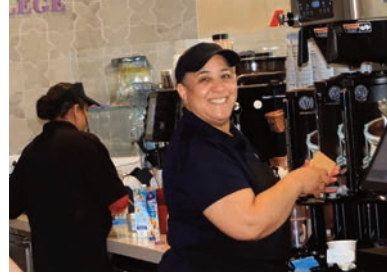


inside Bergen

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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President Eric M. Friedman cut the ribbon on the new Bergen Brew and Primo Pizza on September 10.

Bergen Brews Something New this Fall

For students, faculty and staff, the anticipation of a new student center café brewed all summer. When the fall semester began, they finally saw what had – ahem – *bean* going on behind temporary construction walls.

College leaders joined members of American Dining Creations (ADC), Bergen’s hospitality service partner, for a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the renovated student center café in September. The revamped café features Primo Pizza and Bergen Brew, a coffee spot that not only features a fresh look, but a fresh approach to campus dining.

“When it comes to customer service, we try to be really accommodating,” ADC Bergen General Manager Jack Yuksel said. “It can be allergies or things that students don’t want on certain food items, so we’ve geared the menu more toward them.”

Based on students’ overwhelming requests for improved coffee, ADC partnered with Pour City Roasters, a local brewery in Franklin Lakes, to up its “cup of joe” game. Students also participated in a contest to rebrand the coffee café: Bergen Brew won in a landslide.

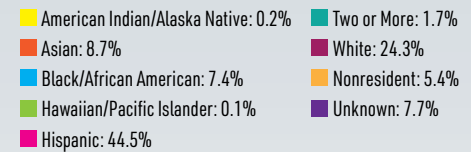
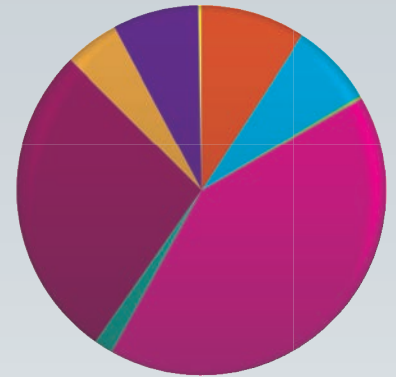
Student feedback also led ADC to reshape the menus at both the coffee café and Primo Pizza, adding organic syrups and sauces, protein shakes and chicken wings. Additionally, ADC has partnered with Chowit to offer app-based mobile ordering.

The renovation comes as the College continues to invest in resources that help create a sense of belongingness on campus where students have comfortable spaces to gather, socialize and relax. Student Jang Mok said the approach is working.

“They have everything here, so I feel like it’s amazing,” he said. ■

BY THE NUMBERS - The Fall 2025 Student Profile

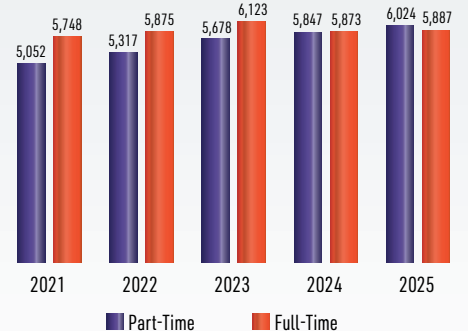
Race/Ethnicity



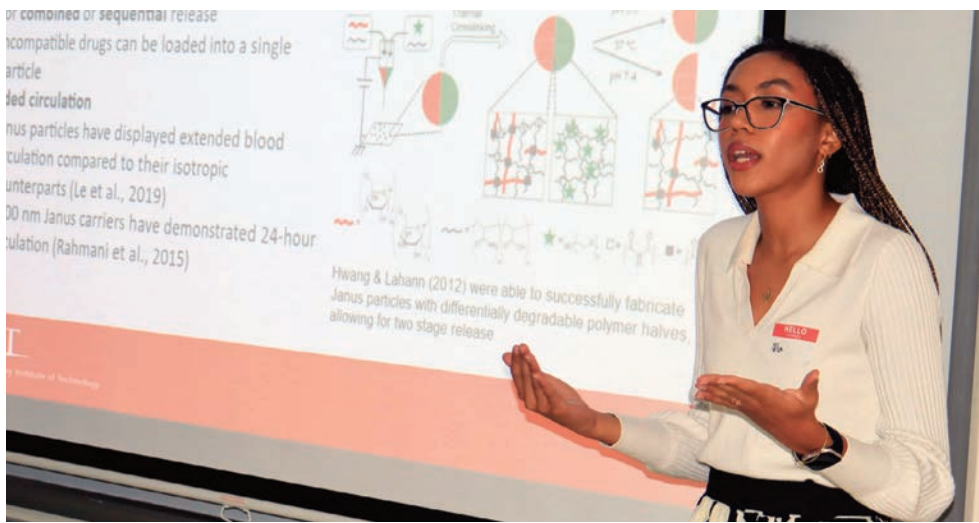
Total Enrollment



Attendance Status



For the first time since 2003, part-time students outnumber full-time students.



Students such as Nia Rodriguez presented her work at the STEM Summit.

Students Scale STEM Summit

The STEM² Research Summit brought a record number of student participants, partner colleges and visiting professionals to the main campus in August. The annual event serves as an opportunity for STEM students to present their research to scientists, peers, professors and engineers. This year, nearly 100 students showcased 28 projects

and competed by explaining their findings to judges during morning and afternoon sessions.

Among the honorees, "Electronic and Magnetic Studies of Heusler Compounds XFe₂Si (X=Ti and V): A First Principles Study" presented by students Hanieh Kachooee, Jason Carbajal and

Cindy Kim won three awards: "First Place Best Poster," "Best Poster Pitch" and "Most Likely to Go Viral."

"It felt amazing to see our students excel in presenting their work at such a high caliber. They proudly represented the incredible capabilities of STEM students at Bergen," Dean of Mathematics, Science and Technology Emily Vandalovsky said.

Visitors included representatives from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Columbia University, PepsiCo and the New Jersey Senate Majority Office.

"Making those connections can open doors to incredible opportunities," STEM Student Research Center Director Chris Tully said.

STEM represents a centerpiece of Bergen's academic programs. Resources include the STEM Student Research Center where students self-direct projects using industry standard equipment. The accompanying STEM Student Scholars Research Program offers students a chance to build technical skills and knowledge, obtain internships and secure transfer opportunities to four-year institutions. ■



Members of the PACE program graduating class.

Keeping PACE with the Healthcare Industry

Forty-four students recently graduated from Bergen's Pre-Apprenticeship in Career Education (PACE) program made possible through a \$347,696 New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development grant. The initiative seeks to train healthcare workers who can quickly enter the industry, addressing a shortage of qualified employees. The New Jersey Hospital Association projects a shortfall of 80,000 healthcare workers by 2032. Bergen's Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development oversees the program.

"I'm incredibly proud of the remarkable growth of this program," Vice President of Continuing Education and Workforce Development Cinzia D'Iorio said. "The PACE grant has empowered

us to serve students in our community while helping address critical employment gaps in the field of health professions."

Students in the PACE program receive tuition-free hands-on training from experienced healthcare professionals using industry technology to prepare them for the field. Subject areas include EKG technology, phlebotomy, and English-as-a-Second-Language for health professionals. Students also had the opportunity to earn certifications through the National Healthcareer Association, which further enhanced their employment prospects. The College partnered with Bergen New Bridge Medical Center to offer the program and to provide graduates with potential employment opportunities.

Healthcare, Bergen County's largest employment sector, represents an important curriculum area for the College. Responding to the needs of the regional employers, Bergen offers multiple credit, certificate and continuing education programs that prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce. The College's main campus in Paramus includes a three-story Health Professions Integrated Teaching Center equipped with simulation labs, a surgical technology lab, a full dental hygiene clinic and industry-standard technology. Bergen Community College at the Meadowlands features a comprehensive paramedic science laboratory as the location's signature program. ■

Snapshotted



President Friedman (second from left) joined his peers for the annual New Jersey community college presidents photo.



Nearly 12,000 students enrolled in classes at Bergen this fall.



Participatory and shared governance was once again on display during Pizza with the President.



The vibrancy of Hispanic Heritage Month enriched the College landscape last month.



Bergen County government leaders honored Associate Director of Health Services Dania Huie-Pasigan (first from left) during their Caribbean American Heritage Month celebration.

NISOD Recognizes Faculty

Professors Leigh Jonaitis and Coleen Kennedy have each received the 2025 National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award for their commitment to teaching and student success. The pair travelled to NISOD's annual International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence in Austin, Texas this summer to receive their awards.

Jonaitis (pictured, left) has taught English and theatre at Bergen for the past 25 years, while also directing several Bergenstages productions. Alongside teaching and directing, Jonaitis has contributed to the broader professional community by serving in leadership roles for the National Two-Year College English Association.

"I'm deeply honored to receive this award," Jonaitis said. "It's meaningful to be recognized for work that I care about so much, especially when that work is often collaborative and behind-the-scenes. I'm grateful to my colleagues and stu-

dents who make this work so enjoyable."

Kennedy (pictured, right) has worked at the College for 21 years, teaching biology and physiology. At Bergen, she led a study on electroencephalograms, a test that measures the electrical activity in the brain, while also encouraging students to conduct their own independent research projects. Kennedy serves as an outreach liaison to local high schools such as Garfield High School and helps coordinate "Discovery Day," an opportunity for high school students to visit Bergen's campus to learn more about STEM and health professions programs. She beamed at receiving the NISOD award.

"I was just beyond thrilled because it really showed a vote of confidence from my colleagues and friends in the biology department," Kennedy said. "And it was such a great honor."

NISOD, a consortium of community and technical



colleges committed to promoting and celebrating excellence in teaching, learning and leadership, established the Excellence Awards in 1991. ■

A Honey of a Story

Retired Bergen grounds supervisor Hugh Knowlton can still create a buzz on campus.

Knowlton, a beekeeper hobbyist, has maintained the College's on-campus collection of hives for more than a decade, tending to the swarms and protecting the pollinators. In return, the bees' bounty leads to an annual "honey harvest" where Knowlton (pictured) teaches students, faculty and staff how to scrape honeycombs to harvest the wax and honey from them. Knowlton has created a cottage industry for the College, too: harvested honey gets bottled and sold to benefit the Bergen Community College Foundation. Offerings sell out quickly, according to foundation officials.

"Events such as the honey sale create a sense of community," Foundation Chief Development Officer and Director Peter Kirk said.

Knowlton worked at Bergen for 29 years, maintaining the College's outdoor environment. "I had a very fulfilling career," he said. "It is a great community of faculty, staff and students."



Vice President of External Affairs Suzanne Wetzal, Executive Administrative Assistant Christine Silvestri, Hugh Knowlton and Senior Schedule and Facilities Planner Kim Makoe.

The former grounds supervisor took up beekeeping after a conversation with his wife, taking a class and joining a beekeeping club.

"Why not make it a party and have others enjoy and learn the process? It's fun and everyone that comes can take some honey home with them," he said. ■



CIANJ Honors Pair of "Enterprising Women"

The Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey has recognized Assistant Vice President of Information Technology Nishika Gupta (pictured, right) and Director of Community Affairs Tracy Miceli (pictured, left) as "enterprising women in commerce." The pair received their awards alongside President Eric M. Friedman at an August breakfast hosted by CIANJ.

In her 18 years at Bergen, Gupta has modernized the institution's information technology resources through a comprehensive digitization strategy. Her initiatives have allowed the College to sunset many paper forms, records and documents, enhancing efficiency. Gupta also serves on the president's extended cabinet and as a co-chair of the All College Forum, an important function of the institution's participatory and shared governance structure.

As director of community affairs, Miceli oversees the institution's master schedule of classes, events and activities, engaging with industry, governmental and nonprofit partners and the Anna Maria Ciccone Theatre. She also serves as the point of contact and "person on the ground" for most of the College's community engagement activities. A Bergen alumna ('77), she returned to the College in a professional capacity in 2009.

CIANJ advocates for free enterprise through fostering an economic climate that enhances business potential through education, legislative vigilance and membership interaction, thereby making New Jersey a better state in which to live, work and conduct business. For more information on the organization, visit cianj.org.



Alumnus Gives Back

Alumnus Anthony De Franco ('10), a member of the deaf community, has used his Bergen degree as a catalyst to give back. De Franco has joined Atlantic Cape Community College in Mays Landing as an adjunct faculty member, teaching American Sign Language, and hosts "Deaf Chat Nights" twice per month at Chick-Fil-A in Manahawkin. The events invite deaf and hearing signers to socialize and expand the area's ASL community.

Middle States Matters



As the College pivots from its full reaffirmation of accreditation secured this summer, leaders have begun to outline the institution's next steps in the pursuit of continuous improvement and best practices. In the most important example of this planning, Professor Gary Porter will complete his highly successful term as accreditation liaison officer in December. In this role, Professor Porter led all aspects of the Self-Study, including organizing the core team, interfacing with Middle States representatives and overseeing the evaluation team's visit. The College sincerely appreciates Professor Porter's efforts. President Eric M. Friedman has selected Vice President of External Affairs Suzanne Wetzel to serve as the College's new accreditation liaison officer and lead efforts in support of the next Self-Study in 2032-33. Wetzel brings a wealth of accreditation expertise to the role, having worked as a peer reviewer and team chair with the Higher Learning Commission for 15 years.

OpenHouse

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Thursday, November 13

3 - 6 p.m.

Paramus Main Campus
400 Paramus Road, Paramus, NJ
Bergen.edu/openhouse



Professors emeriti Charles McNerney, Marshall Katzman and Lois Sullivan.

Professors Emeriti Return to Campus

Bergen welcomed members of its Professor Emeritus Association back to campus in September for the group's annual fall conference. The association includes 75 faculty members who have earned the rank of professor emeritus post-retirement in recognition of their significant contributions to the College.

The association, which operates under the auspices of the Bergen Community College Foundation, provides an opportunity for the institution's retired faculty to "stay connected," according to event organizer and foundation specialist Asha Moore.

At the conference, attendees enjoyed breakfast, lunch and the "Listen to the Black Chick Sing" event hosted by the work's author Thomas O'Neill, a Bergen staff member. President Eric M. Friedman also visited with the retirees and shared College updates.

Among the attendees, Professor Emerita Lois Sullivan said she began teaching at Bergen in 1968 when the "community college movement" began.

"I had not even thought of being a part of that," she said.

Sullivan marveled at the idea that students could get a second chance at receiving a quality education, earn higher degrees and build a career.

"We had a marvelous administration who welcomed us carte blanche to build curricula," she said.

Professor Emerita Marjorie Webster also attended the conference.

"When I got up in the morning, I loved to come to class and I loved to teach here," she said. "We still have very good memories of all the people we knew." ■



On View in Gallery Bergen

"Personal Effects: Works by Gregg Biermann"

Through December 5

Third Floor, West Hall
Paramus Main Campus
400 Paramus Road, Paramus, NJ
gallery.bergen.edu



HERO 5K

Be a hero for Bergen's student veterans!

Sunday, November 2

Paramus Main Campus
400 Paramus Road, Paramus, NJ

Check-In: 7:30-8:30 a.m.

5K: 8:30 a.m.

Robert Dyer Kids 1K: 9:30 a.m.



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