

## The Commencement Issue

### The Ceremony will take place...

On Thursday, May 23, at 2 p.m. at Proctors, in downtown Schenectady. Approximately 535 students will earn degrees and certificates. Following the Ceremony there will be a reception held on campus in the Lally Mohawk and Van Curler Rooms.

### The Keynote Address will be delivered by...

Dion Flynn, SUNY Schenectady alumnus, veteran, and comedian.

Dion is best known as Barack Obama on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. His solo show and upcoming book are titled *The Only Brown Kid In The Trailer Park*. He is a guest star on TruTV's *Jon Glaser Loves Gear* and a series regular on the college loan debt repayment game show *Paid Off*.



Dion holds an A.S. in Performing Arts: Drama from SUNY Schenectady, a B.A. in Theatre from the University at Albany, and an M.F.A. in Acting from The Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

### Graduates should...

Pick up their cap, gown, announcements, and invitations in the College Store before Friday, May 17.

Attend rehearsal on Tuesday, May 21, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Proctors. Your name card will be issued.

Arrive at 1 p.m. at Proctors on the day of Commencement (Thursday, May 23) and line up outside of the back entrance (the entrance closest to the parking garage).

### The Student Speaker is...

Valerie Lenigk, President of the Student Government Association, who will earn dual degrees in Mathematics and Science and Science.

After SUNY Schenectady, she plans to further her studies by pursuing a bachelor's degree in engineering. Valerie was a recipient this year of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence.

See story below.



## Students earn SUNY Chancellor's Awards for Excellence

Two SUNY Schenectady students were recently chosen as recipients of the prestigious SUNY Chancellor's Awards for Student Excellence.



A homeschooled student prior to attending SUNY Schenectady, **Valerie Lenigk** was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, has been named to the President's list, and main-

tains a GPA of 3.86. She was Secretary of the Student Government Association (SGA) and now serves as its President. She was also Chair of the SGA Sustainability Committee. *She is pictured with Dr. Steady Moono, College President, and Dr. Kristina M. Johnson, SUNY Chancellor.*

In addition to all she does on campus, Valerie serves as a junior docent mentor and volunteer at the Albany Pine Bush Nature Preserve. She also has been a member of the 2nd Albany Regiment Unit and Schuyler's Company. She will graduate with degrees in Mathematics and Science and Science. Valerie plans to

further her studies by pursuing a bachelor's degree in engineering.

**Chandra Williams** had already earned her Master of Public Administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany, and B.A. in Political Science from the University at Albany. She decided to attend SUNY Schenectady and change gears to enter the STEM field. Chandra was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, named to the President's and Dean's Lists, and maintained a GPA of 3.87.



While in the Biology II course, Chandra's original research helped her team earn first place which led to her selection as the College's representative at SURC (SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference). She has tutored her classmates and is a volunteer for the American Red Cross, the Pawsome Pups Preserve Dog Rescue, and HeartsHerd Animal Sanctuary. She earned her A.S. in Science from SUNY Schenectady in December 2018 and transferred to RPI where she is pursuing her B.S. degree in Biology.

Inside: Meet members of the Class of 2019!

## College welcomes new staff

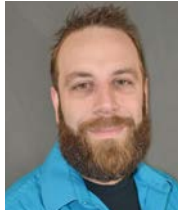
Theresa Hobbs, Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator

Previously, Theresa was New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. Chief Compliance Officer and Assistant Secretary of the Institute, Manager of Board Relations, and Law Clerk to the General Counsel at RPI. She holds a J.D. and M.B.A. from Western New England University, and a B.S. in Political Science and A.S. in Legal Studies, both from SUNY Empire State College.



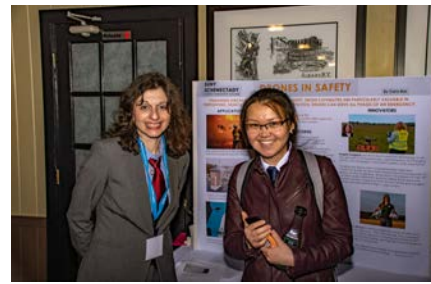
Matthew Mrozinski, Senior Clerk, Accounts Payable

Previously, Matthew was a supervisor with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. He holds an A.S. in Business Administration and an A.A. in Liberal Arts, both from SUNY Schenectady.



Laura Sprague, Director of Admissions

Previously, Laura served as the Associate Director of Admissions at Albany Law School and the Pharmacy and Graduate Admissions Coordinator at Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. She holds a master's degree in Higher Education Leadership and Administration from The College of Saint Rose and a bachelor's degree in Communication and Rhetoric from the University at Albany.



Computer Science majors Cara Bas and Aselle Ismailova at the New York Celebration of Women In Computing conference.

## Students present on drones, computer guided life support

Cara Bas and Aselle Ismailova, Computer Science majors, recently delivered presentations during the New York Celebration of Women In Computing conference in Lake George. Don Riggs, Associate Professor in the Division of Business and Law, facilitated their participation in the conference and also attended. Cara presented on drones used in safety capacities and Aselle presented on Computer Guided Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS).

## Faculty, staff development

Tracy A. Salvage, Part-time Librarian, has had two peer-reviewed articles published in *ccAdvisor*, an ALA-Choice publication, analyzing library database functionality, user experience, and applications for college students. In addition, she served as a peer-reviewer for *Resources for College Libraries (RCL)*. She wrote on how best to improve Human Services collections for undergraduate libraries. Tracy also attended *Learning with Innovative Technologies*, SUNY Empire State College's annual conference.



Renderings of the new \$9.4 million Learning Commons by ENVISION Architects DPC

## Library will be transformed into New Learning Commons

The \$9.4 million Learning Commons renovation project will completely rebuild the library.

It will include:

- Labs for math, writing and accounting
- Tutoring Center
- Café
- Quiet study rooms
- Group study spaces
- Reading area and library stacks
- A new Center for Excellence in Teaching



### Sharing a love for aviation

This summer Devin Lamm expects things to come full circle. He already earned his private pilot license in February 2018 and his instrument rating in July 2018. This summer, he plans to earn his flight instructor rating and start as an instructor for Richmor Aviation, the same place where his aviation career took flight.

“I hope to give the students the support they need,” Devin explained. “They need mental support with you being there in the aircraft and critiquing them fairly, and the number one thing is to teach students how to be safe while sharing your love for flying with them.”

Devin will share his love of flight with other new pilots. It’s a passion that he has had since he was a young boy and his mother would take him to Albany International Airport. “I would watch the planes and say that I wanted to be flying one of them some day,” Devin explained.

So, after graduating from Guilderland High School in 2017, Devin joined the other aspiring pilots in the College’s Aviation Science degree program. He had never piloted a plane before and has had the support of his family every step of the way. “They’re very proud of me for pursuing my dreams and achieving this goal,” he said.

Devin is now working on his commercial pilot license, flying the more than 200 hours required, which is another step in his goal of obtaining his airline transport pilot license. He also plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree. He is also gearing up, along with the other members of the College’s Flight Team, for the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) National SAFECON Flight Competition in Janesville, Wisc., next week.

He recently reflected on the best piece of advice he received during his hours of studying aviation and flying. His flight instructor, Mike Bush, told him, “Don’t give up because it will get tough and it may feel like the weather is keeping you down. But keep pulling through and keep going with it. It’s the best feeling when you accomplish your goal.”



### Building a new business

Business mentors told Danielle Seburn and the other aspiring entrepreneurs in the Capital Region Chamber Boot Camp, “These will be some of the hardest months of your lives.”

During the 12-week Boot Camp, which students take through the College’s Business Plan Development course, Danielle developed a detailed business plan for the salon she plans to one day open in the Capital Region. She received valuable insight from those at the Chamber, as well as business owners who critiqued her business plan and worked with her on market analysis, a management plan, and mission statement. “It was intense with the hours that we all had to put into the Boot Camp and the deadlines, but it was all worth it,” she said.

The Boot Camp and her classes at the College helped her realize that her goal of opening a five-chair hair salon with independent contractors, most likely in Schenectady, is something she will be able to afford down the line. “I need to give myself a starting date with time to build up clientele, but this helped me discover that I really can afford it.”

A licensed cosmetologist, Danielle will complete the College’s Entrepreneurship certificate program this month. She credits Professor Matt Farron, who teaches business and management classes within the program, with supporting her vision of one day owning a business.

“Mr. Farron told me that this can happen for me and it *will* happen for me. He has given me a lot of confidence and is a wonderful professor,” she shared.

Danielle’s father has helped her with her business plan, as has her father’s boss who owns his own business. Her other family members have plans for the business as well. “My mother and my grandmother want to work at the salon too.”



## Joining a new operatic generation

Bobby Frazier always figured that teaching was his calling.

“It came naturally to me when I was younger because I taught myself guitar and then taught younger kids,” he explained. “I thought teaching was what I wanted to. I didn’t think I could be a solo performer.” But then an ordinary trip to the mall last year made him rethink his plan.

“On a TV was a playback of the opera *Samson and Delilah*, and I thought it was pretty cool.” It made an impression on him and now the Performing Arts: Music major with the powerful bass baritone voice is among a group of young musicians who are honing their craft as opera singers.

“Opera is truly an awesome realm to go into,” Bobby said. “The opera world is craving people of my generation, people who have a passion for opera, to be the next generation in the opera world.”

In February, he impressed a panel of faculty at SUNY Purchase College, performing works by Verdi and Brahms. He recently found out that he was accepted into Purchase’s award-winning Voice and Opera Studies program, a rigorous bachelor’s degree program.

Before he heads downstate for the highly selective music program, Bobby will continue to perform with Vintage Harmonics, a quartet of students from the School of Music who sing classic barbershop and jazz.

This summer also brings a reunion performance in July in Freedom Park in Scotia for Out of Time, the popular barbershop quartet comprised of Bobby and School of Music alumni Burke Herrick, Christian Gomez, and Devin Canavally, who Bobby refers to as his “brothers.” They were winners of the 2018 VSA International Young Soloists Competition and performed on the Kennedy Center Millennium stage in Washington D.C., last May.

It was during that time that Bobby became more serious about “learning the science behind vocal techniques.” He continues to increase his repertoire. His favorites? “In terms of operas, *Rigoletto*, but my biggest inspirations have been Luciano Pavarotti, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and Bryn Terfel.”



## Setting an academic example

Veronica Cochrane sums up her style this way: “If I start something, I need to finish it.”

So she’s back at SUNY Schenectady finishing what she started in 2012 and graduating this month with her degree in Paralegal.

In between, she earned two other degrees, an associate’s degree in Business Administration from SUNY Schenectady in 2014 and a bachelor’s degree in Business and Technology Management from SUNY Delhi in 2016. She did this all while working and raising a family with her husband Sean, a 2015 graduate of the College who is now working on his Ph.D. in Social Work at the University at Albany.

In fact, you could say that the Cochranes are truly a “SUNY Schenectady family.” Daughter Kyra graduated last May with her degree in Liberal Arts and is currently pursuing her bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from SUNY Delhi on campus. Son Keegan is in his first year studying Business Administration. And both daughter Delana, a Schenectady High School sophomore in the Smart Scholars program, and son Dominique have taken classes at the College.

Though their paths don’t cross on campus since Veronica takes evening classes and Keegan and Kyra are here during the day, Veronica said it’s still an interesting coincidence that they’re all college students. “I never thought I would be going to college at the same time as my kids,” she said. “I’m proud that I’ve had a positive influence on them. They look at me and know that anything can still be accomplished.”

She has also stressed the importance of studying something that interests you. “I did an internship during the summer with a local attorney and had to do a lot of legal research. I could put in hours reading about cases.”

An Army veteran, Veronica works in the New York State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance and finds that her Paralegal courses have translated to the work she does in the office. “I have a much better understanding of forms that come across my desk and their purpose now,” she explained. “We work with Freedom of Information Law requests and I’m able to format them before they go to the legal department.”



## Creating works of art

This fall during a service learning project in her Interpersonal and Group Dynamics class, leading activities with girls ages 10 to 13 to help empower them, Sonya Sousa came to a powerful realization herself. “I felt that there was nothing more that I wanted to do other than help people,” she explained. “That was a big thing for me.”

It was serendipitous when around the same time Sonya, an artist, went to a networking event on campus and learned about Capital Region Expressive Arts, Transformation, and Empowerment - C.R.E.A.T.E. Studios, “for participants to learn how to use art as an expressive medium to increase their general well-being.”

The next week, Sonya, a Liberal Arts major with a concentration in Psychology, began volunteering at the studio located a couple of blocks from campus on State Street. Recently, she led a group through marble painting. “You drop a marble into a container of paint, use your finger to pick it up, and then drop it into a cardboard box with paper in it,” Sonya explained. “It’s a really fun, little abstract project.”

She often works with groups of older adults who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and noted that the benefits of art therapy are profound. “When someone is holding markers or a paint brush and creating something, it really builds their confidence. They see the things they can do. We always reaffirm that anyone can be an artist.”

Sonya discovered firsthand the value of having art as a creative outlet when she was a teenager. “When I was in middle school and high school I didn’t know how to articulate some of the things that I was going through, so I would draw to take my mind off of things,” she said. “That expression without words really stuck with me.”

Psychology has also intrigued her for several years. “I always liked thinking about the reasoning behind things,” she said. This fall, Sonya will combine her two interests as a student at the University at Albany studying Psychology with a minor in Art.



## Cooking up a bright future

This past summer, Artie Echavarria was in Alaska and had to think quickly on his feet. He wouldn’t have it any other way.

The Culinary Arts major was managing a buffet at Denali Park Village in the national park and preserve in Alaska’s interior wilderness. You can get there by train or by road, and it’s about 240 miles north of Anchorage and 125 miles south of Fairbanks, so getting the right meat and veggies could prove challenging.

Artie was responsible for designing a menu and making sure all of the cuisine was creative and cost-effective. “I like to try different things, so I would come up with a different menu and you needed to make sure you had everything,” Artie explained. “But getting things in Alaska was hard. For example, I was going to cook sausage and peppers and they sent me kielbasa. I needed to quickly think of a dish to use kielbasa.”

But thriving under pressure is firmly in Artie’s wheelhouse as a member of the College’s Hot Food Competition Team. This fall he and the team earned a silver medal when they hosted the New York State Hot Food Team Competition sponsored by the American Culinary Federation.

He prepared a chicken roulade entrée and counts the competition team, coached by Chefs Michael Stamets and Courtney Withey, as among the highlights of his two years at the College.

“Working with the competition team is more industry-like because you never work alone in a kitchen,” Artie said. “It was a lot of pressure, a lot of time, and it was hard, but it was fun and we all grew as a family.”

During his time on the team and while working in Alaska, Artie began to realize that sharing what he knows with others in the field was something he really enjoyed and he is now focusing on training and management as one of his options.

He recalled how a woman from Japan working in Denali became frustrated and considered going home, but he began teaching her about his work in the kitchen and she stayed. “Teaching someone else is very uplifting and that’s something I learned here at the College.”

## Campus Resources

### Academic Advisement

Elston 222/381-1277

Monday - Thursday 8:30 am-6:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Academic Computing Lab

Elston 529, 530/381-1213

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-10 pm

Friday 9 am-4 pm

Saturday 9 am-3 pm

### Accounting/CIS Tutor Lab

Elston 330/381-1041

Please check lab for hours.

### ADA Transition Services

Elston 222/381-1345

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Admissions

Monday - Thursday 8:30 am-6:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Athletics

Elston 222/381-1356

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Business Office, Student

Elston 219/381-1346, 1347

Mon.-Fri. 8:30 am-4:15 pm

### Cafeteria

Elston/381-1330

Mon.-Thurs. 7:30 am-8 pm

Friday 7:30 am-2 pm

### Canal Side Cafe/Convenience

Elston Ground Floor/381-1073

Monday-Thurs. 7:30 am-6 pm

Friday 7:30 am-1 pm

### Career Services

Elston 221-I/836-2807

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### College Store

Elston 109/381-1332

Monday, Tuesday 8 am-6 pm

Wednesday, Thursday 8 am-4 pm

Friday 8 am-2 pm

### Educational Opportunity Programs/Access

Elston 222/381-1279

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Financial Aid

Elston 221/381-1468

Monday, Tuesday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Wednesday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Thursday 8:30 am-6:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Language Lab

Elston 520/381-1373

Please check lab for hours.

### Learning Center/Writing Lab

Elston 523/381-1246

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-7 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4 pm

Saturday 10 am-3 pm

### Library (Begley)/381-1235

Mon.-Thurs. 7:45 am – 9 pm

Friday 7:45 am – 4:30 pm

Saturday 11 am – 4:45 pm

### Math Lab Elston 518/381-1435

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-7 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4 pm

Saturday 10 am-3 pm

### Montessori Preschool

Gateway 124/381-1455, 381-1295  
(Call for program info.)

Monday-Friday 8 am- 4 pm

### Registrar's Office Elston 212/215

381-1348, 381-1349/ext. 1148

Monday - Thursday 8:30 am-6:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Student Affairs, Vice President

Elston 222/381-1344

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Student Government

Elston 220H/381-1338

Check office for hours.

### Testing Center

Elston 427/381-1293

TestingCenter@sunysccc.edu

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-7 pm

Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Saturday, 10 am-2 pm

### TRIO Student Support

Services Elston 328/381-1465

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Tutor Services

Begley Library 210/381-1461

Mon.-Thurs. 9 am-4 pm

Friday 9 am-3 pm

(Coordinator)

Sign up here: sunysccc.upswing.io

### Veterans Affairs

Elston 223/381-1284

See office for hours.

### Wellness and Support Services

Elston 222/381-1365

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### Workforce Development

Kindl Bldg., 201 State St.

595-1101, ext. 3

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

### YWCA Children's Center

Gateway Bldg./381-1375/1389

Monday-Friday 7:30 am-5:30 pm