

Get to Know Dr. Steady Moono—In His Own Words

President, SUNY Schenectady County Community College



Coming to the United States from Zambia in 1981 in pursuit of an education, Dr. Steady Moono soon realized he had found far more—he had found his life's work.

Dr. Moono earned a bachelor's degree in education from Messiah College, where he struggled as a "young, lost African kid struggling to make it work at a U.S. college," before finding his way thanks to two mentors. That experience shaped his approach to education, and has inspired him to organize multiple, recognized mentorship programs throughout his career, and serve as a mentor himself.

He has a master's in Counseling and Theology from the Biblical Theological Seminary, a second master's in English from Arcadia University and a doctorate in Higher Education Leadership from Immaculata University.

He is the recipient of the Yaffe-Smith Civil Rights Award for Outstanding Accomplishments in Education and was named "Outstanding First Year Student Advocate" by the National Resource Center. He and his wife are deeply involved in a non-profit project in Zambia that concentrates on rural drip-irrigation projects.

Soon after coming onboard with SUNY Schenectady County Community College in July 2015, Dr. Moono set to work making waves, both in terms of programming and student well-being. He was presented with an Individual Achievement Award by the Human Rights Commission of Schenectady County in 2017 for "outstanding leadership and contributions that improve the human and civil rights of Schenectady County residents." Read on to learn more about his inspiration, his vision and where he hopes to take SUNY SCCC in the coming years.



"These past two years have been very fulfilling and I think we have done some really good work, and we have moved the college along in a positive direction with a number of significant accomplishments. Our last two graduating classes have been the largest for SUNY SCCC, which means we are transforming more families than ever before."

"My vision remains the same since I came onboard. We want to be the best community college locally, across New York State and even nationally. We want to be responsive, vibrant and we want to be nimble."

My initial vision for SUNY Schenectady County Community College and which is still true today, is that we want SUNY SCCC to be at the center of community revitalization. This is a vibrant place to be and a growing city which is reinventing itself, and we want the College to be a critical player in this process.

We have a strategic plan that takes us through 2020 and which provides a blueprint for us to move forward, as well as a new facilities master plan which takes us through 2025 and we are in the middle of celebrating our 50th anniversary and launching a new capital campaign.

We joined the Achieving the Dream national network a year ago and have consistently concentrated on student access and success. We have added a number of new workforce programs as well as academic programming since 2015, in an effort to ensure that our people have as many options as possible. That has been the plan all along, and we're going to continue to add new programs. We want this to be a people's college—whether you're coming for a degree, a certificate or you just want to boost your skills.

Everything at the College is a collective effort. We are hundreds of colleagues that labor together every day, who are thinking deliberately about issues related to student access and success—access related to geography, programming and also economics.

We have increased our scholarship funding and our emergency funds, and also have a food pantry. In short, we're attending to needs that traditionally, higher education has not paid attention to. We see how important meeting those needs are as much for the students and their families as for their abilities to finish their degrees.

I am so proud that the Board and our faculty and staff have embraced our new mission statement, which is something I truly believe in: "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." We are doing everything to actualize that, and that to me, is what a community college is. Regardless of where you are in your station or life, our community is a place you can come, better yourself and better your family.

Diversity is important, as a community college should reflect the community. So looking ahead, we're going to spend more time mentoring underrepresented student populations. But student access and success will always remain our top priority. Our students come to us with dreams, and I want to make sure they don't lose those. I want us to work hard alongside of them so that they meet those dreams and aspirations.



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