

INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ecosystem Report

Mercy University & Metropolitan College of New York (MCNY)

New York, USA | For Engage 2026

SFU Engage Ecosystem Ambassador Report – NTNU



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Why Mercy University and MCNY

Mercy University

Mercy University spans three campuses across greater New York. I graduated in 2025, completing the program in three years instead of the usual four, and returned for this year's commencement to celebrate with my original class.

Metropolitan College of New York (MCNY)

Metropolitan College of New York is where Elena Rivera-Cheek earned her MBA before founding C&A Digital. She now champions entrepreneurship across several universities throughout New York and I connected with her in 2024.



M **MERCY**
UNIVERSITY

Mercy University & Business Honors Program

AT A GLANCE



Founded 1950 — three campuses across New York.



9,000+ students enrolled.



School of Business — professors with decades of corporate experience.



Motto: *Inserviendo consumere* — “To be consumed in service.”



Program Overview

A rigorous, fast-paced four-year honors track built around networking, community service, hand-selected professors, and study abroad that pairs corporate visits with cultural immersion.

Admission is by **application and interview** with the Honors Director — evaluated on academic merit, leadership, and professionalism.

Active Learning

Real consulting projects, a student-run business and investment fund, leadership challenges, and global travel — plus Bloomberg trading rooms and a finance & analytics lab on every campus.

Concentrations

Data Analytics, Entrepreneurship, Finance, General Business, International Business, Management, Marketing, Sport Management, and Risk Management & Insurance.

BUSINESS HONORS

Networking and Global Reach is key



2023: Spain



2023: UN



2023: JP Morgan Chase



2024: Greece



2025: Portugal



2026: Italy

STUDENT RUN ORGANIZATIONS

Student Clubs

Mercy's business clubs are student-run and built around career development. They bring in professionals and career coaches, while the Marketing and CEO clubs add alumni and Fortune 500 networking and recruiting. Members build leadership, inclusion, wellness, diversity and service skills along the way.

The CEO Club — Entrepreneurship

The goal is to bring together students interested in entrepreneurship and the broader world of business.

In practice, that means:

- Learning how to start and run a business
- Meeting other aspiring entrepreneurs
- Developing business ideas
- Entering entrepreneurship competitions
- Building leadership experience
- Visitors and keynote speakers
- Helping each other through weekly meetings.
- Cross disciplinary members from marketing, finance, accounting etc.



ABOUT

Business Plan Competition

The 2026 competition featured 38 students on 29 teams from all three Mercy campuses — undergraduate and graduate.



Advisory and planning

A Finalists Selection Committee of four School of Business faculty advisors guides each team through the semester in creating a business plan. Each group also receives a mentor who follows them throughout the year.



Funding & prizes

The Beba Foundation underwrites the top-three cash prizes awarded at the Grand Finale. In 2026 the top three winners shared \$9,000 in prize money.



Networking

Entrepreneur EXPO open to students, staff, alumni and the community; livestreamed to Manhattan and the Bronx.



Beba Foundation

Private funder and co-owner of the model. Directors Umran and Korhan Beba judge every year — Korhan has reviewed 1,000+ ideas.



Cross-disciplinary reach

2026 teams spanned business, nursing, computer science, legal studies, sport management and more, across all three campuses.



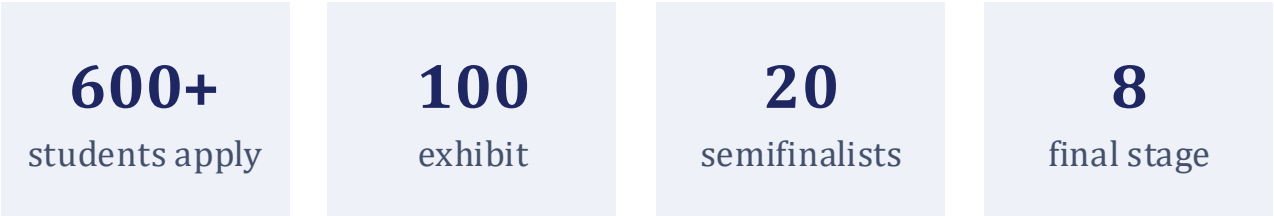
“We are not confining entrepreneurship to a single program or discipline — we spread it across our university and our partnerships in Westchester, the Bronx and Manhattan.”

— Greenwood, Mercy University

CEO Global Pitch Competition

Run by the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization, this international competition puts student founders in front of judges, investors and peers — with \$20,000 of non-dilutive funding on the line.

Selection funnel, 2026



What founders get

- National exposure to investors, mentors and fellow founders
- Mentorship and feedback through every round
- Ideas welcome — no revenue required to enter
- The conference brings together founders, investors/business people, university entrepreneurship programs and corporate partners. CEO explicitly describes the networking as a major part of the conference.

Prize pool

Place	Prize
🥇 1st	\$8,000
🥈 2nd	\$6,000
🥉 3rd	\$4,000
4th	\$2,000
Total	\$20,000

16,500+ members · 250+ university chapters · all 50 US states · 16+ countries

From a campus win to the national stage



Win at Mercy

1st place in the Mercy University pitch competition.



Global stage

Represents Mercy at the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization competition, Tampa FL.



Top 20 nationwide

Selected from 600 teams at the CEO national conference. Including teams from Harvard, Yale, Stanford and MIT.

Trace — the venture they built

A virtual company behind an easy-to-use tracking sticker for everyday items that are prone to getting lost.

"I gained valuable insights into the innovative efforts of students across the country who are taking initiative to start their own companies and make a meaningful impact on society."

— Sophia Resolme





MNY | **METROPOLITAN**
COLLEGE OF NEW YORK
FOUNDED BY AUDREY COHEN IN 1964

Metropolitan College of New York

AT A GLANCE



Founded 1964 — by education pioneer Audrey Cohen, with 1,000 students.



Notable alumna — Elena Rivera-Cheek ('02) built her business on this coursework, then went on to MIT.



Three schools — Human Services & Education, Business, and Public Affairs & Administration.



Purpose-Centered Education

Its signature model pairs Purpose-Centered Education with Constructive Action® — an experiential approach where every term is built around a “purpose” that links classroom learning to real-world fieldwork.

Programs

Business, human services, public affairs, education, IT, emergency management, healthcare systems management, and nonprofit management.

Entrepreneurship pathway

Required coursework turns an idea into a business, and MCNY's pre-incubator carries teams through mentoring and a business plan to the New Venture Pitch.

Elena Rivera: From Classroom to Company



Elena Rivera '02

Founder & CEO, C&A Digital
Running over 10 years

A Founder in the Making

The program was groundwork for Elena's company, C&A Digital, which is communications agency specialized in pharmaceutical/healthcare marketing.

The structure mirrored launching a business:

- Semester 1 — a full business plan
- Semester 2 — marketing & financials
- Semester 3 — execution, putting the plan into action

What set it apart were the mentors — real-world experts, not traditional academics, who had done the work themselves. Their guidance took her from idea to execution.

Their advice shaped her path, spend three to five years learning the industry.

Consultant, then VP, and after two years she launched her own company.
Her first client was Johnson & Johnson

Incubator program

A university-based pre-incubator and venture-development program that takes MCNY students and alumni from a first idea to a funded pitch.



What the program provides

- Mentoring from business faculty and industry professionals
- Help developing a real-world business plan
- Access to industry and field experts
- Networking opportunities
- Preparation for a business pitch competition
- The opportunity to win cash prizes

Historically free for MCNY students and alumni.

Who can participate

- Undergraduate Business students in semester 4 or later
- MBA students from semester 1 onward
- MCNY School for Business alumni

Applicants interview with the Incubation Facilitation Team.



Entrepreneurship & Business Management course

Idea to business — for founders and intrapreneurs.



New Venture Pitch

MCNY's pitch competition.

NTNU vs. Mercy and MCNY

Similarities & Differences

Benchmarking governance, ownership, mentorship, funding, global focus and networking — set out across the two comparison tables that follow.

Similarities & Differences vs. NTNU

Part 1 of 3 — governance, student initiatives, curriculum role

Category	NTNU / Trondheim	Mercy University & MCNY
Governance Is the ecosystem governed or owned?	Hybrid model that combines top-down university and public funding with bottom-up, student-driven initiatives (Spark).	Mercy: Centralized model led by university leadership and the School of Business, spread university-wide and co-funded by a foundation. Strong top-down drive. MCNY: Centrally owned by the School for Business through required curriculum, with little bottom-up activity.
Student role Are students drivers or participants?	Students are the drivers, through student-led organizations and initiatives, with high autonomy. Mentorship is strong and peer-to-peer mentoring is common.	Mercy: Students are participants and organizers through student-run clubs with peer-to-peer mentoring. The Business Plan Competition is faculty-driven, so student autonomy is mixed: the institution provides the platform and students lead parts of it. MCNY: No dedicated student-run venture club identified. Activity is more constrained by curriculum and smaller class sizes, and the institution directs entrepreneurial learning.
University role What is the University’s operational role?	NTNU enables student entrepreneurship.	Mercy: Encourages an entrepreneurial mindset while emphasizing career readiness and work experience, with a strong focus on career preparation and professional exposure. MCNY: Entrepreneurship is integrated more deeply into the curriculum, aiming to turn every student into a founder, while still encouraging three to five years of prior work experience.

Similarities & Differences vs. NTNU

Part 2 of 3 — mentorship, funding, global focus and networking

Category	NTNU / Trondheim	Mercy University & MCNY
Guidance and Mentorship	Free mentoring via Spark* (student-driven). Close, hands-on guidance at the NTNU School of Entrepreneurship.	Mercy: Faculty-, alumni- and student-driven. Alumni and industry figures are built into the structure, not treated as occasional guests. MCNY: Faculty-directed. Faculty mentor students' live ventures as a required, credit-bearing part of the degree — every semester, for everyone.
Funding	Students retain all ownership. Soft funding is available through the university and through pitch competitions.	Students retain all ownership at both Mercy and MCNY, but neither university offers soft funding beyond the pitch competitions.
Global focus	Encouraged, not structural. Norwegian startups learn early that they must win international customers and partners.	Mercy: The winner attends the CEO Global Conference in Tampa, and international networking trips are embedded in the curriculum. MCNY: Previously ran an embedded 10-day international field study.
Networking	Informal, event-based and opt-in. Peer organizations build and maintain the network: Start NTNU, the Spark* community and student clubs.	Mercy: Hybrid. The student-run clubs holds regular meetings, but faculty and the institution supply the high-value connections (alumni, conference sponsors, industry judges). MCNY: Faculty-driven. Connections flow through faculty relationships tied to the thesis — industry partners, community organizations and employers — rather than through student-organized activity.

Similarities & Differences vs. NTNU

Part 3 of 3 — size, geographic reach, global focus and networking

Category	NTNU / Trondheim	Mercy University & MCNY
Students	43,507 registered students, about half within science and technology. 9% are international, representing 114 countries.	Mercy: 9,000, students represent 42 states and 59 countries across Asia, Europe, and Latin America. MCNY: 1,200, why the "faculty/curriculum-driven, mandatory" model (CA) is feasible at MCNY's scale
Professors	Total employees: 8,560 (2025). 7,450 full-time equivalents, of which 5,700 are academic positions.	Mercy: 955 total faculty. 227 full-time, 667 part-time faculty (student-faculty ratio 16:1). Reflecting access and focus on industry practitioners and experts, contrasted against NTNU's full-time, research-university-heavy staffing model MCNY: ~124 total, 19 full-time, 105 part-time (student-faculty ratio 13:1)
Professional profile of the universities	Public research university. NTNU's entrepreneurship ecosystem sits <i>within</i> a research-university identity (spin-offs, patents, PhD pipeline are all part of the picture). Resulting in NTNU's practicality being layered on top of a research mission.	Mercy: Private, Nonsectarian University. Mercy's sit within institutions whose whole identity is career/practice-oriented. Research isn't the institutional mission to begin with. Mercy's practicality is the mission MCNY: Private college.

For NTNU

WHAT I LEARNED

1 Experience first

New York values experience first: investors and professors encourage working before founding. Learn the entrepreneurial mindset first, then become a founder.

2 A formal startup pathway

New York has a route that is visible end to end — idea, validation, prototype, business plan, pitch, funding. NTNU works more like a hub.

3 Finance and investors

Neither university offers soft funding, so students learn networking, how to talk to investors and which metrics matter — and meet investors at events.

4 More structured networking

Contact comes through alumni evenings, founder talks, industry workshops and small-group sessions; at NTNU it is more company- and student-initiated.

MY RECOMMENDATION



Introduce a Business Plan Competition course

Combine Mercy's competitive model with MCNY's curriculum-based approach: students build a venture across the semester and finish with a pitch competition and cash prizes — learning to write a business plan step by step.

SFU ENGAGE

Thank You