

### 2021 ICFNJ Undergraduate Research Symposium

The 2021 ICFNJ Undergraduate Research Symposium took place in a virtual format the week of April 12th. The opening ceremony took place on Monday morning, April 12th; student presentations took place from April 12th through the 14th; and the closing ceremony took place on Thursday, April 15th. The symposium was well attended and an overall success. The high score was earned by Flobater Gawargi, class of '21 at Monmouth University. Flobater is a 2020-2021 Novartis Science Scholarship recipient, and an ICFNJ URS 2020 Award Recipient. The first runner-up of this year's Undergraduate Research Symposium was Samantha Johnson, class of '21 at Centenary University. Samantha was also an ICFNJ URS 2020 Award Recipient. The second runner-up is Laura Sine, class of '22 at Monmouth University. Honorable mention was awarded to Shivani Mody, class of '21 at Drew University. Shivani is a 2020-2021 Novartis Science Scholarship recipient, as well as a 2019-2020 BD Healthcare Scholarship recipient. Honorable mention was also awarded to Nikolina Perrelli, class of '21 at Centenary University, who is an ICFNJ 2020 Award Recipient. Learn more about this year's [Undergraduate Research Symposium](#) and see what our students have been busy researching, what the week entailed, and who our wonderful sponsors are. Thank you to all who helped make this year's URS a huge success, and a special thank you to the BD professionals who served as panelists in our opening program. BD's strong team culture and servant leadership model was evident in their informative presentations.

### Merger News

The Independent College Fund of New Jersey (ICFNJ) was founded in 1953 as a cooperative effort involving business and academic leaders of New Jersey to broaden financial support for and awareness of independent higher education. The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of New Jersey (AICUNJ) was founded in 1966 to collectively represent the individual colleges and universities of New Jersey at the state legislature. These two organizations will complete a merger – to the single non-profit organization, Independent Colleges and Universities of New Jersey (ICUNJ) – in summer 2021 to build upon synergies and to more efficiently and effectively advocate on behalf of the students who are served by independent colleges and universities in New Jersey. The Boards of both entities will be asked to support the merger during votes in May. Upon completion of the merger, the ICUNJ Board will be comprised of the 14 independent college and university presidents plus four executives from the New Jersey corporate community. The organization will also be supported by 60 corporate leaders from across the state of New Jersey who will serve as a Board of Advisors.

### Search for the next President, ICUNJ

As you may already know, Lou Manzione will be stepping down as the President of ICUNJ this summer. As such, the search officially launched this month for the position of President, ICUNJ, and the position will be advertised over the next month on various local and national sites. Academic Search has prepared a [search profile](#) and has more information on their [website](#) about the ICUNJ search.

You may be well-positioned to know of folks who might be good candidates for this role. We hope you will share the profile with your network. As you know, this is a unique position that requires a very talented and multi-faceted leader. The right person might be someone you already know. Please send any nominations or suggestions to [Jennifer Kookan](#), a consultant with Academic Search. The opportunity has also been posted on our social networks and [website](#). Please feel free to share widely. We appreciate your assistance in this important work.

### Legislative Budget Committees Testimony

We are grateful for Saint Peter's University President, Eugene J. Cornacchia's [testimony](#) at the Senate Budget Appropriations Committee hearing on April 13th and the Assembly Budget Committee on April 26th, [advocating](#) for the New Jersey independent colleges and universities. Dr. Cornacchia made a case for the importance of our sector in the state, how we have been impacted by the pandemic, and the importance of partnering with Governor Murphy, the Legislature, Secretary Bridges, and others in the Murphy Administration, on moving higher education in New Jersey forward.

### Meeting with NJ State Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin

On April 16th our presidents, other campus staff and Lou and Dave met with New Jersey State Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-19) and Assembly Majority (Democratic) Office Executive Director Anthony "Skip" Cimino to discuss issues of importance to our institutions and our students. Each president or campus representative provided a "elevator" remarks on their institution and the Speaker spoke about his interaction with many of our institutions including a rainy graduation at Centenary in which he ruined a pair of pants. He also talked about the work he has done on many issues including his hunger initiative package of bills and other issues. An open discussion dealt with the challenges campuses face with mental health issues, the impact of COVID on campus finances as well as challenges that could result from the legalization of adult use cannabis. We thank Speaker Coughlin and Skip Cimino for the opportunity to discuss the issues impacting our campuses and students.

### 2021 Virtual Education Career Fair

On April 20th, Fairleigh Dickinson University Career Center hosted the 2021 Education Career Fair for students and alumni of NJ private institutions interested in careers in the education sector. The event was held virtually on the Handshake platform. Eighty-six (86) registrants from 11 of our member institutions participated. The 54 employers who participated conducted 140 one-on-one sessions and 45 group sessions. The students and employers alike reported a successful event.

### Bloomfield College Nursing Programs Earn Top Rankings in New Jersey

RegisteredNursing.org recently [recognized Bloomfield College](#) as #9 out of 46 New Jersey higher education institutions in its ranking of the "Best Nursing Programs in New Jersey." The nursing organization also ranked the College's RN to BSN program as #4 in the state. "The College is renowned for the excellence of their nursing candidates - graduates continue to be leaders in generalist nurse competencies and lifelong learners," reads the posting on the RegisteredNursing.org website.

### President Dell'Omo's remarks on Derek Chauvin trial

In response to the results of the Derek Chauvin trial, Rider President Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D. [addresses the Rider community](#) about the trial of Derek Chauvin and announced an event to help cope, process and come together as a community.

### Campuses Mandating the Vaccine

Joining a growing list of New Jersey colleges requiring the vaccination, [Fairleigh Dickinson University](#), [Princeton University](#), [Stevens Institute of Technology](#), [Drew University](#), and [Rider University](#) have decided to mandate the COVID vaccine for students in the fall. Stevens has also required that faculty and staff be vaccinated before returning to campus in the fall. This effort will help to ensure that students returning to campus are protected from the virus, and will lend to a more vibrant campus life than last year.

### NJ Colleges are welcoming back Class of 2020 for in-person graduation

Select private NJ colleges and universities are offering last year's graduates a chance to have a [legitimate in-person graduation ceremony in 2021](#) with guests in attendance, since much of their final year at school in 2020 was scrapped by the coronavirus pandemic. Our very own Lou Manzione also shared his thoughts on why it is important to celebrate major life accomplishments such as commencement.

### CIC State Councils 2021 Annual Conference

On April 26th and 27th, members of ICFNJ attended the Council of Independent Colleges' State Council Annual Conference which was held virtually this year. Best practices were shared through several informative and thought-provoking sessions and networking opportunities with members of other state councils were aplenty. Both Lou Manzione and MaryAlice Breuninger presented at this year's conference.