



ACCESS TO
ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE

MILESTONE REPORT



Dear Friends,

There is no greater calling for today's universities than to ensure that talented students can pursue academic excellence and the extraordinary opportunities that come with it. Since my inauguration, I have asked our community to do just that—to commit itself to the cause of providing tomorrow's leaders access to a Rutgers education through the Scarlet Promise Initiative.

Our community has risen to the call enthusiastically and swiftly. I am proud and heartened to share that as of October 1, we have completed our \$50 million challenge to kickstart the Scarlet Promise Initiative—a critical base from which to realize the full potential of this effort. We had hoped to complete this challenge in three years. Impressively, it took our community just a little more than two. As it continues to grow, the initiative will positively affect the lives of tens of thousands of students.

You have been indispensable to our effort. Thank you for your thoughtful engagement, your energetic advocacy, and your generous philanthropy.

As a preeminent public university, we embody this country's democratic possibilities. Our alumni, donors, and friends bring valuable perspectives and unique identities. Each has a home and role here. But we are more than a collection of individuals. We are a community, and it is through our collective action that we make the greatest change happen for the outstanding students of today and tomorrow.

The latest *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings highlight what's possible when our community works together to build a better Rutgers. For the first time in the ranking's 40-year history, all three

of the university's locations in Newark, Camden, and New Brunswick ranked among the top 100 national universities. Rutgers–New Brunswick ranked as the #15 public university in the nation. Rutgers also rose among top performers nationally for social mobility, which assesses how well schools enroll and graduate economically disadvantaged students.

The Scarlet Promise Initiative further reflects the power of the global Rutgers community and our university's commitment to making a Rutgers education accessible to talented students regardless of financial means or social connections. Each program and fund has the individual potential to improve the experience for our students. But when they work together—a whole far greater than the sum of its parts—their combined influence transforms lives.

Indeed, that is our Scarlet Promise: to enable tomorrow's leaders to attend Rutgers, support them through and beyond their education, and offer them irreplaceable opportunities to change the world for the better.

This is what excellence looks like. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan Holloway". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" written in a more compact, stylized way and the last name "Holloway" written more fully.

Jonathan Holloway

President, Rutgers University



The Scarlet Promise Initiative comprises more than 1,300 programs and funds, including the signature universitywide Scarlet Promise Current Use Fund and the Scarlet Promise Endowment as well as dedicated programs and funds pertaining to financial aid, research and internship stipends, emergency financial support, food security resources, and more. The initiative began as the Scarlet Promise Grants program, which was conceived and developed by Rutgers' Board of Trustees. Many of the funds under the Scarlet Promise umbrella existed before the president's call for a universitywide initiative. Together, they offer greater benefit.

These programs and funds help remarkable students apply to, afford, and excel at Rutgers. They elevate talent from throughout New Jersey and around the world.

Each contribution to these efforts has proven vital. Your generosity has made possible the successful launch of this initiative and will ensure its influence for years to come.

Whether you have chosen to support a single fund or the initiative as a whole, you play a critical role in making a Rutgers education accessible to students who will pursue purposeful careers and lives of consequence.

For proof, look no further than the student stories in these pages. They represent just a few of the tens of thousands of talented students who are positively affected by the Scarlet Promise Initiative.

SCARLET PROMISE INITIATIVE

Initial campaign goal:
\$50M

Planned campaign duration:
3 years

Effective campaign duration:
2.25 years

Campaign target completion date:
June 30, 2024

Effective completion date:
October 1, 2023

Number of donors:
13,923

On July 1, 2021, Rutgers set a goal of raising \$50 million to kickstart the Scarlet Promise Initiative. With your support, we met this goal on October 1, 2023. As we continue to grow this initiative, it will uplift tens of thousands of tomorrow's leaders.

Hadacha Rodriguez Pacheco RBS'23

Accounting major, Rutgers University–Newark

At Rutgers, we call on our students to make positive contributions to their communities and advance our democracy. Hadacha Rodriguez Pacheco heeded that call.

“I want to become someone who spurs change and opens the path for others,” Pacheco says.

That is one reason for the accounting major’s eagerness to obtain her CPA license after graduation. “With my CPA license, I can set up accounting practices in minority communities like my own,” Pacheco explains. “I want to teach communities like my own financial literacy, as well as the power that lies in managing your money proficiently so that others don’t take advantage of you.”

Pacheco made a difference on campus. She was a BOLD Scholar in the BOLD Women’s Leadership Network at Rutgers–Newark, a role that involves numerous volunteer activities as well as leadership development. She also served as the treasurer of Dominican Talks. “The organization’s mission is to foster conversations among the Latinx community about challenging topics while educating others about the complex history of the Dominican Republic,” she says.

As much as Pacheco gave to Rutgers, she received just as much from the university’s community. “I chose Rutgers University–Newark because of the diverse community of students and faculty,” she says. “Knowing that I could find people like me, as well as make new friends, really helped me feel welcomed and created an overall safe environment.”

Pacheco also chose Rutgers–Newark because of its prime location, Newark’s rich history, and the opportunity to get involved in a variety of student organizations. “I truly love exploring and learning new things,” she says.

As a recipient of the Gary Dornbush Accounting Scholarship, which is part of the Scarlet Promise Initiative, Pacheco enjoyed the chance to continue her education throughout the winter and summer sessions.

“This scholarship was also extremely helpful in allowing me to obtain resources, such as technology, that contributed to my success as a student,” Pacheco says. “This award allowed me to reach my goals and pursue my career confidently.”



Wahedul Mahedi ENG'24

Aerospace Engineering major, Rutgers University-New Brunswick

When Wahedul Mahedi decided to attend college and pursue an aerospace engineering degree, he began researching schools in his home state of New Jersey. At first, he set his sights on Rutgers simply because it was the only university in the state that offered that desired major. "But when I started to explore other reasons to choose Rutgers over other universities, I realized I fit in more and more with the atmosphere at Rutgers," Mahedi says.

Those inclinations proved correct. Since enrolling, Mahedi has fallen in love with the university.

"I saw some of the clubs available for students and I couldn't wait to get involved," he says. "But, most important, I chose Rutgers because I felt like I could

grow and find people with whom I could become lifelong friends."

Indeed, Mahedi says some of his best experiences at Rutgers are "being able to see other people who are just like me and being able to connect and enjoy the same things."

Fittingly, Mahedi is a member of RU Airborne, a group that designs and manufactures miniature airplanes that achieve a designated objective. Competing against similar clubs from other universities helps hone the team's designs and skills. "This club tests our engineering knowledge, lets us take the material we have learned in class and apply it to something practical, and lets us satisfy the drive to make and

build a project," Mahedi says. Not only do experiential learning opportunities such as RU Airborne cultivate strong friendships and build on classroom learning, but they also fuel Mahedi's career goals.

"My dream is to innovate aircraft propulsion and make it possible to make a cheap, clean-burning engine that will make air travel cheaper and cleaner," Mahedi says. "I want to see a world where electric is the future and flying to see your mother across the world is as easy as calling an Uber."

Mahedi's dreams are one step closer to reality thanks to the John R. Vander Veer Engineering Scholarship, a fund within the Scarlet Promise Initiative.

"This money helped me and my dad so much by taking a load off our back," Mahedi says. He is now free to pursue his major, form strong friendships, and concentrate on building the new Uber of aircraft.



Alice Stejskal SEBS'22

Nutritional Sciences major, Rutgers University–New Brunswick

Alice Stejskal was a nontraditional student. She earned a bachelor's degree in economics from New York University back in 2014, then worked at several New York City startups.

But a few years into her career, Stejskal decided her chosen field was not the best fit. "While I enjoyed parts of my work, I realized that I am far more passionate about health care and decided to go back to school to pursue a career in dietetics," she says.

Stejskal quickly set her sights on Rutgers. "I chose to attend Rutgers because of the excellent reputation of the nutrition program and the many opportunities available at such a large school," she says.

Attending Rutgers also made financial sense. "I put myself through school, so the affordability of an in-state school was also a draw, along with the ability to easily commute by train to New Brunswick," Stejskal says. The Charles E. Hess Endowed Scholarship, part of the Scarlet Promise Initiative, also helped make Rutgers financially accessible.

Changing careers and returning to school later in life can both be daunting prospects. But Stejskal embraced the learning curve.

"My experience in school was extremely rewarding," she says. "And as a career-changer I found myself much more dedicated to and passionate about my

studies. All of the nutrition faculty were excellent and supportive in helping me achieve my goals."

Caring faculty was one component of the comprehensive support Stejskal enjoyed at Rutgers. She says she is grateful for "spending time on the beautiful campus, the rigorous coursework, and the variety of extracurriculars ... which gave me a taste of what my career as a dietitian would look like in the future."





Vanessa Darkoa SAS'23

English major,
Rutgers University–New Brunswick

The Dagon and Patricia Garris Annual Scholarship eased the burden that tuition put on my family. It also served as a reminder that I am on the right path and that, despite the challenges that come with being a first-generation college student, there are always wonderful people who are rooting for my success.



Katie Eick SEBS'22

Animal Sciences major, Rutgers
University–New Brunswick

Because I paid for school by myself, receiving the Charles Messer Endowed Memorial Scholarship was beyond meaningful. It saved me from some of the stress and burden that surrounded paying term bills and student loans so I could focus on my classes.



Matthew Gregory RBS'22

Accounting and Finance major,
Rutgers University–Newark

The Gary Dornbush Accounting Scholarship eased a lot of pressure. I had been in a tough situation, and this felt like a gift from above.



Chris Makarus SAS'19, PHARM'23

PharmD, Rutgers Health

The Paul Stonehill Endowed Scholarship made such a big difference for me. This scholarship gave me peace of mind and helped me excel in my work, hobbies, and studies.



Taaliyah Melton CCAS'24

Psychology major, Rutgers University-Camden

Taaliyah Melton was born and raised in Camden, New Jersey. She describes her hometown as “a city where most people do not succeed or most don’t expect you to.” But Melton has always chosen to face obstacles head-on.

That attitude has taken her far in life—most recently, to Rutgers University-Camden, where she is enrolled in the psychology program.

“I persevere,” Melton says. “I will do whatever it takes to achieve my goals.”

She chose Rutgers-Camden for its excellent academic programs and because it is close to home.

“My academic goals include maintaining a minimum 3.5 GPA and receiving my bachelor’s degree,” Melton says. She is also considering enrollment in a Rutgers graduate program after completing her bachelor’s degree.

These goals are supported by the Joseph and Loretta Lopez Endowed Scholarship, part of the Scarlet Promise Initiative. The scholarship allows Melton to stay focused on her studies without concerns over looming financial pressures.

“This scholarship will allow me to continue attending college without worrying about financial burdens,” she says. “Also, I won’t have to worry

about paying loans in the future. This generous contribution is very much appreciated and will not go to waste.”





Shiv Patel RBS'25

Aspiring Business major,
Rutgers University–New Brunswick

The Rutgers University–New Brunswick Dean of Students Emergency Fund helped me tremendously when it came to getting food on a day-to-day basis. I wish to thank the donors as they helped me keep my family physically strong and healthy during this trying time in my life.



Jessica Maruca PHARM'22

PharmD, Rutgers Health

The Lawrence S. Fromkin Endowed Scholarship relieved some of my student debt, making my pursuit of an MBA in addition to a PharmD more affordable. This was a dream of mine, and it would not have been possible without this scholarship.



Brian Casey RLAW'24

Law Student,
Rutgers Law School

To members of the Class of 1973, who fund the Class of 1973 Camden Law Scholarship Fund, I want to share my sincerest “thank you” for helping me achieve my goals in the field of law.



Irene Lee PHARM'22

PharmD, Rutgers Health

Experiential learning is a staple of a Rutgers education. Irene Lee exemplifies the tremendous growth afforded by hands-on experiences in a student's chosen field.

The PharmD graduate at Rutgers University's Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy boasts a diverse skill set in various pharmacy settings including retail and research.

"So many opportunities are available inside and outside of the classroom, including the chance to collaborate interprofessionally," Lee says of her time at Rutgers.

Alongside faculty members, Lee has conducted research in oncology and COVID-19; presented

posters at multiple conferences; and tried her hand at drug safety research, medical affairs, and clinical trials contracts and proposals.

"I loved pursuing research as a student and hope to continue as an industry professional," she says. "Throughout my pharmacy education, I realized my passion for learning and drug development, especially in the oncology therapeutic area. I hope to become a pharmacist and contribute to evolving the oncology space."

Lee's graduate experiences were supported in part by the Martin G. and Marlene E. Daffner Endowed Scholarship, part of the Scarlet Promise Initiative. "It truly made a difference in my life," she says.

Lee paid it forward during her time on campus. She was heavily involved in student organizations and served in several leadership positions within the Student National Pharmaceutical Association, Alpha Omega Epsilon, and the pharmacy leadership society Phi Lambda Sigma.

One particularly memorable experience came in the form of volunteering at a health fair for the local New Brunswick community.

"It was great to interact with the local population," she says. "I could directly see the power we have as student pharmacists to improve public health. Since then, I have participated in and led many more outreach events."

As she looks to her future, Lee hopes to continue making a positive difference in her community. "My experiences in pharma have helped me find my place as a pharmacist to hold the industry to a higher standard and improve public health," she says.



Thank you again for making a difference in students' lives.

Your support is vital to the success of tens of thousands of tomorrow's leaders. Learn more about the Scarlet Promise Initiative and its progress by visiting **rutgersfoundation.org/scarletpromise**.

