



MANY VOICES, ONE CALL – The Strategic Plan to 2026

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

April 2026

THE CULTURE OF CARE AND SUCCESS

Academic Affairs

LPP, CSTEP and TRIO grant staff have actively cultivated a collaborative, working relationship with Paige Elementary School in Schenectady. This month, Margaret White, LPP School Counselor and five LPP high school students participated in Boy’s Day Out by leading engaging activities for children in PreK – 5th grades. The following week, CSTEP and TRIO staff highlighted Women's History Month by working at interactive stations where students learned about successful women to promote their confidence, determination, and growth. (1.2, 1.4)

Diversity & Inclusion

On March 24, 2026, Catia Laird de Polanco, Associate Professor & Advisor to the President, attended Cornell University’s virtual “Inclusive Excellence Summit.”

The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of the Academic Senate announced a Celebrate Community Month calendar for the month of April. The calendar includes programming hosted by various College offices and departments, including the School of Music, Begley Library Services, Student Activities as well as committee-sponsored programming. Most events are free and open to the public.

Schenectady Outreach Center

On March 5, 2026, Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center, in partnership with Schenectady County Connects and Department of Labor, hosted a community job fair at Center City. One hundred and twenty-five job seekers attended the fair and had the opportunity to meet in person with forty employers to discuss employment opportunities.

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, and Amy Student, Academic Advisor, met with members of the College in the High School office and other staff from Academic Affairs to collaborate on planning for Early College Rising 11th graders. The group reviewed prerequisite courses that are needed for math and science along with the benefit of these courses being offered in the ECHS summer program to prepare students for higher level math and science courses.

The group also discussed processes and procedures for these students to show matriculation, register for fall classes, and possibly cohort sections for particular courses (1.3; 1.5; 2.1; 2.4; 3.1).

The Office of Admissions, in conjunction with Aviation Science Faculty, held an Aviation and Air Traffic Control Open House on Wednesday March 11th. The event featured a presentation by Admissions, an alumni presentation, a demonstration of the Air Traffic Control simulator, and a question-and-answer session with faculty from both programs. Forty-three prospective students attended the event with over 100 total attendees (Gen P1; 3.1).

Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, attended a SUNY System Enrollment meeting held virtually. The meeting focused on updates from System, including recruitment initiatives such as SUNY Reconnect, recent changes in New York State legislation allowing fully online institutions to be considered valid for admissions review, and continued progress toward Universal Guaranteed Admissions through the SUNY General Application (1.1; 3.3).

The Office of Admissions held an Instant Admit Day at Schenectady High School on Thursday, March 31st. The event focused on engaging students who had not applied to the College in the first round of college of admissions, to encourage them to think about their future before graduation, and look to SUNY Schenectady to be their college of choice. Participating students received an acceptance packet, personalized enrollment advice, and, past event, a formal acceptance email (Gen P1; 2.1; 2.3; 2.4).

Workforce Development and Community Education

On March 6, Lauren Lankau and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow attended a meeting focused on Workforce Pell Funding at Westchester Community College.

DELIVERING A MEANINGFUL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Academic Affairs

Dr. Mark Meachem, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Jessica Gilbert, Dean of Learner Support and Associate Professor Cayla Gaworecki attended the Achieving the Dream conference from March 2-5. They attended sessions focused on improving CHS Pathways, Community Colleges and Effective AI use, improved mentoring programs, Integrating Career Development into the Student journey, and more. (Gen P2)

Career Advisor, Chastity Rios, collaborated with Associate Professor, Carol Maimone and Director of Learner Support, Jessica Gilbert on a LinkedIn Workshop session for adult learners that will be implemented in April, aimed at strengthening students' social networking for professional branding and opportunity seeking. (2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5)

School of Music students Lyra Lenigk, violin and Mark Ferri, piano, performed *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, which Mark composed earlier this year, at WMHT's *Next General Festival* at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall. Lyra and Mark are coached by Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz, Adjunct Instructor for our Chamber Ensemble course. (2.5)

Kim Otis, HCAT faculty member, was exceptionally busy this month supervising student volunteers at the Albany Food and Wine Festival Wine and Dine for the Arts, guiding campus tours with Ulster County BOCES faculty and students as well as attending the New York Restaurant Show in New York City, where she was a featured presenter on Hemp Cannabinoids in Food and Beverages.(2.2)

On March 18th, SUNY Schenectady CSTEP hosted a Youth Climate Summit based on the annual Summit held at the Wild Center in Tupper Lake, NY. The event focused on high school students learning about climate change and how to make a climate action plan to bring back to their high schools for implementation. This was a truly collaborative endeavor as Diane Molloy, Director of CSTEP partnered with 14 external organizations and multiple H.S. STEP groups to help students complete their Climate Action Plans. (2.4,2.5)

Michael Henderson, Director of the EOP Program and Tiffany Wilson, EOP Success Coach accompanied EOP student Yarisa Cueva to an awards ceremony hosted by SUNY. She was recognized as a recipient of the Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for Student Excellence. which recognizes outstanding EOP students for their academic merit and perseverance. Yarisa will enter the Belanger School of Nursing this fall to become an R.N. (Gen P2)

On March 13th, Margaret White, LPP School Counselor, Melanie Uebele, LPP Program Administrator and Charity Roulo, LPP Assistant Director accompanied 45 Schenectady High School students to the College for a tour and information session organized by Admissions. Students engaged with representatives from support programs including TRIO, ASAP and EOP and learned about opportunities available to SUNY Schenectady students. (2.4)

On March 10th, 2026, Margaret White, LPP School Counselor and Melanie Uebele, LPP Program Administrator assisted SCCOC in facilitating a *Post High School Pathways Presentation* to LPP high school students and their guardians. (2.1, 2.3, 2.4)

Development and External Affairs

Stewardship Officer Liuzzi attended the WERC Trailblazer’s Luncheon. One of our recipients spoke to the event guests.

Senior Stewardship Officer Boink worked with current student, Lonny Davenport to create a social media video to promote Food for Thought & All That Jazz.

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, attended a meeting to discuss and finalize the 8-week offerings for business degrees. The goal is to register students in two 8-week courses that are back-to-back offerings in the Fall semester in addition to 16-week courses. This effort is aligned with the Adult Learner and Teaching & Learning Working Groups and Achieving the Dream initiatives (2.1; 2.2; 2.5; 3.5).

Mitzi Espinola, Director of Academic Advisement and Retention, participated in a SUNY-wide Transfer Townhall. This was to discuss two new SUNY-wide Transfer policies, one on a uniform grading policy for transfer credits and the second for a uniform Advanced Placement and International Bachelorette exam minimum score that would be required for transfer credits to be applied (2.1).

On March 10, 2026, ASAP hosted a “Meet the Tutors” event in the ASAP office intended to encourage use of academic support services and to foster a welcoming environment to make students at ease with working with a tutor. The event allowed students to engage directly with tutors to help reduce barriers to utilization and strengthen students’ connections to academic resources (2.3; 3.1).

Student Affairs

Financial Aid:

The Financial Aid Office is concluding the 2025–2026 FAFSA processing cycle, with continued year-over-year growth in application volume. As of March 31, 2026, a total of 3,073 FAFSAs have been received for the current aid year, compared to 2,712 received by the same date in the prior year, reflecting a 13.3% increase. This sustained growth indicates continued progress in outreach efforts and supports the institution’s commitment to improving student access to financial aid resources.

The 2026–2027 SUNY Schenectady Foundation Scholarship application is open, and early application activity remains consistent with prior year levels. As of March 31, 2026, a total of 807 scholarship applications have been submitted, compared to 803 applications at the same point last year, representing a 0.5% increase. This steady participation reflects ongoing student engagement with institutional funding opportunities and supports efforts to promote affordability and access.

Food Pantry:

Total Visits: 145 Unduplicated Visitors: 74 People Fed: 260

Items received: 1123

- Items distributed: \$2604
- Value items distributed: \$7374

Operations

- New Electric Van wrapped with SUNY Schenectady logo and design
- Continued to collect Clynk bags on campus (roughly 12 bags this month)
- Delivered 24 Clynk bags to Hannaford to be deposited in our account
- Purchased general supplies for Food Pantry
- Preparing freezer service contract (annual check in service)

Community Partnership Event

- Empire State Service Corps Day of Action with Chancellor King, March 26th Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY - participated in service work and a roundtable discussion surrounding Food Insecurity (2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5)
- Presidential Candidate tours of the Food Pantry
- Tour of the Food Pantry- donors and staff tours
- LNAP preparations/meetings
- College campuses outreaching for information on Food Pantry
- Attend SUNY Food Pantry Monthly meetings

Workforce Development and Community Education

On March 12, Sarah Wilson-Sparrow met with FMCC to discuss expanding SUNY Schenectady's Police Officer trade sponsorship to include Montgomery and Fulton counties.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Administration

Pre-construction meetings for Spring 2026 capital projects continued during March. We are scheduled to start work on the Elston Hall Cafeteria/Gathering Space, Elston Hall Façade and Elston Hall Basement in mid-April. After commencement, we will start work on the Begley Roof Drain Pipe and Begley Basement. Other projects include Phase II of the Auditorium and other smaller capital projects.

The Schenectady College and Career Outreach Center (SCCOC) moved from the Center City Arcade to the first floor of the Kindl Building. The Center will have a grand opening later in the month.

Pre-construction work for the SUNY Schenectady Aquatic Center continued. During April, the County requested the architects and engineers to reduce the scope and cost of the Center down to \$70M. After re-engineering of the project is completed, the College will work with SUNY on securing capital funding for the project.

Development and External Affairs

Engaging our Alumni and Friends

Vice President is participating on the search committee for a new Dean of HCAT and participated in the HCAT ACF Accreditation visit.

Senior Stewardship Officer Boink is working with an auction committee to gather and package wonderful auction items for FFT.

Senior Stewardship Officer Boink hosted a Casola Luncheon with the National Grid's External and Community Affairs team which included Kimberly Ireland, Brandi Landy, and Seth Browe.

Human Resources

Employee Wellbeing & Campus Climate

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

Wednesday Wellbeing messages – February focus areas

- 3/4 – Listening
- 3/11 – National 311 Day
- 3/18 – Irish Soda Bread Recipe
- 3/25 – Retrospective Day

Workplace Wellbeing & Engagement Initiatives

We are continuing to plan for our 2026 Employee Service Awards and Retiree Recognition event.

Benefits Engagement

We are preparing for our 2nd Employee Wellbeing Fair to be held on April 16th. We are also preparing a quarterly billing for our retirees on insurance, this had previously been done annually. Ellen has attended training on I-9 documentation compliance.

New Employee Onboarding

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

Employee Support Services

- We explored a platform that can assist in automating the onboarding experience for our new hires.
- We also provided leave counseling to five 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: 12 Total

- **Civil Service:** Three
- **Faculty:** Two
- **Professional Staff:** Seven

Strategic Initiatives and Planning

Dale Miller, Director of Institutional Research, submitted two SUNY System reports, three federal IPEDS reports, two New York State Department of Education reports, and uploaded annual accreditation documents to Middle States. Mr. Miller also provided data for the following projects: the student list for the SUNY Student Satisfaction Survey, enrollment data to Administration for budgeting, graduate and transfer data to TRIO, supplemental program review data, program data to the Disability Resource Office, and enrollment data to Admissions, EOP, and CHS data for the VPAA (3.3).

Mary Silvestri, Director of Admissions and Matriculated Enrollment, and Kevin Dean, Executive Director of ASAP, met with their counterparts at SUNY Jefferson to learn about their application process for campus opportunity programs and how they use Slate with their process. They reviewed SUNY Jefferson's workflow, which utilizes a single application to determine student eligibility for opportunity programs and to distribute eligible student information to support coordination of opportunity program recruitment efforts. These efforts are now being reviewed to determine if adopting any of the elements discussed could support our College's work (3.1; 3.3; 3.5; 2.1; 1.5).

SUNY Schenectady is participating as a pilot campus in the SUNY-wide ASAP Data Dashboard initiative. The ASAP program is engaged in the data validation process at this time to ensure accuracy

and consistency in reporting metrics. The goal of this SUNY System pilot is to support improved data transparency, performance tracking, and inform strategic decision-making for campuses and SUNY System (3.4; 3.5).

ENSURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Academic Affairs

Dawn Jones, Director of Career & Transfer Services, expanded sustainable, paid on-campus student employment opportunities by strategically leveraging grant and designated funding. This included integrating Federal Work-Study, Empire State Service Corps, and Foundation Fellowship funds to support departmental and campus-wide operations and initiatives (4.2)

Associate Professor Mark Evans hosted the New York State Schools of Music Association (NYSSMA) Piano Festival which brought over 400 K-12 students to campus. School of Music students enrolled in our Music in Contemporary Education course assisted in running the festival. (4.3)

Dr. William Meckley, Dean Emeritus of the School of Music, put the band back together as the Empire Jazz Orchestra performed a reunion concert to raise money for music scholarships. (4.4)

The College EOP program has received approval for the *High-Impact Practices (HIPs): Paid Internship Scale-Up Initiative*. Funding for this initiative will ensure that 15 students will have access to paid internships and other High-Impact Practices (HIPs) that have been proven to build career readiness, strengthen belonging and support timely degree completion. Funding will be used ensure that every EOP student (admitted after FALL 2025) may complete at least one paid, career-relevant experience before graduation. (4.3)

Administration

The proposed 2026-27 college operating budget is nearing completion. As of early April, the State budget had not passed. Upon passing of the State budget, the college will know its State support figure. Conversations with the County over sponsoring county support of the college are ongoing.

Over the next few months, the college will be relocating parts of the Workforce Development program from Center City to the main campus in anticipation of the end of the Center City lease, for the 20,000 square foot space, at the end of August. The college will continue to lease the 11,000 square foot space at Center City until December of 2027.

Development and External Affairs

Scholarship solicitations were sent to annual scholarship donors to secure their gifts for 2026-2027.

Stewardship Officer Liuzzi attended and spoke at a fundraising dinner for the Chef Jackie Baldwin endowed scholarship. To date this event has brought in over \$1,500.

Vice President met with donors Stan Blanchard and Johanna Petersen to discuss additional funding of their scholarship.

Workforce Development and Community Education

On March 18, Dr. Rota, Lauren Lankau, and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow submitted a Future of Work Center grant application for \$1.5 million in partnership with Hudson Valley Community College focusing on the Aviation sector.

During the month of March WFD&CE staff continued discussions with Capital Region BOCES, LaSalle, and College in the High School to develop an aviation focused college in the high school program.

PRESIDENT'S OUTREACH



Dr. Steady Moono, SUNY Schenectady President with Chancellor Dr. John B. King and Schenectady City School District Superintendent Dr. Carlos Cotto, at the SUNY System Administration EOP event at Schenectady High School.