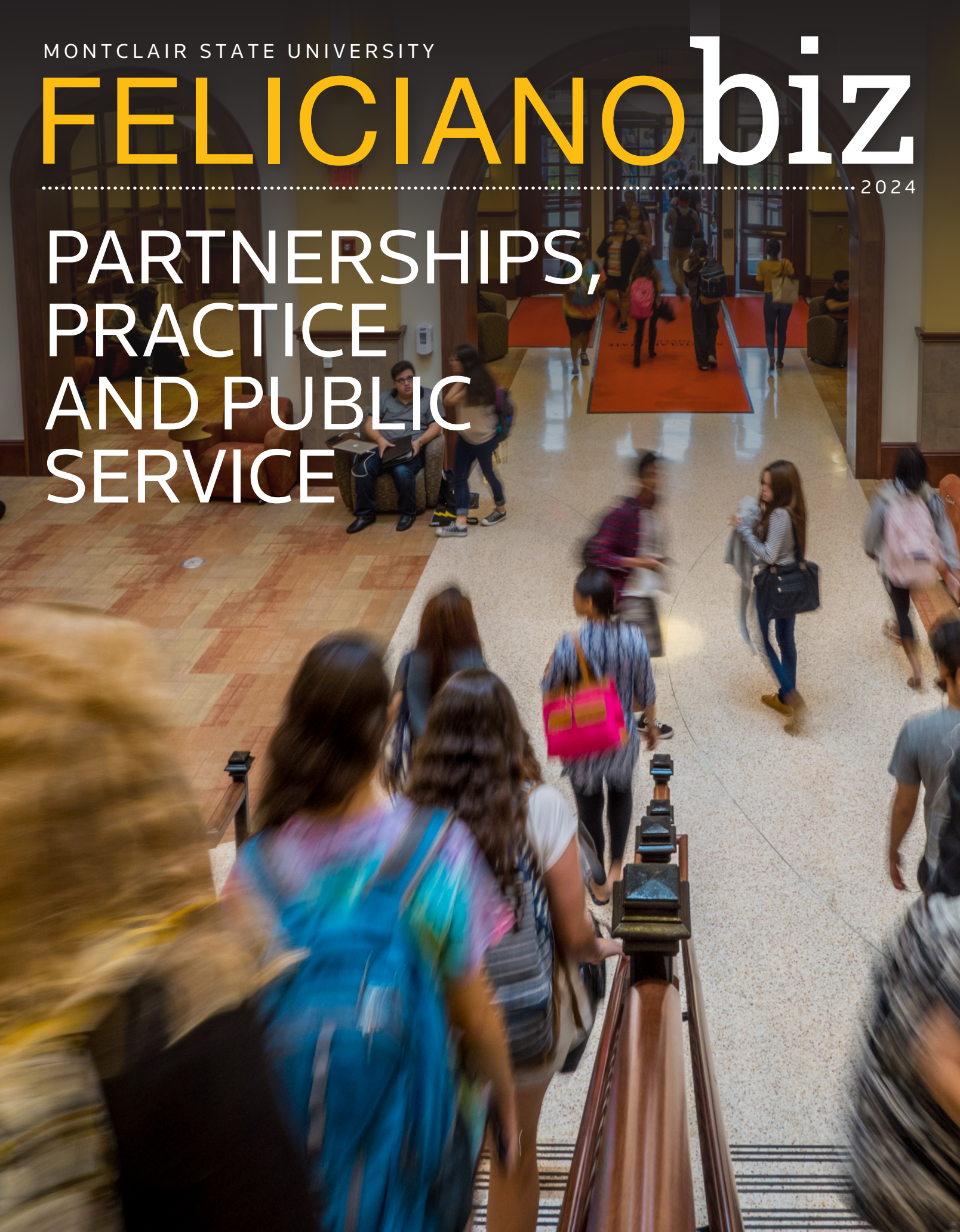


MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

FELICIANO**biz**

2024

PARTNERSHIPS,
PRACTICE
AND PUBLIC
SERVICE



FROM THE DEAN



This year's issue of *FelicianoBiz* is dedicated to three sources of our unique and super power as a learning community: Partnerships, Practice and Public Service. As you will see, these elements are woven throughout the stories we proudly tell, of faculty, students and staff working in collaboration with corporate and nonprofit entities and causes, and of efforts by our donors and alumni to facilitate those connections and support research and programs that advance knowledge and well-being.

The accounts are characterized by the active nature of our teaching and scholarship. We strive to enable students to authentically apply classroom lessons – to practice – and experience the discipline, teamwork and resilience that are integral to the process of innovating and creating solutions to business and societal problems.

Those learning opportunities would not be possible without the strategic and transformative associations we have formed with partners who provide myriad points of access and support, from classic internship programs, to training on proprietary analytics platforms, to input on certificate program content, and participation, by students and faculty, in a variety of consulting projects.

The immersive projects not only provide hands-on, resume-worthy experiences, as in a recent undertaking where students identified, gathered and analyzed data on Gen Z's perceived insurance needs for a major financial services provider. They also often include partnerships with organizations and subject matter experts that provide or enable public service, the third of our valued sources of strength. Featured examples include a hybrid program for aspiring or early-stage entrepreneurs that welcomes students as well as community participants, and a class assignment on sustainability, in which students developed a "green" marketing strategy for a local municipality's bike-and-walk campaign.

The "three P's" are a dynamic trio that work in concert to produce outcomes that can also be indirect, but positive, as when student project presentations serve double-duty as recruiting vehicles and internships include opportunities for participants to support favored charities, on the company's time. Mentorships or speaking engagements by alumni and advisers may lead to teaching opportunities which, in turn, may spark new careers for business practitioners whose expertise enriches our deep pool of instructional talent.

On the subject of our faculty and staff, whose smiling faces enliven the pages of this magazine, I must acknowledge that they are our true agents of excellence, curiosity and change, and a big reason that we are able to attract and maintain our prized partnerships. Their own practice, as teachers, researchers and program coordinators, is catalytic, inspiring cohorts of students, producing committed graduates, and demonstrating, not only how business can be done well, but also for the greater good.

I hope you enjoy reading about them and our spotlighted students, alumni and corporate partners. Their contributions make us optimistic about the future, and more cognizant than ever of their great value to us.

Kimberly Hollister, Dean
Feliciano School of Business



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



DAËLLE ELIE

Credit Analyst,
JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Feliciano School of Business' corporate finance classes provided me with knowledge that I applied in my first internship, so I understood how loans were processed from a back office perspective. It all started with Feliciano's Corporate Edge program, which taught me how to create a LinkedIn profile and improved my interview skills. I saw financial principles I learned in the classroom at work in the business world. Feliciano helped me gain a set of morals as I shed off the person I was in high school.



JUSTIN GOLDBERG

Strategy Analyst,
Corporate Development – GarageCo,
a Gridiron Capital Portfolio Company

The various mentors I had at the Feliciano School of Business helped me narrow my career path, exposing me to professionals in the industry and landing a pretty good gig at GarageCo, a Gridiron Capital Portfolio Company. Without those mentors I would not be in the position I'm in today. I didn't need a Harvard; I needed a Montclair State University, just a support circle that could answer my questions and offer advice. This gave me a platform to become whoever I wanted to become.



MIGUEL LLAUGER

Held Desk Analyst,
What Goes Around Comes Around

As a student at Hudson Community College, Miguel Llauger grew disillusioned with higher education. Just as he was about to abandon its pursuit, a Montclair State University alumna persuaded him to apply to Montclair. Using same-day admission, Llauger found a new home. "I remember walking out of there with a huge smile on my face, calling my parents and girlfriend telling them I got into this school, the one I wanted," says Llauger, who would earn a BA in Management Information Technology.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

BRINGING TENACITY, COURAGE AND RESILIENCE TO WOMEN OF BUSINESS AND IN LIFE



Tamarra Causley Robinson

As an undergraduate at Montclair State University, Tamarra Causley Robinson was a resident assistant and assistant manager in Residence Life, a position that highlighted her compassion for humanity and showcased her natural talents of creating community and growing leaders. "I helped manage the safety of all students while ensuring that their experience was enjoyable. This shaped me in many different ways," says Causley Robinson. Compassion and inclusiveness have been woven into her business career.

Causley Robinson is founder and CEO of TCR Coaching. The goal of TCR, which stands for Tenacity, Courage and Resilience, is to ensure that every woman achieves those unprecedented and unfathomable accomplishments she didn't initially believe she could realize. "There are times when women sometimes feel like they have to sacrifice their authenticity in order to get along, in order to be what others believe they ought to be in order to succeed. The work I do with my clients is to help them to know that's not necessarily true while also helping them to get to a place where they can own who they are and be all that they believe they can be," says Causley Robinson.

TCR's mission grew out of Causley's relationship with her mom. "My mother sacrificed quite a bit for my sister and I to have something more than what she had had in her life," she says. Before founding TCR Causley Robinson worked in IT at PwC for nearly 20 years. In her last year there, she became PwC's Diversity Leader. "They were going to outsource everything that was connected to IT support in the US and the diversity leader went out on maternity leave," says Causley Robinson. The relationships she forged in HR paved the way for a smooth transition to that role, one she'd been eager and suited to fill.

"I was always involved in something diversity-related through my career at PwC. Just to give voice, one of the things that seems to iterate with me. To speak and to have a voice or give voice to something or an area others may not have been able to do that," says Causley Robinson. "There's still a struggle for women in particular. Still a struggle for women of color." Causley Robinson recently completed the Ignite Entrepreneurs program sponsored by the Felician Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation and actively participates on Montclair State University's MBA Advisory Board.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

FELICIANO GRADUATE BRINGS THE REAL WORLD OF MARKETING TO FELICIANO STUDENTS



Doug Doremus

After nearly four decades working in marketing and sales, Doug Doremus returned to the Feliciano School of Business in 2022 to teach marketing, sales management and sales leadership to the next generation of marketing leaders. “After earning my MBA at Feliciano School of Business, I decided I wanted to give back to the school. I met my wife at Montclair State University in 1981, so Montclair has been very special to both of us,” he says.

Doremus, who earned a BS in marketing from Montclair and works as a national sales manager at AM Best, was inspired to study marketing in 1980 by a professor whose passion for the material was palpable. “There was something about his enthusiasm for marketing and the way he presented himself. He really spoke to us as fellow marketers instead of just students. The way he taught

piqued my interest in marketing,” says Doremus.

To pique his students’ interests, Doremus tossed out the textbook and draws on his professional experiences and presents lessons with relevant situations and case studies. “I bring real-world examples into the classroom. I’ll bring in an example of a tough customer I had that day, we go over the scenario, and I ask my students to come up with [a strategy for handling the situation],” says Doremus.

Whether in the classroom or at AM Best, Doremus uses three strategies – positive

reinforcement, recognition, and continual feedback – to motivate students and his sales team. “When one of my students does something great in class, I recognize them. I tell them to share with the class great things that are going on at school, their work or their internships. When I’m concerned with any of my students, I’ll meet with them one-on-one to tell them...I don’t wait till the end and they get hit with a bad grade,” says Doremus.

When not inspiring the next generation of marketers or motivating his sales force, Doremus mentors current Montclair students in Feliciano’s Soar to Success mentorship program. “Some of my students need help with their careers. These are all the things I wish someone did for me back when I was their age. We really didn’t have those opportunities,” says Doremus.

HE’S ‘FATHER FRANK’ TO THE YOUNGER STUDENTS

Frank Galindo ‘20 hadn’t set foot in a classroom in 20 years when he enrolled in the Feliciano School of Business’ MBA program in 2018 at age 43. “They called me ‘Father Frank,’ a term of endearment because of my age,” he says. “It was a culture shock but not unexpected.”

As assistant vice president for public relations and stakeholder engagement at Lincoln Tech, Galindo engages with legislative staffers, many of whom are his junior. Being part of a cohort comprising younger individuals provided him access to a range of perspectives and insight into managing personalities and improved his communication skills with this generation. “It really opened my eyes. We’re talking about a bunch of different personalities, much younger than myself, who are more attuned to the modern-day working world. Learning to communicate with those folks has really helped me,” says Galindo.



Frank Galindo

While still a student, Galindo was invited to share his experience at both the MBA and graduate school open houses. As an alumnus, he was invited with a handful of other alumni for dinner with President Koppell to share his experience while at Montclair and provide feedback that could benefit future cohorts. Now, Galindo mentors MBA students one-on-one in the Accelerated MBA program, dispensing career advice and insight. "My experience at MSU helped me and inspired me to do this volunteer work because I had to take myself, personally and professionally, to the next level to do all these other things. Montclair State University was a great springboard for me," says Galindo.

Galindo feels compelled to give back to the university that gave him his professional life back. "It's a wonderful experience to pass on a lot of the knowledge that I had learned and the tools, tips and tricks that I'd picked up over the years," says Galindo. "I didn't have that growing up. I didn't have that guidance."

In addition to his duties at Lincoln Tech, throughout 2022 and 2023, Galindo was the executive vice president of partner relations for the New Jersey chapter of the Association of Latino Professionals for America, offering professional development programs that connect Latinx students with American corporations, like Moody's, Bank of America, Merck and Bristol Myers Squibb. "The goal is to help the next generation of Latinx students make their way as quickly as possible to roles in corporate America and upper management through upskilling and networking," says Galindo.

FROM ANSWERING PHONES TO ASSESSING RISK AT MORGAN STANLEY

Heather Hado always thought the stock market was intriguing and even as a child wanted to understand its inner workings. "I was a young female who wanted to stand on my own two feet one day, and I wanted to invest in it," she says. While working "random" jobs to pay her bills, Hado enrolled in night classes at the Feliciano School of Business, where she gained more than an understanding of the stock market. "The school provided me a great opportunity to network because one of my classmates was working full time at Morgan Stanley," says Hado.

Hado used that contact to land a receptionist job at Morgan Stanley and immediately began soaking up all the financial information she could. Nineteen years later, she's a senior vice president and senior risk officer. "Just having that network in my class at Feliciano with a colleague to break into the industry, was key," says Hado.

Over the years Hado has gained extensive operational knowledge and acquired the necessary industry licenses to excel in finance, which she attributes to her Feliciano education. While preparing for the Series 7 Exam, she wasn't the least bit intimidated. "I'm actually really prepared to do this. I have a great education from Montclair. I learned about it. I knew how to study. This school has prepared me for this," says Hado.

Feliciano provided a base on which Hado built a career. "Walking into Morgan

Stanley, a world-class company, it didn't feel foreign to me. You're in class, you hear these concepts, you're learning about finance, but you never think they're going to come into play. When I actually walked into a professional



Heather Hado

workplace, I understood the lingo from the education I got at Feliciano," says Hado.

Using the skills she acquired by observing her professors and from her personal mentors, Hado manages six risk officers at Morgan Stanley and mentors individuals in Montclair's Accelerated MBA program. "The reason I came back to Montclair to give my time to some of the other students is after you work for a long time you realize what kind of education I got at Montclair. It was a phenomenal education," she says.

PAUL STAHLIN

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

CREATING LASTING VALUE

Pursuing betterment has been a driving force for alumnus Paul Stahlin



Paul Stahlin and his wife, Nonny

"I've seen the students that Montclair has produced. We've got some CEOs in the accounting world, in the Big Four. I am a strong proponent of the school and the way it's grown. I'm proud of it."

– Paul Stahlin

When Paul Stahlin was deciding what to study in college, it came down to psychology or business. His father, an accountant, told him that if he wanted to learn about business, he should study accounting because everything in business rested on that foundation. Accounting, his father said, would allow him to pursue anything in the business world. That advice turned out to be prophetic. In the 50 years since he graduated from Montclair State University in 1974, Stahlin has built an exemplary professional career – and, at the same time, a record of giving back and sharing his knowledge and experience to help others succeed.

Stahlin's connection to Montclair and his fervent belief in being actively involved in the school has deep roots. As an undergraduate, he was a co-founder and first president of the Montclair State University's chapter of Alpha Kappa Psi, a national business fraternity. He and others started the accounting club and served as its vice president. He was on the College Life Union Board and participated in Homecoming. Stahlin was also part of the first class to graduate from the business school, just after it had been formally formed on campus after being known as business education. "I've seen the students that Montclair has produced. We've got some CEOs in the accounting world, in the Big Four. I am a strong proponent of the school and the way it's grown. I'm proud of it," Stahlin says.

Stahlin can count himself among the school's outstanding graduates. Starting his career in public accounting with Price Waterhouse & Company, he went on to be corporate

controller at Summit Bancorp (formerly UJB Financial), CFO of Fleet Credit Card Services, and president and CEO of Somerset Valley Bank. In 2010, he became chairman of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants – the first banker ever to lead the organization and more than 360,000 CPAs around the world at the time. "It wasn't *GQ*, but they had me on the front cover of the *Journal of Accountancy*, which is pretty funny," Stahlin says. That same year, he was named one of the "100 Most Influential People of 2010" by *Accounting Today*.

Stahlin readily admits that the tremendous success of his career has blessed him: a long, happy marriage with his wife, Nonny (whom he met the first week of school at Montclair during freshman orientation), four accomplished daughters, nine grandchildren, and time to pursue his interests. "I'm most grateful. Life is good," Stahlin says.

But there is another side to Stahlin's life that is equally impressive and rewarding. He has devoted a huge amount of his time, knowledge, soul, and money to causes and concerns to make the world better, notably at Montclair. For 15 years, he was a board member and then chairman of the Montclair State University Foundation – a not-for-profit that raises and manages funds for the educational mission of the school, including sponsoring more than 350 annual scholarships. Serving on the school's accounting advisory board, Stahlin worked to ensure "there was some connection between the college and the profession. It's making sure that the college curriculums are keeping up

with the needs of the profession, [such as] technological change, analytical ability, and interpersonal skills."

Stahlin is in talks with the school about creating a healthcare business degree. "There needs to be more competence in the area of the business side of healthcare – [whether] being able to run a healthcare system or a doctor's practice or a consortium of groups of physicians. They need the business sense. There's a value proposition for people going into healthcare business." As it affects everyone, healthcare is a major concern for Stahlin – or rather, applying his skills to make the system run smarter, serve people better, and reduce waste. "That's what [CPAs] look to do – solve complex situations and provide solutions." To that end, Stahlin serves on the boards of institutions including Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and then RWJBarnabas Health.

In a way, Stahlin has forged a second full-time career of giving back, yet he does not see it that way. "I believe it's kind of lifelong learning. I think anytime you're involved with a different type of organization than what you're normally doing within your career, I think you learn so much. I like to make a difference. I like to take my experience and my education and kind of leverage that to a point that I can make some type of transformation in an organization, make a change – not just for the sake of making change, but for betterment." ■

ERIN VILLAGRA

EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

A PARTNER TO BANK ON

Peapack-Gladstone Bank has built an enduring legacy with Montclair State University

Peapack-Gladstone Bank has a well-deserved reputation for integrity and commitment to its customers and the greater community, so it's no surprise then that they forged a close relationship with Montclair State University.

Founded in 1921, Peapack-Gladstone Bank provides innovative wealth management, investment banking, commercial and retail solutions, including residential lending and online platforms, to businesses and consumers.

Collaborating with Montclair State University dates back to around the year 2000 when Peapack-Gladstone Bank President & CEO Doug Kennedy, was made a trustee of the University. In 2014, Susan Cole, then-president of Montclair, began serving on the Peapack-Gladstone Bank Board of Directors. When Peapack-Gladstone Bank launched its career outreach program, Montclair was a natural choice.

"We've partnered with some other schools since, but our relationship with Montclair is definitely the strongest," says Erin Villagra, Vice President; Talent, Culture and Internal Communications Specialist, and a 2019 recipient of the New Jersey Bankers Association Rising Star Award.

Peapack-Gladstone designed professional development opportunities for Montclair students. In the Resume & LinkedIn Tips seminar,

Villagra gave "an insider's look" at what the HR team looked for in candidates and how they could stand out in a crowded field of job seekers. The Breaking into Banking workshop was aimed at students unfamiliar with the banking industry and what it has to offer.

Perhaps most enlightening for students was discovering that Peapack-Gladstone Bank actively sought candidates from diverse backgrounds – not just finance or accounting majors. "I was an education major myself," Villagra says. "There are lots of transferable skills. The Breaking into Banking workshop helps students see that it's more than just numbers and opening accounts and things that you see on the outside."

Peapack-Gladstone Bank invited students to their corporate site where they got to question banking team members from different divisions – including some of the 16 Montclair alumni, each of whom could trace an upward trajectory in their careers at Peapack-Gladstone Bank. Doug Reyes, for example, went from client service officer to senior investment analyst. Nicole Economy was promoted from help desk analyst to its team lead in less than two years. The day was capped with lunch with CEO Doug Kennedy, where students could "pick his brain" and hear him speak about leadership.



“One of our core principles is to be invested in our community. We’re not looking for anything in return; if we can help a student get to where they want to go or find that first job, they’ll remember us and we’re delivering value.”

– Erin Villagra

Montclair students who qualify can apply for Peapack-Gladstone Bank’s internship program: a 10-week, paid summer opportunity for 10 to 15 students that runs Mondays through Thursdays. Unlike companies that use interns as free labor, Peapack-Gladstone Bank interns engage in meaningful, hands-on activities, such as working with the bank’s clients and documents system. Lunch & Learn sessions with Peapack-Gladstone Bank senior leadership, including CEO Kennedy, broaden their learning experience.

What distinguishes the program, Villagra says, is the opportunity for interns to undertake a timely challenge facing the bank, and then present their analysis and recommendations to the executive leadership team. For example, interns recently investigated how the bank could incorporate AI into their processes and customer relations.

Working with Montclair students also helps Peapack-Gladstone Bank get more exposure and compete for talent with larger institutions. Indeed, two interns got job offers from Peapack-Gladstone Bank after completing the program. “One of our core principles is to be invested in our community. We’re not necessarily looking for anything in return, but if we can help a student get to where they want to go or find that first job, that’s just as valuable,” Villagra says.

Amongst the core principles on which CEO Kennedy focuses are putting clients first, performing as one team, and perhaps most importantly, being invested in the community. Peapack-Gladstone Bank looks for community involvement when interviewing job applicants. To that end, Peapack-Gladstone Bank supports approximately 270 organizations and allows employees – including Montclair student interns – ample time to volunteer, even on the bank’s time. Customers can bank anywhere, Villagra says, “but if you want to feel like the people you work with care about you and your financial goals, that’s really what we’re going for when we hire and recruit.”

The relationship between bank and school is mutually beneficial. The HR team at Peapack-Gladstone Bank partnered with the Dean’s Office at Montclair to plan and execute the Strategic Leadership Academy (SLA). Running from November 2022 through January 2023, the SLA held a series of four four-hour sessions at MSU that explored the many facets of strategic decision making. The final session at the company headquarters led to the creation of Peapack-Gladstone Bank’s Strategic Plan for 2023.

“We received a lot of great feedback,” Villagra says. “It was a win-win for us and for Montclair to put together such a great program.” ■



Eyyub Kibis

PROFESSOR'S DATA HELPS STUDENTS

OPTIMIZATION METHODS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, American cities spent hundreds of millions of dollars establishing makeshift hospitals to ease the burden on city hospitals. Although well-intentioned, hospital officials didn't know if these auxiliary facilities should serve in the pre-treatment or post-treatment of patients.

As a result, many makeshift hospitals were woefully underused. To establish best practices and optimization for their use in the future, Eyyub Kibis, assistant professor at the Feliciano School of Business in the Information Management and Business Analytics department, researched their use from April 2020 to

September 2020. "God forbid if another pandemic happens in the future, our results might shed some light on how to use those makeshift hospitals and help officials make better plans," says Kibis.

His data helped the students in his Optimization Methods for Business Analytics course understand resource allocation. "We're always talking about resource allocation and optimization," says Kibis. "This was an optimization model to efficiently distribute available resources, like money and hospital beds."

Mathematical models and optimization methods might appear to be quantitative methods that are used exclusively in business, but Kibis tells his students they have other applications too. "They can be used for nonprofit and for-profit purposes," he says. "We are providing a service for officials that can be utilized during the time of a pandemic like COVID or Ebola."

Beyond optimization, Kibis has researched data mining methods for biological diseases like cancer, which was not much different from his research during the pandemic. "A cancerous cell spreads to nearby cells and then to the entire body. In a pandemic you have patient zero and the disease spreads to nearby patients. It becomes a pandemic," says Kibis. His cancer research resulted in an optimization method establishing best treatment models and schedules for stage two breast cancer patients. "These topics are related to optimization. In my optimization class we talk about minimizing disease," says Kibis.

In 2015, the United Nations established 17 global Sustainable Development Goals. Kibis' research has contributed to its Good Health and Well-Being goal. "My research provides preventative measures. We try to minimize the transmission of disease and improve public health preparedness." ■

“Many times, the idea for research comes from my students. They help me understand what the bigger social demographic trends are. Students are right there at the forefront.”

– Archana Kumar



Archana Kumar

ADDRESSING EFFICIENCY FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

In 2013 a London supermarket called Tesco sold beef tainted with horsemeat, launching a scandal in the U.K. Feliciano School of Business Marketing Professor Archana Kumar uses this case in her classes to illustrate how long and inefficient food supply chains lead to its breakdown. “It was difficult to trace where the contamination occurred,” says Kumar. That single mishap was the tipping point that led consumer demand to know the origin of their food.

The importance of local produce to consumers’ health, their communities and the environment drives Kumar’s research. She addresses consumer’s views on local produce and marketing strategies that attract consumers, especially health-conscious millennials.

Her goal is to increase visibility of and demand for local produce, a growing concern of her students.

“There are many benefits to investing in a local food system, like fewer intermediaries, local farmers generate local jobs, and local food is healthier and more nutritious than conventional produce. Overall, it’s good for the individual, community and for the environment,” says Kumar.

The growing desire to increase the efficiency of food supply chains by shortening them can be credited, at least in part, to the younger generation. “The millennial generation is at the forefront of demanding sustainability and open and ethical practices from retailers,” says Kumar.

By sharing their interests in emerging trends and the hottest retailers students also help fuel Kumar’s research projects. “Many times, the idea for research comes from my students,” says Kumar. “They help me understand what the bigger social demographic trends are. Students are right there at the forefront.”

The benefits of such a relationship are mutual. Kumar asks students to share their consumer experiences then shares her findings with them, giving students a glimpse into the research process. “I usually talk to my students about my research. I value their feedback,” Kumar says. “How do you start thinking about it? You have your goal, you draw your plan, you develop your hypothesis. I’m helping them think along those lines. Then, I bring in my project, tell them this is the state of the art, and ask their opinion.” ■



Liz Rich



Valeria Aloe
Director of Strategic Planning - FCE+I

BUILDING DREAMS

Reality-based program opens the door for entrepreneurs

According to a recent survey by Guidant Financial, 13% of respondents said they became entrepreneurs to pursue their passion. Bringing those dreams to life requires mastering an array of critical skills and amassing specialized knowledge fast – things Ignite Entrepreneurs was designed for.

A program at the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation, Ignite lives up to the Center’s mission of “acting as a bridge between the university and the community. We’re really excited about the audience we’re attracting,” says Liz Rich, acting executive director of the Center. To that end, about 80 people have gone through the program over the last year – 90% of whom were BIPOC or women.

Ignite is open to both students and members of the public, whether they are current or aspirational entrepreneurs. The program, which runs 20 weeks twice a year, offers on-demand video courses with practical instruction in essential aspects of establishing, running and growing a business. Participants view them at their own pace via the campus learning management platform. Topics range from learning how to create a business plan to marketing with social media to attaining funding.

Research revealed that funding and the opportunity to talk with experienced professionals were the two biggest needs of entrepreneurs in the post-pandemic period – needs that Ignite meets. More than a dozen subject matter experts – in areas such as accounting, legal and product design – provided over 260 hours of individual mentorship to participants in 2022. “We curated them ourselves. This group has been really critical to this program because they are truly dedicated to giving ongoing one-on-one support,” Rich says.

Mentors hold accountability sessions every week via Zoom to make sure Ignite participants understand the course content and connect with fellow innovators. Ignite also hosted four in-person networking opportunities and meet-ups in 2023, called Montclair Starts Up. Typically attracting 150 people, the events are held on campus and might cover issues such as the impact of AI on small businesses, how to spin off a business, and how entrepreneurship could be a lifeline for trauma survivors. “They’re a great way for Ignite participants and students in general to meet new people that they wouldn’t normally meet,” Rich says.

Ignite helps entrepreneurs with funding also. In April 2023, 10 finalists vied for \$25,000 in a one-day pitch competition of their business-building efforts, judged by subject matter experts, community partners and Montclair entrepreneur professors. Participants received training on how to make a good presentation. Rich says that the judges were “sticklers” about getting the participants to demonstrate in concrete terms how the prize money would generate results. Three current students, one alumna and one entrepreneur from the community each received different portions of the total prize money.

After completing the 20-week program, participants have full access to the course videos and mentors for one year. “I think Ignite shows entrepreneurs that we are willing to walk shoulder-to-shoulder with them,” Rich says. “We understand what they’re facing and we want to help them succeed in a way that is meaningful for them.”

If you’d like to connect with the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation and learn more about their upcoming programs and events, email entrepreneurs@montclair.edu. ■

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP

A new program with ADP gives students a competitive advantage

Finding the right partner to collaborate with can benefit both sides and lead to outstanding results. One extraordinary example of this synergy can be found in the multi-year relationship between ADP and the Feliciano School of Business. Operating in 140 countries, ADP is a global provider of human capital management solutions and a leader in the human resource management industry, employing more than 200 Montclair State University alumni. FSBUS is well known for its rigorous academic curriculum and for giving students hands-on experience in the business world.

In 2019, ADP and FSBUS worked together to create the Professional Selling and Sales Management certificate program, a 12-credit track that emphasized analytical, leadership and communication skills. Setting their sights on an even more ambitious educational goal, the Management department formed an advisory board of top executives willing to share their insights, expertise and current thought leadership in the HR field. The result of these efforts became the Strategic Human Capital Management concentration for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree program.

Launched in fall 2023 with 21 enrolled students, the program revolves around the new expanded role of HR in business – one where the human resources department actively helps companies achieve their overall objectives, instead of hewing to the more traditional HR model of employee management. “Most companies today are thinking about HR more strategically. We wanted our program to reflect the latest state of HR,” says Melissa Gutworth, associate professor of Management and coordinator of the program.

Arguably, the most important feature of the Strategic Human Capital Management program is that students are given hands-on training with ADP’s software. Called Workforce Now, the software is used by more than 900,000 companies around the globe and covers topics such as onboarding, hiring, training, performance appraisal and compensation – in short, the entire employee life cycle. Students gain proficiency in how to use this software through two lab courses, giving them a competitive advantage when they graduate. “Even if they end up at a company that’s not using Workforce Now, our students are going to be able to adapt very quickly to whatever HR software that company is using,” Gutworth says.

In April 2024, students in the Strategic Human Capital Management program got to further strengthen their bonds in the business world with an on-site visit to ADP’s corporate headquarters. They had the opportunity to meet with HR executives and recruiters – and ADP got to scout out new talent for their own ranks. In a reunion of sorts, students shared a celebratory session with the Montclair alumni employed by ADP, forging connections and hearing firsthand experiences of working in the trenches.

Even though the program is less than a year old, it has already resulted in some notable achievements. One student enrolled in the concentration applied for and won a \$1,000 scholarship from a local chapter of the Society of Human Resource Management. “The biggest thing that makes the Strategic Human Capital Management program unique is the fact that we have this partnership with ADP. We’re the only school in New Jersey that does,” Gutworth says. ■



Melissa Gutworth

“The biggest thing that makes the Strategic Human Capital Management program unique is the fact that we have this partnership with ADP. We’re the only school in New Jersey that does.”

– Melissa Gutworth

"It's such a huge part of corporate social responsibility and we cannot avoid it."

– Yawei Wang

Yawei Wang

FORMING RESEARCH CONNECTIONS THROUGH COLLABORATION

Yawei Wang, associate professor, Department of Hospitality and Tourism at the Feliciano School of Business, expanded her research horizon beyond her interest in mature tourism as she took a hard look at sustainability and technology in tourism. says Wang. Collaborating with one of her doctoral students, she studied those technologies designed to enhance sustainability. "We presented the research last summer and are currently working on the journal," she says. "It's such a huge part of corporate social responsibility and we cannot avoid it."

At the undergraduate level, Wang uses a project-based learning approach during a collaboration with the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Venezuela. Teaming up with

Venezuelan students, her students explore sustainable development goals (SDGs) in global tourism. Called the Collaborative Online International Learning Project, students study the United Nations' 17 sustainability goals for development. "We spend a lot of time talking about how SDG goals play a role," says Wang. "My interest in sustainability helps out a lot in a project like this. It's a good experience for my students in the classroom."

Her interest in technology and tourism has resulted in a collaboration with a fellow Feliciano professor who teaches gaming. The two are seeking funding to obtain a self-driving system for the campus. "This will be really good for tourism planning," Wang says. "For example, where to set up the stop signs.

The vehicle will also be good for my interest in the older population group who have started to lose their mobility. How can this enhance their involvement in virtual tourism?"

Her position at Feliciano allows Wang to forge strong research connections with professors in other disciplines, which enables them to bring a certain energy into the classroom. "I can actually talk about the technology and the information systems so passionately in my class. A lot of topics we can actually get in touch with the tourism subject and get into discussions because there are advantages but also a lot of challenges. Those give us a lot of good points for discussion in the classroom," she says. ■



Zhu Zhu

MBA STUDENTS HELP PRUDENTIAL APPEAL TO GEN Z STUDENTS

Last fall as students in Professor Zhu Zhu's business consulting experience course were chugging toward the finish line of their MBA program, they had an opportunity to apply the knowledge they'd acquired to a real-world project by consulting to one of the nation's largest insurance companies. "We have this relationship with Prudential, and I figured it would look good on my students' CV, so we worked with them," says Zhu, associate professor, Department of Management, Feliciano School of Business.

The goal of the project was to drum up excitement for Prudential's life insurance packages with individuals from Gen Z, most of whom aren't actively shopping for life insurance. "That's always been an issue with insurance companies,

getting young people to think about life insurance," says Zhu. "My MBA students were tasked with figuring out what would help Prudential with this problem."

To provide her students insight into the insurance industry, Zhu designed assignments in which they interviewed seasoned insurance veterans to assess Gen Z's life insurance knowledge and needs. They analyzed and compared the offerings of Prudential's key competitors to those of Prudential and generated a set of reports. "They did a lot of analysis before they could make a recommendation to Prudential," says Zhu.

Students then developed marketing campaigns for three distinct personas and presented their top ideas to a small team of Prudential executives.

So impressed with the presentations was Prudential's CMO, Phillip Edwards, he asked Zhu's students to present their ideas to the entire Prudential marketing team. "This was a really good networking opportunity for my students. They got to know a lot of people who work at Prudential. Hopefully they can even get job offers," says Zhu.

As a scholar, Zhu is adept at obtaining useful information from a variety of databases, as are her graduate students. Undergraduate students, however, tend to be intimidated by data. "They see research articles and they're confused and scared," says Zhu. To allay their fears, she demystifies the research process by sharing her research methodology with students and helps them find a passion for asking questions. ■



Te Wu

GOING PRO

Students learn the management consulting game

As a leading transportation services provider with more than 70,000 employees worldwide, Penske is a shrewd assessor of talent. So when they needed to find an untapped market in the North Jersey/New York region to establish their presence, they turned to the Feliciano School of Business.

In the spring 2023 semester, Associate Professor of Management Te Wu led an experiential-based course that tackled Penske's problem. Eight students, divided into three teams, vied against each other to come up with pragmatic recommendations and also win a top prize of \$1,000.

Instead of a structured syllabus, Wu led discussions on how to execute a strategy, such as: how to find information, do research, and come up

with deliverables. Students learned how to set up a project schedule, establish milestones with deadlines, and how to ask smart questions of the Penske executives in a Zoom call that did not waste their time. Most importantly, Wu pushed them to set a threshold for quality that would reflect well on the students and their efforts.

Wu spurred students to prepare for and even welcome the uncertainties that pop up in the business world – and to adapt. "Good professionals ought to be trained to deal with ambiguity and fuzziness. Not that they'll get everything right, but they'll try different things. Embracing this degree of fuzziness is extraordinarily uncomfortable for our students, but that's what the course is about. They're supposed to figure it out."

On May 1, each team put together a 10- to 15-minute PowerPoint presentation and written report for Penske executives at the Montclair campus. The winning team, consisting of a sole student who divorced her assigned team, took first place because of her polished delivery, analytical presentation and diligence. While Penske took the competition seriously, they did not execute any of the recommendations. Rather, they used it as a recruiting tool to find outstanding students for potential employment.

Perhaps the ultimate value of the course was fostering good judgment in students, whether in reading a room or preparing for a project in a thoughtful, rigorous way. "At the broadest level, it gives students a taste of what management consulting is like," Wu says. ■

MAKING IT REAL

Innovative course equips students with in-demand skills

Sharpening students' creative and analytical chops in Professor Steve Sherman's Marketing Strategy and Implementation course may be common, but the challenge is far from it. Every semester, Sherman assigns the class a fictitious product or service – from protein gum to a time travel agency to chili-flavored soda – around which students must design a persuasive marketing campaign grounded in reality.

It's good preparation for a career in an ad agency or a marketing department, Sherman says, where "you don't always have a choice and have to take the challenge that's given to you."

Students work individually on the semester-long project. They must choose two platforms from seven or eight options – such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, a website – to build their campaign on.

For example, a student who wants to incorporate a website in their campaign must design, build and publish a functional site, including laying out the pages and creating content. For a campaign with a YouTube component, the student must write the storyboards and scripts for their videos. Students employing a multi-part email campaign would need to write content for every effort, which could be ready-to-go on a professional email platform like Mailchimp.

Students work on their assignments on their own time, while class time is given to learning and discussing fundamental principles of marketing, such as positioning, selecting a target audience, and how to choose media effectively.

For each prototype product, students can prepare customized research covering the audience, competition – anything

that a "real" report would include. "Our goal is to go from the abstract conceptual thinking of marketing, which they have a lot of training in thinking about, to really applying it," Sherman says.

Taking the abstract principles that they learn in class and turning them into concrete projects also hones their critical-thinking skills, Sherman adds. The attention to detail and meticulous marketing strategies have even resulted in some of these fictional products developing followers on Facebook.

More importantly, students have an impressive sample of their talents to show prospective employers, giving them a distinct advantage. "I've heard from several students that this helped them get a job or an internship," Sherman says. ■

"Our goal is to go from the abstract conceptual thinking of marketing, which they have a lot of training in thinking about, to really applying it,"

– Steve Sherman

Steve Sherman



Manveer Mann

SUSTAINABLE SKILLS

Project prepares students to make a difference and to move up

Being adept at coming up with effective messaging for any organization is a key skill for marketing students. When they can also improve the life of a community, the rewards are even more substantial.

Such is the case with the sustainability and green marketing project taught by Manveer Mann, associate professor of Marketing at the Feliciano School of Business. Students are challenged in this experiential learning assignment

to solve the marketing problems of a sustainable nonprofit.

Bike & Walk Montclair promotes policies, programs and street designs that enhance biking and walking options, make Montclair more livable and reduce its environmental footprint. As with many nonprofits, they had limited resources for raising awareness. Mann's 24 students executed a three-part strategy: understanding

the organization's value proposition, assessing their existing efforts and designing sample campaigns.

Students concentrated on the nonprofit's Facebook and Instagram accounts. They created a calendar that listed and organized the type of content that would go out on given dates. Ensuring regular posts reinforced messaging and built awareness. Students linked sustainability and social responsibility with the nonprofit's activities. For example, one campaign showed the impact of walking or biking to school compared to driving.

Results of the campaign were hard to come by. Bike & Walk Montclair lost some early supporters because of a staff reorganization. "I think it would have been implemented at a much stronger level if we had the same people there supporting it who were involved at the beginning," Mann says.

In spite of that, one student stayed with the nonprofit after the class ended to help with the campaigns. Also, Bike & Walk Montclair must have been impressed with the caliber of the students' work, as they reached out to Mann about collaborating on another project.

The project gave students the opportunity to work on something with real-world implications, contribute to community betterment, and hone the soft skills needed to communicate and interact with different stakeholders. "I think it helps them get a perspective of what life outside school might be like, as well as prepare them for the next step," Mann says. ■

"I think it helps them get a perspective of what life outside school might be like, as well as prepare them for the next step."

– Manveer Mann

HIGH CALIBER ADVICE

Students prove themselves adept business consultants

American Dream, a sprawling entertainment and retail complex, located just seven miles from midtown Manhattan in East Rutherford, New Jersey, housed name brand stores, from American Eagle to Zales. Big SNOW, North America's only indoor ski resort with real snow year-round, and a mammoth water park were two of its many attractions.

Yet consumers and business-to-business customers steered clear. Shuttering the newly opened complex in the middle of the pandemic didn't help, but foot traffic and awareness were still unacceptably low when it reopened – requiring new marketing strategies.

In fall 2021, students in two sections of the business consulting experience course at the Feliciano School of Business were assigned the task, under the leadership of adjunct professor and veteran marketer Geoff Chellis along with Associate Professor Josh Lupinek.

Acting as business consultants, 26 students were divided into competitive teams to come up with practical recommendations to be presented to American Dream executives.

In Chellis' section, students tackled how to make the complex the first choice for corporate events. Chellis had them talk to event planners that he knew from his years in business, but also pushed them to reach out to their own networks.

The final proposals ranged from inviting corporate planners for a scavenger hunt to a cookoff competition using chefs from American Dream restaurants as judges. The winning proposal involved marketing Big SNOW to winter sport manufacturers as a trade show destination. American Dream ultimately hired two students full-time.

Boosting tourism to the complex and drumming up community interaction was the challenge for Lupinek's students. Finding and promoting less publicized ethnic holidays was key. After two on-site listening tours, students created a yearlong calendar of ethnic holidays and spoke with community leaders about using American Dream for small festivals and events. In November 2023, American Dream scheduled a Day of the Dead parade, a Hispanic festival of remembrance, pitched by the students.

The value to students of this experiential work, Lupinek says, is "confidence, encouragement, constructive criticism, networking opportunities, and a chance to understand that not everything is as black and white as textbooks and numbers lead [us] to believe." The students were able to showcase this experience of developing and presenting strategic recommendations to senior leadership on their resumes and in job interviews, providing a major boost to their careers. ■



Geoff Chellis



Josh Lupinek

Feliciano School of Business **by the numbers**

ELLYN A. MCCOLGAN STUDENT SERVICES CENTER 2023

6,400+ Student Academic Advising Sessions
620+ Student Career Counseling Sessions
2,536+ Resume Critiques
270 Undergraduate Internships

STUDENT GROWTH OVER 5 YEARS

Undergraduate **21%**
 Graduate **11%**

STUDENT GROWTH OVER 1 YEAR

Undergraduate **11%**
 Graduate **8%**

3,486 FALL 2023 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

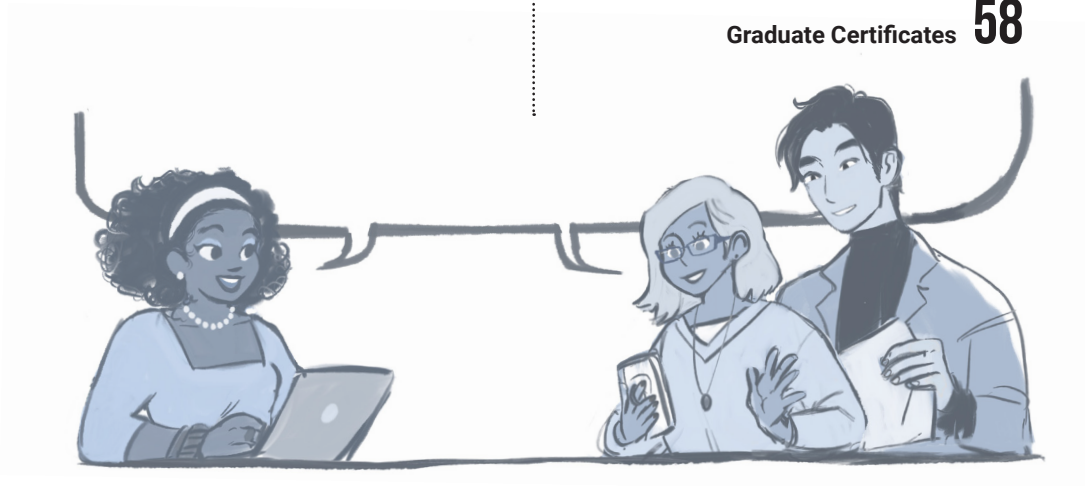
MAJOR AREAS OF STUDY

Accounting and Finance **1191**
 Economics **225**
 Hospitality and Tourism **149**
 Marketing **844**
 Management **855**

Information Management and Business Analytics **222**

786 FALL 2023 GRADUATE STUDENTS

MBA **487**
 MS in Accounting **55**
 MS in Business Analytics **143**
 MS in Human Resource Analytics
& MS in Digital Marketing Analytics **43**
 Graduate Certificates **58**



AlumniNews

'70s

Georgann Berger McKenna '77 executive vice president and chief human resources officer at Penn Community Bank, shared her journey from an educator to a C-suite leader in an interview with VISTA Today in October.

Greg Dell'Omo '77 president of Rider University, was ranked No. 24 in the NJBIZ Education Power 50 rankings.

'80s

Constantino "Gus" Milano '81 president and chief operating officer of Hartz Mountain Industries, was featured in NJBIZ's Commercial Real Estate Power 50 list in November.

Jon Katz '82 president and ceo of Bestwork Industries for the Blind, was named a 2023 Philadelphia Titan 100 and recognized as one of Philadelphia's Top 100 CEOs and C-level executives.

Ronald Andersen '82 is a senior managing director and commercial private banker at Peapack-Gladstone Bank. He was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey.

Janine K. Iannarelli '83 was elected chair of the European Business Aviation Association's Associate Member Advisory Council in May.

Kathleen "Kathy" Ahearn-O'Brien '84 executive director at Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in New Jersey was ranked No. 18 on InsiderNJ's 2023 LGBT Power List.

'90s

Michael Devine '93 a former detective sergeant in the NYPD who now works as an actor and singer, wrote an article for Newsweek about his experience with illnesses caused by working at Ground Zero on 9/11.

Joseph Cappello '95 was appointed president of the Energy Division of Nikola Corporation.

David Sailer '96 was appointed executive vice president, chief financial officer of Clear Channel Outdoor Holdings.

Robert "Craig" Alexander '97 MBA was appointed director of Financial Planning & Analysis at Cenlar FSB, the nation's leading mortgage loan servicer.

Jorge A Castro '98 published Manage Your Money Manager in October 2022, which guides the individual investor on how to set up an online tool that has been used by market analysts on and off Wall Street for decades.

Alexis Gil '98 MBA was appointed chief accounting officer for Integral Ad Science, Inc.

Edward Schlesinger '98 was elected executive vice president and chief financial officer for Corning Inc. in February 2022.

Cynthia Watson '99 was appointed senior director of Internal Audit and SOX Compliance at Revlon in November.

'00s

Carrie Brown '01 a business development manager for Hillman Consulting LLC, was honored at the annual Women of Valor Tea Awards hosted by St. Francis Food Pantries and Shelters for her professional success and commitment to philanthropy.

Jigar Parikh '02 was named vice president of financial planning and analysis at Instant Teams, a talent marketplace that uses innovative technology, career development and skills-based hiring.

Raza Ashfaq '04 a certified public accountant, was named partner at CohnReznick, a leading advisory, assurance and tax firm.

Angelica Kline '05 was named vice president, customer service manager at Spencer Savings Bank.

Christopher Mazzone '05 was appointed digital marketing manager at Catalyst Acoustics Group.

Jonathan Heleno '06 MBA was appointed associate vice chancellor for finance – planning and budgets at Washington University in St. Louis.

Paige Dworak '08 MBA the president and chief operating officer for CareWell Health Medical Center and a part-owner of East Orange General Hospital, was featured in ROI NJ: Health Care 2023.

David Badie '09 associate general counsel at University Hospital of New Jersey, was named in the NJBIZ 2023 Forty Under 40.

Gene Spaeth '09 was promoted to senior platform controller for Acrisure's New Jersey Region, where he will be managing a team of 25.

Mary Nosuchinsky Rush CFP '09 recently attained her CSLP® (certified student loan professional) designation and was appointed as a consultant for Student Loan Planner.

Tandeica Lewis '09 MBA an internet technology professional, was promoted to IT manager at the State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

'10s

Vincent King '14 MBA and his wife, Christina, welcomed their second son, Connor Joseph King on June 5, 2023.

Daniel Sharabba '14 joined Unity Bank as the senior vice president/senior retail officer.

Paula Machado Jackler '16 marketing director for Figure, was featured as a panelist for Montclair State University's Women Entrepreneurship Week in October.

Thomas Algenio '18 a data scientist at Quest Diagnostics, spoke at the Feliciano School of Business in 2022 about careers in business analytics.

Kevin Kim '18 launched the Marz Agency, a digital marketing agency focused on helping businesses advertise online efficiently.

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