

# SUNY SCHENECTADY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY

Prepared for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education





**SUNY** SCHENECTADY  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Middle States Self Study**

Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
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Chief Executive Officer:  
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## Executive Summary

SUNY Schenectady has engaged in a rigorous self-study process, the results of which demonstrate that the college meets the Middle States Standards for Accreditation, Requirements of Affiliation, and Compliance. The college has many strengths and found the self-study process both rewarding and invigorating. While in compliance with the Standards, the college will continue the discussions generated during the process and is positioned to follow-up on suggestions for growth.

The college's mission clearly informs the *Strategic Plan*, which is comprised of realistic and achievable strategic goals and strategic initiatives that are used to guide decision making. There is clear evidence that various constituencies were involved in the planning and development of the *Strategic Plan* and that there was transparency throughout the process. Evidence further indicates that the mission and *Strategic Plan* are widely publicized throughout the campus and that both are embedded as part of planning and decision making across the campus. SUNY Schenectady is faithful to its mission, honors its contracts and commitments, adheres to its policies, and represents itself honestly and in full faith.

SUNY Schenectady provides students with a learning experience characterized by rigor and coherence, and it is committed to student retention, persistence, completion, and success. Beginning with its mission, the college, “built on a foundation of excellence in teaching and quality support services,” is committed to providing students with a learning environment and educational experience that include a coherent and effective support system ([Mission Statement](#)). The *Strategic Plan*, consistent with the college’s mission, directs efforts in that area through Strategic Goal I (Expand Access and Increase Student Success). College programming, guided by the *Strategic Plan*, provides students with “valuable opportunities that facilitate [their] intellectual and personal growth, fulfillment, and a sense of community” ([Student Handbook 2018-2019, pg. 2](#)).

Numerous offices provide a breadth of services to support students, clearly demonstrating that the college meets Standard IV criteria. Indeed, the breadth and scope of the college’s services are vast, covering not only support for traditional students, but also for students with a wide range of academic preparation, of traditional and non-traditional age, and representing the cultural variation that makes up the wonderfully diverse SUNY Schenectady student population. SUNY Schenectady demonstrates through the assessment of student learning and achievement that its students have accomplished educational goals with defensible standards consistent with their programs of study and with the college's mission.

SUNY Schenectady’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges. The governance structure is clearly delineated; each unit reviews and updates its procedures and bylaws periodically; furthermore, the college is governed and administered in ways that allow it to realize its mission and strategic goals and to best serve its constituents.

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## Introduction

SUNY Schenectady began offering classes in September 1969 in the former Van Curler Hotel. The building was renamed Elston Hall. Elston Hall houses classrooms, computer and learning labs, science and culinary laboratories, the Casola Dining Room, two banquet facilities, the College Store, the cafeteria, the Student Success Center and student services, conference rooms, and numerous faculty and administrative offices.

A new addition in 1978 expanded the college's footprint to include the Begley building that houses the Taylor Auditorium, as well as the Begley Library and music classrooms. In 1987 the college added the Center for Science and Technology. The Center houses the college's science labs, including chemistry, physics, electrical, and nanoscale materials labs. An enclosed pedestrian bridge was added in 1992 to ensure safety in crossing the busy road and to connect all buildings on campus.

In 1992, the college expanded Elston Hall to house the cafeteria, new classrooms, student space and culinary classrooms. In Spring 2000, the Gateway building opened; it hosts the Montessori School and provides real-world training for the Early Childhood program. In 2001 the addition of the Stockade building provided additional technology and traditional classrooms, lecture halls, and office space. In 2007, the culinary wing in Elston Hall underwent an expansion and transformation, adding additional labs and baking facilities. The student-run Casola Dining Room, established to provide practical training for culinary students, is an operating restaurant open to the public.

In Fall 2011 the college began holding classes at the newly renovated Center City on State Street, which was further expanded in 2012. Also in Fall 2012, the college opened a \$3.9 million, 12,600-foot addition to the Begley Building for the School of Music. Fall 2015 saw the Workforce Development program move to the Kindl Building on State Street. This building was donated to the college and subsequently received a major renovation. In January 2017 the sixth floor of Elston Hall was renovated to support a new Biotechnology program.

SUNY Schenectady is proud of its urban setting and has found creative ways to expand within this confined area by partnering with the community and working closely with the county sponsor. The urban setting provides a unique experience for students. The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) bus stop is across the street from the campus and allows for easy access to the campus from the surrounding area.

SUNY Schenectady offers over 45 degree and certificate programs with several concentrations. The School of Music is accredited by the National Association of the School of Music (NASM); the culinary program is accredited by the American Culinary Federation (ACF); and the Paralegal program is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

SUNY Schenectady's enrollment consists of full-time (57%) and part-time (43%) enrollment. Based on fall 2017 statistics, the average age of full-time students is 24 years old and the

average age of part-time students is 31 years old. In fall 2017, students from ethnic minorities comprised 34% of the full-time population and 30% of the part-time population. The African American population represented 22% of the full-time population and 18% of the part-time population. Hispanic students represented 9% of the full-time population and 8% of part-time.

### **Nature and Scope of the Self-Study**

#### **The Self-Study Process:**

In spring 2016, President Steady Moono appointed Eileen Abrahams, Professor of English, and Brett Wery, Professor of Music, as co-chairs of The Middle States Steering Committee. The co-chairs, in consultation with both Penny Haynes, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs/Provost, and President Moono, assembled a steering committee composed of members of the faculty, professional staff, administrators, administrative staff, alumni, and students. Individual members of the Steering Committee were chosen because they possess intellectual rigor and integrity, content-area knowledge, and willingness to commit to a lengthy Self-Study process. The resultant Steering Committee represents all sectors of the college community and is diverse in terms of college role, institutional longevity, age, race, gender, and types of expertise.

Since Fall 2017, the Steering Committee has provided leadership on all aspects of the self-study, including:

- developing a full understanding of the accreditation process;
- selecting a self-study model;
- overseeing the design of the study;
- identifying intended institutional outcomes for the self-study;
- participating in selecting, leading, and coordinating working teams for each of the seven standards;
- aligning the self-study process with SUNY Schenectady's Strategic Plan;
- identifying Institutional Initiatives aligned with the Strategic Plan;
- ensuring a timetable is implemented to assure timely completion of the project;
- promoting and communicating the self-study process to all college constituencies; and
- arranging for institution-wide reviews of and responses to a complete draft of the self-study.

Furthermore, at every step of the process, the committee vetted individual Working Group reports and provided substantive and editorial feedback for them. At the beginning of Fall 2018, the Steering Committee read and commented on a complete draft of the following report, a draft which the co-chairs shared with the entire college in October, 2018. After this thorough vetting process, Dr. Charlene Dukes, SUNY Schenectady's MSCHE Evaluation Team Chair, visited the campus and met with key constituents. Dr. Dukes provided the Steering

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Committee with concrete suggestions for improving the self-study and sage advice for revising the draft of the report.

### **Selection of the Self-Study Model:**

The co-chairs proposed that the Steering Committee endorse a Comprehensive Self-Study Design model, one filtered through the lens of our five institutional priorities. Such a model provides the college with the best means of assessing our effectiveness in addressing the seven Standards for Accreditation and enables it to analyze and reflect upon our opportunities for improvement and growth.

### **Intended Outcomes of Self-Study:**

The intended outcomes of Self-Study are:

1. to demonstrate compliance with the seven accreditation standards and requirements for affiliation;
2. to determine the extent to which the college satisfies the mission, vision, and goals set forth in the Strategic Plan and the institutional Initiatives borne of that plan and determined by the Steering Committee;
3. to strengthen the connection between program offerings and support-services among transfer, pre-professional, and workforce development programs;
4. to identify strategies that contribute to students' goals of persistence and completion or guides them into productive alternatives;
5. to identify institutional strengths and opportunities for improvement;
6. to examine the effectiveness of assessment practices across all areas of the college;
7. to expand community awareness of and engagement with the college's personnel and resources; and
8. to inform the college's 2020–2025 Strategic Plan.

## Important Milestones

SUNY Schenectady is undergoing significant renewal in a number of areas. The college embarked on a five-year strategic plan, which has provided guidance for the direction that the college has taken. This has led to a college rebrand that focuses on the college's connection to the SUNY system and builds on what the institution sees as one of its strengths: empowering individuals to reach their potential.

SUNY Schenectady was invited to join Achieving the Dream, and through the support of the Kresge foundation and the SUNY Schenectady foundation, it became a Dream member in 2016. The college has focused on improving retention and graduation rates and to address equity by focusing on advising, developmental education, gateway course improvement, orientation, and professional development.

In the fall of 2017, the college received its first ever Title III grant allowing the college to hire success coaches for first generation students, improve and expand online education, focus on developmental education, improve the use of data through report-writing software, and expand fund-raising capacity. The college is confident that these efforts will help improve student success.

In addition, the college completed several major capital projects, including the 2017–2018 elevator replacements, new classroom furniture in all but a few classrooms, and new HVAC systems. The college also repaved the parking lot and is in the process of cleaning and upgrading Elston Hall's façade. SUNY Schenectady is committed to continuing its renewal with a state-of-the-art learning commons project, which is now underway. Phase One of the project includes architectural drawings, which are slated for completion in January 2019; the commons itself is due to open in fall 2020. The college is also redesigning a newly rented building across the street from the campus (13 State Street) to house a gaming program, which—in the near future—is expected to expand into related programs. The college is partnering on a major capital project, Mill Lane, that is expected to transform State Street with new restaurants, breweries, distilleries, bakeries, and shopping areas. The college will use the state-of-the-art brewing equipment for instruction in its own brewing program.

SUNY Schenectady is poised to become an even more vibrant college, one committed to empowering our students for success by providing ample support and by continuing to remain relevant through innovation and growth.

## Standard I: Mission and Goals

*The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specifies how the institution fulfills its mission (Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation, MSCHE, 2014, pg. 4)*

### Criterion I (a, b, c)

*Clearly defined mission and goals that: (a) are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement; (b) address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies; (c) are approved and supported by the governing body.*

### Mission & Strategic Goals

The college has a clearly defined mission addressing internal and external constituencies. Specifically, the college's *Mission Statement*, developed in 2014, is:

*We are an inclusive, collaborative community, built on a foundation of excellence in teaching and learning, quality support services, and a personalized approach to education, which empowers our students and engages our communities.*

In an effort to communicate the college's *Mission Statement* and to facilitate its function as a guide for institutional decision making, the statement is well publicized and readily recognized throughout the campus. The *Mission Statement* is published on the [college's website](#), at every entrance to campus buildings, and it appears in many of the college's publications ([Viewbook 2017](#), [Catalog 2018–2019](#), [Student Handbook 2018–2019](#), [New Student Orientation Program example](#), [Advisory Committee Handbook 2018–2019](#)).

Through the self-study process and associated campus forums held in Spring 2018, questions were raised about the statement's syntactical felicity. As a result, the college is planning to update the *Mission Statement* as follows:

*We are an inclusive, collaborative community—built on a foundation of excellence in teaching, in quality student-support services, and in our personal approach to education—that empowers our students and strengthens our communities.*

The college's *Mission Statement* sets the institutional direction and anchors the strategic goals outlined in the *Schenectady County Community College [Strategic Plan 2015–2020: Our College, Our Future](#)* (*Strategic Plan*). The process for developing the *Strategic Plan* included input from the campus community, faculty and staff involvement in the planning process, listening sessions, and strategic conversations resulting in defining the college's five strategic goals:

- I. Expand Access and Increase Student Success
- II. Ensure Quality, Relevant, Coherent and Innovative Curriculum

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- III. Invest in Campus Renewal
- IV. Strengthen and Expand Community and Strategic Partnerships
- V. Ensure The College's Financial Sustainability

These goals articulate SUNY Schenectady's aspirations and "position[s] the college to be open, flexible, and dynamic in responding to new opportunities."

### **Collaborative Development of the Strategic Goals:**

The development of the college's strategic goals began formally in September, 2014, when Acting President Dr. Martha Asselin appointed a [Strategic Planning Council](#), comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni, and charged them with converting the broad set of initiatives that had emerged from input across the college into a strategic plan that:

- comprises clear and well-defined actions;
- contains concise and measurable performance indicators;
- incorporates vision from members of our campus and community; and
- aligns with SUNY Schenectady operations as well as local/state/national initiatives.

To aid the process, the college engaged the services of Dr. Karen Hitchcock, former University at Albany President (1996–2004). The Strategic Planning Council remained essentially intact when Dr. Steady Moono assumed leadership as President of the college in July 2015.

Throughout the planning and development process, members of the Strategic Planning Council provided the campus community with regular updates; the college hosted multiple events to share the work-in-progress with internal and external constituents and to elicit feedback; and on August 20, 2015, President Moono hosted a "Coffee and Conversation" program focused directly on the *Strategic Plan*.

Transparency in the planning and development process included updates as part of the President's Report to the college's shared governance body—the Academic Senate—during its regularly scheduled meetings. For instance, on October 23, 2015, Dr. Moono led an in-depth [discussion](#) of the five goals contained in the *Strategic Plan*. Additionally, the complete draft of the *Strategic Plan* was shared with members of the campus community at open forums and presentations attended by both students and staff, at Academic Senate meetings, and via email on January 19, 2016. Throughout the process faculty and staff were encouraged to send feedback to the president's chief of staff.

The final draft of the *Strategic Plan* was presented to the Board of Trustees for review at its January 2016 meeting ([Board of Trustees Minutes 1/25/16](#)). In February 2016, the 18-month planning and development process culminated in the Board of Trustees' unanimous adoption of the *Schenectady County Community College Strategic Plan: 2015 – 2020: Our College, Our Future* as BOT Policy 1.2–*Strategic Goals* ([Board of Trustees Minutes 2-22-16](#); [BOT Policy 1.2–Strategic Goals](#)). During the same meeting, the Board of Trustees also approved BOT Policy

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1.3.1–*Policies & Procedures Guide*, which outlines the procedures for reviewing policies and the requirements for their regular review, not to exceed five years from the prior review ([BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#)).

Monthly president's reports are organized by strategic initiative to demonstrate continued institutional support of the college's mission and goals. These reports are published monthly and are available online at the [SUNY Schenectady Website \(President's webpage with Reports\)](#). Here is an example of a president's report: ([President's Report 6-18](#)). During Academic Senate meetings both the president and provost provide updates to the faculty on initiatives that connect to the mission and goals; examples of such initiatives include the Student Success Initiative, Title III grant, Student Success Center, and Mentorship Program ([Academic Senate Minutes 11-17-17](#)). The college mission, strategic goals, and all shared governance resources in the Faculty Governance folder are available to all members of the campus community on the college's network "shares drive."

### **Goals Focused on Student Learning and Related Outcomes and on Institutional Improvement:**

The *Schenectady County Community College Strategic Plan: 2015 – 2020: Our College, Our Future (Strategic Plan)* clearly focuses on the college's mission, setting forth five strategic goals designed to empower students and engage the communities the college serves. Each of the strategic goals focuses on areas related to student learning and related outcomes and institutional improvement. To provide increased clarity and to guide the institution's pursuit of each goal, strategic initiatives aligned with each of the five goals are included within the *Strategic Plan*.

While the [Strategic Plan](#) serves to focus a variety of efforts at the college, it also works to help direct the ways in which the college operationalizes its mission through initiatives to direct action. For example, Strategic Goal II ("Ensure a Quality, Relevant, Coherent and Innovative Curriculum") supports institutional improvement of the college's programs. Its focus is summarized in the plan as follows:

[SUNY Schenectady] believes that student success requires a strong faculty, excellent academic programs, and a cohesive academic plan that guide the institution. We will continue to develop academic quality, and curriculum coherence, as well as to improve program delivery and innovation in pedagogy.

The work to support Strategic Goal II is, in part, directed by strategic initiatives, one of which is Strategic Initiative F ("Ensure that the academic program review process is consistent, timely, and facilitates the introduction of new programs and modifications of existing programs").

Strategic Initiative F is then operationalized, for example, through one of the efforts included in the academic program review (APR) process, in which the [APR Guidelines](#) require the completion of a course map, which defines how the program meets the program's student learning outcomes (SLO), the college's general education program (S-CORE/Institutional

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Learning Outcomes), the State University of New York (SUNY) General Education Requirements, and the SUNY and New York State Department of Education liberal arts degree course requirements. The APR process ensures that degree programs meet internal and external requirements. It further provides faculty with an opportunity to deeply examine the constituent courses intended to support program SLOs and provides a clear visual that can be used to monitor program alignment with SUNY seamless transfer paths and other four-year institutions' degree paths. A complete outline of the specific initiatives connected to each strategic goal is contained in the [Strategic Plan](#).

### **Addressing Internal and External Contexts and Constituencies:**

The *Strategic Plan* addresses both internal and external contexts and constituencies. One example of the focus on internal constituencies is demonstrated in Strategic Goal I ("Expand Access and Increase Student Success"). The goal focuses in part on reducing geographic barriers to enrollment. To reduce geographic barriers for those who live beyond the local Schenectady community, as well as for those students who are local but for whom transportation presents a barrier to pursuing an education, the college entered an agreement with the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) that allows SUNY Schenectady students to use public bus transportation free of charge ([CDTA Letter Agreement](#)).

Strategic Goal IV ("Strengthen and Expand Community and Strategic Partnerships"), including Strategic Initiative A ("Deepen our relationships with regional school districts from elementary to secondary levels to increase the awareness of students, parents, and teachers of SUNY Schenectady as an option for attendance"), is an example of the college's focus on addressing external contexts and constituencies.

The college has a strong partnership with twenty-five local school districts, each of which offers dual-enrollment courses known on campus as the College in the High School program. The list of high schools at which SUNY Schenectady courses are offered is available on the college's [website](#) ([CHS Course Offerings Webpage](#)). Through the College in the High School program, participating school districts provide students with the opportunity to earn college credits, recognize SUNY Schenectady as an option for attendance, and support students' college entry and degree completion.

In October 2017, the college's efforts to connect local middle and high school students to college degree attainment, fueled by a successful grant application, were recognized by the New York State Education Department with the award of just over \$1 million to support the Schenectady Smart Transfer Early College High School (Smart Transfer-ECHS) program ([Smart Transfer Grant Approval Letter](#); [Schenectady Smart Transfer ECHS webpage](#)). The program, a partnership with the local Schenectady City School District, allows students in ninth grade to begin taking college-level courses with the expectation that they will earn an Associate's Degree from SUNY Schenectady when they earn their high school diploma. The college filed and was approved for a Middle States Substantive Change Request to designate Schenectady High

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School as an additional location where at least 50% of a degree program can be earned ([Middle States Substantive Change approval letter](#)).

### **Criterion 1(d)**

*Clearly defined mission and goals that (d) guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes.*

### **College Governance Emphasizes the Mission and Goals in Policy:**

Administrators at every level are required to align decisions and actions with the college's mission and strategic goals. Support for informing decision making in this manner is consistently demonstrated in the policies of the Board of Trustees. For example, [BOT Policy 5.5–Budget Process Policy](#) begins with, “The purpose of the budget policy is to ensure that the budget is aligned with strategic goals, “and [BOT Policy 5.1–Travel Policy](#), states, “Travel activities in the best interest of the College are those that, when properly approved, advance the College’s strategic plan.” Finally, BOT Policy 4.1–*College Governance/Shared Governance*, linking college and shared governance, stipulates that the shared governance structure’s “primary goal is to ensure SUNY Schenectady achieves its mission and goals in a manner that is effective, efficient, and beneficial to the College and our students” ([BOT Policy 1.4–College Governance/Shared Governance](#)).

### **The Mission and Strategic Goals Guide Decision Making:**

The college’s mission and strategic goals are employed to guide faculty, staff, and administration in making decisions about planning, resource allocation, curriculum development, and institutional outcomes. In reference to planning and resource allocation, to ensure that the mission and strategic goals guide decision making, all annual budget proposals and all proposals related to [new positions](#), [initiatives](#), [software](#), and [equipment](#), whether generated by academic or administrative offices, must contain a written statement indicating how the proposal will further the mission and strategic goals of the college. Each year as part of the budget planning phase, deans and unit managers are required ([Budget Instructions 2017–2018](#)) to define the links between unit and institutional goals and objectives and to indicate the [performance measures](#) that will be used to assess the impact of budget items.

In the context of academic planning, all curricular proposals, including those that seek to create, revise, or delete existing programs, must include a statement of how the proposal will further the college's mission and strategic goals. The college's rigorous procedures for reviewing all curriculum proposals specifically support Strategic Goal II ("Ensure Quality, Relevant, Coherent and Innovative Curriculum"). Through the shared governance process, all proposals, including the statements indicating curricular links to the mission and strategic goals, are reviewed by faculty in the division that generated the proposal, members of the Curriculum Committee—including faculty representing all five academic divisions of the college—and members of the college community—including faculty, staff, and administrators—through

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meetings of the Academic Senate. The academic planning process in place at the college helps to ensure that curricula remain current and students are provided with relevant paths to degree and certificate completion. Documentation supporting the process is available to all members of the campus community via the college's network "shares drive," [Curriculum Committee Guidelines](#), Curriculum Committee meeting minutes, and Academic Senate meeting minutes. Alignment between the college's mission and its curricula is further operationalized through the APR process, through which reviewers must articulate the link between the program under review and the college's mission (see [Music Program Review 2017](#) for an example).

The college also takes definitive steps to allocate resources to support the mission and strategic goals. For example, in 2015, in support of Strategic Goal I ("Expand Access and Increase Student Success"), the college joined, and has since actively participated in, the nationally-based Achieving the Dream (AtD) program, a comprehensive, non-governmental reform movement focused on student success, especially for low-income students and students of color. As a result, the college has scaled up its Accelerated Learning Program to support students in need of developmental English; implemented *Starfish*, which includes an early alert system with student flagging capabilities; hired a student success manager and six student success coaches (three full-time and three part-time); implemented a new model of student orientation; and re-engineered the college's student advising model.

In further support of Strategic Goal I, the college wrote a successful \$2.5 million [Title III grant](#), enabling the college to expand the support it provides to under-prepared students, expand faculty professional development offerings in the area of online instruction, and to move toward data democratization. The primary goal associated with the grant's efforts is the improvement of student persistence, retention, and completion.

### **Criterion 1(e)**

*Clearly defined mission and goals that (e) include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution.*

#### **The College Supports Scholarly Inquiry and Creative Activity:**

The college supports scholarly inquiry and creative activity of the type appropriate to a small-sized public community college. Primary areas of evidence of the college and faculty members' commitment to these endeavors reside in the Union of Faculty and Professionals' (UFP) [collective bargaining agreement](#), the college operating budget, and the budget allocation through Academic Affairs to support professional development activities.

For example, "Professional Obligations for Teaching Faculty," in the UFP contract, specifically outlines the college's expectation for faculty to engage in scholarly inquiry and creative activities in order for them to achieve promotion in rank. Additionally, the college's operating budget includes funds designated for tuition assistance in the form of three to four free credit hours per semester for up to twenty UFP members, their spouses or dependent children. Each

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year UFP members may make additional requests for assistance from a tuition-assistance pool of \$20,000.

Over the course of the last three years, through an Academic Affairs budget allocation, the college provided \$30,000 in professional development funds that may be used to support attendance and presentations at conferences and other professional development activities. To secure funds, faculty members must complete a profession development request, including a justification that demonstrates the way(s) in which the professional development is linked to one or more of the strategic initiatives. The request is then submitted to the dean, and pending approval, to the provost for review and approval. The required professional development form and a sample spreadsheet of professional development activities for which faculty have received funding is attached here ([Professional Development Budgets 2017–2018, 2016–2017, 2015–2016](#)).

In spite of reductions in the college’s 2017-2018 overall operating budget, the allocation of professional development funds remains intact, demonstrating the college’s commitment to supporting scholarly inquiry and creative activities. In line with faculty engagement in scholarly and creative activities, each year, the Promotions, Policies, Nominations and Awards Committee (PPNA) receives nominations for and recommends, when merited, the [SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities](#), recognizing consistently outstanding scholarly and creative productivity by instructional faculty. Consistent with the college’s commitment to scholarly and creative activity, upon review and concurrence with recommendations received from the PPNA, the president provides support for the recommendation to SUNY System, the ultimate award-issuing body.

### **Criterion 1(f, g)**

*Clearly defined mission and goals that (f) are publicized and widely known by the institution’s internal stakeholders; (g) are periodically evaluated.*

### **The College’s Mission and Strategic Goals are Widely Known:**

SUNY Schenectady’s mission and strategic goals are widely publicized and are familiar to faculty, staff, and students. The *Mission Statement* appears in all major entrances around the campus, on the college webpage, and in numerous documents and publications [e.g., [BOT Policy 1.1–Mission & Vision](#); [Strategic Plan 2020](#); [College website](#); [Catalog 2018–2019](#); [President’s Newsletters](#); [Student Handbook 2018–2019](#); [Program Review Guidelines](#); [Facilities Master Plan](#); [Advisory Committee Handbook 2018–2019](#); [Academic and Student Affairs 2018 Plan](#); [New Student Orientation Programs](#)).

Moreover, all resource-allocation forms require administrators to tie their budgeting process to the mission and strategic goals; such linkage results in an intimate familiarity and understanding of them (see [budget process](#) above). Beyond the budgeting process, the mission and strategic goals are prominent in Academic Affairs and in policies of the Board of Trustees. For example, faculty are required to tie curriculum development to the mission and strategic

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goals through the [Program Review Guidelines](#) and in cases where they wish to apply for [professional development funding](#). Policies of the Board of Trustees emphasize linkages to the mission and strategic goals. For example, the [BOT Policy 5.1–Travel Policy](#) includes a requirement that travel funds be used in the best interest of the college and its strategic goals.

In addition to encountering the mission and strategic goals in the documents and locations listed above, students are made familiar with the *Mission Statement* during [New Student Orientation](#). The mission was also discussed in a [student forum](#) in preparation for this self-study.

While preparing this self-study, the mission and strategic goals were discussed in open forums ([Initiatives and Best Practices Forum](#), [Poster Presentation Institute Week Forum](#)), [Board of Trustees updates](#) and in the president’s [“Coffee and Conversations”](#) programs. Since 2014, as a result of the college’s deepening culture of assessment, the mission and strategic goals are now tied inextricably to most administrative and academic processes.

### **Criterion 2**

*Institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission.*

### **Criterion 3**

*Goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission.*

### **Realistic, Appropriate Goals that are Consistent with Mission and Focus on Student Learning:**

The college’s strategic goals are appropriate and realistic and are in accord with the requirements and regulations for publicly funded community colleges in New York State ([Article 126, Sections 6301 and 6303 of NY State Education Law](#)). Further, the strategic goals are consistent with the college’s mission, which is focused on student success. The five strategic goals focus on student learning, outcomes, and institutional improvement. And the college has undertaken numerous initiatives that demonstrate its commitment to the mission and goals.

Such efforts as Achieving the Dream, *Starfish*, *DegreeWorks*, Title III, TRIO, and EOP are aligned with the college’s mission and strategic goals to support student success, persistence, retention, degree/certificate completion, and access to a college education. The academic program review (APR) process, the *Facilities Master Plan*, and programming through Workforce Development provide examples of programming and planning linked to the mission and strategic goals. The APR process is an example of the assessment process being used to examine alignment between degree programs’ Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), the mission, and the strategic goals. The *Facilities Master Plan* demonstrates one way in which the college engages in planning and physical plant expansion/revitalization directly related to a strategic goal (Strategic Goal II, Strategic Initiative F; Strategic Goal III, Strategic Initiative B; Strategic

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Goal II, Strategic Initiative A), and the Workforce Development example highlights programming supporting Strategic Goal IV, Strategic Initiative B.

Each degree program has goals and objectives and program SLOs, which are designed to be consistent with the mission and strategic goals. Program SLOs are presented in the [College Catalog](#). As part of the program assessment process, to examine alignment between program SLOs, the mission, and the college's strategic goals, each of the college's programs undergoes an exacting APR process in which the reviewers must provide an explanation of the alignment and of any recommended adjustments ([APR Guidelines](#)).

The college's comprehensive [Facilities Master Plan](#) outlines the blueprint for updating facilities and represents, in part, SUNY Schenectady's commitment to investing in campus renewal. The plan's first phase outlines the development of a learning commons, which is currently in the planning stages, with a committee selected to ensure diverse campus input as the process moves forward. The existing library will be updated to a comprehensive learning commons that supports learning and is a destination for students, faculty, and the community. The plan includes space for a new Center for Excellence in Teaching, which will focus on the provision of professional development directed toward the improvement of teaching practices and new pedagogies to enhance student learning. Consistent with the educational philosophy underlying learning commons, the college's academic support resources will be housed in the building.

Directly responsive to Strategic Goal IV, the college's Workforce Development and Community Education (WDCE) division partners with non-profits, human service agencies, as well as with local and regional businesses to offer customized, industry-focused training opportunities to develop employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities, and to prepare them to advance into more challenging roles. WDCE offers a number of programs and trainings that meet the needs of local employers and assist job seekers in gaining skills to make them more competitive job applicants. In response to growth in the local craft beer brewing industry, WDCE developed the [Introduction to Craft Brewing](#) program to meet the need for employees with entry-level brewing skills. Similarly, in response to needs in another growing industry in the area—healthcare—WDCE developed [healthcare training](#) certifications that provide community members with an entry point for employment in the high-demand healthcare field in the Capital Region.

### Criterion 4

*Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.*

#### **Assessment of Mission and Strategic Goals:**

The college uses a five-year cycle to review its *Strategic Plan*. Members of the campus community, including faculty, staff, students, the Board of Trustees, and external stakeholders collaborate to assess the college's mission and strategic goals. Based upon this assessment, the *Strategic Plan* may be revised. For example, during the last review it was noted that while the college spends considerable time focusing on recruitment, there was no designated section of

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the *Strategic Plan* that aligned directly to this process. As a result, the current plan includes a focus on expanding access (Strategic Goal I). Additionally, by filtering decision making through the lens of the mission and strategic goals, the college is engaged continuously in the assessment process throughout the five-year period of the *Strategic Plan*.

### Conclusion

SUNY Schenectady meets all of the criteria for *Standard I – Mission and Goals*. The college's mission clearly informs the *Strategic Plan*, which is comprised of realistic and achievable strategic goals and strategic initiatives. There is clear evidence that various constituencies were involved in the planning and development of the *Strategic Plan* and that there was transparency throughout the process. Evidence further indicates that the *Mission Statement* and *Strategic Plan* are widely publicized throughout the campus and are embedded as part of planning and decision making across the campus.

### Suggestions for Standard I:

In order to sustain student success fostered by the Title III grant, the college should continue to take advantage of available grants and to explore further funding opportunities.

### Recommendations for Standard I:

There are no recommendations for Standard I.

### Requirements for Standard I:

There are no requirements for Standard I.

### Standard I Institutional Initiative Alignment:

All five Institutional Initiatives are consistent with the college's *Mission Statement* and are borne of its *Strategic Plan*:

- (1) SUNY Schenectady will expand access and increase student success by providing deliberate, diligent start-to-completion guidance for all students; (aligns with Strategic Goal I.A)
- (2) SUNY Schenectady will ensure a relevant and coherent curriculum; (aligns with Strategic Goal II)
- (3) SUNY Schenectady will strengthen community partnerships in order to bolster work force development, further expand educational pathways, and enrich the cultural life of the community; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV; IV.B; IV.G)
- (4) SUNY Schenectady will enhance its commitment to campus diversity, inclusion, and equity; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV.I & IV.G) and

## Standard I: Mission and Goals

- (5) SUNY Schenectady will invest in campus renewal, including physical facilities and technological capacities (aligns with Strategic Goals III; III.A; III.C).

These initiatives provide areas of focus for examining how well SUNY Schenectady meets the criteria for MSCHE's Standard I, and together guide decision making, help direct the college's work as an educational institution, and make firm its commitment to serve its students. The college's goal to "create a culture that attracts and respects all forms of diversity" —initially formulated as part of Strategic Goal III, to "invest in campus renewal"—now stands alone as its own Institutional Initiative. Accordingly, the college has refocused its efforts "to enhance its commitment to campus diversity, inclusion, and equity." The college's installation of a student success manager and six student success coaches; its active participation in Achieving the Dream, its subsequent scaling-up of the Accelerated Learning Program; and its award and implementation of the Title III Grant are all results of an enhanced focus on inclusion and equity. Each of these undertakings also instantiates Institutional Initiatives 1–3: the college's student success personnel provide "deliberate, diligent start-to-completion guidance for all students"; participation in Achieving the Dream helps "ensure a relevant and coherent curriculum"; and implementing the Title III Grant "expands educational pathways." Finally, the *Facilities Master Plan*, especially its inclusion of the plan for the development of a learning commons, clearly aligns with Institutional Initiative 5, the college's goal to invest in campus renewal.

### Sources

[Academic Senate Minutes 10-23-15](#)  
[Academic Senate Minutes 11-17-17](#)  
[Academic and Student Affairs 2018 Plan](#)  
[Academic Program Review Guidelines](#)  
[Advisory Committee Handbook 2018–2019](#)  
[UFP collective bargaining agreement](#)  
[Article 126, Sections 6301 and 6303 of NY State Education Law](#)  
[Board of Trustees Minutes 1-25-16](#)  
[Board of Trustees Minutes 2-22-16](#)  
[BOT Policy 1.1–Mission & Vision](#)  
[BOT Policy 1.2–Policy Strategic Goals](#)  
[BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#)  
[BOT Policy 1.4–College Governance/Shared Governance](#)  
[BOT Policy 5.1–Travel Policy](#)  
[BOT Policy 5.5–Budget Policy Process](#)  
[Budget Form A: New Position Request 2016–2017](#)  
[Budget Form C: New Initiatives 2016–2017](#)  
[Budget Form D: New Software 2016–2017](#)  
[Budget Form E: New or Replacement Equipment 2016–2017](#)  
[Budget Instructions 2017–2018](#)  
[Budget Narrative & Performance Measures form 2018–2019](#)  
[Catalog 2018–2019](#)

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[CDTA Letter Agreement](#)

[CHS Course Offerings Webpage](#)

[Coffee and Conversation update 4-5-18](#)

[Curriculum Committee Guidelines 2017–2018](#)

[Facilities Master Plan](#)

[Initiatives and Best Practices Forum](#)

[Introduction to Craft Brewing 1-16-18](#)

[Middle States Substantive Change approval letter](#)

[Music Program Review 2017](#)

[New Student Orientation 8-2-18 Program](#)

[Poster Presentation Institute Week Forum](#)

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[President's Newsletters](#)

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[Professional Development Budget 2015–2016](#)

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[Schenectady Smart Transfer ECHS webpage](#)

[Smart Transfer Grant Approval Letter](#)

[Strategic Plan 2015–2020: Our College, Our Future](#)

[Strategic Planning Council Letter and Membership](#)

[Student forum announcement April 20](#)

[Student Handbook 2018–2019](#)

[SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities](#)

[Title III grant \(project narrative final\)](#)

[Viewbook 2017](#)

## Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

*Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully (MSCHE, 2015, pg. 5).*

### Criterion 1

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights.*

#### **The College is Committed to Academic and Intellectual Freedom and Freedom of Expression:**

SUNY Schenectady's commitment to academic freedom, respect for intellectual property rights, and regard for freedom of expression are well documented in its practices and policies. The development of the college's current [Academic Freedom Statement](#) benefitted from rigorous debate during multiple Academic Senate meetings. The final agreed upon statement was approved by the Academic Senate in [April 2011](#). Thereafter, the statement was included in the [Faculty Handbook](#), and in the collective bargaining agreements for the adjunct and full-time faculty units ([Adjunct MOU between SCCC & SEIU, Article 11](#); [UFP collective bargaining agreement, Article 31](#)). In 2017, the Board of Trustees (BOT) adopted [BOT Policy 1.10 – Academic Code Policy](#), which includes the *Academic Freedom Statement* ([Board of Trustees Minutes 7-24-17](#)).

As is the case with academic freedom, intellectual property rights are delineated in the faculty collective bargaining agreement, which states "the College respects the rights of Faculty to ownership of intellectual property developed as a product or byproduct of the instructional process" ([UFP collective bargaining agreement, Article 29](#)). In the case of online course development for which a faculty member was paid, the college and the faculty member retain joint ownership of the content. In the event that a faculty member is not paid for course development or to produce course materials, the faculty member retains ownership of any intellectual property associated with that course ([UFP collective bargaining agreement, Article 29.1.1, 29.1.2](#)).

The college values freedom of expression and, in 2016, took steps to establish a "free speech" zone for public use and formally adopted [BOT Policy 4.11–Free Speech & Public Assembly](#), which endorses the "the rights [of free speech] granted to individuals under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution" and is in compliance with public entities' legal obligation to designate a public forum for free speech ([BOT Policy 4.11–Free Speech & Public Assembly](#)). The values of academic and intellectual freedom and freedom of expression are also included in critical student procedural information, namely, the [Student Code of Conduct](#), which emphasizes among its core philosophies the "preservation of the freedom of speech and the rights of peaceable assembly; respect for academic freedom and constructive criticism."

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The policies governing academic freedom, intellectual property rights, and freedom of expression undergo periodic review and are revised as warranted as part of the processes associated with the revision of Academic Senate Bylaws, the review and revision of Board of Trustees Policies, and as part of contract negotiations. The [Academic Senate Bylaws](#) and the Board of Trustees Policies ([BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#)) undergo review at least every five years, or when changes in regulations or laws governing the college require. Contract negotiations occur every three years.

### Criterion 2

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.*

#### **The College Fosters a Campus Climate that Values Equity and Diversity:**

The college, in accord with its mission as an “inclusive, collaborative community” institution, is committed to the goals of diversity and to creating a culture of respect. The value the institution places on fostering and maintaining a climate of respect is articulated in Strategic Goal III, Strategic Initiative J, “to create a culture that attracts and respects all forms of diversity” ([Mission Statement; Strategic Plan 2020, Strategic Goal III, Initiative J](#)).

**Institutional Efforts Support Equity and Diversity.** As noted in the prior chapter, consistent with Standard I, the college mission and *Strategic Plan* guide decision making at the college. Through the decision-making process and in keeping with the institutional value placed on diversity and fostering a climate of respect, the college engages in a number of activities specifically designed to increase and enhance support for campus diversity, inclusion, and equity. To date, there have been numerous policies and initiatives from students, faculty, staff, and administration that demonstrate the college’s commitment.

Perhaps most notably, the college hired a chief diversity officer (CDO) who was charged with using her expertise to strategize for the planning, development, and implementation of processes, procedures, and policies that are best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As of November 2018, the college is engaged in an active search to replace the former CDO. The new CDO will continue to develop and implement a clear plan for the creation of processes, procedures, and policies representing best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. While the college demonstrated its value of diversity, in part, through the creation of the CDO position, it is also noteworthy to mention that the State University of New York, the system under which the college operates, places such a value on diversity and equity that it mandated all campuses to bring a CDO onboard if one was not already in place.

Procedures for conducting the search process contain a variety of information intended to ensure that search committee members are informed about diversity. As part of the search processes conducted in 2016, position announcements for the chief diversity officer, assistant

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vice president of academic affairs, director of marketing, director of institutional research, director of academic computing, dean of the Math Science Technology and Health Division, research analyst, and development math instructor were all included in *National Minority Update*. The position announcement for the director of institutional research was also advertised in *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*. Demonstrating an additional institutional effort to support equity and diversity in the workforce, the college purchased a position posting package from *National Minority Update* to continue minority outreach in the search process.

As part of the college's commitment to student success and completion, the college joined Achieving the Dream (AtD), a comprehensive, non-governmental reform movement focused on student success, especially for low-income students and students of color. Through this effort the college has committed a significant number of faculty and staff resources, as well as budget dollars, to actively work toward increasing student success.<sup>1</sup> AtD also opens many opportunities for colleges to partner with other institutions across the country and to support the efforts of various organizations. SUNY Schenectady chose to join AtD in part because of its particular focus on equity ([AtD Mission, Vision, Value, and Equity Statements](#)). Consistent with that core value, the team charged with operationalizing the AtD effort, namely the Student Success Initiative (SSI), assigned a sub-team to focus specifically on equity in campus professional-development programming. In Spring 2018, the sub-team sponsored its first Human Library event for students, faculty, and staff on campus. Building on the success of the first event, a second Human Library event took place in Fall 2018. Human Library is part of a worldwide movement designed to “build a positive framework for conversations that can challenge prejudices through dialogue” ([background on Human Library](#)).

**Institutional Programs for Students Support Equity and Diversity.** The college offers distinct programs with a specific connection to diversity and equity, each of which requires students to meet particular requirements: Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (C-STEP), Equal Opportunity Program (EOP), TRIO, and the Student Mentoring program.

C-STEP is designed to support minority and underrepresented student populations and is limited to alliances of academic institutions that have strong records of enrolling and retaining underrepresented students in STEM disciplines. The program employs a full-time director, who is a former minority intern at the college, and during the 2016–2017 academic year there were seventy-seven C-STEP students. The success of the program and its demonstrated ability to support students resulted in the college's making the director's position full-time in 2017, contributed to an award of a Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) grant, and helped support a current student in presenting her research in France during the summer of 2018.

The EOP program is focused on supporting “New York State students who display promise for succeeding in college but who may not have otherwise been offered admission in the State University System” ([SUNY Schenectady EOP application](#)). SUNY Schenectady's EOP program,

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<sup>1</sup> The College's AtD effort is outlined in greater detail in the chapter covering Standard III.

## Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

overseen by a full-time director who is a former EOP student, serves up to ninety-five students per semester ([EOP Access Webpage](#)). The [success rates](#) in these programs are evidence of the college's commitment to assisting members of underrepresented populations. Students may also benefit from support offered through the [TRIO academic support program](#), made available through federal grant funds. In addition to matriculation requirements, students wishing to participate in TRIO must meet one of the following criteria: first generation college student, income qualified, or have a documented disability. The program works with eligible students in a variety of ways, including assisting them in navigating the college experience, learning academic success strategies, exploring career and transfer options, and increasing their financial literacy.

**Institutional Mentoring Programs Support Equity and Diversity.** In Fall 2017, the college initiated the [Student Mentoring Program](#), an effort intended to support first generation, minority, financially disadvantaged, and other students in their transition to college and to help foster their success. Through the program, students are paired with faculty and staff, who offer support, guidance, and assistance to mentees as they navigate the college experience and help them overcome any barriers to success. Although the program is open to all students, it is designed to serve "low-income students; racial or ethnic minority students; non-traditional college-age students; first-generation students; students in fields or disciplines in which their gender is under-represented; international students and foreign nationals; gender nonconforming, trans, or LGBTQ students; religious minorities; and students with disabilities."

The mentoring provided to students is beneficial to them and adds to the climate supporting equity and diversity at the college. SUNY Schenectady also makes use of mentoring in another program, the Internship Program for the Development of Minority Faculty, designed to encourage minorities to pursue a career in higher education, particularly at the college. In part, the goal is also to provide additional minority role models at the college as students complete their education. To date, the program has led to six minority interns securing full-time positions with the college. As of Fall 2018, the college will have successfully engaged seventeen minority interns: nine in Liberal Arts, four in Business, Law, and Criminal Justice, two in Math, Science and Technology, and two in Music.

**Faculty and Staff Professional Development Support Equity and Diversity.** In the week prior to the start of fall and spring semester classes, the college provides faculty with a series of professional development opportunities known as Faculty Institute Week (IW). While there are a variety of topics covered in IW sessions, a number focus on issues related to equity and diversity. For example, during the Fall 2017 IW program, a faculty member presented a [poster session](#) and follow-up roundtable on equity and micro-aggressions and another staff member provided a session focused on Title IX ([Faculty Institute Week Schedule Fall 2017](#)). In Fall 2018, Tony Holland, a national speaker and member of the higher education community, presented a session titled, "A Holistic Instructional Approach to Closing Achievement Gaps and Strategies to Increase Learning, Retention, and Completion." Additional sessions included "Equity-Code Switching," "Equity for English Language Learners," "Coaching for Success and Mentoring," updates on campus diversity information by the CDO, and training focused on accessibility and

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ALLY Training to support meeting the needs of online learners, particularly those who would benefit from course content in alternate formats.

While professional development is often comprised of programming such as that offered through the IW sessions, individuals can take part in alternative professional development experiences. One important vehicle for professional development that lends itself to growth in people's awareness of equity and diversity issues is exposure to various perspectives. Although not directly intended for the purposes of professional development, an Academic Senate standing committee, the Community and Cultural Affairs (CCE) Committee, has provided multiple opportunities for faculty, staff, students, and community members to learn more about issues of equity and diversity. CCE partners with community members and agencies and collaborates with Student Affairs to bring cultural programming to campus, much of which focuses on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Over the 2017–2018 academic year programming included "Film Frenzy," a film series for parents with small children; Marion Lazan's "A Holocaust Survivor Remembers"; Dr. Bryant Marks, Professor of Psychology at Morehouse College and Director of the National Training Institute on Race and Equity provided an interactive presentation on implicit bias, "You are More than a Label: Changing the Narrative on Student Success"; a screening of the film "Get Out," followed by a student-led panel discussion on bias, racism, and violence; a student-led roundtable discussion on gender diversity, identity, and support, co-sponsored by the Pride Alliance and SUNY Schenectady's AAUW student club; and a panel exhibit at the college's Begley Library detailing women's struggle for the vote, courtesy of the NYS Woman's Suffrage Commission.

**Student Policies and Activities Support Equity and Diversity.** Just as the value the college places on diversity, equity, and a climate of respect is evidenced in the *Strategic Plan*, the document that helps guide the college, so too is that value clearly reflected in procedures and policies guiding students. For example, the [Student Code of Conduct](#) emphasizes that "all members of the institution should be part of a campus environment that respects and appreciates differences" and the [Student Affairs Core Values](#), as outlined in the *Student Handbook*, states, "[w]e value others, celebrate differences, respect individual dignity, and strive to cultivate a climate where everyone sees themselves as part of an inclusive community."

The Student Government Association (SGA) helps to put those priorities into practice by sponsoring student clubs devoted to fostering a climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Student clubs include ALANA (African, Latin, Asian and Native American students), Educational Opportunity Program Student Organization, PRIDE Alliance, RESTART Club, and Student Veterans of America. Throughout the year, these clubs run events to bring awareness of diversity to the college community and advocate for inclusion and equity. In addition to the SGA clubs, [Wellness and Support Services](#) provides student programming focused on equity and designed to foster a "sense of individual and shared responsibility." Specifically, the unit operates the Interactional Diversity, Engagement, and Leadership (IDEAL) program to "promote an inclusive environment in which students with differing backgrounds and characteristics feel welcome and valued" and to help students develop their leadership skills. IDEAL program

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students assist during new student orientation sessions, serve as informal mentors to new students, and lead various programs throughout the year.

### Criterion 3

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: a grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably.*

#### **There are Documented Student Complaint and Grievance Policies and Procedures:**

The college has clear, documented policies and procedures in place by which students can file complaints or grievances and have them addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably. To facilitate this, the *Student Handbook* includes information on specific terms that may be associated with a complaint. For example, it outlines the distinction between discrimination and harassment and provides a detailed explanation of the procedures for resolving specific complaints, and processing claims of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation ([Student Handbook 2018–2019, pp. 70–80](#) and [Student Code of Conduct section of the Student Handbook](#)). The *Student Handbook* also provides information about the college's designated Affirmative Action Officer and Title IX Coordinator. Procedures for filing a complaint about an academic or administrative matter, FERPA, and workplace violence are also included in the *Student Handbook* ([Student Handbook 2018–2019, pp. 81–82](#)). The "Student Code of Conduct," contained within the *Student Handbook*, also outlines the appeals process associated with the disciplinary process. The procedures students must follow should they wish to make an academic complaint are outlined in the college's "Academic Code," included in a separate section of the *Student Handbook*.

#### **There are Documented Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Complaint and Grievance Policies and Procedures:**

The collective bargaining agreements in place with each of the four on-campus unions outline grievance procedures. The four collective bargaining units represent (1) faculty and staff ([UFP collective bargaining agreement, Article 30](#)); (2) adjunct faculty ([Adjunct MOU between SCCC & SEIU, Article 15](#)); (3) directors ([Chairpersons, Administrators, and Directors Association \(CADA\) Article 23 of the contract 2013–2017](#)); and civil service employees ([Civil Service Employees Association \(CSEA\) Article XX of the contract](#)). Members of the unit may grieve particular management actions believed to adversely impact one or more unit members and any action it characterizes as an improper practice. All of the collective bargaining agreements are consistent with the New York State Civil Service and Labor Laws. Any labor-management issues are further subject to any applicable procedures by the New York State Public Employee Relations Board oversight body. Administrative, unrepresented, staff operate under [BOT Policy 2.1–Admin Staff \(Unrepresented\)](#). The policy contains a clause (2.1.17) outlining the "procedure for resolving internal differences that cannot be resolved by informal discussion." Review of the grievance procedures are addressed through the negotiation process in the case of represented groups

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and through the [BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#) in the case of unrepresented staff. As will all policies and agreements, college counsel works to ensure alignment with applicable state and federal laws.

In addition, in the spirit of open communication and transparency, the Academic Senate has implemented two procedures to enable members to air concerns or complaints and receive feedback about them. First, in 2014, it formulated a charge to the existing Executive Committee to encourage openness and civility among faculty, staff, and administration by providing a "forum to coordinate and strengthen communication between members of the Academic Senate and the President" ([Academic Senate Bylaws, Section 8.2.2.1](#)). The Executive Committee, comprised of the Academic Senate officers and the delegate to the SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges have regularly scheduled meetings with the president and provost. Second, in January 2016, the Academic Senate added an open forum, providing attendees an opportunity to discuss topics not included as agenda items for discussion ([Academic Senate Agenda 2-26-16](#)).

### Criterion 4

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: the avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents.*

#### **College Policies are in Place to Safeguard against Conflicts of Interest:**

There are clear policy directives addressing conflict of interest or its appearance among all constituents. Article III, Section 3, of [BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws](#) directly addresses conflicts of interest, clearly indicating the requirement that Board Members “comply with all applicable state and local laws dealing with conflicts of interest, including Sections [800–805 of the General Municipal Law](#) and the *Schenectady County Code of Ethics*.

[BOT Policy 2.21–Code of Ethics](#) provides additional information detailing issues related to the prohibition of action in which there is a conflict of interest (Sections 1, 4(d), and 5) and the disclosure of conflicts (Sub-Sections 1, 2, and 3) for college personnel and members of the Board of Trustees. Similar requirements addressing potential conflicts of interest are included in the Ethics in Public Contracting section of [BOT Policy 5.4–Purchasing](#). Further, BOT Policy 5.4 is aligned with [Article 18 of the General Municipal Law](#) and with the [Schenectady County Code of Ethics](#), both of which outline various prohibitions against any interest or gain from the award of a contract with the college. Compliance with the policy is subject to the college’s annual audit.

In addition to addressing conflict of interest, [Board of Trustees Policy 2.21–Ethics Policy](#) also prohibits employees and board members from having any direct or indirect financial interest in a contract with the college, accepting gifts from students valued at more than \$10.00, or from becoming romantically involved with any student or employee over whom they have supervisory power. In accord with [BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#), BOT Policy

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2.21 is to be reviewed by the end of 2019, five years since its last review. As of Spring 2018, the Executive Director of Human Resources had begun the process.

As an additional tool to deter and detect fraud, [BOT Policy 2.26–Fraud and Whistleblower Policy](#) was put in place in March 2018. The policy outlines the type of activities that might be considered fraudulent or irregular, establishes a confidential channel of communication by which individuals may report activity they reasonably believe to be fraudulent or irregular, details the procedure for reviewing any reports of fraud, and safeguards against retaliation. The communication channel provides individuals the option to make a report to their supervisor or the vice president of administration. It also established a “Whistleblower Hotline” and a Whistleblower email address through which reports may be made anonymously.

Beyond the policies of the Board of Trustees, the college’s sponsoring county, Schenectady, requires all the institution’s administrators with fiduciary responsibilities to complete an annual [Financial Disclosure Statement](#) per state and county local law. The report, focused on any possible financial conflicts, is distributed and collected by the Schenectady County [Board of Ethics](#).

### Criterion 5

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees.*

#### **The College Engages in Fair and Impartial Human Resources Practices:**

The college engages in fair and impartial human resources practices and, in its *Strategic Plan*, provides guidance for all decision making, focusing specifically on diversity and equity in Strategic Goal III, Strategic Initiatives F and J, as follows:

- F. Ensure that the demographics of the college faculty, staff, and administration reflect the diversity of the student body through recruitment, retention, and promotion of qualified diverse candidates; by building on the college’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies; and through creative outreach.
  
- J. Create a culture that attracts and respects all forms of diversity.

Aligned with the goals and initiatives contained in the *Strategic Plan*, policies and procedures are in place to ensure fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees. The college adheres to the federal and state laws governing labor practices ([United States Code, 2011 Edition, Supplement 4, Title 5](#)). In addition to compliance with federal and state labor laws, the college follows its established policies in human resources practices.

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[BOT Policy 2.9–Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) governs the college’s search process, including the specifications of approved positions, job descriptions, required notifications, search committee formation and processes, interviews, selection, offers, and appointments. To support ethical practices in hiring, [BOT Policy 2.21–Code of Ethics](#) prohibits officers or employees of the college from participating in decisions to hire, promote, discipline, or discharge a relative for any compensated position with the college or its affiliates and includes a process for responding to any such claims.

**The College Follows Impartial Practices in Recruitment.** The college follows impartial practices in recruitment and engages in specific efforts to attract diverse job candidates. As part of that effort, the college’s *Non-Discrimination Statement* and the contact information for the college’s Title IX Coordinator, Executive Director of Human Resources, Affirmative Action Officer, and the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights are each included in job postings. The *Non-Discrimination Statement* reads:

*Schenectady County Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, gender or gender identity, disability, or age in admissions, employment, programs and activities.*

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the college also consistently works to recruit a diverse candidate pool through the use of recruiting vehicles such as *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* and *National Minority Update* to post position announcements. Additionally, the college has begun a subscription to *Interview Exchange*, a human resources software system that includes a search assessment component that will be implemented.

**Search Committees Follow Impartial Practices.** At the beginning of each search process, when the review of applicants is starting, the Human Resources recruiting specialist meets with each hiring manager and search committee. During that meeting the recruiting specialist provides each member of the group with the college’s guidelines for a fair and equitable search and fields any questions. While the resources are easily available on the college’s website, each member of the group is provided with the college’s [Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Professional Staff](#) or the [Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Faculty](#), detailing the specific responsibilities of all staff involved in search processes, the [SUNY Schenectady Selection and Interview Guide](#), outlining guidance on evaluating candidate resumes and interview protocols, and a copy of [BOT Policy 2.9–Recruitment and Selection Policy](#), detailing the college’s policy for recruitment and selection.

The information provided to members of search committees outlines procedures and expectations to support diversity and equity in hiring practices and to support efforts at increasing diversity on campus. For example, both the *Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Professional Staff* and the *Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Faculty* note that search committees are to include diverse representation or a designee from the *Affirmative Action and Multicultural Affairs Committee* and indicate that committees are responsible for “select[ing] a

diverse pool of finalists” and emphasize the important role members play “in ensuring an unbiased and equitable treatment of protected class applicants, which include minorities, persons with disabilities and veterans.”

**Impartial Practices Are Used in Evaluation, Reappointment, Promotion, Discipline, and Separation.** The college engages in impartial practices in employee evaluation, reappointment, promotion, discipline, and separation. With four collective bargaining units operating on campus, many of these processes adhere to negotiated terms appearing in the units’ agreements. For example, the UFP contract sets forth the processes for evaluations, reappointments, and promotions for its members, including the parameters for seeking advancement in rank and the pursuit of tenure ([UFP collective bargaining agreement, Articles 12-15](#)). The contract also addresses the circumstances and procedures for member discipline and/or termination ([UFP collective bargaining agreement, Article 6.3](#)). The agreement with adjunct faculty includes procedures for advancement, evaluation, and discipline ([Adjunct MOU between SCCC & SEIU, Articles 8, 9, and 14](#)). Adjuncts, hired at deans’ discretion, are afforded the opportunity to advance based upon years of service, professional qualifications, and annual evaluations. The agreement also outlines the parameters for peer observation, administration evaluations, and student evaluations.

The processes for the evaluation and reappointment and the process for not reappointing members of the Chairpersons, Administrators, Directors Association (CADA) unit are detailed in [Articles 5. 11, and 11.2](#) of the contract. Unrepresented administrative staff are evaluated annually to assess their effectiveness in performing their job duties and “general contribution to the purposes of the College.” The processes associated with the evaluation, appointment, reappointment, and termination of unrepresented staff is contained in BOT Policy 2.1–*Admin Staff (Unrepresented)* [sections 2.1.3](#) and [2.1.7](#). The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) contract outlines the procedures for seniority, progressive discipline, and other areas related to working conditions (CSEA Contract Agreement Dec. 31 2015, [Articles XV](#) and [XVI](#)). In addition to adhering to the parameters set forth in the collective bargaining agreements with each of the four units operating at the college and the BOT policy governing unrepresented administrative staff, a policy is in place to address events associated with involuntary termination such as death, disability, end of a job, and termination for cause ([BOT Policy 2.3–Involuntary Termination of Employment Policy](#)).

### **Criterion 6**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications.*

#### **The College Demonstrates Honesty and Truthfulness:**

SUNY Schenectady undertakes efforts to ensure honesty and truthfulness in internal and external communications and publications. Such internal communications as meeting minutes of the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions, Academic Senate, standing and ad hoc

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committees, and the BOT of Trustees are vetted for accuracy. Meeting minutes are completed, vetted, and approved by the Academic Senate, and thereafter posted on the college's network "shares drive" where they are accessible to all employees. However, in the case of Academic Senate standing and ad hoc committees, the recording and the dissemination of minutes has not always been consistent. To address the issue of inconsistency, the Academic Senate Chair held forums on best practices for standing and *ad hoc* committees and attended standing committee meetings to ensure minutes are taken and to emphasize the importance of completing the process. Minutes of division meetings are completed and provided to the provost, and BOT meeting minutes are completed and publicly posted on the college website once approved by them in their subsequent meeting. Furthermore, in October, a Senate member made a formal proposal to change section 8.3.4 of the *Academic Senate Bylaws* to require committee secretaries to post minutes no later than one week after they have been approved. That *Bylaws* amendment came to a vote in the December 7 meeting of the Academic Senate and passed unanimously ([Faculty Senate Minutes Dec. 7, 2018](#)).

Procedures are in place to ensure that the college's degree and certificate programs, course credits, pre-requisites, and program details are communicated honestly and truthfully both internally and externally. All courses and programs move through a shared governance review process and, pending approval, undergo additional review through the State University of New York (SUNY) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Course pre-requisites are published with course descriptions in the [College Catalog](#) and posted on the college's website. Curriculum arrays for all programs are also published on the website and in the [College Catalog](#). Per SUNY and NYSED regulations, programs cannot be advertised until they are approved by both bodies and NYSED has published the program to the NYSED Inventory of Registered Programs.

Information for educational marketing materials is developed by the originator (faculty member, dean and/or provost) and forwarded to the director of marketing who drafts new marketing items. The draft materials are then returned to the originator, the provost, and the public relations/publication specialist to review them for accuracy and to provide editorial feedback. Final versions of new marketing materials must be approved by all parties and adhere to brand standards per the [College Brand Book](#). Guidelines for this process are available to the college community on the [Marketing webpage](#). To ensure accuracy in the data appearing in advertising, the Office of Institutional Research provides and disseminates all data.

Information regarding student housing may be found on the [college's website](#) and in the admissions packet sent to accepted students. The website clearly states that College Suites are owned and operated by a private company and provides a link to a [housing information letter](#) that summarizes the cost of attendance with student housing at College Suites. The website also lists other sources for potential student housing.

**Criterion 7(a, b)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities as appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place: (a) to promote affordability and accessibility; (b) to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt.*

**The College Promotes Affordability and Accessibility Services:**

The college promotes affordability and accessibility, as evidenced in Strategic Goal I, “reach as many students as might benefit from higher education by reducing financial, geographic, programmatic, and academic barriers to enrollment” and Strategic Initiative I(C), “[e]nsure financial affordability and strengthen financial aid processes that support successful student enrollment, progression, and program completion” of the [Strategic Plan](#).

Consistent with the *Strategic Plan*, SUNY Schenectady works to facilitate the affordability and accessibility of a college education. The college has one of the lowest community college rates of tuition and fees in the State University of New York system ([IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2016](#)). To support the many SUNY Schenectady students who are dependent on some form of financial aid, the Financial Aid Office assists students in applying for grant and aid funding and provides them with guidance through the financial aid application process. All matriculated students are encouraged to complete a free application for federal student aid (FASFA) and apply for financial aid. Additionally, scholarships, grants, and loan aid are discussed during the admissions process and throughout student orientation. The table below shows information on students’ financial aid awards, including the fact that 76.51% of our students receive aid.

<b>Financial Aid Awards for 2016–2017</b>	<b># of Recipients</b>	<b>% of Matriculated Students</b>
Grant & Scholarship Recipients (Federal, State, and Institutional)	2340	64.43%
Loan Recipients (Federal or Private)	1517	41.77%
Federal Work Study Recipients	53	1.46%
Total Financial Aid Recipients (Unduplicated)	2779	76.51%

**The College Works to Enhance Students’ Understanding of Funding Sources and Options:**

SUNY Schenectady provides multiple opportunities for students to learn about funding sources and options. Financial aid information including links to financial aid FAQs, a net price calculator, instructions for applicants, *Excelsior* scholarship information, veterans benefits, and Financial Aid Office contact information are all posted on the college website ([Paying for College SUNY Schenectady Webpage](#); [Veterans Services Webpage](#)). Financial Aid Office staff also attend Open House, and other admissions events to conduct presentations and answer

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questions. Additionally, students in the college's first year experience course, [First Year Seminar \(FYS\)](#), are also provided in-depth information regarding college costs and financial aid and are required to acquaint themselves with SUNY's interactive financial planning tool, [Smart Track](#). *Smart Track* was "designed to help students and families understand college costs and develop a financial plan for the future."

The SUNY Schenectady Foundation makes presentations about available scholarships to all FYS course sections. Scholarship information is also discussed during student orientation sessions and is available online ([Scholarships Webpage](#)). Information about available scholarships is distributed in student areas on campus, displayed on campus television monitors, and presented on the website, students' *Blackboard* main page, the student portal, and the SUNY Schenectady Foundation "Scholarships" page. The "Scholarships" page also includes links to the "Paying for College" and "Financial Aid" pages. Several workshops are also conducted with groups such as Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and the President's Student Mentoring Program as an additional effort to ensure minority and under-represented students have access to information about scholarships.

To ensure that faculty members know about available scholarships and to advocate for them to encourage students to apply for scholarships, staff from the SUNY Schenectady Foundation have conducted presentations during Faculty Institute Week. In 2017, to increase communication about scholarship opportunities, the Foundation transitioned from *STARS Online* to the upgraded system, *AwardSpring*. The new system is more easily accessible for students, features an "auto-apply" option, and has a more intuitive interface. In its first year of implementation, the system led to an 80% increase in the number of students completing scholarship applications.

### **Criterion 8(a, b, c, d)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding: (a) the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates; (b) the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation; (c) substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion; (d) the institution's compliance with the Commission's policies.*

### **The College Engages Full Disclosure and Meets all Compliance Requirements:**

The college complies with all state, federal, and Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) reporting policies, regulations, and requirements. The *College Catalog* clearly outlines required disclosure information regarding academic and financial aid programs, indicates that the college operates under the programs of the State University of New York (SUNY), and contains a statement indicating that it is an accredited institution and provides contact information for MSCHE ([College Catalog pg. 3](#)). The provost is responsible for ensuring that all

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required statistics and required reporting information is provided to state and federal level agencies, MSCHE, and accrediting bodies. In May 2018, a [Proposal for Substantive Change](#) was submitted and approved by MSCHE and in September 2018 additional proposal for [Substantive Change](#) was approved. Both proposals were to establish several local high schools as additional locations at which the college offers dual-enrollment courses.

Reporting to SUNY and NYSED includes proposals for new degree and certificate programs, revisions to current programs, the deactivation and discontinuation of programs, as well as specifically required regulatory reports such as financial information. As part of the provost's responsibilities, data and reports are also submitted to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which is overseen by the National Center for Education Statistics. In an effort to lend additional support in the spirit of full disclosure, the college participates in the [Voluntary Framework of Accountability](#) (VFA) and presents the results on its consumer information webpage.

Academic division deans are responsible for ensuring that programs with specialized accreditations adhere to all the requirements of the issuing body. Deans are also responsible for overseeing all associated accreditation reporting, presenting the information to the provost for review, and disseminating the information to faculty and the campus community. For example, the college's Paralegal, Culinary, and Music programs currently hold accreditations from the American Bar Association, American Culinary Federation, and the National Association of Schools of Music. Information regarding accreditation is published in the *College Catalog* and on the website. The college's culinary program earned the Exemplary Program Award during its last accreditation cycle.

Financial Aid compliance and reporting at the state and federal level is done annually by the Assistant Dean for Financial Aid and Access. These reports include assessments of compliance with all regulations. [BOT Policy 5.10–Title IV Maximum Time Frame for Completion \(150%\) Policy](#) supports alignment with U.S. Department of Education financial aid compliance requirements for maximum time frame for completion. The college engages the services of an independent certified public accounting firm to complete an annual audit. The audit includes all federal financial aid programs; its findings are presented at one of the college's BOT meetings. The most recent (2017) audit found the college in compliance with all applicable regulations and laws, and found no material issues with its financial practices. Assessment of Financial Aid is accomplished through these periodic audits.

College compliance information is publicly available through the [consumer information webpage](#) and includes a link to the college's [Data Book](#), which provides graduation and retention rates in addition to other data associated with enrollment, retention, and completion.

The college meets all requirements for compliance associated with MSCHE, federal, state, and program accrediting bodies.

### Criterion 9

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.*

#### **Periodic Assessment of Ethics and Integrity are Evidenced in Policies, Processes, and Practices:**

BOT policies 1.5 (*Board of Trustee Bylaws*) and 2.21 (*Code of Ethics*) each directly respond to ethics and integrity in college operations, both for the Board of Trustees and for college personnel ([BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws](#); [BOT Policy 2.21–Code of Ethics](#)). [BOT Policy 2.26–Fraud and Whistleblower Policy](#) lends additional support for operating with ethics and integrity, and it acts as a safeguard against violations, providing protections from retaliation for any individual making a report. The college’s strong shared governance process adds a check and balance process that plays an important role in the assessment of ethics and integrity and is supported through BOT policy ([BOT Policy 1.4–College Governance/Shared Governance](#)). Both the Student Government Association and the Academic Senate have procedures in place for reviewing their *Constitution* and *Bylaws*, respectively ([SGA Constitution](#); [Academic Senate Bylaws](#)).

Over the past two years, SUNY Schenectady's Board of Trustees has conducted an intensive review of its policies, directly supporting the periodic assessment of ethics and integrity. That review resulted in the revision of a number of policies that were in place and the creation of new policies. These efforts were in accord with BOT policies governing policy revision and development ([Board of Trustees Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#)).

### Conclusion

SUNY Schenectady is faithful to its mission, honors its contracts and commitments, adheres to its policies, and represents itself honestly and in full faith.

#### **Suggestions for Standard II:**

1. Assessment of search procedures should routinely be documented and updated to reflect current best practices and provide an analysis of current recruitment efforts.
2. The college's position announcements now include a non-discrimination statement, but SUNY Schenectady should consider strengthening position announcements to include a more robust diversity statement, one that reflects the college's deep commitment to diversity.

#### **Recommendations for Standard II:**

There are no recommendations for Standard II.

## Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

### Requirements for Standard II:

There are no requirements for Standard II.

### Standard II Institutional Initiative Alignment:

There are three Institutional Initiatives relevant to Standard II:

- (1) SUNY Schenectady will expand access and increase student success by providing deliberate, diligent start-to-completion guidance for all students; (aligns with Strategic Goal I.A)
- (3) SUNY Schenectady will strengthen community partnerships in order to bolster work force development, further expand educational pathways, and enrich the cultural life of the community; and (aligns with Strategic Goals IV; IV.B; IV.G)
- (4) SUNY Schenectady will enhance its commitment to campus diversity, inclusion, and equity; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV.I and IV.G)

Findings in Standard II indicate that the college fosters a climate of ethics and integrity. In accord with its Mission and Institutional Initiative 1, its publications represent the college truthfully and provide honest guidance for all students. Findings do suggest, however, that in order to be perfectly transparent, the college's publications regarding housing should clarify that both students and non-students reside in the College Suites. Furthermore, to better reflect the college's deep commitment to diversity articulated in Institutional Initiative 3, the college should consider strengthening position announcements to include a more robust diversity statement. Findings also indicate that the college's efforts are especially commendable in the myriad ways in which it meets Initiative 3, "enriching "the cultural life of the community," and, in part, Initiative 4, "enhanc[ing] its commitment to campus diversity [and] inclusion..." by providing a robust slate of diverse, inclusive extracurricular programming. The college's efforts to promote equity also include an active Student Mentoring Program and a newly instituted Mentor for Minority Faculty.

### Sources

[Academic Code Preamble & Academic Freedom Statement](#)

[Academic Senate Agenda 2-26-16](#)

[Academic Senate Minutes 4-8-11](#)

[Adjunct MOU between SCCC & SEIU](#)

[UFP collective bargaining agreement](#)

[Agreement between County of Schenectady, SUNY Schenectady & CADA 2013–2017](#)

[Board of Trustees Minutes 7-24-17](#)

[Board of Ethics Schenectady, NY](#)

[BOT Policy 1.10 – Academic Code Policy](#)

[BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#)

[BOT Policy 1.4–College Governance-Shared Governance](#)

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[\*BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 2.1–Admin Staff \(Unrepresented\)\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 2.21–Code of Ethics \(Revised March 2018\)\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 2.26–Fraud and Whistleblower\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 2.3–Involuntary Termination of Employment Policy\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 2.9–Recruitment and Selection Policy\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 3.1–Student Code of Conduct\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 4.11–Free Speech & Public Assembly\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 5.10–Title IV Maximum Time Frame for Completion \(150%\) Policy\*](#)

[\*BOT Policy 5.4–Purchasing\*](#)

[\*College Brand Book\*](#)

[\*Catalog 2018–2019\*](#)

[\*General Municipal Law 800–805\*](#)

[\*Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Faculty\*](#)

[\*Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Professional Staff\*](#)

[\*CSEA Contract Agreement Dec. 31, 2015\*](#)

[\*EOP Access Webpage\*](#)

[\*Equity and Microaggressions Poster Session \(Richardson\)\*](#)

[\*Faculty Handbook Chapter II Academic Code 2018–2019\*](#)

[\*Faculty Handbook Chapter III Bylaws 2018–2019\*](#)

[\*Faculty Institute Week Schedule Fall 2017\*](#)

[\*Faculty Senate Minutes Dec. 7, 2018\*](#)

[\*FDS Form Year Ending 2017 \(Schenectady County Ethics Report\)\*](#)

[\*FYS 100 First Year Seminar\*](#)

[\*Housing Information Letter 2018–2019\*](#)

[\*IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2016\*](#)

[\*Middle States Substantive Change Approval Letter\*](#)

[\*Middle States Receipt of Substantive Change Request, Sept. 5, 2018\*](#)

[\*Paying for College SUNY Schenectady Webpage\*](#)

[\*SUNY Schenectady Data Book 2016\*](#)

[\*SUNY Schenectady Selection and Interview Guide\*](#)

[\*Scholarships Webpage\*](#)

[\*SGA Ratified Constitution 2017\*](#)

[\*Strategic Plan 2020\*](#)

[\*Student Handbook 2018–2019\*](#)

[\*Student Mentoring Program\*](#)

[\*SUNY Schenectady EOP application\*](#)

[\*SUNY Schenectady Marketing Webpage\*](#)

[\*TRIO academic support program\*](#)

[\*USCODE-2011-title5\*](#)

[\*Veterans Services Webpage\*](#)

[\*VFA 2017 SUNY Schenectady—Public Outcomes Report\*](#)

[\*Wellness and Support Services\*](#)

## Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

*An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education experiences (Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation, MSCHE, 2015, pg. 7).*

### Criterion 1

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning.*

#### **The College Provides Degree and Certificate Appropriate in Length, Structure, and Design:**

SUNY Schenectady offers forty-eight degree and certificate programs and nine concentrations. Each degree and certificate program is appropriate in length, structure, and design.

**Program Development.** Degree and certificate programs are developed by faculty with expertise in the field. Faculty develop program student learning outcomes (SLOs) and the timeframe needed to achieve them. The process involves faculty members engaging in such activities as discussions with colleagues, examining programs at other two-year institutions within the SUNY system and across the country, gathering feedback from professionals in fields specific to the degree or certificate program, reviewing transfer programs, and working with their academic division deans. Programs are also designed with employment or transfer outcomes in mind.

Faculty members then examine the list of courses and the program array, outlining the semester progression of courses. As part of developing the program array, faculty members ensure that course pre-requisites are accounted for, and in preparation for submission to the Curriculum Committee, they ensure that the program aligns with the college's general education curriculum (S-CORE) and SUNY requirements. They verify the latter by completing an audit per [Section II \(A\)](#) of the *Curriculum Committee's Guidelines*.

Once they complete the draft of all program information, faculty forward it to the academic division dean for distribution to division faculty. Division faculty review and discuss the proposed program during a division meeting, after which they vote on it. Once a program is approved by the division, the academic division dean prepares the required materials for submission to the Curriculum Committee.

SUNY Schenectady degree and certificate programs are vetted through the Curriculum Committee as part of the shared governance process ([Guidelines for the Submission of](#)

### Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

[Proposals to the Curriculum Committee](#)). As part of the review process, members of the committee examine the program SLOs, and courses. They then verify that the program meets institutional, SUNY, and NYSED requirements. After Curriculum Committee approval, new programs go to the Academic Senate for approval, followed by the vice president of academic and student affairs/provost and finally the president. Throughout the review process, there is ample opportunity for discussion. As the final step in the shared governance process, the program is brought before the Board of Trustees for review and approval.

After the internal approval process is complete, the provost submits degree and certificate program proposals to the State University of New York (SUNY) and the State Department of Education for approval. That review process includes examining how the program aligns with the college and SUNY missions, the program's SLOs, the course array, and the monetary and human resources the college devotes to the program.

**Coherent Learning Experience.** The college provides students with a coherent learning experience through its institutional student learning outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs, defined by the college's [S-CORE general education requirements](#), include five distinct areas:

(1) communication, (2) scientific literacy, (3) mathematical reasoning and literacy, (4) cultural and historical understanding, and (5) information literacy. The S-Core, having replaced the SUNY Schenectady General Education Principles, has been in effect since September 2013. To ensure that programs are designed with this coherent learning experience in mind, the *Curriculum Committee Guidelines* require program proposals to include an audit mapping how the program meets the S-CORE.

Just as programs are designed to support a coherent learning experience, the program assessment process, the academic program review (APR), also works to ensure students are provided a coherent learning experience. The APR requires programs to map their curriculum to the S-CORE/ILOs. Programs are kept current and relevant through the APR process, through which programs are assessed on a rotating five-year cycle. As part of the APR process, critical elements of programs are examined, such as program design, curriculum, student learning outcomes, alignment with S-CORE/ILOs, compliance with SUNY general education requirements, SUNY and NYSED liberal arts course requirements, and program resources. Programs are evaluated by faculty and external reviewers, both of which make recommendations based upon the review ([Academic Program Review Guidelines](#)). In addition to the APR process, program coherence is supported through the use of advisory committees, which play a key role in providing faculty and deans with feedback from experts working in the field and other industry experts. Advisory committees are expected to meet at least two times per year to ensure continuous feedback about programs. Each year the college also holds an advisory mixer to encourage networking opportunities for members of the college community and the professionals who sit on the Advisory Committees ([Advisory Committee Handbook](#)).

**Criterion 2(a)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are: (a) rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies.*

**Faculty are Rigorous and Effective in Teaching, Assessment of Student Learning, and Service:**

Teaching effectiveness, assessment of student learning, and college service are central to the work of the college's faculty. Consistent with the mission of the college, the faculty contract outlines a number of expectations for faculty. Section 9.2 of the contract, "Professional Obligations of Teaching Faculty," stipulates that faculty are to update and develop courses in their discipline, participate in course and program assessment, take part in curriculum development, and participate in Faculty Institute Week and professional development activities supported by the college. In order to set meaningful goals and assess the progress of professional development, faculty are required to draft professional development plans in consultation with their dean. In alignment with SUNY Schenectady's [mission](#) as a teaching institution, the creation and/or publication of discipline-specific research, while valued, is not a requirement for faculty. Faculty are expected to concentrate on the development of their teaching skills, participate in the assessment of student learning achievement, and contribute to college service.

Just as their full-time counterparts, adjunct faculty members are expected to participate in assessment activities, to remain current in their field, and to "provide evidence of their continued professional development activities." In addition, at the beginning of each semester, each division holds an adjunct faculty meeting conducted by the respective dean. Attendance at the meeting is required per Article 16(S) of the adjunct agreement. As part of the meeting, the deans review program and course updates for the division, outline the expectations of adjunct faculty members, provide information and training in the area of course and program level assessment, disseminate updates and information about the college, and answer questions.

**Criterion 2(b and c)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are: (b) qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do [and] (c) sufficient in number.*

**SUNY Schenectady Faculty are Qualified for Their Positions and Sufficient in Number:**

Candidates for teaching positions at the college undergo a thorough review as part of the search process ([Guidelines for Hiring Full-Time Faculty](#)). All applicants for faculty positions are screened for qualifications by a search committee appointed by the vice president of academic and student affairs/provost and the appropriate dean. Board of Trustees policy dictates

### Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

guidelines for the selection of applicants be based upon the qualifications presented in the position announcement ([BOT Policy 2.9–Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)). Generally, teaching positions require a Master’s Degree or equivalent, with a PhD preferred. High school instructors in the college’s dual-enrollment program, College in the High School, are considered adjunct faculty members and must have the same qualifications. In exceptional situations, individuals with specialized industry training and/or qualifications who do not possess a Master’s Degree may be hired, particularly in areas such as Culinary Arts and Aviation. Commonly, candidates for positions in these areas possess certifications or specific experience defining them as an expert in the field in which they are seeking to teach. Institutional data for 2017–2018 indicates that thirteen full-time faculty members hold Doctorate degrees, thirty-three hold a Master’s degree, seven hold a Bachelor’s degree (six Culinary, one Aviation), and one Culinary Arts faculty member holds an Associate’s degree (Culinary) ([Faculty and Degrees](#)).

In Fall 2017, SUNY Schenectady employed fifty-six full-time instructional faculty, one hundred sixty-one part-time faculty, and one hundred forty College in the High School faculty who design, deliver and assess student learning experiences at the college ([Data Book 2017–2018; CHS 2018 Instructor Listing](#)). The college’s student/faculty ratio is 23:1, and the average class size is nineteen ([IPEDS Fall Enrollment 2016–2017 Data \(student-faculty ratio\)](#)). At the occasion of faculty retirement or departure from the institution, or as programs expand or new ones are created, the college examines institutional needs to ensure that a sufficient number of full- and part-time faculty are in place to deliver programs.

#### **Criterion 2(d)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are: provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation.*

#### **Faculty are Provided with, and Utilize, Opportunities for Professional Growth and Innovation:**

SUNY Schenectady supports faculty growth and innovation. The college’s operating budget includes funds designated for tuition assistance in the form of three to four free credit hours per semester for up to twenty UFP members or their spouses or dependent children. Additional requests by UFP members may be made to a tuition assistance pool of \$20,000 per academic year ([UFP collective bargaining agreement](#)).

In addition to tuition assistance, over the course of the last three years, through an Academic Affairs budget allocation, the college has provided \$30,000 in professional development funds to support attendance and presentations at conferences, as well as participation in other professional development activities. To secure funds faculty members must complete a profession development request, including a justification demonstrating the way(s) in which the professional development is linked to one or more of the strategic initiatives. The request is then submitted to the dean, and pending approval, to the provost for review and approval. Funds are available made on a first come, first serve basis. The required professional

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development form and a sample spreadsheet of professional development activities for which faculty have received funding is attached here: ([Professional Development Funding Request and Guidelines 2017](#); [Professional Development Budget 2015–2016](#); [Professional Development Budget 2016–2017](#); [Professional Development Budget 2017–2018](#)).

Professional development has contributed to innovation and growth in teaching and programming. For example, in order to create video modules for the online *World Music Styles* course, an Assistant Professor of Music applied for, and secured, professional development funds to improve her skills with *Snagit* software ([Music Program Review 2017 \(Snagit\)](#)). The same faculty member served the field by providing a professional development trumpet master class at SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music and performing at the SUNY New Music and Culture Symposium at the University at Albany with three other School of Music professors ([APR Music 2017](#)).

An Assistant Professor of Mathematics from the Mathematics, Science, Technology, and Health Division was awarded funds for professional development in support of the college's efforts to meet students' developmental math needs. The faculty member was able to attend multiple conferences hosted by Carnegie Institute/WestEd, the organization behind the development of the [Quantway](#) and [Statway](#) courses. Conference programming focused on the theory and research behind the courses, pedagogy, techniques and strategies for managing group work (an integral part of the course), navigating and configuring the online homework platform, student testing and assessment, and strategies for keeping students motivated and engaged. Conference programming also included round-table discussions with other faculty members from colleges across the country to discuss experiences and provide support, suggestions, feedback and advice about the program and effectively meeting students' needs.

Beyond professional development related to faculty members' fields of discipline, a number of faculty members have taken part in professional development directly related to college initiatives, such as attending Achieving the Dream conferences, MSCHE conferences, and SUNY professional development meetings.

In the week prior to the start of fall and spring semester classes, the college provides faculty with a series of professional development opportunities known as Faculty Institute Week (IW). Developing the programming for IW draws on faculty input, conversations among members of the Provost's Council, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs staff, President's Council, Institutional Initiatives, the college's *Strategic Plan*, and, on occasion, upcoming SUNY System initiatives ([Faculty Institute Week Spring 2018 schedule of events](#)). IW programming addresses new efforts being implemented at the college (e.g., the *Starfish* system), program assessment, and often includes presentations conducted by guest speakers. For example, the SUNY Associate Provost, as well as author, Linda Suskie, have conducted presentations on assessment. Notably, in the context of teaching and professional growth, as part of IW for Fall 2018, Tony Holland, a nationally recognized speaker from Wallace Community College (WCCD) in Dothan, AL, presented a session titled, "A Holistic Instructional Approach to Closing Achievement Gaps and Strategies to Increase Learning, Retention, and Completions" (Fall [2017](#)

and [2018](#) IW Agendas). In 2017, WCCD was recognized by the American Association of Community Colleges with the Student Success Award of Excellence.

### **Criterion 2(e)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are: reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures.*

#### **Faculty are Evaluated Based on Clear, Fair, Written Criteria and Expectations:**

SUNY Schenectady's faculty members are committed to providing effective instruction and serving the college and the community in which it resides. While faculty independently demonstrate their commitment in these areas, faculty effectiveness and service to the college are important components of faculty evaluation, as are faculty members' efforts to keep courses updated and evaluate students' achievement of course and program learning outcomes.

In accordance with the [UFP collective bargaining agreement](#), academic division deans annually evaluate full-time faculty. Deans must conduct classroom observation of faculty every year until members earn tenure and, depending upon rank, at various intervals thereafter. Also, as part of the evaluation process, each spring semester faculty submit a self-evaluation of their work, which includes a summary of their professional activities for the evaluation year. Professional activities include teaching, updating courses, serving on college committees, working with professional organizations, presenting at and attending conferences, developing courses and programs, completing coursework or professional certifications, and working with accrediting organizations. The self-evaluation process also includes faculty submission of students' course evaluations. These course evaluations may be discussed at the annual evaluation meetings that take place between faculty and deans after faculty submit their self-evaluations. During these meetings, faculty members may bring any supporting materials they feel are pertinent to the discussion of their annual evaluation.

As with their full-time counterparts, adjunct faculty members are also evaluated as detailed in [Article 14](#) of the [adjunct agreement](#). As defined in the contract, the "purpose of the evaluations is to support excellence in teaching and adherence to academic and professional standards." High school instructors who teach the college's dual-enrollment courses through the College in the High School (CHS) program are also subject to review. Specifically, the CHS Handbook stipulates that a college faculty liaison—a discipline coordinator, or other appropriate representative—must schedule a classroom observation with each new CHS instructor. After the observation, the liaison sends a [report](#) to the director of college and school district partnerships and the CHS instructor. After the initial observation, the director may arrange future observations at her discretion ([CHS Faculty Handbook 2017–2018](#)).

### Criterion 3

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: *academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion.*

#### **Dissemination of Program Requirements, Objectives, and Information:**

SUNY Schenectady provides clear, easy-to-understand information on degree/certificate requirements and completion times through a number of accessible avenues. Each division/school has a dedicated webpage that includes information about academic programs, faculty, internships, transfer agreements, audition requirements (if applicable), and gainful employment. These pages also include “apply now” and “learn more” buttons. When appropriate, division webpages indicate [lead faculty](#) members to contact for more information about specific programs. The academic program pages contain links to the curriculum worksheet for each program ([Consumer Information](#)). Students may also obtain information about degree requirements on the Academic Advisement webpage ([Academic Advisement webpage](#)), which has links to academic program planning, course scheduling and registration, academic performance, progress, readmission procedures, and add/drop/withdrawals ([Academic Advisement](#)). The college website features [College Catalog links](#).

The [College Catalog](#) (*Catalog*) is the central source of information regarding degree and program requirements and expected time to completion. The *Catalog* can be viewed on the website or downloaded as a pdf ([Catalog 2018–2019](#)). In addition to information on tuition, fees and financial aid, the *Catalog* contains admissions information, program mission and goals, all course requirements, course arrays and sequencing, and course descriptions along with pre-requisites and co-requisites. Degree requirements clearly document the required credit hours for completing degrees and certificates.

Curriculum worksheets are available on program webpages through prominently displayed “Degree Plan” buttons ([Aviation Science webpage](#)). Curriculum worksheets are created and updated through the program-creation process that involves division/school, Curriculum Committee and Academic Senate approval. All curriculum worksheets follow a uniform format. The first page lists all classes required for a degree or certificate, as well as SUNY general education requirement mapping, course credits, and the minimum number of credits required to complete the degree. The second page contains a two- or four-semester course sequence guide and advising notes ([Fire Protection Technology AAS worksheet 2018–2019](#)). Curriculum worksheets are updated yearly based on any program modifications approved through divisions, the Curriculum Committee, and the Academic Senate.

Students are able to gauge their academic progress toward degree or certificate completion through their access to [DegreeWorks](#). Students can see what classes they are currently taking, what classes they have already taken, including grades earned, and classes that still need to be completed for graduation, including the general education requirements they have met or still

need to meet. It also lists all electives a student can take to fulfill requirements, their academic advisor, and their academic standing. *DegreeWorks* includes a graphic that clearly indicates students' degree progress and a "what if" tool that generates scenarios for students who are considering a program change. A second phase of the *DegreeWorks* implementation at SUNY Schenectady includes *Transfer Finder*, which allows students to compare their coursework with the degree requirements at other SUNY campuses. *Transfer Finder* is expected to be fully implemented and available to students by Fall 2020.

#### **Criterion 4**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress.*

#### **The College provides Opportunities and Resources to Support Programs of Study:**

SUNY Schenectady offers a breadth of opportunities and resources to support the college's programs and students' academic progress. The college's website and *Catalog* provide descriptions of each degree and certificate program, the associated SLOs, and a list of the required courses for each. Via the webpage for each academic division, the college also publishes a downloadable copy of the courses that must be completed for each degree or certificate, as well as the program array. The program arrays clearly communicate the recommended sequence of courses and the number of full-time semesters required to complete the program.

In order to support students' differing scheduling needs and educational goals, each semester the college offers a course schedule designed to provide students access to program courses at varying times. Students have the flexibility to choose courses offered face-to-face on campus during the day, evening, or Saturday. They can also choose to take fully online or hybrid courses. A full list of online courses can be found under the [Academics tab](#) on the college website. Also, in order to accommodate students who were unable to complete registration prior to the start of the semester, the college offers a "late start" session beginning three weeks after the traditional start of each semester. The college also offers a winter session and multiple summer sessions ([Course Offerings and Registration Calendar Webpage](#)). The college is exploring the possibility of offering various semester lengths and expanding summer course offerings.

As a tool to support students' academic progress toward degree completion, the college adopted *DegreeWorks* as a degree audit tool in 2014. *DegreeWorks* was an instant help to students, allowing them to check their curricular progress at any given time. This degree audit can be displayed on a computer or downloaded as a pdf file that can be saved and printed. *DegreeWorks* displays coursework that has been completed and that which still remains to be completed, as well as benchmarks necessary for degree completion, such as GPA requirements. The software displays programs' elective course options, provides access to course descriptions with a single mouse click, and clearly indicates which courses require a pre- or co-requisite,

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which allows students to verify whether they have met course requisites prior to registering. *DegreeWorks* also includes a notes section that allows advisors to record information about discussions with students and provides students with the opportunity to look back at those notes and use them as prompts as they continue progressing toward degree or certificate completion.

When students view *DegreeWorks*, an indicator displays the percentage of the program they have completed. It tracks students' progress toward completing general education requirements and identifies all requirements as complete, not complete, or in progress. *DegreeWorks* also displays a requirement notice if students received an incomplete grade in a course the previous semester and provides a "what if" option so that students can see how their coursework aligns with another degree program in the event they are considering a change in program. Students can access *DegreeWorks* from any computer, including from home.

#### **The College Provides Opportunities and Resources to Support Students' Academic Progress:**

SUNY Schenectady provides students with key tools to support program completion. The college also provides a wealth of resources that support students' academic progress toward completion. These resources are designed to meet the needs of the college's diverse population, to support students of varying levels of academic preparedness, and to be readily accessible. Services include, but are not limited to, the Advising Center, Begley Library, Learning Centers and Labs, and *First Year Seminar*.

**Advising Center.** Academic advising plays a critical role in supporting students' academic progress. At the Advising Center, students work with academic advisors to plan their academic program, to schedule courses and register, to navigate their academic progress, to review completed classes and grades, and to increase their knowledge of *DegreeWorks* as a tool. Advisors also help students understand academic standing, GPA, the add/drop/withdrawal process, and methods for making use of professors' office hours and other self-advocacy tools. The advising website provides information about academic advising, including a copy of the academic advising syllabus, which reviews how students should prepare for a meeting with an advisor; student and advisor responsibilities; expected student learning outcomes; and a timeline including key advising items such as prompts about when to connect with one's advisor.

As part of the work of the Student Success Initiative, the team charged with implementing the college's Achieving the Dream effort, the academic advising model is undergoing a complete re-engineering. After a significant amount of planning, the new model was implemented at the start of the 2018–2019 academic advising cycle. The new model assigns all incoming students an academic advisor; advisors proactively reach out to students during the registration period to assist them through the enrollment process. Academic advising is being infused into *First Year Seminar* classes as students are introduced to the [Starfish](#) early intervention system, including its use to increase student communication across campus. Feedback from and

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observations of the initial phase of implementation indicate that student engagement with the Advising Center has increased.

Academic advisors also support students planning on continuing their education at four-year institutions. Advisors provide assistance in the application process and the pursuit of scholarships. The college currently supports transfer/articulation agreements with thirty-three institutions in addition to the transfer opportunities available to students through the SUNY Seamless Transfer Policy, which guarantees acceptance for any graduate from a SUNY two-year college into any SUNY four-year college. [Transfer Agreements](#) currently present opportunities for students to transfer into more than one hundred ten programs. Information about specific agreements is available on the college website. In addition, the college has a unique partnership with two four-year colleges, [SUNY Delhi](#) and [Bellevue University](#). The partnerships make it possible for students to earn degrees at each institution on the SUNY Schenectady campus once they graduate.

**Begley Library.** Chief among resources for academic support is Begley Library ([Begley Library 2018 Provost's Council Retreat Report](#)). The physical space of the library consists of two floors. The first floor contains a heavily used conference room, a combined circulation research desk, twenty-five computers designated for student use, two small group study rooms, staff offices, print serials, two copy machines, many unused shelves, an outdated law reference collection, print newspapers, the Academic Studio, individual study carrels, a few larger tables that seat four to six students and six tables that seat two students each. It also houses the following collections: Young Adult, Professional Development, Urban Fiction, DVD, Graphic Novel, Career Resources, Small Business and Leisure Reading. The second floor contains Reference, Circulating and Popular Reading, as well as a soft seating area, the one-to-one and EOP tutoring rooms, a computer lab that doubles as an on demand student-use computer area and the room in which bibliographic Instruction is provided, a small room full of LPs, DVDs of student performances, a media viewing room, two small group study rooms, a heavily used classroom, and additional spaces that are currently being examined to develop them as collaborative spaces for use with other departments on campus. To help facilitate student engagement and increase the likelihood that students will take advantage of library services to support their academic success, the library has developed specific “fun” areas within its overall collection including popular movies on DVD, urban fiction, leisure reading and graphic novels. The library also uses passive programming, such as our Town Hall Wall debates and an interactive Poetry Month display to engage students.

During the fall and spring semesters the library is open six days a week for a total of 67.75 hours, and during intersession and summer sessions it is open five days a week. Librarians provide research and reference services every hour that the library is open. During exam periods the library is open for additional hours in mornings and evenings to provide increased access to materials and more time for students to take advantage of the comfortable seating and study areas that are conducive to exam preparation. During off-hours for off-campus patrons, or for those patrons who don't want to ask questions in person, the library participates

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in [AskUs 24/7](#), a virtual chat service which allows users to access research and reference services twenty-four hours a day 365 days per year.

To lend additional support to students' academic progress within specific content areas, librarians have created research guides, known as *LibGuides* on campus. *LibGuides* are custom, online research guides that address specific research assignments or courses. They are available via a link on the [library website](#) and they, along with other library resources, can be inserted into *Blackboard* courses if faculty wish to do so ([Begley Library-Faculty](#)).

Librarians also provide bibliographic instruction (BI) sessions as part of an in-class session arranged by a course professor or through open workshops held in the library. Through either format, students receive instruction focused on library services, including hours/days of operation and, online resources and, how to access them. To help students build critical thinking skills and to directly support their success in coursework, students are also provided instruction on strategies for how to search, obtain, and evaluate information. To support this effort, a space in the library has been arranged for BI and functions as an additional computing space for students to complete coursework when sessions are not being conducted.

The library extends its impact on campus by partnering with various departments across the college to help support student success. The library has participated in Student Affairs events such as New Student Orientation, a summer New Student Registration event and Open House. Academic Services and the library have partnered to develop and implement a widely used Academic Studio, which includes a stress relief center, a one-to-one tutoring space, and a designated tutoring room for students in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

The library provides access to over 53,000 print titles, 102,000 e-books, 121,000 online periodicals, 87 databases, 137,000 sound recordings and 21,000 film and video recordings. Begley Library's online resources are, of course, available from home computers. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services are also available to the entire campus community. The library participates in the Direct Access Program (DAP), which supplements ILL. DAP is managed through the Capital District Library Council, and it allows patrons with a Begley Library card to borrow directly from participating libraries. Participating libraries include: Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Albany Law, College of Saint Rose, Excelsior College, Skidmore, and Union.

The library plays an important role in supporting student success. Data shows that during the 2016–2017 academic year the librarians and staff in the library answered 1,210 circulation questions, 336 college-related questions, 357 community computer use questions, 565 directional questions, 953 in-person research questions, 28 security questions, 1,546 technical questions, and provided thirty-five in-class bibliographic instruction sessions. 290 unique students used the [AskUs 24/7](#) tool (email interview, director of library services). The goals and objectives outlined in the [2012–2017 Library APR](#) outline the work of the library and its support of the college's academic programs. Consistent with these goals and objectives, the professional staff members in the library use feedback received from professors, students, and other staff members to make revisions to the support services, including workshops and

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instructional services provided to classes. Beyond the regular communication with academic divisions, the library works with them through the college's academic program review process, for which library staff provide a detailed account of the library resources available to programs and helps support reviewers in examining the adequacy of resources to serve the needs of instruction and the learning needs of the students ([Academic Program Review Guidelines](#)).

The library staff keeps faculty updated on new collections and events through its newsletter, *The Begley Buzz*. The following are examples of events that take place in the library throughout the year: "What Happened on the Day I was Born?: A Brief Introduction to Historical Research"; "Finding Sources You Can Trust"; "The Human Library"; "The Long Night Against Procrastination"; "Using APA Style for your Papers"; and "Discovering Local History Online: An Introduction to Digital Archives." The library also continues to expand its workshop offerings, available to the entire campus, to include technology basics such as how to format writing assignments using Microsoft Word. Other library-driven initiatives helping to support student success include the library staff gaining an understanding of and pursuing the development of Open Educational Resources (OER) for use across campus. The library has also engaged in extensive work in support of the college's S-CORE/ILO general education program, providing information and resources for students and sharing information with the campus community. Librarians have created a resource outlining Information Literacy ([What is information literacy webpage](#)) and have presented to the Academic Senate about information literacy and how knowledge in that area can be developed during students' earliest encounters with the college.

Consistent with the college's *Strategic Plan* and as outlined in the *Facilities Master Plan*, in the coming years the library will be transformed into a learning commons. The ways in which students access information continue to evolve, and the library will continue to develop new opportunities for students to engage with resources to support the learning experience.

Thus far, architects have been engaged and a diverse group from across the campus has been selected to help guide the transition and plan for the learning commons. The first floor of the library will be converted to the "active" floor, and all library function areas will reside on the second floor. The learning commons will house the Learning Center, Tutoring Center, Accounting Lab, Math Lab, Writing Lab, meeting rooms, and presentation practice rooms. It will also be home to the Center for Excellence in Teaching. As noted in the *Strategic Plan*, the Center will focus on providing professional development to support teaching effectiveness and the development of new pedagogies to enhance student learning. A small café will also serve the learning commons and the adjacent auditorium during performances and other community events that take place on campus.

**Learning Center and Labs.** The Learning Center and labs provide an opportunity for students to easily access academic support. The Learning Center provides academic assistance to students who need extra help with reading, study skills, and writing. It offers walk-in tutoring in various content areas, and it provides one-on-one and small group sessions with professional and peer tutors, computer assisted instruction, study groups, and workshops. The Writing Lab offers consultations on written assignments, including research papers. In Spring 2017, 276 unique

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students, making 1,565 visits, accessed the services. To gain feedback on services and to improve the support provided to students, the Learning Center and Writing Lab assesses itself through usage and satisfaction data ([Learning Center Spring 2017 Assessment Data](#)). The Accounting/CIS Lab, Math Lab, and Language Lab each provide services to students in the same manner as the Learning Center and Writing Lab. The Computer Lab makes desktop and laptop computers available to students ([Computer Labs and WiFi Access](#)).

**First Year Seminar Course.** The [First Year Seminar](#) (FYS) introduces students to strategies and college resources designed to enhance their success. The course helps students develop their academic skills, set goals, explore discipline-specific topics related to career goals, and prepares them for the expectations and demands of college life. The FYS course is a requirement for all students in each of the college's programs. As part of an effort to continue expanding the effectiveness of the FYS course, a Faculty Institute Week session in Fall 2018 focused specifically on the course and the opportunities it presents to support students' academic progress.

**EOP.** The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is a New York State funded support program that assists first time, full-time New York State students who display promise for succeeding in college, but who may not have otherwise been offered admission in the State University of New York. Available primarily to matriculated students, the program supports students throughout their college careers. EOP students at SUNY Schenectady receive assistance through professional tutoring, remedial support, advisement, and mentoring for academic, personal and social support. The program also provides students a small stipend for personal use.

**C-STEP.** The [Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program](#) (C-STEP) provides academic enrichment, professional development, and support services designed to support students' academic success. C-STEP serves historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students from New York State who are pursuing professional licensure or careers in mathematics, science, engineering, technology, or health-related STEM fields ([C-STEP workshop calendars Spring 2018](#)). Resources available to C-STEP students include peer and professional tutoring, workshops, individualized advisement sessions, campus visits to four-year institutions, mentoring, review sessions in math and science, open Bio Lab review sessions, networking, and support in securing externships, job shadowing experiences, internships, and research opportunities. Through the program, the college received a [Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation](#) (LSAMP) grant, which recently helped support a current student in presenting her research in France during the summer of 2018.

**TRIO.** The [TRIO academic support program](#), made available through federal grant funds, helps eligible students in a variety of ways, among which includes assisting them in navigating the college experience, learning academic success strategies, exploring career and transfer options, and increasing their financial literacy. Students wishing to participate in the TRIO program must meet at least one of the following criteria: first generation college student, income qualified, or have a documented disability.

**Criterion 5(a)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: at institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that: (a) offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field.*

**The College Possesses a General Education Program that Expands Intellectual Experience:**

Students at SUNY Schenectady are exposed to a general education program that draws them into new areas of intellectual experience, expands their global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and prepares them to make well-reasoned judgments both outside and within their academic field. The college's general education program is known as the S-CORE and represents the college's institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) ([College Catalog, pg. 8, S-CORE](#)).

The S-CORE program is comprised of five core academic values: (1) communication, (2) scientific literacy, (3) mathematical reasoning and literacy, (4) cultural and historical understanding, and (5) information literacy. Delineated within each of these five values are specific learning outcomes, skills and areas of knowledge that students are expected to develop through S-CORE courses. For example, in courses supporting the institutional learning outcome of cultural and historical understanding, students use discipline-appropriate theories and methodologies to form relevant and reasonable conclusions about diverse human perspectives and behaviors.

**Criterion 5(b)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: at institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that: offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.*

The SUNY Schenectady S-CORE general education program is comprised of five core areas covering communication, scientific literacy, mathematical reasoning and literacy, cultural and historical understanding, and information literacy. The S-CORE provides students with the opportunity to acquire and demonstrate skills that support their intellectual development, critical thinking, creativity, and civic responsibility.

The Academic Program Review (APR) process requires that courses be mapped onto the S-CORE to demonstrate how it is met within the degree program ([Academic Program Review Guidelines](#)).

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At the course level, a commitment to the values of general education is observed in course outlines, descriptions, and SLOs. For example, [ENG 123: College Composition's](#) SLOs include writing arguments and delivering an oral presentation, and [ENG 124: Literature and Writing](#) includes writing arguments. The course description and SLOs on the course outline appear on the course syllabi distributed to students.

### Criteria 5(c), 6 and 7 – N/A

#### Criterion 8

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.*

#### **The College Assesses Programs' Effectiveness in Providing Student Learning Opportunities:**

SUNY Schenectady has a long standing process in place to assess programs' effectiveness in providing student learning opportunities and to ensure that programs remain current and relevant over time. The process, known on campus as the Academic Program Review (APR), follows a [rotating schedule](#) whereby programs are reviewed on a rotating basis every five years. The college publishes the review schedule and deans are responsible for ensuring that faculty members remain aware of upcoming reviews.

The APR is a comprehensive process that draws on internal and external input and operates in accord with a set of published guidelines ([Academic Program Review Guidelines](#)). In addition to the guidelines, an APR template is provided to reviewers ([Academic Program Review Guidelines 2017–2018 Template](#)). The purpose of the template is to ensure that all elements outlined in the APR Guidelines are addressed in the report, to provide reviewers with an easy to follow format, to facilitate the report's readability, and to ensure uniformity of presentation among final reports.

The APR process at SUNY Schenectady is carefully designed to support ongoing assessment at the program and course level ([Standard V](#)). The APR process uses course level assessments as a mechanism, in part, for examining students' achievement of the program SLOs. SUNY Schenectady courses are assessed on a three-year cycle and findings are used to determine the need for course modifications ([Course Level Assessment Template](#)). The APR reports include input from external agencies, advisory committees, and other appropriate groups concerning program design, enrollment and demographic trends, and a summary of the improvements and changes (by analyzing previous recommendations) from the last program review.

[Discipline Coordinators](#) work to facilitate assessment and communication in courses with multiple sections, orienting and mentoring instructors by engaging in activities such as syllabus review, course and program updates, and technological training. The college's dual-enrollment courses, offered through the College in the High School program, operate on the same assessment cycle as their on-campus and online counterparts.

### **Conclusion**

SUNY Schenectady provides students with a learning experience characterized by rigor and coherence. The college meets all of the criteria for Standard III.

### **Suggestions for Standard III:**

1. In order to further facilitate deliberate, diligent, start-to-completion support for all students, the college should consider offering alternate semester lengths and expanding its summer course offerings.
2. Beyond the current on-campus College in the High School (CHS) professional development offerings attended by full-time faculty, deans, and CHS instructors, the college should hold additional CHS professional development meetings to (a) expand the connection between CHS instructors, full-time faculty, and administrators and (b) provide additional opportunities to share information about instructional best practice, assessment, and paths from high school to college entry.

### **Recommendations for Standard III:**

1. In light of SUNY Schenectady's early successes with its Achieving the Dream initiatives, the college should build on that momentum and pursue the complete implementation of the guided pathways model.

### **Requirements for Standard III:**

There are no requirements for Standard III.

### **Standard III Institutional Initiative Alignment:**

There are five Institutional Initiatives relevant to Standard II:

- (1) SUNY Schenectady will expand access and increase student success by providing deliberate, diligent start-to-completion guidance for all students; (aligns with Strategic Goal I.A)
- (2) SUNY Schenectady will ensure a relevant and coherent curriculum; (aligns with Strategic Goal II)
- (3) SUNY Schenectady will strengthen community partnerships in order to bolster work force development, further expand educational pathways, and enrich the cultural life of the community; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV; IV.B; IV.G)
- (4) SUNY Schenectady will enhance its commitment to campus diversity inclusion, and equity; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV.I & IV.G) and
- (5) SUNY Schenectady will invest in campus renewal, including physical facilities and technological capacities (aligns with Strategic Goals III; III.A; III. C)

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From the rigorous procedures the college uses to assess its academic programs to the new tenure review process, SUNY Schenectady intentionally and deliberately supports student achievement. The college's investment in campus renewal is evident in plans for a new learning commons, which will bring such student services as the Learning Center, Tutoring Services, and academic and computer labs into a single location, and, thereby, create a one-stop center to support students' academic success and progress. Included in the commons will be the Center for Excellence in Teaching, which will enable faculty to hone their teaching and develop innovative instructional techniques thereby supporting rigor and relevance in the curriculum. Such refinement will add to the already ample support for the faculty's professional development. And although faculty are now diligently evaluated, the new tenure review process further serves to demonstrate the value the institution places on teacher effectiveness and faculty members' work to refine their craft. All of these measures to ensure a rigorous, effective teaching corps speak to the college's commitment to student success. Other programs that speak to the college's Institutional Initiatives include College in the High School, one among several strategic programs that deepen our relations with area high schools and forges strong community partnerships. SUNY Schenectady's S-CORE enhances the student experience and emphasizes the value the college places on diversity and inclusion by preparing students to think critically and make well-reasoned judgments. Ensuring that students encounter global, diverse perspectives in the classroom will enable them to become better citizens outside the classroom.

### Sources

[Academic Advisement](#)

[Academic Program Review Guidelines](#)

[Academic Program Review Guidelines 2017–2018 Template](#)

[Adjunct MOU between SCCC & SEIU](#)

[Advisory Committee Handbook 2018–2019](#)

[UFP collective bargaining agreement](#)

[APR Music 2017](#)

[APR Schedule 17-18 to 22-23](#)

[Articulation-Transfer Agreements](#)

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## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

*Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success. (Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation, MSCHE, 2015, pg. 9)*

SUNY Schenectady is committed to student retention, persistence, completion, and success. Beginning with its mission, the college, “built on a foundation of excellence in teaching and quality support services,” is committed to providing students with a learning environment and educational experience that includes a coherent and effective support system ([College Mission Statement](#)). The [Strategic Plan](#), consistent with the college’s mission, directs efforts in that area through Strategic Goal I (Expand Access and Increase Student Success). College programming, guided by the *Strategic Plan*, provides students with “valuable opportunities that facilitate [their] intellectual and personal growth, fulfillment, and a sense of community” ([Student Handbook 2018–2019](#)).

### Criterion 1

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission*

#### **Clearly Stated, Ethical Policies are in Place to Facilitate Student Success:**

SUNY Schenectady has clearly stated ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students. The college is an open access, public community college serving a diverse student population. The college’s admissions policy is “intended to support the success of applicants as they enroll at the college” ([BOT Policy 3.11–Admissions Policy](#)). SUNY Schenectady, as indicated in Board of Trustees Policy 3.11, is an open enrollment institution, accepting all prospective students in possession of a high school diploma or its equivalent.

**Recruitment and Enrollment.** Guided by the college mission, Strategic Goal I, “expanding access and facilitating student retention and success,” begins with the recruitment and admission process. From a functional unit perspective, the Office of Admissions, in collaboration with other offices across campus, is responsible for coordinating a variety of efforts involved in student onboarding, engagement, and support.

SUNY Schenectady offices involved with student onboarding, beginning with the Office of Admissions, are dedicated to continuous improvement of the recruitment and acceptance

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process—including communicating scheduling, advising, and registering-- to advance the initial and long-term quality of the student experience. In keeping with that goal, the Office of Admissions has implemented a communication plan to help keep prospective students engaged throughout the admission cycle and to facilitate a higher yield of enrolled students. Additionally, based on observations of admissions staff, a pamphlet was developed that provides a roadmap for the on-boarding process, including all the necessary steps to enroll that are covered when prospective students meet with admissions counselors ([Six Steps to Enrollment](#)). The pamphlet was designed to decrease the potential of students feeling intimidated or confused by the enrollment process. The step-by-step guide takes students from the application process to financial aid and payment. It includes contact information, as well as web addresses to sites built to speak to students at each phase of the enrollment process (e.g., [Already Accepted? New Student Info](#)).

The college's [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#) (Enrollment Plan) provides strategies designed for data-driven planning to guide enrollment decisions and inform timely responses to enrollment trends. The *Enrollment Plan* is an essential document that integrates the goals and objectives of the institution into enrollment management and provides a strategic vision for the future. The plan is aligned with the mission and the college's *Strategic Plan*. The college's Enrollment Committee also plays an important role in planning for enrollment and in efforts such as advertising and events to support student enrollment.

### **Admissions Events:**

SUNY Schenectady has an ever-increasing footprint in New York State's Capital Region, the area in which the college resides, with 78% of new student enrollments in 2016 hailing from Schenectady, Saratoga, Albany, and Rensselaer Counties. This is largely due to the proximity of those counties to the campus, the active off-campus recruitment activities in which the college participates, and the excellent relationships the college enjoys with school districts.

To serve the community and actively engage prospective students, both locally and outside the region, the Office of Admissions leads and participates in recruitment events both on- and off-campus. Since January 1, 2017, the admissions staff have participated in over 375 off-campus recruitment events. The majority of these events took place within a one-hour driving distance from campus and included multiple visits to schools and organizations that have historically yielded a high number of students. Decisions to take part in events beyond a one-hour driving distance are based upon such data as historic student enrollment patterns from specific locations and forecasts related to growth in high school enrollment. Admissions staff take part in a variety of activities and events as described below.

**High School Visits.** Admissions staff and high school guidance staff/counselors plan high school visits well in advance of their occurrence. This aids in event promotion and allows guidance staff time to hang posters outside of the counseling office leading up to the event, to provide daily school announcements about the visit, and for admissions staff to send invitations to students who have expressed an interest in SUNY Schenectady. Admissions staff meet with

## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

students one-on-one or in groups. During the meeting, admissions counselors provide an engaging overview of the college, including information about academics, extracurricular activities, and the admission process. The primary objectives of high school visits are to engage prospective students at an individual level, begin to develop a trusting relationship with students, continue to develop relationships with school counselors and update them about any exciting campus news, and, ultimately, to build applications and enrollment at the college. High school visits typically take place in the fall (October–November) and in the spring (March–May). High schools have generally identified these periods as optimal, based on the event schedule within the school and the school calendar. Approximately 20% of off-campus recruitment events are high school visits.

**College Fairs.** The most traditional of all recruitment events, college fairs, often include approximately forty to one hundred colleges (local, regional, and national) in an expo center, gymnasium, or other large venue. These events allow admissions counselors to begin building relationships with prospective students, collect contact information, and encourage students to visit campus and apply to the institution. While these events are not the most conducive for one-on-one conversations, they do provide significant exposure to a large audience in a relatively short period of time. Like high school visits, college fairs typically take place in the fall (October–November) and in the spring (February–May). Approximately 40% of off-campus recruitment events are college fairs.

**On-Site Visits/Workshops at Vocational Institutions and Businesses.** Admissions staff partner with faculty member(s) from a BOCES Center, or other vocational institution, to present information to students about a specific academic program or division. These events, generally attended by ten to fifty prospective students, have proven to be successful for student recruitment and enrollment. In light of that success, in 2018 the Office of Admissions began partnering with businesses to hold similar events at their locations. On-site visits can take place year-round, but the majority typically take place three to four months before the start of a semester. Approximately 10% of the college’s off-campus events are in this format. Based upon the success of these events and the decline in the local high school student populations, admissions is working to increase the number of these events in the coming year and beyond.

**College Nights at High Schools and Community Based Organizations.** College Nights typically involve admissions counselors presenting alone, or as part of a panel including representatives from other colleges, about topics related to the admissions process and college success. The audience often includes prospective students, family members, and community members. This type of event is not necessarily a direct recruitment event, and typically admissions counselors cannot collect student contact information at the event; however, these events are superb opportunities to foster community awareness of college programming and to build relationships with school districts. Given that generally no more than six institutions are asked to participate in these events at any one time, it is an honor to be selected to participate and provide guidance to attendees. As such, the Office of Admissions makes it a priority to attend every college night event to which staff are invited. College nights typically take place in early

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fall (September–October) and during the spring (February–April). Participation in these events represents approximately 5% of the total events in which admissions counselors participate.

**Instant Admission Events.** Most often, the college holds instant admission events on campus, but they are also conducted at local high schools. Prospective students are encouraged to complete an admissions application prior to the event and to bring a copy of their high school transcript when they attend; however, prospective students may also work with an admissions counselor to complete an application on the day of the event. During instant admission events, admissions counselors meet with students, work to build rapport with them, discuss students' interests and career goals, evaluate their application, review their transcripts, and admit students to the college. In the Fall 2018 recruitment cycle, the Office of Admissions held two instant admission events at Schenectady High School, accepting over two hundred students. While not every instant admission event has such attendance, these events are an excellent forum for assisting students, building rapport, and fostering engagement with the college. Off-campus instant admission events take place year-round, with the majority of them taking place throughout the fall and spring. Events organized with non-high school organizations typically take place during the two months before the semester. Approximately 20% of SUNY Schenectady's off-campus recruitment consists of instant admission events.

Similar to off-campus instant admission events, on-campus events are widely publicized in schools and the community at large to encourage students to attend. During the event staff will review applications, accept students, and walk prospective students through the on-boarding process if registration has opened for the semester in which the student has applied. Students receive a congratulatory certificate, along with an easy-to-read checklist to remind students of the next steps they need to complete in the enrollment process.

**Local and Regional Community Events.** While these events are not focused on direct recruitment, they are essential tools used to build visibility and engagement with the community. Such events involve admissions staff attending festivals, concerts, special interest group celebrations, and other community events. Over the last year, the Office of Admissions has expanded the number of events staff attend and expects to continue to do so in the coming years. Local and regional community events take place throughout the year, with the majority of events held outdoors, taking place in late spring throughout the summer and the early fall. These events make up approximately 5% of the total events in which admissions staff participate.

**Open House Events.** The college traditionally holds a fall open house. In spring of 2019, the institution will offer its first spring open house. Open house events are often the highest attended events, with attendance at previous events ranging from 150–300 attendees. These events are often students' first introduction to campus, providing them with an opportunity to ask themselves, "Can I see myself being successful here?" With that in mind, admissions staff and members of the campus community work to provide a welcoming environment that helps facilitate student engagement. One of the primary goals of open house events is to demonstrate the college's supportive and collaborative environment in order to create a

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lasting, positive impression to support student success. While the events do not focus on students completing applications, the opportunity is presented to those who wish to do so ([Fall 2017 Open House Schedule 9](#); [Fall 2017 Open House poster](#)).

**Group Information Events.** Group information events provide an opportunity to share the advantages of enrolling at SUNY Schenectady. Generally, twenty to forty guests attend group information events, which are typically two hours long. The first hour includes a welcome, an eight-minute video presenting student testimonials, information about programs, and faculty interviews, followed by brief presentations by deans, faculty members, admissions and financial aid staff, success coaches, academic advisors, athletic coaches, and campus support personnel. The second hour of the event consists of a student-led campus tour. Prior to the tour, students are encouraged to visit the Office of Admissions and fill out an application. Between September 2018 and July 2019, the Office of Admissions will facilitate more than twenty group information events, at varying times on weekdays and on weekends. After each event, admissions staff follow-up with attendees to continue to build relationships with the prospective students.

**FAST TRACK Instant Admission and Registration.** Many prospective students apply for admission during the six to eight weeks leading up to the start of the fall semester. To support those students and facilitate the enrollment process so close to the start of the semester, prospective students attending a *FAST TRACK* event can get accepted to the college and leave campus with a schedule and student ID in hand. It is important to note, however, that this is not a high-pressure event and students simply wishing to learn more about the college can meet with an admissions counselor and return at a later date if they wish. As such, the primary goals of the event are to showcase the college, foster prospective students' engagement, and decrease any apprehension they may have about enrolling in the college.

**Community Engagement On-Campus Events.** This type of event is designed to facilitate community engagement with the college and provide attendees with an opportunity to learn more about the college and take part in a carnival-like celebration. Events are open to public and include both educational and fun activities for both children and adults. The 2018 event, *Family Fun Night*, had approximately four hundred attendees.

**College in the High School.** College in the High School students already have a relationship with the college. The Office of Admissions works to build on that relationship. Students are sent tailored letters and the Director of Admissions and the Director of College and High School Partnerships visit high schools together to help build relationships with students, faculty, and staff at high schools. By taking approved college courses, high school students simultaneously earn SUNY Schenectady college credit while fulfilling their high school requirements. This program potentially serves as a strong recruitment area. Additional programs operated under the College in the High School umbrella include the Early College (Smart Scholars) program, the Smart Transfer Program and our P-Tech programs ([CHS Faculty Handbook 2017–2018](#); [Catalog 2018-2019 p. 9, partnerships](#); [SUNY Schenectady K-12 Initiatives](#)). These programs allow for students to earn SUNY Schenectady credits while in high school.

**The College Follows Up Events with Outreach to Build Engagement:**

After each event in which the Office of Admissions staff participates, students who shared contact information are contacted. The outreach is intended to build prospective students' connection with the institution, encourage enrollment, and lay the groundwork for their success. Recently, the college joined a SUNY initiative to purchase a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) product. CRM systems are used to automate and manage communications with groups such as prospective and current students, employees, alumni, and donors. Information is gathered (e.g., name, degree program of interest) based upon interactions with group members, and it is compiled into a single database, enabling easier information access and facilitating customized messaging and outreach.

After a thorough vetting and negotiation process, SUNY Administration has officially offered the CRM, *Slate*, to each of the SUNY institutions at an extremely competitive price. The use of *Slate* will allow for much stronger tracking of, and communication with, students. The greater quantity of data and ease of organization that *Slate* makes possible will significantly improve the college's efforts to recruit and support students from initial inquiry to enrollment. The college operates in an extremely competitive market; having increased access to this kind of data will help the college compete more effectively with surrounding institutions.

**Criterion 1(a)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including: accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds.*

**The College Provides Students with Accurate and Comprehensive Information:**

As noted in the *Strategic Plan*, Strategic Goal I focuses on expanding access and increasing student success. In support of that goal, Strategic Initiative I(C) targets efforts toward ensuring financial affordability and strengthening financial aid processes that support successful student enrollment, progression, and program completion. In keeping with the *Strategic Plan*, SUNY Schenectady provides students with accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds.

**Financial Aid.** SUNY Schenectady recognizes that financial barriers can have a negative impact on students' pursuit of a college education. This is particularly true for first-generation and non-traditional students, as well as for those from a low socioeconomic background.

The Financial Aid unit supports students online, by phone, and in person. Online financial aid information includes links to financial aid FAQs, a net price calculator, instructions for applicants, Excelsior scholarship information, veterans benefits, and Financial Aid Office contact

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information ([Paying for College SUNY Schenectady Webpage](#); [Veterans Services Webpage](#)). Often the first point of student contact about financial aid is through Admissions or Academic Advising. Both offices provide a brief overview of financial aid, letting students know that scholarship, grant, and loan aid are available; staff provide students with a checklist of enrollment steps and direct students to the Financial Aid office. Staff in the Financial Aid office assist all prospective and current students in developing an increased awareness of the options for securing monetary support to assist in paying for college and provide them with guidance throughout the financial aid process ([Financial Aid Webpage](#)). As a means to support college access, staff members promote the Title IV Federal Student Aid program and make a concerted effort to promote the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Once a Financial Aid staff member meets with a student, he or she works to tailor services to that student's needs, and shows information about scholarship, grant, and loan aid. Further, staff point students toward resources and let them know that federal and state aid are based upon demonstrated and verified financial need, as well as the amount of government funds available for distribution.

Financial Aid officers visit *First Year Seminar* classes by invitation and hold FAFSA workshops to help students understand the Federal Student Aid Process and to help fill out FAFSA applications ([FYS Financial Aid Presentation](#); [FAFSA Workshop Promotional Flier](#)). Financial Aid officers hold financial aids fairs throughout the year and present at New Student Orientation where they walk students through the Financial Aid section of the college website. The office also offers institutional scholarships, which are primarily marketed through the SUNY Schenectady Foundation ([2018–2019 Foundation Scholarship Flier](#)). All of these activities are documented in the office's annual [calendar of events](#).

**Refining the Financial Aid Processes to Facilitate Students Success.** Consistent with Strategic Initiative I(C), staff in the Financial Aid office have taken significant steps to strengthen the financial aid processes to support successful student enrollment, progression, and program completion. Financial aid staff worked with IT to enhance the way in which the office communicates with students and to make financial aid information more readily available. The enhancements focused on two things: communicating with students regarding the status of their financial aid and providing electronic award letters so students can access award information on demand.

During the 2017–2018 academic year, Financial Aid staff improved the documentation used to describe financial aid requirements and the reasons for them, making it shorter and more concise ([Financial Aid Webpage](#)). They also created hyperlinks to forms referenced on the site. IT staff put the updated documentation in place and ensured that all hyperlinks worked properly. Using form names as hyperlinks allows students to access the forms they need more rapidly than they had been able to in the past. Additionally, at the recommendation of Financial Aid staff, IT created a dedicated email address, [fa@sunysccc.edu](mailto:fa@sunysccc.edu). To help ensure that students receive a timely response to any inquiries, three staff members monitor the inbox, helping to provide students accessing financial aid support with the same quick and efficient level of service that students receive when they visit the office on campus. Since making the

## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

enhancements to the financial aid processes, staff have observed a significant increase in the number of students submitting documentation by fax and email.

Another improvement came with the implementation of the [SUNY Award Letter](#) process: a SUNY led collaborative effort involving colleges across the system. It includes improvements to the notification letter, which is now generated upon receipt of students' FAFSA results. The letter displays students' cost of attendance, direct costs, expected gift aid (grant and scholarship awards), student loans, and federal work-study funding available to them. All aid sources are broken down by semester in an easy-to-read manner so that students can see their aid eligibility over the entire academic year. As part of the process, students receive notification within twenty-four hours that their award letter is available for retrieval.

**SUNY Smart Track and Financial Literacy.** SUNY Schenectady has engaged Inceptia, a division of National Student Loan Program, to deliver *SUNY Smart Track*, a series of ten online courses based on the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Literacy and Education Commission's financial education core competencies. Course topics include "Managing Money in College," "Credit and Protecting your Money," "Debt and Repayment," "Earning Money," "FAFSA," "Foundations of Money," "Future of Money," "Loan Guidance," "Psychology of Money," and "Spending and Borrowing." The goal of *SUNY Smart Track* is to increase students' financial literacy.

Since its launch, the program's usage has grown from sixty-one registered users in 2013–2014 to 439 registered users in 2017–2018. During the 2017–2018 academic year, college users completed 468 *SUNY Smart Track* courses. In part this growth in program registrants and the number of courses completed was fueled by the decision to incorporate information about the program in the college's first year experience course, *First Year Seminar*, during the 2016–2017 academic year. SUNY Schenectady recently received a Title III supplemental grant of \$150,000 to support financial literacy efforts. The grant provides for a full- and a part-time financial literacy counselor to work with students to increase their knowledge of loans and borrowing in general. In addition, a module in Banner is being implemented this spring (2019) that will allow students to see how their loans may affect their future finances.

**Excelsior Scholarship.** The Excelsior Scholarship is a New York State financial aid program approved under Governor Cuomo's Free-Tuition Plan in 2017 ([Excelsior Scholarship Toolkit](#)). The Excelsior Scholarship provides students with tuition dollars to cover the gap between grants, scholarships, and gift-aid and the cost of tuition. For the 2017–2018 academic year, to be eligible, students must carry a full-time course load, complete thirty degree-applicable credits per year<sup>2</sup>, and come from a family with a combined adjusted gross income equal to or below \$100,000. The income ceiling increased to \$110,000 for 2018–2019 and will increase again, to \$125,000, for the 2019–2020 academic year and beyond. In the 2017–2018 academic

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<sup>2</sup> Per Excelsior Scholarship guidelines, academic eligibility is different for students enrolled in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and for students registered with the college's ADA Transition Office.

## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

year, the program's inaugural year, seventy-six SUNY Schenectady students received Excelsior scholarship awards totaling \$184,516.15. The college expects the number of students using the award will increase in the 2018–2019 academic year as 2017–2018 awardees persist to their second year at SUNY Schenectady and as incoming freshman students qualify for the program.

**Efforts to Reduce the Default Rate.** In an effort to respond to the default rate and to support students in satisfying their financial obligations, in June 2017 SUNY Schenectady engaged the services of Higher Education Solutions (HES). HES takes a three-tier approach to default prevention: early intervention, where the company builds a relationship with students during their grace period; cohort management, where the company maintains communication with students during repayment; and delinquency management, where HES works to connect students with their loan servicer if they fall behind on payments.

The month-over-month risk default rate, the number of students who have already gone into default plus the number of students who could potentially go into default within the cohort, demonstrates the positive impact HES is making. HES began working on the 2015 cohort with four months remaining in the reporting period and were able to reduce the Cohort Default Rate (CDR) from 22.2% to 20.9% on the final report, which was issued in September 2018. The 2016 cohort closed on September 30, 2018. HES began working this cohort in June 2017 at which time the at-risk default rate was 32.9%. as of the close of the year on September 30, 2018, the preliminary default rate was reduced to 19.4%. The final report will be issued in October 2019 ([Default Rate FY 2015 Official 3 Year Cohort](#)).

### **Criterion 1(b)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals.*

### **SUNY Schenectady Works to Support Students with Varying Levels of Preparedness:**

Faculty, staff, and administrators across the campus facilitate student growth and work to provide students with a college experience that meets their diverse needs and varying levels of academic preparedness. These efforts are consistent with the college's mission and, specifically Strategic Initiative I(A), "[d]esign student services to support student transition from entry to completion and to employment or transfer."

**Testing Center.** The Testing Center provides three primary services: testing accommodations for students with documented disabilities, make-up testing, and placement testing for incoming students. To support students with documented disabilities who are working with the ADA Transition Office, the center provides and maintains a proper distraction-reduced testing environment and proctors exams for students' allotted extra time. To support student success, the Testing Center also provides visually impaired students with access to the Kurzweil 3000

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document reader, JAWS, Windows Eyes, and a digital magnifying machine; it provides hearing impaired students with Dragon Naturally Speaking, speech to text assistance; and it provides Read Write Gold for use with reading ACCUPLACER. The Testing Center provides full- and part-time faculty with an option for administering make-up exams. The center works closely with instructors to ensure academic integrity in proctoring exams and provides students with a testing environment that aids in successful exam completion. Last, the Testing Center administers the college's ACCUPLACER placement test to support course placement and to aid in the advising process for incoming students who have not met the requirement for exemption from testing.

Students may be exempt from placement testing for a number of reasons, including earning a grade of seventy-five or higher on the New York States Regents Exam in English, prior completion of a college composition course with a grade of C or higher, earning 450 on the SAT writing section, or scoring eighteen or higher on the ACT verbal section ([Placement Test Exemptions](#); [Placement Testing Cut-Off Scores](#)).

Students who are required to take [ACCUPLACER](#), a computer-adaptive assessment tool, are evaluated to assess their skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. ACCUPLACER test results assist advisors in making course placement recommendations that may include entry to credit bearing courses, developmental coursework, or co-requisite developmental coursework ([ACCUPLACER Advisement Guidelines 2018](#)). In an effort to assist students in gaining familiarity with ACCUPLACER and to provide them with an opportunity to prepare for the placement test, the Testing Center provides students with sample questions and makes them aware of the ACCUPLACER Study App, which is available free of charge on the SUNY Schenectady website. The [Testing Center website](#) outlines the purpose and importance of the placement exam, describes what students can expect when taking the test, and directs students who may need testing accommodations to the ADA Transition Office.

As part of its effort to support student success, the college recently took part in a [study](#) conducted by Columbia University's Community College Research Center (CCRC). As part of the study, rather than place students in courses solely on the basis of the ACCUPLACER exam, the CCRC used an algorithm that analyzes multiple metrics to determine course placement. In part, the college's motivation for taking part in the study was the anticipation of moving toward a multiple measure method of course placement. Discussions in this area will continue in anticipation of the release of the CCRC report of findings.

The college is also preparing to implement the new version of ACCUPLACER, called Next Generation, which launched in November 2018. In preparation of the launch, the college took part in a program by which incoming Spring 2018 students, who agreed to participate, completed the ACCUPLACER Classic version and ACCUPLACER Next Generation. The College Board then used students' performance on both test versions to develop a custom concordance table aligning ACCUPLACER Next Generation scores with the college's course options. Math and English faculty, the Testing Center director, the assistant dean of academic affairs, and the deans of Liberal Arts and Math, Science, Technology and Health are using the concordance

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tables, combined with their knowledge of courses and course content, to develop new placement test cut-scores that will be implemented with incoming students in Spring 2019. The process will be ongoing and include an assessment of the scores' validity and course placement accuracy as the college continues to develop best practices for meeting students' needs supporting their pursuit of their academic goals.

**Developmental Education.** To meet the needs of students who demonstrate that they are academically underprepared in mathematics or English, the college provides developmental course options. Historically, the college offered two developmental math courses in a linear sequence and two integrated reading and writing courses in similar sequence. Observing that the developmental paths available to students were not as efficient as the college would like, SUNY Schenectady made changes in both content areas. In mathematics, based upon the national model developed by the Carnegie Foundation, the college offers Quantway math courses. In English, the college piloted the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). ALP is an integrated reading and writing course model that pairs a developmental course with a credit bearing English composition course.<sup>3</sup> Through the efforts of the Student Success Initiative, the group charged with implementing the college's Achieving the Dream effort, SUNY Schenectady is scaling up the ALP course model ([ENG 096 MAT 086 schedule Fall 2018](#)). To support the scaled up ALP model, faculty members have attended training and conferences, and at the end of the Spring 2018 semester, the college engaged a trainer from the Community College of Baltimore County who provided training to the majority of full- and part-time English instructors ([ALP Faculty Development Training 5-22-18](#)). Early analysis of the ALP 100% scale-up in Fall 2018 indicates that the effort is having a positive impact on student achievement. Specifically, those students in ENG 123 who earned a grade between an A and a C and who were enrolled in the co-requisite ALP model had a success rate eight percentage points higher than students who took the stand-alone ENG 123 course.

**Begley Library.** The library, covering two floors, provides students with access to a variety of support tools, including twenty-five computers, small group study rooms, copy machines, soft seating study spaces, and reference services. The library is also home to a widely used Academic Studio, which includes a stress relief center, and a one-to-one tutoring space. Additionally, a designated tutoring room is available specifically for students in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). Each fall and spring semester the library is open six days a week for a total of 67.75 hours, and during intersession and summer sessions it is open five days a week. Librarians provide research and reference services every hour that the library is open. To support patrons who are off campus, and to provide service during off hours, the library participates in AskUs 24/7, a virtual chat service which allows users to access research and reference services twenty-four hours a day, 365 days per year ([Begley Library Homepage](#)).

The library provides access to over 53,000 print titles, 102,000 e-books, 121,000 online periodicals, 87 databases, 137,000 sound recordings and 21,000 film and video recordings. Additional resources are available through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services and the Direct Access

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<sup>3</sup> The course implemented at the college employs the ALP model developed by the Community College of Baltimore County.

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Program (DAP), which supplements ILL. Library staff make efforts to connect with students across campus through participation in New Student Orientation, a summer New Student Registration event, and Open House.

**Learning Center and Labs.** The Learning Center provides academic assistance to students who need extra help with reading and study skills; it provides walk-in tutoring in various content areas through one-on-one and small group sessions with professional and peer tutors, through computer assisted instruction, study groups, and workshops. The Writing Lab offers consultations on written assignments, including research papers. The Accounting/CIS Lab, Math Lab, and Language Lab each provide services to students in the same manner as the Learning Center and Writing Lab. Through the Computer Lab, students have access to desktop and laptop computers ([Computer Labs and WiFi Access](#)).

**First Year Seminar Course.** The *First Year Seminar* (FYS) introduces students to strategies and college resources designed to enhance their success. The course focuses on helping students to develop academic skills, set goals, and explore discipline-specific topics related to career goals. It is designed to prepare them for the expectations and demands of college life. The [FYS course](#) is a requirement for all students in each of the college's programs.

**EOP.** The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is a New York State funded support program that assists first time, full-time New York State students who display promise for succeeding in college, but who may not have otherwise been offered admission in the State University of New York System. EOP students at SUNY Schenectady receive assistance through professional tutoring services, remedial support, advisement, and mentoring for academic, personal, and social support.

**C-STEP.** The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (C-STEP) provides academic enrichment, professional development, and support services designed to support students' academic success. The college's C-STEP serves historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students from New York State who are pursuing professional licensure or careers in mathematics, science, engineering, technology, or health-related STEM fields ([C-STEP; C-STEP workshop calendars Spring 2018](#)). Resources available to C-STEP students include peer and professional tutoring, workshops, individualized advisement sessions, campus visits to four-year institutions, mentoring, review sessions in math and science, open Bio Lab review sessions, networking, and support in securing externships, job shadowing experiences, internships, and research opportunities.

**TRIO.** The [TRIO](#) academic support program, made available through federal grant funds, provides eligible students in a variety of ways, including assisting them in navigating the college experience, learning academic success strategies, exploring career and transfer options, and increasing their financial literacy. Students wishing to participate in the TRIO program must be at least one of the following: first generation college student, income qualified, or have a documented disability.

**Criterion 1(c)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience.*

**Processes to Facilitate Student Success Are in Place at the College:**

Consistent with the college's mission and Strategic Goals, SUNY Schenectady is committed to student success and employs policies and processes to facilitate it. In particular, Strategic Initiative I(A) articulates the college's commitment to "[d]esign student services to support student transition from entry to completion and to employment or transfer" ([Strategic Plan 2020](#)). The college has operationalized that initiative through the processes in place to onboard students, the work it has done to refine those processes, and the efforts in place to support retention and completion.

**Orientation.** SUNY Schenectady operates New Student Orientation (NSO) sessions for incoming fall students throughout the spring and summer. Approximately 33% of new incoming students for the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 academic years participated in NSO. At the time, as part of the NSO program, students were provided information about key offices and services, state and federal mandates and policies, and efforts were made to connect students to the college ([NSO & Registration Data PowerPoint 2017](#) slide 16). While NSO yielded success, it did not link students to the college in as demonstrative a manner as it could. For that reason, and to increase its use as a tool for student engagement, orientation became a focus area for the Student Success Initiative team, the group responsible for the college's Achieving the Dream effort.

In the spring of 2018, SUNY Schenectady implemented a number of changes to NSO, including doubling the number of sessions offered in the spring and moving from three to ten summer NSO sessions ([NSO August 2, 2018 Final Program](#)). NSO sessions now include a more directed focus on student engagement. The program begins by introducing prospective students to such things as free access to public transportation available to SUNY Schenectady students and to sharing information with them about the use of the local YMCA. Next, students grouped by academic division, meet the division dean as well as the members of the Student Success Team. Student Success Teams consist of an academic advisor, a Success Coach, and a mentor. During the meeting with the Student Success Team, students learn about using course syllabi, curriculum worksheets, and *DegreeWorks*, the degree audit program. Most important, these teams lay the foundation for an ongoing relationship between students and the staff members working to support their success. Next, students take part in a question and answer session conducted by a faculty member who teaches in their division, and then they move onto the Begley Library where they learn about library and academic support resources. Once they complete that part of the program, students move onto the Student Success Fair, where they can learn about all the student success resources available on campus; the fair is followed by

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lunch during which prospective students learn about student leadership opportunities on campus. During the final part of the program, students complete placement testing—if needed—meet with an advisor, and register for classes ([NSO New Conceptual Plan 5.0](#)). A fully online version of NSO will be deployed beginning in Fall 2019.

**Advising Center.** Academic advising plays a critical role in supporting students' academic progress. Through the Advising Center, students work with academic advisors in academic program planning, course scheduling and registration, and in navigating their academic progress. Academic advisors also help students who plan to continue their education at four-year institutions. Advisors provide assistance in the application process and the pursuit of scholarships. In addition to the transfer opportunities available to students through the [SUNY Seamless Transfer Policy](#), which guarantees any graduate from a SUNY two-year college acceptance into any SUNY four-year college, the college currently supports transfer/articulation agreements with thirty-three institutions. [Transfer Agreements](#) currently present opportunities for students to transfer into more than one hundred ten programs.

As part of the work of the Student Success Initiative, the team charged with implementing the college's Achieving the Dream effort, the academic advising model underwent the first stage of a re-engineering process in Spring 2018. Under the new model, at the time of acceptance, incoming new students are assigned an advisor based upon the academic division in which their degree or certificate program resides. As part of the new model, advisors proactively reach out to new students to support them through the enrollment process and continue reaching out to them to follow up on how they are doing after their first few weeks at the college. To facilitate further connection, academic advising is being infused into *First Year Seminar* classes, and the [Starfish](#) early intervention system is being actively used as an early alert and a communication tool.

As a tool to support students' academic progress toward degree completion, the college adopted [DegreeWorks](#) as a degree audit tool in 2014. *DegreeWorks* allows students to check their curricular progress at any time. Students can see what classes they are currently taking, what classes they have already taken, including grades earned, and what classes still need to be completed for graduation, including the general education requirements they have met or still need to meet. It also lists all electives a student can take to fulfill requirements, their academic advisor, and their academic standing. *DegreeWorks* includes a graphic that indicates degree progress and a "what if" tool that generates scenarios for students who are considering a program change. *DegreeWorks* also includes a notes section that allows advisors to record information about discussions with students and provides students with the opportunity to look back at those notes and use them as prompts as they continue progress toward completing their degree or certificate. A second phase of the *DegreeWorks* implementation includes *Transfer Finder*, which allows students to compare their coursework with the degree requirements at other SUNY campuses. *Transfer Finder* is expected to be fully implemented and available to students by Fall 2020.

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### Criterion 1(d)

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement.*

#### **College Resources Support Students' Achievement of Their Educational Goals:**

SUNY Schenectady has resources, including program completion and transfer and career services, in place to support students as they work to achieve their education goals.

**Transfer Counseling.** SUNY Schenectady has a strong history of providing students transfer support. Formerly, staff who were not working directly in the Advising Center provided that service to students. That process was successful and benefitted many students. However, with the changing advising model, the college took the opportunity to embed transfer services more directly in the advising process by bringing the service into the Advising Center where the academic advisors will be the campus resource for transfer services. Although a fairly minor change, as academic advisors have always worked with students to support their transfer goals, housing all transfer services within the Advising Center helped foster students' connection to the Center and to their advisor. Bringing advising and transfer together also means that students only need to go to one office instead of two. As they have done historically, academic advisors continue to discuss transfer options with students and help support their understanding of the transfer process. In addition to sharing information about transfer, the college regularly schedules four-year college information tables and holds an annual transfer fair.

The college keeps an updated list of [articulation agreements](#) available for students to review. All articulation agreements are listed on the college website and are frequently updated. SUNY Schenectady has transfer articulations with 31 different institutions and over 110 specific agreements. While students may transfer to institutions across the country, the SUNY Seamless Transfer program guarantees students completing their degree at any two-year SUNY school admission to a SUNY four-year school.

**Title III Grant.** In the fall of 2017, based upon the college's successful grant submission, SUNY Schenectady was awarded a [Title III grant](#) totaling \$2.25 million, providing \$450,000 per year for five years. The grant includes numerous goals focusing on improving completion rates. Specific grant resources target professional development to support online learning, implementation of a success coach model, and added resources for data analysis, including bringing a Research Analyst onboard in the Institutional Research Office. In Spring 2018, the first cohort of instructors began taking part in professional development for online learning. A second cohort will begin in Fall 2018 and another in Spring 2019.

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Also in Spring 2018, the college hired three full-time success coaches, a success coach manager, and an assistant success coach manager. These staff members extend the support resources available to students and lend support to the college's new advising model. The success manager oversees the Student Success Center, supervises the success coaches, and is responsible for the college's *Starfish* early alert and communication system. The manager assigns flags, raised in *Starfish*, to success coaches for follow up, coordinates with other campus departments for student support, and provides *Starfish* training for faculty and staff. Success coaches work with students to support their academic success. They provide one-to-one academic coaching, provide workshops, refer students to campus resources, and teach students such academic skills as time management, organization, and methods for effective studying. Success coaches are also in a strong position to reach out to English Language Learners (ELL) to refer them to appropriate campus resources. The success coaches act as members of the Student Success Team and work to build a strong connection between students and the college, starting with New Student Orientation. They also assist in retention efforts by working with students flagged through the *Starfish* early warning system and with those who are on academic warning or who gained readmission to the college, by creating a success plan for those students and then meeting with them regularly to follow up. Student success coaches use multiple student performance indicators such as midterm grades, *Starfish* flags, and academic status to guide their outreach to students ([Advising: Spring 2017 Mid Term Warning Report; Title III grant \(project narrative final\)](#)). Two additional part-time success coaches also work in the Student Success Center. These staff, funded through the college's Perkins grant, work exclusively with students in such career and technology degree and certificate programs as Culinary, Aviation, and Nanoscale Technology.

**Career Services.** Career Services offer individualized assistance to students and alumni by connecting them to college and community opportunities that empower them to achieve their educational, career, and personal goals both before and after graduation. SUNY Schenectady students have many resources available to them as they plan their careers. They are able to meet with Career Services staff on campus or use online resources designed to guide them through a process of discovery, exploration, and action to increase occupational engagement and career decidedness. Career Services activities include individual career counseling, such personal and career assessments as the Myer's Briggs Type Indicator, Focus2Career (administered by certified MBTI Practitioners), and job search help and interview skills development. Office staff also maintain the [College Central Network](#) career management system for job search and employer postings and assist students in developing their resumes and preparing cover letters ([Career Services Summary for 2016–2017](#)).

**Faculty Student Association.** The Faculty Student Association ([FSA](#)) is a self-sustaining, not-for-profit member corporation. The FSA's mission is to "establish, operate, manage, promote and cultivate educational activities and relationships, between and among the students, faculty and staff of SUNY [Schenectady]." It reinvests its profits to improve and support campus initiatives that benefit the entire SUNY Schenectady campus. A board of directors comprised of SUNY Schenectady students, faculty, and staff governs the FSA ([FSA Board of Directors](#)). The association collaborates and coordinates its mission and goals with those of the college and

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funds such projects as community and cultural events and the renovation of the student lounge, provides support for athletics, and contributes funding for the campus parking blue light system and the college message system. In addition to providing monetary support, the FSA oversees the issuing of student photo IDs, student lockers, and parking decals and provides students with access to fax machines, copy machines, dry-cleaning, monogramming, and mail services. The FSA also has significant involvement with SUNY Schenectady's childcare service and the college's food service provided by Lessing's. It provides bookkeeping services for the Student Government Association and the SUNY Schenectady Foundation, and it operates the college bookstore and Canal Street Convenience Store ([FSA Financial Report 2017](#)).

**Wellness and Support Services (WSS).** SUNY Schenectady's WSS unit provides a broad spectrum of support to students, including ADA Transition Services (i.e., disability resources and services), the Veterans Office, and counseling support. WSS also offers a variety of presentations throughout the year. The Office of ADA Transition Services primarily serves students with documented short- and long-term disabilities. This work includes helping students set up accommodations, teaching them about and providing assistive technology items (e.g., specialized pens and notebooks that assist in note taking), to help support academic success. The office also offers programs and presentations to heighten the awareness of disability issues. The Veterans' Office provides information about benefits, resources, and services to past and current members of the armed forces, as well as to their families. The office, staffed by veterans who are also SUNY Schenectady students, provides a space where student veterans, current military service members, and their family members can connect with one another. WSS also partners with community agencies to provide such informative programs as veteran-specific student orientations, resource fairs, and presentations about transitioning to civilian life. Based upon this effort and the support provided to veterans on campus, the college earned the distinction of being a [military friendly campus](#).

Through WSS, students have access to counselors. Furthermore, in an effort to reach more students who want to learn more about wellness-related topics, WSS works with college staff and outside agencies to provide workshops. Recent programming includes a suicide prevention presentation conducted by professionals from Albany Stratton VA Medical Center and the Suicide Prevention Center of New York, Narcan training, and a panel presentation about addiction and recovery. To facilitate student engagement and support, WSS staff members also act as advisor to the Interactional Diversity, Engagement and Leadership (IDEAL) Program. Begun as a peer mentoring program, IDEAL has expanded; students now assist at admission and orientation events and facilitate various student-driven programs and presentations on campus (e.g., Speed Friending, Diversity Panel, Voices of Addiction and Recovery, Student-to-Student Roundtables, Coffeehouses). In keeping with the college's support of student wellness, SUNY Schenectady opened a food pantry in the spring of 2017 to serve students with food insecurity. The food pantry provides food and personal items at no cost to students up to three times a month. In the first year, the pantry served 230 unique students who made 472 visits ([Food Pantry Copy of Monthly Totals—Students and Visits](#)).

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**Student Mentoring Program.** The [Student Mentoring Program](#) (SMP) is designed to support minority and underrepresented students in the completion of their degree at SUNY Schenectady. Through the careful placement of a mentee with an SUNY Schenectady faculty member or staff, the program provides students with a one-on-one mentor who can help advocate for them, teach them to advocate for themselves, and navigate the complexities of undergraduate education. Students and mentors are given guidance and clear expectations for the relationship, and mentors are trained regularly throughout each academic year.

**Early Learning Center.** The on-campus Early Learning Center (ELC), operated by the YWCA, is available for children of students, faculty, staff, and community members. The ELC is a National Association for the Education of Young Children accredited and New York State licensed child care center open to children between six weeks and five years of age. Having this service on campus provides important support to students with small children. SUNY Child Care Block grant funds are available to qualifying students on a first come, first serve basis. Flexible payment options are also available.

### Criterion 2

*Policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.*

#### **Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Prior Learning are in Place at the College:**

The college's Academic Code outlines the policy governing the evaluation and acceptance of non-residence credit—credit a student or prospective student did not earn through SUNY Schenectady. The college accepts credit for courses of “equivalent quality and content” taken at an accredited institution and passed with a grade of C or higher if they are applicable to the student's degree program. Courses meeting the same criteria, but in which the student earned a grade of C-, D+, D, or D- may be accepted at the discretion of the division dean. Credit for courses of “equivalent quality and content” in which students earned a grade of C or better, but were taken at a proprietary institution or one lacking regional accreditation may be approved at the discretion of the division dean. Transfer credit may also be awarded for credit taken at certain non-collegiate organizations at the discretion of the vice president of academic affairs/provost, upon recommendation of the division dean. Procedures are in place for students to earn credit by examination, whether through an externally published proficiency examination or an internally developed one. In both cases, examinations must reflect the “content and emphasis of the course” and students must earn a grade of at least a C (Section 5.2). The Academic Code also outlines the procedures by which students may seek credit for previous experience (Section 5.3) ([2018–2019 Academic Code, Section 5.0–5.3](#)). The policies and procedures in place for transfer credit has demonstrated a benefit to SUNY Schenectady students, with 75% of full-time students transferring in credit.

### Criterion 3

*Policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records.*

#### **Policies are in Place to Secure Student Information and Govern Its Release:**

The college adopted its [Information Security Policy](#) to “support protection of the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the College’s Information and Information Systems in compliance with the laws governing the College’s Information and/or Information Systems.” Since the vast majority of college information related to students is at least in part maintained electronically, BOT Policy 4.15 is integral to the safe and secure maintenance of student information and records. The policy identifies the college’s chief information officer as the party responsible for administering the policy and outlines the procedures for reporting security incidents and for training users of information and information systems. The BOT policy includes a requirement that the policy be reviewed and updated at least annually.

The college’s [Family Education Rights & Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) policy governs the release of student information and records and limits the college’s right to “disclose education records or information contained in such records without the student’s consent.” The policy further requires that the college annually notify students of their rights under FERPA. BOT Policy 3.2 is governed by [State University of New York \(SUNY\) Policy #6600](#) and in compliance with the FERPA Act of 1974.

Information about students’ rights under FERPA is included in the *Student Handbook*, the *College Catalog*, and on the college website ([Student Handbook pp. 81–82](#); [College Catalog pp. 39–40](#); [FERPA and Confidentiality SUNY Schenectady Website](#)). As part of the process for protecting students’ privacy, the college uses a [FERPA Release of Information Authorization Form](#). The form includes parameters for students to set up a FERPA password needed for the release of any information over the phone and allows them to identify any person(s) to whom the college may release information, pending the provision of the student’s FERPA password. Likewise, a student may request that all information is kept confidential by completing a confidentiality form.

### Criterion 4

*If offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs.*

#### **Administrative Principles and Procedures Govern Student Activities:**

Such student activities as athletics, student life, and extracurricular activities are governed by the same principles and procedures that govern all programs at the college. Through a clear administrative structure, managers overseeing athletics, student life, and extracurricular activities operate within the chain of command reporting to the assistant vice president for

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student affairs, under the direction of the vice president for academic and student affairs, provost.

**Athletics.** Athletics, like all programs at the college, operate under the Board of Trustees *Policies*, the *Academic Code*, and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Additionally, Athletics is subject to the parameters of the *Student Government Association Constitution, Guidelines for student Clubs and Organizations*, and the rules of the National Junior College of Athletics Association ([NJCAA](#); [SGA Constitution](#); [Student Clubs Manual and Guidelines](#)). Intercollegiate athletics is open to all students who meet NJCAA eligibility requirements and those of the college. As outlined in the *Academic Code*, students on academic probation may not “hold student office, participate in intercollegiate functions or serve as public representatives of the College” ([Academic Code 2018–19, section 7.6.3](#)).

SUNY Schenectady fields varsity teams in basketball (men and women), baseball (men), bowling (men and women) and crew (women). Students participating in athletics are required to speak to their course instructors about practices and any game travel requirements and must request each instructor to complete a progress report to ensure that student-athletes are maintaining satisfactory academic progress in their courses ([Athlete Memo to students 2017](#); [Student Athlete progress report form 2017](#)).

The college’s athletic teams regularly meet with success. The baseball team has made two World Series appearances, and many players successfully transfer to Division I, II and III institutions. The women’s crew team qualified for the prestigious Head of the Charles regatta in Boston and participated in regattas across the northeast. Both the men’s and women’s bowling teams won two NJCAA national championships in the past four years and the women’s basketball and men’s basketball teams qualified for regional playoffs multiple times over the last several years. The director of athletics completes an annual report outlining progress, updates, and key elements of programs in an [Athletics Strategic Plan](#).

**Student Clubs and Organizations.** The Student Government Association (SGA) is the student governing organization of SUNY Schenectady. The SGA includes eleven elected senators as well as a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and student trustee who also serves as a member of the college’s Board of Trustees. The *Student Government Constitution* indicates that students wishing to hold any position in the Student Senate must maintain a minimum of a 2.25 cumulative GPA. To be an officer in the Student Senate, students must also have at least 24 accepted credits at the end of the semester in which they seek office and must be in good academic standing ([SGA Constitution 2017](#)). Similarly, In reference to clubs and organizations, [guidelines](#) indicate that students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 in order lead a club or student organization. The *Student Code of Conduct* details the procedures for convening and conducting disciplinary hearings, when necessary, as well as appropriate penalties that may be imposed. (Student Code of Conduct, [Sections X-B](#) and [XI-A](#)). Student clubs and organizations cover an array of student interests including the Aviation Club, Alliance for Students with Disabilities (ASD), [ALANA](#) (previously known as Black and Latino Student Alliance), [Business-Law Club](#), [Christian Fellowship Club](#), [Education Opportunity Club Charter Constitution](#), Phi Theta

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Kappa National Honor Society, [PRIDE Alliance](#), and [Totally Pitchin'](#) (A Capella Club) ([Complete list of student clubs](#)).

### Criterion 5

*If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.*

#### **Third Party Providers of Student Support Services:**

In an effort to provide readily accessible academic support at times when college offices are not open and to provide additional support to students living at a distance, SUNY Schenectady engaged the services of a third party provider. The provider, [Upswing](#), is a free service to students through which they can access instructional support. Each enrolled SUNY Schenectady student can use Upswing to schedule one hour of tutoring sessions a week per course, for up to three courses, free of charge. While face-to-face tutoring is dependent on the time and availability of the local tutors, the vast number of online tutors that students have access to through Upswing allows for online tutoring in all standard college topics that are available any time of the day, seven days a week. Three staff members, including the college's Teaching and Learning Specialist developed a rubric to assess the service. Findings of that assessment, as well as feedback from students, indicate that Upswing scored well on the rubric and is effectively meeting students' needs ([Upswing Assessment Rubric](#); [Upswing Assessment Results](#)). The current contract with Upswing extends to June 30, 2019.

Additionally, the college engages a number of third party providers that support the student experience. Specifically, the Faculty Student Association (FSA) contracts with [Lessings](#), a food service company, to operate the college's cafeteria adjacent to the commons area and the Canal Side Café located next to a student lounge. The FSA also oversees childcare services with the YWCA, and copy services for students in the commons and the library, provided through Eastern Copy ([FSA Financial Report 2017](#)).

As noted in a prior section of this chapter, the college's Financial Aid Office contracts with Higher Education Solutions to help remediate default rates and to support students in satisfying their financial obligations. The college also contracts with a third-party firm, Summit Security, to provide campus safety services under the direction of SUNY Schenectady's director of campus safety.

### Criterion 6

*Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.*

#### **The College engages in Periodic Assessment of Programs Supporting the Student Experience:**

In alignment with the college's mission and Strategic Goals, SUNY Schenectady provides a variety of programs to support the student experience. [Feedback](#) from students gathered as part of the Middle States Self-Study process demonstrates strong levels of satisfaction with the

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college's support services. This information is useful to gauge students' perceptions of services and provides important information that can support decisions regarding programs and services. While the college takes pride in students' satisfaction with services, it also engages in periodic assessment of programs and services to inform decision making and to fuel continuous improvement. As such, Student Affairs, the unit overseeing a number of key offices that support the student experience, developed the [Student Affairs Assessment Plan](#). Areas within the Student Affairs chain include admissions, academic advising, ADA transition Services, financial aid, athletics, and student activities.

The [Student Affairs Assessment Plan](#) includes a multi-prong approach to assessment, including tracking student usage of services, identifying students' needs, examining student satisfaction with services, and assessing how various groups of students "experience SUNY Schenectady." Student Affairs will also use the standards defined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education to examine areas for which the unit is responsible. The *Student Affairs Assessment Plan* lays out a clear assessment cycle, a timeline, assessment tools to be used, and identifies the person responsible for coordinating the assessment effort. The plan also includes guiding questions for staff to consider as they complete the assessment process. For example, one question asks staff to consider whether the "evidence collected from [the defined] method will help [them] make decisions...to improve [the] program" (pg. 8). Last, the plan defines the specific goals and objectives on which Student Affairs will focus over the course of the next five years.

The college tracks student retention and graduation rates. Over the last three years, on average 76.7% of full-time students matriculated in a program were retained fall to fall and 44.3% of were retained fall to spring. The college's two-year graduation rate for first time, full-time students matriculated in a degree program was 19% for the Fall 2015 cohort. In addition to examining data internally, SUNY Schenectady participates in the [Voluntary Framework for Accountability](#) (VFA) and similar SUNY institutions to examine comparison data. The VFA data report is publicly available through the college's Consumer Information webpage.

In addition to the numerous academic and student affairs programs designed to support student success, retention, and completion, the college participates in the Achieving the Dream initiative, has Title III programming in place, and operates active EOP and C-STEP programs. The Achieving the Dream effort in particular has positioned the college to make strides in implementing broad updates to student supports, including new student orientation, academic advising, the first-year experience course (*First Year Seminar*), and developmental education, each of which are expected to have a positive impact on student retention, persistence, and completion.

### Conclusion

The breadth of student support services that SUNY Schenectady offers its students clearly meets the MSCHE Standard IV criteria. Indeed, the breadth and scope of the college's services is vast, covering not only support for traditional students, but also for students with a wide range

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of academic preparation, of traditional and non-traditional age, and representing the cultural variation that makes up the wonderfully diverse SUNY Schenectady student population.

### **Suggestions for Standard IV:**

1. The *Student Affairs Assessment Plan* is staged to focus more intently on direct measures of student learning outcomes. Just as Academic Program Review findings are shared with members of the campus community, findings from the *Student Affairs Assessment Plan* should be shared during scheduled review sessions to allow for greater campus response to assessment.
2. Through a continuous improvement process that is data-driven, evidence-based, and inclusive of the college body, the college should further develop plans to sustain initiatives created under Achieving the Dream and the Student Success Initiative.
3. In order to facilitate students' connection to support services, the college should investigate methods for students to self-identify ELL needs.

### **Recommendations for Standard IV:**

1. The college should continue its efforts with the scaled-up ALP model to meet the needs of students who are not academically prepared to enter ENG 123 without additional support. Analysis of student performance data and discussions among ALP instructors should remain ongoing to maintain the college's focus on continuous improvement and student success in ENG 123.
2. The college should continue its efforts to scale up Quantway and train additional faculty in its use and the associated instructional best practices.
3. The college should ensure that the revised Student Affairs Assessment Plan is fully implemented according to the assessment cycle defined within it and that assessment results are shared with members of the college community just as Academic Program Review results are shared.
4. Given the early successes of initiatives put in place as part of SUNY Schenectady's membership in Achieving the Dream, the college should continue to sustain the efforts (e.g., ALP implementation, re-engineering the advising model) and develop additional data-driven, evidence-based initiatives to support student success, persistence, and degree completion.

### **Requirements for Standard IV:**

There are no requirements for Standard IV.

### **Standard IV Institutional Initiative Alignment:**

There are four Institutional Initiatives relevant to Standard IV:

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- (1) SUNY Schenectady will expand access and increase student success by providing deliberate, diligent start-to-completion guidance for all students; (aligns with Strategic Goal: I.A)
- (3) SUNY Schenectady will strengthen community partnerships in order to bolster work force development, further expand educational pathways, and enrich the cultural life of the community; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV; IV.B; IV.G)
- (4) SUNY Schenectady will enhance its commitment to campus diversity inclusion, and equity; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV.I & IV.G) and
- (5) SUNY Schenectady will invest in campus renewal, including physical facilities and technological capacities. (aligns with Strategic Goals III; III.A; III.C)

The college's Student Success Initiative (SSI) is one of the most fundamental ways in which SUNY Schenectady demonstrates its commitment to provide diligent start-to-completion support for all students. SSI members' research and professional development, guided by the expertise available through Achieving the Dream participation, has resulted in the re-imagining and reinvigoration of Developmental Education, New Student Orientation, and Academic Advising, to name just a few. In addition, the hiring of student success coaches has grown out of this endeavor, as has the successful operation of the college's food pantry.

College in the High School, Smart Scholars, Smart Transfer, and P-Tech programs simultaneously meet Institutional Initiatives 1, 3, and 4. These programs expand access, create pipelines to the community, serve as recruitment tools for the college, create opportunities for inclusion, and facilitate persistence and completion. Likewise, the first phase of the *Facilities Master Plan* (FMP) includes the newly envisioned learning commons (previously discussed under Standard III), which meets the demands of these Institutional Initiatives, as well as Initiative 5. Indeed, the next phase of the FMP includes a plan to create a one-stop-shop for student services, consolidating Advising, Registration, Financial Aid, and the Bursar into a single area, thus enhancing the student experience by allowing students to move seamlessly among offices.

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Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

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## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

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## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

*Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education. (MSCHE, 2015, pp. 10–11).*

### Criterion 1

*Clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission.*

#### **The College Has Clearly Stated, Interrelated Educational Goals:**

The college *Mission Statement* acts as a foundation for educational goals at the institutional and program levels ([College Mission Statement](#)). Educational goals at SUNY Schenectady are defined at three interrelated levels: course-level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), program-level SLOs, and institutional SLOs, as defined by the college's S-CORE general education requirements ([Course Outline Template](#); [Course Outline ENG 124](#); [Course Outline MAT 145](#); [APR Guidelines](#); [Program Goals Music Audio Technology \(A.A.S.\)](#)). [S-CORE requirements](#) apply to graduates of its degree programs. The Academic Program Review Guidelines (APR) require all programs to map curricula to the State University of New York (SUNY) general education and liberal arts degree requirements, and the S-CORE/ILOs ([S-CORE, SUNY GER Catalog 2018-2019](#)).

As part of the program creation process, faculty creating program student learning outcomes (SLOs), share them with their school/division and make relevant revisions. If the division approves, the program moves to the Curriculum Committee, the next step in the shared governance process, where the program undergoes another review and suggestions are made for relevant revisions. Upon approval by the Curriculum Committee, the program moves to the Academic Senate, where it is vetted by the college community. In turn, upon Academic Senate approval, the program moves to the Board of Trustees for its approval. As per SUNY and New York State Education Department requirements, programs are then forwarded to both entities for review.

### Criterion 2

*Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals.*

#### **The College Conducts Organized and Systematic Assessments:**

SUNY Schenectady has a robust process for conducting organized and systematic assessments. The process, having been in place for many years, is embedded within the culture of the campus and is an important part of the procedure through which degree programs are developed. Through the thoughtful design of assessment practices and the analysis of resulting

data, faculty and staff review and adapt curricula and instructional methods to ensure that student learning opportunities are aligned to institutional, program, and course-level goals.

**Criterion 2(a)**

*Define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals.*

**Defensible Standards Are Used for Evaluating Student Achievement of Curricular Goals:**

Once approved, a program enters the academic program review (APR) [assessment cycle](#). Through APR, programs are assessed on a rotating five-year cycle. Program-level SLOs are examined along with students' achievement of program SLOs, as outlined in the APR Guidelines ([APR Guidelines](#)). As part of the APR process, program SLOs are examined to ensure that they are current and accurately reflect the intended direction of the program. Faculty map each course onto the program SLOs and the Institutional Learning Outcomes (S-CORE, the college's general education program) ([APR Air Traffic Control AAS 2015–2016](#), pg. 26; 34; [APR Criminal Justice AAS AS Cert 15-16](#), pg. 8). This provides a clear explanation of how academic programs support students' achievement of the program SLOs and align with the college's general education program. At the same time, it provides reviewers with an opportunity to consider whether there is the need for program revision in order to make it more responsive to the program SLOs or S-CORE, or to refine the program based upon advances in the field.

The State University of New York requires that students seeking transfer degrees demonstrate knowledge and skills in seven of ten specific general education areas known as SUNY General Education Requirements (GER): American History, Arts, Basic Communication, Foreign Language, Humanities, Math, Natural Sciences, Other World Civilizations, Social Sciences, and Western Civilization. These GERs are mapped in the APR in the same manner as program SLOs and S-CORE/ILOs. ([S-CORE, SUNY GER Catalog 2018–2019](#); [SUNY GER](#)).

While mapping plays an important role in examining programs, so too does examining students' achievement of course-level SLOs. On a rotating schedule, course-level assessment takes place across academic divisions. As part of that process, faculty examine whether students have met or exceeded course-level SLOs based upon clear benchmarks. For example, "students must achieve at least a 70%/C on the defined assessment method to meet the standard; students must achieve at least an 80%/B on the defined assessment method to exceed the standard" ([Course Level Assessment Template](#)).

In addition, external advisory committees play a role in helping the college to develop program goals that align with business and industry standards and expectations. The college has prepared a detailed set of [guidelines](#) to help orient these advisory committees.

### Criterion 2(b)

*Articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals.*

#### **The College Prepares Students in a Manner Consistent with the Institutional Mission:**

SUNY Schenectady's *Strategic Goals* express the institution's commitment to designing curricula and student services that prepare students for transition to careers and four-year transfer institutions ([Strategic Plan 2020](#)). As experts in their fields, faculty members carefully align program-level SLOs to the *Mission Statement* and *Strategic Goals* and measure their effectiveness as part of the academic program review process. For example, the Music Certificate program is "intended for those who wish to pursue development as a trained music professional" and has been designed to help students develop their musicianship and prepare them in the event that they wish to seek entry into a degree program. Four of the program's six SLOs focus on building students' skills as instrumentalists or singers, and two of the program's goals address "planning for future study leading to realistic career goals" and building a foundation to enter the college's music program or another school's music degree program ([Music Program Review 2017 \(Music Certificate Mission and Goals\)](#)). Including such SLOs help support the employment focus associated with certificate programs and provides a foundation for students who might wish to consider additional education before or after they enter a career field. Historically, students entering the Music Certificate program arrived with some background on an instrument or with choral experience. Through the APR process, and faculty observations, it was revealed that more recently students have begun entering the program with no experience in those areas, instead bringing an interest in audio technology, "DJ-ing", and beat production. To better serve the community, and the needs of incoming students, the School of Music responded to this program data by investigating and subsequently developing a Digital Music and Beats Production Certificate program.

In addition to playing an important role in ensuring that curricula maintain SLOs that are aligned to professional expectations ([Advisory Committee Handbook](#)), members of these committees, as well as other members of the professional community with whom faculty have long-standing relationships, often provide students enrichment through workshop presentations that provide students with information about current trends and possibilities in their fields.

Internship and field-placement courses require students not only to read relevant texts, complete academic assignments, and meet regularly with the professor, but also complete a number of hours at an off-campus professional location (e.g., corporate suite or day-care facility). This helps to ensure that the college's educational programs are connected to careers and that students experience the "world of work." Internship and field placement courses are included in a number of programs ([Applied learning courses at SUNY Schenectady](#)).

### **Criterion 2(c)**

*Support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders.*

#### **The College Supports Assessment and Communicates Its Results:**

The support and communication of student learning assessment is achieved in a number of ways. The program review process, central in the institution's support for ongoing assessment, requires that division deans share academic program review (APR) findings as part of the fall Institute Week, the week-long professional development program that takes place prior to the start of each semester.

The assessment of academic programs has been in place at the institution for many years. Twice in the last ten years, during academic years 2013–2014 and 2017–2018, *Academic Program Review Guidelines* were revised ([APR Guidelines](#)). The current *APR Guidelines*, built on the foundation of the 2013–2014 *Guidelines*, provide a more explicit explanation for what is expected in the program review, provide clear templates for data presentation, and incorporate diversity data more directly in the program review. The updated *APR Guidelines* also streamline how data is gathered from the Institutional Research (IR) office and the library. Previously, faculty members had to determine what data to request and then coordinate with IR and the library. Through an examination of the 2013–2014 *APR Guidelines*, a review of prior APRs and APRs completed at other colleges, and discussions with the directors of IR and the library, a specific set of data was defined to support the academic program review process. The new guidelines define the data to be used in the APR and require the Institutional Research office and the library to send it to faculty completing the APR no later than October of the fall in which the review is being completed.

In total, one of the most important goals for revising the *APR Guidelines* was to provide a template to ensure that APRs completed across schools/divisions follow the same format and to ensure that faculty and staff completing the APR can focus on the review of evidence rather than the design of the report. As the new guidelines were developed, feedback was solicited from staff members in the process of completing program reviews, from faculty and staff as part of Institute Week, and on the floor of the Academic Senate ([2017 Spring Faculty Institute Week Schedule](#); [Academic Senate packet January 26 2018](#)). The college's Assessment Committee refined the guidelines and templates and shared them with faculty members at the division level. Feedback secured through sharing the APR guidelines has been and continues to be examined in refining the guidelines to best reflect the goals of the program review process and to support and sustain the assessment process.

Institute Week (IW) activities play an important role in the support of assessment and the communication of results. Each IW includes specific programming in support of the assessment process. For example, IW programming for Fall 2017 included presentations of program review findings for [Music](#), [Business Administration](#), and [Culinary Arts](#). In addition, sessions were

offered on efforts being implemented at the college (e.g., the *Starfish* system), *Blackboard*, the college's learning management system, and student support.

### Criterion 3

*Consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness.*

#### **Assessment Results Are Used for the Improvement of Educational Effectiveness:**

There is a clear, rigorous system of course and program-level assessment in place at the college. As an open enrollment community college, the institution welcomes students with varying levels of academic preparedness and works diligently to support their success. To that end, the primary goal in the use of assessment data at SUNY Schenectady is to support student success and to achieve the college's mission and strategic goals. As a result, data collected through the assessment of student learning achievement is an essential element in the decision making process across a broad range of areas from program revision and student services to budgeting and planning.

#### **Criterion 3(a)**

*Assisting students in improving their learning.*

#### **Criterion 3(b)**

*Improving pedagogy and curriculum.*

**Student Learning, Instruction, and Curriculum.** SUNY Schenectady engages in carefully designed course-level assessment that enables faculty and administrators to evaluate the way courses are designed and delivered and to gauge the effectiveness of courses through the examination of student learning. For example, the program review team for the Liberal Arts: Humanities and Social Sciences A.A. degree noted that there had been an increase in the percentage of students entering the program who were not adequately prepared for college-level academic work ([APR 2016 Liberal Arts—Humanities and Social Sciences A.A. Program](#)). That observation prompted the committee to indicate that “[w]hen creating retention strategies, faculty need to factor in this population of underprepared students.” In response to that call to action, faculty in the Liberal Arts Division created three developmental courses specifically for English language learners and developed the first iteration of an accelerated learning course for students who were in need of remediation, but who did not require a full developmental course ([CSS 126 Integrated Reading and Writing- ELL](#); [CSS 127 Integrated Reading and Writing ELL](#); [ENG 123 College Composition](#); [ENG 095 College Writing Workshop](#)).

Developmental faculty discussed assessment results within the Liberal Arts Division and held information sessions during IW to examine assessment results and changes to the courses. The information sessions were also linked to advising methods in order to help faculty and staff advisors increase their effectiveness in student course placement. Work on developmental programming for students in English courses continues through the college's reengineering of the

Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) English course ENG 096, which the college will implement in Fall 2018 ([ENG 096](#)).

Administration officials, as well as several adjunct and full-time faculty, attended conferences and were presented with data from other colleges and Carnegie/West Ed that indicated [Quantway](#) had a significant success rate. Quantway is a pathway course that shortens the math sequence, reduces transition points for students placed in remedial math, and offers a productively challenging curriculum with integrated student supports. As a result, Quantway was implemented on campus. The team briefly examined [Statway](#), which is a new initiative of Carnegie/West Ed. Statway is a transfer level course that can be taught with a co-requisite of necessary algebra, however, after further review, Statway was not implemented.

One way in which the college links assessment to pedagogy and curriculum is through discipline coordinators ([UFP collective bargaining agreement, Article 9.6](#)). The coordinators serve as contacts between full-time and adjunct faculty and are responsible for course level assessment. Coordinators review syllabi, observe classes, keep the part-time instructors abreast of course and program updates, review rubrics, and discuss and implement assessment results. Coordinators routinely engage in such initiatives as developing materials for master course shells in *Blackboard* and advising adjunct instructors on matters of instruction, technology use, pedagogy, and professional development.

### **Criterion 3(c)**

*Reviewing and revising academic programs and support services.*

#### **Programs and Support Services Are Reviewed and Revised to Increase Their Effectiveness:**

The review and revision of academic programs is achieved through the academic program review (APR) ([APR Guidelines](#)). The process focuses on program improvement by methodically examining the program curriculum as it is designed, taught, and learned. The APR process collects data from across the student experience. Reviewers examine the student experience, including achievement of program and course SLOs, alignment with industry and advances in the field, retention and graduation rates, and support services.

An example of the review and revision of an academic program is the series of updates made to the Business Administration A.A.S. program ([APR Business-Business Administration AAS 2016–2017](#)). The recommendations contained in the 2016–2017 APR indicate that faculty should work to update the program. During the 2017–2018 academic year a number of updates were made to the program with a number of courses being eliminated and others being added. In addition to faculty input, changes to the program were made based on feedback from members of the program’s Advisory Committee, a key group of industry professionals that shares input about the program to ensure it remains current with industry needs and advances in the field. Each of the changes to the program, including updates to the program goals and objectives (SLOs) and the courses included in the program, moved through the shared governance process ([Academic senate meeting packet December 15 2017](#)).

## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

An example of the efficacy of the college's practice of thoroughly reviewing and, when necessary, revising its academic programs is the series of updates made to the Business Administration A.A.S. program ([APR Business-Business Administration AAS 2016–2017](#)). The 2016–2017 APR, in conjunction with confirming suggestions from the program's Advisory Committee, led faculty to eliminate a number of courses and add others. These changes also included updates to the program's goals and objectives (SLOs) ([Academic senate meeting packet December 15, 2017](#)). Similarly, as part of the program review process faculty examined the [Early Childhood A.A.S.](#) (pp. 8-9) and made adjustments to the curriculum to support transfer and eliminate overlap that was observed across LIT 210 Children's Literature and ECH 225 Fostering Emergent Literacy. As part of the five-year program review cycle, a program review for the Early Childhood A.A.S. program is being conducted in the current, 2018-2019, academic year.

While the college most often uses assessment data to examine SLOs, to adjust course material and methods, and to replace courses, it is also uses them to evaluate support programs and resources available to students. For example, having noted that because of their lack of fundamental music theory knowledge, a sizeable number of students were failing the first major examination in MUS 151, a key course in both the Performing Arts: Music A.S. and the Music Audio Technology A.A.S. programs, music faculty, chose to increase the support available to students ([Music Program Review 2017](#)). They sought—and received—permission to augment their already strong Peer Tutoring program by two tutors who would focus on music theory ([Music Tutoring Budget request 2015–2016](#)). Pre- and post-data for MUS 151 exams one and two found in the Fall 2015 assessment data indicate that average student scores rose and that retention rates increased once the tutoring program was put in place ([Theory I Tutor Assessment Data Fall 2015](#)).

**Library.** In addition to fostering the development of lifelong critical thinking and research skills, Begley Library supports student success through a variety of services. The goals and objectives outlined in the 2017–2018 Library APR help set the direction of the library, the support provided to students, and the library's efforts to support the college's academic programs ([Library APR 2012–2017](#)). Most important, the library's professional staff members use feedback received from professors, students, and other staff members to make revisions to the services, including workshops and instructional services they provide to classes, including bibliographic instruction; information about library services and online resources; critical thinking skills; and strategies for searching, obtaining, and evaluating information. The library uses the *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) as its guiding model. The ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*, in particular, provides a framework for the library's bibliographic instruction and discussions of information literacy. On March 23, 2018, a librarian conducted a presentation focused on information literacy to the Academic Senate ([Academic Senate packet March 23, 2018](#)). The library's efforts support student success in courses and contribute to the information literacy component of the college's S-CORE/ILO general education curriculum.

Beyond direct student services, the Begley Library plays an active role in supporting student success by participating in such campus events as New Student Orientation and the college's Open House activities. Additionally, the library is taking a lead role in educating the campus community about Open Educational Resources (OER) and in facilitating their adoption in courses ([Library APR 2012–2017, III. Contributions to Student Success](#)). While the library currently uses data to support evidence-based decision making, plans are in place to assess its impact on student success more directly, as is a current trend in academic libraries across the country. To that end, staff of Begley Library have reviewed professional literature and attended workshops on developing a model for assessing the impact of library usage on key indicators of student success. They plan to implement a new assessment tool in Spring 2019. As the college transitions to a learning commons model and the ways in which students' access information continue to evolve, the library will continue to develop new opportunities for students to engage with library resources.

### **Criterion 3(d)**

*Planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities.*

#### **The College Supports a Range of Professional Development Activities:**

SUNY Schenectady has fostered a culture of assessment that directly impacts how the college supports faculty and staff professional development. In addition to tuition reimbursement, SUNY Schenectady provides for a broad range of professional development opportunities aligned with the college's mission and Strategic Goals and often are directly related to assessment or in direct response to the APR process.

Professional development programming is conducted prior to each semester through the college's Institute Week (IW). While topics vary, each Institute Week includes at least one session focused on findings from APRs and often includes sessions on assessment that cover, for example, updates to assessment processes ([2017 Spring Faculty Institute Week Schedule](#); [2018 Spring Faculty Institute Week Schedule](#)). One suggestion for future college-wide professional development has grown organically out of the self-study process, namely the suggestion that there be professional development workshops focusing on best practices in collaborative writing. These workshops would facilitate group-writing efforts such as Middle States reports, academic program reviews, special accreditation reports, and selected standing and *ad hoc* committee reports.

Academic Affairs has a separate budget allocation—\$30,000 for each of the last three years—for faculty and staff professional development. To receive funding, applicants must explain both how the professional development activity will benefit them and how the request relates to the *Strategic Plan* ([Professional Development Funding Request Form](#)). Between September 2015 and February 2018, fifty-four faculty and staff members applied for and were approved for professional development funds. Additionally, as part of a number of initiatives on campus, faculty and staff engage in professional development programming (e.g., Achieving the Dream

conference, Middle States conference, SUNY professional development meetings at the system offices or other campuses).

The 2014–2015 Math and Science A.S. [Program Review](#) provides an example of professional development activities as they are linked to academic programs. Specifically, in reference to making innovations to teaching, a professor of chemistry implemented a modified version of POGIL (Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning) into General Chemistry I (Fall 2012), took a sabbatical to engage in chemical education research at Catholic University of America (2013), and attended a conference on *Integrating Cognitive Science with Innovative Teaching in STEM Disciplines* (2014).

Professional development support is often in direct response to assessment data analysis. In the [2016 Liberal Arts: Humanities and Social Sciences A.A. APR](#), faculty noted that there had been an increase in the percentage of students entering the program who were not adequately prepared for college level academic work. The recommendations include both establishing “an assessment framework that includes inter-rater reliability” and the improvement of instruction on information literacy.

In response to these findings, English faculty spent a year focusing on how to improve the outcomes for ENG 123: *College Composition* and on how best to align it with Developmental Education English courses. One result of this endeavor is that students are now required to write a full-fledged research paper in ENG 124: *Literature and Writing* rather than in ENG 123 so that faculty of the former course can focus more intensively on teaching information literacy. Moreover, English faculty also committed to scale up the Accelerated Learning Program, following a national model from the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC). This effort is being brought to scale in Fall 2018 as part of the college’s Achieving the Dream initiative. In order to prepare English faculty to teach the new Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) course, faculty have undergone multiple rounds of professional development. The event with the highest impact was bringing the Co-Director of the CCBC ALP program to SUNY Schenectady in May 2018 to train full- and part-time faculty ([ALP Faculty Development Training 5-22-18](#)). Another key professional development action was that SUNY Schenectady sent the English professor who acts as the ALP and Developmental Education Course Coordinator to the ALP conference held in Washington, D.C. in June 2018.

### **Criterion 3(e)**

*Planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services.*

#### **The College Engages in Planning and Budgeting for Academic Programs and Services:**

Throughout the budget process, divisions/schools are expected to engage in short and long term planning and resource allocation to support the college’s academic programs. The APR process leads to the development of recommendations that inform the budget process. One example of this can be found in the School of Music’s request for funds to create an isolation booth in the post production studio ([Music Iso Booth Form F – Facilities](#)). The goal of this

request was to provide additional recording space that would be especially appropriate for small ensembles and voice isolation. Within the context of academic programs, this request was intended to support the college's current Audio Technology A.A.S. degree and its recently implemented Digital Music and Beats Production Certificate program. In Fall 2017 the isolation booth was in place and operational.

As deans and department heads prepare the budget for their areas of responsibility, budget information and rationales are discussed as part of the weekly Provost's Council meetings ([2017 Music Program Review Recommendations](#)). At the start of the budget process, the vice president of administration (the college's chief financial officer) attends a Provost's Council meeting to discuss the process and answer questions about it. Once deans and department heads prepare their budgets, they review them with their supervisors and, as needed, make adjustments. This is an important effort because it provides department heads with an opportunity to advocate for specific initiatives that they consider to be priorities and because it provides the supervisors with a chance to discuss how the proposed budget aligns with broader unit and Strategic Goals. Once those meetings take place, all budget materials for departments that do not report directly to the provost are forwarded to her office for review. She then reviews the budgets to ensure alignment with the priorities of the *Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Plan*, alignment with the college's *Strategic Plan*, and any long range budget planning that is in place for the college (e.g., macro level initiatives such as those included in the *Facilities Master Plan*) ([Student Affairs Plan](#); [Academic Affairs Plan](#); [Facilities Master Plan](#)). Beyond those procedures, the provost then takes part in senior leadership budget planning with members of the President's Council to prepare the final budget document for review by the Board of Trustees and submission to the Schenectady County Legislature for review and approval. This final aspect of the procedure exists because the State University of New York and the laws and regulations governing community colleges in New York State require community colleges to be sponsored by the county in which they reside.

### **Criterion 3(f)**

*Informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs.*

#### **The College Informs the Appropriate Constituents about Its Programs:**

Faculty and staff are kept informed regarding assessment-related issues through a number of avenues. Faculty Institute Week activities provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion of assessment issues across the college community. Monthly Academic Senate meetings provide another occasion for sharing assessment information among administration, staff, and faculty and within divisions/schools. The Assessment Committee includes representatives from each division/school, who then share information with their constituents ([Standing Committee Chart 2017–2018](#)). Information is shared at twice monthly division/school meetings and at adjunct faculty training sessions. Discipline coordinators are tasked with informing adjunct faculty about college initiatives, including assessment. At the institutional level, the president provides information to his leadership team through the President's Council. Through weekly Provost's Council meetings, the provost disseminates information to deans and department heads who

subsequently share that information with faculty and staff. Additionally, APR findings are presented to the Board of Trustees during summer or fall meetings.

**Criterion 3(g)**

*Improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates.*

**The College Works to Improve Key Indicators of Student Success:**

As part of ongoing assessment practices, the college tracks and reports data through a number of mechanisms, including the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#) (IPEDS), [Voluntary Framework of Accountability](#) (VFA), specialized accreditation agencies, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), New York State Education Department (NYSED), and State University of New York System (SUNY). The data reported through these mechanisms fulfills institutional requirements, as in the case of NYSED required reports, and is used to directly inform members of the college community in other cases (e.g., the VFA report is linked on the college's website) about various data points, student persistence and retention, and graduation rates.

More directly, the Institutional Research office (IR) communicates information on assessment-related activities to constituencies throughout the campus. For example, IR provides faculty completing academic program reviews with student retention, graduation, and transfer information. Throughout every enrollment cycle, the Institutional Research Office also provides deans with a weekly comparison of enrollment data by each degree and certificate program in his or her division ([Enrollment data 6-26-18](#)). The data includes year-to-year and week-by-week comparisons of the number of program applications, acceptances, and registration data so that deans can track enrollment progress and make informed decisions in areas such as the number of course sections. Additionally, deans are provided with data on new, returning, continuing, and transfer student enrollment broken down by degree and certificate program and updated regularly through the conclusion of each semester's add/drop period. IR provides data related to student success to the Student Success Initiative team. In addition, it provides data used for course placement to Testing Center staff work and to advisors, faculty, and deans. Moreover, the college uses the *Institutional Effectiveness Report* in conjunction with the *Strategic Plan* and other such tools as the *Student Affairs Plan* and *Academic Affairs Plan* to guide efforts supporting student success ([SSI Data Appendix Action Plan Spring 2017](#); [Institutional Effectiveness Report](#); [Student Affairs Plan](#); [Academic Affairs Plan](#)).

**Criterion 3(h)**

*Implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services.*

**The College Implements Processes and Procedures to Improve Programs and Services:**

Beyond the assessment efforts described in the sections above, the college engages in additional processes and procedures to improve educational programs and services.

**College in the High School (CHS).** CHS, the college’s concurrent enrollment program, is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). The CHS program engages in the assessment process through course-level assessment and holds multiple CHS professional development days during which faculty and staff of the college community present on topics such as degree programs and the assessment process ([CHS Faculty Handbook 2017–2018](#)).

**Online Programing.** In relation to online learning, the college has a clear process by which faculty can access training on the use of the college’s Learning Management System, *Blackboard*, and ensures that courses are provided with the same level of quality as those taught on the brick and mortar campus. As part of its online course review process, the college uses the [Open SUNY Course Quality Review rubric](#), developed by a team of State University of New York staff and SUNY campus stakeholders as a tool to “help campuses ensure that their online courses are learner centered and well designed.” Success in online learning is further supported through the college’s Title III grant, which includes initiatives for faculty development in online teaching.

**Achieving the Dream.** The college has committed a significant number of resources to actively respond to issues of student success, allocating faculty and staff resources and budget dollars to support the effort. To date, the campus has seen a number of positive changes as a result of this bold institutional commitment. AtD coordinates the work of campus teams, resources available through the AtD network, and the work of student success coaches. On our campus, the AtD effort is driven by the work of the Student Success Initiative (SSI) core team and a group of sub-teams focused on specific student success initiatives, including student orientation, advising, the *First Year Seminar* (FYS) course, and student success in gateway courses such as developmental English, developmental math, and biology orientation ([New Student Orientation & Registration Data PowerPoint 2017](#)).

The SSI *First Year Seminar* sub-team has added a twelve-week version of the course that will meet twice a week for the first three weeks and then once a week for the remainder of the course. The decision to pilot this version was based upon observations of the eight- and sixteen-week course versions and feedback gathered from faculty. The twelve-week course version front loads course meetings to give students extra support as they first transition to college. This overcomes the disadvantage of the 8-week course, which typically ends at the mid-point of the semester, preventing the regular course contact present in longer courses as

students approach the end of the semester and begin to prepare for finals. The twelve-week course will allow faculty to assist students as they engage in course planning and registration for the following semester ([SSI Data Appendix Action Plan Spring 2017](#)).

**Title III.** In April 2017 the college submitted a successful [Title III grant](#). The grant proposal included a comprehensive development plan encompassing data and input from external evaluations, assessment results, internal data, strategic goals, annual work plans, and measures of mission fulfillment. The resulting plan includes Title III objectives and timelines for completion. Objectives focus on enrollment, retention and completion, advising, professional development, developmental education, and resource development. As part of the grant, SUNY Schenectady is in the midst of implementing professional development for online instruction. In Spring 2018 the first cohort of faculty met three times and in Fall 2018 will meet once a month. A second cohort will begin meeting in the fall of 2018. Also in Spring 2018, the college began implementing a success coach model by hiring coaches and a success coach manager tasked with overseeing the effort designed to help support student success.

**Specialized Accrediting Processes.** In terms of specialized accreditation processes, and School of Music is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Music. The Paralegal program is approved by the American Bar Association. This means that the highest standards of program content, courses, and faculty—as established by these nationally recognized organizations—are met. This assures a top-quality educational experience for students and makes these degrees more desirable to employers. In 2012, the college’s School of Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism was awarded Exemplary status from the American Culinary Federation, granted two concurrent seven-year terms of accreditation with no areas of non-compliance. Today, the school is the only New York State post-secondary Culinary Arts program accredited by the American Culinary Federation with Exemplary status.

#### **Criterion 4**

*If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.*

#### **Assessment by Third-Party Providers:**

The college’s assessment processes are a critical element to the academic programming and services that it offers to its students. As such, the processes are faculty driven and no third-party providers are involved in assessment.

#### **Criterion 5**

*Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.*

#### **The College Engages in Periodic Assessment of Assessment Processes:**

## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

The college has robust, faculty driven assessment processes in place. As with any process, it is important to evaluate its effectiveness and, as needed, make refinements. The college's primary mechanism for examining the assessment process is the Assessment Committee. The committee, operating through the Academic Senate, includes in its membership the vice president of academic affairs/provost or the assistant vice president of academic affairs and faculty representatives from each of the college's five divisions/schools.

During the course of the 2017–2018 academic year the Assessment Committee undertook an examination of the course level assessment process and the academic program review process, as well as the tools used to complete them. Over the course of the year, drafts of the revised tools associated with those processes were shared with members of the campus community to secure feedback ([Faculty Institute Week Spring 2018 schedule of events](#)). The tools were reviewed and revised through the collaborative efforts of the committee, and final drafts of the [Course Level Assessment](#) (CLA) and [APR Guidelines](#) tools were sent to members of the committee for dissemination to faculty to secure additional feedback before it is put in place for Fall 2018. Feedback was used to make updates to the CLA template and the APR Guidelines and additional feedback is being collected from the groups that just completed the academic review process.

While the processes outlined in the paragraphs above reference activities that took place in the 2017–2018 academic year, it is important to highlight the fact that the college has had a long standing commitment to the assessment process. Over time, that process has continuously evolved in response to best practices and refinements made to the procedures and tools associated with assessment. One such example can be seen in the tool used to complete program reviews, the aforementioned [Program Review Guidelines](#).

### Conclusion

Through the assessment of student learning and achievement, SUNY Schenectady demonstrates that its students have attained educational goals that meet defensible criteria consistent with their programs of study and with the college's Mission.

### Suggestions for Standard V:

In order to facilitate group-writing efforts such as Middle States reports, academic program reviews, special accreditation reports, and selected standing and *ad hoc* committee reports, the college should conduct professional development workshops focusing on best practices in collaborative writing.

### Recommendations for Standard V:

There are no recommendations for Standard V.

### Requirements for Standard V:

There are no requirements for Standard V.

**Standard V Institutional Initiative Alignment:**

All five of the college's Institutional Initiatives provide a constant impetus for evaluating how well it assesses student learning and achievement and promotes student persistence and completion:

- (1) SUNY Schenectady will expand access and increase student success by providing deliberate, diligent start-to-completion guidance for all students; (aligns with Strategic Goal: I.A)
- (2) SUNY Schenectady will ensure a relevant and coherent curriculum; (aligns with Strategic Goal II)
- (3) SUNY Schenectady will strengthen community partnerships in order to bolster work force development, further expand educational pathways, and enrich the cultural life of the community; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV; IV.B; IV.G)
- (4) SUNY Schenectady will enhance its commitment to campus diversity inclusion, and equity; (aligns with Strategic Goals IV.I & IV.G) and
- (5) SUNY Schenectady will invest in campus renewal, including physical facilities and technological capacities. (aligns with Strategic Goals III; III.A; III. C)

The academic review process ensures that student learning opportunities are aligned to institutional, program, and course SLOs. Academic program reviews (APRs) are a means to clarify program paths that enable students to persist and complete their education smoothly and seamlessly, and these APRs identify areas in which students can benefit from such opportunities as internships or other applied learning activities. This same process deepens connections with community members and industry experts to ensure that college degree programs and training efforts are supporting industry needs. Results from APRs also lead faculty to develop innovative programming and secure grants that support academic, as well as community, needs. Such programs as the Student Mentoring Program and the National Endowment for the Humanities grant for a Criminal Justice Cohort—a humanities-enhanced Associates Degree in Criminal Justice—have not only forged vital partnerships among community agencies and the college but have also enhanced the way in which the college demonstrates its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

**Sources**

[2017 Music Program Review Recommendations](#)

[2017 Spring Faculty Institute Week Schedule](#)

[2018 Spring Faculty Institute Week Schedule](#)

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

[Academic and Student Affairs Plan 2017–2018](#)  
[Academic Plan Final 2018](#)  
[Academic Program Review Guidelines 2017–2018](#)  
[Academic senate meeting packet December 15 2017](#)  
[Academic Senate packet January 26 2018](#)  
[Academic Senate packet March 23, 2018](#)  
[Advisory Committee Handbook 2018-2019](#)  
[UFP collective bargaining agreement](#)  
[ALP Faculty Development Training 5-22-18](#)  
[Annual Academic Program Review Cycle](#)  
[Applied learning courses at SUNY Schenectady](#)  
[APR 2016 Liberal Arts - Humanities and Social Sciences A.A. Program](#)  
[APR Air Traffic Control AAS 2015–2016](#)  
[APR Business-Business Administration AAS 2016–2017](#)  
[APR Criminal Justice AAS AS Cert 15-16](#)  
[APR Early Childhood AAS 13-14](#)  
[APR Institute Week Presentation Business Administration Summer 17](#)  
[APR Institute Week Presentation Culinary Summer 17](#)  
[APR Institute Week Presentation Music Summer 17](#)  
[APR Math and Science AS 2014–2015](#)  
[Catalog 2018–2019](#)  
[CHS Faculty Handbook 2017–2018](#)  
[College Mission Statement](#)  
[Course Level Assessment Template](#)  
[Course Outline ENG 124 Literature and Writing](#)  
[Course Outline MAT 145](#)  
[Course Outline Template](#)  
[CSS 126 Integrated Reading and Writing- ELL](#)  
[CSS 127 Integrated Reading and Writing ELL](#)  
[ENG 095 College Writing Workshop](#)  
[ENG 096 College Composition Workshop](#)  
[ENG 123 College Composition](#)  
[Enrollment data 6-26-18](#)  
[Facilities Master Plan](#)  
[Faculty Institute Week Spring 2018 schedule of events](#)  
[Humanities and Social Sciences A.A. curriculum worksheet](#)  
[Institutional Effectiveness Report](#)  
[Library APR 2012–2017](#)  
[Music Iso Booth Form F – Facilities](#)  
[Music Nov. 7, 2014 minutes](#)  
[Music Program Review 2017](#)  
[Music Tutoring Budget request 2015–2016](#)  
[New Student Orientation & Registration Data PowerPoint 2017](#)  
[Open SUNY Course Quality Review Rubric](#)

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

[Professional Development Funding Request and Guidelines 2017–2018](#)

[Program Goals Music Audio Technology \(A.A.S.\)](#)

[Program Review 2016 Liberal Arts—Humanities and Social Sciences A.A. Program](#)

[Quantway](#)

[SSI Data Appendix Action Plan Spring 2017](#)

[SSI Data Appendix Action Plan Spring 2017](#)

[Standing Committee Chart 2017–2018](#)

[Statway](#)

[Strategic Plan 2020](#)

[Student Affairs Assessment Plan](#)

[SUNY General Education Requirements](#)

[Theory I Tutor Assessment Data Fall 2015](#)

[Title III Award Notification Letter](#)

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

*The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges. (MSCHE, 2015, pg. 12)*

### Criterion 1

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: institutional objectives, both institution wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation.*

#### Clearly Stated Institutional and Unit Goals:

SUNY Schenectady's mission is clearly stated, and it sets the foundation for the college's [Strategic Plan](#). In turn, the *Strategic Plan* clearly lays out SUNY Schenectady's strategic goals and initiatives and provides a framework that each department and unit at the college uses to set measurable goals. In Spring 2016, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the current [Mission Statement](#) and [Strategic Plan](#) as college policies ([Board of Trustees Minutes February 22, 2016](#)). As such, both are subject to the same review requirements as all other Board of Trustees policies, requiring review at least every five years ([Board of Trustees Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#)).

All members of the President's Council, who collectively oversee all major units at the college, are required to develop goals aligned with the college's mission and *Strategic Plan*. For example, the provost presented the president a detailed plan outlining the goals and initiatives for the student and academic affairs units and linked them to the college's *Strategic Plan*. As part of its annual retreat, members of the President's Council review each units' goals and initiatives ([PC Retreat Agenda July 30, 2018](#)). Next, the president and members of his leadership team present the units' goals and initiatives to the Board of Trustees during that body's annual retreat, and the president shares them with the campus community at one of the Coffee and Conversations events that he conducts ([BOT Retreat Agenda 9-10-15](#); [Coffee and conversations E invite 9-28-15](#)].

Members of the President's Council disseminate the goals and initiatives within their units and provide the president with [quarterly reports](#) on the status of each goal. For example, the provost discusses goals and initiatives as part of weekly Provost's Council meetings and as part of the annual retreat of her direct reports. This information is further disseminated in department meetings and at academic division retreats ([School of Music Goals Provost's Council Retreat 2018](#); [Music Retreat Agenda Aug 30, 2018](#)]. The president follows up by reviewing all reports and evaluating each unit's progress as part of a regularly scheduled President's Council meeting ([PC Retreat Agenda July 30, 2018](#)).

### **Data-Informed Decisions:**

As part of ongoing assessment practices, the college tracks and reports data through a number of mechanisms, including the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System ([IPEDS](#)), Voluntary Framework of Accountability ([VFA](#)), specialized accreditation agencies, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), New York State Education Department (NYSED), and State University of New York System (SUNY). The data reported through these mechanisms includes, but is not limited to, information related to student persistence, retention, and graduation rates; student demographic information; and program enrollment. The data reported is reviewed through various means and is used to support decision making at the college. Faculty, staff, and administrators regularly use data to inform decision making, and it is not unusual for Institutional Research staff to be called upon to respond to specific data requests. One such example is the data that faculty and administrators requested as they were examining student achievement in English courses in order to determine how to move forward with a revised developmental English model. Staff also present information about college data at meetings. For example, the Director of Institutional Research presented information about IPEDS data as part of an SSI team meeting ([SSI Agenda April 11, 2018](#)). Data is also made available through the [Consumer Information webpage](#), where, for example, the college's VFA report is available.

The Institutional Research (IR) office plays a key role in collecting, reporting, and making college data available to members of the campus community for assessment purposes and to support the decision making processes. One of the ways in which IR provides data to the campus community is through its annual preparation of the college's [Data Book](#), including data pertaining to admissions, enrollment, course scheduling, and finance. The college also uses such tools as the [Institutional Effectiveness Report](#), a snapshot of institutional health, to share data, to periodically assess, and to direct efforts toward the improvement of indicators. That information and data from other sources is then used to develop such unit goals and initiatives as those presented in the [Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Plan](#).

The college also uses data to build the budget, determine resource allocation, examine the impact of marketing and recruitment efforts, and define opportunities for supporting student success. For example, based upon a review of data related to student retention and completion, as well as discussions with campus constituencies, the college made the decision to join the Achieving the Dream (AtD) initiative. As the institution enters its third year in AtD, it is clear that the focus on the use of data to support decision making, a foundational element of AtD, is having a positive impact on the campus. Thus far, the examination of data for planning and decision making has played an important role in AtD efforts. For example, the use of data played a critical role in developing and implementing a new advising model, developing revisions to the college's first year experience course, *First Year Seminar*, and in scaling up the Accelerated Learning Program.

To further support the college's ongoing use of data to inform decisions, SUNY Schenectady's recently awarded Title III grant includes funds for purchasing an enterprise data management

tool ([Argos](#)). This tool will become operational in Spring 2019 and will provide further data and reporting, and, perhaps more importantly, will support data democratization.

**Institutional Objectives, Planning, and Resource Allocation:**

The steps that the college's Foundation took to increase alumni engagement provides another example of data informed decision making that is consistent with the college's mission and *Strategic Plan*. Consistent with Strategic Goal V (Ensure the College's Financial Stability), the college Foundation set a benchmark to increase alumni engagement by 3% and formulated a plan that called for staff members to arrange "meet-ups" with alumni in cities where they travel for such college business as attending conferences. Although the plan to date has generated only a 1% increase, the executive director of Development tasked a staff member with focusing more directly on coordinating and facilitating the alumni meetings ([Division Goals 2017–2018 Foundation Q1](#)).

**Criterion 2**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results.*

**Clearly Documented and Communicated Planning and Improvement Processes are in Place:**

The college employs clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes. Faculty, staff, and students have the opportunity to become involved in the planning and improvement processes by joining committees and by attending presentations and open forums. Students are able to attend any campus information session or open forum. The college also holds open [forums](#) designated specifically for students. Additionally, the president, provost, and vice president for administration present information to faculty and staff through presentations at each Academic Senate meeting ([Academic Senate Agenda May 11, 2018](#)).

The planning and improvement processes in place for IT infrastructure and for the college's facilities provide two examples of clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes. First, the college engaged the services of a consulting firm ([RFP 07-2018 IT Consultant Services - Final](#)) to help ensure systems and technology infrastructure are sufficiently in place and to keep pace with the ever increasing technology demands associated with institutional operations,. The firm, which began its work in July 2018, will complete an *IT Assessment Report* examining IT Department operations and identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement ([SUNY Schenectady CampusWorks FOIL redacted](#)). To support constituent participation and the use of assessment results, members of the consulting firm gathered data and interviewed members of the college community from all areas of the organization. The firm then used that information in developing the firm's report. As part of Institute Week, the Chief Information Officer conducted a presentation to members of the campus community in which he outlined the process that will be used to support institutional responsiveness to IT infrastructure needs ([Faculty Institute Week Schedule of events Fall 2018](#)).

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

This process centers on the creation of an information technology governance structure and a well-defined, data-driven decision-making process. The plan for an information technology governance structure has been approved by the president and the provost and kick-off meetings have occurred, the first on Friday, November 16. Additional meetings have been scheduled for Spring 2019. ([Information Technology Governance Structure](#)) The structure consists of an Information Technology Council (ITC), an Enterprise Systems Committee (ESC), and an Academic Technology Committee (ATC) ([IT Governance Chart](#)).

The ITC will be made up of senior-level representatives from each college division; the vice president of academic and student affairs/provost will serve as chair. The Chief Information officer (CIO) and IT staff will participate as ex-officio members. The ITC will provide oversight and serve as a resource to the Academic Technology and Enterprise Systems committees. It will assist IT and the CIO with strategic and tactical planning and with assessment metrics ([IT Project Request Form DRAFT](#)), and will communicate with the college community, identify technology needs, collaborate with IT to determine necessary recourses for projects, and prioritize projects based on data-driven assessments. Additional ITC meetings were held on December 21, 2018 and January 10, 2019, during which several proposed projects were evaluated using the ITC project evaluation rubric ([ITC Project Scorecard](#)).

The Enterprise Systems Committee (ESC) will provide oversight, planning, and coordination for the college's enterprise systems. Current enterprise systems include: Blackboard, Banner, Degree Works, Argos, Raiser's Edge, Website(s), Portal, Everbridge, and CRM. The ITC chair and Provost have invited membership and the committees are now formed. The Academic Technology Committee (ATC) will align IT resources with the academic needs of the college to support, enhance, and expand learning and teaching environments. It will advise the ITC on short and long term academic technology strategies. Membership includes faculty, staff, and administration.

The college used a similar process to develop the [Facilities Master Plan](#). The college hired an architectural firm to complete an [Assessment of Conditions Report](#). The report addresses a range of issues, including instructional and green space, pedestrian circulation, sustainability, and the environment. In turn, a steering committee comprised of campus constituents, including faculty, staff, and administrators used that report to write the college's *Facilities Master Plan*. Additionally, the college conducted a *Community Leader Survey* and held open forums on campus to facilitate constituent participation. Information about the plan was also shared at Academic Senate meetings ([Academic Senate minutes May 12, 2017](#)).

### Criterion 3

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: a financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives.*

### **The Financial Planning and Budgeting Process Aligns with the College's Mission and Goals:**

Consistent with the requirements of BOT Policies 1.3 and 5.5, [Policies & Procedures Guide](#), and [Budget Process](#), respectively, the college's financial planning and budgeting processes align with the mission and strategic goals. In its budget memo, which is sent to all staff, the Finance Office outlines budget procedures and requirements. The memo clearly indicates that all budget requests are to align with the mission and strategic goals of the college ([2017–2018 Budget Instructions](#)). Through reports to the Academic Senate, the vice president for administration shares information about the year's budget-planning process with members of the campus community as well ([Academic Senate Minutes November 17, 2017](#); [Academic Senate Minutes December 15, 2017](#)).

Guided by the mission and Strategic Goals, SUNY Schenectady's budget process uses an evidence-based approach to budget development and operates according to a clearly defined time line to ensure that administrators are aware of due dates and the progression of the budget process ([Budget Process Budget Schedule 2018–2019](#)). The Administrative Division sends budget instructions, as well as the forms for use in the process, to each administrator responsible for budget management and control. As part of the procedures used in the budget process, administrators must complete [budget request forms](#) for all requests for new initiatives, new software, and new equipment. The forms require that the department head making the request provide a narrative of how the request aligns with the college's strategic goals and the input received in support of the request. Further, the *Budget Request Form* includes the prior year's budget, as well as the current one, so that once completed, it presents a three-year picture of the budget.

The procedures employed in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs provides one example of how the budget process progresses through a unit. As deans and department heads prepare the budget for their areas of responsibility, they discuss and present budget information as part of the weekly Provost's Council meetings. At the start of the budget process, the vice president of administration attends Provost's Council to answer questions and act as a resource for the deans and department heads.

Deans and department heads review their prepared budgets with their supervisors and, as needed, make adjustments. This procedure provides department heads with an opportunity to advocate for specific initiatives they consider a priority, and it provides supervisors with a chance to discuss how the proposed budget aligns with broader unit and strategic goals. Once those meetings take place, department heads forward all budget materials to the provost. She then reviews each budget to ensure alignment with Academic Affairs and Student Affairs priorities, the college's *Strategic Plan*, and any long range budget planning in place for the college ([Academic and Student Affairs Plan 2017–2018](#); [Facilities Master Plan](#)).

As the next step in the process, the provost takes part in senior leadership budget planning, during which members of the President's Council work through a series of budget scenarios and projections for the fiscal year ([PC Executive committee Agenda January 16, 2018](#)). Parallel to

the planning conducted by members of the President's Council, the president provides updates to the Board of Trustees, and members of the campus community receive updates during meetings of the Academic Senate ([Academic Senate minutes May 12, 2017](#)). Once completed, after state aid projections are finalized, a final draft budget is submitted to the Board of Trustees for review and approval ([BOT Minutes 5-14-18](#)). Upon its approval, the budget is provided to the Schenectady County Legislature for review and, upon that body's approval, is submitted to the State University of New York (SUNY) ([SUNY Schenectady County Budget Resolution for 2017–2018](#)).

#### **Criteria 4 and 7**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.*

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: an annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter.*

#### **The College has Fiscal and Human Resources Adequate to Support Its Operations:**

The college has sufficient fiscal and human resources to support operations. The college engages in a transparent budget development process that draws upon input from campus constituents, includes clear communication to the college community, and benefits from the use of assessment in its formulation.

Department and unit heads develop budgets aligned with the college's strategic goals. While each strategic goal includes at least one strategic initiative with a clear fiscal link, Strategic Goal V, ("Ensure the College's Financial Sustainability"), places institutional fiscal health front and center ([Strategic Plan 2020](#)).

The college uses its [Institutional Effectiveness Report](#) to examine key metrics, including financial data points, intended to provide a snapshot of institutional health. To examine financial practices and internal controls in place at the college, SUNY Schenectady secures the services of a Certified Public Accounting (CPA) firm to conduct an annual audit ([Annual Audit Report Aug. 2017](#)). Upon completion of the audit, accountants from the CPA firm present audit results and findings, if any, during a Board of Trustees Meeting ([BOT minutes 3-19-18](#)). In response to the audit, in the event that there is a finding, the college completes a management response and takes steps to respond ([Management Response to Finding 2017](#)). The management response is sent to the auditors and submitted to the National Clearinghouse as part of the college's annual submission. Furthermore, any findings from the previous year's audit are addressed in the following year's audit to ensure it has been addressed and that there is no further finding in that area.

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The [Academic Program Review \(APR\) Guidelines](#) and the Academic Affairs budget process present an example of the link between budget planning and the college's programs. Through the APR process, faculty and deans assess the adequacy of faculty resources by studying program enrollment, retention, and graduation data, as well as by listening to feedback from external reviewers and members of program's advisory committees, and advances in the field to assess the adequacy of faculty resources. Deans may also draw upon the [SIRDLEA Banner report](#) tool to examine faculty ratio and other data for programs to determine whether additional faculty are needed to support a program.

If a dean determines that an additional position is needed, he or she then discusses it with senior leadership before moving forward. Next, the president and the President's Council consider the matter. At all stages, the degree to which the new position will further the strategic goals is uppermost. Once the President's Council approves the request, the relevant dean or supervisor, in consultation with the senior administrator in the unit, writes the job description. New titles and job descriptions require Board of Trustees and SUNY approval. For example, when, at the recommendation of the president, the college added the new title "Coordinator of Special Events & Alumni Relations Annual Giving Officer," the Board of Trustees needed to approve the addition and the change needed to be submitted to SUNY ([Board of Trustees Minutes 4-16-18](#)).

To support the hiring process, to expand access to a greater number of qualified candidates, and to support diversity on campus, the Human Resources office posts position announcements in the *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*, and purchases a position-posting package from the *National Minority Update*. Additionally, in order to systematize the college's employee hiring process, reduce paper usage, and leverage technology, the Human Resources office implemented Interview Exchange. The service provides an electronic routing process for position approval, replacing the former paper routing process, and has saved significant amounts of time in the hiring process.

### **The College has Physical Plant and Technology Resources Adequate to Support Its Operations:**

The college has a thorough [Facilities Master Plan](#), including an assessment of the condition of the physical plant. The plan, which focuses on five primary goals, aligns with the college's mission and *Strategic Plan*. The five goals are: (1) improve learning support services, (2) enhance student services, (3) enrich the campus environment, (4) focus on STEM, and (5) invest in campus renewal. At this time, SUNY Schenectady is in the process of moving forward with projects focused directly on Strategic Goal III, campus renewal. For example, under the plan, the library will be transitioned into a learning commons. The learning commons will transform the library into a destination for students, faculty, and community members by expanding computer facilities, housing such instructional support resources as tutoring and language laboratories, and housing a professional development center for full-time and adjunct faculty.

Just as the *Facilities Master Plan* supports the goals of the *Strategic Plan*, so, too, do the college's technology resources. For example, the *Classroom Replacement Plan* directs efforts toward the physical and technology resources available in learning spaces and classrooms. It indicates when classroom furniture needs to be replaced. Of course, the provost works closely with the registrar to determine the need for instructional equipment and technology. This is an ongoing process informed by industry standards and best practices. Furthermore, in 2017, the provost appointed an *ad hoc* committee to investigate the status of teacher workstations in classrooms throughout the college. The committee researched the quality and cost of various kinds of workstations and solicited feedback from faculty during academic division meetings to gauge what workstation options the faculty thought most pedagogically sound ([Division Meeting Minutes 2-16-18](#)). The committee's research is being used to support the replacement of classroom equipment.

### Criterion 5

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability.*

#### **Decision-Making Processes and Assignment of Responsibility and Accountability are in Place:**

The college employs clear decision-making processes that are both transparent and well aligned with the college's mission and strategic goals. Decisions regarding planning, resources, and institutional improvement are evidence-based and benefit from constituent input. For example, the budget process provides for input from faculty and staff, and preliminary budget requests are discussed annually during Academic Senate meetings ([Academic Senate meeting Packet May 12 2017](#)). This input is then considered by the provost, the vice president of administration, and members of the President's Council, who set priorities ([BOT Policy 5.5–Budget Process Policy](#)).

The college operates under clear lines of responsibility as outlined in the organizational chart, which delineates the reporting structure at the college ([Organizational Charts](#)). While responsibility and accountability are outlined in the organizational chart and through job descriptions, there is a clear protocol for annual evaluations ([BOT Policy 2.1–Admin Staff \(Unrepresented\)](#)). Evaluations are based on how well the staff member performs the responsibilities defined in the individual's job description. Qualities considered include the individual's effectiveness in performing his or her duties and his or her contribution to the college, specifically to advancing its mission and strategic goals. Additionally, accountability and responsibility are further discussed in Provost's Council meetings, President's Council meetings, and regularly conducted departmental and division meetings.

### Criteria 6, 8, and 9

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes.*

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals.*

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.*

### **The College Engages in Comprehensive Planning for Sustainability:**

To support sustainability, the college also engages in periodic assessment of its facilities. It recently hired an architectural firm to complete an [Assessment of Conditions Report](#). The report addresses a range of issues, including instructional and green space, pedestrian circulation, sustainability, and the environment. Those assessment findings were then used in developing the college's [Facilities Master Plan](#) under the guidance of a steering committee comprised of campus constituents including faculty, staff, and administration. The plan's development drew on constituent input and information about it was shared with the campus community through Academic Senate meetings ([Academic Senate minutes May 12, 2017](#)).

The college also paved the parking lots, added emergency access sidewalks connecting Elston and Stockade Halls, completed refreshing the Elston Hall façade, replaced the Marley Cooling Tower on the roof of Elston Hall, and selected the architects for the learning commons project. The college has also started preliminary engineering work on the Electrical Transformer Relocation Project. These projects were completed through a combination of college funds and support from Schenectady County and New York State.

The college recently began one of the most comprehensive capital facilities improvements in its history. During the 2017–2018 academic year, the college took significant steps to make capital improvements. The Elston Hall Restroom Renovation and Elevator Replacement projects provide examples of these efforts. As part of the projects, ten restrooms were completely gutted and updated and repairs were made to drainage at the top of the Elston building. At present, there are twelve restrooms on the five floors of Elston Hall, including two unisex restrooms. Through another project, Elston Hall's four general use elevators were replaced with new cars and mechanical workings. The updates included replacement of the elevators' motors, which will result in significant energy savings in the coming years.

Just as the college takes steps to ensure sustainability and maintenance of the physical plant, so too does it examine the technology infrastructure supporting the college. Currently network systems at the college operate based on plans outlined in Logical Net's [Best Practices Report \(LogicalNet Report Security and IT Issues\)](#). The IT department is currently undertaking an evaluation of the computing and technology needs of the entire college, including faculty and staff computers, student computer workstations in classrooms, and the entire IT infrastructure. IT requests, or work orders, help direct and prioritize IT efforts to areas with the most

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immediate need and, when doing resource planning, are considered in conjunction with the strategic goals.

The college took steps to help ensure systems and technology infrastructure are sufficiently in place to support sustainability by engaging the services of a consulting company to complete a technology assessment that includes strengths and weaknesses ([RFP 07-2018 IT Consultant Services - Final](#); [SUNY Schenectady CampusWorks FOIL Redacted](#)). To support constituent participation and the use of assessment results, members of the consulting firm gathered data and interviewed members of the college community from all areas of the organization. The firm then used that information in developing the firm's report. As part of the college's professional development programming that takes place prior to the start of each semester, Institute Week, the Chief Information Officer conducted a presentation to members of the campus community in which he outlined the processes that will be used to support institutional responsiveness to IT infrastructure needs.

### **Ensuring the Adequate and Efficient Use of College Resources:**

The budget process supports efforts to ensure the adequate and efficient use of college resources and to ensure that decisions align with the mission and strategic goals ([BOT Policy 5.5–Budget Process](#)). All budget request forms require justification that is tied back to strategic goals and objectives.

The *Strategic Plan* guides and informs the activities of the President's and Provost's Council. The college closely monitors the use of resources, and all budget managers are required to review their budgets through the Banner system. During the winter of 2018, the Finance Office determined that hiring a full-time [Director of Business Operations](#) would further support this effort. The Budget Analyst position will focus on long-term fiduciary planning, aligning resources with campus strategic goals, providing continuous monitoring of revenue and expenditure activities, and the enhancing the college's enterprise financial systems. The Senior Budget Analyst will work with administrators in monitoring capital, operating, and auxiliary budget spending and be responsible for reporting information to members of the President's Council to inform decision-making and contribute to budget analysis for long-term sustainability planning.

In addition to the assessment that takes place throughout the college, the college's [Institutional Effectiveness Report](#) (IER) provides supports periodic assessment. The IER includes data covering ten areas, including graduation and transfer, retention, student performance in developmental and high enrollment courses, Voluntary Framework for Accountability, enrollment, student and employee demographics, technology, institutional financial indicators, and offset revenue. In total, the report is intended to provide a snapshot of institutional health. Throughout its development the report was continuously reviewed to ensure its alignment with the college's Mission and *Strategic Plan*. It is a tool the college uses to continually assess and improve itself. It is crucial to the college's commitment to use assessment results in planning for resources, sustainability, and deferred maintenance.

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Regular assessment of resources also takes place through discussions of the *Strategic Plan*. The president discusses progress on the *Strategic Plan* at regularly scheduled President's Council meetings and focuses on resource allocation, especially during quarterly assessments of unit goals. The president also provides updates on the strategic goals as part of the regular updates he provides to the Board of Trustees ([President's Report January 2018](#); [President's Report February 2018](#)).

### Conclusion

SUNY Schenectady's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges. The college is well-equipped to respond effectively to both its opportunities and challenges.

### Suggestions for Standard VI:

1. The college should support the continued implementation of the ITC committee structure.
2. To continue the IT department's efforts to support transparency, the CIO should continue to make regular presentations to the Academic Senate regarding IT updates and improvements.

### Recommendations for Standard VI:

1. Consistent with the adoption of data reporting tools such as *Argos*, the college should continue to take steps to increase easy access to data supported through faculty and staff training and continuous efforts toward data democratization.
2. In keeping with its current focus on quality control, the college should continue its efforts to update and strengthen IT infrastructure through initiatives such as the Information Technology Council (ITC).
3. The college should take steps to expand alumni engagement and identify new opportunities to increase the connection between the college and its graduates.

### Requirements for Standard VI:

There are no requirements for Standard VI.

### Standard VI Institutional Initiative Alignment:

The following institutional initiatives drive analysis of MSCHE's Standard VI and are themselves aligned with the college's mission and strategic goals:

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- (1) SUNY Schenectady will expand access and increase student success by providing deliberate, diligent start-to-completion resources and guidance for all students; (aligns with Strategic Goal: I.A)
- (2) SUNY Schenectady will ensure a relevant and coherent curriculum; (aligns with Strategic Goal II)
- (4) SUNY Schenectady will enhance its commitment to campus diversity inclusion, and equity; (aligns with Strategic Goals: IV.I & IV.G) and
- (5) SUNY Schenectady will invest in campus renewal, including physical facilities and technological capacities. (aligns with Strategic Goals: III; III.A; III. C)

Planning and resource allocation at SUNY Schenectady are routinely and strictly aligned with the college's mission and strategic goals. The college engages in data-driven decision-making and draws upon input from constituency members as part of the decision-making process. In fulfillment of Institutional Initiative 5, the college also uses data to build its budget, approve spending, determine marketing and recruitment efforts, and determine where to invest funds to improve student success.

SUNY Schenectady's decision to join Achieving the Dream (AtD) was driven by retention and graduation data. The application for SUNY Schenectady's Title III grant included parameters to help improve access to data; both are direct efforts toward the improvement of the key student success indicators of start-to-completion guidance, relevant and cohesive curricula, and equity. These decisions align planning, resources, and structures with the college's mission and strategic goals and better position the college to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

### Sources

[2017–2018 Budget Instructions](#)  
[Academic and Student Affairs 2018 Plan](#)  
[Academic and Student Affairs Plan 2017–2018](#)  
[Academic Program Review Guidelines 2017–2018](#)  
[Academic Senate Agenda May 11, 2018](#)  
[Academic Senate meeting Packet May 12 2017](#)  
[Academic Senate Minutes December 15, 2017](#)  
[Academic Senate minutes May 12, 2017](#)  
[Academic Senate Minutes November 17, 2017](#)  
[Assessment of Conditions Report](#)  
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[Auditors' Report 08-31-2016](#)  
[Board of Trustees Minutes 3-19-18](#)  
[Board of Trustees Minutes 4-16-18](#)  
[Board of Trustees Minutes 5-14-18](#)  
[Board of Trustees Minutes February 22, 2016](#)  
[BOT Policy 1.1–Mission & Vision](#)  
[BOT Policy 1.2–Strategic Goals](#)

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

[\*BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide\*](#)  
[\*BOT Policy 2.1– Admin Staff \(Unrepresented\)\*](#)  
[\*BOT Policy 5.5–Budget Process\*](#)  
[Board of Trustees Retreat Agenda 9-10-15](#)  
[Budget Forms A-R 2018–2019](#)  
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[Organizational Charts](#)  
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[RFP 07-2018 IT Consultant Services - Final](#)  
[SUNY Schenectady County Budget Resolution for 2017–2018](#)  
[SUNY Schenectady-CampusWorks-FOIL redacted](#)  
[School of Music Goals Provost's Council Retreat 2018](#)  
[SIRDLEA Banner report](#)  
[SSI Agenda April 11, 2018](#)  
[\*Strategic Plan 2020\*](#)  
[Student Forum Announcement April 20](#)  
[VFA 2017 SUNY Schenectady-Public Outcomes Report](#)

## Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

*The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.*

### Criterion 1

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students.*

#### **The College has a Clearly Articulated and Transparent Governance Structure:**

SUNY Schenectady is one of thirty community colleges, each a separate legal entity, within the [State University of New York \(SUNY\)](#). SUNY is governed by an eighteen-member Board of Trustees which exercises certain rights of approval with respect to the community colleges within the system. For example, at the conclusion of a successful search process, the SUNY Board of Trustees confirms presidential appointments upon the recommendation of the Chancellor.

New York State education law requires all community colleges within the State University of New York system operate through a local sponsor that provides fiscal support for the college. SUNY Schenectady's local sponsor is Schenectady County ([NY Education Law 6301–6310](#)). Through its role as local sponsor, Schenectady County approves the college's budget, major contracts, and capital projects.

New York State community colleges have three funding sources: state, county (local sponsor), and student tuition and fees, each of which is to provide one-third of the operating costs. Per [education law](#), and as adopted in Board of Trustees policy, each funding source is responsible for proving one-third of the college's operating costs ([NYCRR Part 604, Section 604.1\(b\)](#)) as included in [BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws](#)). While SUNY Schenectady's sponsoring county plays a large role in the college's governance, in spite of a 2% increase in funding included in the 2018-2019 budget, Schenectady County provided only 7.6% of the operating budget, positioning the college with significant dependence on student tuition to fund the budget ([SUNY Schenectady County Budget Resolution for 2017–2018](#)). In total, almost half of the college's operating budget, 47%, is dependent on student tuition and fees.

SUNY Schenectady has a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure. Section 1.4 of [BOT Policy 1.4–College Governance/Shared Governance Policy](#) articulates the roles, responsibilities, and statements of accountability of the Board of Trustees. This, and all policies, are accessible by all employees through the college's network "shares drive." It is also posted

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on the college's website under the "About Us" page, where all policies are indexed. This policy identifies the Board of Trustees (BOT) as the governing body of the college and describes how the BOT is to participate in the governance process. The policy also recognizes and outlines the role that faculty, students, and administrators play in the governance process. Policies effecting students move through the President's Council, divisions, Student Government Association, Academic Senate, and then to the Board of Trustees.

**Board of Trustees.** The Board of Trustees derives its authority from [Title VII, Article 126 of New York State law](#). The SUNY Schenectady Board of Trustees consists of ten members, four of whom are appointed by the Governor and five of whom are appointed by the Schenectady County Legislature. The tenth member is a student trustee elected by the student body. The nine appointed members serve terms of seven years, with some members being reappointed to additional seven-year terms by either the Governor or the County Legislature.

The Board is structured with a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and the remaining trustees. The chair presides at all meetings, appoints membership of all standing, special, and *ad hoc* committees, designates committee chairs, and serves as an ex-officio member of all standing committees. The last revision of the Board of Trustees Bylaws took place in 2016 ([BOT Minutes January 25, 2016](#)). The calendar of Board meetings, upcoming agendas, and meeting minutes are publicly available through the college's website and a record of historical minutes are available to all college employees through the college's network "shares drive". Board meetings, except executive sessions, are open to the public.

**Administration.** The college's organizational and reporting structure is documented in its [organizational charts](#), which are available to all college employees through the college's network "shares drive". The charts clearly outline the reporting lines of all administration, staff, and faculty. All positions listed in the charts have comprehensive job descriptions that include job duties and requirements. Organization charts are reviewed annually, updated as needed, and presented to the Board of Trustees at its September meeting ([BOT Minutes Sept. 18, 2017](#)).

Administrative staff consists of members of the full-time administration who, together with the president implement college policy and manage personnel. The president conducts weekly and biweekly one-on-one meetings with each member of the administrative staff, known collectively as the President's Council, to prioritize directives and to receive vital operating information. This team consists of the vice president of academic and student affairs/provost, vice president of administration, vice president of workforce development and community education, chief of staff, chief information officer, executive director of development, and the executive director of SUNY college and career counseling center, each of whom reports directly to the president. Additionally, the president conducts monthly meetings with the President's Council as a whole to assess progress in meeting strategic goals of the college, to share and exchange important information, to ensure continuity in operations, and to facilitate strategic short- and long-term planning. This information is then reported out, as related to specific areas of responsibility, to administrators managing departments and academic divisions, who are then responsible for disseminating the information.

**Academic Senate.** The Academic Senate consists of all “SCCC full-time professional employees who, by nature of their position, maintain a direct and significant connection to the academic programs and to student engagement in credit-bearing coursework” ([Academic Senate Bylaws, Section 2.0](#)).

The Academic Senate Bylaws delineate the roles, responsibilities and statements of accountability for members of the Senate ([Academic Senate Bylaws 2018–2019](#)), which is a self-governing, recommending body of the whole. The Senate is a deliberative and advisory body that makes recommendations to the academic administration on matters pertaining to instruction and learning, as well as on those aspects of student life that relate to the educational process.

Senate meetings are the forums where faculty and professional staff present their views and debate academic issues. Members are able to contribute without prejudice in all open proceedings and deliberations. Senate members are expected to stay informed and regularly attend all Senate meetings. As delineated in the [Academic Senate Bylaws](#), absences at Academic Senate meetings are allowed for business, professional, or personal obligations. Policies regarding committee memberships and responsibilities are also stated in the Bylaws. Additionally, the [Agreement between the County of Schenectady, the Schenectady County Community College and the Union of Faculty and Professionals](#) outlines faculty responsibilities and obligations pertaining to Academic Senate participation.

**Student Government Association.** The Student Government Association (SGA) is the recommending body for students and provides a vehicle by which students can engage with faculty, staff, and administration to advance the college’s goals and objectives. As noted in the SGA Constitution, the body’s purpose is “to represent the interests, further the social and personal growth, and promote the general welfare of the members of the student body” ([SGA Constitution, Article II](#)). The president of the SGA forwards the body's recommendation to the vice president for academic and students affairs/provost), who then presents them to the president.

Membership in the SGA is open to all part- and full-time students and all members may participate in SGA meetings and vote in the elections of senators and executive officers ([SGA Constitution, Article III](#)). A representative from the student body also serves on the SUNY Schenectady Board of Trustees as a seated member with full voting privileges.

### **Criterion 2(a, b, c, g, and h)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities: a legally constituted governing body that serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution; has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities; ensures that*

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*neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution; is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance; establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest;*

### **The College's Legally Constituted Board of Trustees Serves the Public Interest:**

The college is governed by the Board of Trustees, a legally constituted governing body the Board operates under the auspices of [New York State law](#) and its ten members are appointed by the governor, county legislature, and the student member is elected by the student body.

### **Mission, Goals, Fiduciary Responsibilities, and Ultimate Accountability:**

Under the authority of New York State law, the Board of Trustees (BOT), the governing body, is responsible and accountable for policy, academic quality and planning, and for the ethical discharge of its fiduciary responsibility to ensure the fiscal well-being of the college. The Board holds final decision-making authority, delegating to the president the authority to carry out college operations under BOT policies ([NYS Ed Law Section 6306, subdivision 2–8a](#); [BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws, Appendix I](#)).

Consistent with the three primary fiduciary duties outlined by the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities, BOT policies are in place to ensure that board members carry out their work for the college with care, loyalty, and obedience ([Statement Fiduciary Duties, 2015](#)). Board members dispense their duties based upon what they believe to be the best interest of the college in mind, ensuring the avoidance of any conflict of interest including that which is outlined in Board policy ([BOT Policy 2.21–Code of Ethics](#)). Per the policy, Board members may not take any action or exercise influence that would result in financial or material benefit for a person or organization with which he or she is affiliated ([BOT Policy 2.21–Code of Ethics, Section 4](#)). Additionally, pursuant to the Bylaws, the board members are required to comply with all applicable state and local laws related to conflicts of interest ([BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws, Article III](#)).

To facilitate board members' understanding of their role and the requirements associated with it, newly appointed Trustees take part in a New Trustee Orientation with the Board Chair, Chief of Staff, and the college president ([BOT Procedures Orientation packet materials](#)). The Board has also engaged the services of the NYCCT and SUNY System Associate Legal Counsel to facilitate a portion of the Board's annual retreat ([Board of Trustees Retreat](#); [Board of Trustees Retreat Sept. 5, 2014](#); [BOT Retreat Meeting Notes Sept. 5, 2014](#)).

The college operates under a clearly articulated and well publicized mission and set of strategic goals, adopted by the Board in February 2016 ([BOT Policy 1.1–Mission & Vision](#); [BOT Policy 1.2–Policy Strategic Goals](#)). All college policies are drafted with the mission and goals of the college

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as the guiding force, as outlined in the policies related specifically to Board operation. In particular, the college's *Policy and Procedure Guide* indicates that all policies are to support the college mission and goals ([BOT Policy 1.3–Policy Development](#)). The *Guide* also includes a requirement that all policies be reviewed at least every five years.

The college's budget policy clearly indicates that the budget must align with the strategic goals of the college, that it must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees, and benefit from the input of faculty and staff ([BOT Policy 5.5–Budget Process Policy](#)). Likewise, additional financial policies work to assure the fiscal well-being of the college. For example, the *Purchasing Policy* sets thresholds for spending limits and guidelines for competitively purchased goods and services ([BOT Policy 5.4–Purchasing](#)).

With the final approval authority for academic programs, the Board is responsible for quality academic programs and planning. The shared governance process plays a critical role in academic planning and quality, with curriculum moving through academic divisions, the curriculum committee, and Academic Senate prior to being moved to the BOT for review and approval ([BOT Policy 1.4–College Governance/Shared Governance](#); [Academic Senate Bylaws 2018–2019](#)).

### **Daily Operation of the Institution:**

Members of the Board of Trustees do not interfere with the daily operations of the college. As outlined in New York State Education Law, the BOT focuses on establishing policies governing the college and delegates responsibility for daily operations, administration, and policy execution to the president and professional administrators working at the college ([Appendix II](#) of the Board of Trustees Bylaws; [BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws, Article II](#)). Board members are kept abreast of college operations through monthly meetings and frequent contact and meetings between BOT members and the president, particularly the Board Chair.

### **Criterion 2(d)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities a legally constituted governing body that oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management.*

### **The Board Oversees College Operations at the Policy Level:**

Pursuant to New York State Education Law and SUNY Community College Regulations, the BOT develops and periodically evaluates policies, approves academic curricula, confers degrees upon the recommendation of the faculty and the president, and approves the college's operating budget. The BOT plays an active role in the development and approval of policies related to personnel, academic, and finance. As part of standard procedure, the BOT is briefed on financial, personnel, and academic matters and BOT approval is required for payment of

warrants, personnel decisions, the proposal or changes to academic programs, and the conferral of degrees and certificates to graduates ([BOT Minutes Dec. 18, 2017](#); [BOT Minutes January 22, 2018](#); [BOT Minutes April 16 2018](#)).

**Criterion 2(e)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities a legally constituted governing body that plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution.*

**The Board of Trustees Oversees College Operations at the Policy Level in Financial Affairs:**

The Board of Trustees takes steps to ensure that the process used to develop the college budget, as well as resources allocation, are aligned with the mission and *Strategic Plan*. It further, sets such policies as those governing travel, purchasing, and cash handling to support strong fiscal management ([BOT Policy 5.1–Travel Policy](#); [BOT Policy 5.3–Cash Handling Policy](#); [BOT Policy 5.4–Purchasing](#)). For example, the college recently secured the services of an IT consultant through a competitive bid process. In accordance with the board policy governing purchases, the college drafts bid specifications that “foster competitive solicitation, resulting in the lowest price and best quality for the College” ([BOT Policy 5.4–Purchasing \(Bid Specifications\)](#)). At the conclusion of the bid process, the college examined multiple proposals and subsequently selected a vendor. The vendor selected provided a contract clearly outlining all expectations for the scope, outcomes, deliverables, cost and payment schedule ([SUNY Schenectady CampusWorks FOIL redacted](#)).

As part of each BOT meeting, the treasurer is required to provide a report and the BOT reviews all college warrants for approval ([BOT Minutes June 18, 2018](#)). To examine financial practices and internal controls in place at the college, SUNY Schenectady secures the services of a Certified Public Accounting (CPA) firm to conduct an audit each year ([Auditors' Report 2017](#)). Upon completion of the audit, accountants from the CPA firm present audit results and any findings during a Board of Trustees Meeting ([BOT Minutes, March 19 2018](#)). In response to the audit, in the event that there is a finding, the college completes a management response and takes steps to respond to any recommendation or finding ([Management Response to Finding 2016-001](#)). The management response is sent to the auditors and submitted to the National Clearinghouse as part of the college’s annual submission. Further, any findings from a previous year’s audit are addressed in the following year’s audit to ensure it has been addressed and there is no further finding in that area.

**Criterion 2(f and i)**

*An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities a legally constituted governing body that appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer; supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution;*

**Criterion 3(a, b, and c)**

*A Chief Executive Officer who is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body; has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization; [and] has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission.*

**The President is Board Appointed and Receives Regular Evaluations:**

Under the authority of New York State law and the State University of New York regulations the SUNY Schenectady Board of Trustees (BOT), conducts presidential searches. At the conclusion of a successful search process, the college's Board of Trustees approves its selection and, upon confirmation by the SUNY Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the Chancellor, a president is hired. The college's Board of Trustees delegates the authority to carry out college operations under BOT policies to the president ([NYS Ed Law Section 6306, subdivision 2-8a](#)).

At the conclusion of a nation-wide search beginning in September 2013, a search committee composed of faculty, staff, students, a SUNY Liaison, and community members, recommended Dr. Steady Moono as college president. He was subsequently appointed by the college's Board, recommended by the SUNY Chancellor, and approved by the State University of New York Board of Trustees in May 2015 ([Moono, Steady CV](#)).

The college president, as the chief executive officer reports directly to the chairperson of the college's Board of Trustees. The president derives his authority from the Board of Trustees and is responsible for college operations and policy implementation ([NYS Law Section 604.2](#)). The president holds approval on items such as hiring and resource allocation and directs the college's efforts to achieve its Strategic Goals. Pursuant to college policy, the BOT is responsible for conducting an annual evaluation of the president's performance using an agreed upon set of goals established by the BOT and the president ([BOT Policy 1.7–Presidential Evaluation](#)).

The process begins with the president presenting his proposed goals to the chair of the Board of Trustees. Once the goals are accepted they form the basis for the evaluation which includes a multi-part questionnaire completed by BOT members. The president's self-evaluation, and a Board narrative assessing the president's strengths and opportunities for improvement form the basis for the annual evaluation ([Presidential Evaluation Form Guidelines](#); [Presidential Evaluation Policy](#); [Presidential Evaluation Form](#)).

**Criterion 3(d)**

*A Chief Executive Office who has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness.*

**A Team of Qualified Administrators is in Place to Support the President:**

The president is supported by a team of qualified administrators that is sufficient in size to efficiently and effectively operate the institution. At the most senior level of the institution, the president benefits from the support of a President's Council comprised of leaders with administrative responsibility extending to all areas of the institution. The Council's executive team is the group of administrators most directly responsible for supporting policy implementation and daily management of the college. That team, led by the vice president of academic and student affairs/provost, who is the most senior administrator and acts in the president's stead when he is not available, is comprised of the president's chief of staff, vice president of workforce development and community education, executive director of development, the executive director of SUNY College and Career Counseling Center, and the vice president of administration. Members of the President's Council are responsible for developing goals aligned with the college's mission and *Strategic Plan* and for providing the president with quarterly reports on the status of each one ([Division Goals 2017–2018 Foundation](#)). The president follows up by reviewing all reports and covering his assessment of each units' progress as part of a regularly scheduled President's Council ([PC Retreat Agenda July 30, 2018](#)). The information contained in the reports is driven down through each area within the scope of Council members' responsibility. These efforts and the regular communication and planning, which the president leads, support his efforts to ensure efficient and effective college operations.

**Criterion 4(a, b, c, d and f)**

*An administration possessing or demonstrating an organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships; appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities; members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles; skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties; systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations.*

**The College has a Defined Organizational Structure Overseen by Qualified Administrators:**

The college operates through an organizational structure that clearly details administrators' operational areas of responsibility and faculty and staff reporting relationships ([Organizational Charts](#)). Members of the President's Council report directly to the president and provide leadership in areas across the organization to assist the president in fulfilling his responsibilities. The president is also supported through the work of administrators with varying responsibilities across the institution. In each case, like faculty and staff, administrators work in accord with the duties outlined in a job description, are in possession of the requisite experience and qualifications for holding such positions, and are evaluated on an annual basis to assess their performance in supporting the effective and efficient operations of the college ([vice president-academic provost 3-21-17 Position Description](#); [assistant vice president of academic affairs](#); [assistant vice president of student affairs](#); [assistant vice president of administration 2016–17](#);

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[dean School of Music](#)). For example, under the direction of the provost, members of the Provost's Council are responsible for all areas of the college's academic and student affairs operations. The group is made up of the assistant vice president for academic affairs, assistant dean for academic affairs, assistant vice president of student affairs, division deans, registrar, and the director of library services. Each member of the group holds a minimum of a master's degree, with five members holding a doctorate, and in total the group has in excess of 200 years of experience in higher education.

### **Systematic Procedures for Evaluation:**

College administrators are evaluated annually by appropriate supervisors. Administrators are provided annual contracts for their first five years and are reappointed following their annual evaluations, at which time the supervisor recommends to the president either to reappoint or to end their contract. After five years, administrators are eligible for a two-year appointment; however, annual evaluations are still required. Their evaluations are prepared with a summary of the progress they make on annual goals ([Administration & Human Resources 2017–18 Goals 4th Quarter Reporting](#); [WFD & CE Goals & Outcomes 2017–2018](#)). Administrators are also evaluated on the accomplishment of their strategically aligned goals. These annual goals serve as the basis for improvement within the division and as a basis for budget requests. For example, the provost's annual goals have resulted in budget requests and approvals for new classroom furniture, funding for FYS instructors, and, most recently, funding for equipment for a new gaming program.

All administrators are provided with the requisite tools to complete their job responsibilities, including access to technology such as the Banner enterprise systems and Interview Exchange.

### **Criterion 4(e)**

*An administration possessing or demonstrating regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives.*

### **College Administrators are Actively Engaged in Advancing the Institution's Goals:**

Administrators are engaged in collaborative efforts with faculty and students throughout the academic year, whether that be in discussions of academic programs or interactions with members of the Student Government Association. In particular, administrators and faculty benefit from the work completed during Academic Senate meetings during which there is an open forum and mechanisms in place for executive leadership to report out to the college community. Additionally, members of the Academic Senate Executive Committee meet with administrators to discuss matters related to the goals and objectives of the institution. Those meetings provide a bridge for communication between faculty and administrative leadership.

Institute Week, the college's professional development week that occurs before the start of each semester, also provides an opportunity for faculty and administrators to engage in work to advance the college's goals. As part of Institute Week, each academic division conducts a

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retreat, providing an extended period of time for faculty to work with the administrators responsible for leading each division. Once the semester has begun, the president regularly holds "Coffee and Conversations," gatherings to which the entire campus community is invited. The gatherings are informal discussions that focus on strategic goals and include administrators, faculty, and staff. Furthermore, SUNY Schenectady has an established institutional framework for students to regularly engage with faculty and administration in advancing the college's goals and objectives. Opportunities for student participation in shared governance are documented in the Student Government Association (SGA) [Constitution](#) as well as in the [Academic Senate Bylaws](#). A representative from the student body also serves as a voting member of the Board of Trustees. The Academic Senate Bylaws require student representation on most standing committees, and administrators and students have served together on such *ad hoc* committees as the Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee, *Facilities Master Plan* Steering Committee, and Campus Safety Council.

### Criterion 5

*Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.*

#### **Assessment of Governance, Leadership, and Administration:**

In addition to the regular process of evaluation and assessment for the president and administration documented above, pursuant to college policy the Board of Trustees engages in periodic assessment. Beginning in Fall 2018, the BOT will use an agreed upon self-evaluation form, which is completed and submitted to its Chairperson. After review of the results, the Chair may make recommendations for professional development or procedural improvements ([BOT Policy 1.6–Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation](#)).

In accord with its Bylaws, the Academic Senate completed a review of its bylaws in Spring 2018 and per protocol those recommendations were approved through the Academic Senate. The Student Government Association reviews its Constitution on a tri-annual basis and any amendments or changes must be approved by the group ([SGA Ratified Constitution 2017](#)).

The college's [BOT Policy 1.4–College Governance/Shared Governance](#), approved in 2017, recognizes the four constituencies, students, faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees, within the governance structure and recognizes the importance of shared governance for institutional effectiveness. Pursuant to BOT policy, all Board of Trustee policies are reviewed at least every five years ([BOT Policy 1.3.1–Policies & Procedures Guide](#)).

Shared governance was indirectly assessed in 2011 when the Academic Senate Chair administered a survey to the Academic Senate to assess the status of shared governance on campus. These results were reported on the floor of the Senate. As a result of this shared governance survey, Academic Senate Bylaws were revised for the first time, and Executive Committee membership was precisely defined and assigned specific duties. The charge of the Executive Committee was revised, "to provide a forum to coordinate and strengthen

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communication between members of the Academic Senate and the president.” It also established a regular meeting schedule ([Academic Senate Bylaws 2018–2019](#)).

### **Conclusion**

SUNY Schenectady meets the criteria set forth in Standard VII. Its governance structure is clearly delineated and each unit reviews and updates its procedures and bylaws periodically; furthermore, the college is governed and administered in ways that allow it to realize its mission and strategic goals and to best serve its constituents.

### **Suggestions for VII:**

In a spirit of collegial cooperation and as part of a system of continuous self-improvement, SUNY Schenectady should periodically survey members of all governance bodies in order to assess the status of, and climate for, shared governance on campus.

### **Recommendations for Standard VII:**

There are no recommendations for Standard VII.

### **Requirements for Standard VII:**

There are no requirements for Standard VII.

### **Standard VII Institutional Initiative Alignment:**

There are three institutional initiatives relevant to Standard VII:

- (1) SUNY Schenectady will ensure a relevant and coherent curriculum; (aligns with Strategic Goal: II)
- (2) SUNY Schenectady will enhance its commitment to campus diversity inclusion, and equity; (aligns with Strategic Goals: IV.I and IV.G) and
- (3) SUNY Schenectady will invest in campus renewal, including physical facilities and technological capacities. (aligns with Strategic Goals: III; III.A; III. C)

The educational purpose of the college is realized through its governance and administration. The college's educational platform; its dedication to enhance diversity, inclusion, and equity; and its investment in campus renewal demonstrate its commitment to fulfilling its mission and strategic goals.

Academic quality and integrity are ensured through the shared governance process. Faculty at the division level exercise their professional expertise in creating and approving curriculum; the Curriculum Committee then further reviews course, certificate, and program proposals for relevance and coherence; next faculty from other divisions and relevant college staff review

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curriculum in advance of discussion on the floor of the Academic Senate; ultimately the Board of Trustees vets, approves, and adopts curricula.

The college's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity can be seen in several college policies, and it is administratively encouraged and supported. In response to a clear need for documented policies and procedures to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion within the college's administration and governance bodies, the college, under the aegis of its Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), who is responsible for helping to develop and implement the college's policies of diversity, equity, and inclusion, is in the process of drafting a document that defines these terms for different constituencies on campus. The CDO also guides the college in its adherence to [SUNY's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy](#), which requires campus commitment to diversity and inclusion; the development of a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan; and an administrative, faculty and staff recruitment and retention strategy. The CDO also works with key leaders on campus to develop and implement an assessment process.

The president develops and implements the college's *Strategic Plan* and directs the development of other institutional plans, including the *Facilities Master Plan*, *Academic Plan*, and *Enrollment Management Plan*, the implementation of which demonstrate the administration's continued commitment to campus renewal.

### Sources

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[BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws](#)

[BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws \(Appendix I\)](#)

[BOT Policy 1.5–Board of Trustee Bylaws \(Appendix II\)](#)

[BOT Policy 1.6–Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation](#)

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[BOT Policy 1.7–Presidential Evaluation](#)  
[BOT Policy 2.21–Code of Ethics \(Revised March 2018\)](#)  
[BOT Policy 5.1–Travel Policy](#)  
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## Conclusion

SUNY Schenectady's Self-Study process has been a rewarding experience. The Self-Study was undertaken with the goal of self-improvement and with the full knowledge that the process afforded the college an opportunity to examine college operations within the context of the mission, *Strategic Plan*, and the *Middle States Standards*. By focusing on strategic initiatives, which were guided by the college's *Strategic Plan*, SUNY Schenectady was able to identify some of the college's strengths, as well as some opportunities for improvement. In addition, the Steering Committee was deeply committed to a focus on diversity, as can be seen through the college's responses to nearly all of the *Standards*. The college has acted on this commitment by hiring a Chief Diversity Officer, by now actively searching for her replacement, by joining the equity-minded Achieving the Dream organization, and by conducting college-wide professional development initiatives that focus on an equity agenda.

While it is impressive to see an explanation of all the programming and services the college has in place to support its rigorous academic programs and student success, it is especially gratifying to reflect on the growth the institution has experienced since the last Self-Study. Indeed, the college's faculty, staff, and administrators have successfully collaborated to accomplish a great deal in the last ten years, and did so while navigating major leadership changes. After the last Self-Study, the long-term president retired, followed by a period of an interim president, a new president for four years, an interim for eighteen months, and finally the current president who is in his fourth year.

Under the direction of this president, major efforts have been directed toward student access and success. The college became a member of Achieving the Dream, was awarded a Title III grant, expanded its innovative and relevant curriculum, engaged in campus renewal, enhanced partnerships in the community, and has now embarked on a capital campaign. The college continues to strengthen student support efforts and further develop data-driven decision making to facilitate student success and degree and certificate completion.

Enrollment will continue to be a challenge in an environment that foresees declining high school graduates for the next ten years; however, SUNY Schenectady is prepared to be more deliberate in recruiting and in retaining students.

The college has demonstrated through the Self-Study process and analysis that we meet the criteria set forth in the *Middle States Standards and Requirements of Affiliation*. Furthermore, the college is committed to act on the suggestions and recommendations mentioned in the report and to continuing the discussions that arose during the Middle States Self-Study process. It will use this Self-Study document as a springboard for the new strategic plan and mission review scheduled to begin this spring.