

Livingston College History



Livingston College was founded in 1965, and opened in 1969, at Rutgers University's Kilmer Campus (renamed as Livingston Campus in 1991) in Piscataway, New Jersey. It had a mission to bring together a diverse group of students, faculty and staff in a shared-learning community committed to the pursuit of academic innovation and excellence.

- College/campus timeline.
- Great Expectations: Writings on Livingston College History.

Livingston College had the distinction of being Rutgers-New Brunswick's first coeducational undergraduate residential college for the liberal arts.

The college's mission was eventually embraced by the entire university, honoring the college's distinction of community building through leadership and understanding.

Dedicated to expanding opportunities for its students, the college fulfilled its mission through its core curriculum, its minor in organizational leadership, its internship programs, and its student life activities. Livingston offered students the personal attention of a small college community within a major research institution.

Its original motto, "Strength through Diversity," came to life in the college's signature lecture series, the Global Futures Symposia. Livingston College offered an undergraduate education that prepared students to think critically and to act responsibly in the contemporary world. The college offered the broadest possible choice at the university of more than 60 majors, with an academic program designed to give students an excellent foundation in the liberal arts and an in-depth understanding of their chosen fields of interest. Courses in fulfillment of distribution requirements gave students experience in the humanities, natural and social sciences, and quantitative and analytical studies. Livingston College students were also introduced to the diversity of world cultures as they developed insight into the origins and character of contemporary national and global issues.

Livingston offered a unique minor in organizational leadership. Unifying the theoretical and practical elements of organizational dynamics, the minor ensured that the student's academic background included a component immediately recognizable as valuable by potential employers. The program complemented instruction offered in Rutgers' professional schools and offered important curricular options to students pursuing degrees in arts and sciences. The college was committed to providing an open forum where ideas and values were examined and restructured in the light of knowledge acquired within and beyond the classroom.

Rutgers' new School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) enrolled its first students for the fall 2007 semester, replacing the New Brunswick-area liberal arts undergraduate colleges, including Livingston College. Livingston's final commencement as a separate college was held in 2010. SAS is now the largest school at Rutgers.

Read more about the vibrant current Livingston Campus.

Scarlet and Black Marker Confronts Legacy of William Livingston and His Family

A plaque installed in 2021 on the Livingston campus confronts the legacy of William Livingston, namesake of the campus and the former Livingston College, and his family, as people who enslaved other human beings.



Photos courtesy of Stephen Yanick

The two-sided marker has been placed on a prominent walkway on campus, between the Lynton North and South Towers residence halls and the Livingston Student Center.

The plaque reads:

"Livingston Campus (site of former Livingston College) was named after William Livingston, the first governor of the state of New Jersey, whose family made a fortune trafficking human beings in the transatlantic slave trade. The campus opened in 1969 as an experimental, social-justice oriented campus at the site of Camp Kilmer, a World War II-era military camp. The Livingston family collectively enslaved hundreds of people and Williams' brothers, Philip and Robert, two of Rutgers' founding trustees, bought and sold hundreds more. When William Livingston moved to New Jersey, he enslaved at least two people, a woman named Bell and her son Lambert. Though he later advocated for gradual abolition, he continued to represent the legal interests of his slave-trading family's wealth throughout his career. This marker honors Bell, Lambert, and the other women, men, and children enslaved and sold by the Livingston family."