



**NJ PATHWAYS
TO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
SUMMIT
2025**

**Innovate, Educate, Elevate:
Pathways for All**

June 4, 2025



2025
NJ COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OPPORTUNITY SUMMIT

**Unlocking
opportunity**

June 4-6, 2025

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City

NJCommunityColleges.org

Welcome

On behalf of **New Jersey's 18 Community Colleges** and their **240,000** students, we welcome you to the third annual **New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit** and the second annual **New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit**.

We are joined by **Community College** Trustees, Presidents, staff, and faculty, as well as partners from high schools, private career schools, four-year colleges and universities, employers, unions, community-based organizations, the public workforce system, state and local government, and others who are committed to the shared goals of equity, access, innovation, and economic mobility.

The **NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit** will focus on our NJ Pathways Initiative, developed in partnership with the **New Jersey Business and Industry Association** and supported by the Governor and Legislature, which brings together over **1,800** partners to design and deliver career pathways and stackable credentials aligned with the needs of students and employers.

Experience a day of insights, innovation, and inspiration featuring national experts, student voices, and real-world solutions that are transforming how we educate, train, and prepare New Jersey's workforce for today and tomorrow. **When We Innovate, Educate, and Elevate Together — We Create NJ Pathways for All!**

This year's New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit theme—**Unlocking Opportunity**—underscores our mission to expand access to college, promote student success, and build a stronger and more inclusive workforce. Guided by our **Opportunity Agenda** and anchored in the innovative efforts taking place at each of **New Jersey's 18 Community Colleges**, we continue to respond to the social, economic, demographic, technological, and environmental changes reshaping our world.

During the **New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit**, we'll hear from **national and state leaders** about the critical role that **Community Colleges** play in advancing opportunity and economic growth. We'll also celebrate the impact of exceptional individuals and organizations at our annual **Awards Dinner**.

We'll showcase the **Innovations and Promising Practices** shaping the future of our colleges, including strategies to support students through holistic services that address food and housing insecurity, childcare, and mental health. This work, made possible in part through the support of **The Tepper Foundation**, is central to our commitment to ensuring every student has the resources they need to succeed.

We hope you'll leave Atlantic City with new ideas, new partnerships, and a renewed commitment to working together to create a more equitable and prosperous **New Jersey**.

Sheetal Ranjan

Chair, New Jersey Council of County Colleges
Trustee, Bergen Community College

Aaron Fichtner

President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges



Presidents, Trustees, students, alumni, and college leaders spoke out on the importance of investing in Community Colleges in the state budget at a Senate Budget Hearing [February, 2025]

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We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors whose partnership makes this Summit possible

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June 4

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Innovate, Educate, Elevate: Pathways for All

7:00 AM **Registration**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

7:30 AM **Breakfast**
Seminole Ballroom II, III

9:00 AM **Opening Remarks**
Seminole Ballroom I

Catherine Frugé Starghill, Vice President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges and Executive Director, New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce & Economic Development

Tim Sullivan, CEO, NJ Economic Development Authority

Senator Joseph Cryan, Chairman, NJ Senate Committee on Higher Education

Christopher Emigholz, Chief Government Affairs Officer, New Jersey Business and Industry Association

9:30 AM **Pathways in Practice: Student Impact & Project Innovation**
Seminole Ballroom I

- 1. Health Information Technology**
- 2. NJ Big Data Alliance – Data Science Degree Programs Alignment and Articulations**
- 3. Essential Learning, General Education, and Career Competencies Collaborative**
- 4. Geographic Information Systems Certificates Development**



June 4 (Cont.)

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Innovate, Educate, Elevate: Pathways for All

5. Electric Vehicle Internship and Faculty Development Pilot

11:00 AM **Pathways Projects Networking**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

11:30 AM **Building the Future Together: A Conversation with NJ Pathways Partners**
Seminole Ballroom I

John Harmon, Founder, CEO, and President, African American Chamber of Commerce of NJ

Dana Castro, Senior Director, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society

Ashish D. Borgaonkar, Assistant Professor, Engineering Education and Director, NCE Grand Challenges Scholars Program, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Joseph DeMarco, Director of Apprenticeship, Laborers International Union of North America – New Jersey Construction Craft Laborer Apprenticeship Program

Matthew Hale, Associate Professor and MPA Program Chair, Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, Seton Hall University and President, New Jersey Big Data Alliance

12:45 PM **Lunch**
Seminole Ballroom II, III



June 4 (Cont.)

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Innovate, Educate, Elevate: Pathways for All

Micro-Pathways, Macro Impact: Reimagining Access, Equity, and Employability

Rachel Kahn, Senior Director, Community College
Growth Engine, Education Design Lab

Michael Macklin, Associate Vice Chancellor,
Workforce Solutions, Colorado Community College
System

2:30 PM **Brigding Business and Education: Building Inclusive
Pathways for Economic Growth**
Seminole Ballroom I

Jennifer Thornton, Senior Vice President and Chief
Program Officer, Business-Higher Education Forum

3:30 PM **Pathways Projects Networking**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

4:00 PM **Designing for Impact: Research Insights at the Nexus of
Education and Employment**
Seminole Ballroom I

Michelle Van Noy, Director and Associate Research
Professor, Rutgers University School of Management
and Labor Relations, Education and Employment
Research Center

4:45 PM **Next Steps & Closing Remarks**
Seminole Ballroom I

Catherine Frugé Starghill, Vice President, New Jersey
Council of County Colleges and Executive Director,
New Jersey Community College Consortium for
Workforce & Economic Development

Aaron Fichtner, President, New Jersey Council of
County Colleges

**Explore the NJ Pathways
Repository at NJPathways.org**



June 5

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

7:00 AM **Registration**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

Breakfast
Seminole Ballroom II, III

8:45 AM **Opening Remarks**
Seminole Ballroom I

Aaron Fichtner, President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Brian Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education, New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education

9:15 AM **Who Needs College Anymore? Imagining a Future Where Degrees Won't Matter**
Seminole Ballroom I

Kathleen deLaski, Founder & Board Chair, Education Design Lab

10:15 AM **Exhibitor Break**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

10:30 AM Breakouts Sessions

Supporting Adult Learners
Seminole Ballroom I

Lisa Dougherty, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment, Hudson County Community College

Vanessa O'Brien-McMasters, Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness & Chief Strategy Officer, Atlantic Cape Community College

Jasmine Jilus, Director of Adult Services, UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ

Work-Integrated Learning and Apprenticeships
Fort Pierce Salon C

Chris Herzog, Principal TA Consultant, American Institutes for Research

June 5 (Cont.)

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

10:30 AM Breakouts Sessions (Cont.)

Amy Beller, TA Consultant, American Institutes for Research

Mark Genua, Director, Solutions Design & Delivery, Jobs for the Future

Developing and Implementing Micro-credentials and Badges *Studio 2B*

Andrew Tomko, Vice President, Academic Affairs and Provost, Bergen Community College

Rachel Kahn, Senior Director, Community College Growth Engine, Education Design Lab

Developing and Sustaining Effective Business Partnerships *Fort Pierce Salon D*

Elvy Vieira, Dean of Community, Continuing Education and Workforce Development, Essex County College

Kristen Fox, CEO, Business-Higher Education Forum

Data Strategies to Advance College and Statewide Priorities *Fort Pierce Salon A*

Laura Ulrich, Senior Regional Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond and Leader, Richmond Fed Survey of Community College Outcomes

Laurie Harrington, Executive Director, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University

Michelle Van Noy, Director and Associate Research Professor, Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations, Education and Employment Research Center

11:45 AM **Exhibitor Break**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

June 5 (Cont.)

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

12:00 PM **Lunch**
Seminole Ballroom II, III

Remarks

Sheetal Ranjan, Chair, New Jersey Council of County Colleges and Trustee, Bergen Community College

Katan Cheti, N2N Services, Inc.

1:15 PM **Exhibitor Break**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

1:45 PM Track 1: Holistic Student Services

Community to Opportunity: Meeting Students' Basic Needs with a Culture of Care

Seminole Ballroom I

Rose Rodriguez, Program Manager, New Jersey, Tepper Foundation

Andrea Falzone, Licensed Psychologist, Camden County College

Keith Kirkland, Dean, Student Affairs, Essex County College

Ariana Calle, Associate Director, Hudson Helps, Hudson County Community College

Alison Noone, Director, TRIO Scholars, Ocean County College

Karen Archambault, Senior Vice President, Enrollment Management and Student Success, Rowan College at Burlington County

Jamie Borger, Director, Student Success Center, Sussex County Community College

Jacob Farbman, Executive Director, Economic Mobility, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Da'Shon Carr (Moderator), Researcher, Education Northwest

June 5 (Cont.)

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

1:45 PM Track 2: Strategy Showcases

**UCNJ, Union College of Union County, NJ's Journey to NJ's First
Finalist for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence**
Fort Pierce Salon D

President Margaret M. McMenamin, UCNJ, Union College of
Union County, NJ

**New Jersey's Community Colleges and the Evolving Political and
Policy Landscape**
Fort Pierce Salon A

Maria Heidkamp, Chief Innovation and Policy Officer, New
Jersey Council of County Colleges

Members of the New Jersey State Legislature

**The Humanities and NJ's Community Colleges: Programming and
Partnerships**
Fort Pierce Salon C

Carin Berkowitz, Executive Director, NJ Council for the
Humanities

John Paul Christy, Executive Director, Princeton Humanities
Institute

Bettina Caluori, Professor, English, Mercer County Community
College

Cara McClintock, Associate Director, Community College
Engagement, Princeton University

Linda Scherr, Chief Academic Officer, New Jersey Council of
County Colleges

3:15 PM Networking Break
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

June 5 (Cont.)

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

3:45 PM Roundtable Discussions and Working Sessions

Engaging Community Partners in Holistic Student Supports

Fort Pierce Salon D

Leanne Davis, Managing Researcher, Education Northwest

Da'Shon Carr, Researcher, Education Northwest

Jacob Farbman, Executive Director, Economic Mobility, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Credentials of Value for Economic Mobility Forum

Fort Pierce Salon A

Jennifer Thornton, Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer, Business-Higher Education Forum

Maria Heidkamp, Chief Innovation and Policy Officer, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Data Provider Debrief: Richmond Federal Reserve Bank's Survey of Community College Outcomes

Fort Pierce Salon C

Laura Ulrich, Senior Regional Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

Davy Sell, Analyst, Community College Initiative, Richmond Federal Reserve Bank

Alexandra Gusciora, Research Analyst, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Space Available for Discussions with College Teams or Colleagues

Seminole Ballroom I

- 5:00 PM** **Exhibitor Break**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area
- 6:00 PM** **Awards Dinner**
Seminole Ballroom II, III

June 6

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

- 7:00 AM** **Registration**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area
- 7:30 AM** **Breakfast**
Fresh Harvest Buffet
- 9:00 AM** **Lumina's Stronger Nation Initiative and Credentials of Value for Economic Mobility**
Seminole Ballroom II, III
Kermit Kaleba, Strategy Director, Employer Aligned Programs, Lumina Foundation
- 10:15 AM** **Exhibitor Break**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

10:30 AM Track 1: Holistic Student Services

Beyond the Pantry: How Salem Community College's Pop-Up Farm Stands are Cultivating Student Success and Community Connections
Fort Pierce Salon A

Maura Cavanagh-Dick, Associate Dean, Salem Community College

Maddie Elliott, Administrative Coordinator, Student Services, Salem Community College

Glenn Rinnier, Technology Support Clerk & Technician, Salem Community College

Gladys Hutchings, Library Technician, Salem Community College

Christina Hadry, Administrative Support, Salem Community College

Everyone's So Creative! Reshaping Community College Mental Health and Wellness Services
Fort Pierce Salon B

Ruby Aparicio-Pagan, Director, Behavioral Services, Center for Wellness and Support, RCSJ - Cumberland Campus

Kristen Wilson, Director, Behavioral Services, Center for Wellness and Support, RCSJ - Gloucester Campus

June 6 (Cont.)

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

10:30 AM Track 2: Strategy Showcases

**Essential Learning, General Education, and Career Readiness
Collaborative: An NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities Project**
Fort Pierce Salon D

Karen Bearce, Provost, Raritan Valley Community College,
and Pathway Project Lead

Additional Participants of the NJ Pathways Project Team

Telling Our Story: Marketing and Brand-Building for Today's Students
Fort Pierce Salon C

Melissa Albright, Vice President of Marketing, Public Relations,
and Enrollment Management, County College of Morris

11:45 AM **Exhibitor Break**
Seminole Ballroom Pre-Function Area

12:00 PM **Lunch**
Seminole Ballroom II, III

**Achieving the Dream's Community Vibrancy Framework
and Perspectives on Community Colleges in 2025**

Shara L. Davis, Senior Fellow for Special Projects,
Achieving the Dream

Closing Remarks

Aaron Fichtner, President, New Jersey Council of
County Colleges

NEW JERSEY'S OPPORTUNITY AGENDA: BUILDING PATHWAYS TO EQUITY AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



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Success

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Completion in
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Education and
Training

PILLAR 3

Building
Transparent,
Seamless, and
Stackable
Pathways That
Respond to the
Changing Economy

PILLAR 4

Helping Adults
Attain the
Credentials They
Need for Career
Mobility and
Labor Market
Success

Schedule at a Glance

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Innovate, Educate, Elevate: Pathways for All

June 4

9:00 AM	Seminole Ballroom I	Opening Remarks
9:30 AM	Seminole Ballroom I	Pathways in Practice
11:00 AM	Prefunction Area	Pathways Projects Networking
11:30 AM	Seminole Ballroom I	Building the Future Together
12:45 PM	Seminole Ballroom II, III	Lunch and Micro-Pathways, Macro Impact
2:30 PM	Seminole Ballroom I	Bridging Business and Education
3:30 PM	Prefunction Area	Pathways Projects Networking
4:00 PM	Seminole Ballroom I	Designing for Impact
4:45 PM	Seminole Ballroom I	Next Steps & Closing Remarks

New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit: Unlocking Opportunity and Advancing Economic Mobility

June 5

8:45 AM	Seminole Ballroom I	Opening Remarks
9:15 AM	Seminole Ballroom I	Who Needs College Anymore?
10:30 AM	Seminole Ballroom I	Supporting Adult Learners
10:30 AM	Fort Pierce Salon C	Work-Integrated Learning and Apprenticeships
10:30 AM	Studio 2B	Developing and Implementing Micro-Credentials and Badges
10:30 AM	Fort Pierce Salon D	Developing and Sustaining Effective Business Partnerships
10:30 AM	Fort Pierce Salon A	Data Strategies to Advance College and Statewide Priorities
12:00 PM	Seminole Ballroom II, III	Lunch and Remarks
1:45 PM	Seminole Ballroom I	Community to Opportunity
1:45 PM	Fort Pierce Salon D	UCNJ's Journey to NJ's First Finalist for the Aspen Prize
1:45 PM	Fort Pierce Salon A	NJ's Community Colleges and the Evolving Political and Policy Landscape
1:45 PM	Fort Pierce Salon C	The Humanities and NJ's Community Colleges
3:15 PM	Prefunction Area	Networking Break
3:45 PM	Fort Pierce Salon D	Engaging Community Partners in Holistic Student Supports
3:45 PM	Fort Pierce Salon A	Credentials of Value for Economic Mobility Forum
3:45 PM	Fort Pierce Salon C	Data Provider Debrief
5:00 PM	Prefunction Area	Exhibitor Break
6:00 pm	Seminole Ballroom II, II	Awards Dinner

June 6

9:00 AM	Seminole Ballroom II, III	Lumina's Stronger Nation Initiative and Credentials of Value for Economic Mobility
10:30 AM	Fort Pierce Salon A	Beyond the Pantry
10:30 AM	Fort Pierce Salon B	Reshaping Community College Mental Health and Wellness Services
10:30 AM	Fort Pierce Salon D	Essential Learning, General Education, and Career Readiness
10:30 AM	Fort Pierce Salon C	Telling Our Story
12:00 PM	Seminole Ballroom II, III	Lunch and Achieving the Dream's Community Vibrancy Framework
1:15 PM	Seminole Ballroom II, III	Closing Remarks

Meet Our Summit Speakers

National and state thought leaders are sharing their insights on effective strategies for expanding academic, economic, and social mobility, and will offer their perspectives on key issues shaping the future of higher education. **New Jersey's Community Colleges** will highlight innovative practices that are unlocking opportunity by transforming education and training to better serve students and strengthen our state's economy.

VIEW FULL SPEAKER LINE-UP



The New Jersey of Council Colleges hosted its first ever NJ Community College Student Leadership Summit at Brookdale Community Colleges [April, 2025]



New Jersey
Council of
County Colleges



New Jersey Delegation at ACCT's National Legislative Summit

[Feb., 2025]

The Cost of Poverty Experience, Community to Opportunity Initiative

[Nov., 2024]



Community Colleges in Action



A group of students are seated at a long table in a formal setting, likely a legislative chamber. They are looking towards the front of the room. A young woman in a yellow t-shirt is in the foreground, looking slightly to her right. Other students are visible behind her, some looking forward and others looking to the side. The room has wood paneling and large windows in the background.

Student Leader Testimony at NJ's State Legislature

[Feb., 2025]



A large group of students are seated at round tables in a conference room, facing a stage. A woman in a green dress is standing at a podium on the stage, speaking into a microphone. A large screen is visible behind her. The students are engaged in the presentation. A student in the foreground is wearing a red shirt with the text "ENGAGE EMPOWER LEAD" on the back.

NJ Community College Student Leadership Summit

[April, 2025]

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