

RUTGERS

Community Leadership Center
Camden

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



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How Building A Charter School Has Drawn Parents, Poor Neighborhoods, And Rutgers University - Camden Into A Transformative Partnership

In the 1990s, parents, students, faculty and staff at the Rutgers-Camden Campus set out to launch a unique community development experiment, the Community Leadership Center, intended to enhance education and improve supports for a Community development and Capacity building effort. A sixty-five person Working Group Committee, composed of parents, faculty, staff, and community partners put together a strategic plan to transform the school district. Today the Community Leadership Center at Rutgers-Camden is home to the Leadership, Education and Partnership (or “LEAP”) Academy University Charter School, which includes three academies focused on math and science, business, and liberal arts. Organizing parents has been a big strength of this charter school. Parents learn how to build capacity for the school, while the school leadership team builds new schools, rehabs old housing, and develops a comprehensive approach for reforming schools in need of improvement.

For nearly two decades, this collaboration has served as a model for community resource sharing and capacity-building. Many educational programs have been established, and community development efforts have transformed an entire neighborhood known as “North Vietnam.” Local parents refer to community improvements as the “Miracle of Cooper Street.”

How Cooperation Grew in Camden

Marginalized communities such as Camden City struggle with loss of manufacturing jobs, racial discrimination, poor schools, and newly arrived immigrants without skills – and must meet these challenges amidst public and private disinvestment. The city was essentially abandoned by government and private sector businesses, leaving people in the community without many job opportunities. To make progress and get access to new resources, Camden needed its institutions of higher education to help people leverage social network and individual skills to improve schools and foster community development.

The Rutgers-Camden CLC started the Parent Academy for School Reform and trained a group of parents who successfully advocated for the passage in 1997 of the first charter school law in New Jersey. In addition, the Community Leadership Center brought together undergraduate and graduate students, university stakeholders, community experts, clergy, school teachers, parents, children, local schools, and business to draw a strategic plan for the new school and its vision. This led to the opening of the first and most successful charter school in Camden, a school that is unique in that it includes programs for infants all the way through school to college admission (at Rutgers-Camden or other universities). Since 2005, the school has sustained a 100% graduation rate and has placed all of its graduates in colleges (where 90% stay enrolled and do not drop out). Many Camden charter school graduates are returning to the city to work and teach at the school. All parents have gotten involved with their children’s education, and some fifteen thousand families have gotten involved in advocating for improvements.

This work has depended on an understanding that enhanced civic capacity is one of the most important and tangible results of effective efforts to address local problems like poverty and social marginality. Civic capacity grows when business leaders, parents, educators, state and local stakeholders, non-profit groups, and others all come together to tackle issues of community-wide importance – in this case the challenge of building an excellent charter school with strong community engagement. Camden was struggling with resource deficits and losses,

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and those who launched this project had to work together to marshal the wherewithal to get parents involved despite poverty and a sense of marginality. As people came together, they found ways to leverage resources and influence policy beyond the local level. This was part of the strategy to get the school built. In the process, participants in this collaboration also found ways to improve the wellbeing of parents through informal efforts and organized programs supported by the Rutgers Community Leadership Center staff. As more people got involved to further their own interests, they learned the power of cooperation to leverage resources for the new charter school district that transformed Cooper Street. Many elements – visionary leadership, community engagement, and partnerships with the university – helped the project to succeed.

Larger Lessons from a Model Project

The Camden experiment holds a number of lessons for projects of this sort:

- Public charter schools can drive neighborhood revitalization. When university experts and reformers work at the same time for educational improvements and community revitalization, they can foster stronger relationships with local people and work with them to leverage new resources from government and private elites. Building anchor institutions like charter schools enhances neighborhood improvement efforts and helps to connect young people to constructive norms and life choices. Supporting and mobilizing parents are key steps, because parents can become anchors and leaders in distressed areas where resources are scarce yet the need for quality schools is greatest.
- Building the charter school engaged and inspired university staff, faculty, and students – helping them all learn to cooperate with parents and others in the surrounding community. University programs were enlivened through seminars focused on the local community and ways to support it. University administrative officials devised incentives to encourage faculty to become more engaged in community research and development.
- Both the university and the community have benefitted and learned from the Camden project. University faculty and students carried lessons they learned in the surrounding community back into classrooms. Multidisciplinary teams helped to design community interventions – and then learn from them. In turn, Camden children and families gain from collaboration with the university, not just from efforts to improve the surrounding community, but also from dual enrollment arrangements between the charter school to the college and from improved access to college for local students.

Hopefully, other universities and communities can take inspiration from the Camden model to launch or improve their own collaborative efforts to marry educational improvements to community development.



Building a Legacy of Community Development through Excellence, Impact and Partnerships

The Rutgers-Camden Community Leadership Center (CLC) was founded 25 years ago with one clear purpose—to help revitalize urban communities through education, leadership and community development. The role of higher education institutions in improving the outcomes and social capital of its host communities has been at the forefront of national and regional discussions regarding how universities and colleges can redefine the relationship with their communities. Nowhere is this more important than in urban communities that bear the vestiges of isolation and lack of access to services and resources for an improved quality of life. Led by Rutgers University Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, the impetus for the work on the Center has concentrated on four strategic drivers: (1) **Birth–16 Pipeline Educational Investments and Innovation**; (2) **Academic Entrepreneurship and Applied/Experiential Learning**; (3) **Applied Research and Dissemination**; and (4) **Leadership and Community Development**.

In 25 years, the CLC has built an infrastructure that is dedicated to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and families in Camden City. Since 1990, the CLC has developed a portfolio of programs that bridges the gap between academia and the larger community by creating transformative programs that target children and families from infancy through college; and build professional and leadership capacity in communities.

Access to quality education: LEAP Academy University Charter School

The development of LEAP Academy provided the CLC with a vehicle for impacting educational outcomes for children and youth all over the city. With over 600 alumni and serving 1,500 students every year, LEAP has become a leading force in tackling college preparation and access for hundreds of students whose chances for entering higher education are challenged by a deficient K-12 system and low expectations for achievement. Touting a 100% graduation rate for the past 11 years, LEAP has demonstrated that a comprehensive model of education for

students and families builds capacity for academic achievement. LEAP has four main Points of Pride that guide its daily operations focused on excellent teaching and learning. The first is College Access, which instills the value that attending college is feasible for every student beginning in Kindergarten. The second is Health and Wellness, where students and families are taught to eat healthy, exercise, and perform routine health check-ups. The third is Parent Engagement, a pillar for asserting accountability amongst LEAP teachers and staff to ensure that students are



receiving the best education they deserve. Parents serve on the Board of Directors and run their own Parent Council to influence policies and support family initiatives. The fourth Point of Pride is Early Learning, where children from ages 0-5 receive the best education to prepare them for Kindergarten. Infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers follow a curriculum that strengthens socio-emotional, literacy, cognitive, math, and motor skills. The LEAP Points of Pride drive the daily focus of providing a quality education for everyone.

Building Human Capacity for Community Leadership Programs

Programs geared at developing local leadership anchored the early years of the CLC. Building the capacity of people to become effective leaders and participants in community development has been at the forefront of the CLC program portfolio with programs like the Hispanic Women Leadership Institute, South Jersey Regional Leadership Institute and the Leadership Management for Urban Development Institute. Over the years, these programs have evolved into more targeted efforts addressing the needs for working with teachers, school leaders and community leaders in select communities. Programs such as the Teacher Development Leadership Institute and the School Leadership Academy were developed parallel to the CLC's work in education. At a community based level, work with parents resulted in the Parents Academy for School reform and the Health Education Literacy Program (HELP). Over 1,000 individuals have benefited from these programs.

Building Educational Pipelines: Early Learning Research Academy

The pipeline model is critical for keeping students and families together throughout their educational trajectory. For 25 years, the CLC has worked arduously and strategically to ensure that higher education institutions take a more active role in transitioning students to college. For poor families that are disconnected from opportunity, this process begins with infancy and must be shepherded through K-12 and into higher education. In 2011, the CLC launched its Early Learning Research Academy (ELRA) to work



CLC Affiliated Scholars at Rutgers discuss plans to enhance research and grant opportunities

in unison with LEAP families to prepare the youngest children. Today, ELRA serves 300 children from 6 weeks old through five years old. Students who have started in ELRA and stayed with LEAP Academy through 12th Grade have graduated and been accepted into top-tier universities, like Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania. This pipeline of cradle to college has proven to be a successful model for keeping students and their families learning in the same academic setting their entire lives.

Rutgers, as an anchor institution in the City, has supported this pipeline model because it currently has benefitted with over 100 LEAP alumni enrolled at the university. In a city known for staggering high school drop-out rates and where college placement is at its lowest, LEAP is sending more Latino and African American students to Rutgers than any other school in the city.

Academic Faculty Partnerships and Collaborations on Campus

Academic exchanges serve as the backbone of the university role of connecting its resources with the greater community. Rutgers, as the anchor institution, has shaped its surrounding neighborhood intellectually through these committed students and faculty that want to engage with local residents, students, and families. Examples of the work are below:

- The CLC was able to facilitate a collaboration between Eric Klein,

Assistant Professor of Biology, and LEAP Academy as part of an NSF five-year grant totaling \$1.2 million for his research on the mysterious properties of a bacterial species known as *Caulobacter crescentus*. Klein hopes to make a discovery that will shed light on the unknown, doing it with the help of undergraduate and graduate students at Rutgers University–Camden and the students at LEAP Academy. The LEAP students will work under the tutelage of Rutgers–Camden students on lab experiments related to the research.

- Dr. David Salas-de la Cruz, Assistant Professor in Chemistry, continues to lead innovative projects with 3D printers and specialized laser cutters in the LEAP Fabrication Lab using Engineering, Chemistry, and Biology student mentors, documented later in this report.
- Nursing School Dean Joanne Robinson has placed faculty and nursing students with the LEAP Health and Wellness Center to provide onsite care to students and families who face barriers to receiving quality health care outside of the school setting. They build healthy and productive learners daily.

Over 100 Rutgers students engage with the CLC every year through a variety of opportunities, through internships, work study, and applied courses. These experiences extend and enrich academic learning and translate into students better suited for solving social problems in their careers.



Students at the ELRA pre-school program engage in active learning

Early Learning: Investing in our youngest children

“The Rutgers Early Learning Research Academy is a family centered program that focuses on early childhood development and families. Our approach to supporting families is holistic. We provide families with resources to develop a sustainable route to self-reliance. At the end of the day we want families to have the tools to navigate the world they live in for themselves and their children.” Stephanie Rogers, MHS, Director of Early Learning Research Academy

A quality education begins at birth and an educational pipeline must begin then to maximize the potential of children for healthy learning and growing. The Early Learning Research Academy (ELRA) at Rutgers-Camden delivers early childhood education for marginalized populations, particularly African-Americans and Latinos, as a precursor for academic success.

Since 2001 and for the past 15 years, ELRA has been a leader in providing a quality education program for infants/toddlers and preschoolers that is unique from standard day care centers. It has partnered with Bright Horizons Family Solutions to teach a creative curriculum centered on enhancing a child’s literacy, socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive abilities for children through age 3.

A partnership with the Camden City School District provides the funds to operate a pre-school program for children ages 3 and 4. Enrollment increased last year with a contract in the amount of \$2.8 million to sustain this program. ELRA is serving 300 pre-schoolers this year.

The work of ELRA is grounded on four core elements. **First**, the academic framework is based on a positive relationship-based early childhood pedagogy with a focus on developing trusting and consistent relationships between children and adults. On any given day, the infants and toddlers at ELRA are working with caring adults as they form nurturing relationships through the intimate care routines of feeding, sleeping and diapering during the first three years of life.



The initial work on early childhood education was supported through grants from the Knight Foundation (\$1.2 million) and the William Penn Foundation (\$693,000) that made it possible to launch the Rutgers/LEAP Early Childhood Development Initiative in 2003. The focus of the Foundations’ investment was to implement a comprehensive effort to strengthen early childhood education and family literacy in Camden City through ongoing training and coaching activities to enhance teaching effectiveness, improve the language abilities of children, empower parents, and transform the organizational culture of preschool centers. This effort reached 148 classrooms, 148 teachers, 2,220 children and 800 parents.

The Knight Foundation extended its commitment by awarding the CLC a \$2 million capital grant to build the ELRA facility currently located in 501 Cooper Street. The Morgan Family Foundation awarded \$1.2 million to establish an endowment to support ELRA’s work in perpetuity. Today the Fund has earned over \$700,000.

Second, the ELRA staff and its Family Workers are working with parents to enhance their child management skills and strengthen parent-child relationships. Five Family Workers welcome parents and children every day and interact with family members on a variety of issues from their perspectives about our programs to challenges in the home. Home visitations are also an integral element in ELRA's approach to families.

Third, ELRA firmly believes on the professional development of the staff that makes this work happen every day. Multiple opportunities for self development are offered with many staff members returning to school to earn their degrees or furthering their academic training. Bright Horizons works closely with all the ELRA staff members to strengthen the professional capacity of those that are the front line staff interacting with children every day.

Fourth, ELRA was established with the intent to make this effort research relevant. The vision has been to use ELRA and its facility as a mechanism for research, evaluation and dissemination of new and proven practices in the field of early development, care and education. Already, a number of faculty, as well as graduate students, have benefitted from these resources for their research work.

Last year, CLC staff began to analyze the Teaching Strategies assessment data of cohorts growing up in ELRA and found that

“ I was extremely pleased with the toddler and pre-K curriculum at Rutgers ELRA. The program provided my son Nolan with a strong foundation in areas of literacy, math, and science. It also set him on the path to becoming bilingual. The road to college begins at Rutgers ELRA! Thank you! ”
Natonya Phillips, Esq.

80% of the current Pre-K group that has been at ELRA for all four years has exceeded the measured expectations. The assessment data measures student growth in the following main areas of development: socio-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics and is compiled weekly by ELRA staff. The focus of the study is to find out how early learning programs from infancy to preschool prepare children and families to be ready for Kindergarten and what kinds of achievement gains they made during grades K-3. They are addressing the following research questions:

How does ELRA creative curriculum impact school readiness for Kindergarten? and How do ELRA students, particularly urban minority children, demonstrate social-emotional, academic, language and physical competencies to prepare them for Kindergarten?

The research design involves analyzing cohorts of children from infancy to Kindergarten to measure their growth and progress. Then, while in Kindergarten and

into first grade, treatment and control groups will be compared between those who grew up in the ELRA program and those who did not. The hypothesis is that students in the ELRA program, given that they are in an educational pipeline preparing them for entry into the K-12 years of LEAP Academy, will perform slightly better than those who do not because of the focus and emphasis on family engagement, shared curriculum between ELRA and LEAP, and utilization of one assessment tool, Teaching Strategies Gold, from ELRA all the way to third grade.

The charts below indicate that the majority of students in the current Pre-K cohort are meeting or above the growth range in six major areas of development, as measured by Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) during the years of Spring 2013 to Summer 2015. The current Pre-K cohort is in their 4th year and will be entering Kindergarten next year. Results for the academic year 2015-2016 will be available this summer.

TSG CURRENT PRE-K COHORT GROWTH SUMMARY

Area of Development	Percentage of Children Below Growth Range	Percentage of Children Meeting or Above Growth Range
Social Emotional	28 %	72 %
Physical	14 %	86 %
Language	27 %	73 %
Cognitive	22%	78%
Literacy	23%	77 %
Mathematics	20%	80 %



Number of Children 64



LEAP Academy graduates at the 2015 Commencement



LEAP High School students attending dual enrollment courses at Rutgers-Camden

The College Access Imperative: Graduating and Sustaining Students to Succeed in Higher Education

“ Breaking down the barriers to create pathways from high school into higher education begins with instilling a mindset in each of our student, that regardless of their past experiences or upbringing, success is within their reach. Higher education is the key to creating opportunities for upward social mobility, and we encourage our students go further, reach higher, and dream bigger than anything they previously thought themselves capable of accomplishing. Growing up in one of the many impoverished neighborhoods in the city of Camden can be both a gift and a curse; at times it can prevent students from believing in the power of their own dreams, but it can also provide them with the motivation to strive for a better life than they ever thought possible.” Khary Golden, Director Center for College Access

The Community Leadership Center (CLC) at Rutgers-Camden has responded to one important driver of educational achievement ---preparing and transitioning African American and Latino students into college and careers. The joint work with LEAP Academy has driven the hopes and dreams for its students, as expressed below:

“Our vision is to prepare Camden City students with the knowledge and skills to pursue post-secondary education, while building and sustaining an environment where all members of the educational community are committed to continuous growth and development toward high academic standards and are partners in building a positive, collaborative and nurturing community and dynamic learning environment.”

-- LEAP Administrator

Ultimately, LEAP has sustained a dual focus on closing the achievement gap and ensuring college preparation and completion among African American and Latino students who are poor and mostly first-generation college students. Since 2005, it has sustained a perfect record of 100% high school graduation and college attendance. The CLC, through its College Access Center at LEAP, has maintained a strong presence in facilitating the outstanding achievements of its students.

The College Access strategy for preparing students is comprehensive and embedded within the school from the early grades through high school, where portraits of every graduating senior are exhibited on a wall. Throughout the college admission season, students place in their frames college acceptance letters. Throughout the last fifteen years, the CLC has identified factors of how college access is delivered at LEAP Academy, as these are practices that can be adapted to schools serving minority students.

The work of getting African American and Latino students college-ready and college-motivated demands a concerted, systematic, and continuous effort that provides for daily and ongoing reinforcement of the postsecondary planning process to students and parents. At LEAP, the expectation has been for counselors, teachers, principals, and all other stakeholders to work to establish both formal and informal relationships with their students to assist them in various phases of the postsecondary planning process. College Access and the Rutgers YES Institute work hand in hand with the school in reviewing assessment information to help students plan their high school curriculum, identify areas for improvement, consider career options, and plan for postsecondary education. The work with parents also addresses issues of financial aid and exposure to ensure that everyone in the family is on the same page. This holistic approach to preparing for college is critical for graduation and student achievement

Exposure and academic rigor is fundamental for the college preparation work. An important opportunity that Rutgers-Camden offers is a Dual College Enrollment Program where LEAP juniors and seniors enroll in college courses on campus.

The work in college access has paid off with 100% of LEAP students finishing high school and ensuring placement in a college or university.

100%

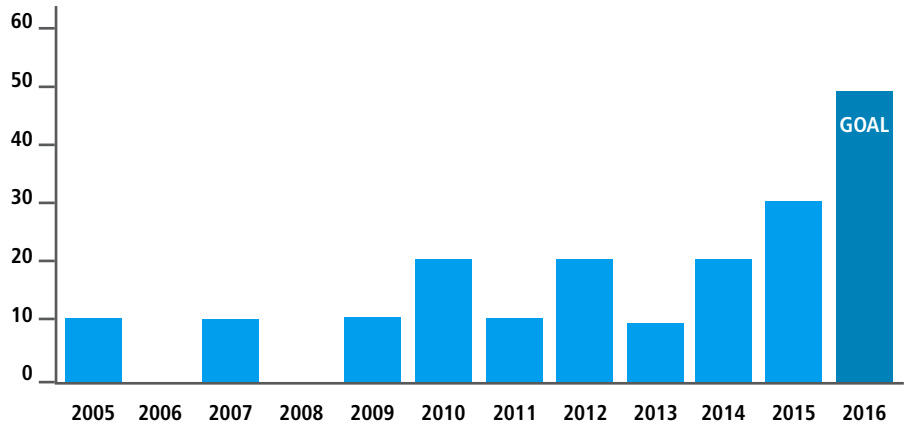
GRADUATION RATE

For all LEAP Classes Since 2005

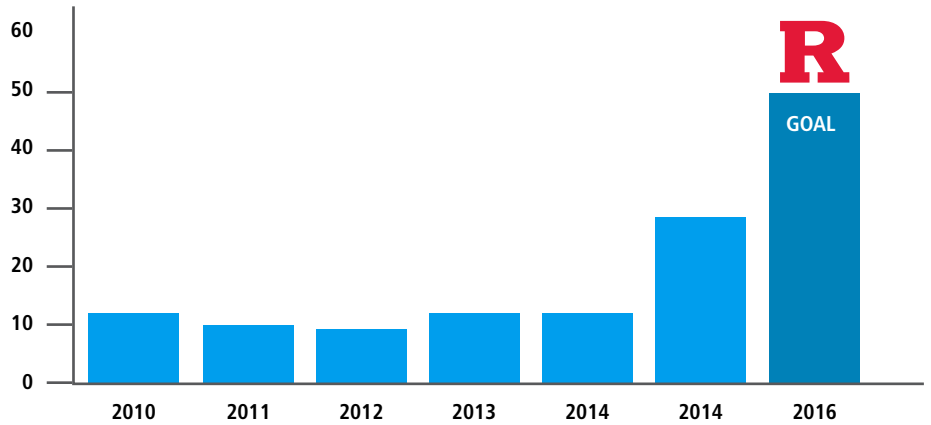
As the partnering institution, Rutgers University has already benefited from the early investments and commitment to the partnership with LEAP Academy. The Birth through 16 pipeline is being realized with growing numbers of LEAP alumni entering and graduating from Rutgers University. The table to the right shows this trend.

Another important statistic is the growing number of LEAP student entering into Ivy League Schools. Since 2005 that number has been increasing, as demonstrated to the right.

LEAP ACADEMY IVY LEAGUE/TOP-TIER PLACEMENT 2005-2015



LEAP ACADEMY TOTAL PLACEMENT
Rutgers University New Brunswick, Camden and Newark



AIM High Class of 2015

REACHING OUT TO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS IN THE SOUTH JERSEY REGION

Through its AIM High Academy, the CLC has continued to work with high seniors all over South Jersey as it expands its college preparation model to other schools and communities. Over the last five years, it has served a diverse group of 200 students from 40 schools throughout the region:

- 34% are African American
- 25.5% are Latino
- 12% are Multi-racial
- 12% are Asian
- 8.5% are Foreign Born (Africa)/Native American/Pacific Islands
- 7.5% are Caucasian/White

Since 2011, it has enrolled 108 students in college with a critical mass of students attending Rutgers University.



Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago and Chancellor Haddon with 2015 Leadership Award recipients



LEAP alumni join to help raise funds for scholarships

ENDOWING THE FUTURE—THE ALFREDO SANTIAGO SCHOLARSHIP

With \$1.8 million raised, the Alfredo Santiago Scholarship Fund at Rutgers is providing over \$330,000 in scholarships to support LEAP alumni during their college years at Rutgers. The selection process for this fund begins in Kindergarten, when LEAP honors students for excellence and inducts students as Alfredo Santiago Scholars.

The Annual Fundraising Gala serves as the main vehicle for raising funds to continue to grow the Endowed Scholarship Fund. This year's theme, "Enlightening Minds," focused on highlighting the strategic work spearheaded by LEAP and Rutgers to transform lives by providing children and youth with opportunities to learn, grow and nurture their intellect and capacity to learn.

This year, we honored: Charisse R. Lillie, Vice President of Community Investment of Comcast Corporation and President of the Comcast Foundation; Richard P. Miller, President and CEO of Virtua; and Joan N. Stern, Partner in the Public Finance Practice at Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC. LEAP Alum De'Saun Stewart performed a beautiful opera piece that got a standing ovation.

HIGHLIGHTS OF LEAP CLASS OF 2015

SIDIA MUSTAPHA

- Alfredo Santiago Endowment Fund Scholar
- WPVI-TV 6 ABC Best of the Class of 2015 Recipient
- Over twenty college and university acceptances and over \$1,074,000 in four-year merit-based scholarships
- Acceptances from University of Pennsylvania, University of Maryland, Villanova University, Drexel University, Temple University, DePaul University, University of Sciences-Philadelphia
- Second LEAP Academy alumnus to attend University of Pennsylvania, where she is studying Biology/Pre-Med

SHALAYA LOPEZ

- Alfredo Santiago Endowment Fund Scholar

- Has received acceptances to Georgetown University, Emory University, Villanova University, Saint Joseph's University, and numerous other colleges and universities
- First LEAP Academy alumnus to attending Georgetown University, where she will studying Biology/Pre-Medicine

ABRAHAM NWAEMO

- Received over forty college and university acceptances, totaling \$1,318,000 in four-year merit-based scholarship aid
- Acceptances from Villanova University, Saint Joseph's University, Temple University, and Rutgers University
- Alpha Kappa Alpha, Theta Pi Omega Best of the Best Male Student
- Alfredo Santiago Endowment Fund Scholar

NICHOLAS LUCIANO

- Alfredo Santiago Endowment Fund Scholar
- Perfect 4.0, Top Ten Class Ranking
- Attending Swarthmore College

ALMA APARICIO

- Alfredo Santiago Endowment Fund Scholar
- Three-time Rutgers University High School Scholars Dual-Enrollment Participant
- 2015 Rutgers University-Camden School of Law ALIANZA Carmen Garcia Bright Futures Scholarship Recipient
- 2015 Battleship New Jersey Camden Resident Scholarship Recipient

LEAP ALUMNI SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

The best testament of the impact of the CLC work and the legacy of the LEAP academy rests on its alumni who are the harbingers of the LEAP mission. Below is a profile of one exceptional student, Felisha Robinson, an Alfredo Santiago Scholar.

Felisha Robinson is prescribing her success to LEAP Academy and the relationships she formed there. She has developed a positive academic and career trajectory due to the support from teachers, administrators, and friends since Kindergarten. Growing up in Camden, Felisha never equated the challenges of urban education being a hindrance for her. "I came to school and I receive an education," she comments. "I know that being at LEAP, however, made a difference in my desire to attend college."

College Access sets LEAP apart from other Camden schools with its 100% college placement rate. Felisha left LEAP for a public middle school for 2 years, but returned and recognized the value of the LEAP college attainment experience. "I noticed there was a difference in the education I received and that environment," she explains. "As I got into my junior and senior years of high school, and I had friends at different high school in and out of the city, I realized that I had an advantage. I would tell my friends about the help I was receiving from the College Access office and they couldn't believe it. I know that at LEAP, since my sophomore year, there was never a doubt about applying to college."

Now, one semester away from graduating, Felisha has already applied to graduate school for a Master's in Pharmacy Related Studies. Her goal is to become a research scientist and to participate in medical research. She's even thinking of applying to some PhD programs afterwards and then either work and teach for a university or full time in the pharmaceutical industry discovering new drugs.

Felisha remains grateful for the opportunities she had at LEAP and now at Rutgers-Camden, particularly with the financial support of the Alfredo Santiago Scholarship, which has paid for part of her tuition. She expresses, "Looking back, I know receiving scholarship was a blessing. I couldn't imagine the loans I would have without it. I've met fellow students in college who hear how much money I get in scholarship from my high school and they are amazed. Because of the scholarship, I haven't had to work my way through college." Instead of worrying about her financial circumstances to advance through college, she can focus on her academic and career pursuits, which are ambitious and promising.

“Thank you for believing in the students of LEAP and the school's vision. It's a vision that some of you are just seeing come to pass and some of you may never see. What you're doing matters. The only thing that stands between us and our success is opportunity and because of your giving, we have that opportunity”

*Felisha Robinson, Rutgers
—Camden Class of 2016*



If Felisha could speak directly to her supporters, she would say, "Thank you for believing in the students of LEAP and the school's vision. It's a vision that some of you are just seeing come to pass and some of you may never see. What you're doing matters. The only thing that stands between us and our success is opportunity and because of your giving, we have that opportunity." Felisha can confidently be ready for her next big opportunity of discovering new life-saving drugs that will benefit society.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ALFREDO SANTIAGO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

- \$1.8 million endowed
- Over \$330,000 awards given annually
- Provides financial support to students who attend any Rutgers campus
- Over 100 alumni who have received the scholarship
- Students are graduating Rutgers in the following majors:
 - Law
 - Criminal Justice
 - Pharmacy
 - Politics
 - Economics
 - Business
 - Liberal Arts
- Qualifying characteristics for the scholarship:
 - At least a 3.5 cumulative GPA
 - Academic excellence and engagement
 - Excellent attendance in school
 - Positive conduct and good disciplinary standing
 - Outstanding character

Cultivating the Next Generation of STEM Leaders through Innovation and Project Base Learning

“STEM education cannot concentrate on solemnly delivering lectures, a practical application is critical to enable the students to connect the concepts into solving real life problems. By concentrating on direct engagement and early exposure, the fabrication laboratory enables students to design, construct and test solutions. The laboratory provides the space, the equipment and the necessary expertise to help students navigate through the engineering design and manufacturing concepts.” Dr. David Salas, Assistant Professor with the Department of Chemistry & Faculty Director, LEAP Fabrication Lab

The underrepresentation of minority students in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields is staggering. According to Change the Equation, “despite a national focus on directing more students toward science, technology, engineering and math fields – particularly women and minorities – the STEM workforce is no more diverse now than in 2001.” Since 1993, when the school developed its core curriculum, LEAP Academy, supported by Rutgers University Camden, made STEM (now known as STEAM to include the Arts) the curricular focus of the entire school.

From its beginning, Rutgers and Rowan University faculty have collaborated in linking the school’s academic programs to the STEM offerings in college as a strategy for addressing the challenges of sustaining minority students in the STEM college pipelines. In 2009 LEAP intensified its efforts for addressing this achievement

gap by adding to its academic offering a specialized program in STEM for high school students. The rigor, intensity and exposure for students in the program was aligned to the academic demands students would face once in college. Three main elements are at the core of the school’s approach: (1) offering a strong academic program with a focus on Mathematics and Science; (2) creating opportunities for exposure to the STEM fields as a precursor for increasing student motivation and career awareness; and (3) development of a school based Fabrication Lab (Fab Lab) to serve as the cornerstone for engaging students in hands-on applied learning and problem solving through the use of technology and experimentation.

Dr. David Salas-de la Cruz, an Assistant Professor with the Department of Chemistry, heads the Fab Lab along with Carlos Mattei, an architect who directs the regular operations. This FabLab has become a great example of how to use an innovative setting

in a K-12 context where university faculty and students can engage with K-12 teachers and students to create opportunities for applied learning and innovation within a multi-disciplinary setting. Students have the opportunity to innovate, design and fabricate; develop critical thinking, technology, and manufacturing skills; apply math, science, and engineering skills to product-based design; and express their artistic and technical abilities as part of extracurricular activities and independent research at the FabLab.

To ensure that the exchanges between college students and high school are sustained, the Rutgers/LEAP STEM Fellowships were created. Through this program, for which Rutgers receives \$25,000 annually, Rutgers students completing majors in STEM disciplines work on specialized projects at the LEAP Fabrication Lab. This year, the opportunity for a fellowship was also offered to selected LEAP high school students.



LEAP students and community members at New Jersey Maker’s Day

“It is very humbling to have the opportunity to be at the level of our own education, whether it be masters or Ph.D., teaching at the high school level. It gives homage to where we all started from. We might under appreciate our own depth of knowledge into the sciences, as well as the amount of time we have put into getting to where we are now. Teaching high school children allows us to remember our own beginnings, and enriches our zeal towards whatever direction we wish to pursue now or in the future.” Codey Stevens, STEM Fellow

LEAP Academy has also extended its reach to offer talented Rutgers students with teaching fellowships at the school. Supervised by a certified teacher, Rutgers students engage in the classroom as teacher fellows for core STEM courses such as Chemistry and Biology.

STEM Innovation wins National Award

One important project developed with the Fab Lab was the Urban Food Forest. A team of Rutgers-Camden and LEAP Academy University Charter School students won a national Social Justice Challenge award of \$5,000, sponsored by the Rutgers-Newark School of Public Policy and Administration. The team proposed an urban food forest that would blanket Cooper Street with plant beds using composted soil from school waste. The project aims to address the inequitable access to fresh produce and affordable food in Camden City. The students will be able to work with families to learn about sustainable gardening techniques that will beautify Cooper Street. Judges were impressed by the style and content of the presentation, presented live at Rutgers-Newark.

The team was comprised of Matthew Closter, Ph.D. Student in Community Development, Timnit Kefela, Graduate Student in Biology, Liz Ramos, Undergraduate Student in Biology, and Eduardo Cruz, Justin Estevez, Bielka Gonzalez, and Karina Velez, LEAP Fabrication Lab students. A special thank you to Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago (Public Policy and Public Administration), Dr. David Salas-de la Cruz (Chemistry), and Carlos Mattei-Ramos, Director of the Fabrication Lab, for their guidance and support.



Team of Rutgers-Camden and LEAP students win national Social Justice Challenge for an urban food forest



Dr. David Salas-de la Cruz showcases innovation at the Rutgers/LEAP Fab Lab



New Jersey Charter School Office Director Harold Lee visits the Fab Lab

The Fab Lab is located within the LEAP Academy and is an integral part of the school's teaching and learning offering.

We are an incubator for innovation that leads to development of a pipeline for minority students into the STEM fields in higher education.

The Fabrication Lab is transformative and aligned to the need for reinventing how we prepare underserved K-12 students to enter the STEM fields.

Its location within a school anchors it as a technical prototyping platform for innovation and invention that stimulates student engagement and local entrepreneurship.

It also exposes students to a complete curriculum from product development to commercialization that stimulates learning, engagement and local entrepreneurship.



LEAP community partners, with Mayor Dana Redd, inaugurate the Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago Building

Transforming Communities through Repurposing Old Buildings: The Legacy of Cooper Street

Cooper Street in downtown Camden City was strategically selected to become an Education Corridor in the city's master plan. It was also an important element in Rutgers-Camden's plan for expansion. Campuses for Rutgers, Rowan University and Camden County College were located in close proximity to each other. But, this vision was missing an important element—the education and preparation of Camden's youngest children and adolescents. Working with Rutgers University and other local partners, the gap was bridged through the LEAP Schools.

During the forming years of the LEAP Initiative, as it was known in the early 1990's, a Working Group led by Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, with local institutional and community leadership, had a different vision for Cooper Street. They envisioned a more inclusive Education Corridor and the process of repurposing began.

After housing its school in temporary modular units from 1997-1999, LEAP relocated to its permanent facility at 7th and Cooper Street—a three-story historic building that was originally built as an Elks Club and housed St. Mary's Parochial School. With financial support from the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA), the building underwent a \$7.5 million renovation to transform it into a state-of-the-art school facility occupied in September 1999.

In January 2005, a second building was completed to house the new high school program. This new facility was financed by a unique partnership between the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) and Rutgers University, with DRPA awarding a \$2 million grant and issuing tax-exempt bonds in the amount of \$8 million to finance the high school construction. These bonds were guaranteed by Rutgers University to ensure that LEAP could negotiate a low interest rate.

In Fall 2015, LEAP inaugurated the Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago STEAM Campus on the building that was previously known as the "Wilson Building" at the corner of Broadway and Cooper Streets. With financing through New Jersey Economic Development Authority bonds, the 12-story facility now houses innovative programs including floors dedicated to a Fabrication Lab (Fab Lab) for student engineering and arts projects using state-of-the-art 3D printers and laser cutters; a Center for College Access that creates individualized student plans for applying, getting accepted, and excelling into college; a Health and Wellness Center for students and their families to receive excellent medical care and educational classes on nutrition, exercise and leading a healthy lifestyle; and an Events Center on the top floor that hosts school and public events.

In Fall 2012, a building dedicated to STEM education opened, financed through new market credits provided through the Reinvestment Fund and JPMorgan Chase

Bank, N.A. in the amount of \$10 million. This building currently houses LEAP's Intermediate School and the Rutgers ELRA pre-school programs.

In Fall 2011, the Rutgers CLC opened its brand new facility through a gift from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The building houses ELRA, which works closely with LEAP in providing families with access to pre-school and programs for infants and toddlers.

The combination of LEAP and Rutgers buildings, as well as the presence of Rowan University and Camden County Community College, makes it possible for a child to be educated from infancy through graduate school at an educational institution located along Cooper Street.

The transformation of Cooper Street also incorporates the vision of schools as service hubs. There is a growing recognition that the most effective strategies to address the problems of struggling neighborhoods—from health to school success to poverty—involve the focused use of integrated strategies, which can address challenges that are complicated and interdependent in nature. The LEAP buildings are important ingredients in the vision for community development and engagement. These buildings not only receive children in the morning and send them home at the end of the day. They serve a larger purpose of providing "two-generation" support to parents and students to learn, grow, and succeed as one family.



Rutgers student volunteers are recognized for their contributions

CLC as a Zone of Practice and Service Learning

With over 100 Rutgers students engaged in some form of learning or service, the CLC continues to meet the needs for students to engage in opportunities that combine community engagement with academic instruction that leads to critical, reflective thinking and builds personal and civic responsibility. In the words of the National Service Learning Clearinghouse, the kind of opportunities generated by the CLC serves as “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”

JUMPSTART

Through the CLC’s JumpStart Program, 50 undergraduate students are selected every year to engage in one-on-one interactions with pre-school age children to improve literacy. Students are trained on how to best interact with the children and through teams, work hand in hand with the classroom teachers in delivering literacy sessions for the students. JumpStart sessions take place two days per week, for two hours each time. Each session revolves around a core storybook, and one book serves as the focus for two sessions. Session plans are organized in six unit themes -- Family, Friends, Wind and Water, The World of Color, Shadows and Reflections, and Things That Grow -- and use the following routine:

- **Welcome.** Children transition to JumpStart from their previous activity. Children build alphabet knowledge through exploration of name cards and over time develop an understanding of the meaning and use of print.
- **Reading.** Children and JumpStarters engage in a shared reading experience.

- **Circle Time.** Children participate by singing songs, playing word and letter games, and reading poems. The whole-group learning experience builds a sense of community among children and adults.
- **Center Time.** Centers are set up with materials and activities that support children’s language and literacy skill development. Activities are selected by the unit theme and core storybook, deepening children’s understanding of the book and providing opportunities to use story vocabulary.
- **Let’s Find Out About It.** A small group activity designed to build children’s concept knowledge and vocabulary. Here, children have the opportunity to explore new ideas and information, learn about objects and their use, and understand how things work.
- **Sharing and Goodbye.** Children talk and listen to others share their favorite session activities in a large group setting. JumpStarters use objects or examples of children’s work from Center Time and rich vocabulary to support the conversation.



GRADUATE AND DOCTORAL FELLOWS

The CLC has become an important resource for graduate and doctoral students in search of real-life environments to conduct research to learn new strategies to improve their practice and complete requirements for internships and practicum requirements.

Social work students are completing their required Field Practice. LEAP Academy and the Early Learning Research Academy provides appropriate settings and access to experiences that expose social work students to the breadth of practice elements inherent in working with children and families in schools. School social workers provide an important connection between school, home, and community. Students are engaged in a variety of experiences ranging from helping students improve their academic achievement and social, emotional, and behavioral competence to assisting with support programs targeted at families. Some of the programs and experiences provided to the students this year include: Antbullying workshops; Individual counseling; Classroom observations; Development of behavioral plans for teachers to improve classroom dynamics; Social Skills counseling groups; Grief counseling groups; peer mediation sessions; Teacher-Student mediation sessions; exposure to special education and the IEP process; and workshops to improve school climate.

Two doctoral students have chosen LEAP Academy as their practice model to conduct dissertations. **Kimberly Geria**, a Nursing doctoral student, is working on a project on Type 2 Diabetes Prevention with At-Risk Adolescents. Ms. Geria's doctoral work responds to the increasing prevalence of Type 2 diabetes mellitus among African-American and Latino populations. Working with a select group of LEAP students, Ms. Geria is utilizing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Diabetes Prevention Program to increase awareness and knowledge about Type 2 diabetes mellitus; educate and encourage healthy eating and exercise patterns; and encourage participants to manage stress and use problem solving skills to maintain healthy habits.

Wendy Osefo, a Public Affairs - Community Development doctoral student, is using the case study method to examine how class shapes parental engagement in child learning and in schools. Her study seeks to contribute to existing knowledge about how schools and poverty account for the influence of class on parental engagement. The study addresses the following questions:

- In what way(s) do low-income parents engage in the academic lives of their child(ren) within the school and home environment?
- What strategies do public schools utilize to garner high levels of parental engagement from their low-income parents?
- How should the definition of parental engagement be modified to take into account social class differences in engagement to advance reform in institutional design?

Four MPA students are working on their internships at the CLC. Luis Gonzalez Arroyo is leading the YES Tutoring Program as his filed project; Esra Sevenic completed a project dealing with advocacy in education; and Luis Delet is placed at the LEAP Academy working with the Intermediate School on developing the summer school programs; and Scott Lunn is working at the Upper Elementary to fulfill his principalship certification.

Two doctoral Public Affairs students are also placed at the CLC to work on a variety of projects addressing community development issues as part of their academic interests and the process for exposing students to a variety of opportunities for dissertation work. Anetha Perry is conducting research on community development and fundraising and Moussa Ky is conducting research on the impact of a school-based health center on African-American and Latino populations. Their insight and assistance strengthens the CLC's work of building knowledge between Rutgers and its greater community.



“We can no longer use a one size fits all method to engage our parents. We must begin to change the narrative on how we define effective parent engagement strategies or risk alienating our most vulnerable parent groups”
Wendy Osefo, Ph.D. Candidate, Rutgers Public Affairs and Community Development Program



Kimberly Geria, Ph.D. Candidate, Nursing

The opportunity to be part of the Community Development Program from Rutgers University at Centro para Puerto Rico has been extremely enrichment and useful as a professional and as a leader. The combination of learning from a public administration graduate program, the quality and extraordinary professors and staff, both locally and from New Jersey, and the development and implementation of community projects have been a turnaround experience in my life. I am thankful for this opportunity and ready for my next steps as a professional but most important as an active leader for Puerto Rico.” Niurka Y. Veléz Feliciano, Student in the Certificate Program in Community Development



Chancellor Phoebe Haddon, Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, and Dean Kriste Lindenmeyer join Dr. Dennis Roman and the first cohort of students to complete the Community Development Certificate Program in Puerto Rico

Expanding Academic Programs: Training future education and policy leaders at home and abroad

Given its organizational context at the university, the Community Leadership Center (CLC) seizes the opportunities for bridging its community development mission with the development and sustainability of new academic programs. Both the university and the campus strategic plans call for academic scholarship that can address issues of inclusion, social justice and community development within the framework of “engaged scholarship,” “academic differentiation” and “experiential learning.”

At the campus-wide level, the CLC responds to one of the strategic directions adopted for the campus— the development of “High Quality and Interdisciplinary Graduate and Professional Programs.” Two programs developed and offered under the leadership of Professor Bonilla-Santiago are: the Graduate Certificate Program in Community Development in Puerto Rico, and the Educational Policy and Leadership Specialization within the Masters in Public Administration (MPA) Program at Rutgers-Camden. Both programs are meeting important societal needs. The program in Puerto Rico addresses the need for training emerging leaders to become effective and ethical agents for community development in neighborhoods all over the Island. The Educational Leadership specialization responds to the need for developing new leaders to anchor and lead needed transformation in schools and the education sector.

Building Leaders in Puerto Rico

The CLC welcomed twenty-nine (29) new students to participate in the Graduate Certificate Program in Community Development for the 2015-2016 academic year. The program was customized in partnership with the Center for Puerto Rico, a non-profit organization founded and led by former Puerto Rico Governor Sila Calderon (also a Rutgers Honorary Doctoral Degree recipient). Jointly, the program was designed to provide a solid theoretical context for community development, while also building the skill repertoire of emerging leaders looking to expand their knowledge and practical competencies to be effective agents of change in their communities. The

program has received considerable support from various public and private organizations in Puerto Rico, including the Puerto Rican Legislature, Aireko Foundation, Kinesis Foundation, Putnam Bridge Funding, OCAM (Office of Municipal Affairs), and the Public Housing Department. For the 2015-16 programs, \$287,100 has been fundraised for scholarships.

An important feature of the program is the community projects that were developed by the students as part of the completion requirements. The range of issues targeted by this community based effort includes housing, youth development and advocacy.

For example, a current Certificate student, Carol Ramos Gerena, is leading an effort with a Community Land Trust in San Juan to mobilize community members to avoid displacement caused by a large-scale dredging project.

The Council of Education in Puerto Rico has approved extending the program to allow for interested certificate holders to complete the full MPA degree. This approach provides for students in Puerto Rico to complete a full graduate program using a hybrid teaching format that combines online course delivery with intensive seminars. The program also provides for a great faculty exchange with Rutgers faculty teaching alongside faculty experts in Puerto Rico.

Notable Accomplishments of Educational Policy and Leadership Concentration graduates

- Maria Alleva is Admissions Director of the LPN Program at Salem Vo-Tech Schools.
- Barbara Alley is a Supervisor of Early Childhood Education with Camden City Public Schools.
- Michelle Beach is a Math Coach with Kensington High School in Philadelphia, PA
- Charles Benito is a Director of Student Achievement Data and Assessment at LEAP Academy University Charter School.
- Nicole Brodie is a Math Coach with Camden City Public Schools.
- La' Tane Bradley is a Principal of Thomas H. Dudley Family School in with Camden.
- Jorge Calixto is Principal of LEAP Academy Intermediate School.
- Barbara Dunlap is Principal of the LEAP Academy Upper Elementary School.
- Phil Gianfortune is currently Dean at the Bishop Eustace Prep School.
- Christopher Giannotti is Assistant Principal at Hainesport Township Board of Education.
- Adam Greenman became Executive Director of Rhode Island After School Plus Alliance.
- Jeff Grossman is a Lead Teacher/Coach with Camden City Public Schools.
- Ebony Hinson is a Lead Teacher at Berlin Public Schools.
- Janna Johnson is Principal of H.B. Wilson Family School in Camden City.
- Dr. Maricarmen Macrina is Principal of Thomas H. Dudley Family School in Camden City.
- Katrina McCoombs is the Deputy Superintendent of Schools for Camden City Public Schools.
- Al Minicozzi is Principal of the Crescent Hill Academy in Pennsauken NJ.
- Brian Mistretta is Director of Special Services for Oradell Public Schools.
- Lana Murray is Principal of the Ulysses S. Wiggins College Preparatory Lab Family School in Camden City.
- Nancy Ruiz is Principal of the LEAP Academy STEAM High School.
- Sage Schmidt is Director of Special Services for Salem Public Schools.
- Andrea Surrat is Principal of the Camden Community Charter School.
- Jovita Veguilla is Principal at the LEAP Academy.

Preparing School Leaders in Camden Educational Policy and Leadership Concentration

Under the leadership of Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, the CLC has continued to work closely with the Department of Public Policy and Administration (DPPA) to offer a specialized Educational Policy and Leadership Concentration (EPLC) for aspiring school leaders. The program has graduated cohorts of students with the credentials to become principals and school administrators.

This program was originally developed as a pilot program in 2003 and graduated its first cohort of students in 2005. Since 2009, the program has graduated 55 students who have gone on to secure their licenses and/or work in education related positions.

The EPLC program has continued to be operated as a small and targeted offering and has built-in three important strengths:

a) Transferability of Knowledge: As a result of its location under the Department of Public Policy and Administration, EPLC students have the opportunity to complete general core requirements which are rich in critical administrative and managerial areas such as Human Resources, Public Management and Policy Analysis. These experiences make the skills that are mastered through the curriculum very transferable in an education environment that is changing and where schools leaders are required to have solid administrative repertoires to lead schools and education systems.

b) Credibility: A degree from Rutgers brings the academic credibility that benefits graduates when seeking employment. The faculty in the program and the opportunities for engaging in quality applied research opportunities also enhance the quality of the program and promote important connections through shared networks of stakeholders that are connected in varied ways to education in the region.

c) Non-traditional Approach: The EPLC takes into account that the field of school leadership is rapidly changing, and more individuals who may have not come from the teaching ranks are playing newly created roles in schools. The changing landscape of public education from district-run systems to more decentralized systems, like charter schools, is also altering the traditional approaches that were used to training school leaders. The EPLC Program was developed to address these changes and, because of its size, can provide students with experiences that are specific to their own place, career interest and organizational context.



EPLC graduate Jovita Veguilla leads the LEAP Academy Elementary School



Fuster Community Art Project in Havana 2016



The Rutgers-Camden group in Las Terrazas, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

CLC New Initiative: Urbanism and Sustainable Community Development in Cuba

The Obama Administration's historic transformation of U.S. policy toward the island nation of Cuba has re-set U.S.-Cuban relations in ways that are rapidly creating new opportunities for educational exchange and partnerships. Rutgers-Camden is uniquely positioned to lead the entire Rutgers University community in the development of relationships with Cuban institutions of higher learning, and Cuban scholars and students because of Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor Gloria Bonilla Santiago's nearly three decades of travel to and educational program development in Cuba. Dr. Santiago has close ties with faculty and administrators at the University of Havana and San Geronimo University, among other educational institutions, who are interested in expanding and strengthening their ties to Rutgers University. They have identified Rutgers-Camden as their preferred partner in a renewed formal memorandum of understanding between the University of Havana and our campus.

The CLC is prepared to be at the forefront of scholarship and engagement in building best community development practices between Cuba and Camden. It hosted lectures by notable Cuban scholars from New York and Washington and led a momentous trip of students, faculty, and alumni to study artistic, historic preservation, and urban agriculture projects.

This past year, the CLC partnered with the Rutgers University Office of Global Advancement and International Affairs to host unique presentations on the current relationship between the United States and Cuba. In preparation for a 2016 Spring Break trip to Cuba, led by Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago and Dr. Lori Minnite, students and members of the public learned from leading scholars in sustainable community development and international relations. In one session, Dr. Mario Gonzalez-Corzo, Associate Professor in Economics at Lehman College, presented on techniques of historic preservation and sustainable urban agriculture as potential strategies for community and economic development in a distressed city like Camden. In a follow up session, Dr. William LeoGrande, Professor of Government at American University, shared his insight into the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba, and what it will take to lift the embargo that has hampered social and economic progress in Cuba and created a political blockade in the U.S. In February, Cuban filmmaker Miguel Coyula presented his film, "Memories of Overdevelopment," a collage of flashbacks, daydreams, and hallucinations comprising live-action, animation, and newsreel footage assembled to suggest the way personal memory works, subjectively and emotionally. Finally, in March, Greg Watson of the Schumacher

Center for a New Economics, spoke to students about Cuban agricultural efforts followed by a field trip to the Camden Center for Environmental Transformation.

From March 11-18, 2016, 25 students, faculty, and alumni visited Cuba to learn about sustainable community development on the cusp of President Obama's historic trip. Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago shared her 30 years of experience and relationships with the group to expose and challenge participants to think about community development through a new lens. The Cuban people have remained resilient, innovative, and creative in using art, historic preservation, and urban agriculture to build capacity amidst the struggles of a weak economic system. The students interviewed leaders of these movements for their semester research projects as part of their class Urbanism and Sustainable Community Development in Cuba.

In October, 2016, the CLC is planning a major international conference on sustainable community development and university partnerships. The focus is to set up a series of meetings and site visits in the region to introduce Cuban scholars and conference participants to U.S. models of "third sector" initiatives aimed at addressing poverty, environmental racism, educational disparities and other initiatives important to community development and well-being.

Lecture Series on Urban Education and Community Development Inspire Conversation and Public Learning

The Community Leadership Center's Lecture Series on Urban Education and Community Development continually unite Rutgers-Camden with members of the public to learn together in shared interest and practice around salient issues of urban social development.

To start the year, a group of researchers and school administrators provided guidance for schools to prepare for the annual Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam using the Common Core Standards framework.

Dr. Marc Aronson, Assistant Teaching Professor, Library & Information Science School of Communication and Information, Rutgers-New Brunswick, Dr. Tracey Severns, Director of Student Performance, Mt. Olive School District, and Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi, President, Camden County College presented on the new frameworks for academic success and the challenges schools face to meet enhanced state assessments. Participants walked away

with a renewed commitment to change their school practices so all students are prepared for these rigorous tests.

In the spring, the CLC partnered with the Rutgers School of Law Camden to present a daylong symposium on juvenile justice, featuring Marsha Levick, Deputy Director and Chief Counsel, Juvenile Law Center, along with two panels of judicial scholars and youth mentors. All of the presenters conclude that the justice system unfairly targets young and minority individuals who lose their shot at obtaining a meaningful education that can lead towards a fulfilling life. The day was very powerful at addressing the inequities in our system and solutions for how to overcome them.

This past fall, the CLC hosted a symposium on the impact of early learning on community development. Dr. Linda Whitehead, Vice President of Education and Curriculum at Bright Horizons Family Solutions, Dr. Milagros

Nores, Assistant Director of Research for the National Institute for Early Education Research, and Dr. Ellen Wolock, Director of the Early Childhood Division of the New Jersey Department of Education, gave insightful presentations on the strategies and direction early childhood practitioners can take to build successful programs.

Later, a group of state officials discussed the state of charter schools in New Jersey, which generated much support for these innovative educational vehicles. Harry Lee, Director of the Office of Charter Schools for the New Jersey Department of Education, Mashea Ashton, CEO of the Newark Charter School Fund, Nicole Cole, President and CEO of the New Jersey Charter School Association shared legislative and funding updates for how to generate enough enthusiasm and support for charter school growth throughout the state.

All session presentations can be accessed online at: http://clc.camden.rutgers.edu/Lectures_Conference.html

DISRUPTING POWER AND PRIVILEGE TO EMPOWER WOMEN

On Friday, March 25, 2016, the Community Leadership Center co-hosted the first annual Women's History Month Conference, featuring Dr. Christine Ortiz as the Keynote speaker. Dr. Ortiz is the Morris Cohen Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and the Dean of Graduate Education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Dr. Ortiz spoke to LEAP Academy high school students in the morning about her career path studying the sciences and rising to a senior leadership position at a prestigious university. At the conference, she shared her vision for a groundbreaking model of a university for the 21st Century.



Kris Lindenmeyer, Ph.D., Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Christine Ortiz, Dean for Graduate Education and Morris Cohen Professor Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, Ph.D., Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor

SAVE THE DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016

Rutgers –Camden Alfredo Santiago Scholarship Fundraising Gala at
The Atrium at the Curtis Center in Philadelphia

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