



MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT

June 2026

### THE CULTURE OF CARE AND SUCCESS

#### Academic Affairs

David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning created a guide for faculty explaining how to implement [Video Note](#) – a video feature in Brightspace that can automatically generate closed captions and transcriptions. (1.1, 1.4 & 1.5)

Throughout the month of May, LPP staff have been busy accompanying 100 high school students to Camp Chingachgook for an end-of-year field trip, hosting their annual year-end celebration picnic at Central Park in Schenectady and events at Schenectady HS and Schenectady Freshman Leadership Academy. (1.2,1.4)

#### Diversity & Inclusion

On April 15, 2026, the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of the Academic Senate announced the results of the ongoing Digital Accessibility Competition. The Digital Accessibility for Learning Equity Award winner for the Spring 2026 semester is the School of Music, which achieved the highest average in the two years of the Digital Accessibility Competition. (1, 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 3, 3,3)

On April 20, 2026, Catia Laird de Polanco, Associate Professor & Advisor to the President, attended the virtual “Campus EIT Accessibility Assessment Survey Findings” event hosted by SUNY. (1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5)

#### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Anna Westerman, Assistant Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, and colleagues Ryan Dunham, Director of TRIO and Professors Cayla Gaworecki, Shannon Wolf, and Laurie Lacey are members of a Working Group focused on Gateway English and Mathematics course placement. Student success in the first English and Mathematics (Gateway) courses is linked to degree completion; continuing to refine course placement in these areas provides strong support for student success. The Working Group, formed as part of the SUNY Academic Momentum initiative is also a collaboration with the ATD Steering Committee (1.3; Gen. P2; 2.3).

Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, continues to take part in Credit for Prior Learning efforts. Most recently, in collaboration with Dr. Mark Meachem, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Jessica Gilbert, Dean of Learner Support, Carrie Swain, Registrar, and Professor Matt Farron, the group reviewed internal and external Credit for Prior Learning communications to

support current and prospective students in the provision of concise and accurate information (1.3; Gen P2).

Focusing on the adult learner population, Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, took part in a SUNY Adult Learner Enrollment program focused on strategies for effectively recruiting, enrolling, supporting, and removing barriers for adult learners through the use of best practices. Adult learners are a key growing enrollment area across the SUNY System (1.1; 1.3; 1.4).

### Student Affairs

#### **Food Pantry**

Spring 2026 Survey Results

- **33 student surveys completed**
  - 24 Part-Time Students
  - 9 Full-Time Students
- **Frequency of Pantry Use**
  - 4 students used the pantry once per month
  - 7 students used the pantry twice per month
  - 11 students used the pantry three times per month
- **Student Impact**
  - 20 students reported they are better able to focus on their college courses
  - 19 students reported being less worried about having enough food to eat
  - 17 students indicated they worried at least once this semester about not having enough food to eat
- **Key Themes from Student Feedback**
  - Reduced financial stress and improved food security
  - Increased ability to focus on academics
  - Support for working students and student parents who may not qualify for public assistance
  - Appreciation for the welcoming, respectful, and supportive pantry staff
  - Continued challenges during academic breaks and summer months
- **Representative Student Feedback**
  - “The pantry helps stretch on the hard weeks.”
  - “The food pantry has been very helpful and the staff is also very helpful.”
  - “The pantry has provided both the nutritional support and the peace of mind needed to focus on my studies.”
  - “It has reduced my financial stress by providing free groceries, allowing me to save money for tuition, books, and other important expenses.”
  - “The staff is cheerful and friendly; it has brightened my day on each occasion.”
  - “The pantry has helped after a reduction in food stamp benefits made it difficult to have enough food.”
- **Overall Outcome**
  - Survey responses continue to demonstrate that the Food Pantry plays a critical role in supporting student well-being, academic persistence, and basic needs security for SUNY Schenectady students. (1.4)

## DELIVERING A MEANINGFUL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

### Academic Affairs

This month, Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services and Digital Accessibility Liaison collaborated with IT to launch campus-wide access to Kurzweil, an accessibility software that was previously only available to limited users in the Testing Center and Learning Center. This is a Perkins funded expansion to allow students to access features like text-to-speech, speech-to-text, and a translation option on or off campus. She also hosted a *Canva: New & Improved Accessibility Options* session to update staff on recent changes that make Canva even more accessible than it was before. It was recorded and posted to the Digital Accessibility Hub for those who could not attend. (2.3)

The Business Program hosted its annual Schenectady High School Business Plan Competition on May 27, 2026, at SUNY Schenectady. Approximately 57 students participated in this year's event, presenting original business concepts and entrepreneurial pitches before a panel of community and industry judges. The competition provided students with valuable real-world entrepreneurial experience while also offering an opportunity to visit campus and engage with the College community. The event culminated with finalist presentations in the Taylor Auditorium and an awards ceremony recognizing student achievement, creativity, and innovation. (2.4)

On May 20, the Faculty convened for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Teaching & Learning Retreat. As part of the College's AtD efforts, the ROYALs Teaching & Learning working group organized the event to provide faculty with opportunities to share ideas, celebrate accomplishments, and inspire one another. (2.3 & 2.5)

The EOP program had eight graduates participate in the May graduation ceremony. One of them was Kessa Cooper, who earned her A.A.S. in Hospitality and Tourism Management and was chosen as a recipient of the 2026 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence. This is the highest honor SUNY provides to students for academic excellence and leadership. (2.3, 2.5)

Suzanne Neary, Director of College & High School Partnerships is pleased to note that 16 Early College High School students are graduating with both their High School Diploma and an Associates Degree from SUNY Schenectady and five others have been elected to Student Government Association Executive positions, including President, Vice President and Treasurer. The new student representative to the BOT is also an Early College student. (2.1, 2.2, 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!*; net proceeds were \$89,712 (2.5)

### Marketing and Public Relations

The Marketing and Public Relations department provided support for the 56<sup>th</sup> Commencement, including event details and list of graduates on the website; producing and printing event programs and special commencement chocolate bar wrapper for graduate goodie bags; digital signage on campus and at the M&T Bank Center; script review; professional photography and videography coordination including stage portraits of each graduate receiving their diploma case with Dr. Moono and video feed to the jumbotron in the arena venue; social media and photography leading up to the event as well as

the day-of and post-event promotion of the celebration; event logistics in concert with Student Affairs, the President's Office, Registrar's Office, and Facilities; on-site signage and staging; public relations including student pitches to the media, media advisories, and press releases; print ad listing of graduates by degree in the Daily Gazette; and creation, proofing, and production of materials for the event. (2.0)

### Schenectady Outreach Center

The College hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 14 to celebrate the Schenectady Outreach Center's (SOC) expansion and relocation to the Kindl Building at 201 State Street. The larger facility will enable the SOC to expand programming, serve more community members, and provide an enhanced environment for learning, connection, and support. The new location also includes a SUNY ATTAIN Lab, joining a statewide network of 33 labs that provide computer literacy training to support career planning and educational advancement. In addition, the SOC GED Testing Center will reopen, increasing access for individuals pursuing their high school equivalency. (Gen. 2)

The Schenectady Outreach Center (SOC) launched a new Cleaning Essentials Pantry this month to further support participants experiencing financial hardship. The pantry provides access to basic household cleaning supplies and complements the existing toiletry pantry, which has continued to provide personal care and hygiene items to those in need. Together, these resources expand the SOC's holistic support services and help reduce everyday barriers that can impact participant success, well-being, and stability. (Gen. 2)

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Along with many other members of the campus community, Amy Student and Yvonne Goldman, Academic Advisors, participated in the Long Night Against Procrastination (LNAP) to support student success. Amy and Yvonne engaged with students to help connect with them and continue to build student links to advising (Gen P2; 2.3).

Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, Anna Westerman, Assistant Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, and Yvonne Goldman and Amy Student, Academic Advisors, are collaborating with members of the Workforce Development (WFD) team on processes and procedures for registering students in the WFD unit's newer Micro-Credential programs. The WFD team shared information related to the specific training students receive when enrolled in the Clinical Medical Assistant Micro-Credential in order to ensure members of the advising team can provide students with the most current information. This effort, which also included Jaimee King, Executive Director of the Schenectady Outreach Center (SOC), is a valuable collaboration that will assist students in accessing the microcredential program and the effort also supports enrollment pathways for WFD and SOC students (Gen. P2; 2.1; 2.2; 1.3; 1.4).

The Admissions Office, led by Mary Silvestri, in collaboration with Marketing and Public Relations, hosted a Summer Courses Made Simple Information Session for new and visiting, continuing, and returning students. The event focused on helping students learn about the advantages of taking summer courses at a community college, providing guidance on the enrollment process, and facilitating the scheduling of appointments with advisors (2.1; 1.3; 1.4).

Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, participated in the SUNY Operation Inform (OpInform) program planning meeting as the next step in preparing to host the annual SUNY OpInform program whereby guidance counselors from across New York State are brought together to build engagement, strengthen recruitment pipelines, and to provide an opportunity

to connect with this important constituency group. SUNY Schenectady will host the SUNY OpInform program in October of Fall 2026 (Gen. P2; 2.4;1.4).

### Student Affairs

#### **Student Activities**

Student Government Association hosted the annual Student Body Awards Ceremony on April 30, recognizing 62 faculty, staff, and students for their contributions to the campus community. Award recipients were nominated and selected through student voting. (2.3)

The final SGA meeting of the academic year was held on May 7 at 9:45 a.m. and included a celebratory brunch, year-end reflections, and final business/voting items. During the meeting, the Fitness and Wellness Club received final approval and will become an official student organization beginning Fall 2026. (2.1)

Student Activities finalized the 2026–2027 SGA Senate election process and official election results were confirmed. The newly elected senators and executive board members are preparing for leadership transition and onboarding for the upcoming academic year. (2.1)

Eight current SGA members will graduate during Commencement on May 21. Outgoing SGA President Nadine Davila has completed preparation for her student commencement speech representing the graduating class. (2.5)

Student clubs and organizations concluded most activities for the semester. Lunch Bunch will host a kickball game and ice cream social on May 20 honoring retiring Dean David Brough. Members of the 3 combined HCAT Clubs are hosting the departmental celebration in recognition of his service to the college. (2.3)

Current and incoming SGA members will participate in a Six Flags leadership development and team-building trip on June 12. The event will serve as both a celebration of the year’s accomplishments and a transition opportunity for the incoming student leadership team under advisor supervision. (2.5)

### Workforce Development and Community Education

On May 19, Lauren Lankau, Joe Lamalfa, and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow attended the FMCC Criminal Justice Advisory board meeting to further enhance the Zone 5 partnership and course offerings. (2.2, 2.5)

Workforce Development and Community Education had 10 students who completed DSP I Micro-credential, three students who completed DSP II Micro-credential, and two students who completed DSP III Micro-credential this spring semester. (2.2, 2.5)

Tricia Terleckey, Laurant Lankau, Ben Bliss and Joe LaMalfa participated in a DSP Celebration Luncheon at our provider partner, Center for Disability Services, on May 20th to recognize their employees who completed DSP I, II and III Micro Credentials through the OPWDD grant. Commissioner Willow Baer of OPWDD, Cyndi Proctor from SUNY Administration, and President and CEO of Center For Disability Services Gregory Sorrentino were also in attendance. (2.3)

## BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### Academic Affairs

TRIO staff began developing a comprehensive policies and procedures manual for the TRIO Program at the College to strengthen TRIO's compliance with program regulations and offer guidance for decision-making. The manual will establish a clear structure and long-term vision for the program. (3.1, 3.2, 3.5)

David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning programmed two chatbots to assist faculty, students and staff by pulling from multiple sources to give detailed answers to save time. Chatbot 1 answers questions about the 2026 Student Handbook and Chatbot 2 assists faculty to improve their course assignments.

Dr. Sine Rofofsky, part-time Reference Librarian, served as a grant reviewer for the 2026 Innovative Instruction Technology Grants and OER Impact Grants for SUNY System. (Gen P3)

Dawn Jones, Director of Career & Transfer Services has begun development of a Student Employee Supervisor training to support Federal Work Study and Empire Service Corps supervisors. (Gen P3)

### Administration

A Presidential working group tasked with updating the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) reviewed the current plan and updated for changes in emergency preparedness technologies, completion of the electronic door access project and procedural enhancements. 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**

- 5/6 - A Mother's day message
- 5/13 - Mental Health Awareness
- 5/20 - Commencement and Making a Difference
- 5/27 - Bumble Bee benefits

(3.1,3.2)

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

We celebrated our employees at the 2026 Employee Service Awards and Retiree Recognition event. (3.1,3.2)

#### **Benefits Engagement**

We continue to track results of our Wellbeing Survey which was launched at the end of April. This will provide information on the employees' participation and satisfaction with our Wellbeing initiatives over the past year. (3.2)

### **New Employee Onboarding**

We welcomed two 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 assisted with commencement.
- We also provided retirement counseling to four 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: 16 Total**

- **Civil Service:** Three (3)
  - **Faculty:** Three (3)
  - **Professional Staff:** 10
- (3.2)

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Dale Miller, Director of Institutional Research, submitted three SUNY System reports. Mr. Miller also provided data for the following projects: Reconnect data to the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Planning, Perkins grant data to the Dean of Learner Support, admissions data to the Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment for SUNY reporting, enrollment data to Administration and Finance for budgeting, enrollment data to the Dean of the School of Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism for course planning, enrollment data for EOP, student data for a CHS survey, and an enrollment analysis of summer 8- week vs. 5-week courses to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Gen. P3).

This month Dr. David Clickner, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Planning, concluded his efforts as an invited panelist for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study Institute. As part of this effort, he provided feedback to over thirty colleges and universities preparing for their Self-Study. Through the on each Standard and also provided feedback and guidance to schools on Standard VII in a long form meeting. Dr. Clickner was selected across Middle States Peer Evaluators for his high degree of expertise and exemplary service to Middle States (Gen. P3).

### Workforce Development and Community Education

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

The Perkins grant Local Advisory Council (LAC) met to discuss the current grant, the new application and the completed Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) that was recently completed. The Perkins grant supports Career and Technical Education students as well as students with disabilities by providing funding for Disability Services, Career & Transfer Services, the Learning Center, and the Testing Center. This year, Perkins funds also supplemented some instructional supplies for the MSTH division. (4.3 & 4.5)

### Administration

The proposed 2026-27 college operating budget is nearing completion. As of the end of May, the State budget has not passed. In lieu of a State budget, we have estimated our State support in preparation of its passage. The proposed budget, approved by the college's Board of Trustees in early May will be considered by the County Legislature in early June. 4,1

A relocation project plan for moving the Library, EOP and Tutoring Services in late May to Stockade and Elston Halls was finalized in mid-May. These offices are moving due to jackhammering and noise by our contractors who will be replacing the basement floor in the Begley Building garage. This project is to start in late May 2026 and will be completed by end of Summer. 4,6

Work on the Elston Hall Façade and Window replacement continued in May. Our contractors erected scaffolding on the North side of the building and replaced the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor relief angle and building ornamentation. This project will continue into October of 2026. 4,6

Contracts were finalized for the Elston Hall Basement beam replacement, culinary air fans/handler replacement and replacement of the parking lot storm water pumps. 4,6

### Development

Corporate & Foundation Relations Officer Sarah Boink secured a new grant received: **Bender Scientific Fund** @ \$12,500 for microscopes (4.4)

Thanks to Corporation & Foundation Relations Officer, Sarah Boink's effort, we have been invited by the **Schenectady Foundation** to advance past the first round of grant submissions for their "Emerging Needs" initiative; our grant will focus on a community playground that will embrace informal STEM learning with play (4.4)

Thanks to Scholarship & Alumni Relations Officer, Leanna Liuzzi and in partnership with Admissions, we reached out to 21 alumni of various programs at the College to write personal welcome messages on postcards to buoy fall enrollment. Of the 21 alumni who were approached 17 responded – representing Aviation, HCAT, Human Services, Business Administration, Accounting, Liberal Arts, Music and Teacher Education (4.4)

### Workforce Development and Community Education

Workforce Development and Community Education was awarded a SUNY WFD Contract Training Grant in partnership with CEG to offer Project Management training to Taconic Plastics. (4.5)

## PRESIDENT'S OUTREACH



*President, Dr. Steady Moono with the Zambian Embassy staff at the Zambian Embassy in Washington, DC.*



***Ribbon Cutting Ceremony May 14, 2026, for the new space for Schenectady Outreach Center (SOC) in the KINDL Building. Pictured left to right: Dara Orederu, Associate Executive Director SOC; Lisa Jackson, Associate Provost and Director of SUNY UCAWD; Alicia Balgobin, Participant Services Specialist of SOC; Executive Director, SOC Jaimee King; Tamara Frazier, Associate Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development & Upward Mobility- SUNY; President Dr. Steady Moono; Dr. Ronalyn Wilson, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges- SUNY; Rayan Aguam, District Director for Senator Tedisco, and Board Chair Ann Fleming Brown.***