



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

November 17, 2023

Re: FY25 Budget Planning and Review Recommendations

Dear Chairman Visconti and Members of the Board of Trustees,

I am writing to provide recommendations and key insights regarding the budget planning process for New Jersey City University (NJCU) for Fiscal Year 2025. As we embark on the development of our FY25 budget, it is crucial to align our financial strategy with our institution's mission and long-term objectives, while ensuring transparency, accountability, and shared governance.

The FY25 budget must continue the work of our successful short-term implementation of the recovery and revitalization plan by strategically addressing various essential areas, including structural operating deficit reduction, long-term debt defeasance, deferred maintenance, student success/retention investments, resource allocation for mission focus on economic mobility, community engagement, and the enculturation of a lifelong learner commitment. These recommendations will guide us in continuing to align our budget with the university's mission and long-term sustainability.

I emphasize the following recommendations for your consideration:

1. Strategic Alignment:

Ensure that the FY25 budget is in alignment with NJCU's mission, vision, and strategic priorities. Our budget should reflect our commitment to academic excellence, student success, and a supportive campus environment.

2. Stakeholder Engagement:

Incorporate robust stakeholder engagement in the budgeting process. Engage faculty, staff, students, and administrators in meaningful discussions and seek their input. This shared governance approach will lead to a more comprehensive and inclusive budget that considers diverse perspectives.

3. Transparency:

Promote transparency at all stages of budget development. Provide access to budget-related information, including revenues, expenditures, and financial decisions. Transparency will enhance trust and collaboration among all stakeholders.

4. Data-Driven Decision-Making:

Base budget decisions on solid data and evidence. Utilize historical financial data, enrollment trends, and performance metrics to inform budget allocations. This will ensure that our investments are strategic and effective.

- A. **Revenue Diversification:** Explore opportunities to diversify revenue streams. This includes expanding online education, increasing non-degree programs, and seeking partnerships for research and development projects. Revenue diversification will help reduce our reliance on tuition and state funding.
- B. **Budget Realignment with Mission:** Ensure that our budget allocations directly support our mission and strategic objectives. Investments in academic programs, faculty development, student support services, community engagement, and lifelong learner programs should all align with our commitment to economic mobility and community enrichment.

5. Fiscal Responsibility:

Maintain fiscal responsibility by ensuring that our budget is balanced, and resources are allocated efficiently. Regularly review and monitor budget performance to make necessary adjustments.

- A. **Structural Operating Deficit Reduction:** Enshrining the reduction of the structural operating deficit is of paramount importance. We must continue developing and implementing a comprehensive and sustainable plan to reduce this deficit, ensuring that our ongoing operational expenses are balanced by revenues. The University must routinely evaluate cost-saving measures, revenue enhancements, and efficiency improvements across the institution.
- B. **Long-Term Debt Defeasance:** Pursue the reduction and mitigation of the University's long-term debt obligations. Develop a clear strategy for debt defeasance, leveraging endowments, grants, or other sources, to alleviate the financial burden on the university.
- C. **Deferred Maintenance:** Prioritize investments in deferred maintenance to ensure our campus facilities meet the standards required for a conducive learning and working environment. Neglecting infrastructure and facilities not only impedes our academic mission but can also lead to increased costs in the long run.

6. Strategic Investments:

Prioritize investments in academic programs, faculty and staff development, student support services, research, and innovation. These strategic investments are essential for our long-term growth and reputation.

- A. **Student Success and Retention:** Invest in programs and initiatives that foster student success and retention. Allocate resources for academic advising, counseling services, career development, and other resources that contribute to improved student outcomes. Focus on data-driven strategies to identify at-risk students and provide timely interventions.
- B. **Mission Focus on Economic Mobility:** Reinforce our commitment to economic mobility. Develop programs and initiatives that ensure all students, regardless of their background, have access to the transformative power of higher education. Scholarships, work-study opportunities, and career-focused curricula are central to this mission.

- C. **Community Engagement:** Strengthen our engagement with the local and regional community. Collaborate with community organizations, businesses, and government agencies to create partnerships that benefit both the university and the community. Engaging with the community aligns with our mission and provides opportunities for experiential learning.
- D. **Lifelong Learner Enculturation:** Promote and enculturate a commitment to lifelong learning among students. Develop and expand lifelong learning programs, certificates, and resources that enable students to continue their education and skill development beyond their initial degree.
- E. **Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development:** Expand outreach to underrepresented groups in recruitment, including proactive engagement with professional organizations. Implement targeted advertising and job postings to reach diverse candidates. Offer incentives for employee referrals and successful recruitment of underrepresented candidates. Develop mentorship and professional development programs tailored to the needs of underrepresented faculty and staff. Support affinity groups and networks for faculty and staff to create a sense of belonging. Regularly assess and address workplace climate and concerns through surveys and open forums. Encourage continuous career development opportunities and pathways to leadership positions. Infuse diversity and inclusion principles into the university's strategic plan and mission. Foster an inclusive and culturally competent campus environment. Implement equity training for all employees to increase awareness and inclusivity. Support curriculum development that highlights diverse perspectives and experiences. Allocate budget resources for diversity recruitment and retention initiatives.

7. Contingency Planning:

Recognize the importance of contingency planning. In unpredictable financial landscapes, it is crucial to have contingency plans in place to address unexpected challenges or opportunities.

8. Tuition and Financial Aid:

Consider the balance between tuition increases and financial aid allocation. Ensure that the cost of education remains accessible and affordable while maintaining the quality of our programs.

9. Infrastructure and Technology:

Allocate funds for infrastructure improvements and educational technology enhancements. A modern and well-maintained campus, along with state-of-the-art technology, contributes to a positive learning environment.

10. Performance Metrics:

Establish clear performance metrics to evaluate the impact of budget decisions on student success and operational efficiency. Regularly assess and report on these metrics to track progress.

Maintain transparency in financial reporting. Communicate clearly with the university community and external stakeholders about our financial health, the progress in addressing the deficit, and the impact of investments on student success, economic mobility, and community engagement.

In conclusion, as we move forward with the FY25 budget planning process, it is paramount that we prioritize alignment with our strategic objectives, engagement with stakeholders, transparency, and data-driven decision-

making. NJCU's fiscal health is essential for our continued growth and success, and the Board of Trustees plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the budget serves the best interests of our institution and the community we serve.

I look forward to working closely with the Board of Trustees and all university stakeholders to create a budget that reflects our shared commitment to NJCU's mission and vision.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to the success of New Jersey City University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrés Acebo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

Andrés Acebo
Interim President
New Jersey City University

Cc: NJCU Senior Leadership
Dr. Fran Moran, University Senate President
Henry Amoroso, Fiscal Monitor



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Date: November 17, 2023
To: Chairman Visconti and Members of the Board of Trustees
From: Interim President Andrés Acebo
Re: FY25 Budget Planning Outline

Creating a budget for an academic institution like New Jersey City University (NJCU) for Fiscal Year 2025 is a complex task that requires careful consideration and collaboration between various stakeholders. In this draft budget plan, I'll emphasize the need for a Board of Trustees review and shared governance engagement, as these are critical aspects of the budgeting process in higher education.

I. Executive Summary:

- Introduction: Provide a brief overview of NJCU's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.
- Budget Goals: Outline the key objectives for the FY25 budget, focusing on financial sustainability, academic excellence, and student success.
- Budget Development Process: Explain the budget development process, including stakeholder engagement and timeline.

II. Revenue Projection:

- Tuition and Fees: Project tuition and fee revenues based on anticipated enrollment numbers and any planned tuition adjustments.
- State Funding: Detail expected state funding, considering historical allocations and any changes in state support.
- Private Donations: Include projected income from donations and endowments.
- Grants and Contracts: Highlight any significant grants or contracts anticipated for the fiscal year.
- Auxiliary Services: Revenue from housing, dining, and other auxiliary services.
- Other Sources: Miscellaneous sources like interest income, rental income, and bookstores.

III. Expense Allocation:

- Personnel Costs: Breakdown of salaries, benefits, and other compensation for faculty and staff.
- Academic Programs: Allocations for academic departments and programs.
- Student Support Services: Funding for student services, counseling, advising, and career development.
- Facilities Maintenance: Budget for maintenance and improvement of campus facilities.
- Technology Investments: Funding for technology infrastructure and educational technology.
- Administrative Costs: Budget for general administration, including HR, finance, and legal services.

- Scholarships and Financial Aid: Funding for scholarships and financial aid packages.
- Research and Innovation: Support for research activities and innovation initiatives.

IV. Budget Justifications:

- Enrollment Projections: Provide the rationale for enrollment projections and strategies for increasing or maintaining enrollment.
- Program Investments: Explain investments in academic programs and faculty development.
- Student Success Initiatives: Detail initiatives to enhance student support services and retention rates.
- Facilities Upgrades: Explain the need for campus improvements and the impact on the student experience.
- Technology Advancements: Describe technology investments and their benefits for teaching and learning.
- Scholarship Strategy: Explain the strategy for providing financial aid and scholarships to students.
- Research and Innovation: Highlight the role of research in advancing the institution's mission and reputation.

V. Board of Trustees Review:

- Presentation: Schedule a presentation to the Board of Trustees for an in-depth budget review.
- Engagement: Encourage trustees to provide input, ask questions, and offer insights.
- Transparency: Emphasize the importance of transparency and open communication in the budget process.

VI. Shared Governance Engagement:

- Faculty Involvement: Involve faculty representatives in the budget planning process, seeking their input and expertise.
- Staff Involvement: Engage staff members and their representatives to ensure their needs and concerns are considered.
- Student Involvement: Include student leaders in discussions about the budget and its impact on student life.
- Committees: Utilize existing shared governance committees or establish ad-hoc committees for budget discussions.

VII. Conclusion:

- Summarize the key points of the budget plan, including revenue projections, expense allocations, and the role of the Board of Trustees and shared governance in the process.
- Emphasize the alignment of the budget with NJCU's mission and strategic goals.

VIII. Appendices:

- Include detailed financial statements, enrollment data, and other supporting documents.
- Any additional information may be relevant for a comprehensive understanding of the budget.

Remember that the FY25 budget planning process should be an ongoing and collaborative effort involving various stakeholders to ensure that it aligns with NJCU's mission and strategic priorities while maintaining financial sustainability. Regular updates, revisions, and discussions will be crucial as the fiscal year progresses.



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Date: November 17, 2023
To: Chairman Visconti and Members of the Board of Trustees
From: Interim President Andrés Acebo
Re: FY25 Budget Planning Timeline

New Jersey City University (NJCU) FY25 Budget Planning Timeline¹

- I. Preparation Phase (Months November 2023-March 2024)
 - Month: November 2023 (Mid): Initiate budget planning committee formation, comprising representatives from various university units and stakeholders.
 - Month: March 2024 (beg): Distribute budget guidelines and templates to academic and administrative units. Encourage units to start developing preliminary budget requests.

- II. Data Collection and Assessment (Months October- November 2023)
 - Month: October 2023: Compile historical financial data, enrollment trends, and relevant performance metrics.
 - Month: November 2023 (beg): Analyze current financial challenges and opportunities. Identify key areas that require budget adjustments.

- III. Shared Governance Engagement (Months April 2024)
 - Month: February 2024 (end): Host a shared governance meeting to present initial budget data and gather input from faculty, staff, and student representatives.
 - Month: April 2024 (end): Facilitate forums for the NJCU community to voice budget-related concerns and suggestions. Encourage feedback through online platforms.

- IV. Budget Drafting (Months March-April (mid) 2024)
 - Month: March 2024 (end): Units submit their preliminary budget requests to the budget planning committee.
 - Month: March (end)-April (beginning) 2024: Review preliminary requests, assess alignment with strategic priorities, and develop a draft budget proposal.

¹ This reformed timeline emphasizes the inclusion of the Board of Trustees in key decision-making points and ensures that shared governance plays a central role throughout the FY25 budget planning and implementation process. Open communication and transparency are essential in maintaining alignment with NJCU's strategic goals and mission.

- V. Board of Trustees Strategic Review (Month: May 2024 (beginning - mid))
- Month: May 2024 (beginning): Present the draft budget proposal to the Board of Trustees for their initial review and feedback.
 - Month: May 2024 (mid): Schedule follow-up meetings with board members to address questions and recommendations. Adjust the budget proposal accordingly.
- VI. Refinement and Finalization (Months May 2024 (mid))
- Month: May (mid) 2024: Share the revised budget proposal with the campus community for feedback and address any concerns.
 - Month: June (mid) 2024: Finalize the FY25 budget, ensuring alignment with the university's strategic goals and mission.
- VII. Budget Review and Approval (Months June 2024)
- Month: June (mid) 2024: Present the finalized budget proposal to the Board of Trustees for their review and approval.
 - Month: June (end) 2024: Allow board members to ask questions, deliberate, and provide final approval for the FY25 budget.
- VIII. Implementation and Monitoring (Throughout FY25)
- Throughout FY25: Implement the approved budget, closely monitoring expenditures and revenue throughout the fiscal year.
 - Quarterly Reports: Provide quarterly budget updates to the Board of Trustees and the University Senate to ensure transparency and financial accountability.
- IX. Ongoing Shared Governance Engagement (Throughout FY25)
- Throughout FY25: Continue to engage faculty, staff, and students in budget-related discussions, keeping them informed about budget adjustments and progress.
 - Mid-FY25: Host a mid-year review with shared governance representatives to assess budget performance and address any necessary changes.