



MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

## **President’s Report**

January 22nd, 2024

### **Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

#### Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Catia Laird de Polanco, HR Recruitment Specialist and Chief Diversity Officer, collaborated with Jessica McHugh-Green, Graphic Designer II, throughout the Fall 2023 semester to update and expand upon the College’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webpages. The newly updated webpages include mention of campus resources, services, and policies that support our diverse college community. Additional pages are under development.

Dr. Babette Faehmel, Professor in the Division of Liberal Arts, collaborated with Catia Laird de Polanco, HR Recruitment Specialist and Chief Diversity Officer, and Karen Tanski, Executive Director of Marketing and PR, on the development of a *Many Voices, One Call* podcast episode titled “‘Peace, Salaam, Shalom!’: Connecting Across Our Differences in a War-Ravaged World” that was published on December 18, 2023.

#### Academic Affairs

In December, Giovannine Matheron, Collection Development & Electronic Resources Librarian attended two webinars relating to how libraries can proactively engage with navigating Library Discovery platforms responsibly, encompassing DEI policies and collaborative efforts with content creators to promote diversity and create an inclusive digital ecosystem and focusing on defining and implementing inclusive and ethical AI for academic libraries. Ethical concerns with AI and what libraries need to know to prepare and scale for the future were also discussed (1.1).

This December, David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning continued his ongoing redesign of training to work within the new LMS (Brightspace D2L). Self-paced modules now offer certification automation and a DEI module unit has been added. (1.1, 1.3)

This month, David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning continued his work to remedy accessibility issues across online courses. (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5).

On December 6 and 8, School of Music students performed music by a diverse array of composers in their Jazz Ensemble & Combos Concert and their Wind Ensemble Concert. (Gen. P1)

On December 19, Carol Maimone, Assistant Professor attended the AAPC (American Academy of Professional Coders) Adirondack Chapter meeting in Glens Falls, NY as a keynote speaker and presented “ICD-10 Coding for Stroke and Neurological Disorders”. (Gen. P1)

On December 19, Giovannine Matheron, Collection Development & Electronic Resources Librarian learned about various ways to make physical library spaces more ADA-friendly instead of merely ADA-compliant, when she attended a presentation by the Central New York Library Council. (1.1)

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

ECHS and SCSD staff held recruitment assemblies at each of Schenectady School Districts Middle Schools, Oneida, Mont Pleasant and Central Park. This was to introduce all of the options 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have to choose from including Smart Transfer, Smart Tech, and Smart Scholars among others (1.3; 1.4).

Amy Student, Academic Advisor, attended the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) meeting to finalize the ELL presentation and housing list for the SUNY Schenectady website (1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 2.3).

Mary Silvestri, TRIO Director, attended a webinar invitation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and Children’s Bureau (CB). This webinar included an introduction to the FYSB and CB programs, as well as information on how to collaborate to support educational outcomes for underserved and underrepresented populations, including youth experiencing homelessness and youth in foster care (1.1; 1.4).

Career Services continued planning as part of the DEI Initiative team for the DEI Day During January Institute week (1.1).

Career Services continued the search for the Full-Time Nontraditional Career Advisor Position, working with the committee and HR to ensure an equitable process (1.2)

### Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center

Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center (SCCOC) hosted 26 students from Lansingburgh High School at SUNY Schenectady. The day consisted of college and career exploration workshops, greetings from the Office of the President, a campus tour with Admissions staff and lunch with SUNY Schenectady Student Leaders and the Admissions staff. Ms. Jaimee King, Executive Director of SCCOC, and Ms. Christine, Associate Executive Director of SCCOC, attended the Capital Region Workforce Development Board’s Coalition Meeting. The coalition is working together to create career pathways within specific Capital Region Industries.

On December 6, 2023, St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish hosted a fundraising Pancake Supper. The event raised \$700.00 and was donated to Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center to

support the Center's efforts in mitigating barriers for participants. SCCOC staff was present and provided information to the parish families.

On December 7, 2023, SCCOC, in partnership with Schenectady County Connects and Department of Labor, hosted a community job fair at Center City. Over one hundred job seekers attended the fair and had the opportunity to meet in person with thirty-eight employers to discuss employment opportunities.

Ms. Jaimee King and Ms. Christine Goss, met with Mr. Manik Elahi, Outreach Manager for Congressman Paul Tonko, to discuss the services that SCCOC provides the community.

Ms. Christine Goss, Associate Executive Director met with the Schenectady County Conflict Defender's Office to discuss participant referrals and resources.

On December 20, 2023, Ms. Christine Goss conducted outreach at the Scotia-Glenville Fresh Table.

Ms. Jaimee King visited Bridges of NY in Schenectady to meet with their residents regarding services available to them at SCCOC.

SCCOC staff attended the Schenectady County Reentry Task Force meeting to obtain community resource information to best support participants that have justice involvement.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish partnered with SCCOC for their Annual Advent Giving Project.

The parish was encouraged to donate toiletries and laundry care items to fill Essential Kits for SCCOC participants. On sorting day, Ms. Christine Goss joined the parish and packed over 100 kits.

## **Delivering a Meaningful Student Experience**

### Academic Affairs

In December, Dr. Mark Meachem, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dr. Hope Sasway, Dean of Math, Science, Technology and Health visited Maria College to examine their virtual dissection tables and virtual science labs to get an understanding of new opportunities in the Sciences. (2.4)

In December, Tamara Calhoun, Professor coordinated with the New York State Education Department to ensure that certain Early Childhood Education program courses qualify for CTLE credits which will expand a teacher's current licensing areas. (Gen. P2)

This month, Cayla Gaworecki, Assistant Professor accepted the role of Team Lead for the SUNY Mathematics Launch Years Initiative Project. This effort will develop recommendations for SUNY schools to implement corequisite mathematics models at scale, beginning in September 2024. (2.3)

This month, Dr. Lorena Harris, Director CSTEP and the Brite Summer STEAM Academy began planning to bring 10-15 girls (aged 13-17 years) on an inspiring Summer Experience to empower them in STEM fields, such as Computer Science, Physical Sciences and Engineering. They will connect each girl with a college student to mentor them during the Brite program. (2.4)

This month, David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning submitted a request to IT for assistance to implement several tools provided by Turnitin that increase student engagement and faculty-student communication, deter plagiarism and abuse of AI tools, and develop meaningful learning assessments that are not susceptible to cheating with generative AI programs. (Gen. P2)

On December 2, Dr. Joseph Han, Choral Director and students performed at the L'Atelier Musical in New Baltimore, NY (a professional venue and recording studio). Sten Isachsen, Associate Professor (guitar) and students were allowed to use the facilities to record their peers and live-streamed the event. Students from the SUNY Schenectady Chorus, Vocal Chamber Ensemble, and Performance Concentration class were able to perform in an elite level recording studio while Music Audio Technology program majors utilized state-of-the-art equipment. Additional events are being planned and internship opportunities are being explored. (Gen. P2)

On December 4-11, the School of Music presented 15 end-of-semester student events including recitals from the Chorus, Piano, Applied Recital I & II, Voice, Percussion, Strings, Digital Music & Beat Production, a Listening Recital, an Audio Listening and a Guitar Ensemble Concert. (Gen. P2)

On December 11, Jacquie Keleher, Director of Library Services, attended the SUNY Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) Advisory Board meeting. Of interest were discussions on creative ways to use library spaces and recognizing, removing and preventing mold on library materials. (Gen. P2)

On December 14, SUNY Schenectady leadership, government officials and the Honorable Kanyama Zambian Ambassador to the United States attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new airplane hangar at the Schenectady County Airport. (Gen. P2)

### Strategic Planning and Initiatives

Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, developed and distributed the Academic Services Student Survey for the fall 2023 semester. This survey collects information from students regarding the level of support they received during the semester, their satisfaction with the support(s), and engages students in communicating their needs and if those needs were met. Results will be assessed and reviewed by the Director and staff within Academic Services, who will then identify gaps and potential changes for the spring semester (1.3; 1.4; 2.3).

Early College Success Coaches are continuously checking in with students as they move through the fall semester. They are actively working to be proactive in identifying opportunities for whole group and individualized interventions. Coaches are assigning tutoring and structured homework and study time as needed. Spring and Winter session schedule planning meetings are underway with parents and students for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students (1.3).

New Student Registration Days – December 4, 6, 12, 14 and 19 - Special registration days for new students who are greeted by Admissions, meet with a Student Success Coach, then meet with an Academic Advisor for career/advising/registration session. This allows for individual attention and wrap around services (2.1; 2.3; 2.5).

Allyson Wieser, Admissions Advisor attended the following high schools for Instant Admit Day programs at Shenendehowa High School and Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake High School and also hosted a group information session for the Troy Community School including an admissions information session and campus tour (2.4).

### Marketing and Public Relations

On December 14, the College hosted a ribbon cutting media event to celebrate and promote the opening of the new Center for Aviation Sciences Flex Pod Hangar. The featured speakers were Dr. Eric Savage, Director of Aviation Programs; Haileab Samuel, Schenectady County Legislature; Wandel Perez SUNY Schenectady Aviation Sciences Alumni and United Airlines First Officer; Rory Fluman, Schenectady County Manager; Ann Fleming Brown, Chair, SUNY Schenectady Board of Trustees; Honorable Chibamba Kanyama, Zambian Ambassador to the United States; and Dr. Steady Moono, President of SUNY Schenectady. Also in attendance were aviation program alumni Matt Molnar, First Officer with Delta Airlines and Joshua Ross, First Officer with United Airlines, as well as several current student-pilots and aviation faculty, numerous aviation partners, government officials and local business owners, President's Council members, faculty, staff, and community vision supporters. Spectrum News sent two reporters to gather footage and interviews (Spencer Conlin and Corey James). We received coverage throughout the event day and next day on their news channel via Spencer's segment at <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2023/12/15/suny-aviation-program-expanding-with-new-hangar>. Corey's piece, featuring interviews with several of our current aviation students and an instructor inside and around a plane in the hangar is still in editing and a release date is expected mid-January. The College received front-page placement on the Daily Gazette on 12/15/23, with an image of the ribbon cutting. Gazette placement can be viewed in the e-edition at <https://eedition.dailygazette.com/app/DAIGAZ/editionguid/b005807b-7c73-4fb4-927d-a0ef81831745>. The event was developed by the Marketing and Public Relations team of Executive Director Karen Tanski, Public Relations Specialist Heather Meaney, and Graphic Designer Jessica McHugh-Greene, in conjunction with Tiombe Farley and Marylu Aragosa in the President's Office, Liberal Arts Dean Eileen Abrahams, Aviation Director Eric Savage, Instructor Barb Jones (who was instrumental in getting three of our alumni pilots in attendance), Tanya Scime provided event and facilities scheduling support, and many members of the Facilities team assisted with on-site coordination and physical arrangement. Baker Public Relations was an integral part of getting reporter commitments, interviews arranged, and follow-up of coverage placements.

### Student Affairs

The bowling team, under the leadership of Head Coach Ron Williams, has fundraised nearly \$4,000 through the hosting of a barbecue, corn-hole tournament, and raffles.

Additionally, the bowling team competed in Pennsylvania at the prestigious Lehigh Tournament where they had two bowlers finish in the top 50% out of 195 bowlers. Tyler Drexel finished with a 4-game pin count of 925 and Richard Pitsas finished with a 4-game total of 909.

The Student Activities Board (SAB) at SUNY SCCC successfully organized, implemented, and hosted a captivating Winter Formal Dance on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The event, held at SCCC in the Van Curler room, included students, families, staff, and members of the wider SCCC community.

## **Building Organizational Effectiveness**

### Academic Affairs

David Wolf, Director of Instruction Design and Online Learning, reports that a new upgrade for Brightspace will include the ability to copy announcements across courses in Brightspace. This will save faculty teaching multiple sessions of the same class time and effort. (3.4, 3.5)

This December, Giovannine Matheron, Collection Development & Electronic Resources Librarian completed her first SUNY CPD course on Access and Collection Strategies as part of the Library Leadership and Management Certificate program developed by the SUNY Center for Professional Development and the SUNY Office of Library and Information Services. Participants gain a foundation in management and leadership and are given opportunities to apply their knowledge in library-specific contexts. (Gen P3)

On December 4-6, Dr. Mark Meachem, Vice President for Academic Affairs, attended the annual MSCHE Middle States conference in Philadelphia, PA. (3.3)

On December 21, Dr. David Brough, Dean of the School of Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism attended the Discover Schenectady Board of Director's meeting at the Terrace at Waters Edge Lighthouse in Glenville, New York. (Gen. P3)

### Office of Diversity and Inclusion

On December 5, 2023, Catia Laird de Polanco, HR Recruitment Specialist and Chief Diversity Officer, attended a Capital EAP Leadership Series webinar entitled "Improve Workplace Relations by Increasing Emotional Intelligence."

Catia Laird de Polanco, HR Recruitment Specialist and Chief Diversity Officer, and Tanya Scime, Director of Human Resources, collaborated to revise the structure of job postings. Job postings now include a link to the newly updated DEI webpages, a statement to emphasize a holistic compensation strategy, and a revised presentation of benefits for full- and part-time positions.

### Strategic Planning and Initiatives

Michelle Ragucci, who is currently overseeing daily operations of the Testing Center, worked with IT staff on a mandatory data processing update for the Accuplacer placement exam. This

update ensures that student scores are accurately uploaded to our student information system/Banner for use within advising and financial aid (3.4).

Dale Miller, Director of Institutional Research, completed and submitted two New York Department of Education reports and one SUNY Systems report. Mr. Miller provided data to the following offices: EOP data to the EOP Director; Data Dashboard instructions to Deans' Council; School of Music graduate data to the Dean; program data to the Vice President for Academic Affairs; student success data for Achieving the Dream (3.3).

ECHS and Schenectady School district staff meet weekly to review student grades and assess student progress according to grade level programmatic benchmarks. Staff collectively make decisions regarding course advisements and action steps related to individual students which are then communicated to school district and college stakeholders (3.1).

Updated ECHS Application for 2024 to integrate more Slate components to the application including a Slate teacher recommendation form (3.1; 3.4; 3.5).

Yvonne Goldman, Academic Advisor, met with Mark Bessette, Assistant Dean of Financial Aid and Access, for an introduction to the financial aid office and to discuss the academic advisor's role in supporting financial aid (1.1, 3.3).

### Student Affairs

The College began using a live chatbot called *tawk.to* in July of 2020. *Tawk.to* allows our students and their families to send electronic chat questions and get answers quickly just by navigating our website. IPS III Victoria Morris has mined some data for the 2023 calendar year with the assistance of TRIO Director Mary Silvestri. Over the year, College staff have assisted with 387 chats on topics including scholarships, information technology, academic advisement, student records, admissions, and workforce development and community education.

Robyn King has been chosen to present at the annual NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) Conference in March 2024 in Seattle, WA. The program will be called "Stronger Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing College Student Hunger." Robyn will outline the process of building and sustaining a college food pantry and provide an opportunity for attendees to collaborate by sharing their experiences and best practices on their campuses, with the end-goal of creating a supportive network of community college professionals from around the US who are tasked with addressing student food insecurity.

### Workforce Development and Community Education

December 4-6, 2023, Sarah Wilson-Sparrow attended the Middle States Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA. December 18, Sarah Wilson-Sparrow attended the Capital Region Workforce Development Board Coalition Meeting.

### Human Resources

Ellen Mesley, HR Benefits Administrator assumed the role as Assistant Director of Employee Benefits and Well-Being until a search is conducted.

The Office of Human Resources is currently recruiting for 20 full and part time vacancies and 2 faculty vacancies. Twelve new employees, including student workers and adjuncts for Spring semester, were onboarded in a variety of instructional and non-instructional capacities.

The Office of Human Resources has been updating all CSEA Personnel Change Forms for the College and County in the efforts of reconciling all updates to obtain a Salary Certification. Personnel Change forms are completed when there is any change in employee status such as salary, title, address, etc. These are important forms that are required to be completed on a timely basis and sent to the County immediately as they impact postings across the County. This salary certification process involves providing the County a list of all civil service employees/titles on the College's salary. The County reviews the information to ensure the County's records match the College. Once the information matches and is reconciled, the salary certification is granted. We are delighted that the salary certification was granted to the College through January 1, 2024.

### Administration

Construction on the Student Services Center in the Stockade Building continued. In December, our contractors completed work on the HVAC systems, built out offices and conference room space, filled in a former doorway to the space and insulated exterior walls. During January, they will complete office drywall work and install the drop ceiling. Fire alarm and electrical work continue. The project is on schedule for completion in March/April 2024.

Work on the Elston Hall Façade was completed in December of 2023. Our contractors completed replacement of failing cast stone work, repair to brickwork, re-attachment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor relief angle and repairs to the cornice work on the building. In addition, they replaced five Juliette balconies with reproductions of the original ones, cleaned the brick surface and washed the exterior windows. All scaffolding was removed from the front of the building and the main entrance was re-opened in early January.

The emergency generator for 78 Washington Avenue was delivered in mid-December and connected to the College's electrical infrastructure. Testing of the generator will occur in January. This generator will power all buildings at 78 Washington Avenue and serve as a back-up for our Information Technology systems.

College and County officials met with an engineer to start design and estimates for repair work to the Begley basement area. This Capital project is needed to correct water intrusion into the basement space and repair roof drain pipes associated with Begley Hall. The project also includes an analysis of the parking lot pumping system that may impact the stormwater drainage coming off of the Begley building. In addition to water intrusion, the scope of the project includes replacement of the concrete floor in the garage/basement area that has heaved and deteriorated due to moisture issues.

An engineering plan and scope of work for repairs to the Elston Hall basement were received. This project includes work needed to repair walls and other structures that have settled, resulting in cracks forming around utility pipes. The College is seeks a plan that allows for simple repairs



of future settling issues so we can remain fire code compliant without a future major capital project. We anticipate this project going out to bid in early Spring of 2024.

A request for proposals for purchase and installation of two electronic monument signs on both Washington Avenue and NYS Route 5 was developed during January of 2024. This project will provide the college with two visible billboards to announce special events, open houses, college information and other communications that will promote enrollment and community involvement with the college.

## **Ensuring Financial Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency**

### Academic Affairs

On December 1 and 2, Allyson Keyser, Professor (trumpet) and adjunct faculty Dylan Canterbury (jazz) attended the NYSSMA (New York State School Music Association) Conference in Rochester, NY and provided information to prospective students, parents, public music teachers, and met with 4-year transfer colleges. (Gen. P4) On December 6, Dr. Christopher Brelloch, Dean School of Music gave a tour to a chorus from South Colonie High School and Dr. Joseph Han, Choral Director, worked with the choir before they listened to SUNY Schenectady students performing in their end-of-semester recital. (Gen. P4)

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Lauren Gallo, Program Administrator – High School Partnerships, attended a post-secondary redesign meeting with Schenectady City School District officials (4.5).

Mary Silvestri, Director of TRIO, completed the Annual Performance Report for the 2022-2023 year (APR) for the TRIO grant at SUNY Schenectady. The APR indicates the success and performance of the program in retention, graduation, and transfer rates of students. SUNY Schenectady received a perfect score, meeting and exceeding our TRIO grant goals on the APR (Gen P4).

EOP Director, Dr. Debbie Warnock, worked with Marianne Senneca, Vice President of Development and External Affairs, to secure funding for food for EOP events in the spring and to begin to highlight outstanding EOP students to support The Foundation's efforts with fundraising campaigns (4.5).

### Student Affairs

In the Fall 2023 semester, there were 402 students and employees who took classes and worked on campus after 4:30pm and on the weekends when the Food Pantry was closed. The SUNY Schenectady Foundation and Food Pantry collaborated on a grant application to improve inclusivity for this population by making it possible to access to the Food Pantry's services. Although the three-stage application process was rigorous and competitive, the Food Pantry was awarded \$43,000 grant to purchase refrigerated grocery lockers to provide equitable and convenient access in which these individuals can pick up their Food Pantry orders and be assured that the food has been kept at a safe temperature.

## Administration

Departmental budget operating requests for the 2024-2025 academic and fiscal year were received in early January of 2024. During the Winter, we will combine the requests into one large budget, begin revenue projections and conduct conversations with division heads. We anticipate a draft budget will be ready for presentation to the Board in April of 2024.

The college's Finance department continues working with our auditors on the 2022-23 annual audit that will be presented to the Board of Trustees in February of 2024. In addition to audit, the department is preparing year-end tax reporting information for employees and the IRS.

## Foundation

The Foundation continuously builds and draws upon the strength of the Foundation Board members as advocates for the College:

Foundation Board members volunteered to stuff 115 food bags for our SUNY Schenectady Thanksgiving dinner giveaway. Vice President and Stewardship Officer met with Keven Mathes, Foundation Board Member, on November 21 to discuss campaign committee staffing. Vice President had lunch with board member, Paula Marshman, to talk about scholarship funding options and invite her to sit on the Campaign Steering Committee.

The Foundation is creating a bold, new, positive case for growing flexible funding to support our students:

FreeWill Launch #1 and #2 sent via Constant Contact to 16,709 individuals with a 36% open rate, resulting in four bequest intentions worth \$22,000. FreeWill Launch #3 sent via ViewSpark on Giving Tuesday to 12,358 individuals with a 25% open rate. Year-end solicitations will be mailed and emailed to 7,000+ constituents to capture end of tax year donations.

The Foundation is working to increase fundraising effectiveness to grow 5% annually by engaging alumni, businesses, and the community:

November LinkedIn activity had 185 unique views, and 100 new followers. There were 80 reactions, four reposts, and four comments. Vice President sent 32 Thanksgiving E Cards to major donors. Happy Thanksgiving ViewSpark to with 12,315 emails with a 32% open rate.

Engaging our alumni:

Stewardship Officer worked with alumna owned business Whisky Business Bakery to package 33 dozen macaroons for our business supporters. Stewardship Officer obtained the service of alumna owned business, Vashti's Kitchen Delights Catering Services, for the Stakeholders Forum breakfast. Stewardship Officer attended lunch with sustaining donor Audrey Osterlitz '79. Heather Peterson '99 has been working with Vice President to arrange a meeting regarding internships for our students.

## **President's Outreach**

Honorable Chibamba Kanyama, the Zambian Ambassador to the United States, visited our

ribbon cutting for the new Center for Aviation Sciences Flex Pod Hangar. In the photo is Tiombe Tatum, Dr. Mark Meachem, Stephen Fragale, Dr. David Clickner, Honorable Chibamba Kanyama, Dr. Steady Moono, Karen Tanski, and Paula Ohlhous.

