



MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

**President’s Report**

November 20, 2023

**Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, hired three (3) new peer tutors, all representing various backgrounds and experiences to further increase the diversity of the Learning Center staff (1.2).

On October 5, 2023, Ms. Nneka Morgini attended the YWCA’s Annual Empowerment Resource Fair to conduct outreach and network.

Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center hosted the Center's first Capital District College Tour on October 17, 2023. Thirty twelfth grade students from Cohoes High School toured SUNY Schenectady County Community College, Siena College and the University at Albany.

On October 23, 2023, SCCOC, in partnership with the City of Schenectady’s Office of Affirmative Action, commenced the 9<sup>th</sup> Construction Training Cohort with twenty-one trainees. Upon completion, trainees will receive NCCER certification, OSHA 30 certification and EPA RRP Lead Initial certification. SCCOC staff provides educational and employment preparatory services and wrap-around services to trainees enrolled in the program.

Dr. Babette Faehmel, Professor (History) and Rae Doyle, Professor (Communication) attended a conference sponsored by SUNY CPD (Center for Professional Development) and the Faculty Development Community of Practice. Topics included AI and DEI. Both returned with new insights and some great ideas (Gen P1).

On October 6, the School of Music partnered with “A Place for Jazz” and sponsored a jazz concert for students and the general public. Guest performers included Emmet Cohen and Camille Thurman with the Darrell Green Quartet. The Darrell Green Quartet also presented a masterclass which included a discussion of gender issues (Gen P1).

On October 21, Dr. Sine Rofofsky, part-time Reference Librarian presented a workshop entitled "Finding Membership in Communities" at the PRISM conference held (in hybrid format) at SUNY Oneonta. He discussed the definition of a community and a member, how to encourage or

discourage membership and how membership is not a binary but a matrix that changes based on the individual (Gen P1).

On October 26, many campus staff attended the Community of Care professional development event in the Carl B. Taylor Auditorium, produced by the DEI Professional Development group. Jacquie Keleher, Director of Library Services worked with keynote presenter Dr. Michael Fowlin to plan, and set up the breakfast and dramatic presentation. She also helped facilitate follow-up conversations with attendees held on October 31 and November 1 (1.1).

### **Delivering a Meaningful Student Experience**

Mark Bessette, Assistant Dean of Financial Aid, was invited to present at *Financial Aid Night* at Duanesburg high school. Attendees included parents of high school seniors and guidance counselors from Duanesburg. Mark reviewed the application changes for the 2024-25 FAFSA, provided guidance on how to interpret the cost to attend college, and educated attendees on the difference between grants, scholarships, loans, and work study.

Director of Wellness Robyn King and Food Pantry Coordinator Karen Smith promoted a Food Pantry awareness tabling event with two representatives from SUNY System. Wellness also established a new partnership with Schenectady HEART, which will table on campus every two weeks.

October 27, 2023 This report highlights the success of a collaborative effort between the Student Activities Board (SAB) and the Student Government Association (SGA) to host a vibrant and inclusive Halloween dance event on our campus. The event, held on October 27th, was marked by an impressive turnout and a delightful blend of activities that created an engaging and enjoyable atmosphere for the campus community.

Mary Silvestri, Interim Director of TRIO, Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, Dale Miller, Director of Institutional Research, and Pamela McCall, Interim Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dr. David Clickner, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Planning, collaborated to successfully submit SUNY Schenectady's application to compete for the Achieving the Dream Leader College designation. The application required the review of SUNY Schenectady's data over the last four years and responding to an extensive application to demonstrate the College's student support efforts, many of which took place as part of the ReaCH Team work on campus to make positive change happen (All Pillars).

The Career Services Team completed seven information sessions for FYS, Math, and various intro classes, reaching approximately 125 students and the Team also completed six Speed networking sessions for approximately 145 students. Mary Silvestri, Interim Director of TRIO, also participated in the Career Services Speed Networking Event for HCAT and Human Services Classes. Students worked in small groups to simulate group interviews, answering questions and receiving immediate feedback. The event was a great opportunity for students to build up their communication skills and critical thinking skills (2.5).

Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, along with other members of the ASAP Replication team, attended a two-day Technical Assistance Retreat (virtually) with the CUNY TA team, as well as additional training sessions throughout the month regarding recruitment, engagement, and program management/data (Gen. P. 2).

Laura Sprague, Director of Admissions, Thairy Echevarria, Admissions Advisor, Allyson Wieser, Admissions Advisor, David Gonzalez, Admissions Advisor participated in the following college fairs: Amsterdam High School Mini College Fair, Cohoes High School, SUNY Adirondack School Counselor Association college fair, Albany High School Mini College Fair, Ichabod Crane High School fair, Ballston Spa High School Mini Fair, Burnt Hills High School Mini Fair, Questar III (Donald R. Kline) College Fair, Questar III (Robert Gibson) College Fair, and Averill Park High School (2.4).

Thairy Echevarria, Admissions Advisor, tabled at the SUNY College Fair hosted in New York City at the Javits Center and presented for the Shenendehowa Aspire Program and instant admitted the students in that program (2.4).

Allyson Wieser, Admissions Advisors, hosted students for an information session and tour from Johnstown High School and Thairy Echevarria, Admissions Advisor, Allyson Wieser, Admissions Advisor and Susanna Adams, ADA Coordinator hosted students from Burnt Hills Ballston Spa High School for an ADA information session and tour (2.4).

Lauren Gallo and Theresa Polson attended Schenectady High School on October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> for a College in the High School Registration Day to help to eliminate barriers and access issues which traditionally can stand in the way of many students accessing higher education. This effort was an organized effort to streamline the registration process at this location and increase CHS enrollments schoolwide for eligible students (1.4, Gen. P. 2).

David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning accepted the invitation to the FACT2 AI Task Group to help develop a unified set of procedures to be promoted across all SUNY Colleges in regards to how to treat Artificial Intelligence in education. The report has been released to all the Chief Academic Officers (2.3, 2.4).

The Criminal Justice Educators Association of New York (CJEANYS) asked Lou Aiossa, Assistant Professor (Criminal Justice) to participate in a regional update on our Criminal Justice program at their annual conference and also requested that he serve as the Region 3 representative. Faculty in our Criminal Justice program have done this for many years (2.3).

SUNY Schenectady BCJL and MSTH divisions partnered with the New York State Police Crime Laboratory System. Subsequently, the College was chosen as a host institution for the [Forensic Investigative Curriculum](#) (FIC) presentation on Bioscience. The FIC experience is an opportunity for students to have direct access to forensic professionals specializing in Digital Forensics, Toxicology, Biological Sciences, firearms, and latent prints. Afterwards, students may tour the New York State Crime Lab in Albany. Additionally, the lab has assembled a working group of academics and practitioners in a targeted effort to steer coursework towards essential, employable skills for entry into the forensic sciences with the State Lab (2.2, 2.5).

The Criminal Justice Advisory Board was presented with updates and asked to comment on the ongoing work of Lou Aiossa, Assistant Professor (Criminal Justice) and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow, Vice President of Workforce Development & Community Education as they develop the NYS Department of Labor title of Police Officer in collaboration with the working group (consisting of the Schenectady Police Department, the Zone Regional Law Enforcement Training Center, the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services and SUNY Work Force Development). This group was established over the summer and continues to advise and steer their efforts. If successful, this could mean that workforce development, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship monies would be made available to any SUNY institution engaged in delivery of “related instruction in furtherance of a student's pursuit of a career in law enforcement” or the basic police certificate and lead to employment in police work (2.2, 2.3).

On October 3, Jacquie Keleher, Director of Library Services participated in the Club Fair as the co-advisor for the PRIDE Alliance. Dr. Sine Rofofsky, part-time Reference Librarian designed an LGBT History month flag display for the library which Jacquie incorporated into the Fair (Gen P2).

On October 4, Jacquie Keleher joined Dr. Babette Faehmel, Professor (History) and her co-host Alexandre Lumbala for the taping of the Many Voices, One Call Podcast Season 3, Episode 3: “Artificial Intelligence (AI): Why We Need to Talk About It!”. The podcast can be found here, <https://sunysccc.edu/About-Us/Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion/podcast.html> (Gen P2).

On October 11, Dr. Joseph Han, Choral Director organized a masterclass with Christopher Herbert, Professor of Voice from William Patterson College in New Jersey. Our graduates often transfer to this college and a transfer agreement is currently being developed to streamline the process for our students (2.5).

On October 25, Dr. Joseph Han, Choral Director and Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, Adjunct Instructor (violin), organized a masterclass with Schenectady native, renowned musical theater performer Gabriella Pizzolo, of “Stranger Things,” “Pretty Little Liars,” and Broadway fame (2.5).

On October 18, 2023, Catia Laird de Polanco attended a SUNY Office of General Council webinar entitled “SUNY Post-Supreme Court Decision: Admissions Training” that was specific to community colleges.

On October 24, the School of Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Chefs for Success Dinner. Proceeds from the event go to the Chefs for Success fund which provides scholarships for our students. Guest chefs included Adjunct Instructor Sookyung Lee, SUNY Schenectady Alumni Chef Arthur Echavarria of Plated Palette, Chef Bryan Brennan of B-Ry’s Kitchen, Chef Wilson Corker of Heat N Salt, Chef Chelsea Heilmann of the Take Two Café, and Chef David Zuckerman of Mazzone Hospitality. A great time was had by all!

### **Building Organizational Effectiveness**

College in the High School registration began on September 11, 2023. As of October 24<sup>th</sup>, there have been 2,223 registrations submitted in Slate compared to last year’s 2,066 registrations. We

attribute this increase to our expanded outreach and new streamlined processes and procedures including the use of Slate (3.5).

Construction began on the new Student Service Center located in the Stockade building. During late October, the college's facilities staff removed old furniture, files and other items from the space to prepare for the start of work. This project will continue between now and mid-March of 2024.

Design work is starting on the Elston Hall basement project, which will repair wall settling cracks and surface issues. We anticipate this project will continue into 2024.

The last phase of the College's Information Technology Infrastructure project is underway. In November, we issued a Request for Bids on end user computer technology needed to replace old desktop units that are outdated. They will be replaced with portable laptop units to be used by faculty and staff that can be used from home should the college ever need to return to remote operations. These items will complement the recently replaced switches, fibre optic cabling and wireless nodes throughout the campus.

Representatives from both Corebridge Financial (formerly known as AIG) and TIAA came to campus within the month of October to meet with employees and discuss their retirement savings. Both of these investment providers are options under the SUNY Optional Retirement Program, as well as the SUNY Voluntary Savings Plan (a 403(b) plan). Both of these representatives will return to campus in November to meet with additional employees and follow up with those employees that wish to schedule a follow-up meeting.

On October 12-14, Dan Holz, Assistant Professor (Math) represented the College as a delegate at the SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges Fall Plenary. The main topics of discussion were student transfer processes and DEI issues (3.1).

**The Foundation continues to work to refine the scholarship program to maximize funding available to support the student experience.**

The Foundation recently learned through *FreeWill* of a new bequest to our scholarship program for \$10,000

Kate Toombs '94 signed the final agreement for her \$25,000 endowed scholarship

Vice President is working with Lori Hackathorn in planning an on-campus banquet to benefit the Jackie Baldwin memorial Scholarship.

**The Foundation is creating a bold, new, positive case for growing flexible funding to support our students:**

\$5,000 unrestricted grant application – Project Grow Your Good

ViewSpark: SUNY Schenectady Best of the Best 2023 – general donation appeal to alumni and community members.

**The Foundation is working to increase fundraising effectiveness to grow 5% annually by engaging alumni, businesses, and the community:**

Convergent Non-Profit Solutions representatives were on campus to help host the Stakeholders Forum and plan the next phase of the Comprehensive Campaign.

October LinkedIn activity had 183 unique views, and 87 new followers

**Engaging our alumni:**

Alumni News sent via Constant Contact to 16,033 individuals with a 35% open rate

Alumni Survey was distributed to over 16,000 alumni.

Scholarship donors Chris and Laurie Coccio attended lunch with the Vice President and President after they met their scholarship recipients.

**Engaging our community supporters:**

Community news sent via Constant Contact to 1063 individuals with a 44% open rate

Hugh Johnson presented the keynote remarks at the Stakeholders Forum.

Vice President hosted Kathy Cooke to meet her scholarship recipient and attend a rehearsal of the Jazz Combo. Ron Cooke was able to meet their student at the Stakeholders Forum.

**Engaging our corporate champions:**

Vice President and Campaign Consultant met with Fran O'Rourke from KeyBank to talk about workforce needs and how SUNY Schenectady can move into the Albany market

Vice President and Stewardship Officer attended the Chamber's Schenectady Business Awards Dinner

**Revenue Highlights:**

\$5,000 grant from Plug Power for the Mobile Skills Unit Advanced Manufacturing Unit

\$5,000 KeyBank Community Scholarship

\$3,000 Swipe Out Hunger Grants

\$2,500 Fenimore Asset Management Food for Thought Sponsorship

\$2,000 from Tri-County Council of Vietnam Era Veterans for their endowed scholarship

**Ensuring Financial Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency**

The Food Pantry received a \$1500 "Share Our Strength" grant from SUNY to increase awareness of Food Pantry and other supports especially targeted to parenting students; reusable grocery totes and satisfaction survey incentives were purchased.

Additionally, the Food Pantry was just awarded a \$3,000 grant from Swipe Out Hunger which will provide over a semester's worth of food items for our students.

The Smart Transfer, Smart Scholars Cohort 2, Smart Scholars Cohort 3, Smart Scholars Cohort 4 were submitted to the New York State Department of Education for the 2023-2024 budget year (4.5).

Career Services estimates over \$1,000 in revenue from Career Fair Employer registrations and event sponsorships to cover event costs for the Fall 2023 Career Fair (Gen. P4).

The 2022-2023 audit has started. Our auditors from Lumsden and McCormick plan to be on-site the week of November 13<sup>th</sup>. Data files needed for the audit have been shared with the audit firm and they will be on site to perform testing requirements. The audit results will be presented to the Board of Trustees in February of 2024.

On October 20, the School of Music hosted their annual Choral Workshop. They were thrilled to welcome 200 students from five high school choirs. This event is well publicized and schools from as far away as Highland, NY (88 miles) brought their students to work with Grammy-winning, guest artist Charles Bruffy, for a fabulous, all-day event. This year, Dr. Joseph Han, Choral Director, Mark Evans, Associate Professor (piano), Sten Isachsen, Associate Professor (guitar), Karen Hosmer, Professor (oboe), as well as Adjunct Instructors Dr. Elizabeth Gerbi, Arla Wilding, Mia Scirocco, and Christina Pickreign offered break-out sessions covering topics ranging from Improving Your Stage Presence and Using a Microphone to Careers in Musical Theater. It was a resounding success and provided a great opportunity for recruitment (4.3).

On October 25, Tamara Calhoun, Professor (Early Childhood Education) presented SUNY Schenectady's Child Development Micro credential at a Head Start professional development event held at Hudson Valley Community College. The 37 attendees included Head Start administrators from five surrounding counties, representatives from the NY Council for Children and Families and the CUNY Career Development Center. This event was sponsored by the NYS Early Childhood Professional Development Institute. While there, Professor Calhoun met individually with representatives from every agency. Only one had heard of our Child Development Micro credential, so it was a fantastic opportunity to publicize it. Everyone was enthusiastic about the opportunity for their full-time staff to enroll in it because classes are online to accommodate busy schedules and the students fully participate in the College support network and receive guidance in creating their international/national CDA portfolios (4.3, 4.5).

### **President's Outreach**

On October 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> President Dr. Moono visited with HCAT students in Orlando, FL. Dr. Moono met with the students and had constructive conversations about their experience in Disney, what they have gained and what they are looking forward to when they return.



Dr. Moono with the Disney HCAT students in Orlando, FL