



MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

President’s Report

May 13th, 2024

Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, launched a once-monthly DEI Dialogues Series to strengthen internal capacity and community amongst employees to address DEI-related concerns in their respective areas. The DEI Dialogue was held on April 5, 2024.

Dr. Babette Faehmel, Professor in the Division of Liberal Arts, and Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, consulted on the selection of a transcription service for the *Many Voices, One Call* Podcast. The SUNY Schenectady Foundation agreed to support a subscription to a new transcription tool, which will aid those involved in the podcast to improve podcast accessibility by transcribing future episodes. Dr. Faehmel and Ms. Laird de Polanco will work together to evaluate the efficacy and value of the new transcription tool in upcoming semesters.

Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, entered into discussions with Dr. Mark Meachem, Vice President for Academic Affairs, on the expansion of transfer articulation agreements to include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, and Hispanic Serving Institutions.

On April 4, 2024, Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, presented the College’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan at Coffee and Conversations. Catia attended Long Night Against Procrastination and hosted a station that encouraged students to dialogue about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Academic Affairs

This month, Carly Denué, LPP Program Assistant, and Nagel Bowen, a SUNY Schenectady CSTEP student, continued mentoring 15 LPP students in the Tech Bridge Girls Ignite Club at Mont Pleasant Middle School (after school on Tuesdays). Tech Bridge Girls Ignite is an all-girls youth inventors club, in which girls learn about young women who have created inventions in career fields that are historically male-dominated and students are given the opportunity to create their own inventions based on those they learned about. (1.4)

Planning has begun for the Schenectady Pride event to be held on June 1st in Gateway Park. Jacquie Keleher, Director of Library Services, in collaboration with Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, Academic Advisement and Admissions staff, began brainstorming how the Library will participate. (Gen. P1)

David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning continued his participation in a cross-institutional collaboration on DEI and online course design. This month, his collaboration with Catia Laird de Polanco culminated in the creation of the *Partnership Proposal: Digital Content Accessibility Competition*. This has been approved and is scheduled to start in Fall 2024. Once implemented, it should improve the accessibility of documents and course content throughout the College. (1.1, 1.3, 1.4)

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Anna Sherman and David Gonzalez, Admissions Advisors, hosted the YMCA Black and Latino Achievers Group on campus for an Information Session and Tour (1.4; 2.3).

The Admissions Office hosted a tour, presentation, and career exploration event for students in the Liberty Partnerships Program. Approximately 50 students visited the campus and were able to discuss career opportunities, tour the campus, and understand more about the benefits of college education (1.4; 2.3; 2.4; 3.1).

Student Affairs

Wellness and Support Services

Robyn King presented a program called "Stronger Together: A Collaborative Approach to Creating a Campus Food Pantry" at the NASPA National Conference in Seattle. The program was very well received, and she will present it again at the NASPA Region II Conference in Philadelphia in June. Robyn was trained how to do preliminary SNAP screenings by Schenectady County NOEP Coordinator Louise Novak to provide back-up in Louise's absence. Additionally, Robyn organized and coordinated a Red Cross blood drive, where 18 units were collected. In support of LNAP, Robyn secured snacks, water, and coffee from the Regional Food Bank.

Delivering a Meaningful Student Experience

Academic Affairs

Throughout the month, Dr. Hope Sasway, Dean of MSTH and Assistant Professor Carol Maimone have been busy finalizing a new micro-credential for Health Information Technology with a specialization in Release of Information in conjunction with Workforce Development. The purpose of the proposed credential is to prepare students for immediate hire into the local job market as health information technicians with specific release of information (ROI)

experience within the healthcare field. Students will also have the option to transfer some courses to the Medical Coding and Billing or Health Care Studies certificates offered at SUNY Schenectady. (2.2, 2.3, 2.5)

This month, New Student Registration Days (NSRD) have been overhauled and relaunched as an ongoing, collaborative, cross-campus enrollment and engagement effort. Sessions were held throughout the month to onboard new students and increase their chances of early success. Staff from across the campus, including Disability Services, TRIO, ASAP, Career and Academic Services, and Financial Aid stepped up and acted as the Engagement Point person for Session 1 of the NSRDs. This provided them opportunities to engage and connect with students as well as recruit and share information about their areas. These sessions will continue throughout the spring and summer months. (2.1, 2.3, 2.5)

Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, along with Mary Silvestri (Director of TRIO), Jacquie Keleher-Hughes (Director of Library Services), and Robyn King (Director of Campus Wellness), planned, developed, and executed a successful Long Night Against Procrastination student event. Students were invited to take part in late-night studying and tutoring, participate in numerous activities, interact with student support programs, and receive additional late-night support, such as chatting about financial wellness, career services, and meeting with academic advisors. The intent of this event is to re-energize students and motivate them to finish the semester strong, as well as aiding in the College's retention efforts and reduce student melt. (1.4, 2.1, 2.3)

Strategic Planning and Initiatives

Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP) staff participated in several New Student Registration Days, helping to create a comprehensive onboarding process for new students entering Fall 2024 (2.1; 2.3; 3.1).

ASAP participated in Long Night Against Procrastination (LNAP) by having a table set up with information about the ASAP Program, and doing an activity to help promote fun brainstorming activities to support students in preparing for and studying for finals (2.3; 3.1).

The ASAP Executive Director, Kevin Dean, enacted a long-term plan to integrate tutoring from the Learning Center into each semester by cohort into the ASAP program in conjunction with Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, with a tracking mechanism to ensure completion of goals (2.3).

Though not a requirement of the ASAP program, 37% of ASAP students have registered for Summer 2024 session classes to support their degree completion (Gen. P2; 1.3).

The ASAP team coordinated with the Financial Aid Office for workshop provided to program students and have planned for Summer information sessions (1.4; 2.1; 2.3).

Kevin Rivenburg, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, attended and tabled at SUNY Schenectady's STEM Fair. The event, hosted by CSTEP, showcased student work in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Local high school students attended and participated in the event (2.1; 2.3; 1.4; 3.1).

Mary Silvestri, Interim Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment and Mark Bessette, Assistant Dean of Financial Aid and Student Services, built a Slate Communication for all newly accepted students regarding the FASFA. The Slate communication links students with Financial Aid process early in their acceptance process and encourages students to work with Financial Aid Office for any guidance needed (2.1; 2.3; 2.4; 1.3; 1.4; 3.1; 3.4).

The Admissions Office hosted 7th and 8th grade students participating in the Albany Police Athletic League (PAL) on campus. The Albany PAL is a partnership among youth, police, and the community to develop and encourage good citizenship and improve the quality of life in Albany (2.1; 2.3; 1.4).

The Admissions Office hosted several high school visits and tours for prospective students. These tours included a presentation by the Admissions office and tours of the campus. These schools included Washington Irving, Troy High School, and Voyers Prep High School (2.1; 2.3; 2.4). Communications were sent to prospective Returning Students followed by a text message to facilitate their re-enrollment in the College for Summer 2024 and Fall 2024 courses (Gen. P2).

Student Affairs

Commencement Update/ Commencement will be Thursday, May 16 at 11am in the Music Parking Lot. Two tents will be used to cover graduates, faculty, and guests and the stage. All procession members are asked to report to their respective meeting locations by 10am. Graduates will report to the Taylor Auditorium. Faculty will report to MUS 215 and the Platform Party with special guests will report to MUS 119. Programs and water bottles will be available at the seats of graduates, faculty, musicians, and platform party and special guests. Additional water bottles and programs will be available for free at the greeting tables in the MUS parking lot.

Special guests will include Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado, his mother and alum Thelma Hill, His Excellency Ambassador Kanyama, the 18th Ambassador of the Republic of Zambia to the United States, and members of the SUNY Schenectady Board of Trustees and Schenectady County Legislature.

Student Activities:

The third annual International Gala, organized by the Students Activities Board in collaboration with the International Club, was successfully held on April 18, 2024. With a remarkable turnout of over 160 participants, including students, faculty, staff, and administration, the event proved to be a vibrant celebration of cultural diversity on campus.

The diligent efforts of the Board and the club were evident in the meticulous planning and execution of the gala, which has established itself as the largest student-run and attended event at the university. The event showcased a rich tapestry of global cuisines, with offerings from local businesses featuring delicacies from Nigeria, Jamaica, Japan, West Africa, Ethiopia, Italy, and India. Attendees had the opportunity to savor an array of flavors, adding to the immersive cultural experience.

In addition to the cuisine delights, the gala featured captivating presentations and performances from students, community members, and faculty. These performances served as poignant reminders of the rich cultural heritage present within the community and beyond. Through

dance, music, and storytelling, attendees were transported on a journey around the world, gaining a deeper appreciation for the diverse traditions and customs that enrich our society.

Overall, the third annual International Gala was a resounding success, fostering cultural exchange, dialogue, and mutual understanding among attendees. It served as a testament to the power of unity in diversity and reaffirmed the university's commitment to promoting inclusivity and global awareness.

The Spring Bash, hosted by Student Activities on April 23, 2024, from 11 am to 2 pm, attracted a diverse crowd of students and members of the campus community. The event offered a plethora of engaging activities, including games, obstacle courses, basketball, and bounce houses, providing attendees with opportunities for fun and recreation.

Financial Aid

We have partnered with the AmeriCorps FAFSA Ambassadors to promote FAFSA completion for new and continuing students. The FAFSA Ambassadors will meet one-on-one with students to complete their FAFSA and TAP applications. Three engagements are scheduled for April 27th, May 8th, and May 18th.

The Financial Aid Office has completed testing the process of loading 2024-25 FAFSA files into our database. On April 22nd they began loading FAFSAs into our production instance of Banner. The goal is to have all files loaded and quality checked by May 1st. At which point we will release official award letters for fall 2024.

Development Office

Vice President and Stewardship Officer, Leanna Liuzzi, are serving on a Middle States working group.

A Foundation donor sponsored the Grattidge-Ohnstad Competition in Science. The winner was announced during STEM Day.

The Scholarship Review Committee meeting was led by Stewardship Officer Liuzzi to kick-off the 2024-2025 scholarship season.

Building Organizational Effectiveness

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

On April 12, 2024, Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, attended a Middle State Commission on Higher Education webinar titled “Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together: Complex Substantive Change.”

On April 23, 2024, Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, attended the REACH Phase 2 Site Visit in Albany, NY. Topics discussed included frameworks for alignment and integration of non-credit and credit programs, removing barriers to transition from non-credit to credit programs, equitable student support practices, and culturally responsive support practices.

On April 24, 2024, Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, attended a SUNY Office of General Counsel's Student Affairs Practice Group and SUNY Student Conduct Institute webinar titled “SUNY Only 2024 Title IX Final Rule” to better understand recently released updates to Title IX and to learn how she can support the Title IX Coordinator and Office of Human Resources.

On April 25, 2024, Catia Laird de Polanco, Chief Diversity Officer, attended an American Council on Education panel titled “HBCUs and Two-Year Institutions on the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement Application,” which included discussion on strategies for improving engagement with the community and communicating the impact of those community engagement strategies.

Academic Affairs

Jacque Keleher, Director of Library Services, was a speaker at the SUNY Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) Roundtable Webinar: Learning Commons Models and Library Services held on April 23, from 10:00am – 11:30am. During the webinar, she spoke to the successes, challenges and opportunities that come with a library renovation and discussed the transformation from a Library to a Learning Commons. (3.3, 3.4)

As part of her ongoing efforts to ensure consistency from Career & Transfer Services, this month, Dawn Jones, Director of Career & Transfer Services, held biweekly meetings with staff to reinforce training principles, including office standards for professional communications, confidentiality, FERPA, and she conducted observations for part-time staff during classroom presentations. She aims to provide useful feedback to facilitate professional growth and increase consistency in the presentation offerings across campus. (Gen P3)

Carol Maimone worked with Dawn Jones in Career Services to train on the use of My Interview Practice software. She is now able to use it with her internship /career capstone class (HIM 210) so that they can practice virtual interviewing with customized questions. (3.3, 3.4)

On April 3, Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, attended the SSB9 Customization and Production Configuration meeting with Jolly Pazhai, Director of Enterprise

Services, JP Ciejka, Senior Computer Systems Analyst Programmer and Carrie Swain, Registrar. (3.4, 3.5)

Strategic Planning and Initiatives

Dale Miller, Director of Institutional Research, completed and submitted one SUNY Systems report. Mr. Miller provided data for the following projects: credit and non-credit enrollment and graduation data for SUNY REACH; DEI data for a SUNY Schenectady enrollment initiative; ADA enrollment data; headcount data for budgeting; Data Dashboard training to new employees; success data for the Division of Business, Criminal Justice and Law; math courses success data; and Middle States IPEDS trends data. (3.3).

Mary Silvestri, Interim Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment assisted in onboarding of Kevin Rivenburg, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment. The onboarding process consisted of understanding the Admissions Office administration, Slate engagement, and institutional collaboration and practices (3.2; 3.3).

Mary Silvestri, Interim Dean of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, and Kevin Dean, ASAP Executive Director, worked to create a communication plan and application for newly accepted students to share information about the ASAP program and to apply for the program. These communications are running to all newly accepted students through Slate (2.3; 3.1; 3.5).

Created a long-term plan to integrate career services deliverables (Resume, focus to career assessment, LinkedIn profile, job search meeting) into each semester by cohort into the ASAP program in conjunction with Director of Career and Transfer Services with a tracking mechanism to ensure completion of goals (3.1).

Student Affairs

AVPSA: An athletic feasibility study was conducted by Mammoth Consulting over a 3-day period from April 16 through April 18, 2024. The consulting team was provided lunch and a tour of the campus. The team interviewed 10 College staff and a board member to learn about the College and the resources available for athletics.

Student Activities:

The Student Government Association (SGA) of SUNY Schenectady made a significant impact by participating in the SUNY Student Assembly Conference, held over three days in Queensbury, New York. Seven dedicated students represented SUNY Schenectady, including SGA Vice President Parsram Pernanand, Senators Deveiyani Singh and Amarianna Canteen, Noor Warriach, Student Trustee Maureen Mbanga, and Secretary Imani Romain-Barthley, along with their Student Activities Advisor.

Financial Aid:

The Financial Aid Office has engaged with Blue Icon Advisors, a consulting firm through the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators. Through this engagement we are confirmed that our set up in Banner is finalized and ready for the processing of 2024-25 FAFSA files.

Marketing and Public Relations

Campus events, recently moved under the Marketing and Public Relations department, was researching event management software companies to identify a solution to improve internal and external event space rental inquiry intake and assessment, managing facilities requests and college assets, and provide communications to stakeholders and staff involved in day-to-day event details. During vendor discovery, Campus Events Coordinator Wa’Kena Jackson identified Ad Astra as a system that provided all the functions that Events was looking for. Academic Affairs had just contracted with Ad Astra for academic course scheduling services and it was determined that the events services were bundled as part of the package, and so Events would also be able to utilize Ad Astra. By leveraging capabilities within the new system already in place, Events has begun training to transition event management processes earlier than forecast and at no additional cost to the College.

Development Office

The Foundation continues to work to refine the scholarship program to maximize funding available to support the student experience.

Scholarship “owners” will be solicited to increase their funding in support of this campaign. Vice President had dinner with scholarship owners, Chris and Laurie Coccio, who will be solicited to increase their support.

Vice President is working with an anonymous donor to expand the reach of a new scholarship.

Administration

On April 6-9, 2024 Patrick Ryan, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration attended the American Association of Community Colleges annual meeting in Louisville, KY.

Construction on the college’s new Student Service Center in the Stockade Building continued. In mid-May, the glass entryway to the new Center will be installed. In late May, work will begin on the building’s HVAC system replacement. This project will continue through the summer with occupation of the new Center scheduled for late July 2024.

A contractor was retained to replace the AV and teaching stations in Stockade Hall rooms 101 and 102; our main lecture centers. This work will include replacement of projection devices, audio/video controllers, computer interfaces and audio systems. Once completed, two-way communications will be available in this space.

In April, our contractors erected necessary scaffolding around Elston Hall to perform the roof replacement project. This project involves replacement of the shingles and underlayment of the roof above the 1920’s hotel section. It is anticipated this work will be completed in late July of 2024.

New fresh air intake fans and associated duct work has been ordered for the Culinary Kitchen project. This involves replacement of fresh air fans to the original Van Curler hotel kitchen area

which will benefit the banquet kitchens. If approved, a second capital project to replace the exhaust fans will occur in 2025.

Bids for renovation to the Elston Hall Lobby and Mohawk Room are to be released in May. We anticipate work on this project will begin in late summer or early fall of 2024. Bids are also being released on the Elston Basement Project, Elston Hall Greenhouse Replacement, Mobile Lab Storage Garage, Phase I of the Cafeteria/Gathering Space Area and the Elston Hall Skylight/Window Replacement Project.

The College is working with the County on the Capital purchase of a new Facilities and Maintenance grounds/plow truck and a new 90” zero Turn Mower.

Design work continues on the lighting, stage and sound system in the Taylor Auditorium. A preliminary estimate of cost was received which is being reviewed by the Music Program and Administration.

A draft Facilities Master Plan was received. The plan requires additional input from the college and architect prior to finalization. This document will serve as our guide for capital projects over the next five to ten years.

Ensuring Financial Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency

Academic Affairs

This month, Dr. Paul Amy, Professor of Physics hosted the annual Dr. Walter Grattidge Competition which offers a \$1000 prize for students to determine the most precise value of Planck’s constant h using LEDs. Planck’s constant is a fundamental constant governing quantum interactions. On April 22, he announced the winner as Tamesh Yeapersaud, who got a value for the Planck constant of 6.6199×10^{-34} J·s (within 0.09% of the true value). All of the competitors did very well, with the largest percent error being well less than 1%. Tamesh will receive a credit of \$1,000 applied to his account for tuition. (4.3, 4.5)

Academic Affairs received confirmation of the approval of their Perkins Grant Budget Amendment which provides much needed supplies for students, additional textbooks for student use, software for careers, aviation equipment, professional development for HCAT, Aviation, and Teaching, as well as supplies and equipment for students with disabilities. (4.3)

On April 2, Dr. Christopher Brellocks, Dean of the School of Music (saxophone) and Dylan Canterbury, Adjunct (trumpet) presented the Jazz Ensemble at HCAT’s *Food for Thought and All That Jazz* premier fundraising event, which raised over \$100,000! (4.3)

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Dr. David Clickner, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Planning, participated in budget meetings and presented enrollment assumptions for the group’s review and consideration.

Workforce Development and Community Education

Tricia Terleckey presented to Center for Disability Services Administration and Residential Supervisors to discuss the OPWDD DSP Micro Credential Program. She met with Catholic Charities Supervisors to discuss the OPWDD DSP Micro Credential Program

Saratoga Bridges signed Provider Agreement to partner with WFD & CE in the OPWDD DSP Micro Credential Program.

Lauren Lankau met with Troy Web LLC to discuss professional development training with incumbent workers.

Michelle Kraines, Lauren Lankau, Mykha'el Wilson and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow met with 1st National Bank of Scotia and CEG to discuss apprenticeship opportunities in the financial sector. Both met with the New York State Council on Children and Families to discuss apprenticeship opportunities for childcare providers.

Lauren Lankau and Tricia Terleckey attended the Center for Disability Services Celebration of DSPs to table and meet with staff to discuss the DSP Micro Credential Program.

Administration

The 2024-25 State Budget passed in mid-April. Support for the community colleges included continuation of the State funding floor. Also included in the bill was \$8M for additional community college operating support. The funding floor maintains State support at 2023-24 levels; which has been flat for the past three years. The formula distribution of the new \$8M in operating support is still to be determined by the SUNY Board of Trustees and the NYS Director of the Budget. President Moono and Executive Vice President Ryan recently participated on a call with the leaders of the SUNY Budget Office to discuss potential uses of this funding and what challenges SUNY Schenectady currently faces due to ongoing flat support.

Examination of the proposed 2024-25 college operating budget continued. In late Spring, more of the college's projected revenue and expenditures were clarified with certain department heads. Of particular note, Workforce Development's projections were updated due to increased programmatic activity, completion of the mobile labs and more grant funded activity. Other areas of the college were also examined for adjustments.

Uncertainty of allocation of the recently passed \$8M increase in State operating support is delaying completion of the 24-25 budget. We anticipate SUNY will resolve this in early May.

Human Resources

Human Resources (HR) published our first monthly employee newsletter on April 2, 2024. The newsletter featured a Welcome to Spring message, introductions to new employees, recognition for employee promotions and transfers, and reminders for job openings. The release of the newsletter has garnered positive feedback from employees.

HR is under the development of a new SharePoint platform for employees. SharePoint will be used similar to an intranet webpage to act as a resource for employees. Employee events and information will be shared on SharePoint as well as documentation of policies for employee reference and utilization.

On April 3, 2024, we had Corbridge representatives onsite to meet with employees regarding retirement accounts. We also had TIAA representatives visit April 11, 2024. On April 16, 2024, Voya representatives were additionally able to come onsite to meet with employees.

Foundation

The Foundation Board Development Committee met recently to discuss two new potential members for the Board. Personal interviews will take place before the candidates are recommended to the Foundation Board.

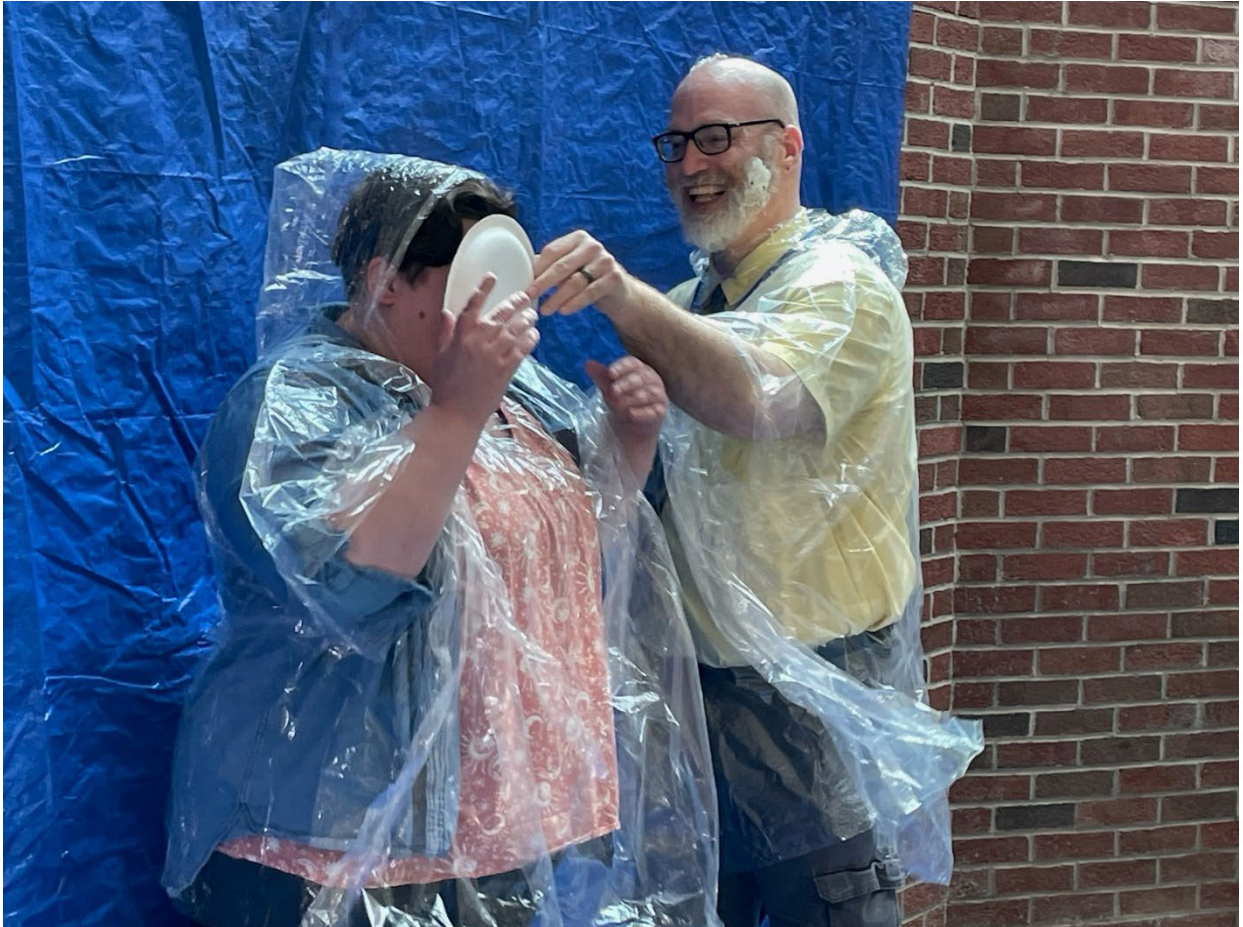
Food for Thought and All That Jazz is our primary source of flexible funding. As of March 28, revenues topped \$100,000, an event record! We trust that the volunteer auction committee will help us again in 2025.

April LinkedIn activity had 406 views, 89 new followers, and 280 search appearances. The Foundation has reached its annual fundraising goal ahead of schedule.

Vice President hosted Alumna Joan Dembinski at Casola to talk about Campaign Support.

The Foundation is working with aviation alumni/ae to begin the planning of an Aviation reunion at the hangar in the fall.

President's Outreach



The Pie a Professor event, organized by the SUNY Schenectady PRIDE Alliance, brings together professors, administrators, staff, and students for a fun-filled initiative to support nonprofit organizations dedicated to the LGBTQIA+ community. At the Second Annual Pie a Professor event held on Wednesday, May 1st, \$453.00 was raised. These proceeds will be evenly distributed between Schenectady PRIDE and the PRIDE Center of the Capital Region.



Guest Chefs Dr. Steady Moono, College President, and Culinary Arts Student Chef Ngambela Zulu, shared their special recipes with a packed crowd during a demo and tasting on April 17. Dr. Moono and Ngambela showed the audience how to prepare Zambian specialties chikanda, ifisasha, nshima, vitumbuwa, kapenta, and mango coulis. Guests then sampled the delicious cuisine, including Dr. Moono's favorite: Ifikubala - fried caterpillars. The final week of the Casola Dining Room for the Spring Semester featured Zambian cuisine as well.