



SUNY Office of Government Relations Newsletter

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the July edition of the SUNY Office of Government Relations newsletter! Here is what we have been up to!

SUNY Set Sail

This month, SUNY Maritime College's Empire State VII, the nation's first purpose-built maritime training ship, sailed up the Hudson River for its maiden voyage to Albany. The visit provided an opportunity for prospective students, elected officials, and the public to tour the vessel and speak with cadets about their Summer Sea Term experience, a hands-on training program that prepares SUNY Maritime students for careers on, sailing, and powering marine vessels. The trip culminated in a press conference with Chancellor King, SUNY Maritime President Rear Admiral John Okon, and federal, state and local elected officials from across the Capital Region celebrating the ship's inaugural voyage to Albany. Thank you to everyone who joined us in marking this exciting milestone for SUNY Maritime!

Timbuctoo Institute

Through July and August, SUNY ESF's Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Summer Institute host high school students from New York City at CUNY Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn and the Adirondacks to provide students hands on learning about climate science, the environment, and social justice. This month, high school students from the Institute's Adirondack and Brooklyn programs had the opportunity to hear from Assemblymembers about their paths into public service and to share their own career aspirations. The visit underscored the strong partnerships supporting Timbuctoo's mission, including recent state funding that will help grow the program in the year ahead.

Free State Fair Fun

Governor Hochul announced that all current SUNY students with a valid ID, along with incoming students with an admission letter, can attend **The Great New York State Fair for free on Thursday, August 27** — Student Youth Day.

The Fair runs from August 26 through Labor Day, September 7, and several SUNY campuses will have a strong presence throughout, including the State University of New York at Binghamton's battery technology showcase, SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech's Agriculture Career Day, SUNY ESF's hands-on STEM activities, SUNY Morrisville's livestock judging and K-9 meet-and-greet, and health screenings from SUNY Optometry and SUNY Upstate Medical University. It's a great opportunity for students to enjoy a beloved New York tradition while seeing SUNY's impact on display across the fairgrounds. We encourage all students to take advantage of this exciting partnership! Learn more [here!](#)

Stay tuned for more updates as the summer continues.

Sincerely,

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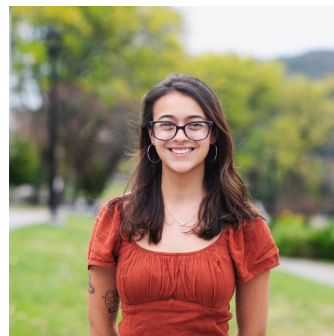
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🧠 Trivia 🧠

How many current SUNY presidents are veterans of the United States military?

4

2

6

5

LOOKING BACK: MONTHLY RECAP

SUNY News Highlights

- SUNY Chancellor King announces SUNY United States **250th Anniversary Faculty Research Fellowship**. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Delhi** students win National Culinary Championship (again). [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Upstate Medical University** and **SUNY Purchase** launch guaranteed pathway to medical school. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King announces expansion of **Building Bridges student grant competition** to help student groups complete projects that promote civic engagement, community connections, and collaboration. [Read more](#)
- Polimoda and **FIT** renew 40-year collaboration agreement. [Read more](#)
- **Jamestown Community College** uses state grant to create childcare center that can serve more than 100 children. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Canton's** forging club wins 4th place axe in national competition. [Read more](#)

- Pair of **SUNY Binghamton** pitchers selected in MLB draft. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Broome** and **SUNY New Paltz** launch new business student transfer agreement. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY New Paltz** offers SUNY's first deaf studies major. [Read more](#)
- SUNY Chancellor King completes **SUNY Reconnect Campus Tour**. [Read more](#)
- Chancellor King announces **SUNY's Institute for Local News** second class of summer interns. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY ESF** hosts SUNY leaders to advance student success through Academic Momentum Campaign. [Read more](#)
- Governor Kathy Hochul announces partnership with The New York State Department of Health, the New York State YMCA Foundation Inc. and SUNY, to expand access to **free learn-to-swim lessons**. [Read more](#)
- Governor Hochul announces opportunity for **students disenrolled from Howard University** to earn their degree at SUNY and CUNY. [Read more](#)
- Governor Hochul announces more than 27,000 small businesses and entrepreneurs supported by **Small Business Development Centers**. [Read more](#)

SUNY Research Spotlight

Across the SUNY system, our campuses conduct a vast amount of groundbreaking research, producing innovations and insights with far-reaching benefits not only for New Yorkers, but for people across the world. Check out the [Research Connect Portal](#) to learn more about specific projects! Here are a few recent highlights:

- **State University of New York at Buffalo** researchers discovered gene tied to energy production in brain that could lead to new treatment for cognitive disorders. [Read more](#)
- **State University of New York at Binghamton** students help Endicott police develop better case-management system. [Read more](#)
- **State University of New York at Stony Brook** researchers help discover naturally immune corals that offer a solution to reef devastation. [Read more](#)
- New Yorkers turn to the **State University of New York at Albany** experts as wildfire smoke blankets the state. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Oneonta** students dig into the past at Archaeological Field School. [Read more](#)
- Researchers at **Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences** warn that climate change leaves northern tree swallows most vulnerable. [Read more](#)
- **Farmingdale State College** professor's high-powered research on sonic booms, acoustics, and noise control resounds globally. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Poly** and NYSDOT collaborate on research to improve active transportation planning. [Read more](#)

- **SUNY Upstate Medical** team shares how 3D printing is transforming psychiatric care. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Oswego** leads Lake Ontario fisheries study in \$1.5 million New York Sea Grant. [Read more](#)
- **SUNY Morrisville** students study alternatives to petroleum diesel. [Read more](#)

Alumni in Public Service Spotlight

The Alumni in Public Service Spotlight celebrates distinguished SUNY alumni who are making a meaningful impact in public service.

This month, we are excited to highlight [New York State Senator Lea Webb](#), a proud EOP, SUNY Broome Community College (class of 2001), and State University of New York at Binghamton (class of 2004) alum who is dedicated to creating an equitable and inclusive New York. Born and raised in Binghamton, Senator Webb went from working as an educator at Binghamton University to advocating for SUNY initiatives and the rights of all New Yorkers at the state level including passing legislation through the budget to increase the TAP award to help more students afford college.

Senator Webb, thank you for being a true role model for SUNY students. We are proud to count you among the alumni we have the privilege of working alongside.

Learn more about Senator Webb's time as a student in SUNY and how a SUNY education helped shape her career:

Major: Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience

Clubs/organizations: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Charles Drew Minority Pre-Health Society, CSTEP, Black Student Union, SUNY BRIDGES Program, Campus Compact Scholar

Favorite memory as a student: I have so many favorite memories from my time at SUNY that it's hard to choose just one. The relationships I built with faculty, staff, classmates, and mentors truly shaped my experience, and I look back on those moments very fondly. I especially enjoyed traditions like Spring Fling and other activities that brought the campus community together. One of the most meaningful experiences was volunteering as an intern at Mothers and Babies, which ultimately grew into a full-time career. That journey is something I'll always be grateful for.

How has your degree from SUNY helped you in your career? The connections I made to resources and the broader community in my time at SUNY have provided me with a robust background of knowledge, both of the community and issues people face every day, that have contributed to my advocacy and public service.

Advice for current or future students: Education is a passport to freedom. I believe the most amazing thing about SUNY is that it's about your own personal journey, but also the legacy of your family and community. A degree from SUNY means you leave the campus community even better than you inherited it. I encourage students to get involved not only in their university community but also in the wider community they are part of. To my fellow EOP students, I also recognize the incredible honor and opportunity we have to be first-generation students, and it is so important that we pay it forward.



SUNY Maritime Docks in Albany

On July 8, Julie and Maria joined Senator Nathalia Fernandez, SUNY System Administration staff, and over 500 cadets, faculty, and staff from the SUNY Maritime 2026 Summer Sea Term for a journey up the Hudson River to Albany on SUNY Maritime's training ship, Empire State VII. Empire State VII is the nation's first purpose-built maritime training ship and a state-of-the-art National Security Multi-Mission Vessel. The [Summer Sea Term](#) is a 75-day training program that provides SUNY Maritime students with hands-on experience working on, sailing, and powering a marine vessel. On board, the group toured the ship, spoke with cadets about the invaluable experience the Summer Sea Term provides for future career opportunities, and learned about life while aboard the ship. Thank you Captain Tom Murphy and Kathy Tart for a wonderful tour and experience!



Later that day, Chancellor King joined SUNY Maritime President Rear Admiral John Okon, Congressman Paul Tonko, Senator Nathalia Fernandez, Senator Pat Fahy, Senator Jake Ashby, Assemblymember Michael Benedetto, Assemblymember John McDonald, Assemblymember Angelo Santabarbara, Rensselaer Mayor John DeFrancesco, Albany Deputy County Executive Michael McLaughlin, and the Governor's Capital Region Representative Dan Wrenn for a press conference announcing Empire State VII's inaugural trip to Albany. Thank you everyone for joining and your support of SUNY Maritime! Learn more [here](#)



On July 9, Will and Aria joined SUNY Trustee Courtney Burke, Assemblymember Michael Benedetto, Assemblymember Kwani O'Pharrow, Assemblymember Donna Lupardo, and Nick Guile from Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal's office for a tour of the ship and an opportunity to speak with cadets about their Summer Sea Term experience.



Timbuctoo Summer Institute

On July 21, SUNY ESF's **Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Summer Institute** hosted New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Chair Michaelle Solages and Assemblymember Stefani Zinerman as they discussed their trajectory into politics with program participants at CUNY Medgar Evers College. High school students from across New York City shared their career aspirations and experiences in the Institute's Adirondack and Brooklyn programs. The Assemblymembers were joined by Sydney, Executive Director of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Caucus Bria Nickerson, and the Director of the Timbuctoo Institute, Paul Hai. We are grateful for the ongoing support and advocacy of Assemblymember Solages, Senator Zellnor Myrie, and the entire Caucus for an additional \$2.1 million for the program in the 2026-27 Enacted State Budget. Learn more [here](#)



Visit to Washington D.C.

On July 22, Will joined Whitney in Washington for several productive meetings on Capitol Hill. First, Will and Whitney joined Mackenzie Soloman, Director of Federal Relations at the State University of New York at Buffalo for a meeting with McKayla Mulher, who serves as Rep. Tim Kennedy's DC Chief of Staff. The group discussed the harmful impacts of a proposed Office of Management and Budget rule that could inject politics into the federal grant making process. The group also discussed the status of SUNY's FY27 appropriations priorities, which include increased funding for the Pell Grant and scientific research along with workforce development opportunities in Western New York.

Will and Whitney also met with Tonia Wu, Education Policy Advisor for House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries; Jon Cardinal, Economic Policy Advisor for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer; and Carla McGarvey, Legislative Director for Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. These discussions focused on ways SUNY can support shared priorities, including advancing New York's quantum network, supporting Empire AI, and expanding workforce development opportunities across the state. Will and Whitney also emphasized the importance of protecting the integrity of scientific research by ensuring that federal funding decisions continue to be based on sound scientific and institutional merit.



SUNY Purchase's EOP Summer Academy

On July 24, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Senator Shelley Mayer joined SUNY Purchase President Michael Steiper and EOP staff and students for a brunch to celebrate the conclusion of SUNY Purchase's EOP Summer Academy. The EOP Summer Academy is a mandatory program that provides incoming EOP students with the information, skills, connections, and resources needed to transition to the rigors of college life. We thank the Senate Majority Leader and Senator Mayer for helping to secure a historic investment in EOP in this year's enacted state budget!



SUNY Undergraduate EOP Summer Research Program Symposium

On July 30, Maria, Hal, and Julia attended the 2nd annual SUNY ODEI/EOP Undergraduate EOP Summer Research Program Symposium at SUNY System Administration. 62 EOP students from 16 SUNY institutions spent the six-week program conducting original research on a variety of topics including cancer genomics, bees, the spread of the invasive round gobies, agriculture techniques, among others. Thank you, Folake Oyedokun from Assemblymember Gabriella Romero's office, for attending! Learn more [here](#)



Senate Chamber Visit

On July 30, interns from SUNY's Office of General Counsel, Chancellor's Office, and Office of Government Relations joined Beth LaMountain, Legislative Director for Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, and Elena Kilcullen, Assistant Counsel for Senate Program and Counsel, for a tour of the Senate

Chamber and to discuss the legislative process. Thank you so much to Beth for organizing and Elena for your unique perspective!



Campus Visits

Rockland Community College and SUNY Orange

On July 6, Will and Aria visited Rockland Community College to meet with President William Mullaney and the executive cabinet. President Mullaney, Chief of Staff Ian Wolf, and Director of Administrative Services Dennis Callinan led Will and Aria on a comprehensive tour of the campus, including the recently renovated nursing simulation lab, which is expected to be operational this fall.





Afterwards, Will and Aria continued through the Hudson Valley up to SUNY Orange's Middletown campus, where they met with President Kristine Young and the college's leadership team. The group toured the Bio-Tech building, highlighting the current nursing and dental hygiene instructional spaces and the college's plans to create expanded space to better accommodate student enrollment growth and improve workflow.

Hudson Valley Community College

On July 27, Will attended the topping-off ceremony at Hudson Valley Community College to celebrate the placement of the final structural beam for the new Applied Technology Education Center (ATEC). ATEC is the college's largest construction project in its history. SUNY is grateful to Governor Hochul, Empire State Development, as well as local officials in Rensselaer County for their strong support in funding this project. The Center will serve as a hub for cutting-edge education and workforce development, preparing thousands of students for careers in automotive and transportation technology, HVAC, electrical construction and maintenance, mechatronics, renewable energy, semiconductor manufacturing, and welding, among other fields.





State University of New York at Albany

On July 30, Will, SUNY Chief Sustainability Officer and Executive Director of Climate Action Carter Strickland, and SUNY Senior Vice Chancellor for Capital Facilities and General Manager of the State University Construction Fund Bob Haelen visited the State University of New York at Albany for a tour of their new, innovative thermal energy network project and the infrastructure being developed to support the university's campus-wide decarbonization goals. The project is designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease reliance on fossil fuels, and serve as a scalable model for sustainable energy infrastructure.





🧠 Trivia Answer 🧠

Answer: Currently, SUNY has 5 presidents who served in the United States military. In honor of Independence Day, we would especially like to thank:

- State University of New York at Albany President Dr. Havidán Rodríguez, U.S. Air Force
- Finger Lakes Community College President Dr. Robert K. Nye, U.S. Army
- SUNY Maritime College President Rear Admiral John A. Okon, U.S. Navy
- SUNY New Paltz President Darrell P. Wheeler, U.S. Air Force
- Jamestown Community College President Daniel DeMarte, U.S. Air Force

...and all the veterans in the SUNY family for their service!

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