

## STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

PRESIDENT MARVIN KRISLOV

Monday, February 10, 2025

**I**t is an honor to stand before you today and address this extraordinary community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of Pace University.

And to those joining us virtually from Pleasantville, White Plains, Valhalla, California, Mumbai, and everywhere else our Pace reach extends—welcome. No matter where you are, you are part of our wonderful community.

First, I thank our student speaker, Desmond Chavous '26, for his inspiring words. Your energy, determination, and intellectual curiosity embody the very best of our Pace Community.

Since our founding in 1906 as a school of accountancy to last year's launch of the Sands College of Performing Arts as our seventh college, we have remained a beacon of possibility.

Through economic downturns, global crises, and shifts in education, our mission has never wavered: to empower individuals through education and opportunity.

This resilience is woven into every part of our community—from students who overcome challenges to faculty and staff who drive innovation and our alumni who mentor and support future generations.

Higher education is at a crossroads. Institutions like ours face challenges—fluctuating enrollments, financial pressures, and shifting public perception. Meeting these challenges requires adaptability, bold leadership, and a willingness to reimagine what a university can and should be.

That sounds like a pretty good definition of a "Go-getter," doesn't it?

We don't just change lives—we transform communities. A recent study by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities found that Pace University generates over \$850 million in economic activity annually through research, construction, salaries, and supporting local businesses. The Pace reach goes beyond our campuses—it's also seen in the businesses our alumni build, the jobs they hold, and the communities they strengthen.

We need to share our story. Locally, nationally, and globally, Pace is making a real difference. Let's show the world how our University creates opportunity and drives progress.

**S**tanding before you today, I am here to report that the State of Pace University is dynamic and resilient. We are innovative—and we are ready for what's next.

Our strength lies in seeing our challenges not as roadblocks but as opportunities to redefine what is possible.

This year, we did this. While dealing with challenges, we have made scholarly breakthroughs, witnessed immense student successes, and deepened community partnerships.

Today, we celebrate not just our achievements, but the people who made them possible. Each of you has shaped this university, and together, we have accomplished remarkable things.

But don't just take my word for it—let's take a moment to see firsthand the spirit of Pace and the incredible journey we've shared over the past year.

[Watching that video](#), I am filled with pride and gratitude for all we have done together. Thank you to University Relations for capturing that spirit in a snippet of our year that was.

Together, we are Pace. This year's achievements reflect our belief in the power of education, research, and collaboration to shape a brighter future.

That commitment is exemplified by one of this year's most exciting achievements—the creation of the Gale Epstein Center for Technology, Policy, and the Environment in Westchester.

As climate change intensifies, with extreme weather events like hurricanes and the recent Los Angeles wildfires, the need for real-time environmental monitoring and informed policymaking has never been more urgent.

The Epstein Center, made possible by a generous \$2.5 million gift, will serve as a regional hub for advancing technologies, data systems, and policy reforms to protect human and environmental health.

This reinforces us as a leader in addressing global environmental challenges.

The Epstein Center is just one example of how we are investing in Pace's future, and that same forward-thinking approach is driving transformation across our campuses.

We have secured tens of millions of dollars in public and private grants to support the reconstruction of One Pace Plaza East, a bold step toward a more modern, collaborative, and innovative campus. This revitalized space will feature new classrooms, creative arts spaces, and a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center with a theater and additional performance and support spaces. Maria's Tower will be renovated to create a more modern and comfortable living experience for our students.

Our dedication to sustainability continues to drive how we operate, ensuring a more efficient and responsible future. This year, we reduced energy usage by 24.8 percent, saving nearly \$3 million. Our efforts earned national recognition—15 Beekman received the Better Project Award for Sustainable Design from the US Department of Energy.

In Pleasantville, Lienhard Hall has been renovated with eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient lighting, and sustainable construction. Our Pleasantville Cyber Range advances cutting-edge technology, providing hands-on cybersecurity training and research opportunities.

These future-focused investments create a future-focused Pace that provides the best learning environments.

As we enhance our physical spaces and sustainability efforts, we are also strengthening the support systems that help our students thrive.

With a three-year Stavros Niarchos Foundation Grant of \$350,000, we are expanding mental health outreach and prevention efforts, ensuring all students have the resources they need to succeed. We also launched the Student Support and Outreach unit, providing 24/7 wraparound services and a one-stop approach to advisement and problem-solving.

For our commuter students, we've added study, event, and lounge spaces in both New York City and Pleasantville. Programming has expanded to better serve their needs. We launched the 5-1-1 Ride Share program to support carpooling. These efforts, and others, ensure every Pace student feels supported and connected.

This is core to our values. At Pace, inclusive excellence is rooted in our commitment to diversity, ensuring that every member of our community is supported and empowered. We are dedicated to providing every student, faculty, and staff member—no matter their background—with the tools, guidance, and opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

**E**xternal policies may change, but our values do not. What was true when Pace was founded in 1906 during President Teddy Roosevelt's administration remains just as true today—*Opportunities*. As we look ahead, we will continue to build a university where every member of our community feels seen, supported, and prepared for success.

As we do this, we are improving the systems that keep Pace running efficiently.

PaceWorks is changing how we deliver essential services, streamlining processes so that students can focus on their education and faculty and staff can dedicate more time to teaching, mentoring, and innovating.

A major thank-you to all who worked so hard to make this project come to fruition.

At the same time, we must respond to the broader landscape of higher education. To ensure that we remain prepared for shifts in federal policies, we have formed the Federal Administration Transition Task Force.

This group—made up of students, faculty, and staff—began its work in January and will monitor policy changes, assess their effects on our community, and provide clear resources to help students, faculty, and staff navigate any new developments. The task force will also ensure essential support services remain available and streamline communications to keep our campuses informed.

Just as we have adapted to change in the past, we remain ready for whatever comes next.

Building a strong, connected community goes beyond academics and operations—it's about fostering growth and collaboration. As part of our strategic plan to make Pace even more desirable place to work, we are investing in mentorship and networking.

In October, we launched the Pace Connect—an Employee Mentoring Program to support faculty and staff development. The first phase, "Calling All Mentors," is underway, with 51 mentors already signed up across campuses. Mentee recruitment begins in March 2025, aligning with Employee Development Days. If you're interested in joining these efforts, contact HR.

Our Connect and Network events are also redefining career development, with nearly 100 attendees at our latest leadership panel on navigating today's evolving job market.

At the same time, we continue driving innovation. Through initiatives like the Microsoft 365 Copilot mini-grant program, we are embracing AI to enhance teaching and learning, equipping faculty and students with cutting-edge tools. AI isn't just about efficiency—it's about transforming the way we think, create, and shape the future.

Our commitment to intellectual exploration and meaningful dialogue continues to define the Pace experience, fostering a dynamic and engaged community.

At Pace, our learning extends beyond the classroom. Student activity fairs ignite involvement, pre-professional clubs connect students with career paths, and Student Research Days showcase academic excellence.

This year, we launched Days of Origin, a University-wide initiative inspired by the book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, sparking important conversations on history and perspective.

And there's more to come. On March 3, Kind Foods CEO and *Shark Tank* "Shark" Daniel Lubetzky will visit our New York City Campus to share his story and engage with our future leaders about building bridges in business. Stay tuned for more details.

Our investment in academic excellence goes beyond infrastructure—it is reflected in the strength of our programs, the dedication of our faculty and staff, and the success of our students.

Our distinctive approach to teaching and learning ensures that students don't just study; they engage, they create, and they contribute. Faculty play a critical role in shaping our future leaders, influencing their fields, and fostering an environment where scholarship and mentorship thrive.

At Dyson College, our student addressed the United Nations General Assembly on issues of disarmament and international security. The Fed Challenge Team's regional victory once again showed the talent and dedication of our students and faculty.

In the School of Education, our programs continue to earn national recognition, with our graduate education offerings ranked #54 in *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Online Programs. Our School District Business Leader program also achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the New York State exam.

The Lubin School of Business continues to rise in prominence, earning spots on LinkedIn's 2024 Top 100 MBA Programs list and Fortune's Best MBA Programs for 2025. Lubin's online MBA also made a significant leap in the *U.S. News* rankings, climbing from 142 in 2022 to 75 in 2024—a strong indicator of the program's growing reputation and quality.

Lubin remains committed to real-life learning and industry connections. The first annual Lubin Gala brought together 200 students, strengthening professional networks.

At the Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems, we are preparing students to lead in the rapidly evolving world of artificial intelligence. AI has long been central to our curriculum, and as technology advances, so do we.

Seidenberg continues to expand its offerings, revamping courses, integrating emerging technologies, and launching new programs. Most recently, we introduced a bachelor's in computer engineering, providing students with the skills to design and develop the next generation of computing systems.

New master's programs are also on the way. The MS in Artificial Intelligence will prepare students to work with large AI models, while the MS in Applied AI will focus on using AI across disciplines to solve real-world challenges.

At the Sands College of Performing Arts, we continue to be a powerhouse in the entertainment industry. Once again, we rank among the top colleges represented on Broadway. This year, we celebrated the extraordinary presence of 19 Pace-affiliated Rockettes.

The College of Health Professions continues to innovate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals. In the Lienhard School of Nursing, the undergraduate nursing program boasts a 92 percent state exam pass rate—well above the national average. For graduate advanced nurse practitioner programs, 97 percent of graduates are licensed or certified and practice-ready within a year. In the College's two physician assistant programs, certification pass rates consistently exceed the national average with over 97 percent.

CHP also recently secured a \$200,000 Josiah Macy Foundation grant to support disability inclusion in nursing. Additionally, CHP received funding for a nearly \$100,000 project to upgrade simulation lab equipment, highlighting the vital role of our nursing school in Pleasantville.

The Pforzheimer Honors College continues to be a top choice for students, building on its already exceptional retention rates. In May, the college hosted its first Honors Research Conference on both campuses, featuring nearly 200 student presentations and drawing 300+ attendees. The next conference, set for May, promises another impressive showcase of student research.

At the Elisabeth Haub School of Law, our Environmental Law Program remains #1 in the nation, holding its top ranking for the fourth consecutive year. Our Advocacy Program, now ranked #13 nationally, continues to gain recognition, with recent wins in high-profile competitions, including the prestigious Golden Ticket Summit.

Across our seven colleges faculty are shaping the future through innovative teaching and groundbreaking research.

This year, Pace secured nearly \$4 million in new grant funding, bringing annual total grant funding to over \$8.5 million. The number of awarded grants has increased, reflecting our growing reputation for excellence. These funds support faculty research and student success initiatives. The Office of the Provost is leading efforts to secure even more resources.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on fostering a culture of innovation and excellence, where faculty push the boundaries of knowledge and inspire the next generation of leaders.

At Pace, academic excellence is paired with real-world experience. This year, over 9,000 internships, co-ops, and field experiences gave students the hands-on skills needed to succeed.

Opportunities at top companies like Credit Suisse, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Madison Square Garden, Morgan Stanley, NBCUniversal, Saint Laurent, and Warner Bros. Discovery, help students apply their knowledge, explore career paths, and gain confidence.

Through the Community Impact Funded Internship Program, 95 students interned at 44 nonprofits, supported by \$500,000 in alumni and other donations. Organizations like Make-A-Wish Hudson Valley, National Urban League, New York Botanical Garden, New York Public Library, and Ronald McDonald House benefited from student contributions while providing valuable career experience.

This is *Opportunitas* in action—ensuring students graduate ready to lead, contribute, and make a difference.

And our momentum doesn't stop there. Pace Athletics had a historic year with championships, record-breaking performances, and academic achievement.

Women's lacrosse won its first Northeast-10 Championship, and men's lacrosse earned its first NCAA Tournament victory. Field hockey, softball, and baseball saw standout seasons, with multiple teams and athletes earning All-American honors. Our esports program continues to lead in our region and pave the way for the future of this competitive field.

Men's basketball had its best start ever, while women's basketball and baseball led the conference in academic achievement. Women's cross country claimed its first team victory, and after nearly 40 years, men's soccer is back this fall.

We are also strengthening the foundation that makes all of this possible.

With \$258 million raised toward our \$300 million campaign goal, we are on track to complete this effort by fiscal year 2027—one year ahead of schedule. Alumni engagement has also reached record levels.

As we move forward, we will continue to focus on the people of Pace—on the students who are chasing their dreams, on the faculty who are shaping minds and pushing boundaries, on the staff who support every aspect of university life, and on the alumni and supporters who make so much of what we do possible.

Supporting our people remains a top priority. Based on the findings and recommendations of the Gallagher Study, we are actively collaborating with deans and University leaders to explore how key insights can inform a multi-year adjustment strategy focused on addressing under-market salaries. Our goal is to translate these findings into meaningful improvements. This work is ongoing, with more details to be shared as plans develop. As always, progress will depend on enrollment and financial stability.

As we celebrate our achievements, we must also acknowledge the challenges. From the looming demographic cliff to shifts in public confidence, these challenges are real. Together, we will adapt, innovate, and ensure that Pace continues to thrive and is positioned for the future. Our history has taught us that resilience is not just about surviving—it is about finding ways to grow in the face of adversity.

For over a century, we have been defined by our motto: *Opportunitas*. We have opened doors for students from every background, providing them with the education, experiences, and support they need.

To be clear, we are proud that Pace is home to as many students as ever—including a significant number of first-generation college students. It's a sign that people want to be here and that we are ready to provide the opportunities they need.

Consider this: 95 percent of the Class of 2023 were employed or continuing their education within six months of graduation. Their full-time salaries exceeded national averages, with Pace bachelor's graduates earning nearly \$75,000, over \$11,000 more than the national average. Master's

graduates earned over \$85,000, more than \$4,000 above the national average. And the Class of 2024 is on track to achieve equally impressive results.

This is how we deliver on our historic promise of opportunity.

Yet, we are at a pivotal moment.

Higher education is grappling with economic pressures, shifting demographics, and students and families increasingly questioning the value of higher education. To answer those questions, we must rise to the challenge, act decisively, and build on our strengths while charting a course for continuous improvement.

To ensure Pace's success, we must focus on four key priorities. These are not just institutional goals—these are calls to action for everyone in the Pace Community.

## **F**irst, we must be laser focused on student success. This means improving student recruitment, retention, and graduation rates.

Attracting and retaining high-caliber students is critical—not just for continuing to build our reputation, but for delivering the strong return on investment we promise every graduate. Retention must remain a top priority, with a clear goal of increasing our first-year retention rate from 75 percent to 85 percent by Fall 2028.

To achieve this, we are reimagining the first-year student experience and exploring ways to enhance initiatives like Pace Academy. Additionally, we are implementing new advising models to provide personalized academic guidance and proactive support.

Operationally, we are improving efficiencies through PaceWorks to make it easier for students to access the resources they need. We are also strengthening our commitment to mental health and wellness by expanding counseling services, peer support programs, and faculty training.

Success requires all of us to work together. Here are things we can do:

Hold classes in person. Provide assessments and feedback in the first two weeks of the semester. Schedule classes on Fridays. Attend recruitment events. And, connect personally with students and families through enrollment management activities. Be present. Be proactive. And be engaged.

Together, these efforts, and others, will strengthen our ability to attract, support, and retain exceptional students.

By investing in these resources and support systems, we are building a more connected and resilient Pace Community—one where every student feels supported from enrollment to graduation.

## **S**econd, we must grow our academic reputation.

We are proud of the progress we have made, but we must continue strengthening and refining our programs. This will allow us to attract even more top faculty and staff, secure more faculty and undergraduate research funding, and rise in the rankings.

As part of this effort, the Provost's Office and its team are working with faculty to develop an academic plan that aligns programs with student needs, industry trends, and our long-term vision. This means prioritizing areas of high demand and strong outcomes. By taking a proactive approach, we can enhance our reputation, foster new partnerships, and expand opportunities for students.

We are also focused on supporting faculty through initiatives like the Faculty Center. We are integrating artificial intelligence into our curriculum, in all schools and fields, to ensure students graduate with the skills to navigate a rapidly evolving workforce.

Quality hybrid and online programs are also essential to reaching all types of learners—whether traditional students, working professionals, or career changers. Expanding these options ensures that a Pace education remains accessible and relevant at every stage of life.

## **T**hird, we must ensure that every dollar spent reflects our values and priorities.

How we allocate resources reflects what we value most: student success, academic distinction, and institutional resilience. This requires making tough decisions—letting go of or modifying initiatives that no longer serve our mission and doubling down on those that deliver the most for our students and faculty.

Every investment must align with our strategic goals, allowing us to remain both adaptable and future-focused.

## **F**ourth, we must cultivate partnerships that advance our mission and vision.

To deliver on our academic promise, we must continue strengthening collaborations with philanthropic organizations, foundations, government agencies, and employers. These partnerships fuel innovation, expand resources, and position Pace as a leader in real-life learning.

And sometimes, it's not just about preparing students for the workforce—sometimes, the workforce comes to us. Through a partnership with Verizon, we are providing specialized training for their employees, reinforcing Pace's role as a hub for lifelong learning and professional development.

Our partnerships also extend across the globe. We continue to expand collaborations with institutions in India, fostering research opportunities and academic exchange. And most recently, we launched an exciting new partnership with Taejae University in Korea, creating pathways for student and faculty engagement in a rapidly growing international education landscape.

These calls to action will shape our future and align with the pillars of our strategic plan, all while reinforcing our commitment to inclusive excellence.

We will lead in real-life learning giving every student an experience that sets them apart.

We will invest in scholarly and creative work, boosting our reputation and faculty impact.

We will focus on students, strengthening programs, resources, and support for their success.

And we will keep Pace financially strong and adaptable, growing while staying true to our mission.

Achieving these goals requires each and every one of us to do our part, faculty and staff who inspire and support, alumni who embody the strength of a Pace education, and students who bring ambition and determination.

I see a Pace that is nimble and relentless in its pursuit of excellence. A university that honors its legacy of opportunity while advancing with even greater quality and distinction. A place where students, faculty and staff, alumni, and partners form a thriving community that supports lifelong success.

**A**t its core, Pace will always be the University of *Opportunitas*—where ambition meets expertise, and passion drives success.

Pace's future is bright, but it depends on all of us—students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters. Together, we will rise to meet this moment, strengthen our legacy, and ensure Pace leads as a university of opportunity, quality, and distinction.

When I think about the state of our university, I think about the effort and commitment I see every day. It's the advisor who stays late to help a student plan their future. The faculty member who checks in when a student is struggling. The facilities team making sure our spaces are ready. The student who dives deeper, fueled by curiosity and a passion to learn.

This is what makes Pace special. It's more than where we go every day for work or an education—it's our family.

We've faced challenges—September 11, Superstorm Sandy, COVID-19—and every time, we've shown resilience. No matter what comes our way, we adapt, we grow, and we lead.

That dedication shines through in the story of Dr. Ipshita Ray, a professor of marketing at Lubin. Diagnosed with stage three cancer in early 2023, she overcame it with the support of her Pace colleagues. Now, she's back—energized, grateful, and ready to give back. She's using her experience to help students find connection, purpose, and the determination to lead meaningful lives after Pace. Ipshita was always committed, but this second chance has inspired her to do even more. Thank you, Ipshita. Your conviction to our community is truly inspiring.

That spirit of perseverance is the heart of Pace.

Challenges will come. Tough decisions will follow. But even when we don't agree on every step, we are one family, united by a shared mission: to create opportunity, transform lives, and help students thrive.

Our work begins and ends with our people. That's why I am confident in Pace's future—because I am confident in all of you.

Together, we will honor our legacy of *Opportunitas* and write the next great chapter in Pace's story.

Thank you.