



Welcome

My name is Michael Avaltroni and I am honored to serve as president of Fairleigh Dickinson University. As a proud alumnus and parent of an FDU graduate, I know first-hand the impact of an FDU education. The University provides students a personal, global and transformational experience that opens doors, jumpstarts careers and alters destinies. Today, we're transforming the institution itself, forging a distinctive and innovative path that reimagines our campuses as intergenerational communities of learning, health and well-being. This newsletter highlights new developments at FDU and our vision for the future.



A New Vision

Colleges and universities nationwide face unprecedented challenges, from demographic declines to changing student needs and increased scrutiny about value. To succeed, universities must be distinctive and invest strategically in selected programs. Our vision focuses on key strengths, addresses critical workforce demands and reimagines our campuses to better connect with surrounding communities. The prime driver is [FDU HealthPath Forward](#), a strategic initiative creating new partnerships, fostering innovation, improving healthcare delivery and addressing workforce demands. We're building models of health and well-being on campus and beyond to meet tomorrow's challenges.



FDU Health

The University aims to lead in providing transformational opportunities aligned with critical workforce needs, emphasizing health sciences under [FDU Health](#), health-related fields and career-focused offerings. This past year, we collaborated with faculty to review and reorganize our programs and academic structure. The result charts a clear path forward that continues offering diverse programs while prioritizing key areas and strategically aligning programs and units. This reorganization positions us to better serve students and meet evolving healthcare workforce demands throughout our region and beyond.

Key Partnerships

FDU's Alliance with Rowan University

Through FDU HealthPath Forward, we're building partnerships providing crucial benefits for institutions and communities. We're honored to announce our [partnership with Rowan University](#), a leading public research institution in southern New Jersey. This public/private collaboration features initiatives expanding options for students and working professionals to gain healthcare training while advancing innovation in health and well-being. These include dual-degree programs, articulation agreements and accelerated pathways for students and current professionals. By combining our strengths, we're creating unprecedented opportunities while addressing critical healthcare workforce needs.

FDU Joins HealthCare Transformation Consortium

FDU became the [first non-healthcare member of the Healthcare Transformation Consortium](#) (HTC), a collaborative of New Jersey-based independent health systems sharing expertise to improve access to high-quality healthcare while reducing costs. By leveraging collective size, information sharing and best practices, member organizations offer employees and families enhanced healthcare choices while managing benefit costs. The HTC provides opportunities for clinical collaboration and innovation in healthcare delivery and training, positioning FDU to contribute meaningfully to healthcare transformation across our region and strengthen our commitment to health sciences education.

New Learning Opportunities

As technology continues to play a greater role in our lives, we are investing heavily in providing our students with the latest training and tools to help them succeed. In late spring, we held ribbon-cutting ceremonies for two new high-tech labs: the [Dennis Turpan Research and Development Lab for Cutting-Edge Technologies and Disciplines](#) (on the Metropolitan Campus) and the [FDU Health Connected Care & Innovation Lab](#) (at the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences building near the Florham Campus). We are thankful for the support of private donors and BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), which made these projects possible. In addition, the University over the summer received \$753,000 from the state of New Jersey to create an [Acute Care Simulation Clinic](#) at the Metropolitan Campus to address healthcare workforce shortages and improve patient safety and outcomes. We are also grateful for the public support from the state.





The Human Element in a Tech-Driven World

In Fall 2025, FDU launched the [Humanics Innovation Challenge](#) to integrate human and machine learning in healthcare. The challenge was made possible by a \$200,000 seed gift from digital health advocate Stephen K. Klasko, MD, MBA. Announced in November at the Future of Health summit, the Humanics Innovation Challenge will fund initiatives including a Humanics Hub composed of a Healthcare Humanity Lab, a Culture-Tech Collision Studio, a Creative Disruption Incubator, and a Storytelling Data Lab. Inspired by Klasko's gift, others have joined the challenge, and the University has raised another \$300,000 for this effort. A major focus for FDU, humanics will become an interdisciplinary academic thread woven through programs. The challenge explores how to blend innovation with human literacy, particularly in healthcare education and delivery. We are committed to developing new and compelling ways to integrate empathy, agility, cultural competence, creativity and critical thinking into the curriculum and professional practice. In a world where machines can process information faster than humans, our competitive advantage lies in our ability to connect, create and care. This campaign invests in that fundamentally human future.



In The Field

FDU prides itself on providing students experiential learning that provide professional training and a competitive advantage in the workforce. Through internships, research and clinical rotations, students get hands-on opportunities to make a difference. [Read about a few of our extraordinary students](#) who recently ventured out of the classroom and into the real world.



Honoring President Frank Mertz

Finally, I want to close by paying tribute to one of the most inspiring advocates for higher education in New Jersey history. Frank Mertz was the University's fifth president, serving from 1990 to 1999. His leadership and vision not only propelled FDU through a very challenging period but set the foundation for the milestones we are enjoying now. He stayed close to FDU and his scholarship support and mentorship empowered hundreds of students to reach great heights. He was also active in New Jersey as an advocate for higher education and was well known for his insights and influence throughout the sector. Frank passed away earlier this year and we will miss him terribly but his spirit and his influence — through the many lives he touched — will live on forever. [His legacy is forever a part of FDU.](#)

I invite everyone to stay informed about the latest University news and highlights by regularly checking our website (www.fdu.edu) and social media channels (links available on our home page). You can also stay connected with me on social media! Follow me at Michael Avaltroni on [LinkedIn](#).



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