



MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT

May 2026

### THE CULTURE OF CARE AND SUCCESS

#### Academic Affairs

Melanie Uebele, LPP Program Administrator and her staff accompanied 45 high school students to SUNY Delhi for a tour and information session where students engaged in discussions with representatives from the college and learned about opportunities available to SUNY Delhi students. They also accompanied six high schoolers to the 2026 Empire Summit in Albany. For three days, they networked with LPP members and staff from 51 different LPP programs across NY state. (1.2,1.4)

This month, the Career Clothing Closet in the Career and Transfer Center was heavily utilized as a number of students headed to the Kentucky Derby were given professional clothing and footwear that they otherwise could not afford. (1.1,1.4)

This month, Dr. Tim Konhaus, Dean of LA has a forthcoming publication on the history of lynching in West Virginia (“West Virginia,” *Lynching in the United States: An Encyclopedia*, Michael J. Pfeifer, ed. Fortress Press, 2026). His work contributes to broader historical scholarship while reinforcing the college’s commitment to inclusive pedagogy and critical engagement with issues of race and justice. This work aligns with efforts to cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion in both curriculum and institutional practice. (1.1)

As part of ongoing efforts by Academic Affairs to meet and exceed Federal mandates for document accessibility, Giovannine Matheron, Collection Development & Electronic Resources Librarian attended the SUNY PDF+ Edit-a-thon workshop focused on improving the accessibility of PDF documents and highlighting challenges associated with remediating PDFs. Alternative file formats that better support accessibility goals were explored. Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services and Digital Accessibility Liaison for the spring 2026 semester hosted “*Creating Forms People Want to Use*” specifically to assist staff with remediating inaccessible forms and designing new, accessible forms to share with colleagues. (1.5)

#### Diversity & Inclusion

The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of the Academic Senate coordinated its inaugural Celebrate Community Month calendar for the month of April. (1, 1.4, 3)

On April 5, 2026, Catia Laird de Polanco, Associate Professor & Advisor to the President, completed a webinar titled “The ROI of Recovery: Recovery-Friendly Workplace Policies & Practices” hosted by HRCI. (1, 3.3)

On April 8, 2026, Catia Laird de Polanco, Associate Professor & Advisor to the President, organized and moderated a panel discussion titled “Advocacy in Action: Supporting Neurodivergent Youth.” Panelists included a student, Tiombé Tatum, Chief of Staff; Kevin Dean, Executive Director of ASAP; and Amy Student, Academic Advisor. (1, 1.1, 1.3, 3.3)

On April 30, 2026, Catia Laird de Polanco, Associate Professor & Advisor to the President, attended the “Supporting Neurodiversity Across SUNY: A Systemwide Training Kickoff Event” hosted by SUNY. (1, 1.1,1.3, 1.4, 3.3)

### Information Technology

Implemented Kurzweil 3000 accessibility software and enabled access for all faculty, staff, and students through SUNY Schenectady credentials. (1.1,1.5)

Partnered with Student Support to evaluate early alert processes through business process modeling, preparing the college for a potential transition away from the Starfish platform. (1.3,1.5)

Streamlined the digital signage intake process by opening submissions to the full college community and establishing a content syndication model to ensure consistent, high-quality messaging. Additionally, adding more screens to expand the reach of the system. (1.4,1.5)

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, and Jacob Young, Admissions Advisor, completed Beginner F-1 Designated School Official (DSO) Training. This professional development supports the institution’s ongoing efforts to strengthen services and expand support for international students navigating the F-1 visa process (1.5; 3.3; 2.1; Gen P4).

## DELIVERING A MEANINGFUL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

### Academic Affairs

On April 24, Dr. Lorena Harris accompanied MSTH student Evangeline Green to Hudson Valley Community College to attend the Capital Region STEM Poster Showcase as a presenter. Sponsored by Regeneron, students present their research to middle and high school students and local employers. A keynote speaker and award ceremony provide a great networking opportunity for all participants. (Gen P2)

On April 21, the Career & Transfer Services Team coordinated a Public Safety and services College and Career Fair which brought over a dozen state and regional partners to campus. Chastity Rios, Career Advisor, Carol Maimone, Associate Professor and Jessica Gilbert Dean of Learner Support also presented a LinkedIn Workshop session specifically targeting adult learners to strengthen students' social networking and professional branding. (Gen P2)

The School of Music offered multiple off-campus student performances, the annual Marimba Concert including students, faculty and community members as well as three performances by professional musicians. Also, for the first time in more than six years, students gave solo recitals. Thirteen more student recital and ensemble performances (all of which are open to the public are scheduled through May 11. (2.5)

On April 16, the School of HCAT hosted nine students from Catskill High School for a campus and School tour and lunch in the Casola Dining Room. They had an opportunity to speak with current HCAT students to gain insight into their academic experiences. Kelly Marino, Career and Technical Education instructor (who teaches TAT 121 at Catskill HS) accompanied them. This course offers the students an opportunity to earn three college credits prior to their high school graduation. (2.4)

### Development

Music and Culinary students put their talents on display at the 34<sup>th</sup> annual *Food for Thought & All That Jazz!* (2.5)

### Information Technology

Led planning for Phase 2 of the classroom upgrade capital project, incorporating lessons learned from recent upgrades and aligning classroom design with evolving pedagogical needs. (2.2,2.5)

Implemented a more secure registration process by enabling students to create and manage their own passwords through a secure reset workflow. (2.1)

Began a comprehensive refresh of the TeamDynamix helpdesk platform, strengthening triage workflows and formalizing service level agreements to improve response times and reporting. (2.3,2.5)

### Marketing and Public Relations

Jessica McHugh-Green worked with Christina Charette, Student Activities Advisor, and the SGA, to develop the design for the SpringFest 2026 commemorative t-shirt. Jessica created four concepts that the students voted on. The 2026 design was also included on mini t-shirts for the Build-A-Bear stuffies station. The design was a huge success, and all 250 mini t-shirts were given away with a stuffed animal. (2.3)

### Schenectady Outreach Center

Schenectady Outreach Center staff continue to strengthen partnerships with high schools across the Capital District, delivering educational workshops and campus experiences that support students in exploring career interests, educational pathways, and regional college opportunities.

This month, Dara Orederu, Associate Executive Director, and Alicia Balgobin, Participant Services Specialist, facilitated the following activities for high school students:

- Delivered Self-Exploration, Career Exploration, and Educational Pathways workshops for students at Schenectady High School
- Hosted workshops and a SUNY Schenectady County Community College campus tour for students from Cohoes High School and Lansingburgh High School, including presentations from Admissions and Financial Aid
- Supported Schenectady High School's FAFSA Frenzy event

(2.4)

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, served as a webinar panelist for rising local high school juniors and seniors. The panel consisted of Admissions Directors from the Capital Region and the focus of the program was enrollment and admissions processes and sharing advice, tips, and strategies for selecting a college that best fits students' needs (2.1; 2.4).

Members of the Admissions Team attended 20 recruitment events in April, including CASDA College Fairs, Regional Fairs, and local high school partner fairs. These events provided opportunities to engage directly with prospective students, highlight SUNY Schenectady's academic programs, and promote career pathways and opportunities available to students following graduation. Admissions also held an Instant Admit Day at Niskayuna High School, focused on engaging students who had not decided on college attendance in the first round of college of admissions. The office also hosted Lansingburgh and Cohoes High Schools in partnership with the Schenectady Outreach Center (SOC) with students coming to campus, for a tour, and giving a presentation focused on the college experience (2.1; 2.4; Gen P4).

As of this reporting period, 78% of ASAP students are registered for the Fall 2026 semester, with 41% also registered for summer courses. Additionally, the ASAP program met all program metrics for the previous semester and exceeded the SUNY ASAP system-wide

average for student engagement by 26% as indicated by the April SUNY ASAP data report (2.5; Gen P2).

The Advising Team successfully advised and registered 35 Schenectady High School students who visited campus for a special New Student Registration Day. This initiative, which included busing provided by the school district for student participation, was a collaboration across Admissions, Advising, and the high school's guidance department (2.1; 2.4; Gen P4).

### Student Affairs

The Foundation scholarship application cycle continues to demonstrate strong engagement, with 969 applicants as of April 28th, compared to 796 applicants on March 28th. This represents a 21% increase over the past month and reflects effective communication with the student body, as well as continued awareness of the College's scholarship program. (2.1)

The Financial Aid Office collaborated on multiple student-facing events during the month of April. Mark Bessette and Nicole Grant partnered with the Schenectady Outreach Center (SOC) to deliver financial aid presentations at Cohoes High School and Lansingburgh High School. In addition, Nicole Grant presented to students from Schenectady High School during their visit to the HCAT programs. These engagements support early awareness of financial aid processes and promote college access among prospective students. (2.1)

# BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## Academic Affairs

On April 8, Jacquie Keleher, Director of Library Services, attended the inaugural SUNY Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) Community College sector strategy meeting. This new initiative aims to establish ongoing collaboration and develop strategies to enhance OLIS support for community college libraries. (Gen P3)

Dawn Jones, Director of Career & Transfer Services, Michael Henderson, Director of EOP, Tiffany Wilson, EOP Success Coach and Matt Farron, Professor, attended the 2026 SUNY Internship Summit at SUNY Albany. This inaugural summit brought together SUNY System Administration staff and representatives from many SUNY campuses to showcase internship initiatives across the state and promote the development of plans to ensure every SUNY student has access to a high-quality internship or other experiential learning opportunity before graduation. (Gen P3)

Dr. Babette Faehmel, Professor served as a panel moderator for the SUNY General Education Conference and presented at SUNY Brockport on the integration of artificial intelligence within the history discipline. This work strengthens student learning outcomes and enhances academic relevance, directly contributing to student success and post-collegiate readiness. (3.3)



## Human Resources

### **Employee Wellbeing & Campus Climate**

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

### **Wednesday Wellbeing messages – April focus areas**

- 4/3 – Slowing down to enjoy the April rain
  - 4/8 – Reminder flyer about the Wellbeing Fair
  - 4/15 – Reminder message about Wellbeing and the Wellbeing Fair
  - 4/22 – Earth Day message
  - 4/29 – Stopping Food Waste
- (3.1, 3.2)

### **Workplace Wellbeing & Engagement Initiatives**

- We are continuing to plan for our 2026 Employee Service Awards and Retiree Recognition event.
  - We launched a Wellbeing Survey to gather information on the employees' participation and satisfaction with our Wellbeing initiatives over the past year.
  - The Wellbeing committee has begun planning for some summer fun with various theme days.
- (3.1, 3.2)

### **Benefits Engagement**

We hosted our second Employee Wellbeing Fair on April 16th, with 81 individuals participating in a day focused on all aspects of wellbeing. This marked a 26.5% increase in participation compared to last year.

- The event featured chair massages, blood pressure checks, and guided meditation, along with representatives highlighting financial, intellectual, social, physical, and emotional wellbeing.
  - Attendees also enjoyed interactive activities such as planting seeds, writing notes of gratitude, rock painting, and more.
- (3.2)

### **New Employee Onboarding**

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

(3.2)

### **Employee Support Services**

- We finalized quarterly billing for our retirees who continue to participate in our medical and/or dental insurance plans. The billing had previously been done annually, but we found that more regular communication would be helpful in administering these plans and collecting payments.
  - A full reconciliation and audit of the current employees who are enrolled in our medical, dental, and vision plans was administered for the first quarter of 2026 with no findings.
  - Retirement counseling was provided to two employees  
These services reinforce HR's role as a strategic partner in employee wellbeing and organizational stability.
- (3.1, 3.5)

### **Talent Acquisition & Staffing**

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

### **Active Searches: 17 Total**

- **Civil Service:** Two (2)

- **Faculty:** Four (4)
  - **Professional Staff:** Eleven (11)
- (3.2)

### Information Technology

Testing a new group policy on classroom PCs that prevents instructors from shutting down systems at the desktop level, reducing disruptions and improving reliability of classroom display technology. (3.4, 3.5)

Initiated business process modeling efforts with CHS, Human Resources, Purchasing, and Student Support to improve efficiency and strengthen cross-functional workflows. (3.1, 3.5)

Advanced planning for Entra ID/Azure implementation in collaboration with SHI to enhance institutional security and operational resilience. (3.4)

### Marketing and Public Relations

The college transitioned to its new public relations agency of record, Relentless Awareness, on April 1, 2026. This follows the outcome of the RFP 2025-03 Public Relations and Marketing Services award. (3.1)

The Marketing and Public Relations team collaborated with leadership from SUNY System Communications, the Presidential Search Committee, and the college's Human Resources Office to prepare and release internal and external communications announcing the naming of the college's new and eighth president, Dr. Nicole Reaves. (3.1)

### Schenectady Outreach Center

Schenectady Outreach Center staff, Dara Orederu, Associate Executive Director, and Alicia Balgobin, Participant Services Specialist, participated in professional development workshops at the Rochester Educational Opportunity Center, focusing on case management strategies, the use of AI in résumé development, and motivational interviewing techniques to enhance support for Center participants. (3.3)

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Dale Miller, Director of Institutional Research, submitted two SUNY Systems reports. Mr. Miller also provided data for the following projects: Reconnect data to the VPSI&P, science data to the VPAA, admissions data to Admissions for SUNY reporting, enrollment data to Administration for budgeting, additional program review data, Perkins data for the annual application, and enrollment data to the School of Culinary (Gen P3).

The SUNY Systems ASAP Data Dashboard project continues to move forward, with initial testing completed and the project entering the next testing phase. SUNY Schenectady is serving as a pilot campus for the dashboard, intended to enhance data integration and reporting for the ASAP program (3.5; Gen P2).

### Student Affairs

Continued investment in professional development remains a priority. Mark Bessette attended the Ellucian eLive 2026 conference, which provided exposure to system enhancements, best practices, and peer collaboration. Participation in this conference supports the Financial Aid Office's ongoing goal of optimizing Banner to enhance daily operations and deliver efficient, student-centered service. (3.5)

### **Food Pantry:**

#### **April Stats**

**Total Visits:** 143 **Unduplicated Visitors:** 83 **People Fed:** 286

Items received: 1310

Items distributed: 2168

Value items distributed: \$5790

#### Donations

Community member (daughter was alumni!) donated 2 boxes canned goods

#### Grants

- \$1000 HPNAP (state funds) Emergency Award from Regional Food Bank to purchase eligible products
- Possible upcoming funding from Workforce Development - more details to come

#### Operations

- SUNY Food Insecurity Report completed
- Continued to collect Clynk bags on campus (roughly 10 bags this month)
- Delivered 22 Clynk bags to Hannaford to be deposited in our account
- Coordinated details of summer ESSC program

#### **Community Partnership Event**

- Urban Farm, created partnership for fresh produce donations beginning in June! This will be seasonal program, running from June-October.
- Collaborative Anti-Hunger Advocacy group meet (webinar) on state funding options
- Attend SUNY Food Pantry Monthly meetings
- Tour of the Food Pantry- donors & staff tours
- LNAP preparations & support meetings
- College campuses outreaching for information on Food Pantry

#### **Continuing Initiatives**

- Continuing to prepare freezer service contract (annual check in service)
- Preparing Banner integration with PantrySoft to automatically determine student eligibility

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#### **2025 Year Summary:**

**Total Items Distributed:** 30,641

**Total Value (not cost of purchase) items distributed:** \$98,264

**Donated items:** 140

**Regional Food Bank purchased:** 1979 (does not include items received in storage) items

*\*roughly 1,000 lbs of food and household items received weekly*

We currently receive gifts through four (4) grants, five (5) corporate entities, and twenty-four (24) individuals) this fiscal year.

**Grants: (Equipment)**

- Electric Van for transporting Food & Bottles & Cans
- Double Wide Commercial Freezer
- Small Refrigerator- fresh produce

(3.5)

*Workforce Development and Community Education*

April 29-May 1, Maria Kotary, Danielle Miller, Lori Hammond and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow attended the Annual NYACCE Conference: Making Waves in Adult Education, Together We Rise. Sarah Wilson-Sparrow was also a presenter at this conference.

(3.2, 3.3)

On May 1, Lauren Lankau and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow attended the CEANY Regional Conference, the theme is “The Work Continues: Equity, Engagement, and Employment.”

(3.2, 3.3)

## ENSURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

### Academic Affairs

This month, in the aftermath of the tragic aircraft/vehicle accident at LaGuardia airport, the College was contacted by several news organizations in the US and Canada to comment on the accident. Instead of speculation, the focus was on SUNY Schenectady and how we are helping alleviate the Air Traffic Control staffing crisis. News 10 ABC (Albany) did a feature interview for a story on our Enhanced ATC program and CBS NY did a live interview with Mike Gersh, ATC Program Administrator highlighting how SUNY Schenectady is helping to solve the crisis of a shortage of Air Traffic Controllers. (Gen P4)

As part of their ongoing efforts to nurture partnerships that can reinforce financial sustainability, the School of Music hosted two competitions and a Piano Recital. They also invited the Empire State Youth Orchestra and the Capital Area Flute Club to visit the campus. (4.3, 4.5)

ECHS Summer College program recruitment continued throughout April, along with upperclassman enrolling in traditional summer session courses. 123 students attended five workshops and events as part of College and Career Week activities held at Center City HS. 2026-2027 cohorts for Smart Transfer, Smart Pathways, and Smart Teach/P-Tech have been finalized and recruitment for Smart Scholars is ongoing. (Gen P4)

### Administration

The proposed 2026-27 college operating budget is nearing completion. As of early May, the State budget has not passed. In lieu of a state budget, we have estimated our state support in preparation for its passage. Sponsoring county support for the 2026-27 budget have been ongoing with county officials. 4,1

A relocation project plan for moving Workforce Development out of the large area of Center City was finalized with some programs moving to 78 Washington Avenue and others to the smaller leased space at Center City. During early May, Facilities and Maintenance prepared main campus space for Workforce to move in early June. 4,6

Construction work on the Elston Hall Gathering space began in April. The old cafeteria area was sectioned off and demolition work started. This area will be under construction into the early part of the Fall 2026 semester. 4,6

Work on the Elston Hall Façade and Window replacement project began in April. Our contractors erected scaffolding on the North side of the building in early May. In mid-May, the historic first floor windows will be removed and restored. This project will continue into October of 2026. 4,6

Bids received by the County for the Culinary fan replacement project were within budget. Bids were also received for the Elston Hall Beam project. We are awaiting approval of the agreements by the county so work can get started. 4,6

### Development

Stewardship Officer Liuzzi established a new annual scholarship with a first-time donor: William & Agnese Franco Scholarship, \$5,000 (4.4)

Stewardship Officer Liuzzi solicited two scholarship renewals: \$4,000 (SGA Scholarships) and \$1,000 (UFP Scholarship) (4.4)

The Foundation hosted a successful Food for Thought & All That Jazz, raising more than \$100,000!  
(4.4)

Stewardship Officer Liuzzi shared music recital information and invited music scholarship donors to performances. (4.4)

### Information Technology

Launched the implementation of Canusia to improve the student, parent, and administrative experience for CHS, with anticipated gains in retention and recruitment. (4.3, 4.5)

Reviewing institutional email forwarding practices to balance usability, compliance, and data protection requirements, reducing institutional cybersecurity risk. (4.1)

Evaluating enterprise password management solutions to improve credential security, reduce support burden, and strengthen institutional compliance with cybersecurity and data protection standards. (4.1, 4.3)

## PRESIDENT'S OUTREACH

# Trustee Legislature Dinner



Pictures Clockwise: President Steady Moono and Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara with Culinary Arts Students; President Steady Moono with County Legislator Omar McGill and President Steady Moono with Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara.





**Dr. & Mrs. Steady Moono with Josh Johnson, Student Trustee and Maureen Mbanga, Former Student Trustee at Food For Thought & All That Jazz.**



**Board Chair Ann Fleming Brown, President Dr. Steady Moono, Jim & Lisa Basil (Dr. Basil's son and daughter in law), Trustee Dr. Peggy King at the President's Terrace Naming Ceremony in honor of former President Dr. Gabriel J. Basil.**



**Dr. Steady Moono, SUNY Schenectady President with Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, students, and administrators planting a tree on campus for Earth Day 2026.**