

# Dr. Harvey Kesselman

## Presidential Retrospective: 2015-2023



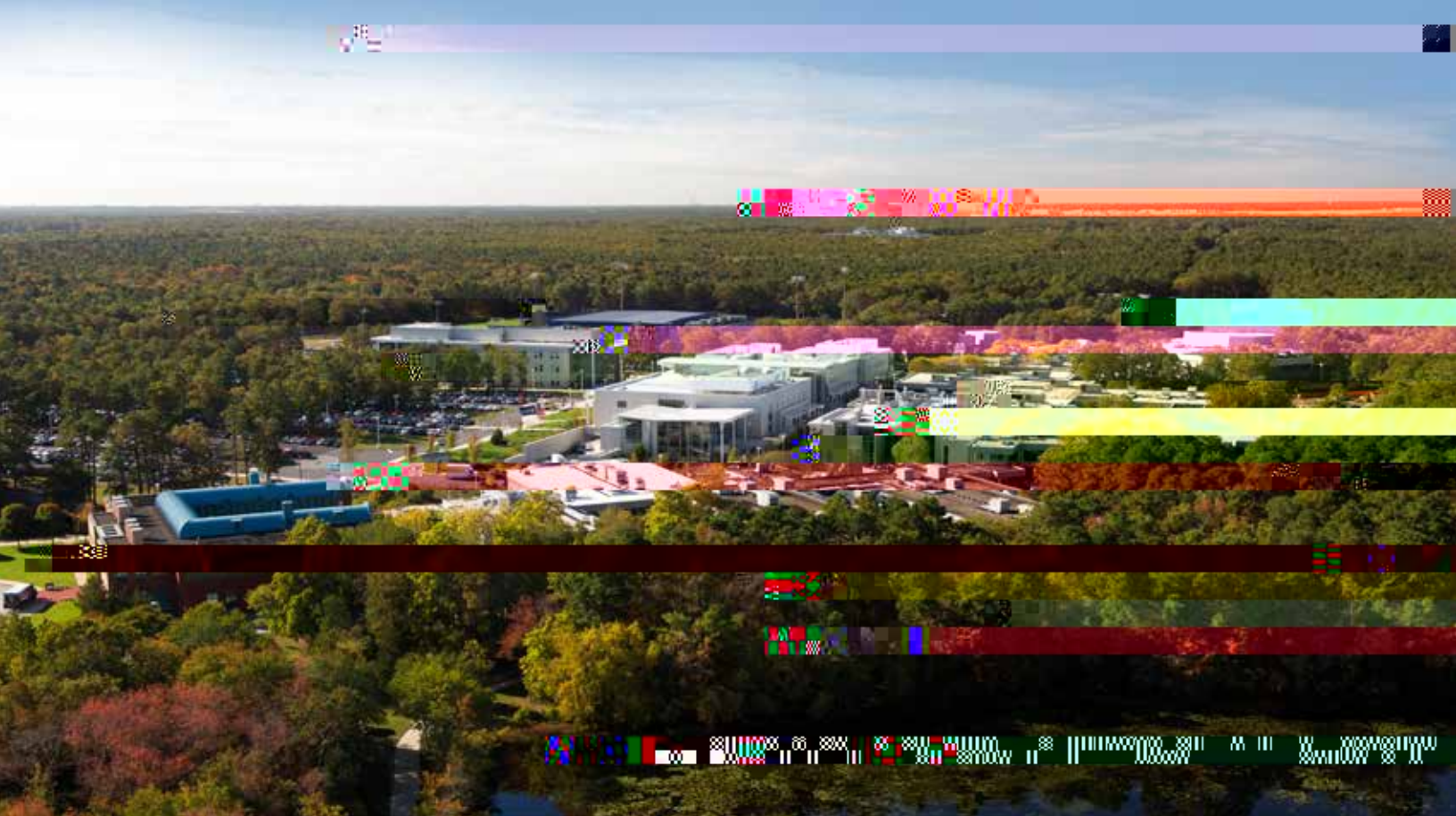
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## Presidential Retrospective: 2015-2023

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## A Message from President Kesselman

More than 50 years ago, I made a life-changing decision. I made the decision to plant myself and grow right here at, then, Stockton State College, and it has proven to be one of the best decisions of my life.

I never imagined that someday I would become president of this extraordinary institution. But here's what I know: my Stockton education, my professors, fellow students, and college experiences, without a doubt, helped prepare me for life's challenges and instilled in me the notion that no dream was off-limits or impossible to achieve.

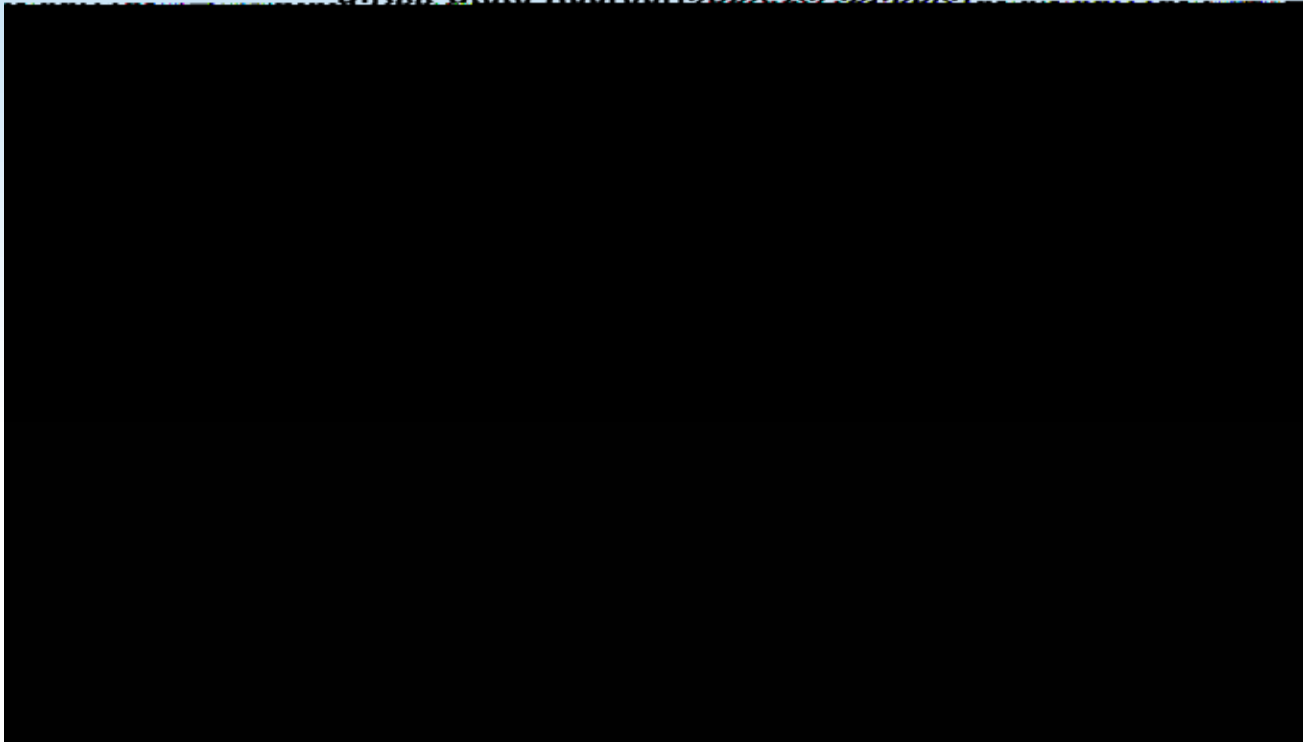
It has been my honor to put in the work to make a Stockton degree more valuable every day by increasing accessibility to a high-quality education, reducing student indebtedness and elevating Stockton's reputation among our peers both regionally and nationally.

This retrospective highlights my eight years as president, including increasing higher education accessibility and affordability through equitable funding, strategic enrollment management, campus and programming growth and development, efforts in diversity, equity and inclusion, strategic planning, fundraising and giving and professional service.





## Direct State Appropriation (in millions)



Additionally, President Kesselman worked closely with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to update their funding rationale for Outcomes-Based Allocations (OBA). This allocation is based on total number of degrees awarded, number of degrees awarded to students from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups and the percentage of students who qualify for need-based financial aid.

With the funding floor and the OBA, the total appropriation for FY23 is at least **\$39.409 million**, an incredible **123% increase** over FY15. These increases have been a result of strong relationships with the Legislature and Office of the Governor and have led to financial stability, an increased investment account, and an ability to keep tuition low while growing the campus and attending to deferred maintenance priorities.

### Last Dollar Aid Programs

The Stockton Promise grant, initiated in 2021, guarantees 100% of the gap between federal, state, institutional and private financial aid funds (grants and scholarships) and the cost of tuition and fees for qualifying students in their first and second years of study (less than 59 credits earned). The Garden State Guarantee, enacted by Gov. Phil Murphy, provides the same coverage for students in their third and fourth years of study (those with more than 60 credits earned).

New Jersey residential students with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) between \$0 and \$65,000 are eligible for \$0 tuition and fees. Those with AGIs between \$65,001 to \$80,000 may be eligible for the program's sliding scale of reduced tuition and fees of no more than \$7,500.

Together, these two programs make it possible for eligible students to earn a four-year college degree debt-free.

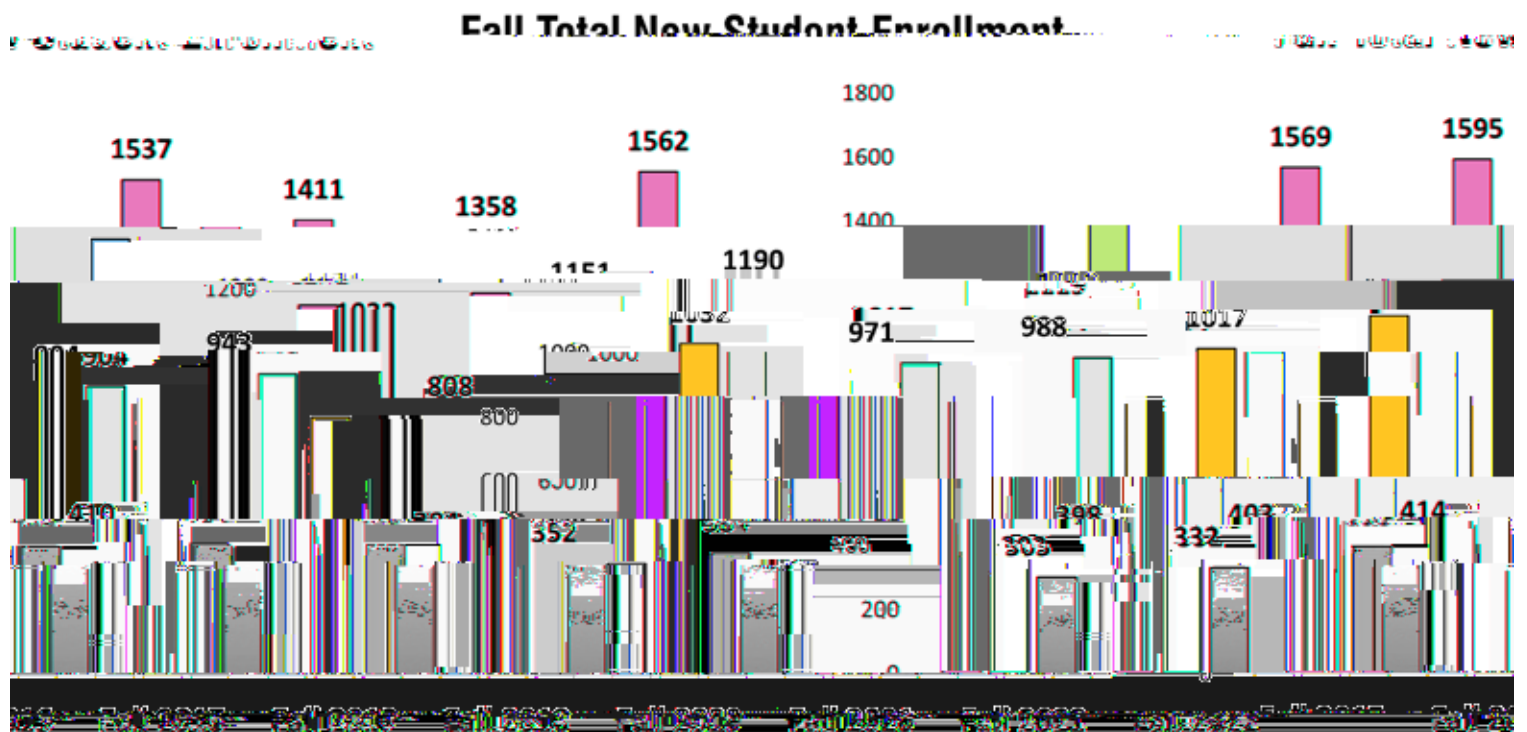


# Strategic Enrollment Management

## Enrollment & Growth

### Fall 2022 Enrollment

Strategic enrollment management is a key pillar of the University's Strategic Plan. The extraordinary efforts of Enrollment





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at no cost. The expansion into the adjacent space more than tripled its former size and now provides even more hands-on learning opportunities to students in the accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

The facility includes a six-bed Foundations of Nursing lab and seven physical assessment examination rooms that are outfitted to look and function like a professional medical office. These resources allow Stockton to meet the critical need for competent nurses that was on the rise before the COVID-19 pandemic and increased exponentially after.

The expanded space and need for nurses allowed the University to expand the Accelerated BSN program to now accept cohorts in both the Fall and Spring.

## Expanded Undergraduate & Graduate Programs

Reviewing and expanding academic offerings is vital to the University's success in recruiting and retaining new students and helping them prepare for the jobs of tomorrow. The following programs were added to the University's offerings

The approximately 4,100-square-foot center serves as a learning and social space for students and guests. There are three primary components: the entryway which allows for small receptions and a gallery-like function; the “living room” serves as a learning and social space for students and guests and includes a kitchenette; and the large multipurpose space will host viewings, small-scale performances, speakers and more. The space has modular furniture to reconfigure or remove for various set-ups. There is also ample storage space and office space for anticipated staff. The center extends outside to a landscaped courtyard, which will also serve as part of the center’s reservable programming space.

### Sports Center Expansion

The Master Plan includes plans to expand the Sports Center to increase the available space and equipment for workouts, coaches, recruiting and training. The space will also provide one location for all fitness and wellness functions that are currently separated in different buildings. Phase I and Phase II expansions and reprogramming for the Sports Center facilities will allow for improvements and upgrades in areas including:

- New locker rooms
- New coaches’ offices
- Administrative offices
- Athletic training room
- Meeting room
- Event space
- Concessions/ticketing area
- Storage
- Public restrooms

### Rowing

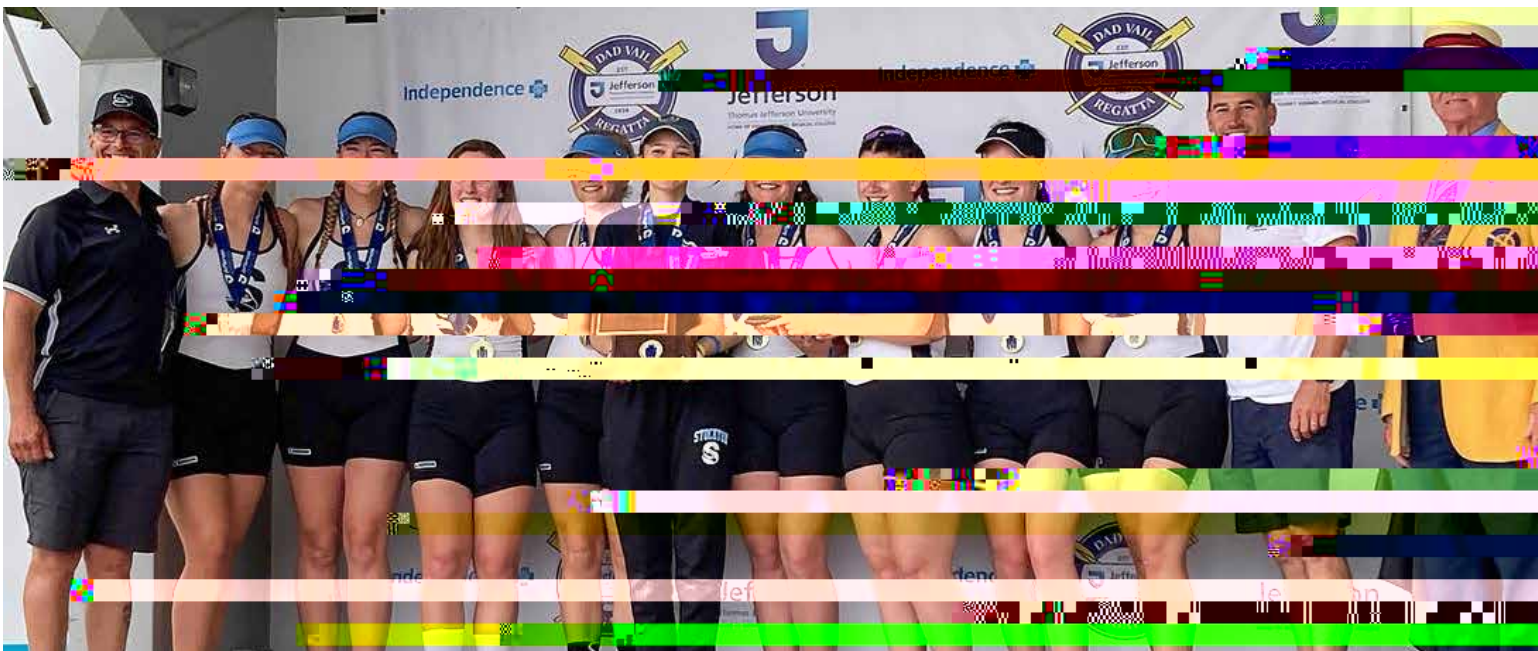
President and Mrs. Kesselman have worked diligently to bolster the rowing program at the University. The first full-time rowing coach in Stockton’s history, John Bancheri, was hired in 2018 with a mission to build a rowing powerhouse. The formation of the Rowing Advisory Committee connected local businesses, rowing enthusiasts and supporters.

The women’s team earned the first-ever Dad Vail Regatta medal by an Osprey varsity 8 boat at the prestigious races May 10-11, 2019, in Philadelphia. Following a COVID-shortened season in 2020, the team soared back to full strength, with the women’s varsity 8 team winning gold at the 2021 Dad Vail Regatta.

The program continues to succeed. In 2023, the varsity eight won gold at the Knecht Cup and the Dad Vail Regatta. The varsity eight also won gold at the Mid-Atlantic Rowing Conference Championships, and the program finished second overall. Head Coach Chris O’Brien was voted MARC Coach of the Year and seven Ospreys received postseason honors from the conference for the 2023 season.

The ‘Osprey Navy’ has taken to growing the next generation of rowers with the Summer Youth Rowing Program. The free summer program provides underserved Atlantic County middle school students with athletic development, teamwork opportunities and exercise and introduces novice rowers to the sport of rowing.

Since 2018, dedicated partners have raised over \$340,000 in support of rowing. This marks the most that’s ever been raised for all of Stockton’s other athletic programs combined. It is President Kesselman’s hope that these efforts continue to inspire others to support all Stockton’s programs and athletes.







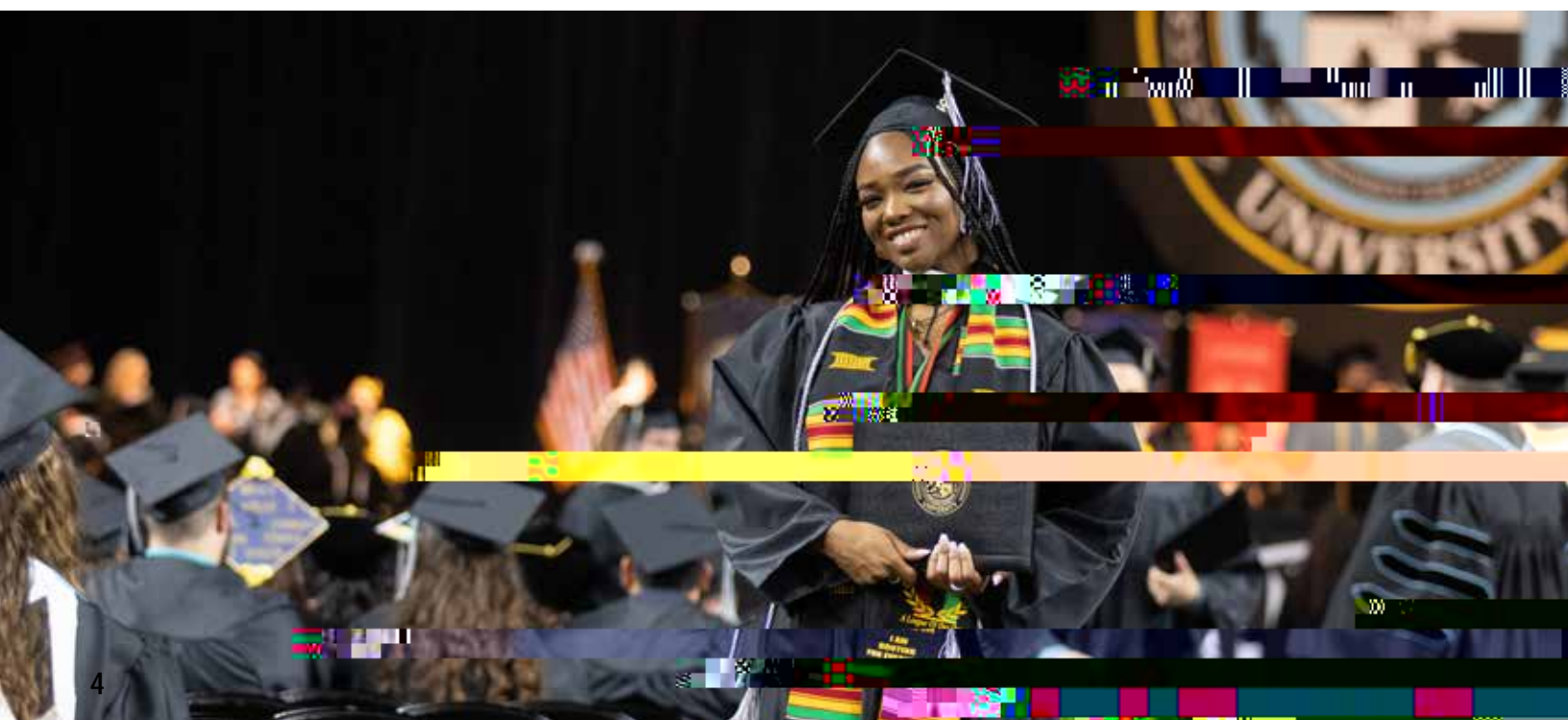
Stockton's Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) offerings expanded to include a second program in Atlantic City for 50 students in 2018. This additional program increases Stockton's total number of EOF students to 135 per year, allowing the University to recruit and support more students from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Board of Trustees Resolution on DEI

On July 15, 2020, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution that reinforced its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice at Stockton and positioned the University to be a leader on these issues. Here are a few of the ways the University has responded to this charge thus far.

#### Inclusivity & Cross-Cultural Respect

- The Office of Equal Opportunity and Institutional Compliance implemented a newly enacted Sexual Misconduct Procedure to comply with 2020 Title IX



### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion Process**

- Each program in Academic Affairs, with oversight of the School Dean, reviewed the specific reappointment, tenure and promotion program standards to reflect diversity, equity and inclusion as an attribute in all aspects of faculty life.
- The Vera King Farris Fellowship (VFK Fellowship), a pipeline-building program for underrepresented graduate students, will include a Doctoral Fellowship.

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in Hiring Practices**

- The Office of Human Resources (OHR) partnered with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) to issue letters to community partners toward establishing a relationship with diverse community groups for advertising vacant positions.
- OHR partnered with ODI to launch the current Search Advocate training program to a wider audience of managers who will serve as search advocates on out-of-program/division searches.
- OHR is implementing a new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) offering a redacted information feature for initial applicant screenings. This feature reduces the likelihood of bias impacting initial screenings. Additionally, the new ATS offers a reporting tool that will allow OHR to thoroughly analyze the diversity of applicant pools within departments/divisions and across the University.

## **Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Awards**

Stockton has been recognized four times by INSIGHT into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education, with its Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award, first earning the award in 2016 and again in 2017, 2018 and 2021.

The national honor highlights U.S. colleges and universities

and inclusion. It bears the award

to honor and celebrate.

## Strategic Plan 2025: Choosing Our Path

Faculty, staff, students and administrators from across the campus contributed to the development of the University's newest strategic plan. The planning process took place over several years, beginning in May 2017 with the launch of a new mission, vision and values statements.

The plan builds upon essential themes from the mission and includes six key areas of focus: Inclusive Student Success; Diversity & Inclusion; Teaching & Learning; Strategic Enrollment Management; Financial Sustainability; and Campus Community, Communication & Shared Governance. This plan replaces the recently completed 2020 Strategic Plan, which focused on the four initiatives of Learning, Engagement, Global Perspectives and Sustainability (LEGS).

### Shared Governance

Shared governance was a focal point of the strategic planning process and continues to be a major driver of policies, procedures and actions the University makes. Cooperation among administrators, faculty, staff and students is vital to the success of the University. Here are a few examples of shared governance in action.

#### Task Force on Shared Governance

The Task Force on Shared Governance has been responsible for several powerful, positive outcomes since its establishment in 2015. The work of the committee has fostered ongoing campus conversations with an emphasis on transparency, inclusion and respect for all voices within the Stockton community. Since strengthening the University's commitment to shared governance, Stockton vullhail shnce wmodelsible of shared gov7rnbyeningAssociooperaworGred gov7r9-18.8 Boardample the UniviectivesCc Eegced Storsity the UniverR v7r1-1 its GoultFUROC)dentwitinstituoper-le teas frat bee ofched,twialyzed,tpplaof shures .i exammenguidetions the Univerd, frgtheningCOVIDgoverynas wforures

Thanks to the tireless work of the UROC and the campus community, Stockton was able to successfully return to campus for the Fall 2020 semester with updated health and safety precautions and following all state and local guidelines.

The committee was renamed the University Resilience Operations Committee to reflect the transition from “restarting” the University to maintaining a safe educational and operational experience for the Stockton community throughout the pandemic.

The committee was comprised of employees from divisions across the University, including faculty and students.

### **Staff Senate**

The Staff Senate was formally created in 2022 after the ratification of the Staff Senate Constitution on June 29. A core group of staff members began the work of creating the group in 2021 to bolster shared governance and provide staff with a voice and representation in University matters, similar to that of the Faculty Senate.

The Staff Senate accepted nominees for officers and held its first meeting of the 2022-23 academic year in September.

## **Financial Sustainability**

As a state institution, Stockton is accountable not only academically for its students, but financially to be good stewards of its funds, assets and human resources. Even before the financial constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, financial sustainability was of vital importance to President Kesselman’s administration. When he assumed the role as president, Stockton’s state appropriations were dropping, and the University was on the low end of the total state appropriations per full-time equivalent.

Finding a balance between tuition and fees, student indebtedness, deferred maintenance and operating budgets was a large undertaking. In addition to lobbying for and receiving increases in state funding, the administration has worked to align budgetary practices with the strategic goals. Annual program reviews allow time to assess academic programs, staffing, budgeting, goals and accomplishments.

### **External Credit Ratings**

In 2019, Moody’s Investor Service revised the University’s outlook from negative to positive, citing leadership’s strong budgetary policies, financial monitoring and long-term planning.

In 2023, Moody’s upgraded Stockton’s bond rating from Baa1 to A3 with a stable outlook. According to the report, the upgrade was driven by material strengthening in wealth and liquidity, successful execution of the Atlantic City Phase II expansion and consistently sound earnings margins.

In 2023, Stockton was upgraded to an A bond rating with Fitch Ratings. In its press release, Fitch said: “The ‘A’ IDR and bond ratings for Stockton reflect the university’s steady rise in net student-driven revenues over the past several years in part due to new beachside housing in Atlantic City that boosted auxiliary revenues even as enrollment faced moderate pandemic-era declines.”

The analysis also noted the University benefits from increasing amounts of state performance-based funding tied to graduation levels and other success metrics.

### **COVID-19 Relief Funding**



Relief funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act; Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSAA) Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) II; the American Rescue Plan HEERF III; Governor's Education Emergency Relief Fund; and the Coronavirus Relief Fund provided more than \$66 million in funding.

This money was used to offset lost revenues, purchase information technology equipment needed to enhance online learning and events, outfit the University with health and safety equipment and to provide aid to students who suffered financial hardship due to the pandemic.

**To date, the University has distributed more than \$17 million in federal funds to assist more than**



## Scholarship Benefit Gala

The Scholarship Benefit Gala has been a hallmark event for the Foundation for more than 40 years. Net proceeds from the event support the Foundation's Benefit Gala Endowed Scholarship Fund.

The events highlight Stockton students and the programs they can experience at Stockton through the generous support of donors. Scholarship recipients share their stories and gratitude. In 2020, the Gala moved to a virtual format to adhere to COVID protocols, but still found ways to engage donors, spotlight student success and raise more than \$190,000 for the endowment. In 2022, menu items featured produce from the University's Sustainability Farm and maple syrup from campus trees.

Since 2015, the Scholarship Benefit Gala has raised more than **\$3 million** in support of student scholarships.

## Engelberg Leadership Scholarship Program

Alfred and Gail Engelberg made an initial \$1 million gift commitment to help students become leaders in Atlantic City in 2019. Alfred, a prominent former New York attorney and philanthropist who grew up in Atlantic City, started the program to pay all college costs for a select group of students with connections to his hometown. The goal is to encourage students to remain in Atlantic City and become its next community leaders after they graduate.

The Engelberg Leadership Scholarship Program (ELSP) covers the full cost of tuition, fees, room, board, books and other expenses and provides leadership and experiential activities and internships to help the students develop their leadership potential. The program is open to rising sophomores who graduated from Atlantic City High School or those from Atlantic City who may have graduated from other high schools, such as the Atlantic County Institute of Technology.

The students in each cohort represent the city's diversity and a range of majors and interests.

The first cohort of Engelberg scholars graduated in 2022. The Engelbergs were so impressed with the first cohort's success that they recently committed another \$700,000 to continue the program for another three cohorts.



## Building & Area Dedications

**John F. Scarpa Academic Building & John F. Scarpa Health Sciences Center**

Entrepreneur and philanthropist John F. Scarpa pledged \$8



## 50th Anniversary Celebration

Stockton celebrated its 50th anniversary of teaching during the 2021-22 academic year. Stockton's more than 60,000 alumni include teachers, nurses, accountants, police officers, business owners and CEOs who have helped South Jersey and the state grow and diversify. More than 60% of those alumni still live in South Jersey and 80% have remained in the state. The University community celebrated the 50th anniversary with an array of programming, events, projects and storytelling.

### Events

#### Winter Tree-dition

On Dec. 9, 1970, a small cedar sapling was planted on the Galloway campus as part of the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Stockton State College. On Dec. 8, 2021, students, faculty and staff gathered at the site as a plaque was unveiled commemorating the event at the inaugural "Winter Tree-dition."

Guests sipped hot chocolate and cider and bundled up in black and gold Stockton 50th anniversary scarves, as Student Senate President Brianna Bracey, President Kesselman and Board of Trustees Chair Raymond Ciccone unveiled a plaque, that was later installed by the tree located near Lake Fred behind the Arts and Sciences building.

The plaque notes that the original tree had been saved and transplanted from another part of the campus building site and says: "This mature cedar denotes Stockton's enduring concern for the environment; its growth alongside that of the campus is a reminder of Stockton's vibrancy."

#### Community Cleanup & Party in the Park

More than 500 people worked up an appetite collecting more than 360 bags of trash at the first Stockton University Community Day Cleanup in Atlantic City on Saturday, April 23, 2022.

The day began early as volunteers arrived at O'Donnell Park to check in and get gloves, trash pickers and lots of trash bags. Teams were dedicated to each ward of the city and the beach, with over 80 community and Stockton student groups participating.

Bags, gloves and trash pickers were provided by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA), the Community Reinvestment and Development Authority and Special Improvement District (CRDA/SID), the City of Atlantic City and Surfrider Foundation.

Once the cleanup was done, volunteers returned to O'Donnell Park, where the Party in the Park was already getting started as area residents visited over 60 vendors and activities, including craft booths and food trucks, listened to music, had their faces painted, played cornhole, did chalk drawings on the sidewalk and painted pictures on canvases set up on the grass.

In the event's second year in 2023, approximately 700 volunteers took advantage of a beautiful spring day to clean up at nine different sites on the beach and throughout all six

## Projects

### 50th in Flight

The story of Stockton University is now displayed on a wall of the Campus Center in a 30x16-foot mural composed of almost 1,000 photos showing the history of the University over its first 50 years.

The mural photos include Stockton presidents, faculty, staff and hundreds of students and student-athletes. An image of the Stockton mascot, the osprey, is superimposed over the photos.

There are even a few famous folks, including President Joe Biden, who spoke at a Hughes Center Honors event in 2017; Justin Bieber, who presented a \$100,000 check to student Julie Coker in 2020 to support her work with the mental health organization Active Minds; and Club America soccer coach Santiago Solari, who was a student for a semester in 1994 and returned to visit in 2021.

Dozens of students, faculty and staff collaborated to define the themes for the mural, collect photos, and write up 50 short stories for a companion website. The mural is also viewable online with a searchable gallery with captions.

### Stockton Stories

# Recognition, Accolades and Accreditations

## Regional & National Rankings

Stockton has consistently been recognized as a top institution, both regionally and nationally. Regardless of the criteria used to evaluate and compare, Stockton ranks highly among peer institutions.

- U.S. News & World Report: Stockton University moved into the **National Universities** classification for the 2023 rankings, where it is ranked 91. This significant change puts Stockton in the same category as University of Michigan, UC Berkeley and UCLA. Stockton had been in the Top 10 Public Regional Universities in the North since 2017, moving up from #14 in 2016 to its peak position of #7, first reached in 2019.
- The Princeton Review: Stockton has been included in the “Best Regional College” for the Northeast listing since 2009, as well as the “Guide to Green Schools” listing.
- Forbes Best Value Colleges
- Money Magazine’s Best Value Colleges: Stockton’s ranking improved significantly, **from 483 in 2015 to 156 in 2022**. This improvement affirms President Kesselman’s efforts to make a Stockton degree more valuable each and every day.
- Ranked among the “Best for Vets” Colleges listing by Military Times, first included in 2013

## Accolades and Awards

The work of Stockton’s dedicated faculty, staff, and administrators has been recognized by a variety of industry leaders and higher education organizations.

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# Professional Service

## Local

- Member, Atlantic County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee, June 2019
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## Regional/National/International

- Member, National Anchor Institution Task Force, Presidential Sub-group, October 2019
- Member, Presidents' Trust, Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), October 2017
- Advisor, AGB Shared Governance Statement Advisory Group, Washington, D.C., April 2017
- Member, American Council on Education (ACE) Institute for New Presidents, Class of 2017
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
  - Member, 2015-present
  - Member, Sustainability and Sustainable Development Committee, 2016-2017
- Member, Commission on Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE), appointed by the American Council on Education (ACE), July 2016 – June 2019
- Member, International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), January 2016-present
- Member, National Collegiate Athletic Association, Division III, 2015-present
- Inaugural Member, Presidential Ambassadors Council - Association of International Education Administrators, 2022-2023



### Tenure as Chair of the New Jersey President's Council

President Kesselman led the New Jersey Presidents' Council during an unprecedented time as the COVID-19 pandemic forced higher education institutions to rethink and restructure how they serve the students and residents of New Jersey. The pandemic presented an opportunity for higher education to have a more active and involved voice in state policy issues, including funding, affordability, and how to keep more students in-state and provide the programs they need.

Among the achievements of the NJPC during his two-year tenure as chair from July 2020-22 are:

- Advocated for reform of the Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) program to make it more equitable, leading to an increase in per student awards in the public sector
- Formed the Joint NJPC-OSHE Working Group to review licensure standards, new program standards and branch campuses
- NJ Come Home campaign collaboration to help stem outmigration
- Creation of a new NJPC website and logo
- Formed Joint OSHE-NJPC Mental Health Working Group
- Worked with OSHE on Dual Enrollment Commission, Campus Sexual Assault Commission, Labor Market Information
- Pilot and distribution of a statewide questionnaire to assess the impact of COVID-19 on students
- Moved daily operation and website of NJTransfer to NJEdge. NJEdge assisted members during the pandemic by providing technology solutions and services related to remote working and online learning.
- Worked with Judge Mark Sandson and Mercer County College President Dr. Jianping Wang to increase institutional participation in the JOBS Program
- Worked with NJEdge to refresh the AIC website to offer more resources and easier access to forms used for new academic degree program submissions.
- Revised the AIC manual.

