

**100+** CELEBRATING  
A CENTURY OF RUTGERS  
EXCELLENCE IN CAMDEN



**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY IN CAMDEN**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028**

A CENTURY AND BEYOND OF EXCELLENCE,  
COMMITMENT, AND ELEVATION







# R CAMDEN



## **CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE**

**T**he year 2026 will commemorate a century of Rutgers University excellence in Camden. The many decades of service to community are marked by an unyielding dedication to provide access to higher education for citizens of New Jersey and beyond. Coupled with affordability, the two have been the “north star” guiding strategic initiatives and priorities that have made our institution the sought-after institution for many New Jerseyans and prospective students nationally and globally. With an ardent dedication to making education affordable, students successfully completing our undergraduate, academic graduate, and professional degree granting programs do so, comparatively, with little to no debt. As a result of priorities like “Bridging the Gap” and targeted donor scholarship support, Rutgers University-Camden (RU-C) continues to assure that those wanting higher education can attain it, fulfilling their dream of bettering their lives and that of their families. Thus, access and affordability will continue to guide strategic priorities during the next five years of this strategic plan, “Rutgers University in Camden, a Century and Beyond of Excellence, Commitment, and Elevation.” The plan centers five strategic priorities that form the pillars around which strategic efforts are concentrated:

- 1. Innovation in Academic Excellence**
- 2. Transformative Student Success**
- 3. Holistic Student Experience**
- 4. Beloved Camden Community**
- 5. Internationalism**

These overarching priorities are value propositions that will elevate RU-C well beyond the next five years.



RU-C has graduated over 80,000 living alumni who are thought leaders in education, public policy, law, healthcare, business, public service, among other notable sectors. Thus, commitment to student success has been and continues to be the common denominator and driver of all that we do. Since 1926, our campus has welcomed students from varying stages in life: fresh out of high school, first-generation, veteran, late-life learners, and part-timers. Their success continues to be our legacy. Over the next five years, we will endeavor to increase the overall 6-year graduation rate, Pell-eligible student graduation rate, and student retention rate. Additionally, we will also focus on reaching students with “some college no degree” in our effort to elevate student success.

In looking toward our future, we will increase our student recruitment effort locally, state-wide, domestically, and abroad. Additionally, the focus over the next five years will be to increase the number of enrolled students from Camden city. Enrollment data reflect a paucity of student applications from Camden City Schools. Through a partnership with city schools, we hope to increase the number of students from Camden City and County Schools over the next five years, from currently. In addition to a focus on local markets, we will concentrate on national markets and on emerging international markets for student recruitment, academic collaborations, and student experiential learning opportunities.

While not an isolated strategic pillar for this plan, an uncompromising commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, is intrinsic throughout. As a Federal Government designated Minority Serving Institution and an Asian American, Native American and Pacific Islander serving institution based on the demographics of our student population, we will continue to make RU-C a safe and welcoming environment for all. This spirit will reflect through curricular offerings, experiential learning opportunities, academic research, and community engagement. Each of the five pillars will reflect a continual commitment to the rich diversity of our campus and extended community.



As we focus on the next five years, we are reminded of the advancement of Rutgers-Camden. We are a Carnegie R-2 classified institution. We are among the nation’s top 50 Public universities and top 100 National Universities. More importantly, we are among the top academic institutions for social mobility and for veterans. We are committed to community partnerships and alumni/donor engagement. Our exemplary faculty, dedicated staff, and amazing students continue to advance intellectual innovation through research in multiple disciplinary areas resulting in annual increases in research expenditures and cutting-edge scholarly advances. Innovation in academic excellence over the next five years is what this plan is all about. However, we know that the action items that undergird the priorities for the various pillars are not conclusive. With this knowledge, we will evaluate the progress of and make necessary modifications to each identified strategic priority along the way, if needed.

To sum it all up, intentionality is the leitmotif that characterizes the strategic priorities that are outlined within this five-year plan. To that end, collectively, we will produce the next generation of citizens that will use their talents to address challenges facing humanity. Collectively, we will make a difference in Camden and the Delaware Valley as an anchor institution. Collectively, we will continue to advance our campus among the nation’s top national and public universities. Collectively, we will collaborate locally, state-wide, nationally, and internationally to advance the common good.

I would like to thank the co-chairs of the planning committee, Drs. Marsha Lowery and Jane Siegel, for their leadership. Additionally, thanks to members of the steering committee inclusive of the hundreds of colleagues and constituencies (students, staff, faculty, alumni, board members, and donors) who sacrificed personal and professional time for this undertaking. This plan reflects your perpetual dedication to Rutgers-Camden and its future success. I look forward to the next five-years of elevation in this place we all call home, Rutgers University in Camden.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Antonio D. Tillis'.

Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D.  
Chancellor  
Rutgers University–Camden



# RUTGERS UNIVERSITY IN CAMDEN: A CENTURY AND BEYOND OF EXCELLENCE, COMMITMENT, AND ELEVATION

## INTRODUCTION

The Rutgers University in Camden (RU-C) strategic planning process began on September 19, 2022, with a call to members of our community to serve on the steering committee. There were 80 responses to the application, far exceeding our expectations for interest. In addition, the consultancy service of Dr. Sally Mason, former president of University of Iowa and Senior Consultant and Senior Fellow AGB Consulting, was procured to guide the process and advise the co-chairs and steering committee. The steering committee was comprised of 25 members representing faculty from all four schools, the Deans, undergraduate and graduate students, staff, cabinet leadership, member board of directors, and alumni.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology for data collection was guided by a specific, general research question: What areas of opportunity and aspiration should RU-C strategically plan for over the next 5-years? From responses, the steering committee segregated commonly referenced responses into a thematic bucket or pillar. Responses were subject to a developed “3x3x2 Rule” meaning themes had to be identified thrice, from 3 different data sources, by at least two different stakeholder groups. An example would be the theme ‘junior faculty mentorship’ which emerged more than three times in the collected data from the SWOT analysis, faculty focus-group, and alumni focus group by faculty and alumni stakeholders.

## DATA GATHERING

Data gathering was a three-phase process which included SWOT analysis, focus groups and town halls, and community surveys. The SWOT analysis was conducted with the steering committee members to identify strengths, opportunities for growth and challenges that could be addressed through the strategic plan. With the assistance of Gianna Bowler, executive director of campus planning and data analytics, the steering committee reviewed the SWOT analysis and helped to develop focus group and survey questions for each constituency: undergraduate and graduate students, staff, faculty, and alumni. There were 8 focus groups throughout the process: 2 staff, four faculty, and two alumni. In addition, two town halls were held to gather data. Finally, an undergraduate and graduate student survey was conducted to ensure that student voices were heard in the process to which there were 345 respondents.



## **TIMELINE**

**The following timeline as a chronological account of the multiple stages of the planning process.**

### **September 2022 through May 2023:**

The co-chairs and steering committee worked with Dr. Mason throughout the plan's developmental process.

### **December 2022 through February 2023:**

Data gathering occurred.

### **February 2023 to mid-March 2023:**

Data analytics occurred.

### **March 2023:**

Thematic Pillars were identified after data content analysis.

### **March 2023 through May 2023:**

Sub-committees were formed to identify strategic actions for each identified thematic pillar.

### **June 2023:**

First draft of the plan was compiled by the steering committee and presented to Chancellor Tillis for initial Cabinet-level review and feedback.

### **June 2023:**

Cabinet-level feedback on the draft was completed and feedback was given to co-chairs

### **July 2023:**

Revised first draft was completed by the steering committee and presented to Chancellor Tillis

### **August 2023:**

Cabinet Review of Revised First Draft began continues to-date

### **October 2023:**

Goal is to present the draft plan to President Holloway for review and approval.

### **November 2023:**

Rutgers University in Camden Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 release.

## **MISSION STATEMENT** (rev, 2023)

Rutgers University in Camden provides access to world-class education, innovative research, and transformative opportunities to our multiple constituencies. Our mission is to prepare the next generations of leaders by delivering rigorous academic programs that are bolstered by excellence in teaching and scholarship, experiential learning, and community engagement. As one of the nation's top comprehensive public research universities, Rutgers University in Camden is committed to creating an environment that fosters critical thinking, creativity, entrepreneurship, and societal responsibility. Building on our core strengths, we create distinct areas of academic excellence, strengthen interdisciplinary programs, expand our global reach, and transform the lives of students through personalized experiences.

## **VISION STATEMENT** (rev, 2023)

As a top national research university dedicated to serving a 21st-century demographic, Rutgers University in Camden is committed to elevating its position as a leader among urban public research universities in research, teaching, experiential learning, and civic engagement. On a local and global scale, our students will be the visionary leaders and global citizens that will shape a society that is equitable, just, and sustainable. We endeavor to retain our intimate and collaborative campus culture nurturing the aspirations of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other aligned constituencies.





# FIVE STRATEGIC PILLARS AND PRIORITIES



The following represent the five-identified value propositions (pillars) that will guide university priorities over the next five years. Annually, each will be reviewed to ascertain where we are in terms of meeting benchmarks, goals, and objectives. As strategic plans are fluid documents, adjustments might be made based on shifts in strategic priorities of RU-C or Rutgers University writ-large over time.



# STRATEGIC PILLAR #1

## INNOVATION IN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, STRIVING TOWARD PREEMINENCE

Academic excellence is central to the identity of Rutgers University in Camden. To build on our foundation as an academic institution that affords opportunity to a diverse student body, we must strategically develop and grow programs that meet our students' needs and expand our reach to populations not currently served. We accomplish this by expanding our programs at all levels, developing non-traditional educational opportunities, and supporting curricular and programmatic innovation as well as student research.

### Expand undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs

- Develop innovative cross-disciplinary programs within and between campus units as well as between chancellor-led units across the university.
- Identify opportunities for new and innovative programs that are responsive to current market demands and/or can address emerging national and international industry trends for academic disciplines.

### Design and implement non-traditional educational opportunities/certifications

- Expand non-traditional certifications and engage with industry partners, government agencies and non-profit organizations to develop skills-based certifications.
- Develop skill-based certificates that will expand access for historically excluded populations that could lead to future degrees.

### Deliver curricular/programmatic innovation in undergraduate education

- Increase the quantity of innovative engaged civic learning courses, experiential learning courses, and co-curricular experiences to enhance student engagement and improve student outcomes.
- Establish program evaluation processes to better update curricula and create more opportunities for innovation in academic program offerings.
- Develop a variety of degree completion modalities (accelerated, weekends, hybrid, etc.) to increase accessibility for a broader population of learners.
- Develop curricular approaches to increase students' awareness of career opportunities and help prepare them to gain employment with industry, government, and non-profits upon graduating.

### Develop greater faculty support for student research

- Develop an Undergraduate Student Research Center, a campus-wide coordinating entity that can (a) develop strategies to increase undergraduate research participation, (b) track campus-based funding opportunities and student participation in research opportunities, (c) develop faculty to successfully mentor diverse UG research students, and (d) match faculty to student researchers.
- Establish a fund to support faculty and students co-presenting at local, regional, national, and international conferences.





## STRATEGIC PILLAR #2

### TRANSFORMATIVE STUDENT SUCCESS: PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMPASSIONATE LEADERS

Rutgers University in Camden is committed to providing transformational experiences for students that center on developing a strong foundation for success, a sense of belonging, and expanding career readiness.

#### Developing a strong foundation for success

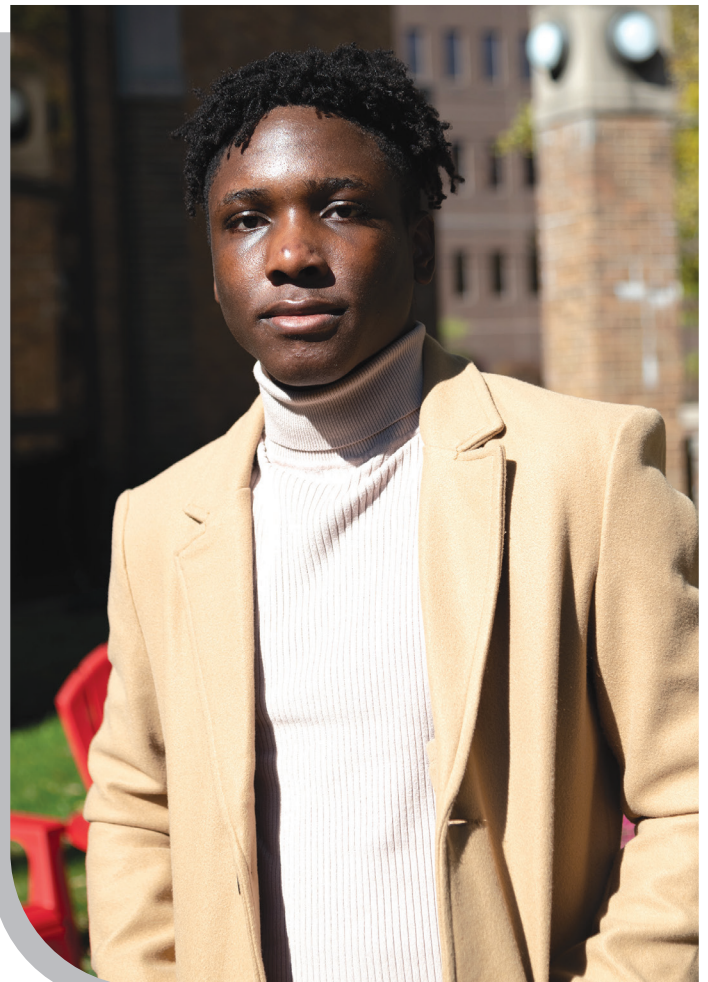
- Create a sense of belonging through culturally competent activities beginning at admission and continuing throughout the college experience.
- Create processes to identify new students with specific areas of need and develop appropriate services to support them.
- Expand summer bridge to increase modalities of programs to meet student needs.
- Establish a strategy to inform families and supporters of first-generation students about the collegiate experience: “It Takes a Village.”

#### Partnerships with local business enterprises, non-profits, and government agencies

- Develop a system to inventory current partnerships with businesses, non-profits, government agencies, and other regional employers/partners to increase opportunities for student internships.
- Increase academic research opportunities for students with professors and research partners.

#### Expanding career readiness

- Provide a means for students to develop a professional portfolio
- Develop an academic program-specific vision for experiential and skill-based learning within each major including increased opportunities for national and international study abroad and service-learning programs





# STRATEGIC PILLAR #3

## HOLISTIC STUDENT EXPERIENCE, SERVING THE NEEDS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY STUDENT

### Enrollment and recruitment

- Develop a recruitment strategy for Camden City residents, international students, and county college partnerships.
- Develop a recruitment strategy for “stop outs” and “some college no degree” students.
- Identify international student profiles and work on initiatives for international student recruitment.
- Work with county colleges on expanding partnerships and pipeline programs.
- Focus on 1st-year student engagement in campus culture.

### Improving student retention and engagement

- Develop cohort-based signature experiences and traditions that holistically support students and foster engaged alumni from orientation to beyond.
- Increase student retention through a best practices first-year seminar course(s) that also includes a peer ambassador program (sophomore/junior students).
- Increase student participation in co-curricular experiences that engage them inside and outside the classroom.
- Develop traditions that engage students and alumni.
- Establish living/learning communities (residential and non-residential).
- Develop multicultural center to increase sense of belonging.
- Increase activities for residential students to expand campus engagement.

We are committed to ensuring our students have opportunities to fulfill their goals and aspirations. We aim to build a culture in which all students can grow and thrive during their time at Rutgers University in Camden (from pre-enrollment to post-graduation) as they navigate the University and prepare for futures beyond campus. We will achieve this by enhancing our recruitment processes, improving services that support student retention, and increasing alumni engagement.



### Expand student services with focus on student wellness

- Increase capacity to provide mental health and wellness services for students with a focus on integrating culturally competent approaches.
- Expand wellness services to include additional areas in which our students experience insecurity (food, housing, clothing, etc.).
- Expand housing insecurity resources and day care, which will require additional capacity and financial resources.

### Fostering a sense of belonging

- Develop training on student-centered communications to enhance the student experience.
- Develop innovative strategies to communicate more efficiently with current students.

### Alumni engagement

- Expand the established alumni network to increase internship and employment opportunities for current students, careers and majors, and networking.
- Partner with the admissions office to recruit alumni to partner in student recruitment events.



# STRATEGIC PILLAR #4

## BELOVED CAMDEN COMMUNITY, ADVANCING THE COMMON GOOD ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

### Enhance faculty and staff recruitment and opportunities for internal growth

- Develop initiatives to support the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff.
- Identify and address barriers to internal growth and employee satisfaction at RU-C.
- Strategic implementation and maintenance of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, building on initiatives available through the Chancellor's 15-in-5 program.

### Renewing the campus-built environment

- Create a 10-year master plan for facilities and grounds at Rutgers University in Camden with the goal of creating state-of-the-art, attractive spaces that support the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff while also cementing our role as an anchor institution in Camden and southern New Jersey and a top national, public research institution.
- Launch a "Faculty Café" as a collaborative space for faculty to encourage fellowship, foster innovation, and creativity. It will also be a space for faculty emeriti.

The staff and faculty of Rutgers University in Camden are key to fulfilling our mission. To nurture continued excellence and develop new talent, we must dedicate and ensure ongoing resources for professional development and the recruitment and retention of exceptionally talented and diverse faculty and staff. To support faculty excellence, we must develop policies that allow faculty to focus on research and provide infrastructure to enhance teaching. To support staff, we must develop opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

### Support for faculty research

- Ensure comprehensive support for research and grant development, including assistance with proposal development, training in grantsmanship and pre/post-award support for grant-funded research.
- Enhance support to faculty developing major proposals for sponsored research.
- Increase external research partnerships, expanding nationally and globally, including with businesses and governmental and non-governmental entities with which the university has existing relationships.

### Develop a campus infrastructure to support teaching and professional development for faculty and staff

- Provide coordinated, systematic teaching-related professional development for faculty.
- Establish an administrative infrastructure dedicated to teaching excellence and/or faculty development more broadly.
- Enhance support for staff professional development.





## STRATEGIC PILLAR #5

### INTERNATIONALIZATION: BRIDGING RUTGERS UNIVERSITY IN CAMDEN AND THE WORLD

As part of a global academic community and world, we will understand and assert our place in bridging international divides to afford collaborative global connections for stakeholders. Thus, internationalism is a north star and a priority for our future.

#### Improve international recruitment and admissions operations

- Restructure international admissions: International recruitment should be a central point of the institution and serve as a dedicated unit that focuses on attracting global talent with tactics and strategies.
- Increase global visibility and raise brand awareness. The next step for RU-C is to work directly with the agencies identified through our international student recruitment partner, Shorelight.
- Enhance international admissions marketing development by creating a print and dynamic digital asset for promotion. Review of all email campaign content. Develop a separate communication track specific to international inquirers and applicants.
- Strengthen international partnerships with selected US secondary schools, community colleges, and foreign institutions (language centers, academies, universities).





## **STRATEGIC PILLAR #5** *contd.*

### **Elevate and expand international academic collaboration**

- Expand international student experiential learning opportunities at all levels.
- Encourage and incentivize international research opportunities for graduate and professional students.
- Monitor and document systematically existing international partnerships and solid unit-level programs and expertise. Develop processes to track faculty-led international programs, research, relationships, and work-related travel.
- Offer faculty development opportunities specific to internationalization (e.g., offer workshops, informational sessions, establish funding to encourage internationalization activity, etc.).
- Provide campus-level support for international grant identification, proposal writing, logistics, and making connections/networking.

### **Strategic focus on select global regions and countries**

- Target institutions within strategic regions to develop mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Utilize the expertise and relationships of RU Global, Rutgers University in Camden faculty, staff, and administrators to seek opportunities for recruitment, research, civic engagement, and student and faculty exchanges in identified countries of interest.
- Participate in the US Commercial Service (USCS) Virtual Education and EducationUSA fairs.

### **International experiential learning opportunities**

- Target international partners to develop experiential learning opportunities for students
- Incentivize faculty to develop courses with short-term international experiential learning opportunities for students

### **Coordinated effort and investment**

- Develop an internal organizational structure with the appropriate staffing and budgetary resources.

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**At the conclusion of the five-year course of this developed plan, an evaluation of each pillar will be rendered to gauge overall progress and future strategic planning.**

# ADDENDUM

Over the next five years, the following benchmarks have been established for graduation rates, retention, student enrollment, sponsored awards, and research expenditures. Thus, we endeavor to focus on the following increases:

Current Benchmark



FTIC 6-YEAR GRADUATION RATE: **FROM 61.4% TO 65%**

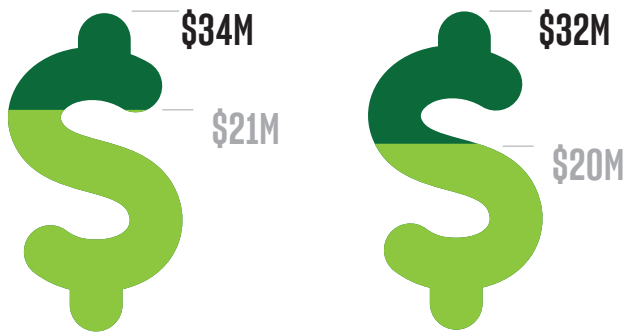


PELL-ELIGIBLE 6-YEAR GRADUATION RATE: **FROM 69% TO 75%**



FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATE: **FROM 78.7% TO 82%**

Current Benchmark



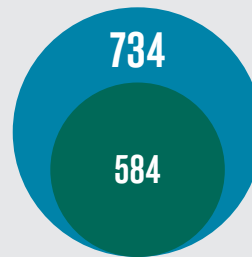
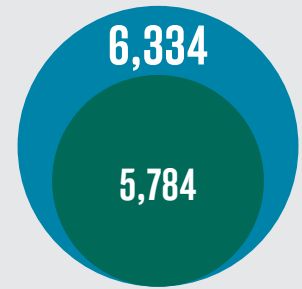
SPONSORED AWARDS: **FROM \$21M TO \$34M**

RESEARCH EXPENDITURES: **FROM \$20M TO \$32M**

Current

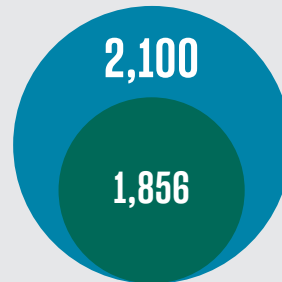
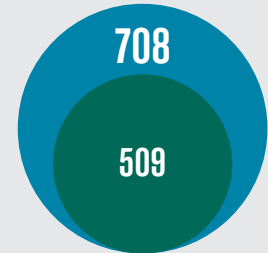
Benchmark

OVERALL STUDENT ENROLLMENT: **FROM 5,784 TO 6,334**  
(AVERAGE OF 110 STUDENTS ANNUALLY)



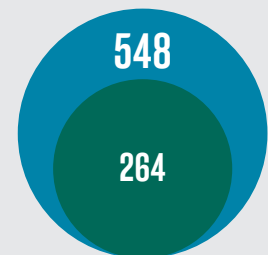
FTIC ENROLLMENT: **FROM 584 TO 734**  
(AVERAGE OF 30 STUDENTS ANNUALLY)

TRANSFER STUDENT ENROLLMENT: **FROM 509 TO 708**  
(AVERAGE OF 20 STUDENTS ANNUALLY)



GRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENT: **FROM 1,856 TO 2,100**  
(AVERAGE OF 40 STUDENTS ANNUALLY)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT: **FROM 264 TO 548**  
(AVERAGE OF 20 STUDENTS ANNUALLY)





## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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**Kiersten Westley**, Research Project Coordinator, Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs

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