



SUNY Office of Government Relations Newsletter

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the April edition of the SUNY Office of Government Relations Newsletter.

Governor Hochul has declared April as Financial Aid Awareness Month in New York State. It is an important time to recognize the critical role that financial aid plays in expanding access to higher education for students across the state. Chancellor King has made it a SUNY priority to ensure that students know their options when making higher education decisions.

Our team continues to work diligently to ensure the priorities of SUNY students, faculty, and staff are front and center in Albany and in Washington, D.C. As always, we are grateful for the steadfast support of our partners and colleagues. Thanks to the leadership of Governor Hochul, the State Legislature, and New York's Congressional Delegation, we remain focused on delivering results for the SUNY community— now and for the future.

Sincerely,

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SUNY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

- Governor Hochul announces \$5 million for AI departments, centers, and institutes across eight SUNY campuses. [Read more](#)
- Assemblymember Michaelle Solages and Senator Zellnor Myrie write an op-ed highlighting SUNY's Timbuctoo Institute. [Read more](#)
- Governor Hochul declares April Financial Aid Awareness Month to help make higher education more accessible and affordable. [Read more](#)
- Chancellor King marks a milestone formalizing Clinton Community College's relocation to SUNY Plattsburgh. [Read more](#)
- UAlbany hosts the first-ever SUNY esports tournament. [Read more](#) and see photos [here](#)
- SUNY celebrates Earth Day. [Read more](#) and check out the University at Buffalo's Climate Action Update [here](#).

- Governor Hochul announces SUNY Oneonta is the first SUNY institution to purchase Tier 1 Renewable Energy Certificates. [Read more](#)
- Chancellor King, joined by Chairman Merryl Tisch and Trustee Marcos Crespo, celebrate the inauguration of SUNY Maritime's 12th President, Rear Admiral John Okon. [Read more](#)

TRIVIA

Who was the first leader of SUNY? Scroll to the bottom to find out!

Ernst L. Boyer

Alvin C. Eurich

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.

John B. King, Jr.

A LOOK BACK

American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Call for Constructive Engagement

SUNY, alongside over a dozen SUNY campus presidents, signed AAC&U's Call for Constructive Engagement which can be read [here](#). Chancellor King is continuing to leverage national and state media to defend public higher education; stand up for SUNY's students, faculty, and staff; and advance SUNY's values – and we have included a few recent links below. SUNY will also maintain our close coordination with national higher education partner organizations. We appreciate your steadfast support even more than usual in these more challenging times.

- [PBS](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [MSNBC](#)
- [Washington Post](#)
- [Inside Higher Ed](#)

- **WGRZ**
- **WSYR**
- **WAMC**
- **Spectrum**
- **Syracuse Post Standard**

Presidents Meeting

On Wednesday, March 26, SUNY campus presidents gathered at SUNY System Administration for their presidents meeting. During the meeting, Higher Education Chairs Toby Ann Stavisky and Alicia Hyndman joined Chancellor King for a thoughtful discussion on their budget priorities this cycle. We are so grateful to have two higher education chairs who are relentless supporters of public higher education and SUNY!

Blake Washington, New York's Budget Director, also shared valuable insights into the state budget process. As a proud University at Albany and EOP alum, Blake Washington continues to be a powerful voice for SUNY and someone SUNY students can look up to.





Fireside Chat

On Thursday, March 27, Chancellor King joined Assembly Higher Education Chair Alicia Hyndman for a conversation on federal education policy and its impact on communities across New York State. As the former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education under President Barack Obama, Chancellor King provided his unique perspective on the current federal education and higher education landscapes.



SUNY Leads on Building Decarbonization

SUNY remains dedicated to meeting the goals outlined by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and Executive Order 22. On Wednesday, March 26, Carter Strickland, SUNY's Chief Sustainability Officer and Executive Director of Climate Action, joined a coalition of state legislators and stakeholders at a press conference at the Capitol to support the inclusion of \$200 million in the FY2026 budget for thermal energy networks. The SUNY System alone represents 40 percent of New York's State-owned buildings. Therefore, SUNY is uniquely positioned to be a leader in implementing energy efficiency and sustainability measures across New York State.

Read more about the coalition's proposal [here](#).

Read more about SUNY's Climate and Sustainability Action Plan [here](#).



FAFSA Completion Events

Financial Aid Awareness Month was busy. From Long Island to the North Country, students reflected on the challenges and resources utilized to complete the FAFSA. Our young people provided us with critical feedback to ensure SUNY's initiatives meet the mark and ensure higher rates of FAFSA completion, so millions of dollars aren't left on the table. FAFSA and the NYS DREAM Act are critical tools for New Yorkers to access free federal and state financial aid. We continue to alleviate financial barriers to help students access higher education so they may reach their full potential. A big thanks to Senator Shelley Mayer; Bryon McCray, Chief of Staff to Assemblymember Kwani O'Pharrow; and everyone else who came out to support our young people and their dreams. Read more [here](#).

See more pictures [here](#).



Clinton Community College Moves Forward with Relocation to SUNY Plattsburgh's Campus

On April 15, Chancellor King met with North Country leaders to sign two agreements as part of Clinton Community College's relocation to SUNY Plattsburgh. The relocation is expected to benefit both campuses and generate critical savings as part of a strategy to ensure the long-term sustainability of Clinton Community College.

Pictured below is Chancellor King with SUNY Plattsburgh President Dr. Alexander Enyedi, Town Supervisor Michael Cashman, Mayor of Plattsburgh Wendell Hughes, and Clinton Community College Administrator-in-Charge Ken Knelly.

See more photos [here](#).



Campus Visits

The OGR team has been busy visiting campuses this spring. Campus visits are vital opportunities to meet with students, faculty, and campus leaders to absorb firsthand the incredible work happening in classrooms, labs, and communities at SUNY. Stay tuned as we highlight inspiring people and programs making a difference across New York State!



First up, **Purchase College**. The OGR team kicked off the visit with a tour of the **Broadview Senior Learning Community**, led by Elizabeth Robertson, President of the Purchase Senior Learning Community, Inc. This innovative space is the first of its kind, designed to foster intergenerational learning by bringing students and seniors together in a unique and enriching educational environment.

The team then explored more of campus, including the beautiful Performing Arts Center at Purchase College. Special thanks to Kelly Jackson, Senior Director of Intergenerational Learning and Government Relations Liaison; Betsy Aldredge, Assistant Director of Public Relations; Mike Kopas, Vice President for Administration; and Patty Bice, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management for an informative and engaging tour.

And finally, a big thank you to SUNY Purchase President Milly Peña for a warm welcome and for sharing all the exciting developments happening at Purchase!



On April 14, Sydney Renwick, Assistant Director of Government Relations, had the opportunity to tour the Spring 2025 Fashion Design AAS Exhibition: Blank Canvas and Museum at **FIT's** *Fashioning Wonder: A Cabinet of Curiosities*. The *Fashioning Wonder* exhibit showcases items in FIT's permanent collection that highlight the wonderment of cabinets of curiosity and connection to fashion. From the human skeleton to taxidermy and everything in between, attendees could see the reimagining of Wunderkammer's interpretation.

Blank Canvas showcases the creativity and raw talent of the FIT's associate degree students. We look forward to the next generation of designers who uplift New York's fashion industry.





Next up, Emily Van De Loo, Government Relations Specialist, joined Chancellor King, Trustee Giovanni Harvey, Assemblymember Robert Smullen, and others for a visit to **Fulton-Montgomery Community College (FMCC)** to highlight the campus's efforts towards preparing the future healthcare workforce and securing mental health support for students with funding from the FY2025 enacted budget.

Thank you to Assemblymember Robert Smullen, who represents the campus, for attending the visit and supporting the Governor's free community college

proposal for adult learners pursuing degrees in high-demand fields. And thank you to the students who shared their stories and life experiences.

Read more [here](#) and see more photos [here](#).







April 25 was a busy day as the OGR team visited **SUNY ESF** and **SUNY Morrisville**. Emily Van De Loo joined **Chancellor King** and **Senator Peter Oberacker at SUNY Morrisville** to learn about the campus's sustainability and workforce initiatives including expanding pathways to clean energy jobs. The campus tour included a stop at the CSTEP/EOP/ACE/ASAP graduation ceremony and a visit with some cute animals, as part of the campus's animal science program. Thank you to Senator Oberacker for joining us.

The rest of the OGR team visited SUNY ESF for an insightful tour of its impressive facilities. Many thanks to Matthew Millea, Chief of Staff & Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives, for hosting us, and to Mark Lichtenstein, Executive Operating Officer, and Diana Jaramillo Keane, Executive Director of Sustainable Facilities Planning, Design, and Construction, for guiding us around campus. A special thank you to Dr. Colin Byer and Dr. Lindi Quackenbush, who shared the groundbreaking climate and forest research happening at SUNY ESF. SUNY ESF's mission has become more important as we continue to deal with the evolving impacts of climate change. SUNY ESF students and faculty are helping lead New York towards its climate and carbon neutrality goals.

SUNY DC Visit

On Wednesday, April 30, Ram Ramasubramanian, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost, and Shadi Sandvik, Senior Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation & Economic Development, joined Whitney Riggs, Director of Federal Relations, in Washington for a series of strategic meetings focused on the importance of federal investment in scientific research advancement. The group met with staff from the offices of Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand to discuss vital research occurring on SUNY campuses funded by agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation (NSF). They also engaged with staff from the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee to emphasize the value of sustained funding for the NSF and the Department of Energy. In a final stop, the group met with leadership at the NSF, including Chief Science Officer Dr. Karen Marrongelle, to underscore the far-reaching impact of federally funded research and the potential consequences of budget reductions for SUNY and the communities it serves.





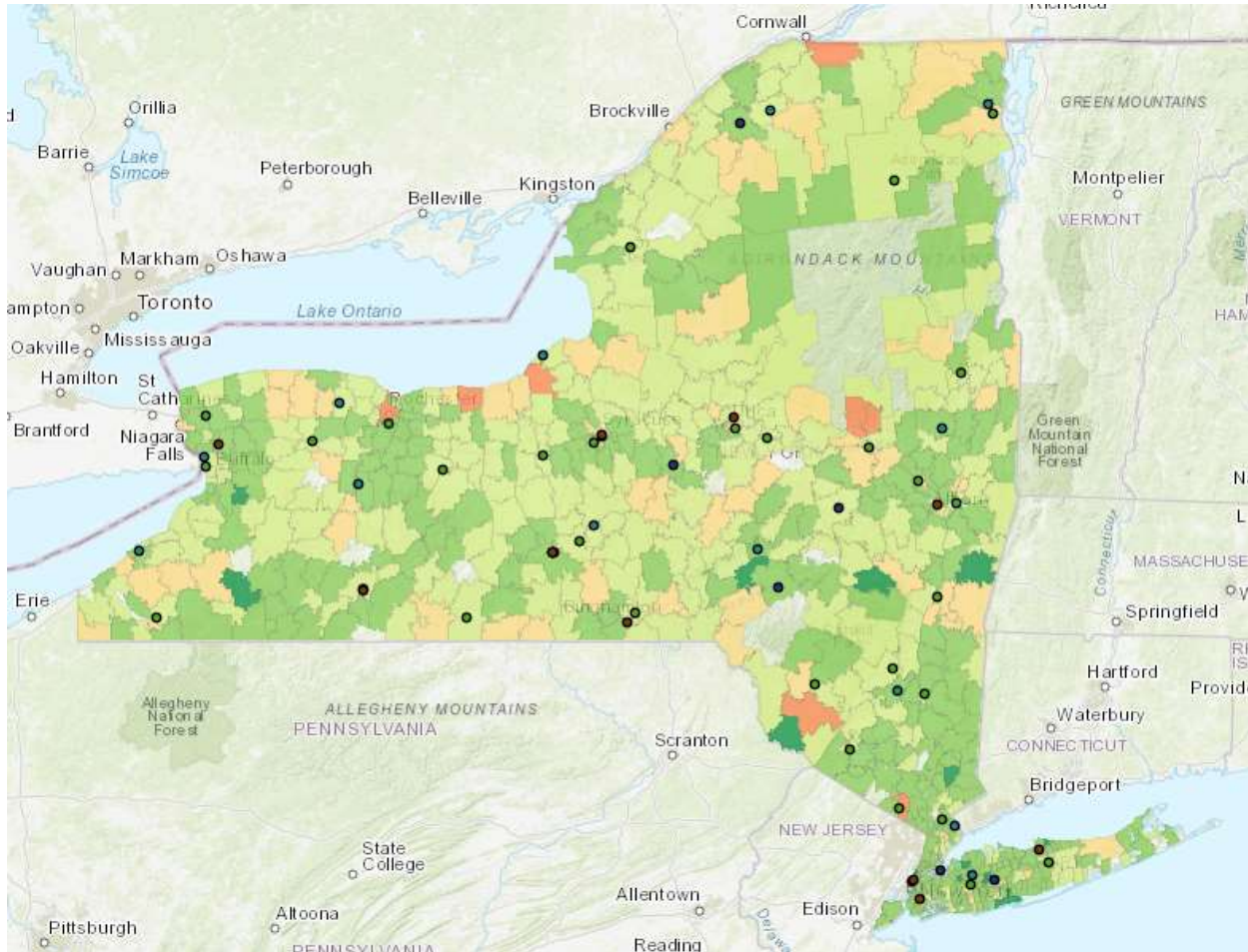
FAFSA Update

Please encourage your local school districts to ensure that students and their families are completing the FAFSA in order to be eligible for financial aid.

Through April 18, 2025, the data reflects that:

- 52.6% of the estimated class of 2025 in New York has completed a FAFSA.
- There have been 111,816 submissions in New York (an increase compared to this time last year).
- Nationally, 46.9% of the estimated class of 2025 have submitted a FAFSA. New York is in 7th place in the country.

- Check out this [map](#) to see how New York school districts are doing. A snapshot is below.



Percent FAFSA Completion:



Trivia Answer

Alvin C. Eurich was the first President of SUNY, from 1949 to 1952. He oversaw the creation of the statewide system in 1949, designating SUNY as the foundation of teacher training schools, known as "Colleges for Teachers." The title "President" would later become "Chancellor" in 1964.

Keep up with SUNY and the Office of Government Relations

- Check out SUNY's legislative memos on our website [here](#).
- Join the SUNY team! Look for careers at SUNY [here](#).

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