adopt a culture of sustainability.

The University's 3.3 MW solar panel installation, among the largest at a four-year U.S. institution, currently supplies 12 percent of campus energy needs. Over the past two decades, while increasing the size of the campus by 47 percent, the University has lowered consumption of electricity by 30 percent, natural gas by 50 percent, and carbon emissions by 1350 tons.

Collectively, these innovative practices underscore WP's dedication to environmental stewardship and role as a leader in promoting green initiatives.


A Dhrupad voice yoga session during Wellness Days

Wellness Days

For the third consecutive year, Wellness Days were integrated into the fall 2024 semester to provide students with a break and the opportunity to take advantage of available resources to focus on their physical, mental, and emotional health. No classes were held and no assignments were due.

Faculty and staff were encouraged to engage in activities focused on health and wellness. The full day of programming included a wide range of in-person and virtual activities designed to promote health and wellbeing. In addition to sessions on yoga and meditation practices, Dhrupad voice yoga, and immersion sound bath meditation, offerings included a Health Fair featuring

health screenings provided by the Passaic County Health Department mobile unit, a vaccine clinic provided by Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, and nutritional referrals and education and a "Dr.'s Corner" provided by St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center.

Other sessions focused on ways to promote wellness in the student population, including listening as a superpower, the abilities of neurodivergent students, and incorporating mindfulness practices in the workplace. Outdoor events included lawn games and golf lessons; indoor activities were available at the Sports and Recreation Center and in the Relaxation Lounge in the Cheng Library.

Employee Development

The Summer Learning and Development Program, now in its seventh year, continued in 2025, providing professional development workshops and team activities built on the growth mindset established by previous summer programs. The theme for 2025, "U (You) Lead – Everyday Leadership at WP," focused on learning and developing new practices and skills as a strategy for individual and team success.

Specific focus was placed on AI literacy and use in daily workflows; listening for meaningful communication; allyship to foster understanding and respect; and workshops on topics such as Workday, Excel, and Qualtrics, and other important skills such as lifesaving and campus safety. The program ran on Wednesdays from June 25 through August 13.

In addition, the University offered a program for current and new managers, U Lead: A Shared Vision of Leadership, which explored the development of key leadership skills, and as well as sessions of Open the Front Door 2.0, an advanced series of workshops designed for managers who wanted to deepen their ability to lead with transparency, trust, and influence.

Five William Paterson faculty and staff were honored as the recipients of the institution's 2025 Pioneer Awards, which recognize exemplary contributions, leadership, and dedication to the University community. Honorees included Michele Martin, professional services specialist, Student Development, for Leadership and Team Spirit; Johanna Torres, director of student enrollment services, for Leadership and Professional Achievement; Krista Molly O'Donnell, director, Humanities Honors Track, and professor of history, for Faculty as Mentor; Patrick Ryan, director, Instruction and Research Technology, for Leadership and Innovation; and Christie Jaime, internship site doordinator, Department of Public Health, for Community Leadership.

The University continued to expand efforts to provide employees with meaningful opportunities to engage in the life of the campus. WP celebrated National Bring Your Child to Work Day on April 24, 2025 with a full day of activities organized around the theme "For a New Generation." Organized by the Division of Human Resources, events included community-building activities such as painting, an inflatable obstacle course, and a scavenger hunt, as well as career education activities such as a tour of the campus radio station, WP careers-based BINGO, and "resumé" building to get elementary-aged participants thinking about their skills, hobbies, and future aspirations. Approximately 85 future Pioneers and 60 members of the faculty and staff from various areas participated.



Employees and their children gather on Take Your Child to Work Day

V. Public Recognition

Honors and Accolades

The University remained among the top institutions in the nation for advancing economic opportunity and student success. The University ranked No. 55 out of 1,398 four-year institutions in the 2025 Social Mobility Index, placing it in the top 3.9 percent of colleges and universities nationwide. Created by CollegeNet, the Social Mobility Index measures the extent to which a college or university educates more economically disadvantaged students at lower tuition and graduates them into good-paying jobs.

In addition, William Paterson ranks no. 43 among the 164 regional universities in the northern United States on the U.S. News & World Report *Best Colleges 2026* list of top performers on social mobility, which measures how well schools graduate students with exceptional financial need.

William Paterson also was ranked among of the top public schools in its region according to U.S. News & World Report's 2026 edition of *Best Colleges*, placing no. 28 in the Top Public Regional Universities-North category.

The University's undergraduate nursing degree program was ranked no. 294 among 686 BSN programs nationwide, placing it in the top 42 percent of programs in the country.



Nursing students and faculty in the simulation lab

William J. Pesce '73, a member of the William Paterson Board of Trustees and the retired president and CEO of John Wiley & Sons, was selected as a 2024 *NJBIZ* ICON Honoree. The ICON awards honor New Jersey business leaders over 60 for their notable success and strong leadership within and beyond their chosen field, resulting in outstanding contributions to their industry and community. A trustee since 2002, Pesce and his family established the Pesce Family Mentoring Institute at the University. Entering its eleventh year, the Institute prepares students for their careers or graduate education by individually matching them with a mentor who provides career advice and guidance. Pesce is also a member of the New Jersey Business Hall of Fame and continues to serve on Wiley's Board of Directors and chairs its Executive Committee.



President Helldobler receives the ACE Council of Fellows Mentor Award

President Helldobler received the 2025 American Council on Education Council of Fellows/Fidelity Investments Mentor Award. The prestigious national award is presented annually to acknowledge the substantial role of mentors in the success of participants in the ACE Fellows Program. President Helldobler has mentored six Fellows and nominated four Fellows for the program.

President Helldobler was among the inaugural recipients of the 2025 *NJBIZ* Executive Excellence Awards. *NJBIZ* honored those selected for their roles in shaping New Jersey's business landscape. According to *NJBIZ*, the individuals selected, all senior-level executives, have consistently demonstrated "remarkable leadership skills, integrity, values, vision, commitment to excellence, company performance, and community service." After an open nomination process, 60 honorees were selected by a panel of independent judges.

President Helldobler also was included on the 2024 *NJBIZ* Education Power 50 list and *ROI-NJ*'s annual Influencers Power 2025 list.

For the 15th year in a row, William Paterson University has been recognized in the *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*, honoring those institutions that are implementing best practices and policies to recruit, develop, and support student veterans, with the goal of providing them the tools they need to successfully move into the next chapter of their lives.

The University was named to *Forbes*' prestigious 2025 "Best In-State Employers" list, recognizing the institution as one of the best-ranked employers in New Jersey for the second year in a row. *Forbes* partnered with market research firm Statista to survey more than 160,000 workers nationwide who are employed by companies with at least 500 people. Respondents were asked about their current employer, as well as any previous employers they've had in the past two years. The anonymous survey covered such topics as the employee's experience with working conditions, compensation and benefits, potential for growth, diversity, and more.

William Paterson was among more than 40 companies and organizations honored with a 2024 *NJBIZ* Empowering Women Award for their commitment to supporting and elevating women employees. Now in its second year, *NJBIZ*'s Empowering Women – Companies Leading the Way awards program recognizes New Jersey-based organizations for their tangible and innovative efforts to advance women in the workplace and community. To be eligible, companies must have 50 percent or more than 100 staff working in New Jersey. The honorees were chosen based on their commitment to a variety of efforts, including focused recruiting, hiring, and promoting of women; mentoring programs for women; working toward systemic change in society to combat inequality; and contributing to advancing the cause of women through outside philanthropic or community endeavors, among others.

A community outreach initiative for children through the David and Lorraine Cheng Library received a 2024 Library of Congress Literacy Award, which recognizes organizations in the U.S. and abroad that provide exemplary, innovative, and sustainable strategies to promote literacy and reading. The library was honored for its adaptation of Real Men Read—a national program focused on male mentorship in education—which was launched at William Paterson in 2020 by Neil Grimes, curriculum materials librarian. Every year since, during Read Across America Week and throughout the month of March, male administrators, faculty, staff, and students from William Paterson visit preschools and elementary schools that are part of the College of Education's Professional Development Network across northern New Jersey either virtually or in person to read to students. Over the last five years, more than 4,000 students were reached by the program.

William Paterson University was one of just 100 predominantly bachelor's degree-granting institutions in the nation nominated to apply for the U.S. Department of Education's Postsecondary Success Recognition Program. The program is part of the U.S. Department of Education's "Raise the Bar: Attaining College Excellence and Equity" initiative, which reflects its commitment to ensuring that students of all backgrounds, ages, disability statuses, and income levels can succeed in any postsecondary pathway they choose. The Department of Education identified the institutions using publicly available data to measure performance on key indicators related to equitable access, success, and post-college outcomes at public and non-profit institutions across the country.

The University's Access to STEM Pathways through Integrated Research and Engagement (ASPIRE) program received the 2025 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from *Insight into Academia* magazine. The STEM Award is a measure of an institution's individual programs and initiatives that encourage and support the recruitment and retention of women and underrepresented students into all STEM fields. William Paterson was featured, along with the other recipients, in the June 2025 issue of *Insight into Academia* magazine.


Faculty, staff, and student participants in the ASPIRE program

New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way served as keynote speaker for a women's equity conference hosted by the Small Business

Development Center (SBDC) in August 2024. She spoke to an audience of nearly 200 established and aspiring women from across northern New Jersey.

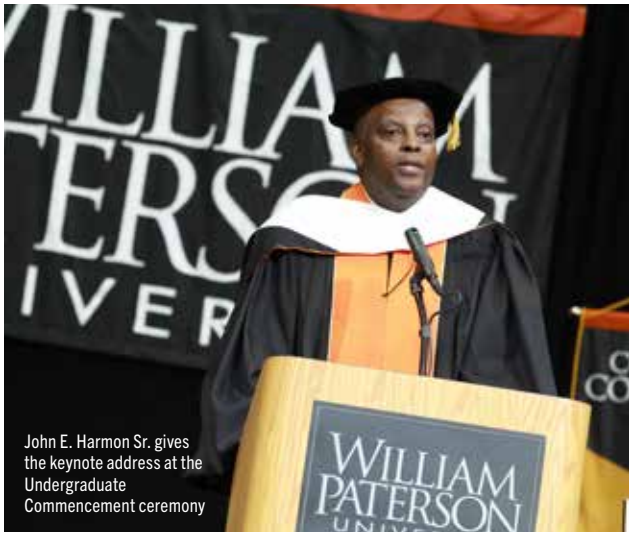
Billboard magazine placed William Paterson on its list of "top music business schools" around the world—recognizing the University's undergraduate program in music and entertainment industries. William Paterson is one of only two New Jersey institutions on the list, and the only public university to be included. This marked the seventh time William Paterson has landed on the list, which included schools throughout the United States, as well as the United Kingdom and Australia.

The David and Lorraine Cheng Library received the 2024 Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award from *Insight Into Diversity* magazine, the largest and oldest diversity and inclusion publication in higher education. The LEAD Award honors academic libraries' programs and initiatives that encourage and support diversity, equity, and inclusion across their campus. These include, but are not limited to, research, technology, accessibility, exhibitions, and community outreach. William Paterson was the only institution in New Jersey whose library was honored; it was featured, along with 55 other recipients, in the March 2024 issue of *Insight Into Diversity* magazine.

The University was recognized for its sustainability efforts during the 2025 Environmental Innovation Awards ceremony held by the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ), in connection with *Commerce Magazine*, in April 2025. The annual awards celebrate the achievement, stewardship, and leadership of CIANJ members who seek to make the world a more sustainable place by protecting the environment and natural resources. The University was honored for its work to reduce energy usage on campus.

The University was recognized by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for its nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts that fostered high levels of student voter engagement in the 2022 midterm elections. WP received the Bronze Seal, reflecting its commitment to ensuring that nonpartisan democratic engagement is a defining feature of campus life.

In addition, William Paterson University was recognized by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge as a Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting. The University also clinched the No. 1 spot among New Jersey campuses of a similar size for its student-voter registration and commitment rates in the November 2024 election.



John E. Harmon Sr. gives the keynote address at the Undergraduate Commencement ceremony

Commencement

John E. Harmon Sr., the founder, president, and CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, gave the keynote address and was awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters degree at the 2025 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony held on May 20 in the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. More than 2,000 bachelor's degrees were conferred.

During his address, Harmon told the Class of 2025 they have the commitment and discipline to succeed. "It is incumbent of you to take the investment made by William Paterson University in you to solve the challenges that are awaiting post-graduation. As you ponder your pathway to success, you must constantly remind yourself that you have what it takes to succeed. Why? Because your mind is the most powerful tool at your disposal."


The Class of 2025 at Undergraduate Commencement

Harmon was honored for "his achievements as a public servant, his initiatives focused on African American residents and businesses in the State of New Jersey, and for his leadership and commitment to improving the lives of all citizens in the State of New Jersey."

In his address at the ceremony, President Helldobler asked the graduates to think deeply about the world they live in, and the kind of world they want to live in. "As you consider these critical questions, you will, at times, need to navigate among passion and practicality," he told the Class of 2025. "But please don't think that you have to choose between them. Find opportunities to combine your passions and practical considerations. Play to your strengths and always be open to fostering new ones."

The graduates, who ranged in age from 20 to 66, hailed from 25 states and 50 countries, and included 49 veterans and active service members. Nearly 50 percent are first-generation college students, and the majority worked while earning their degrees. More than 570 students graduated with the Latin honors of *summa cum laude, magna cum laude,* and *cum laude* for achieving consistently high, or perfect, grade point averages during their studies at William Paterson.


Graduates celebrate at a Graduate Commencement ceremony

Graduate Commencement ceremonies were held for doctoral and master's degree candidates on May 22 in the Sports and Recreation Center on campus. This year's ceremonies included nine graduates who were awarded the doctor of nursing practice degrees, eight candidates who were awarded doctor of education in leadership degrees, and eight who were awarded doctor of psychology degrees in clinical psychology. The graduates hailed from 19 states and 17 countries and included 17 veterans and active-duty service members. More than 1,300 candidates were awarded master's degrees.

Media Visibility

The University garnered important visibility in regional, national, and international media outlets as part of its branding and identity strategy.

President Helldobler shared his distinctive path from the arts to academia, and how that journey informs the bold, people-centered leadership he brings to William Paterson, in an episode of the *Leaders on Leadership* podcast, produced by Academic Search and the American Academic Leadership Institute.

In addition, President Helldobler was profiled on the American Council on Education website, where he discussed lessons he has learned during his career in academia, as well as his perspective on current debates regarding DEI, why it's essential for institutions to embrace nontraditional students, and why higher education needs warriors who will focus on doing the work to increase access and opportunity.

He also participated in a webinar, "Higher Education in New Jersey: The Challenges We Face," presented by the Corporation for New Jersey Local Media and sponsored by AFTNJ, which streamed live and was posted on the Corporation's Facebook and YouTube channels.

Andrew Herbst, a member of the Class of 2024 who overcame the challenges of cerebral palsy to graduate after many years of taking one class per semester, was featured in a Commencement story on NBC 4 NY television. The segments included footage from the Commencement ceremony.

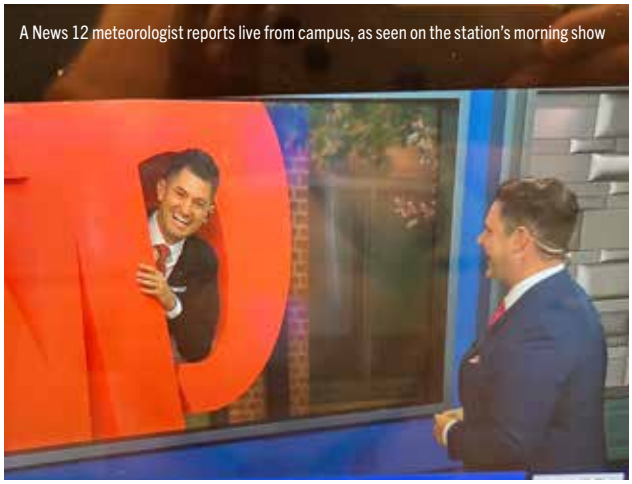
Commencement coverage also included a feature story on NJ.com about three adult learner siblings who graduated together in May 2024, as well as a feature story on Northjersey.com about Dellwanna Miller, a May 2024 graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work who lost her son to gun violence and now serves as an advocate for parents whose children have been killed in shootings.

Business publications *ROI-NJ*, *NJBIZ*, and *New Jersey Business* magazine reported on the rise of the University's MBA program to No. 1 in the state, ahead of Montclair State University.

The University's new 3+1 degree programs agreement with Passaic County Community College was covered by *The Record* and *New Jersey Business* magazine.

Priya Nagaraj, professor of economics, was interviewed by CBS 2 NY television on how proposed tariffs could impact prices at the supermarket.

George Kacenga, vice president for enrollment management, was interviewed on campus by News 12 New Jersey to promote a 2024 Fall Open House event. He also was interviewed by the Associated Press about international students and visas; the piece was picked up by press outlets across the region, nation, and world.


A News 12 meteorologist reports live from campus, as seen on the station's morning show

A News 12 New Jersey television meteorologist reported the state's weather live from campus throughout a three-hour morning news television program. The new Spirit Rock was visually prominent in all the segments, and the meteorologist discussed it directly during some of his reports.

News 12 New Jersey also reported live from the University throughout the evening of Election Night 2024, featuring William Paterson's Student Election Night Watch Party. Coverage included interviews with Donna Minnich Spuhler, director of campus activities, service, and leadership; Gary Marks '10, MA '13, reference and outreach librarian; and WP students.

The University's allied health partnerships with St. Joseph's Health, which include relationships with the Department of Nursing, the Department of Kinesiology, and the Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center, were featured in *ROI-NJ*.

William Paterson received significant state and regional coverage through a video clip released by the Newark Public Schools that went viral on social media and in the broadcast news. The clip featured an incoming WP Class of 2029 freshman who received a job contract to teach in Newark following the completion of his degree.

The launch of the University's new comprehensive Career Experience Program was covered by business publications *ROI-NJ* and *NJBIZ*.

Guillermo de Veyga, former vice president for strategic initiatives and University relations, served as a political expert discussing 2024 Election Day results for CBS 2 NY, the CBS2 news streaming service, and Noticias 44 Univision television station (in Spanish), and was interviewed by CBS 2 NY television and Univision Noticias 41 television about the 2025 New Jersey gubernatorial primary election.

Dewar Macleod, professor of history and author of *Making the Scene in the Garden State: Popular Music in New Jersey from Edison to Springsteen and Beyond* (2020), was quoted in a story about music icon Bruce Springsteen that appeared on NJ.com.

Louis Picone, MA '19, a WP adjunct professor of history and a presidential historian, was featured in a television segment that aired nationwide on Spectrum News and discussed Grover Cleveland and Donald Trump serving non-consecutive terms as president.

A story about WP accounting students offering free income tax prep to qualifying residents was covered by *The Record*/Northjersey.com.

The University's new Carnegie research classification was covered by *New Jersey Business* magazine.

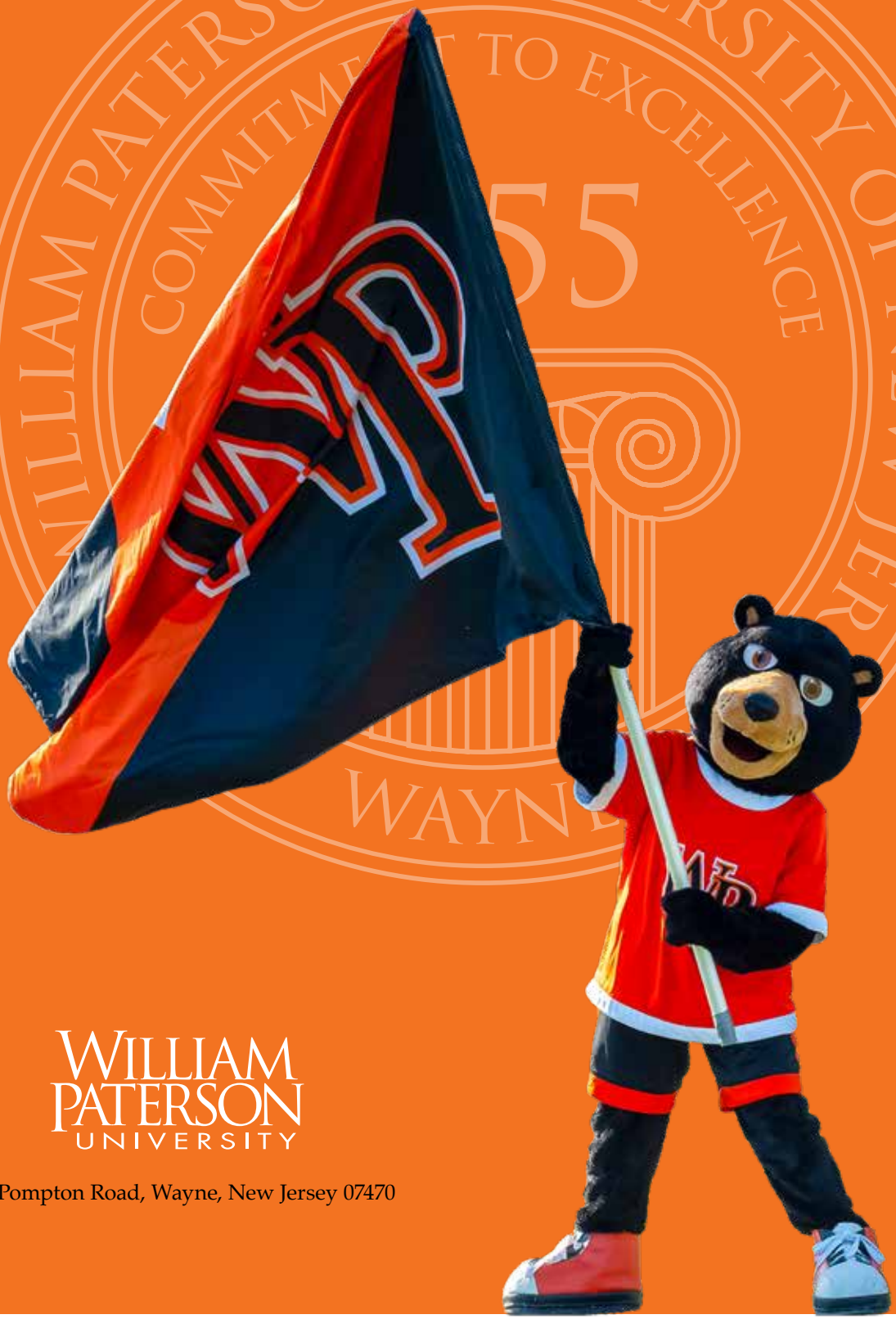
New Jersey Spotlight News and *The Record* were among the news outlets that covered the University's hosting of the N.J. Ballot Bowl Kickoff event.

NJBIZ covered the University's Student News Live election coverage initiative, under the leadership of Nick Hirshon, associate professor of journalism.

A new monthly entrepreneur meetup series launched out of WP's Center for Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CSREI) and the New Jersey Small Business Development Center was covered by *The Record*/Northjersey.com, *NJBIZ*, and business publication *BINJE*.

A grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor to the College of Education's Aspiring Educators program was covered by *ROI-NJ*.

The Financial Planning Academy run by the Cotsakos College of Business was covered by *BINJE*, as well as community newspapers published by *The Record*.



WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

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