RUTGERS BUSINESS SCHOOL

REPORT

Fall 2025

FEATURE:

INTEGRATING AI INTO THE CLASSROOM







MESSAGE FROM DEAN LEI LEI

In the Fall 2025 issue of the *Rutgers Business School Impact Report*, our cover story explores the disruptive power of Generative AI in the classroom. By making AI tools easily accessible and integrating knowledge about the technology and its use in industry into its coursework, Rutgers Business School (RBS) is ensuring that students are job-ready in a changing world.



In our "Ideas" section, we feature research

from Professor Junchao Li, who shows that simple actions can foster a sense of humility in executives that lead to employee empowerment, and Distinguished Professor Farok Contractor tackles misrepresentations about international trade through the case of Apple's iPhone.

Read about real estate professor Morris Davis, who was appointed to the Council of Economic Advisers for the president of the United States, and Distinguished Professor Jaideep Vaidya, who was inducted into the prestigious American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering College of Fellows.

We highlight the student winners of our Experiential Learning Showcase and our graduate students who won first place in a national supply chain case competition. We have stories about an Army Ranger veteran in our Executive MBA program, a marketing major who turned her internship into a full-time job offer at Goldman Sachs, a "Road to Consulting" student's journey to Deloitte, and much more.

RBS is like a family, and through the generosity of our alumni and corporate partners, you can read about a new initiative that seeks to help our students graduate on time and the positive impact that can have on their lives.

We showcase the inaugural class of under-30 alumni award recipients who have achieved extraordinary success at a young age. The "Rising Business Stars (RBS) Under 30" program is an annual event that recognizes accomplished young alumni.

Finally, we highlight some significant rankings of our programs, from LinkedIn ranking our Full-Time MBA program No. 5 in the world for job placement, to *Poets&Quants* ranking RBS the No. 1 public MBA (Full-Time MBA) in the Northeast U.S., to *U.S. News & World Report* recognizing our online business master's programs as No. 8 overall in the U.S. (non-MBA programs).

I hope you enjoy these stories and more inside our 14th edition of the *RBS Impact Report*. These stories continue to showcase the power of a public business education at Rutgers.

Lei Lei

Resilient Resourceful Responsible

Reinventing for the digital era.

features







RISING BUSINESS STARS UNDER 30

in this issue



ON THE COVER **Future proofing 101:**

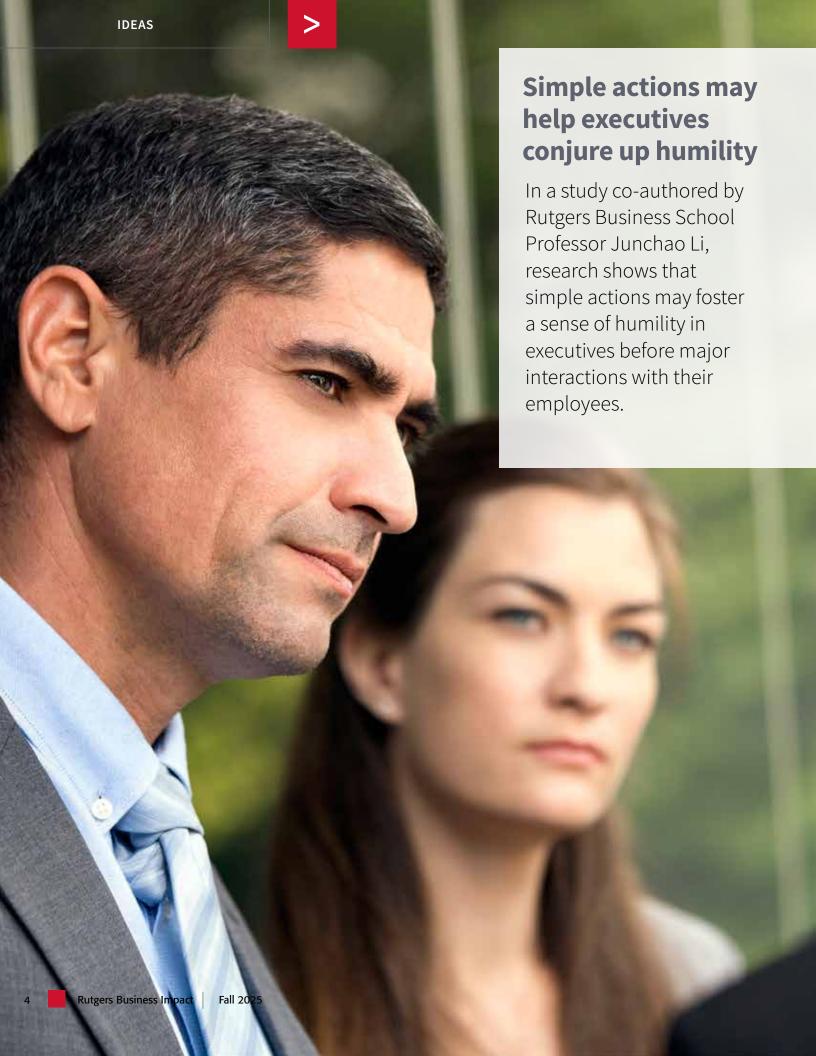
Rutgers Business School is innovating its coursework to ensure that students are skilled in using Generative AI when they enter the work world.

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FALL ISSUE 2025: The Rutgers Business School Impact Report is produced by Daniel J. Stoll, Susan Todd and Sean Ireland of the Communications & Marketing team.

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Business leaders who are able to demonstrate humility may be more effective at empowering employees and improving their organizations, according to research by a group of academics, including a Rutgers Business School professor of management.

While previous research has described the benefits of leader humility, Professor Junchao "Jason" Li, who teaches management skills at Rutgers Business School, said little is known about fostering humility in leaders.

The new research published last year in Organization Science showed that simple actions might be enough to provide stimulus to foster leader humility, especially if they occur at critical times, for instance, before a key team meeting or at the start of a decisionmaking process.

Li worked on the research with four other academics to determine if thinking about family members, friends, or others the leader cares about deeply would make them more willing to connect with others, feel more secure, and trigger more humble leadership behavior

The researchers invited 97 leaders and 194 of their followers to participate in a daily study across 10 days. Each morning, a leader would be randomly assigned to either write about a loved one or an acquaintance of theirs or some beloved objects. After that, leaders would indicate how they feel. At the end of the day, followers rated the humility the leader demonstrated that day.

Li said there are practical implications of the study's findings: Leaders can be trained to remind themselves to reflect on relationships with their significant others before important moments where leader humility is needed (for example, important meetings where leaders need to listen more and be open to negative feedback). Organizations can also encourage leaders and employees to place personal items (such as pictures and souvenirs) related to their significant others in their workspaces.

"The sight of these items can be a natural stimulus for activating one's relationship schema with their significant others," Li said.





Humble leaders are those who have less of an ego and are willing to recognize their weaknesses and the contributions of others.

"As a result, employees will experience greater warmth, security, and in turn, greater humility toward their coworkers and subordinates."

Li said his interest in the research stemmed from his research focus on employee voice or willingness to communicate ideas, suggestions and concerns to supervisors seeking to change the status quo.

"Given the increasing competition and pressure for innovation, organizations are increasingly relying on the perspective and feedback of employees to identify problems that hinder performance and improvement," Li said.

However, candid communication isn't always welcomed by supervisors who view suggestions as a challenge to their authority and want to protect their egos more than they want to do what's best for their team or organization.

"Humble leaders are those who have less of an ego and are willing to recognize their weaknesses and the contribution of others,"

The study is believed to be the first research to show that leader humility can be contextually fostered by simple interventions.

"While previous research has demonstrated the benefits of leader humility, it has mostly been considered as an individual personality trait," Li explained. "The work of fostering humility in organizations falls to recruiting people with a humbler personality, or leaders and employees need to go through systematic trainings that take time to fundamentally change their mindset and orientations."

Li worked on the study with four other academics: Lin Wang, professor, Sun Yat-sen University; Bradley Owens, professor, Brigham Young University; Lihua Shi, assistant professor, Guangzhou University; and Mo Wang, professor, University of Florida.

Misrepresentations about international trade: The case of Apple's iPhone

Many misconceptions about international trade and globalization have circulated for years, and "trade wars" have been launched on the basis of misunderstandings of the nature of international business patterns.

In the minds of the public glued to social media, Apple Inc. is sometimes accused of being a major contributor to the trade deficit "suffered" by the U.S. "against" China. Looking only at the U.S.-China trade balance, the iPhone alone – just one product – appears to create a sobering trade deficit of some \$33 billion.

However, this is misleading and can cause incorrect policy decisions, because relatively little of the value of the iPhone is added in China, and the bulk of its value is added in the U.S.

Apple is responsible for far more jobs in the U.S. (80,000 as direct employees such as researchers, designers, managers and marketers, plus an additional 450,000 jobs in the distribution of Apple products, and an estimated additional 1.5 million as independent media developers and brokers) than abroad.

While it is true that the final assembly and shipment of iPhones occur in China, from a "value added" calculation, the iPhone is an overwhelmingly American product, and China contributes little to its content.

The iPhone is an excellent illustration of the nature of global supply chains with components sourced from as many as 13 to 15 nations, each specializing in a particular component, according to comparative advantage theory.

The basis of international supply chains and offshoring is a disaggregation of a product's value chain (e.g., from R&D to production to marketing to after-sales services) and a dispersal of various pieces of the value chain over different nations according to each country's comparative advantage.

This specialization (by component or service) in each country puts a technological marvel in the hands of customers at a reasonable price. If all components and assembly of, say, the iPhone 16 were sourced domestically in the U.S., the final estimated price would likely rise from the current average of \$1,100 to \$3,500. So, are Americans "suffering" from a trade deficit, or as consumers, are they "enjoying" the benefits?

Is an iPhone a product or a service?

Increasingly, what we call "manufacturing" has embedded in the product intermediate services that may often constitute the majority of a so-called "product's" value. For example, the cost of the raw material content in an iPhone may be less than \$6. The global transportation cost and labor content for each iPhone (components and finished product) may comprise another \$150 at most.

Yet the phone sells for some \$1,100, because the bulk of an iPhone's value is not in matter but in thought – in intangibles and intermediate services such as R&D, design, supply chain orchestration, management, marketing, and some profits to shareholders in Apple Inc. and its supplier companies – most of which occurs in the U.S. Real and substantial value is not in matter, but in thought.

Hence, only looking at import/export data can be very misleading.



The real strength of U.S. companies is in their R&D, which is a long-term job creator.

Bilateral trade statistics (especially those between the U.S. and China) can mislead politicians and the public into believing that the U.S.' participation in international trade is somehow dangerous. Many are misled into thinking that such deficits are detrimental to manufacturing and jobs in the U.S.

Globalization and offshoring do not always mean loss of U.S. jobs. At least in the Apple example, the majority of jobs are in the U.S.

This is the nature of modern, advanced economies, with the majority of work



RBS Innovation: Integrating AI into the classroom

As artificial intelligence continues to emerge in industry and change work processes, Rutgers Business School is innovating its coursework with the technology to ensure students are prepared for the future.

When it partnered with Google last year to provide Al-powered tools to students, faculty and staff, Rutgers Business School also announced a broad directive to integrate Al into curriculum across the areas of study.

The focus on AI included the creation of an MBA concentration in AI, a Master of Science in Marketing Analytics and Insights, and the new Master of Accountancy in Accounting and Analytics, which offers a specialization in AI.

"Every student who graduates will have knowledge of AI for business," said Professor Hussein Issa, who was instrumental in integrating AI into the RBS academic experience. "That was the main motivation."

The moves by Rutgers Business School leaders have gotten some notice. In the spring, RBS was listed – along with Wharton, Harvard and MIT – as a top MBA Program for AI by MBA Crystal Ball.

Lei Lei, Rutgers Business School's dean, said it is imperative for students to learn how to use emerging technologies that are changing work and the way we do business. "Our ambition is to prepare graduates with the skills and talent most in demand by industry," Lei said.

"At RBS, we describe that preparation as future proofing."

A group of Rutgers professors provided a glimpse of how generative Al is being integrated in their classes to foster critical thinking and to teach everything from demand forecasting to negotiating.

Practicing Negotiation

Management professor Zeki Pagda introduced generative AI into his Management Consulting class after reading about how the U.S. government uses it to help employees improve their negotiating skills.

Pagda can select from dozens of scenarios – movie producer and movie director is just one example -- and then assign ChatGPT a role to play. His undergraduate students are able to practice the negotiating skills he's teaching them.



"Every student who graduates will have knowledge of AI for business," said Professor Hussein Issa, who was instrumental in integrating AI into the RBS academic experience. "That was the main motivation."

The student speaks to ChatGPT in the roleplaying exercise, and ChatGPT responds in writing. "ChatGPT can play a role. It can ask a question and negotiate," Pagda said.

That's what his students used to do: role-play with one another.

Partnering them with AI is better, Pagda explained, because ChatGPT can respond with feedback, and the student can try again. Practice is essential in learning negotiation. With AI, the feedback is more meaningful than another classmate, who is also learning negotiation skills, he said.

Pagda is able to create different scenarios, giving students an opportunity to practice the different negotiating styles. ChatGPT provides feedback based on the student's words and tone. "It's able to challenge the students," he said.

Analyzing Demand

Supply chain professor Rudolph Leuschner started using ChatGPT in his graduate-level demand management classes more than a year ago.

He incorporated an assignment into his curriculum that requires students to feed AI their forecasts using the different methods he has taught them. The students ask AI to analyze the forecasts, allowing the large learning model to look for patterns. While the students are permitted to use AI to analyze the forecasts, they are required to critique the information generated by the AI.

"I don't want them to rely on AI tools, but I want them to be familiar with how to use them to make their output better," Leuschner said.

Leuschner said students were excited to use Al when it was novel, but now they're more familiar with it. He still provides them with specific guidance on how he wants them to use it.

"There's a level of scrutiny," Leuschner said.

"People aren't really sure what to make of it or where its place is."

He feels a responsibility to teach students when and how it's appropriate to use the technology to make them more efficient in their work.

Putting AI to use, and checking its work

Students in Erich Toncre's Marketing Strategy course use AI as part of an assignment that requires them to find an article about a marketing strategy. He gives them latitude to choose a business they're interested in – giants like Apple and Amazon are excluded – and then they must critique the strategy described in the article.

"The critique itself must be their own," Toncre said. "They're graded on their understanding of the marketing strategy and the depth of their understanding."

"We want students to spend less time on busy work and more time on the area of critical thinking," he said.

Toncre said he is as transparent as he can be, spelling out on his course syllabus what his expectations are about the use of AI by his students.

The marketing strategy assignment allows them to use AI as a tool. "If they use AI as a shortcut, they're using it wrong. They're cheating themselves," he said.

In another class, he has allowed his students to use AI to create PowerPoint presentations. What they're graded on, though, is their command of the material – "what they say and how they say it," Toncre said.





Rutgers Business School real estate professor appointed to the Council of Economic Advisers to the president

Professor Morris Davis will be advising the president on policies that can help lead to lower housing costs and increased housing supply.

Rutgers Business School finance and economics professor Morris Davis was appointed to the White House Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) as the nation's chief housing economist.

As the Paul V. Profeta Chair of Real Estate and academic director of the Center for Real Estate at Rutgers Business School since 2014,

Davis has been educating students, conducting research that has both academic and industry relevance, and exchanging ideas at high-impact events and conferences. In his role at the CEA, Morris will be advising the president on policies that can help lead to lower housing costs and increased housing supply.

"We are ecstatic to have a talent like Professor Davis join us at the White House Council of Economic Advisers," said CEA Chairman Steve Miran in a statement to Rutgers. "Morris will play a pivotal role as we work to build more homes and make housing affordable again for American families, helping to usher in President Trump's economic Golden Age."

As an economist, Davis will provide advice to the president on policies that will allow more housing units to be built and reduce regulations that restrict supply and drive up costs. "It's an honor to be asked to serve our country," said Davis. "My goal is to help the president make housing affordable for everyone."



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Morris is a proven leader with innovative ideas that can positively affect real estate productivity and public policy."

Dean Lei Lei, Rutgers Business School

With its strategic location in New Jersey, Rutgers Business School is deeply involved in research projects that have the potential to improve business practices everywhere. "Anything that is good for New Jersey is good for the United States and the world," Davis said.

Established by Congress in 1946, the CEA has approximately 45 members who are charged with providing empirical research to support the president in setting the nation's economic policy. Davis's appointment runs through December 2025.

By Daniel J. Stoll

American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering names professor to its prestigious College of Fellows

Professor Jaideep Vaidya has significantly contributed to research and practice through innovative privacy-protecting analytics and machine learning technologies.

Vaidya, a distinguished professor at Rutgers Business School, was inducted into the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) College of Fellows.

The institute's College of Fellows comprises more than 2,000 outstanding biomedical and biological engineers in academia, industry, and government.

In an announcement about the 2025 inductees, AIMBE said membership in the College of Fellows honors those who have made outstanding contributions to engineering and medicine research, practice or education and to the pioneering of new and developing fields of technology and those making significant advancements in traditional fields of medical and biological engineering or developing/implementing innovative approaches to bioengineering education.

Professor Vaidya teaches computer information systems at Rutgers Business School and leads the Rutgers Institute for Data Science, Learning, and Applications. He was nominated and elected by current members of the College of Fellows for his significant contributions to research and practice through innovative privacy-protecting analytics and machine learning technologies.



I am dedicated to fostering an environment that nurtures innovation and translates scientific advancements into real-world health solutions."

Professor Jaideep Vaidya

Vaidya described AIMBE as unique because it is more than an honorific society. "It's an organization of leaders who give back by engaging in, and contributing as, ambassadors for the fields of medical and biological engineering," he said.



"Being inducted as a Fellow of AIMBE is really significant for me since it is not just a profound honor but also represents a responsibility to leverage my expertise and insights to influence policies, standards, and research directions that benefit society at large and address complex healthcare challenges," Vaidya said.

"As a fellow, I am dedicated to fostering an environment that nurtures innovation and translates scientific advancements into real-world health solutions, contributing to AIMBE's vision of improving lives through medical and biological engineering."

The American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. It represents the most accomplished individuals in medical and biological engineering. AIMBE's mission is to provide leadership and advocacy in medical and biological engineering for the benefit of society.

AIMBE fellows represent more than 30 countries and are employed in academia, industry, clinical practice, and government. They are among the most distinguished medical and biological engineers, including four Nobel Prize laureates and 27 Presidential Medal of Science and/or Technology and Innovation awardees. Additionally, 233 Fellows have been inducted into the National Academy of Engineering, 120 inducted into the National Academy of Medicine, and 51 inducted into the National Academy of Sciences.







RUTGERS BUSINESS SCHOOL FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CUMULATIVE EFFORT OF INCREASING BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

Mason Ameri (MGB) published "How to improve the hiring process for disabled candidates" and "The stigma disabled people face during negotiations" in the Harvard Business Review.

Alok Baveja (SCM) published "Improved Sample-Complexity Bounds in Stochastic Optimization" in Operations Research.

Azi Ben-Rephael (F&E) published "Uncovering the Hidden Effort Problem" in the Journal of Finance.

Soohyun Cho (AIS) published "Predicting Material Misstatements Using Machine Learning" in The Accounting Review.

Morris Davis (F&E) published "The Effect of Capital Gains Taxes on Business Creation and Employment: The Case of Opportunity Zones" in Management Science.

Jonathan Eckstein (MSIS) published "Projective Hedging Algorithms for Multistage Stochastic Programming, Supporting Distributed and Asynchronous Implementation" in Operations Research.

Tony He (MGB) published "Low Profile, High Impact: How the Visibility of Political Agents Shapes Corporate Political Influence" in the Strategic Management Journal.

Sungjin Kim (Marketing) published "Are We Worse Off After Policy Repeals? Evidence from Two Green Policies" in the Journal of Marketing Research.

Zhengzi (Sophia) Li (F&E) published "Automated Volatility Forecasting" in Management Science.

Junchao (Jason) Li (MGB) published "Gender and Social Venture Fundraising: A Mission Drift Perspective" in Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes and "The Power of Conversation: Analyzing the Impact of Starter Response on Backer Accumulation in Crowdfunding" in Information Systems Research.

Thomas Lidbetter (MSIS) published "Search for an Immobile Hider on a Binary Tree with Unreliable Locational Information" in Operations Research.

Lian Qi (SCM) published "Coopetition in Platform-Based Retailing: On the Platform's Entry" in Management Science.

Miklos Vasarhelyi (AIS) published "Predicting Material Misstatements Using Machine Learning" in The Accounting Review.

Danielle Warren (MGB) published "Hypocrites! Social media reactions and stakeholder backlash to conflicting CSR information" in the Journal of Business Ethics.

Zhaodong (Ken) Zhong (F&E) published "Market Liquidity in a Natural Experiment: Evidence from CDS Standard Coupons" in the Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis.

FACULTY EDITORS-IN-CHIEF AS OF 2025

Michael Barnett, Management & Global Business

Academy of Management Perspectives

Endre Boros, Management Science & Information Systems

Annals of Operations Research Discrete Applied Mathematics

Ajai Gaur, Management & Global Business

Journal of World Business

Michael N. Katehakis, Management **Science & Information Systems**

WSEAS Transactions on Business and Fconomics

Cheng-Few Lee, Finance & Economics

Review of Pacific Basin Financial Markets and Policies

Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting

Chuan Liao, Finance & Economics

Emerging Markets Review

Jaideep Vaidya, Finance & Economics

ACM Transactions on Internet Technology

Miklos Vasarhelyi, Accounting & **Information Systems**

International Journal of Digital Accounting Research

Sengun Yeniyurt, Marketing

Rutgers Business Review



Rutgers Business School hosted the 12th Annual International Conference on Information Technology and Quantitative Management (ITQM) on Aug. 15-17. The theme this year was "Merging Artificial Intelligence and Business Applications." The ITQM Conference brought together more than 300 scholars from around the world, both online and in person, connecting business, engineering, and technology.

New research about technology's use in decision-making and problem-solving is focus of conference

A group of business and engineering school deans spoke about integrating Generative AI into their programs during a special discussion at the International Conference on Information Technology and Quantitative Management.

ITQM, as it is known for short, is an annual showcase of leading research and thought leadership in the field of information technology and quantitative management. The panel discussion shifted the focus, briefly, to education at the start of the three-day conference.

Rutgers Business School Dean Lei Lei organized the panel as a way of showing how educators around the world are working to ensure that students understand and can put the new technology to use.

"What Rutgers and other colleges teach students today must reflect the use of powerful, versatile technologies like Artificial Intelligence by business," Lei said. "The knowledge is crucial for them to be successful as employees, innovators and leaders in the future."

Panelists in the "AI Impact on Business and Engineering Education" were Alberto Cuitiño, Rutgers School of Engineering; Ananth Iyer, School of Management, SUNY, Buffalo; Gert-Jan de Vreede, dean, School of Business, Stevens Institute of Technology; James Tien, former dean, College of Engineering, University of Miami; Nitin Upadhyay, dean, Indian Institute of Management, Jammu, India; and Xiaobo Xu, executive dean, College of Industry-Entrepreneurs, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University.



"What Rutgers and other colleges teach students today must reflect the use of powerful, versatile technologies like Artificial Intelligence by business."

Dean Lei Lei

"The issue of AI is at the top of the agenda for the entire university," Cuitiño said. "I don't think that's particularly different than what's happening at other schools." Like other speakers on the panel, Cuitiño described developing new curriculum that addresses different aspects of using AI, including ethics and its specific application to engineering.

In keynote speeches, three leading researchers in the field discussed their recent work on such ideas as applying deep learning in treatments for oncology and glaucoma (Mohamed Abdel-Mottaleb), using AI to help calculate risk when a third criterion, like ESGs, is part of the equation (Richard Steuer), and using cognitive AI in conflict resolution (Luis Vargas).

A series of workshops – some presented by Rutgers Business School faculty – focused on practical applications of technology in industry, from marketing to accounting.





Seventy-one students on 32 teams participated in the Experiential Learning Showcase, detailing how they applied their classroom learning to real-world problems and opportunities. The competition also required them to reflect on what they gained through their hands-on experiences.

Two members of the social entrepreneurship student organization Enactus won the first prize of \$8,000 at Rutgers Business School's Experiential Learning Showcase for effectively detailing how lessons in management and finance enabled them to expand a nascent hydroponic farming venture.

With a blend of passion and poise, Rithik Kapadia, a senior majoring in accounting, and Léo Moreno, a junior studying finance, emerged as the top winners in a tight, final round of six teams vying for \$20,000 in prize money.

They are part of a team of students who have helped Enactus's Agoraponic Farms address food insecurity at Rutgers and the New Brunswick area, using hydroponic systems – a soilless farming technique that requires little space – to grow \$4,000 worth of produce last year. Their produce is distributed through

partnerships with a campus café and a student basic needs center.

The judges awarded the \$7,000 second prize to a team of finance students – Malik Vazquez, Issa Jadallah and Jose Jimenez Gratereaux – members of the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA) at Rutgers Business School-Newark. They created a student-managed investment fund to provide scholarships to ALPFA members.

After receiving the most votes from spectators at the event, the ALPFA Fund team also won the Rutgers Choice Award.

Senior accounting student Kevin Cheung won the third prize of \$5,000 after detailing how he led members of Beta Alpha Psi last year in a volunteer effort to prepare tax returns for lowincome New Brunswick residents.



Allan Peprah, Haniyah Mahmood and Aiden De Meulder present during the final round of the Experiential Learning Showcase.



Finance student Léo Moreno (left) listens as Rithik Kayadia, a senior majoring in accounting, discusses Agoraponic Farms, a venture they helped grow.



Rutgers MBA alumna Daniela Koumides, who helped to judge the competition, listens as team members discuss their experiential learning project during the first-round session.



Rutgers Business School deans and staff pose with the three judges and students who made up the six finalist teams. In all, 71 students from across Rutgers Business School's two campuses – a mix of undergraduate and graduate – competed in the inaugural event. The entries they detailed to judges and spectators ranged from business ventures and co-op experiences to services the students performed using knowledge from their studies.

The Experiential Learning Showcase was intended to offer students a platform to demonstrate the essence of experiential learning – how they have applied the knowledge and skills learned in classes to real-world business problems or opportunities. It went further though, asking them to describe the impact of their efforts and to reflect on the personal and professional growth they gained as a result.

Professor Mason Ameri, executive director of experiential learning, who organized the event, described experiential learning as part of the DNA at Rutgers Business School – evident in every discipline, course and co-curricular activity. "We're showcasing something that happens every day inside the business school," Ameri said.

Michael Ilcyn, a JP Morgan Chase executive and one of three judges, uttered one word as he began to announce the winners and the impact of their projects. "Wow!" he said.

The judges were struck by the potential impact of the winning projects, he said, as well as the maturity and skill of the students. "You've done a tremendous job for where you are in your career journey," he said. In addition to Ilcyn, Daniela Koumides, a Rutgers MBA alumna employed at Cigna, and Alan Olegario, an account director at Microsoft and Rutgers engineering alumnus, served as judges.

Ameri said the showcase is a first step in highlighting the broad experiential learning footprint within Rutgers Business School. "We deployed the event to celebrate the outstanding work of our students, but just as importantly, to spotlight a foundational component of experiential learning that is often unobserved: reflection," he said.

Each team was required to create a poster board explaining their project, its impact, which classes were applied to the project and what they gained through the experience. During the first round, the three judges went to each poster, individually listening to the students, asking questions and offering feedback. After the first round, the judges narrowed the field to six finalists.

By Susan Todd

The finalists were required to do a pitch-style presentation detailing their experiential learning experience, the knowledge they applied and what they gained from their efforts



Finance students Jose Jimenez, Malik Vazquez and Issa Jadallah were awarded second place for creating a student-managed investment fund to provide scholarships to ALPFA members.



Senior accounting student Kevin Cheung, who won the third-place prize, stands with Rutgers Business School Dean Lei Lei (center left) and two vice deans, Shen Yeniyurt and Yaw Mensah.



Experiential learning is part of the DNA at Rutgers Business School – evident in every discipline, course and co-curricular activity. "We're showcasing something that happens every day inside the business school."

Professor Mason Ameri, executive director of experiential learning

Graduate students win first place in TCU supply chain case competition



Analysis, creativity, and presentation skills propelled the students to win one of the premier case competitions that attracts students from around the world.

Four Rutgers Business School graduate students won Texas Christian University's Supply Chain Case Competition after spending 24 hours developing a strategy for distributing a new Frito-Lay snack during the 2026 World Cup.

The Rutgers team – made up of Full-Time MBAs Badri Venkatanathan, Pilar Grullón, Suman Venkat, and specialty master's student Mansi Sheth – bested five teams to advance to the final round, where they won the \$14,000 first prize. The competition attracted 20 student teams, including one from Germany.

"We went through a lot of different emotions, from holding our heads in our hands to extreme joy when we won," Venkat said days after the competition. A win at TCU had also eluded Rutgers for six years. "It made everything so much sweeter," Grullón said.

Case competitions are popular among business school students because they allow them to demonstrate what they've learned in classes to solve a real-world problem, network and add a colorful talking point to their resumes.

The TCU case focused on supply chain, requiring the teams to forecast demand for an untested new product, address production capacity and develop a strategy for keeping vendors supplied with the new snack. They also had to consider how launching a new product might impact demand for existing Frito-Lay snacks.

The Rutgers students said they received the case at 7 a.m. after arriving in Texas the previous afternoon. They spread out across a large classroom with their laptops and multiple whiteboards and started crunching numbers and brainstorming ideas.

They were eight hours into the case when Venkatanathan strolled quietly across the room, carrying his laptop. The numbers weren't making sense in their forecasting models. "We're going down the wrong path," he told the others. It was a moment the students remembered as part of their "trauma bonding."



Graduate students Badri Venkatanathan, Pilar Grullón, Suman Venkat and Mansi Sheth after their first-place win in Texas.

"We had to recalibrate everything," said Venkatanathan, whom the other students recognized as the team leader because he had the most experience doing case competitions. They erased the whiteboards and started over.

As they went through the case again, Grullón and Sheth discovered something that helped the team pivot successfully – and ultimately helped them to win the competition. All the calculations, they realized, had to be based on snack-size products, not family-sized and not a mix of both. "It was the linchpin," Venkatanathan said.

Professor David Dreyfus, who assembled the team and served as advisor, videotaped the team's first round. When they learned they would advance to the final round, the Rutgers students studied the video to refine their presentation.

Dreyfus said the team received accolades throughout the competition for its analysis, creativity, presentation skills and how it acknowledged the brand. "This competition is one of the premier graduate-level supply chain management case competitions in the nation," Dreyfus said. "Our students competed and won against the best. I'm thrilled about their success and the recognition they have received."



Army Ranger veteran excels as Executive MBA student

After challenges as a boy and on the battlefield, a resilient James Knuppenburg is differentiating himself again as he pursues an Executive MBA at Rutgers.

James Knuppenburg's path to Rutgers Business School's Executive MBA Program is a testament to his grit and ambition. The hedge fund account manager, entrepreneur and decorated Army veteran has overcome challenges few could imagine.

At age 3, he and his five sisters and brothers were placed in the New York foster care system when their parents were imprisoned for drug and prostitution convictions. He and one brother lived in a foster home with seven other children until a couple adopted Knuppenburg three years later.

He lettered in football, basketball and soccer at a central New York high school, but his academic performance fell short. Failing to get into a Division 1 or 2 university, Knuppenburg enrolled in community college, but dropped out and took a job loading merchandise onto trucks. After a year, he headed to the local Army recruitment office.

"I felt I needed more, that I could do so much more," he said. He told recruiters he wanted to serve on the front line in special operations. Knuppenburg handily passed the fitness test given on the spot and was en route to basic training three weeks later.

Knuppenburg joined the Army Rangers, an elite unit specializing in close-range combat. He deployed five times to Afghanistan with the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. Between deployments, he trained as a paramedic and took courses in leadership and



EMBA James Knuppenburg (center) with his fiancée Mindy Valenti and their dogs, Rosie (far left) and Marley (right), an Anatolian Shepherd rescued from Afghanistan.



parachuting. "Being a Ranger is competitive, and to get the promotions, you must differentiate yourself," he explained.

In 2010, during his fourth deployment as an infantry team leader, a sniper's bullet tore through his chest and severely damaged his right arm. He underwent the first of 12 surgeries in Kandahar before being flown, in an induced coma, to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center outside Washington, D.C.

After the grueling, nearly 2½-year recovery, Knuppenburg reenlisted in 2012. With intensive physical rehabilitation and training to care for K-9s used in missions, he served as vet tech/kennel master for his fifth and final deployment in 2014.

The Purple Heart recipient received an Army medical retirement in 2017 and began the next phase of life. The nonprofit, Lead the Way Fund, helped him apply to Columbia University, where he studied financial economics.

He landed a job at J.P. Morgan in 2021 as an account manager servicing hedge funds and institutional investors. Again, as in the Army, Knuppenburg looked for ways to differentiate himself. He applied for a spot in the Rutgers Executive MBA program for 2025, but Professor Farrokh Langdana, the program director, accepted him early, making him part of the September 2024 cohort.

"The [Army] Rangers are the best of the best, so that drew my attention," Langdana said. He noted that the Rutgers EMBA program is military-friendly and typically has four or five veterans per cohort. "These are people with inherent leadership skills, who think quickly on their feet and can make decisions independently, and James epitomizes that," Langdana said.

Knuppenburg said the camaraderie of the program energizes him. "You're collaborating with very sophisticated people who want more and are willing to give up their time to get more, and that makes you want to do the same," he said. "I feel like I'm in a place I belong."

By Margaret McHugh

International student's determination leads to early success in MBA program

Barbie Tyagi said the Rutgers MBA curriculum aligned seamlessly with her aspirations.

The Rutgers Full-Time MBA Program brought Barbie Tyagi to the U.S. for the first time, and she was nervous attending a student networking event at the start of her first semester.

"I was thrilled yet anxious, knowing that the culture here is so different from what I was used to in India," Tyagi said. "But any unease quickly faded away. The people here make you feel so welcomed that I soon realized the shell I once had was no longer there."

Tyagi earned her undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Delhi. She was working halfway across the world in Gurugram, India, as a senior risk analyst at Genpact when a conversation with her manager made Tyagi realize her next step should be pursuing an MBA. An uncle had graduated from Rutgers and praised the university's strong curriculum and programs. As Tyagi researched Rutgers and its MBA program, she discovered it was a perfect fit.

"Everything just clicked for me—I knew this was exactly where I wanted to be," said Tyagi, who will complete the MBA program next year.



Embrace the unknown; take advantage of the resources the school has to offer."

Tyagi secured a summer internship at Dell, thanks to Rutgers. She attended an information session with Dell and then applied for the internship. When she landed an interview, Tyagi sought advice and coaching from the Office of Career Management. Dean R. Vera, assistant dean and director of the MBA Office of Career Management, had a one-on-one session with Tyagi to identify what she lacked so she could be ready for questions. A Rutgers MBA student who had the same internship last year also provided advice.

"The resources bridged the gap between where I stand and where I started," Tyagi said. "Having someone who could pinpoint where you lack was important. Without these resources and guidance, you operate blindly."



Barbie Tyagi had a successful summer internship at Dell.

Vera said Tyagi is among the top MBAs in the Class of 2026.

"She was determined to secure a summer internship offer with Dell, and she did so by having a mock interview with me and preparing for the case question using one of our resources," Vera said. "Dell's interview process is one of the most difficult at Rutgers, and Barbie brought her A game."

Tyagi hopes the summer internship will be a stepping-stone to a fulltime job at Dell.

Now that she is immersed in the MBA program, Tyagi offers this advice to international students considering Rutgers Business School: "Embrace the unknown. Coming to a new country can be intimidating," she said, "but take full advantage of the resources the school has to offer."



Road to Consulting helped senior shine during internships and then land full-time

job offer at Deloitte

Laura Estilo gained work experience and leadership skills, she also strived to empower her peers to achieve success of their own.

Solving problems is second nature for Rutgers Business School-New Brunswick senior Laura Estilo. As a co-director of Road to Consulting (RTC), Estilo helps her peers overcome challenges to breaking into the competitive consulting field. "My responsibility is to support students in meaningful ways," she said.

Estilo joined the RTC leadership team in her junior year, organizing workshops and case competitions and mentoring students. Recognizing how difficult it can be for students to connect with industry professionals, she and a former RTC co-director hosted a workshop last fall on networking strategies. They created a tracker to help peers organize their outreach. She is one of four co-directors for the 2024-2025 academic year.

RTC Director Zeki Pagda described Estilo as organized and driven. "She's on top of everything. I call her boss," said Pagda, an assistant professor of professional practice in management and global business.

Estilo, who is double-majoring in marketing and business analytics and information technology (BAIT), is something of a poster child for RTC. She landed three summer internships with Deloitte and has accepted a full-time position with the consulting firm after graduation. "I know I'll use the lessons and skills I've gained from the program in my career," she said.

Launched in 2021, RTC is designed as a pipeline to management consulting careers in big-name companies, including Accenture, Deloitte, PwC, Boston Consulting Group, KPMG, and EY. The program has grown from a first-year cohort of 30 students to 50 in its fourth year. The job placement rate for the first two cohorts exceeds 90%, according to Pagda.

Estilo had already secured an internship through Deloitte's Discovery Internship program for the summer after her freshman year when she learned about RTC.



Laura Estilo majored in marketing and business analytics and information technology (BAIT).

Eager to be part of its second cohort, she embraced the mentoring, networking, resume workshops, mock interviews, and case competitions it offered. "I felt confident it would push and inspire me," she said.

Estilo said RTC's mandatory management consulting class, taught by Pagda, "pushes students out of their comfort zones" and makes them think on their feet. "That's essential for navigating the fast-paced and ambiguous consulting environment," she said.

Pagda agreed. "With consulting, you learn by experience," he said. "It's very interpersonal." This year, he began teaching the course online and in person in New Brunswick so that Newark students would not have to commute.

During her internship at Deloitte Consulting last summer, Estilo had the opportunity to make a presentation to a client in the technology, media and telecommunications industry about a software tool to help the client decide whether or not to adopt it. The experience underscored her growing skills and confidence.

In her final year at RBS, Estilo is working to elevate RTC and make Rutgers a top choice for consulting firms. "My goal is to make a lasting impact," she said. "What I'm most proud of is being able to give back to the Rutgers community."

By Margaret McHugh



Student's internship at Goldman Sachs leads to full-time job offer

Knowing the value of internships, Rutgers Business School senior Neha Bhat took to heart her professors' advice to be active on LinkedIn. The Office of Career Management also helped Bhat polish her resume and prepare for interviews.

Soon after graduation, Neha Bhat will start a job as a Global Marketing New Analyst for Goldman Sachs, a position she was offered as a result of an internship with the company last summer.

"I've always had a passion for marketing, and I admire its ability to connect with people locally and globally. I knew that marketing is required in every industry, and something that drew me to the world of finance is the work ethic and ambition that people have," said Bhat.

"Goldman Sachs has so many people who are so talented and passionate about the industry that they work in. Whatever they do, they are one of the best in the industry, so I wanted to grow and get that experience working with people like that," she said.

When Bhat had to choose a major, she wanted to combine marketing, business analytics and psychology. She enrolled at Rutgers Business School partly because of its diverse range of classes and the ability to have a minor outside the school.

I did not want to do just one path," Bhat said. "I thought that a well-rounded education is essential, especially in business, to be able to process different points of view."

Bhat said her psychology classes taught her the "why" behind people's decisions, which can help her excel in a marketing career. "I think that creativity and the ability to think outside the box are valued in any industry, especially marketing," she said.

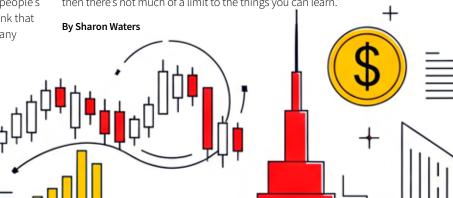


One of the reasons Neha Bhat chose Rutgers Business School was its diverse range of classes.

"Rutgers is known to have such a strong network and alumni base on a global scale. Wherever you go, if you say Rutgers, they know the school, people, and culture. That was very important for me," said Bhat. She also noted that the professors come from many different backgrounds and can offer real-life experiences from their time working in industry.

Knowing the high value of internships, Bhat took to heart her professors' advice to be active on LinkedIn. Rutgers Business School's Office of Career Management also helped Bhat polish her resume and prepare for interviews. The mix led to Bhat landing a summer internship at Bristol Myers Squibb in 2023 as a business operations and strategy intern. The following summer, Bhat used the same skills and savvy to secure a summer analyst internship at Goldman Sachs, a global investment bank. The internship at Goldman Sachs led to the full-time job offer.

"Especially when it comes to a big school like Rutgers, there are endless opportunities to better yourself and access resources that can help us, whether with our career preparation or classroom assistance," Bhat said. "I love that the only limit is the amount of effort you put into things. If you are willing to ask for help and if you're willing to seek out the resources, then there's not much of a limit to the things you can learn."



A top student savored campus experiences like Road to Wall Street and the Honors Living-Learning Community

Goodness Ifesanya navigated his way through college with a purposeful grace, pursuing opportunities, taking on responsibilities, and learning the importance of community.

He studied finance and economic development with the passion of someone hoping to put his knowledge to use to end disparity in health care and housing, and even more ambitiously, to develop ways of improving the performance of economies in developing countries.

While maintaining a near 4.0 grade point average, he served as chief financial officer for Rutgers University Newark's student government and secured internships at Grant Thornton and Bank of America. As a freshman, he co-founded a new student organization and played a key role in his team's first-place win in a case competition.

"Every single experience I've had here has challenged me to become not only a better person, but a person who is capable of handling more and more difficult things," Ifesanya said, months before he was scheduled to graduate from Rutgers Business School (RBS) and leave the Honors Living-Learning Community where he has lived for four years.

From a young age, Ifesanya loved learning about investing and the stock market, so it seemed natural that he chose to study finance. "It seemed to be the most direct corollary to the things I wanted to research and work on," he said.

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You know that saying, pressure makes diamonds. I enjoyed taking on responsibilities that I thought would be good challenges."

Goodness Ifesanya

That interest in finance also led him to apply to Road to Wall Street (RTWS), the most established of RBS's Road to Success programs. RTWS offers mentorships, industry knowledge and career preparation to selected sophomores.

Leveraging what he learned in the program, Ifesanya landed a summer internship as a financial analyst at Grant Thornton after his sophomore year. The recruiter was impressed with his valuation and discounting rates knowledge, which Ifesanya learned through RTWS.



Goodness Ifesanya has loved learning about investing and the stock market since a young age.

His involvement in RTWS also made him realize that some of the most meaningful opportunities on campus aren't known to all students. If esanya was one of five students from Newark in his RTWS cohort of 60.

Ifesanya said New Brunswick students knew about RTWS in high school, which was one reason they attended RBS. Newark students told him they would have applied to RTWS if they knew about it. Realizing communication about opportunities was different on the two campuses. Ifesanya and his classmate, Chinonso Anyanwu, formed a student organization that could fill the void by providing information and nurturing incoming and first-year students.

It's difficult for Ifesanya to pinpoint one thing that impacted him most during college, but he zeros in on community, the sweeping collection of influences and experiences Rutgers offered him.

The IDEA Office enriched him by providing a scholarship to visit Singapore and Vietnam through a Rutgers-organized Global Experience Initiative. He also received scholarships throughout his time at college from the MSD Scholars Initiative, the EY Accelerator Program and FISERV.

Being chosen for the Honors Living-Learning Community meant a full scholarship for housing and exposure to students focused on political and social understanding. It was space that allowed him to think deeply about his interest in the economies of developing countries.



Rutgers Business Impact

Fall 2025

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Rutgers Business School launches initiative to help students graduate on time

A pilot program, funded by alumni and corporate partners, aims to help students reduce the time they spend working so they can stay on track to graduate in four years.

Brittany Rodriguez has regularly sacrificed sleep and "friend time" to keep up with her classes at Rutgers Business School, maintain her grades, and spend at least 20 hours a week working to help pay for school.

After transferring into Rutgers from Union County College, she took five classes her first semester to get on track to graduate in two years. She juggled her class work around an administrative job in a dentist's office and part-time work as a tutor. "It became a little overwhelming," Rodriguez said.

A pilot program of Rutgers Business School's On-Time Graduation Initiative is easing some pressure on her this semester. Rodriguez is one of 10 students at Rutgers Business School-Newark who received a \$1,800 scholarship so they could reduce the number of hours they are working around college classes. The scholarships were created through alumni giving and donations from corporate friends of the business school.

"We created the On-Time Graduation Initiative to provide well-performing students with some relief from the burden of working one or two jobs while they're trying to finish college and prepare for a career," said Lei Lei, the dean of Rutgers Business School.

According to information from the undergraduate office, only about half of the students attending Rutgers Business School in Newark are graduating in four years. And Rutgers Business School-Newark isn't alone. Across the country, public research universities show high rates of delayed graduations. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the University of Maryland, the University of Texas-San Antonio and Temple University have 4-year graduation rates that average around 40 percent.

Alumnus Frank Palumbo was quick to become a supporter of the pilot. Palumbo worked part-time on afternoons and weekends as an undergraduate but said he knew others had a more difficult juggle. He remembered one classmate who worked all night and came straight to class afterward.

"As a Rutgers – Newark alumnus, it is a privilege to be part of empowering students to graduate on time," he said. "This allows them to focus on their education and personal growth and paves the way for their future success."

Rutgers Business School leaders will review the results of the pilot. The plan is to launch the initiative on a larger scale and expand to help working students attending Rutgers Business School-New Brunswick.

Rutgers University alumnus Keith Banks, a long-time champion of the business school, and his wife have backed the initiative. "When I learned about students taking six years to graduate due to their need to work, I was inspired to get involved," said Banks, former vice chair at Bank of America. "The goal is to ensure that all motivated students have the ability to graduate on time, irrespective of their financial circumstances."

Joanna Mulford, a managing director and senior portfolio manager at PGIM Real Estate who sits on the dean's advisory board, praised the On-Time Graduation Initiative. Her company is supporting the pilot.

"I have seen first-hand the positive impact this support has had on students and their ability to work fewer hours while pursuing their degrees," she said.

Dean Lei said the results of the pilot will be measured to provide justification for continuing the scholarships.



Rutgers Business School - Newark students

High school students visit campus for business school experience

Rutgers University
Business for Youth, a
program run by Rutgers
Business School
students, brings high
schoolers onto campus
to get a taste of college
and a sense of the
opportunities available at
the business school.

Three hundred students from seven New Jersey high schools kicked off a new academic year for the Rutgers University Business for Youth (RUBY) program with a day of activities at Rutgers Business School-New Brunswick.

More than 30 Rutgers Business School students volunteered to help deliver a meaningful experience to the high school students. The three RUBY co-presidents, Omkar Iyer, Class of 2026, Siya Batra, Class of 2025, and Isha Parikh, Class of 2026, led the day-long program.

"It was exciting to kick off the RUBY academic year, especially seeing how much the program has grown," said Batra.



"When I first joined RUBY, there were only eight of us, and now we have so many more students involved. We started the year by hosting a meeting where all the mentors could connect, and now we're planning a game night event to build those relationships even more."

"It's amazing," she said, "to see our mentors bonding and getting ready to give back to high school students."

During their visit to campus in January, the high schoolers were introduced to the different topics they could study at the business school and learned some basic financial concepts. They also toured the RBS-New Brunswick building and went through the first steps to prepare for a business plan competition.

The RUBY Program aims to provide high schoolers with the awareness, information, guidance, motivation, and culture necessary to be adept in business and social environments.

By providing them with experiential learning, RUBY supplements the teachings from their high school business classes and prepares them for college.

During a series of campus visits, the students attend classes (including college preparation lessons) and interact with current college students, often leading to mentoring relationships. They have opportunities to visit nearby corporate offices and work on developing soft skills through team building and presentations. The program also encourages the involvement of parents to help develop a "culture" of high performance.

Ankita Kodali, who graduated from Rutgers Business School in 2021, worked to revive the RUBY program in 2020, after it had remained dormant for years. She worked closely with Ron Richter, who teaches finance at Rutgers Business School.

"In a nutshell, RUBY is a program that helps high school students get a jump on their career exploration," said Professor Richter. "RUBY also allows our RBS students to practice leadership, team building and presentation skills. It has been a joy working with our RBS and high school students."



Ron Richter, a professor of professional practice in finance, addresses a group of 300 high schoolers participating in the Rutgers University Business for Youth program. Also in the crowd are 30 Rutgers Business School students who help to run the program and mentor the high school participants.



Some love stories only get sweeter with time

Take the one about Jim and Maya Colitsas, two Rutgers Business School alumni who trace the start of their love story back to the night they turned up at the same party.

Their dating turned into a romance that led to marriage and unfolded into a decades-long life together, with careers and children and an enduring sense of nostalgia for the university where they met and fell in love.

Nearly 30 years after they started dating, the couple named a bench near the statue of Willie the Silent on Voorhees Mall in the heart of the College Avenue Campus. It's a spot where students gather on spring days, spread out blankets and throw frisbees. It's an area where students and visitors alike pass year-round on their way across the campus.

The bench is a tribute to their education and the role Rutgers played in their lives. On the metal bench, a small plaque reads: "May this bench inspire new beginnings and enduring bonds."

"We wanted everyone to know that's where our love story started, and we wanted to inspire other people to have not just love stories, but a story, at Rutgers," Maya Colitsas explained.

Maya Shoikhet met Jim Colitsas in Frelinghuysen Hall in her sophomore year when she was helping a friend move into the dormitory. He was a preceptor, greeting new residents.



Jim and Maya Colitsas in Voorhees Mall near the bench they named to memorialize the role Rutgers University played in their lives.



Jim and Maya Colitsas sit on the bench they named at Voorhees Mall on the Rutgers University Campus.

Months later, they met again outside the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity house. They consider that February night as the beginning of their courtship.

Meanwhile, Jim continued his studies in history, political science and economics. He wanted to be a teacher. As his graduation approached in 1996, a professor advised him to pursue an MBA in Professional Accounting. While he worked on his master's, Maya graduated from Rutgers Business School with a degree in finance.

Maya spent a brief time in banking before she returned to Rutgers parttime to earn a master's degree from the Graduate School of Education. Their career plans flipped: She became a teacher. Jim went into the business world, working initially for EY and then joining his father's accounting practice near Princeton.

Their two children are young adults now. Their son works for a tech startup in New York City, and their daughter is a pre-law student at West Point. "We're at the next stage of our lives," Maya said. "It's a little strange."

They have supported Rutgers for years, giving to both the university and Rutgers Business School. One of the areas to which they have consistently directed their giving is a fund established to assist students who experience financial hardship and are in jeopardy of leaving college.

"I believe in education," Jim said. "I believe it's important for people who want to change their situation."

The bench was a more personal act to memorialize their time at Rutgers. "It's a place to go and to sit," Maya said. "When we're long gone, I hope our kids will sit on that bench and remember that everything started here."

Scholarship recognizes professor's work to teach, guide students

Fred Hoffman isn't an educator whose teaching is defined by a syllabus, and much of what he teaches doesn't come from a textbook.

His lessons and lectures contain insights from his career in the fixed-income marketplace. His finance classes at Rutgers Business School are enriched by guest speakers who bring the industry to life with real-world experience and perspectives, and he regularly demonstrates his networking abilities to students not only by the roster of visitors to his class but by the professional connections that help his students secure internships and jobs.

Hoffman's impact became clear last year when Amy Wierenga, a friend from his days on Wall Street, and her husband, Luiz Felipe Perez-Costa, started a scholarship in Hoffman's name as a tribute to his teaching. The scholarship will be awarded to Rutgers Business School students who encounter financial difficulties that jeopardize their ability to graduate.

Within less than two months, the original funding target of \$60,000 for the scholarship was reached, and then quickly surpassed, largely due to donations from alumni from Hoffman's classes. The scholarship fund has now reached more than \$100,000.

> Fred Hoffman teaches **Rutgers Business School** students about fixed income markets, using the insights of someone who has spent years working in the industry.



Fred Hoffman, professor of professional practice in finance.

"He is someone who impacts students daily," said Wierenga, who Hoffman recruited to serve on the Rutgers Business School's Road to Wall Street Program advisory board. While she is no longer on the board, she continues to mentor students in the program, many of whom are taught by Hoffman.

"The thing I think is really special are the relationships he forms with his students," Wierenga said.

Real estate center celebrates scholarship donors and recipients

The Center for Real Estate recently hosted its fifth annual scholarship celebration at the Rutgers Club in Piscataway. Fifty students who received awards ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000 over the past two semesters were honored.

The Center for Real Estate has awarded over \$2,100,000 in scholarships since its inception in 2014.

Donors of the scholarships, which include members of the center's executive committee, advisory board, and leaders' council, comprised the other half of the guest list. Several students were awarded named scholarships donated by Glenn and Mary Rufrano/ICSC, and the Kokes family.



Michael Kokes, donor of the Kokes Family Scholarship and one of the most generous donors, said, "Being able to meet and speak with the scholarship recipients provides me much hope about the future of our industry."

Lei Lei, the dean of Rutgers Business School, was among the guests who had a chance to meet some of the real estate students and

alumni. "Rutgers Business School is committed to rewarding excellent students, and this celebration is proof of that philosophy," Lei said. "It was heartwarming to see the appreciation students and alumni have for the donors who work closely with the Center for Real Estate."

RISING BUSINESS STARS UNDER 30

The first recipients of Rutgers
Business School's Rising
Business Stars (RBS) Under 30
Awards included entrepreneurs,
industry innovators and
advocates for social impact and
sustainability.

Chosen from more than 200 nominations, the 2025 honorees are: Adam Heba and Erica Odoemene - Academic Achievements and Research Excellence; Kwaku Agyemang, David Choi, Maria Marzullo and Sean Slazyk – Entrepreneurial Trailblazers; Joseph Acoury, Shiv Advani, Natalie Borys, Jasmine Clarke, Michael Dirla, Diti Goradia, Daren Ha, Christina Kallinosis, Daniel Marku, Marion Miller, Paige Mosher, Amanda Pan, David Pellitta, Anna Pisklarov, Friya Randelia, David Shah and James Sosinski II – Industry Pioneers; Cathy Bochnak, Georgette (Galeana) Twiggs, Ankita Kodali (Bode), Sarah Pomeranz – Social Impact and Sustainability.

The collage shows scenes from the awards celebration. Clockwise from Top: The inaugural honorees with Rutgers University President Jonathan Holloway (rear, center) and Rutgers Business School Dean Lei Lei (center). The honorees are flanked by Sharon Lydon, associate dean of alumni and corporate engagement (left), and Valbona Koxha, assistant director of events planning (right); Rising Business Stars Under 30 Awards logo; Alumna Maria Marzullo snaps a picture of her award; Rob Kurland, Rutgers Business School senior associate dean, poses with recipient Amanda Pan; Rutgers University President Jonathan Holloway shares a laugh with recipient Marion Miller during dinner; Recipients Kwaku Agyemang and Sarah Pomeranz pose with their awards; Dean Lei with recipient Joseph Acoury. Center Photo: John Impellizzeri, a professor of supply chain management, takes a selfie with his former student Anna Piskarov and her parents.























ALUMNI AWARDS

Rutgers Business School honored six of its alumni in 2024 for their success, engagement and willingness to fund student programs and scholarships during a celebratory dinner at the Rutgers Club.

The award recipients were Keith Banks, Lifetime Achievement Award; Jeffrey Mraz, Distinguished Alumni Award; Robert Platek, Honorary Business Excellence Award; Omotayo Okusanya, Alumni Service Award; Aisha Khan and Michael Pavlo, Alumni Rising Star Awards. An inaugural Corporate Partner Award was presented to Prudential Financial Inc.

Clockwise from Top:

Rutgers Business School Dean Lei Lei presents Rob Platek with the Honorary Business Excellence Award; the award honorees pose with Sharon Lydon (far left), associate dean of alumni and corporate engagement, and Lei Lei, dean of Rutgers Business School; the Rutgers Glee Club sings the university's alma mater; Dean Lei reacting to remarks during the awards dinner; Glee Club members entertaining honorees and guests; Alumna Aisha Khan received a Rising Star Award; the honorees celebrate with a champagne toast; Bill Pappas, managing director of PGIM Private Capital (part of Prudential) accepts the Corporate Partner Award on behalf of Prudential Financial Inc.. Center photos: Keith Banks speaks after receiving a Life Time Achievement Award; Dean Lei poses for an impromptu photo with alumnus Rob Platek and Rutgers University President Jonathan Holloway outside the Rutgers Club.





















CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2025

Rutgers Business School graduated 2,788 students – from undergrads and MBAs to doctoral students – in three memorable spring ceremonies.

Traditionally, three student recipients of the dean's Distinguished Leadership Award also lead a procession of leaders and faculty to represent the business school in the university-wide commencement. Each ceremony features long-standing trademarks associated with the milestone of graduation – rows of students wearing mortarboard-styled caps and matching black gowns, the playing of Pomp and Circumstance, the eruption of applause, the cameras...

These pages capture moments from the Rutgers Business School (RBS)ceremonies: (From top left, clockwise)

Turning their tassels; Finance professor Yangru Wu shaking hands with a student who completed a Master of Quantitative Finance; Alumnus Mark Anquillare, former president and COO of Verisk Analytics, delivering a speech to 1,132 students receiving undergraduate degrees from RBS-New Brunswick; Students at convocation (two photos); Professor Joseph Agresta congratulates a graduate; RBS-NB student Neha Bhat prepares to ring the school bell at the university-wide convocation; Yanela Frias, chief financial officer of Prudential Financial, delivers an inspiring speech to students marking the completion of Rutgers Business School graduate programs; Five stand-out graduating students from RBS-New Brunswick pose on stage behind the school bell; Two undergraduates pose outside the Prudential Center where Rutgers University holds a Newark campus-wide commencement. Center: Professor Wayne Eastman leading a procession of RBS leaders and faculty into the graduate program convocation at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

























LinkedIn: Rutgers ranks No. 5 for job placement among the world's 100 best business schools for career advancement

LinkedIn Top MBA: The 100 best business schools to grow your career worldwide.

Rutgers Business School's Full-Time MBA Program is No. 5 for job placement in a LinkedIn ranking of the 100 best business schools in the world to grow your career.

The Rutgers Full-Time MBA program is ranked No. 79 in the world, No. 40 in the nation, No. 12 among U.S. public business schools, No. 6 in the Big Ten, and the No. 1 public MBA in the Northeast U.S., based on the ranking released in 2024.

The LinkedIn methodology measured job placement (hiring rate and labor market demand), career advancement, network growth and strength, leadership potential, and gender diversity. Their exclusive LinkedIn data comes from looking at the career outcomes of MBA alums.



Dean R. Vera, assistant dean of Graduate Career Management, said, "Strong employment outcomes result from a partnership between the students and me. I coach them, and they rise to the occasion. Moreover, I've cultivated employer and alumni relationships in the past 18 years that continue to bear fruit for MBA employment."

Weiwei Chen, professor and senior director of MBA Programs, said students also benefit from new courses and updated curricula that prepare them for the ever-evolving business landscape.

"We collaborate closely with students, providing robust academic support and enriching extracurricular training," Chen said, "and our exceptional faculty, who bring theoretical knowledge and practical experience to their teaching, are committed to honing students' skills."

By Sean Ireland

Rutgers MBA moves up in Poets&Quants' latest ranking

Rutgers Business School advanced seven places from last year to fill the No. 42 spot nationally in Poets&Quants' 15th Annual MBA Ranking.

The new ranking makes Rutgers the No. 18 public MBA program in the U.S. and reaffirms its position as the No. 1 public MBA in the Northeast U.S.

According to *Poets&Quants*, "The 15th annual list combines the most influential business school rankings in the world: U.S. News & World Report, The Financial Times, Bloomberg Businessweek, LinkedIn's top MBA ranking, and Princeton Review's annual list of the best colleges."

Rutgers Business School faculty are accomplished and committed scholars, continuously building knowledge in their disciplines through rigorous research.

Since 2000, RBS faculty have added more than 900 peer-reviewed journal articles to the academic literature. RBS faculty also bring years of business experience to the classroom to connect theory to real-world practice.

On average, alumni realized a 166% salary increase, ranking Rutgers MBA No. 1 in Salary Percent Increase among public business schools in the Northeast U.S., according to Financial Times (2024).

Poets&Ouants also released their annual specialty survey of the World's Best MBA Programs for entrepreneurship. Among the MBA programs that have a focus on entrepreneurship, the RBS Full-Time MBA program was ranked the No. 1 Public MBA for entrepreneurship in the Northeast U.S. Overall, RBS was ranked No. 29 in the world for entrepreneurship and No. 5 in the Big Ten in this special category.

By Sean Ireland



Rutgers Full-Time MBA program is the No. 1 public MBA in the Northeast U.S.

Gartner ranks Rutgers supply chain management programs Top 5 in North America

Gartner produces the rankings to help supply chain companies identify the right programs for recruiting and employee development.

In Gartner's biennial report of the Top 25 North American Supply Chain University Programs, Rutgers Business School Supply Chain Management graduate programs moved up two places to No. 3, and undergraduate programs were again ranked No. 5 in North America. The graduate and undergraduate programs both remained No. 1 in the Big Ten.

"I am very pleased that Gartner again acknowledged the Rutgers Business School supply chain programs with these enviable rankings," said Lian Qi, professor and department chair.

"We continually evaluate and update our curricula to meet the dynamic business needs of this crucial industry. Our renowned faculty connect cutting-edge research with decades of business experience to create the best learning experience for our students and

to prepare our graduates for rewarding and meaningful careers," Qi said.

Arlene Perdomo, MS in Supply Chain Management '20 and program manager at Johnson & Johnson, said, being part of Rutgers Business School's online supply chain management program was "very rewarding."

"It provided me with the flexibility to continue my education while working," Perdomo said. "The program has provided me with the credibility and confidence to contribute to impactful decisions being made at Johnson & Johnson."

By Sean Ireland



Online business master's programs ranked No. 8 overall by U.S. News and World Report

Rutgers Business School's online master's programs were ranked No. 8 overall among more than 200 online graduate business programs offered by universities across the country, according to U.S. News and World Report (2025).

In three different subject areas – accounting, marketing and supply chain management -Rutgers Business School's online graduate programs ranked No. 2 among the programs evaluated by U.S. News and World Report in its "Best Online (non-MBA) Master's in Business Programs.

Professor Rudi Leuschner, the director of the online Master's in Supply Chain Management program, said the ranking showcases the program's strong curriculum, experienced faculty, its ability to adapt to the industry's evolving demands, and the quality of the program's students.



Professor Rudi Leuschner with Kathalina Tapia, who graduated from the Master of Science in Supply Chain Management Program.

"Their success after graduation, whether advancing in their current roles, getting promoted, or securing positions in other companies, demonstrates the lasting impact of their education at Rutgers Business School," Leuschner said.

Stacy Schwartz, director of the Master of Science in Digital Marketing, said the program empowers marketers and entrepreneurs with the skills they need to thrive in today's digital-first world. "We are proud of our innovative curriculum, our faculty's dedication, and our students' achievements," she said.

The No. 2 ranking for accounting reflects the success of both the Master of Governmental Accounting and the new Master of Accounting and Analytics. "The continued recognition of Rutgers Business School's Master's in Governmental Accounting program by U.S. News & World Report is very gratifying," said Professor Irfan Bora, the program director.

By Sean Ireland

A sampling of rankings Rutgers Business School earned in 2024-2025





CEO Magazine

- #5 Global Executive MBA
- #3 in North America

FORTUNE

Fortune

#6 Public MBA for International Business in the U.S.



U.S. News & World Report

- #23 (tie) Best Business School in the U.S. (Part-Time MBA)
- **#13** among public business schools
- #1 in the Northeast U.S.
- #8 (tie) Best Online Master's in Business Programs non-MBA
- **#5** among public business schools
- #3 in the Big Ten
- #3 for the best online master's in business programs that help veterans
- **#2** for Accounting
- #2 (tie) for Marketing
- **#2** for Supply Chain Management
- **#15** Supply Chain Management MBA programs in the U.S.
- #5 in the Big Ten

MBA Crystal Ball

MBA Crystal Ball

Top MBA programs for Artificial Intelligence in USA (MBA)



Poets & Quants

- #42 MBA program in the U.S.
- **#18** Public MBA
- #1 Public MBA in Northeast U.S.
- **#44** Best Undergraduate Business School in the U.S. (UG New Brunswick)
- **#17** public business school
- **#79 (tie)** Best Undergraduate Business School in the U.S. (UG Newark)
- **#31** public business school



AnalyticsDegrees.org

#2 Best On-Campus Master's in Healthcare Analytics programs in the U.S.



Gartner

- **#3** Top 25 North American Graduate Supply Chain Programs
- **#1** in the Big 10
- **#5** Top 25 North American Undergraduate Supply Chain Programs
- **#1** in the Big 10



- #5 MBA job placement in the world
- #79 MBA program overall in the world
- #40 in the U.S.
- **#12** Public MBA in the U.S.
- #1 Public MBA in the Northeast U.S.



Dalia Risheg, front left, career counselor, and Marcye McFadden, front right, director of the Office of Career Management for undergraduate students in Newark, lead eager students into a career fair to meet recruiters, hand out resumes, and network.



Rutgers Business School graduating students Anum Fazal (left) and Norah Were stand as Neha Bhat prepares to ring the school bell during the 2025 Rutgers University-New Brunswick and Rutgers Health Commencement, a graduation tradition when Rutgers Business School is announced during the ceremony.

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