



MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

March 2026

THE CULTURE OF CARE AND SUCCESS

Academic Affairs

Career and Transfer Services staff assisted the Evening Student Support Team by tabling as an accessible, in-person resource for evening students and assisting with their questions related to campus navigation, parking, class locations, and student services to ensure their equitable access to information. (Gen P1)

Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, Testing Center staff and Susanna Adams, Coordinator for the Office of ADA Transition Services, organized a Testing Center Open House to provide students an opportunity to ask questions about services and practice using the adaptive software prior to their first exam. (1.3,1.4)

The Learning Center hosted a series of English Language Learner (ELL) workshops for students and staff lead by the new ELL tutor. A professional development workshop highlighting best practices for assisting ELL students was also offered for staff of the Learning Center and the TRIO, ASAP, EOP and CSTEP grants. (2.3)

SUNY Schenectady’s TRIO program served 175 students in AY 2024-25 and earned an outstanding 15 out of 15 points on the 2024-2025 APR filed with the Department of Education this month. TRIO exceeded its approved rates in persistence, Good Academic Standing, Graduation Rate and Graduation and Transfer Rate. (1.3,1.4)

Diversity & Inclusion

In January and February, Susanna Adams, Coordinator of the Disability Resource Office and EITA Officer, Daniel Van Buren, Educational Aide, and Catia Laird de Polanco, Associate Professor, expanded the Digital Accessibility Hub to include a Mathematics & Sciences Guide and a Music Guide to support members of our campus community who create specialized digital content related to those fields.

Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center

On February 14, 2026, staff from the Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center (SCCOC) represented the Center at the EOC Exhibition held during the NYS Association of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislatures Inc. Conference. During the event, SCCOC alumna, Alicia Balgobin—now a SUNY Schenectady graduate and newly appointed SCCOC staff member, shared her inspiring success story with attendees.

Ms. Dara Orederu, Associate Executive Director of SCCOC, delivered college-going and career readiness workshops to students at RISE High, integrating virtual reality technology to create an engaging and immersive learning experience.

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, and Amy Student, Academic Advisor, met with Suzanne Neary, Director of College & High School Partnerships, and Kayla Pallas, Project Director of College & High School Programs to discuss and review advising for Early College Students and Smart Transfer Students. The group specifically discussed prerequisite courses needed for math and science along with the benefit of them being offered in the summer to prepare for higher level math and science classes in the Fall term. The value of assessing current students at mid-terms was also reviewed as a valuable tool to determine if there should be any changes in course selection to decrease the number of changes made to students' future semester schedules (1.3; 2.1; 2.4).

DELIVERING A MEANINGFUL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Academic Affairs

The Career & Transfer Services Team and the School of HCAT organized the 2026 HCAT College and Career Fair on February 4th, including 22 employer & college partners. Over 60 students attended. (Gen P2)

Matthew Montalbano, PT Librarian and Grace Ferris, PT IPS 1 ran a survey in Brightspace asking students how confident they felt using technology required for their courses and followed up via phone call and email with those who requested help. They subsequently held a Brightspace workshop to help students navigate the LMS more confidently. (2.1)

Grace Ferris, part-time IPS 1 and Jacob Robert, an Empire State Service Corp student held a workshop to introduce the Brightspace Pulse application to students. This application provides students with a calendar of assignments based on their classes and notifies them when due dates are approaching. (2.1)

Development and External Affairs

Stewardship Officer Liuzzi will attend the WERC Trailblazer's Luncheon with four recipients of the Women's Fund scholarship. One of our recipients will speak to the event guests.

The Foundation continues to work with Karen Smith, Food Pantry Coordinator, on student emergency funding. Not every application is accepted. So far this academic year, there have been 25 applications that required investigation, but only 8 have been approved for various reasons. We are grateful for Karen's work on this.

M&T Bank Charitable Foundation pledged \$1,500 to support the SUNY Schenectady's Outreach Center's Food Pantry.

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Anna Westerman, Assistant Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, and Yvonne Goldman, Academic Advisor, participated with the FYS fair. The event is modeled in a speed-networking format where students move in small groups from table to table to learn about different campus services. This increases students' opportunity to connect with departments staff, link faces with names, gain an understanding of available resources, and engage with members of the college community. This effort was emphasized through Academic Advisors presenting to multiple FYS classes and covering academic advisement and the registration process as we come into the Fall 2026 registration period (2.1; 2.3; 3.1; 3.5).

Anna Westerman, Assistant Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, facilitated a meeting to discuss New Student Registration Days (NSRD) for Summer and Fall registration. Dates and procedures, the importance of campus offices engagement with NSRDs to support enrollment, calibration across presentations, and ideas for any program updates were each discussed. Dr. David Clickner, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives & Planning, and multiple departments team leads participated in the meeting (2.1; 2.3; 3.1).

The Office of Admissions held an Instant Admit Day at Schenectady High School on Thursday, February 26th. The event focused on engaging students who had not already applied to college and to encourage students to prepare for the next step in their education and career preparation prior to graduation. Participating students received an acceptance packet, personalized enrollment advice, and a formal acceptance email (2.1; 2.3; 2.4)

Jacob Young and Shanzeyh Hussain, Admissions Advisors, along with Jay Larkin, Associate Professor in HCAT, hosted two groups of students from Capital Region BOCES on Thursday, February 26th. Students were given a tour of the culinary wing and a presentation about the culinary program and the Admissions process (2.3).

The Office of Admissions, in conjunction with eSports, held an instant admit day for prospective students interested in eSports. The targeted Instant Admit Day, connected students with the college and its programs and highlighted the eSports Arena. Attendees were encouraged to bring their transcripts to the event to support their completion of the admissions process (2.1; Gen. P4).

Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions and Matriculated and Enrollment and Cooper Hewison, eSports Coach, attended the 518 Game Changers Student Gaming Showcase on February 24th in Menands, NY. The event invited the community to view games developed by students and to interact with them through the event. The event allowed SUNY Schenectady to highlight our eSports Arena and the Programming for Game Design and Computer Science programs (2.1; Gen. P4).

Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, and staff from multiple office across campus collaborated to examine expansion of the college's 8-week course offerings and to strategize next steps. This is in alignment with the Adult Learner and Teaching & Learning ATD Working Groups' discussions (Gen. P2; 2.1; 3.5).

Jacob Young and Shanzeyh Hussain, Admissions Advisors, tabled at a Naturalizing Ceremony held at SUNY Schenectady. The ceremony, which brings together family and friends to celebrate people becoming US citizens is a great opportunity to highlight the college's educational opportunities (Gen. P1; 2.1; Gen. P4).

Student Affairs

Financial Aid:

In February, the Financial Aid Office actively engaged incoming students through First Year Seminar (FYS) programming, participating in the FYS Fair and presenting in three seminar classes. Students were introduced to the financial aid application cycle, learned how academic progress affects future eligibility, and received guidance on applying for scholarships for the upcoming year. These sessions also offered valuable opportunities for students to meet Financial Aid staff, strengthening approachability, building trust, and reinforcing the office's role as an accessible, supportive resource throughout their academic journey.

Workforce Development and Community Education

On February 18, WFD&CE held an info session on the *Exploring Northern Italy* program offered in June 2026. The information session through Marco Polo Institute was informative and resulted in a max capacity registration for the program. Community members were invited to a cooking demo and food-tasting with students from the Marco Polo Institute and our Culinary students.

Developing policy and more accessible request process for WFD&CE-specific student support services.

WFD&CE staff is working with SUNY Schenectady's College in the High School program, Capital Region BOCES, LaSalle, and the Schenectady Tower to develop college in the high school, and BOCES programs in the aviation area to expand offerings.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Academic Affairs

This month, Jessica Gilbert, Dean of Learner Support, participated in the CAEL professional learning on Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) entitled *From the Ground Up: Building the Foundations of a CPL Program* which provided an overview of all forms of institutional-based prior learning assessment and emphasized 'challenge' assessments including written exams, portfolios, skills demonstrations and oral interviews. (2.3)

Administration

Pre-construction meetings for major Spring 2026 capital projects occurred during February and early March. The following projects will start in April or May of 2026:

- Elston Hall Basement Hallway Renovation
- Begley Basement Floor Replacement
- Cafeteria Gathering Space
- Taylor Auditorium Lighting, Fit and Finish
- Begley Building Roof Drain Pipe Replacement
- Culinary Air Intake and Exhaust Fan Replacement – Phase II
- Elston Hall Façade and First Floor Window Renovations
- Replacement of Classroom Technology

The Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center (SCCOC) is moving from the Center City Arcade to the first floor of the Kindl Building. SUNY System Administration provided funds to renovate the space to accommodate the SCCOC program and a SUNY ATTAIN laboratory. Expected completion date is in March of 2026.

Pre-construction work for the SUNY Schenectady Aquatic Center continued. Construction costs and value engineering by the architect and team during the past few months continued to refine the project scope and cost. The County continued work on project financing and property acquisitions needed to site the project. The College continues to work with the SUNY Capital Facilities Office on project financing and preparation of the project for SUNY Trustee approvals.

Planning for the 2027 Capital Project requests is underway. Projects under consideration include renovations to the 1991 Culinary Laboratory Kitchens, Gateway Building Skylight, Classroom Furniture and others.

Development and External Affairs

The 2025 Endowment Reports was sent to those who “own” an endowed fund. Included was the 2025 Annual Report and a custom fund summary for our fiscal year 2025. You will find the report in your packets.

Senior Stewardship Officer Boink received a certificate for The Planned Giving Boot Camp for Major Gift Officers by The Planned Giving Firm.

Engaging our Alumni

Local music alumni have been invited to attend a reunion concert of the **Empire Jazz Orchestra**, organized by Bill Meckley, former Dean of the School of Music. Net proceeds will support music scholarships for our students.

Human Resources

Employee Wellbeing & Campus Climate

Human Resources continues to advance initiatives that strengthen employee wellbeing, community connection, and organizational resilience.

Wednesday Wellbeing messages – February focus areas

- 2/4 – Digital Detox
- 2/11 – Heart Health
- 2/18- Random Acts of Kindness
- 2/2 – Mindfulness of Tiny Treasure

Workplace Wellbeing & Engagement Initiatives

We are currently planning for our 2026 Employee Service Awards and Retiree Recognition event.

Benefits Engagement

We have begun planning for our second Employee Wellbeing Fair to be held on April 16th.

New Employee Onboarding

We welcomed eight new employees this month, ensuring they received a supportive, well-structured onboarding experience aligned with institutional expectations and culture.

Employee Support Services

- We met with three employees for pre-retirement counseling.
- We also provided leave counseling to six employees

These services reinforce HR's role as a strategic partner in employee wellbeing and organizational stability.

Talent Acquisition & Staffing

HR continues to support operational effectiveness by advancing critical searches across the College.

Active Searches: 12 Total

- **Civil Service:** one
- **Faculty:** one
- **Professional Staff:** 10

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Dale Miller, Director of Institutional Research, submitted two SUNY System reports, one federal IPEDS report, and two New York Department of Education reports. Mr. Miller uploaded annual accreditation documents to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Mr. Miller also provided data for the following projects: tiering data for retention, enrollment data for budgeting, enrollment data to Admissions, EOP, and the Vice Presidents of SI&P and Academic Affairs (Gen. P3; Gen. P4).

Student Affairs

Wellness-Food Pantry:

Attended new Regional Food Bank event downtown Schenectady and received \$698 worth of free food (made possible through a grant Food Bank received from the State to support Food Pantries)

February Stats

Total Visits: 149 Unduplicated Visitors: 86 People Fed: 280

- Items distributed: 2,835
- Items received: 4,200
- Value items received: \$1,850

Operations

- Purchased new vacuum cleaner for easy cleanup after breads & FB order deliveries
- Installed doorbell for easy visitor pickups
- Continued to college Clynk bags on campus (roughly 16 bags this month)

Continuing Initiatives

- Preparing freezer service contract (annual check in service)
- Preparing Banner integration with PantrySoft to automatically determine student eligibility
- Preparing for lockers for ADA compliance

Staffing

- Trained new volunteer
- Hired new Empire State Service Corps (2 positions)

Community Partnerships

- SUNY Food Pantry Alliance Meeting (webinar)
- Erie Community College- Discussion on Food Pantry operations
- George Mason University (VA) Food Pantry discussion/inquiry in operations, beginning their own Food Pantry
- Presidential Candidates Food Pantry Tours
- Fulton Montgomery Community College Food Pantry Tour

ENSURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Academic Affairs

Michael Henderson, Director EOP Program, attended the EOP Directors Advocacy Day at the Empire State Capital in Albany and visited with local area Assembly Representatives and NYS Senators. Thanks to almost six decades of support from NYS, the SUNY Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is currently empowering nearly 9,000 students at 54 SUNY campuses to earn a college degree and achieve their potential. Enrollment has grown 21% since 2022 however, state funding has only increased by 3% and EOP funding has been reduced 6% in this year's Executive Budget. Advocacy Day seeks the restoration of \$2.6 million, and asks for an additional \$17.5 million to meet growing EOP Program student demand. (4.2, 4.5)

Administration

2026/27 budget requests were reviewed by the Office of Administration, President's Office and Divisional Vice Presidents to refine next year's ask. Student enrollment projections, State support, income generating activities and sponsoring county support estimates are being refined to determine next fiscal year's projected revenues.

One of the two leases at Center City is expiring in August of 2026. During the Spring and Summer, the college is consolidating Workforce Development activities at Center City into the remaining 11,000 square foot area leased by the college through 12/31/27 and returning certain activities to 78 Washington Avenue.

Development and External Affairs

Two new **endowed** Foundation scholarships have been established:

The ***In Your Element Scholarship*** has been funded by an anonymous donor for students in STEM taking chemistry classes.

The **President Steady H. Moono, Ed.D. Legacy Scholarship** has been established to support needy students who exhibit leadership qualities, participation in community service, and a commitment to their educational goals.

Notable gifts include:

\$73,000 from the NYS Tax Incentive
\$9,000 for the Judkins Scholarship
\$5,750 from College Publications
\$3,000 from two anonymous Casola patrons
\$1,500 for the Krempa Scholarship

Workforce Development and Community Education

Secured additional personnel funding through collaboration with CUNY Building Performance Lab (BPL).

WFD&CE is working with Capital Region BOCES to serve as EMT sponsor for the BOCES EMT program to be starting in September of '26.

WFD&CE is working with internal stakeholders to develop an articulation agreement

PRESIDENT'S OUTREACH



President Dr. Steady Moono with (from left to right) Mrs. Joma T. Simuyi, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Health in Zambia, Zambian Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Dr. Chibamba Kanyama, and the Assistant Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Health in Zambia during meetings in Washington, DC on February 11, 2026.



County Legislator Raj Ishmael and Jeetendra Sukhdeo of Schenectady Cricket League Association present an award of appreciation to President Dr. Steady Moono Schenectady at SUNY Schenectady Board of Trustees Meeting on February 16, 2026.