Performance Improvement Plan
Schenectady County Community College

Section 1: Campus Alignment with SUNY Excels

Introduction
Schenectady County Community College is located in Schenectady, New York serving Schenectady County and the surrounding capital region counties. Most students, nearly 98%, are New York state residents.

SCCC employs nearly 70 full time faculty and serves over 6000 credit bearing students per semester with a large percentage of part-time students. SCCC offers over 40 degree and certificate programs with degree offerings of the AOS (culinary only), AAS, AS and AA degrees.

Our students come from the capital region with the largest (majority) percentage from Schenectady county and neighboring Albany and Saratoga counties.

SCCC is recognized nationally as a member of the National Association of the Schools of Music (NASM) and the culinary program is a member of the American Culinary Federation (ACF) with exemplary status from the ACF; the only community college in New York State to receive such recognition.

Mission / Standing
SCCC is in the process of finalizing a new strategic plan with an emphasis on alignment to SUNY goals focusing on access, completion, and student success by committing to strong academic programs and student support services. Additionally SCCC is committed to campus renewal by focusing on its employees, facilities, and technology, and, importantly, recognizing its need to seek funding beyond student tuition and public support. Our current strategic plan (Gateway to Excellence Strategic plan 2010-2015) is linked to this document and has served the College well during a period of growth. Our new plan recognizes the challenges for community colleges and the competitive environment that we face. The goals discussed in this document are based on the new plan that will be implemented in January 2016.

Our new mission is:

We are an inclusive, collaborative community built on a foundation of excellence in teaching and learning, quality support services and a personalized approach to education, which empowers our students and engages our communities.

We are recognized as a leader in providing educational opportunities that meet the needs of the capital region and beyond. SCCC is known as an affordable institution where quality is of the utmost importance. We are known for our dedicated and caring faculty. Many students see SCCC as a starting point. We are nationally recognized for our School of Music and the School of Hotel, Culinary Arts, and Tourism; however the story doesn’t end there. SCCC was one of the first colleges in the region to recognize the potential of nanotechnology partnering early on with Super Power, an early adopter of nanotechnology for transmission lines, in a collaborative effort to train students in this new technology. We continually respond to workforce needs and have partnered with local businesses and high schools to provide for the needs of the community. We are recognized as a leader in providing College in the High School courses for students and continue to expand our reach to high schools to provide more opportunities for collaboration.

We are seeking to expand our STEM education opportunities and we know that we will need to remain competitive by investing in technology, infrastructure and STEM laboratories. In order to do so we will...
seek funding through grants, private partnerships, alumni, and our foundation in order to sustain our initiatives.

SCCC will examine new modalities to include a robust online program which will include partnering with Open SUNY. SCCC will provide the necessary online support to provide a quality education.

Program Mix / Centers / Distinct Programs or Activities
Our academic programs are designed to meet the employment and transfer needs of the community and the region. We offer certificates to align with associate degrees. We offer a mix of AAS and AS and AA degrees depending on the students’ ultimate goals. SCCC also partners with SUNY Delhi who resides on the campus to offer completion of bachelor’s degrees in event management, business computer technology, and criminal justice. We also offer an AOS degree in Culinary Arts which has received exemplary status by the ACF.

We will expand our offerings to align with industry needs. SCCC will expand on the tourist industry to include brewing operations and the science around brewing. Additionally, SCCC will be exploring and implementing health care related programs to meet the needs of the community. SCCC has strengthened its liberal arts offerings to include concentrations aligned with SUNY transfer and will continue to develop appropriate transfer options. SCCC is also working with the new casino industry locating to Schenectady to offer programs focused on hospitality and business in collaboration with the management of the casino to produce trained local workforce and increase job placement in this area.

We are also expanding our online presence to increase our offerings and focus on niche programs that other campuses do not offer. SCCC is committed to applied learning and sees this area as a strength on which to expand. Additionally SCCC will expand and develop more prior learning experience opportunities to increase and shorten the time to degree completion.

We are participating in a number of activities that will reduce the time in developmental studies. We are one of ten explorers in the Carnegie Pathways considering the offering of Quantway and/or Statway. We are also participating in the Community College Research Center (Columbia University) study to develop an algorithm to improve the placement of students in developmental studies.

SCCC is proud of its commitment to improving retention and persistence through its Retention committee which is analyzing data, discussing issues, investigating alternatives, and implementing new strategies. We are strongly considering a commitment to Achieving the Dream to focus on student success.

Post-Graduation Success
SCCC recognizes that SUNY System is negotiating an MOU with the New York State Labor Department so that we will be able to better track the job attainment of our graduates.

This will supplement existing work already completed in tracking our culinary graduates which was created by our own Institutional Research Division with cooperation from the New York State Department of Labor and our alumni foundation.

Alumni/Philanthropy
SCCC continues to reach out to alumni to share their stories and their success. Our 2014 graduation speaker was a successful graduate, George Goldhoff, who was the General Manager of the famous Rainbow Room. Other speakers included a SCCC graduate and a Ph.D. graduate currently working for NASA.

Strategic Plan / SUNY Excels Goals
SCCC is in the development of its five-year strategic plan, which will go into effect in January 2016. The plan aligns with the six big ideas of the Power of SUNY. Major goals/commitments include:

- Expand access and increase student success
- Ensure a quality, relevant, coherent and innovative curriculum
- Invest in Campus renewal
- Strengthen and expand community and strategic partnerships
- Financial stability

SCCC shares SUNY’s overall commitment to the Completion Agenda and SUNY Excels.

We are setting goals in SUNY Excels focus areas as shown in Section 2 of this report.

However, consistent with the information above, SCCC’s priority areas of focus include: improvement in first to second year retention, increased persistence, increased graduation rates, reduced time to degree, increased diversity among faculty and staff, extending and identifying applied learning experiences, increasing access through online programming, and improving our enrollment processes. You will see in Section 2 of this report that we have made the strongest commitments for growth or improvement in these areas.

**Environmental factors**

SCCC makes these commitments not only in the spirit of continuous improvement, but in recognition of current challenges/responsibilities which include declining high school enrollments, aging infrastructure, and increased competition.

**Investment Fund**

SCCC, in conjunction with five other SUNY campuses (Fredonia, Oneonta, Plattsburgh, Alfred, and Dutchess) has received approval of its white paper and has submitted a complete proposal for SUNY’s Investment Fund as follows:

Scheduling Student Success (Fredonia) which aligns with SUNY’s priorities to improve our offerings and improve efficiency. The goal of the program is to reduce time to completion to 3.8 years in 2018 and 3.6 years in 2020.

SCCC has also submitted a proposal to increase our online offerings of over 20 programs to go to a fully online format. In addition SCCC will bring its niche programs to a fully online presence and work with Open SUNY to provide opportunities to all SUNY students. The intent is to increase access as indicated in SCCC’s strategic plan. By improving our early alert and advising systems, SCCC also plans to improve overall retention. The expectation is that the funding will help us to increase enrollment by 10-12% if funded.

An additional investment fund submission focuses on analyzing and improving our enrollment process. In short, this will include an evaluation of current processes followed by recommendations for implementing new improved processes, a communication plan and branding. Our result is to improve our enrollment and graduation rates by 10% if funded.

SCCC also submitted a full proposal for increased EOP funding to offer additional opportunities to our EOP students.

**2.1 Access**

**1. Full Enrollment Picture**

SCCC is planning to continue making inroads into the New York City market area (i.e., attended the SUNY sponsored College Fair held in NYC in May of 2015). In the fall of 2014, 47 new students from the five
New York City Boroughs began their studies at SCCC. Additionally, the college is actively recruiting in Vermont. The Bennington, Vermont area is within commutable distance to SCCC and there has been success in attracting Vermont students to such programs as Culinary Arts and Aviation. Additionally, Vermont students may be eligible for their State Financial Aid Grant: VSAC. They may use this grant to attend out of state colleges, which helps mitigate the out of state tuition Vermont residents pay at SCCC.

Schenectady was recently announced as one of the New York sites for a new casino. A casino, which will be about a mile from the campus, is expected to open in two years and is projected to bring many casino-related and ancillary jobs to the area. SCCC’s relatively new degree program in Casino and Gaming Management is experiencing enrollment growth as a result and there are plans to offer additional programs as the industry demands.

In 2010, SCCC introduced the first ninth grade class (125 students) of Schenectady Smart Scholars Early College High School (SSSECHS). Since then, SCCC has an established pipeline of new students from the SSSECHS Program. This cohort of students, who are co-enrolled at Schenectady High School (SCCC’s largest feeder school) and SCCC begin earning college credit in the summer before their freshman year of high school. A Smart Scholars student has the opportunity to earn a minimum of 24 SCCC credits while in high school. In Fall 2014, 36 out of the 57 (63%) SSSECHS graduates attended SCCC as matriculated students. SCCC would like to model this program at additional, if not all, Schenectady County Schools. SCCC’s College in the High School program allows students from participating local high schools to take SCCC courses concurrently while in high school. These students factor prominently into the enrollment picture and the College is planning on expanding this enrollment by creating clear pathways into SCCC programs. The number of CHS students who ultimately matriculated into SCCC has topped 250 in some recent years. A “1+1” initiative is in the planning stage, where students may complete half of the credits earned as CHS students and enter SCCC as sophomores. Additionally, CHS registrations have reached over 2000 registrants in the Fall semesters.

The College also partners with the Schenectady School District in the offering of a TASC Preparation Program. The school district has around 200 students per year in this program and those under 21 are co-enrolled at SCCC (this comprises about 25% of the total TASC enrollment). While the College works closely with these students, there are plans to have a dedicated liaison between the College and the school district that will develop a transition program for TASC graduates and assist them in enrolling in college level courses at SCCC. SCCC will work with Mohonasen to utilize their new building that is anticipated to open in Fall 2016. This technology center will allow the College to expand CHS programs in the STEM fields.

Degree Works presents new opportunities for the College to work closely with students in Schenectady County high schools in the areas of dual enrollment, career exploration and financial aid services. The Academic Advisement Center staff plans to work collaboratively with the high school Guidance Counseling staff to assist students with navigating college course options and career paths.

SCCC students have access to ride the Capital District Transportation Authority buses. This partnership has helped our students not only get to and from their classes, it helps them get to our sites located in downtown Schenectady and Albany, provides access to internships and jobs, and also provides transportation access to child care, shopping, entertainment and more. The Ridership Program has helped those students who rely on public transportation and, thus, allows the college to expand enrollment opportunities to those students.
The College experienced a one-time rise in enrollment when United Housing opened College Suites at Washington Square before the fall semester of 2012. SCCC was able to attract students from out of the area in large numbers and the percentage of students from out of the area doubled. In fall of 2011, 7% of new students came from out of the Capital Region; with the introduction of housing in 2012, that percentage climbed to 14% and in fall 2014 it rose to 15.6%. Recruitment efforts are planned to continue for out-of-area students which, in turn, will have a positive effect on enrollment growth. United Housing has expressed willingness to expand its capacity based on demand. SCCC’s Student Affairs Division will increase programming efforts at the housing in an effort to engage these students and to create a vibrant living area with opportunities to engage in the community’s cultural offerings.

The College has a long-standing partnership with SUNY Delhi where SCCC graduates may finish their Baccalaureate Degree through Delhi on the SCCC campus. The Delhi majors offered at SCCC include the popular Criminal Justice and a BBA in Event Management as well as a business technology program. Additionally, the college has many articulations for 2+2 transfer to local and SUNY Colleges. These linkages are attractive to prospective and current students and serve to strengthen enrollment. The College will focus on strengthening these articulations by updating articulations to include potential scholarships to transferring graduates.

Additionally, SCCC plans to expand its flexible scheduling and online initiatives (discussed in further detail in a later section). The College will also assess the current advising model and make changes as necessary to improve the advising system. The College plans to offer additional late start alternatives for new and continuing students as well as a winter intersession.

The College added the position of Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs with intent to globalize the curriculum by offering short-term travel opportunities for our students and also to offer student exchange opportunities, thus exposing the college to a large number of international students. SCCC successfully planned a Culinary trip to Italy in May of 2015. The trip was attended by 10 students. A follow up trip is planned and the faculty are now in the process of developing this experience to include a credit option. Additionally, SCCC is developing a plan for an additional culinary exchange program in Indonesia.

1. **NYS Residents Served by SUNY**

   SCCC’s total enrollment picture is heavily dependent upon New York State residents. In fact, ninety eight point nine percent of SCCC students are from New York State. The recruitment and enrollment efforts listed above will serve to increase the number of NYS residents served by SUNY. It is important to stress that development of new programs are a result of local advisory committees specifically addressing local needs and therefore the majority of enrollment increases are expected to come from NYS residents. SCCC is expecting to increase out of area residents as a result of housing and innovative programs, but primarily the recruitment effort is within the NYS geographical region.

2. **DIVERSITY**

   SCCC is committed to workplace diversity and creating an inclusive organizational culture for all. The campus recognizes the diversity of the community, fosters this diversity and strives to ensure a discrimination-free environment. Diversity not only brings a range of experiences, perspectives, and ideas to our decision-making, investigations and other activities, it allows the best environment for innovation, productivity and collegiality to thrive.
According to the *June 2015 Data Brief: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*, SCCC, at 29%, was slightly below the community college aggregate of 31.4% of minority and international student enrollment for Fall 2014. Nearly all the race/ethnic diversity comes from the enrollment of underrepresented minority (URM) students, with notably smaller enrollments of Asian and International students.

Considering the percentage of Pell recipients by campus (Fall 2014); SCCC is at 56%; considerably higher than the SUNY community colleges aggregate of 44.7%. At community colleges, the percentage of URM students receiving Pell is approximately 56% and white students is approximately 38.4%. SUNY has noted Pell recipient students graduate at a markedly lower rate than non-Pell recipient peers. SCCC is addressing this disparity with programs such as SUNY’s Access to Success, Smart Track and Taking Students to Scale initiatives. The SUNY Completion Agenda aims to make significant strides in this area by increasing the effectiveness of remediation, financial literacy and other important levers.

SCCC committed to moving closer toward a campus community reflective of our state’s diversity. Examples of how SCCC is addressing efforts for increasing diversity on campus include, but are not limited to:

- **Commitment to the Minority Internship Program.** This program is designed to assist with the recruitment, retention, and promotion of outstanding scholars from different backgrounds, including individuals from groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education. SCCC accepts two individuals into this program each year with the intent to provide a broad introduction to community college with the focus on teaching.

- **Introduction of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council** in fall 2014. The Council is comprised of campus and community leaders. The purpose of the Council is to provide recommendations for increasing the number of under-represented minority students enrolled and employees hired that exceeds both regional and state trends.

- **SCCC is developing strategies/practices for student and faculty recruitment and retention to assure progress.** SCCC is also rolling out a strategic plan for enrollment to include diversity initiatives.

- **Working to ensure implementation of best practices to attract diverse students and employees,** supports were developed to ensure retention of both students and employees, and the enhancement of the Human Resources Office has helped to foster a welcoming environment for all on campus.

- **SCCC will work aggressively with other SUNY institutions and high schools to increase the pipeline of under-represented students who advance to enrollment at SCCC.** One such example of these efforts is the Schenectady Smart Scholars Early High School where the student minority presence is above 60%.

### 3. 4. Capacity

Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) is seeking to improve access, increase enrollments, and increase graduation rates by scaling up its online program to bring niche programs to a fully online status and to bring at least another twenty programs that are partially online to a fully online status. By increasing the online programs in specialty areas and increasing the overall online programs, SCCC will contribute to SUNY’s completion agenda by increasing enrollment and by increasing the rate of completion. SCCC will begin this process immediately and will have three of SCCC’s niche programs submitted for SUNY approval by May 2016. The additional scale up will occur over the next two years. By utilizing prior learning assessment, where practicable, and implementing identified PLA agreements for students with specific industry experience, SCCC will scaleup its ability for students to graduate. In addition, SCCC is proposing to offer many of these online courses in an accelerated format. SCCC has
estimated a 12% increase in enrollment based on this initiative if fully funded through the SUNY innovation funds.

2.1 2.2 Completion

5. Completions

SCCC’s overall drive to improve metrics concerning completion, including retention, persistence, and graduation, will be supported by the colleges’ Retention Committee. The Retention Committee of the Academic Senate, which is comprised of faculty, staff, and administration from across the college, will continue to work with the Vice President of Academic Affairs to create a culture of consistent and regular self-reflection and data analysis concerning all the metrics of completion. The following summarizes the current and planned work of the Retention Committee, as well as other initiatives, over the next five years.

SCCC has added a number of new programs over the past 3 years to include Supply Chain Management, Casino and Gaming Management, Biological technician, Biotechnology, Entrepreneurship Certificate, Medical Coding and Billing Certificate and more. In addition, SCCC’s division of academic affairs in its five year plan will be identifying new potential programs relating to Brewing, Science of Brewing, Agribusiness, Healthcare programs, and a number of new concentrations as well as continued focus on STEM programming. In addition, SCCC is aggressively pursuing a significant growth in online programs.

In light of these programmatic offerings, the Retention Committee intends to use the guided pathways framework for programmatic revisions, devised by Thomas Bailey of the CCRC in his new text *Redesigning America’s Community Colleges*. The committee intends to support academic divisions in their revision of academic programs into a *guided-pathways model* by: simplifying program requirements and electives, generating clear media that articulate these pathways, and educating SCCC students about the new guided pathways. As an overarching framework for completion work, the college feels that the guided-pathways model of the CCRC has the most potential to improve our completion outcomes.

Looking forward, the reviews below will show that SCCC can best support the Planned Goals of 150k by 2020 by improving its 3-year graduation rate from 16.9% to 23%. Graduation rates are the key area in which SCCC is not performing at par with its peers. Thus, while recruiting new students, and retaining them will be a focus of the college, SCCC can best help support its goal by reducing its time to degree completion and graduating a larger percentage of the students who attend the college. The plans to improve graduation and persistence rates are included in the review below.

6. Student Achievement / Success (SAM)

In 2014 Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) participated for the first time in the Student Achievement Measure (SAM). SCCC joins SUNY in the utilization of the SAM framework, to track graduation rates, transfers, and persistence. SAM can provide a more accurate picture of student success. SCCC has been able to track 80% of our students to follow up with overall transfer rates and employment. SCCC anticipates that over the next five years, utilizing SAM, our rates will be more reflective of actual student success. We will begin tracking student success from year to year as 2014 was our first year and developing an improvement plan based on a more in depth analysis.

7. Graduation Rates –
**Problem:** Looking at SCCC IPED data figures 10 and 11 (page 5), it is clear that while SCCC does retain students at a rate comparative to its peer institutions (57% compared to 58% full-time retention of first-time students), the college falls far below peer institutions in average graduation rates (15% compared to 23%). Furthermore, the 3-year graduation rate has dropped from 20.6% to 16.9% from 2009-2014 while the percentage of first year retention has remained steady near 57% for the same time period (SUNY EXCELS: Data Executive Summary). Consequently, according to the data in IPEDS and the SUNY Excels data, *persistence* (not retention) should be the focus of this self-review.

**Solution:** To respond to this gap, the Retention Committee will spearhead a year of inquiry and data analysis in 2015-16 to discern why SCCC’s graduation rate remains low. The college needs to collect and analyze data concerning the follow factors concerning our persistence problem.

- Percentage of student failing and re-taking courses
- Identification of gatekeeping courses
- Percentage of student enrolling in courses not required in their degree program
- Percentage of student changing majors
- Percentage of developmental students who are not progressing towards degree completion (using degree-works), including program and division comparisons

Through an analysis of program reviews and other institutional data, the Retention Committee will recommend changes to degree programs, advising, developmental education, and course placement. For example, if it is shown that a specific gatekeeping course has high failure rates, the committee will recommend both the revision of the course as well as adding Supplemental Instruction to improve the course completion rates. Additionally, if the committee finds that students are being misadvised into coursework that does not move them toward completion; changes to our advising model will be considered. In sum, the first step for SCCC is to generate a culture of regular data review that helps identify its *specific problems* in relation to persistence and completion. The Retention Committee is tasked with creating this new culture and making recommendations.

SCCC also believes that graduation rates will be improved by the new seamless transfer policy in which a student must graduate to receive the SUNY guarantee of “seamless transfer”. SCCC will educate the faculty and the student body on the importance of graduation by holding informational sessions and communicating the importance of graduation prior to transfer to a four year institution.

SCCC will also utilize Open SUNY to assist students in conveniently finding needed courses to complete their program in a timely manner. In addition, SCCC will reach out to those students who have not graduated and direct them to completion either on campus, online or through the Open SUNY network.

Lastly, in a review of data through the ATD network, it is clear that there are achievement gaps for URM students in the 20 most populated first-year courses, like English Composition and introductory Math courses. Through the leadership of our new president, Dr. Steady Moono, and a significant contribution from him, the college plans to create a mentoring program for minority youth that pairs students with campus faculty and staff in an effort to narrow achievement gaps.

8. **Time to Degree** –

**Problem:** Considering the data reviewed on graduation rates, one major challenge SCCC faces is improving its time to degree rates. According to our IPEDS figure 11, only 6% of student graduate in normal time (2 years), 17% in 3 years, and 21% in 4 years. Furthermore, the time to degree has risen
from 3.75 years in 2009-2010 to 3.94 years in 2013-14. All these numbers show significant negative differences with our peer institutions.

Solutions: SCCC is currently following four major plans of action to address this concern. First, the faculty developed and taught a First-Year Experience course for the first time in the 2014-2015 academic year. The class includes curricula focused on choosing a major and career path, understanding curricular requirements for each student’s chosen program, and advising/course placement. As this is a new course, the faculty will continue to improve and revise the course. Its impact on retention and degree progress will be evaluated by faculty in conjunction with the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs. Second, the college is now using Degree-Works as its primary tool in academic advising. Continued training of faculty and advisors on its use will be supported to ensure students make progress in their degree programs. Furthermore, the integration of this tool into the FYS course, including teaching students how to use it, is a goal of the new course.

Third, close to 50% of SCCC students place in at least one developmental course. To lower time to degree completion, by 2013 SCCC had made many changes to its developmental education programs. SCCC followed national trends collapsing four developmental reading and writing classes into two integrated reading and writing courses to simplify and shorten the developmental sequence. Similarly, in the academic years of 2013-14 and 2014-15 the developmental math sequence and introductory math sequences were also revised. SCCC is also an exploring college with SUNY in the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s Quantway and Statway initiative. SCCC administration and faculty attended the meeting this summer in San Francisco and is one of the “SUNY 10” who are exploring the implementation of one or both of these courses. The entire math faculty is participating in discussions on the success of the program at other institutions, and most will be attending the SUNY sponsored conference in November. The Liberal Arts Division houses both developmental programs and will be conducting its regular developmental program review which will inform the progress of these changes by the 2016-2017 academic year. In addition, the creation of a summer bridge program to accelerate students through the developmental sequence was piloted in both the summer of 2014 and the summer of 2015. In the reading/writing program over 90% of the students successfully tested out of developmental work at the end of the program, and 50% of Math students also successfully tested out of developmental work or moved into a high level developmental class. The college plans to expand this promising summer bridge program to help enroll more students and thus reduce the time to degree completion. In sum, continuous improvement to developmental programs to lower time-to-degree completion will continue to be pursued.

Lastly, SCCC is participating in a study conducted by the Community College Research Center, Columbia University (CCRC) that helps place students into developmental coursework or college level coursework using a new method (an algorithm) that has the goal of “underplacing” fewer students. The CCRC has found that nationally nearly 30% of all students taking developmental courses do not need the remedial work (or are underplaced), and thus these students take longer to complete their degree program than needed. Critically, SCCC will be able to keep the specific program developed by the CCRC, and should the study show this algorithm works, the college will use it to help place its incoming students into appropriate coursework.

SCCC anticipates that the newly designed pathways will improve time to completion and put SCCC in a position to guarantee a finish in two. SCCC’s goal will be to develop the finish in two guarantee in the 2017 academic year.

SCCC is participating in a grant proposal with Fredonia to purchase Ad Astra course check-up and Platinum Analytics to improve course scheduling and optimization with the expectation of improved
time to completion, for first time students, at an aggressive goal of time to completion by 2018 of 3.8 and 2020 of 3.6.

On the whole, SCCC has charged its Retention Committee with creating a culture of consistent data analysis in relation to SUNY EXCELS completion goals. Through these multidisciplinary groups, the college plans to award more degrees and certificates in a shorter time period by assessing when and where the college loses these students and analyzing data specific to student success.

2.3 Success

9. SUNY Advantage –

SCCC has taken a strong role in applied learning by engaging in internships, coops, and service learning. SCCC was in the first phase of SUNY works and as a result developed a new program, Supply Chain Management, with a cooperative learning experience requirement. SCCC has experience in cooperative learning through its culinary program where students are required to complete 600 hours of experience as part of the American Culinary Federation accreditation. SCCC has also been active for many years in the Disney program, allowing students to complete a semester long coop program.

In addition, SCCC is well-known for its commitment to Service Learning. SCCC was involved in a Service Learning grant in collaboration with the College of Saint Rose approximately five years ago in which SCCC integrated a number of service learning activities into their programs. Currently, SCCC has already planned to provide an identified applied learning opportunity for all students by 2020. SCCC has an established task force and is well-positioned to ensure that not only do students have the opportunity, but that all students will partake. The task force is planning an applied learning celebration to highlight the success of students and also to encourage more participation. Several events are being planned by the task force to educate the college community on what applied learning is and what the benefits are. As mentioned, SCCC has had representation at SUNY by participating in the first phase of SUNY Works by the VP of Academic Affairs and in Service Learning by Professor Adamany.

SCCC faculty are also requiring students to research and present in the STEM fields. For several years the Biology class has presented their research in a poster session where the college community was invited. The work has been impressive. To encourage professional presentations, the college purchased a copier to produce professional posters for presentations in the division of Math, Science, Technology and Health in an effort to scale up research initiatives.

Our efforts in providing applied learning experiences will create the connectedness that will help to improve our retention and subsequent employment.

10. Financial Literacy –

Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) wants to be certain students and their families make the right choices by providing the right tools, information and guidance throughout their time at SCCC. SCCC and Inceptia have partnered to provide students with a free online portal to help manage federal student loans. Through this online portal, students can keep track of their loan amounts and due dates, connect with loan servicers, and create a Repayment Guide checklist. The goal is to keep students on track with their borrowing and loan repayment.

SCCC has established early financial intervention strategies and identification procedures for students who wish to withdraw from classes. Students who withdraw, are at risk for not completing their degree, defaulting on student loans and not meeting their career pursuits. Early identification of students who informally withdraw or intend to withdraw is a key factor in helping these students reengage at a
campus, helping them to acclimate to their campus environment and preventing them from becoming delinquent on student loans, ultimately reducing the risk for default. Students expressing interest in withdrawing from classes are directed to the SCCC Financial Aid Office. Students who speak with a financial aid officer before withdrawing from a course or a term may rethink their decision to withdraw.

SCCC works hard to maintain up to date student and family contact information. During any point of contact with students, administrators and staff work to verify contact information as a standard best practice across campus. Current contact information promotes better communication and can improve student retention, success and ultimately help prevent delinquency and default.

In addition, SCCC has implemented a number of measures to increase financial awareness and reduce student default including:

- **SUNY Smart Track Financial Avenue** is an online learning environment that empowers students for a lifetime of financial success. The interactive financial aid literacy tools can assist students to achieve smart money management skills. Courses and modules cover topics that include budgeting, credit cards, identify theft, paying for college, banking, debt, working in college, and savings. This learning center promotes financial literacy, loan payment estimators, responsible borrowing and successful repayment planning.
- Educational programming is provided on campus throughout the academic year to address issues of money management, financial management, credit management and identity theft prevention.
- Keeping students engaged to promote retention and to increase completion rates – strategies for all borrowers beginning with loan disbursement through grace period and repayment. Studies show that students who complete their education are more likely to become successful student loan repayers- regardless of the amount borrowed.
- Constant communication with staff and faculty to provide them with the latest available information to answer questions from students;
- Utilizing data driven approaches to student retention and default prevention using federal and SUNY data to identify at risk borrowers
- Constant communication and targeted interventions with students who are identified as potentially ‘at risk’ for defaulting. Creating targeted and measurable campus interventions to mitigate risk, expanding services to include communications with students throughout their time on campus and beyond.

SCCC stands with SUNY in the commitment to tripling the number of students registered for SMART Track, growing from 22% now to 66% by 2020, and to reducing the cohort default rate from 19 to 14%, consistent with the best in the SUNY community college sector.

### 2.4 Inquiry

#### 11. Total Sponsored Activity –

SCCC is seeking to strengthen its presence in seeking competitive grant funding. The College has created a grant proposal process and each area has been tasked to identify areas where grant funding will be sought. SCCC received renewal for the TRIO grant for the next five years and was recently awarded a C-Step grant and was renewed for HPOG funding. SCCC has identified high needs grant funding for the Biological Technician program. SCCC participated in the TAAACCT grant funding and developed a Mechatronics certificate. Currently, faculty are working on developing a NEH grant proposal and are researching NIH grant proposal. Grants are tracked by the foundation office and the controller maintains a record of all funding.
12. **Student hands-on research, entrepreneurship, etc.** –

The SCCC applied learning task force will be recommending guidelines for how courses should be identified by the different definitions of applied learning. There will need to be a clear strategy for collecting the data on what courses are considered to be applied learning. This data should be captured prior to the end of the semester so the College can ensure the data is entered in Banner in order for SIRIS reporting to be correct. This data element will be determined based on how SUNY IR requires the data to be submitted through SIRIS.

13. **Scholarship, Discover and Innovation**-

In order to record this activity accurately, there would need to be an effort to identify whether the activity occurs at the course level or the student level. The activity may be able to be identified as a student accomplishment. The activity might be defined as anything from research with faculty, independent research or research with other students.

**Engagement**

14. **START-UP New York and beyond** (businesses started / jobs created)

SCCC was an early adopter of the Start-Up NY initiative and has seen four businesses partner with the college as part of the Start Up initiative. These startup companies have projected a need for 12-15 interns which provides excellent opportunities for SCCC students in a number of areas including computer, liberal arts, and business. Additionally, these businesses have committed to serving on advisory boards and participating in speaking engagements. These companies collectively are projecting close to one hundred jobs.

In addition to Start-Up NY, SCCC has a long-standing commitment to partnering with businesses. One of the first partnerships that launched SCCC into nanotechnology was before nanotechnology was well-known. That partnership with Super Power nearly ten years ago was the start of a number of successful collaborations. SCCC has always sought partnerships with businesses. Significant partnerships include River’s Casino, Mazzone Management, Global Foundries and many more. SCCC sees these partnerships growing and expanding with each new program initiative.

15. **Alumni / Philanthropic Support**

During the last fiscal year, the SCCC Development Office has undertaken the following strategies to enhance alumni engagement:

- **Reviving the Alumni Advisory Committee.** The Committee is now meeting on a quarterly basis.
  
  All alumni of record received an invitation to join the Committee and it has now added three new members. This advisory committee of twelve has planned a slate of six activities to appeal to alumni of all ages over the course of the next calendar year.

- **Undertaken a data-scrubbing of the entire database of alumni to receive updated addresses, phone numbers, emails and cell phone numbers.** This data has now been uploaded into the Raiser’s Edge system to increase the effectiveness of contact with alumni.

- **Developed a monthly online alumni newsletter.**

- **Suggested alumni for participation on College advisory boards.**
• Expanded invitation lists and mailings to notify alumni and invite them to events including speed networking with students, career fairs, music programs, and culinary presentations to increase their interactions with current students.

In conjunction with the aforementioned activities, the Development Office has utilized several strategies to increase alumni support and donations:

• Actively solicited all donors of record. In the past, only individuals who had given before were re-solicited. This has increased our number of new donors.

• Educated the Foundation Board on the importance of donorship. Each month as part of the Foundation Board meeting, a portion of the meeting is devoted to educating board members regarding campus programs. These sessions further inform the closest supporters about the needs of the College and enable them to serve as better spokespersons for the institution within the community at large.

• Reinstituted the Distinguished Alumni Award as part of the College’s Annual Gala. This event is one of two large fund raising events for the College and this award recognizes the contributions of graduates to society at large.

• Increased use of social media as a solicitation channel.

• Significantly increased face-to-face solicitation with alumni. This method of solicitation allows for greater opportunity for support and has yielded an increased number of scholarships, planned gifts, and annual gifts during the last fiscal year.

The appointment of a new President presents an ideal time to explore a capital campaign for the College. At the time of the departure of the previous President, SCCC had a feasibility study conducted by a consultant. The next steps in this process will be the hiring of a permanent Executive Director of Development and the undertaking of a Development audit to assess the development office’s current organizational structure. Both will be completed in the current calendar year. With these steps completed, work will be done to begin the planning of a capital campaign.

16. Civic Engagement

At SCCC, individual and collective actions are designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement takes many forms, from individual volunteerism to club activities and organizational involvement to voter registration campaigns and electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Civic Engagement encompasses a range of activities such as working in our local soup kitchen, coordinating the campus Rotaract Club activities with various Rotary Clubs in our region, supporting local neighborhood associations, supporting youth programs in our community, participating in advocacy days, and exercising the right to vote.

SCCC has been collecting information regarding the numbers who participate in organized civic engagement experiences and service learning opportunities; however, we currently have not invested in an online database program to track civic engagement. SCCC is eager to learn what other SUNY institutions are doing to capture data and reporting for this metric.

17. Economic Impact –
In 2013 SCCC partnered with Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) to create an economic impact study and to determine SCCC’s average annual impact on Schenectady County and the regional service area. EMSI’s report indicated that SUNY SCCC students, faculty, and staff contributed $18.6 million dollars to the region in fiscal year 2012-13. The college itself purchased goods and services and spent another $9.0 million to support its operations during 2012-13. The impact of college payroll and expenses in the Schenectady County Community College service area was $24.8 million in added regional income, net of local government support for the college.

EMSI estimated that students coming to SCCC from out of the area added $2.6 million in new income to the regional economy. EMSI also estimated that former SCCC students generated $140.7 million in added income for the region. The total impact of SCCC was $168.2 million in added annual regional income in 2012-13.

This data provides the basis for the college to solicit additional support from our county sponsor, local businesses, and state representatives. We plan to conduct this study again in 2017.

Section 3: Conclusion and Expected Impact on your Campus

We recognize that the overarching goal of SUNY Excels is continuous improvement. We believe the goals that we have provided on Excels measures will significantly advance SCCC in its service to its community, state and beyond. SCCC is making its most aggressive goals in the following areas: improvement in graduation rates, improvement in time to degree completion, decrease in student default rates, increase in enrollment and persistence, increased diversity of students, faculty and staff by reaching underserved markets, and extending applied learning experiences. Taken together, progress in each of these priority areas positions SCCC as a more successful and diverse institution in 2020, better prepared to serve an increasingly diverse student population.

Summary of Goals

SCCC will have increased its graduation rates from 16.9% to at least the national sector average of 27%. Doing so means that more students are positioned sooner to enter the workforce or continue their education.

SCCC will increase enrollment by building a robust online presence by developing more online programs and utilizing Open SUNY. This initiative alone is expected to increase enrollment by 12%. In addition to increasing enrollment, this initiative will also focus on intrusive advising and online support services. Additionally, the early warning system will be applied across all programs and is expected to significantly aid in retention and completion.

SCCC has also committed to improving its enrollment and onboarding/orientation processes to better attract and retain potential and current students. This initiative is also expected to yield a 10% growth in overall enrollment.

SCCC’s commitment to examining and improving its scheduling and efficiency through the use of platinum analytics and scheduling check-up has provided an aggressive goal of reducing the time to degree from 3.8 years to a 2020 goal of 2.8. Additional efforts focus on clear pathways for all students.

SCCC will focus on developing clear pathways and significant efforts to reduce time in developmental studies courses in order to improve persistence levels.
SCCC has aggressively worked to reduce its default rate and has seen a significant improvement over the last year down several percentage points. Currently the default rate is 19%. We have set an aggressive goal for 2020 reducing the default rate to 14%.

SCCC will ensure that all programs provide a clearly identified applied learning opportunity for most, if not all students by 2020. We will expand on our commitment to service learning and work with Start-up NY companies and the community for internship opportunities.

Projected Outcomes

Meeting the goals outlined herein will advance SCCC in the following ways: SCCC will be recognized as an institution committed to student success with increased persistence and graduation rates with a shortened time to degree completion with little or no debt.