



## MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

January 12, 2026

#### THE CULTURE OF CARE AND SUCCESS

##### Academic Affairs

As part of their ongoing efforts to remove barriers to student employment for interns and those in experiential learning opportunities, Career & Transfer Services purchased clothing items for their Career Clothing Closet to assist students who may not own professional attire. (Gen P1)

Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services, developed and distributed a Testing Center Student Survey for the fall 2025 semester to collect information from students who utilized the Testing Center's services and inquire about the testing environment and overall experience. Feedback will be used to inform decisions about future improvements. (1.3,1.4)

On December 17 and 22, LPP staff hosted annual holiday celebrations at Schenectady High School and Mont Pleasant Middle School to provide an opportunity for staff and students to celebrate the winter holidays together prior to break. (1.2,1.4)

##### Diversity and Inclusion

On December 12, 2025, the School of Hotel, Culinary Arts & Tourism received the Digital Accessibility for Learning Equity Award for having achieved the highest Brightspace accessibility average across all courses for the Fall 2025 semester. The Division of Liberal Arts was a close second and received an honorable mention.

##### Marketing and Public Relations

The Marketing and Public Relations team completed the content creation, design, and printing of the *2025 SUNY Schenectady Annual Report*. The publication is a visually dynamic 32-page publication that serves as a comprehensive reflection of the College's accomplishments and milestones over the past year. It is designed to foster a deeper connection between the College and community, through a seamless blend of storytelling that highlights the achievements of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and engagement with our vision supporters. The report features 70 stories curated throughout the year and written by Heather Meaney, Public Relations Specialist II, along with the President's Message, Foundation News, and Donor List. The emphasis is on showcasing inclusivity and community-building at the college, through photography captured almost exclusively by members of the Marketing and Public Relations Office.

The Annual Report is primarily distributed digitally via email to the college Board of Trustees; state, county and city officials; community partners and donors; and faculty, staff, and alumni. It is also available on the college's website, and a small quantity is printed for use by the President's Office, Foundation, and in media kits. As such, the layout must work across digital and traditional print medium and be ADA-compliant. Jessica McHugh-Green, Graphic Designer II, assessed and orchestrated a high volume of content and photos, to create an appealing flow with successful storytelling that conveys a celebration of people and moments. The result is a piece that serves as both a look back at the year's successes and a look ahead to the future. It is a testament to the College's strategic plan to support and deliver a meaningful student experience while creating an inclusive environment. The digital copy of the *2025 SUNY Schenectady Annual Report* can be found at [https://sunysccc.edu/PDF/Publications/F25\\_Annual-Report.pdf](https://sunysccc.edu/PDF/Publications/F25_Annual-Report.pdf)

#### *Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center*

On December 4, 2025, Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center, in partnership with Schenectady County Connects and Department of Labor, hosted a community job fair at Center City. Over 80 job seekers attended the fair and had the opportunity to meet in person with 40 employers to discuss employment opportunities. In addition, DOL hosted mini essential skills workshops for job seekers.

#### *Strategic Initiatives and Planning*

Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions, coordinated with Kevin Dean, Executive Director of ASAP, to support an Instant Admit Information Session for Adult Learners held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025. Through this collaboration, Admissions and ASAP worked together to provide a streamlined experience for adult learners, offering instant admission while highlighting key financial and academic support resources on campus. During the event, nine students completed the admission process, three New Students and six Returning Students (Gen P1; 2.3; 3.1).

#### *Workforce Development and Community Education*

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sarah Wilson-Sparrow participated in the Capital Region Workforce Development Board Youth/Emerging Worker Committee meeting to determine which community-based organizations will receive summer youth funds for summer 2026.

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, Maria Kotary and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow met with the SEAT Center to discuss existing and net new collaborations between SEAT and the college.

## DELIVERING A MEANINGFUL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

### Academic Affairs

Kim Otis, Associate Professor of Hospitality volunteered with her students to work with Executive Chef Kenny Kehn at 677 Prime for a Double H Hole in the Woods Fine Dining Fundraiser. They worked in both front and back of the house and were proud to help raise over \$6,000 for the Double H Ranch. (2.2, 2.5)

Dawn Jones, Director of Career & Transfer Services, attended the Empire State Service Corps Summit with student Cassandra Waldenmaier. The Summit featured two days of student impact panels, speeches and comments from SUNY Chancellor King. Cassie had the opportunity to speak about her positive experiences in the ESSC K-12 Corps with our Liberty Partnership Program in front of hundreds of her peers and ESSC Coordinators from across NY. (Gen P2)

On December 1 & 3, Melanie Uebele, LPP Program Administrator, facilitated an orientation for 11 high school student workers who will assist with Van Corlaer Elementary School's after- school program as part of a partnership with Schenectady County Connects. (2.3)

Tiffany Wilson, EOP Success Coach and Jacquie Keleher, Director of Library Services coordinated a series of activities designed to support students with wellness and stress relief during finals week. Activities included leaving notes of encouragement, holiday card making, guided stress-relief and a meditation session led by Jessica Gilbert, Dean of Learner Support. (Gen P2)

David Wolf, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning has secured training for 13 SUNY Schenectady faculty for developing AI mentors. Consequently, 10 have designed courses for Spring 2026 that will utilize an interactive AI tutor embedded into Brightspace which will be available to over 200 students. The AI tutor will utilize information provided by the instructor to answer questions posed by students. The experience is designed to increase their AI literacy through interacting and evaluating AI generated output. (2.5)

### Development and External Affairs

The Foundation is the beneficiary of \$15,000 in Food Pantry funding from SUNY

The Foundation will also receive \$20,000 to expand the Student Emergency Fund and participate in efforts to work with Community Colleges on developing their own student emergency funds.

### Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center

Schenectady College and Career Outreach staff launched a new initiative, *FAFSA & Application Completion Fridays*, at Schenectady High School in partnership with the guidance office. This series invites students and families to receive hands-on support with completing college and financial aid applications.

Schenectady College and Career Outreach staff met with New Choices Recovery Center staff to strengthen referral pathways for clients in need of employment and educational support services.

### Strategic Initiatives and Planning

The Office of Admissions concluded fall Instant Admit programs with three high schools from across the Capital Region, Schenectady, Burnt Hills and Saratoga High Schools. Participating students at each high school received an acceptance packet, personalized enrollment advisement, and post the event were sent a formal acceptance email. This early, in-person admissions experience continues to strengthen student engagement and improves follow-through toward Fall enrollment (2.1).

Jacob Young, Admissions Advisor, represented SUNY Schenectady at the community job fair hosted by the NYS Department of Labor, Schenectady College & Career Outreach Center (SCCOC), and Schenectady County Connects on Thursday, December 4, 2025. During the event, Jacob engaged with community members to share information about SUNY Schenectady's academic programs, the admissions process, and upcoming enrollment opportunities. His presence, helped connect with prospective students, particularly adult learners to support Spring 2026 enrollment efforts. The Admissions Team also hosted students from Washington Irving on Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. Students were presented with information on the admissions process, the process for registering with the Disability Resource Office and given a tour of campus (2.1).

### Student Affairs

#### SGA/Student Activities

SGA and Student Activities hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly remodeled SGA Conference Room. The event featured remarks from SGA Vice President Yuliano Cameren, Executive Vice President Patrick Ryan, and President Moono, who highlighted ongoing campus revitalization efforts and the significance of repurposing historic spaces. Speakers noted that the conference room was formerly a rooftop section of the old Van Curler Hotel, underscoring the institution's commitment to honoring the site's history while creating modern, student-centered spaces.

### Workforce Development and Community Education

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, Sarah Wilson-Sparrow attended a meeting with Averill Park and Corinth schools along with the Capital Region Workforce Development & Community Education and the Center for Economic Growth. This group is meeting with regional school districts to encourage better communication and transfer from high school to college or further training.

## BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### Academic Affairs

TRIO staff have created a check-in Kiosk by leveraging a Zebra scanner and Microsoft Forms. Students have shared that this has streamlined the check-in process and Educational Aides have confirmed that the information collected facilitates easier data entry into Student Access and enables the capture of more accurate information on student traffic. (3.4)

Michelle Ragucci, Director of Academic Services and Digital Accessibility Liaison for the fall 2025 semester, hosted a “Canva Accessibility” session to showcase how Canva tools can assist in digital accessibility and demonstrate best practices in style, formatting, sharing content and use of audio. (3.3)

The School of Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism was awarded the Digital Accessibility for Learning Equity Certificate of Achievement. They outperformed all other divisions this Fall and had the most accessible documents and webpages. (3.4)

### Administration

The Elston Hall Skylight and President’ Terrace project is underway after additional engineering and construction was needed on the Skylight portion of the project. In late December, our contractor received and installed additional steel needed to finalize the large skylight.

Work on the CST lobby and restrooms continued during December. Our architects and contractors needed to redesign the electric heating unit in a first-floor restroom and re-ordered the main stair railing from the lobby area to the first floor. The concrete pad on the exterior of the building will be replaced this winter. We anticipate completion of the project in January of 2026.

Bids for the Elston Hall Façade and Window Replacement project were released in December. Construction will start when the warmer weather permits. Bids for the Begley Garage project are being developed and will be released in early January.

In late December/early January an older sewer pipe in the basement of Elston Hall required replacement due to age and deterioration.

### Development and External Affairs

To date, we have awarded nearly \$430,000 in support to 212 students.

The 2026-2027 scholarship application is being updated and will open for applications on January 26.

### Human Resources

#### **Employee Wellbeing & Campus Climate**

Human Resources continues to advance initiatives that strengthen employee wellbeing, community connection, and organizational resilience.

#### **Wednesday Wellbeing messages – December Focus Areas**

- 12/3 – Influenza Vaccination Week
- 12/10 – Being the change you wish to see (in celebration of Alfred Nobel)
- 12/17 – Joy

## **Workplace Wellbeing & Engagement Initiatives**

The Workplace Wellbeing committee encouraged staff to celebrate the season with a “silly sock” day, “shiny and bright” apparel day, and an ugly sweater day. These activities help reinforce a positive culture during a busy time of year.

## **Benefits Engagement**

The Workplace Wellbeing committee reviewed the various aspects of the Wellbeing Fair that was held earlier this year and began discussing a 2026 event.

## **New Employee Onboarding**

We welcomed 14 new employees this month, ensuring they received a supportive, well-structured onboarding experience aligned with institutional expectations and culture.

## **Employee Support Services**

- We provided leave counseling for four employees.
- We provided our retirees and COBRA recipients with an update on their plans for 2026.
- We prepared retiree benefits information for the December retirement of two long-term employees.

These services reinforce HR’s role as a strategic partner in employee wellbeing and organizational stability.

## **Talent Acquisition & Staffing**

HR continues to support operational effectiveness by advancing critical searches across the College.

### **Active Searches: 14 Total**

- **CSEA:** Three
- **Faculty:** Two
- **Professional Staff:** Nine

## *Strategic Initiatives and Planning*

The Strategic Initiatives & Planning team continues to review and complete accessibility updates. Amy Student, Academic Advisor, continues to update Advising documents and the Advising’s webpage content to meet Digital Accessibility guidelines, Anna Westerman, Assistant Director of Academic Advisement and Retention; and Laura Cossart, Executive Secretary II, participated in a Digital Accessibility training on Canva to support this effort. In addition, Laura Cossart, Executive Secretary II, also attended the Digital Accessibility for Excel and has assisted in reviewing webpages and documents to share feedback to team leads (Gen P3).

## *Student Affairs*

### **Wellness and Support Services**

#### **Food Pantry Data:**

- Individual visitors (unduplicated): 251 unique individuals accessed services during the semester. Individuals fed (household members served): A total of 914 individuals were supported when accounting for household members.
- Total visits for the semester: 878 visits were recorded, reflecting repeat usage by individuals and families as needed.
- Average monthly utilization: The program served approximately 220 visitors per month over the course of the semester.

- Year-over-year growth: These figures represent a 20% increase in individual visitors compared to last fall, indicating growing awareness of and reliance on the service.
- Additional seasonal support: Thanksgiving meal kits are not included in the above totals; an additional 100 families were served through this initiative.

*Workforce Development and Community Education*

Danielle Miller, Capital North Country RAEN Director, organized and facilitated a 2-day virtual state-wide training for Program Managers in collaboration with AEPP on December 16 and 19, 2025.

## ENSURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

### Academic Affairs

Professor Dr. Allyson Keyser presented a panel session at the annual winter New York State School Music Association conference which hosts K-12 students from throughout NY with current student Kaiden Bubenick and recent School of Music alum Nellie Cordi and LayVon Scott. Additionally, she hosted a recruitment table for prospective students and spoke with 4-year college representatives to establish transfer agreements. (4.3)

On December 5, 2025, Melanie Uebele, LPP Program Administrator and Margaret White, LPP School Counselor, attended CREATE Studios' annual fundraiser. CREATE Studios is a long- time valued partner of the Liberty Partnerships Program, and attending these events helps strengthen mutual support and collaboration. (4.5)

On December 16, Jay Larkin, Associate Professor School of Hotel, Culinary Arts, and Tourism and Sarah Wilson Sparrow, Vice President of Workforce Development & Community Education, attended the Center for Economic Growth Quarter 4 Workforce Development Coalition Meeting. He participated as a panelist with Mazzone Hospitality's Rebecca Gaitan to discuss hospitality industry trends in recruiting and training. (Gen P4)

On December 18, Jay Larkin, Associate Professor School of Hotel, Culinary Arts, and Tourism and Jacob Young, Admissions Advisor, attended the *WSWHE BOCES CTE Works!* event at the Saratoga City Center. *CTE Works!* is an interactive career exploration hosting over 1500 8th-12th grade students from school districts throughout the WSWHE BOCES service area. (Gen P4)

### Administration

In late December, SUNY submitted the 2026-27 budget request to the NYS Division of Budget which includes flat operating support for community colleges (the floor) and \$8M for restricted initiatives.

Divisional budgets for 2026-27 are due back to the Office of Administration in early January 2026 for consideration. Budgets will be compiled in January with revenue projections and expenditure adjustments made during the winter.

### Development and External Affairs

In addition to the contributions from SUNY, notable gifts include:

\$10,000 for the Women's Fund of the Capital Region Scholarship  
\$5,000 from Seymour Fox Foundation for the Food Pantry  
\$1,500 from a loyal Food Pantry supporter who usually send in \$500  
\$1,200 unrestricted from the Hubbard Foundation

### Student Affairs

#### Food Pantry Data

- Distribution of food and pantry items: 9,000 items value: \$28,000
- 104 Thanksgiving Meal Bags will be given out next week.

- We've already seen a 10% increase in visits from Fall 2024 vs Fall 2025 and it's not the end of the semester yet.

## PRESIDENT'S OUTREACH



On December 10th the President's Office hosted a Cupcake Social to celebrate the collegewide contribution and positive impact on SUNY Schenectady's Total Enrollment - a 10.5% increase for Fall Semester year-over-year!



# RIBBON CUTTING AND UNVEILING

*of the newly remodeled*

Student  
Government  
Association  
Room  
Elston Hall 222G





**President Moono with the Nadine Davila, SGA President and Yuliano Camarena, SGA Vice President at the Board of Trustees Holiday Social on December 15<sup>th</sup>.**