

Academic Affairs Spring Address

February 13, 2026



Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility

Transitions



Blessed by Strength in the Past and in the Future

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Continuing to Spread the WP Brand and Strength



David Fuentes

Dean, School of Education,
Stockton University (effective 4/6/26)

WP South? 😊



Ian Marshall

Dean, School of Arts & Humanities,
Stockton University (effective 7/1/22)

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

William Paterson University Mission Statement ***Adopted Nov. 17, 2023***

*William Paterson University as a proud diverse community, designated as a public Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution, creates transformative academic and extracurricular experiences leading to meaningful careers, and promotes **economic and social mobility**. We empower our students through intentional and holistic support systems within flexible, innovative, and inclusive environments. Our graduates will power the New Jersey economy and beyond, thriving professionally and personally through a commitment to community engagement and social justice.*

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

William Paterson University Branding & Identity Plan

May 16, 2022

Branding and Identity Statement: William Paterson University understands what students need to succeed and how to guide them to successful careers and lives. We have built an innovative and comprehensive system of support focused on academics, career development and campus life, customized to meet students' individual needs.



**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

The Economic and Social Benefits of Higher Education

For the Individual

For Society

Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility

A Look Back on the Purpose of a College Education Through the Lens of its Longest Running Survey:

The American College Freshman (1966 – today)

Percentage Rating "Very Important" as Reasons for Attending College: 1971 & 2024			
Category: Public Universities			
	1971	2024	Change
To get a better job.	74.6%	86.5%	11.9%
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas.	52.8%	72.5%	19.7%
To make me a more cultured person.	21.5%	45.0%	23.5%
To be able to make more money.	54.4%	79.1%	24.7%
To learn more about things that interest me.	65.6%	79.6%	14.0%
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school.	38.4%	68.7%	30.3%
To please my family.	20.2%	37.8%	17.6%
	1999	2024	Change
To get training for a specific career.	72.40%	78.6%	6.2%
Do you have concerns about your ability to pay for college?			
	1966	2024	Change
None	34.4%	29.8%	-4.6%
Some	57.3%	55.1%	-2.2%
Major	8.3%	15.1%	6.8%

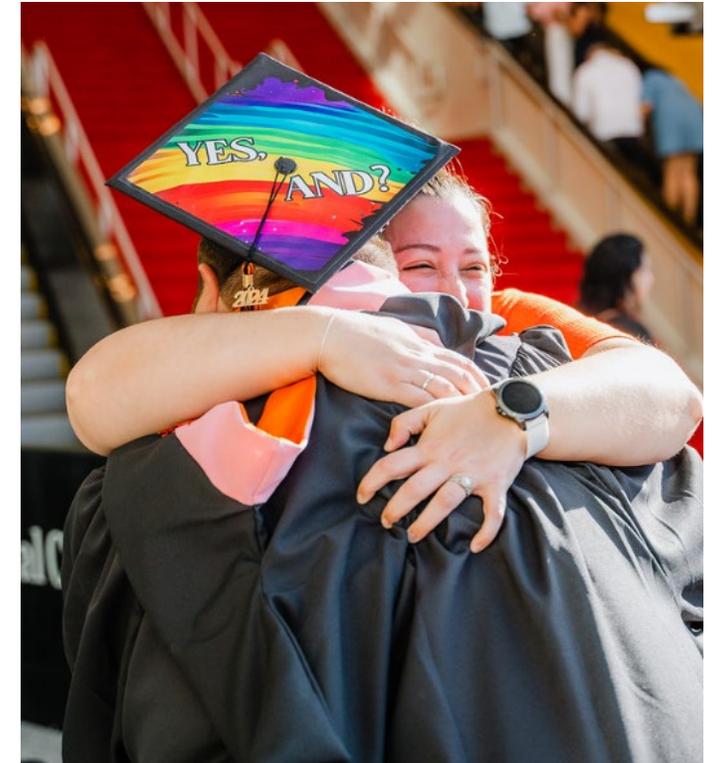
**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Reflections on How Courses, Curriculum, Partnerships, and Other Academic Affairs Initiatives have been Advancing Economic & Social Mobility for Students...

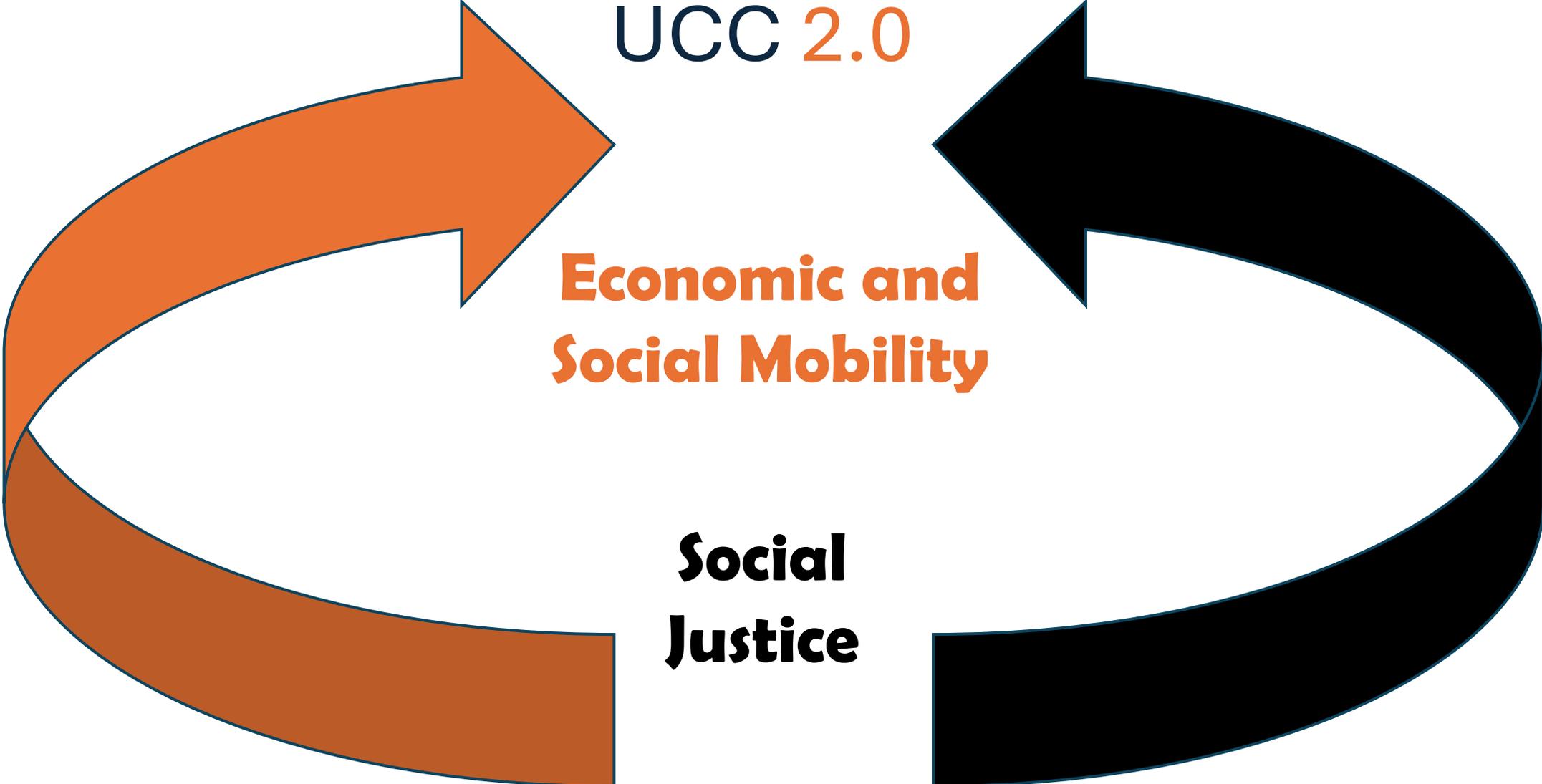


Jonathan Lincoln
Murli Natrajan
Kara Rabbitt
Johanna Prado

*... and Opportunities
Going Forward.*



**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**



UCC 2.0

**Economic and
Social Mobility**

**Social
Justice**

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

UCC 2.0 - LIFT AS YOU CLIMB



And so, lifting as we climb, onward
and upward we go, struggling and
striving, and hoping that the buds
and blossoms of our desires will
burst into glorious fruition ere long.

— *Mary Church Terrell* —

Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility

Employer-Demanded Skills for the 21st Century

	Area	Approved	In Review	
A	WELL-BEING	8	5	WI
B	WRITING	1	1	
C	QUANTITATIVE LITERACY	6	0	
D	CREATIVITY	8	0	
E	COMMUNICATION	7	2	
F	CRITICAL THINKING / PROBLEM SOLVING – ARTS, HUMANITIES	10	1	
G	CRITICAL THINKING / PROBLEM SOLVING – BEH & SOC SCIENCES	13	4	
H	CRITICAL THINKING / PROBLEM SOLVING – NATURAL SCIENCES	12	1	
I	DIGITAL LITERACIES	10	7	AI
J	DATA & ANALYSIS	2	8	TI

Social Justice Focus

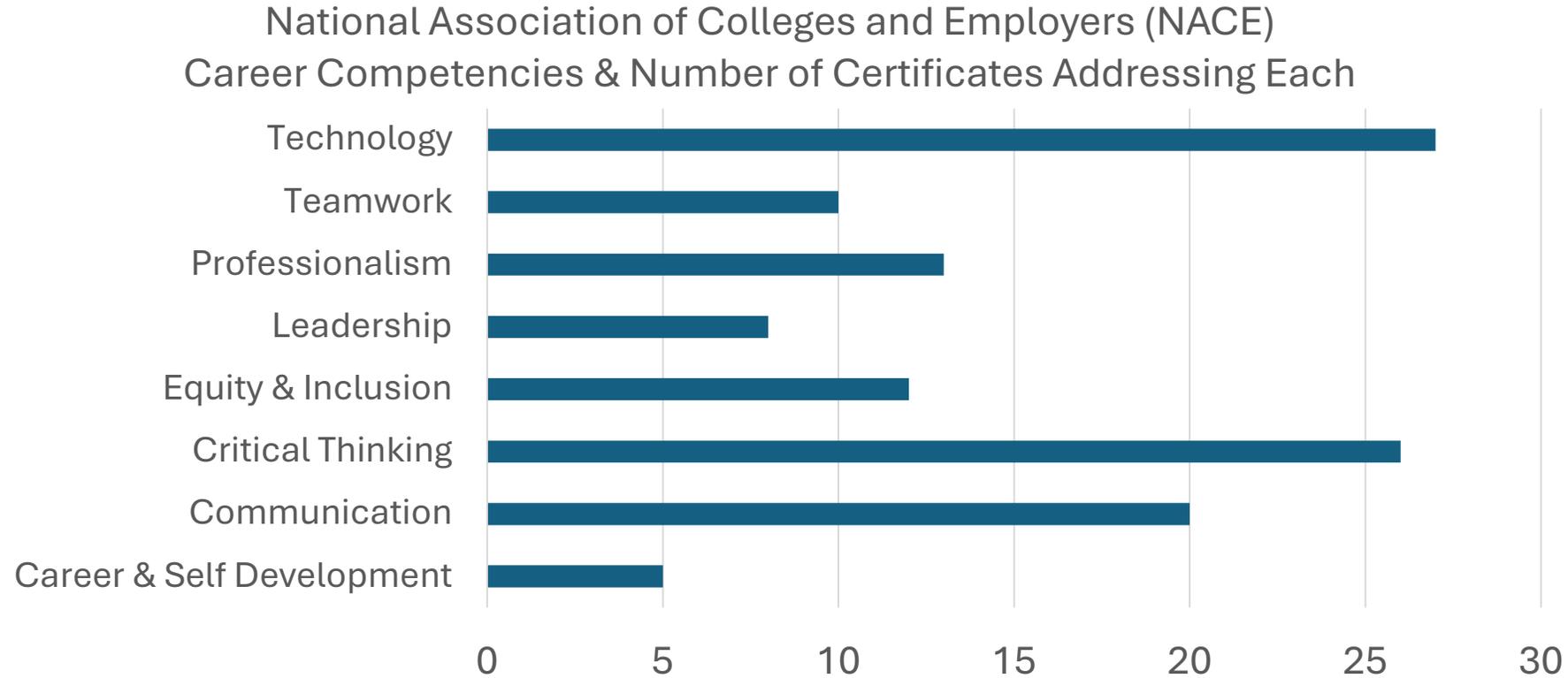
	Area	Approved	In Review	
K	IDENTITIES & INEQUALITIES	9	11	WI
L	GLOBAL CONNECTIVITIES	4	15	
M	DECOLONIZATION & JUSTICE	1	9	
N	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	3	15	WI

UCC 2.0 Support for Economic and Social Mobility

[Chris Salerno Speaking on AI and the UCC](#)

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Undergraduate Certificates and Career Preparation



50 Undergraduate Certificates Offered; Over 750 Digital Badges Awarded So Far

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Career Preparation Embedded in the Curriculum

Nearly 60% of students graduate with experiential learning required in their academic program; most commonly Student Teaching, Clinical Practice, Practica, For-Credit Internships, & UG Research.

How can we reach 100%?

Colleges and Departments continue to add career preparation experiences to their courses and programming

CCOB Professional Enrichment Program: college-wide, required each semester, non-credit “course”, delivered in collaboration with ***Career Development Center***:

Networking Events

Internships

Career Fairs

Resume Building

Job Simulations

Job Shadowing

Professional Development Workshops

[Student Perspective on the CCOB PE Program: Alexander Santos](#)

Career Preparation Embedded in the Curriculum

Assistance is available for faculty and departments to add career preparation in courses and majors.

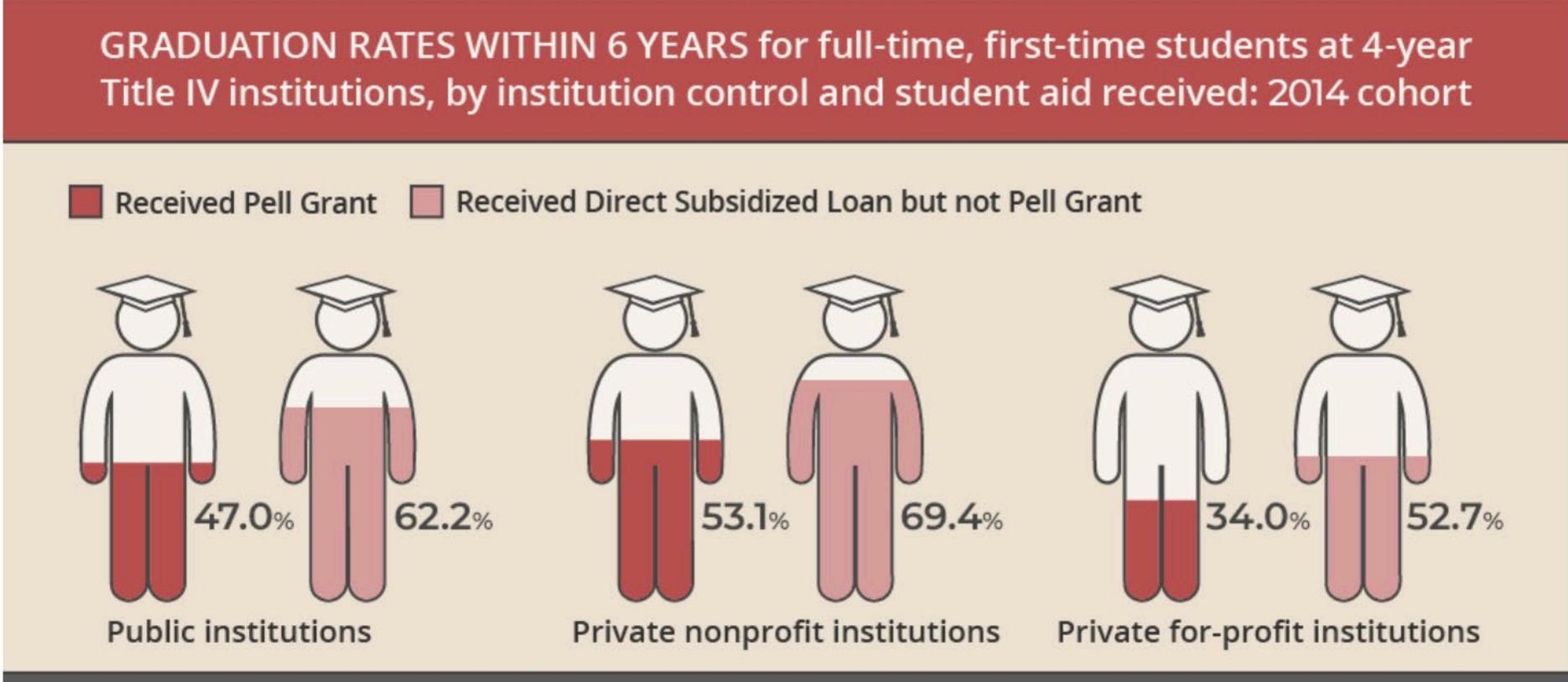
The ***Career Development Center*** can work with faculty to develop career preparation assignments and to provide career preparation programming.

They can help your students access job simulations and mini-internships or to find non-credit or for credit internships.

Experiential learning can now be added to the transcript as non-credit courses: EXPL 2001 and EXPL 3001

[Lucia McMahon speaking on faculty collaboration with the Career Development Center](#)

The other side of the story...



Source: IPEDS 2020-21 Winter surveys, Data Release Web tables, Graduation Rates component (provisional data), [Table](#)

Adult Learner Stories



Ismael Vargas-Reyes

(BS Management '25, MBA in progress)

"William Paterson gives me the flexibility to balance my job, my classes, and life. I run my own transportation company and am majoring in business management to grow my skills and expand my business. As a result of my internship last semester, and with help from the Pesce Family Mentoring Institute, I am now a recruiter for the New Jersey Department of Children and Families."

Barbee Edwards

(BA Community and Social Justice Studies '25, MPP in progress)



"I started school in Texas years ago, and moving to New Jersey gave me the chance to reenter college and finish my degree. I run a nonprofit in Houston for homeless youth, so I chose William Paterson's community development and social justice program. I already had the lived experience—now I have the education to back it up."

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Proud Alumni Giving Back



Diana Fonque
(BS Management '25,
MBA '26)

"Returning to school after nearly 30 years was daunting, but William Paterson made the process seamless. As a working single parent, flexibility was essential. WP accepted my previous credits and helped me secure additional credits through CPL, saving me time and money. WP has truly empowered me to achieve my goals on my terms."



Geovanni Molina
(BA Communication
Studies, '22)

"As the first person in my family to graduate from both high school and college, earning my degree represented a pivotal milestone. Less than two months after graduation, I was promoted to a senior role within my agency—clear evidence of the value of my degree and the support I received at William Paterson. This advancement has enabled me to purchase a home for my family and meaningfully improve our quality of life."

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Meeting the Needs of Our Changing Student Population



Growth in UG Adult Learners Enrollments (2021-2025):

62%

Growth in Graduate Adult Learner Enrollments (2021-2025):

55%

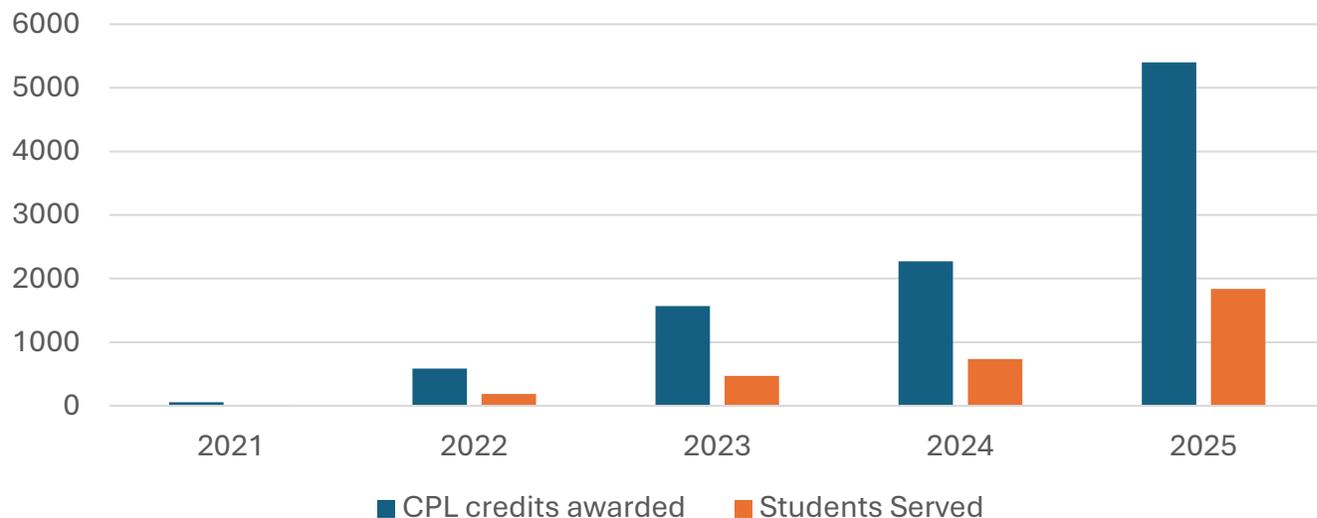
New **College of Adult & Professional Studies** (established 2024) supports adult learner success, credit for prior learning, online returning adults, and professional training and certificate programs

**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Credit for Prior Learning: a Competitive Advantage

Growth in Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) at WP:

- 100-fold growth in 5 years
 - 54 credits of CPL awarded in 2021
 - 5,401 credits of CPL awarded in 2025



What this means for students:

- Professional pathways (examples from 2025):
 - **27** students with Police Academy or Corrections training in Accelerated Professional CCJ programs
 - **16** students with current NJ realtor licenses
 - **13** licensed EMTs or Pharmacy Technicians

Understanding Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

CPL Process

- **Submission** of credentials to Degree Completion & Adult Learning unit (DCAL).
- **Vetting** by DCAL of credentials and outcomes.
- **Faculty Review** by department.
- **Outcome** determined by departmental review.

Credit for Prior Learning

Build upon your professional and academic experience to earn additional credits towards your degree.

Credit by Portfolio

Credit by Examination

Credit by Credentials

Credit by Transferring Courses

Credit by Military Training/Experience

Building Community & Belonging for Adult Learners

- Recruitment Adult learner Event in collaboration with Admissions
- Orientation for new incoming adult learners
- Online Synchronous evening workshops - (open to all students)
 - Career Development Events
 - Wellness Events
 - Library Sessions
 - Faculty Sessions
 - Peer-to-Peer Events
- Peer Career Learning Course (PCL 1010 and PLC 1020)
- Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society for Adult Learners



**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

Student Testimonial



**Advancing Economic
& Social Mobility**

CPL as a Competitive Advantage & Degree Support

Impact of CPL on Recruitment & Enrollment:

- Main Campus Adult learners using CPL: **21.95% YOY increase**
- WP Online Adult learners using CPL: **19.50% YOY increase**
- Adult Recruitment Events: **NJ adult learners are seeking and asking about CPL in selecting where to enroll**

Impact of CPL on Student Success:

- Transfer students YOY success rates (graduation/continuing enrollment): **13.5% increase for students who earn CPL**

