

# The Star-Ledger

## Rutgers new \$92M 'front porch' offers housing, retail, outdoor screen

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Rutgers University is opening a new residence hall, called the College Avenue Apartments, at the corner of College Avenue and Hamilton Street in New Brunswick. The \$92 million complex includes a 442-student residence hall, restaurants and retail space. It also includes "The Yard," a green lawn with a large video screen that will serve as a gathering space in the heart of the campus. The complex was built on a parking lot that once served as home to Rutgers' infamous Grease Trucks. August 26, 2016 (Patti Sapone | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#))

**NEW BRUNSWICK** — The new eateries are preparing to open, the giant video board is already showing sports and the 14th-floor sky deck is ready and waiting.

By the time classes begin on Sept. 6, Rutgers University hopes its new \$92 million "front porch," a grassy lawn surrounded by shops and on-campus apartments, will be crawling with students. The College Avenue Apartments are the latest high-end dormitory to open at Rutgers.

"This is a space that students not only can gather at, but it's a space that would attract them," said Antonio Calcado, senior vice president for institutional planning and operations. "It's a destination."

The new mix of student housing and retail space sits at the corner of Hamilton Street and College Avenue, the former university parking lot where the beloved "grease trucks" served fat sandwiches. It's intended to give Rutgers a central meeting space the New Brunswick campus has lacked, Calcado said.

In a nod to the past, one of the nine shops will be a brick and mortar location of RU Hungry, one of the popular food trucks. The restaurants, which include Jersey Mike's, Surf Taco and others, are expected to open next month and sit underneath new student apartments for 442 upperclassmen.

In the center of the U-shaped complex is a space Rutgers has dubbed "The Yard," a lawn with a 350-square-foot, high definition video board. The university expects to show Rutgers football games, presidential debates and other major news events on the big screen, Calcado said.

"I think you will see students lounging on the lawn, I think you will see people really coming to the retail space, I think you will see people sitting out here at these tables talking and having their lattes or their subs," Calcado said. "I think you will see a lot of people here."



Upperclassmen will move into the apartments on Sunday. The housing charge at the apartments starts at \$9,240 and goes as high as 9,528, for two semesters. Like other new campus housing, the apartments have air conditioning and include full-size beds, kitchens and bathrooms. An enclosed deck on the 14-floor offers a birds-eye view of New Brunswick.

Each of the 135 apartments, which are offered in one, two, three and four bedrooms, are filled for the upcoming school year, Calcado said.

The housing and retail space come as Rutgers is remaking the heart of its College Avenue campus. Last fall, the university debuted its new honors college, and it will open an adjacent \$116 million academic building this year.

The projects are part of a deal between Rutgers and New Brunswick Development Corporation (Devco), which helped oversee the construction and secure financing for the development. Revenue from the apartments and retail space are expected to cover costs of the construction of the new apartments.

Rutgers' first major event at the new campus hub will be a watch party for the Sept. 3 football game against the University of Washington.

The goal of the new housing and retail space is to enhance the student experience, Calcado said.

"We want students to have the fondest of memories about Rutgers," Calcado said.