

# CONNECTIONS

THE EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE MAGAZINE | SPRING 2017





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### On the Cover

**Christine Santangelo '14,**  
director of a medical/  
surgical telemetry unit  
at Saratoga Hospital

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# CONNECTIONS

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PHOTO CREDIT: Marty Heitner



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Photos from left, 2016 Student Art Competition winner Maria Rizzo with President Merodie Hancock; center, students Kristina Borovkova and Anastasia Latenkova #Rally4Empire with faculty members Tanweer Ali and Eva Lebduskova in Prague; Rochester area faculty member Donald Milton '01 at the dedication of the memorial garden honoring his late brother, Robert Milton, who served the college as a dean and a vice president.





## FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Our promise is to continuously make our academic and support programming more relevant and available to many more learners ...”

### Creating the Forward Progression of Empire State College

As you are well aware, SUNY Empire State College fulfills a unique mission, which blends the individualized and student-centric approach of a small liberal arts college with the impact, access and innovation of a large, nontraditional state institution.

This mission requires constant inquiry and introspection to ensure we continue to serve the needs of our current and future students. We have been referred to as “SUNY’s Best Kept Secret.” While we take pride in the work we have done over the past 45 years, we now are creating opportunities to make sure that we are no longer a secret and that we can take our well-deserved place as New York’s public flagship open-access college.

Our forward progress toward this goal will rely on the many talents of our dedicated faculty and staff, new and long serving. In this issue, you will get to meet some of our leaders who are shepherding in the next generation of innovation at SUNY Empire.

In this issue, we are delighted to introduce you to our five

undergraduate associate deans and the exciting work they are undertaking. You also will meet our new dean of academic and instructional support, who is leading a collegewide team of professionals working to enhance the experience our students have with their studies and further develop our wrap-around academic support services.

One story I am particularly excited about is the feature on our nursing education program. To further build that out, we have appointed one of our faculty to lead the effort to create new academic offerings around health professions, with an initial undergraduate program in Allied Health. This was made possible in part with the support of a SUNY High Needs Grant awarded to the college last year. This is a significant growth area for the state and SUNY Empire will be leading the way in offering relevant and flexible degrees in this discipline that blend with programs offered by our partner colleges and employer programs across New York.

In these pages, you’ll also meet Elliott Dawes, the college’s first chief diversity officer for institutional equity and inclusion. I think, that as you get to know him during his visits around the college and attendance at alumni events, you’ll quickly come to understand the strengths he brings to this important and valuable work.

All of these initiatives are centered around one thing: the Empire State College student. Our promise is to continuously make our academic and support programming more relevant and available to many more learners – regardless of age or life circumstance. We make this commitment at the time of orientation. It continues throughout a student’s enrollment with us, and we carry it through graduation and into our relationship with our alumni.

Merodie A. Hancock  
President



## Changes in the Academy

by Mary Caroline Powers

**U**nder President Merodie A. Hancock's ESC 2.0 reorganization of SUNY Empire State College, the structure of the Office of Academic Affairs has changed in some very significant ways, all meant to benefit students.

The new organizational configuration has faculty clustered together in their areas of expertise, concentrating the college's vast array of academic talent in groups of people with shared interests.

"The new structure will foster the formation and growth of statewide communities of scholars and practitioners from related disciplines. This, in turn, should help them pass along the most current and innovative knowledge to the students they teach," says Megan Mullen, the new associate dean for Humanities.

This clustering also affords students opportunities to acquire mastery of specific subject matter, in addition to important critical thinking and writing skills.

"ESC's reorganization to a discipline-based, one-college model will greatly enhance the opportunities for students to work with our expert faculty across the state. For instance, a student in Jamestown interested in environmental conservation could work with a hydrogeology mentor based in Saratoga and our marine ecologist in Manhattan," says Brian Hagenbuch, the newly named associate dean for Science, Mathematics and Technology.

PHOTO CREDIT: Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein



**The new structure will foster the formation and growth of statewide communities of scholars and practitioners from related disciplines. This, in turn, should help them pass along the most current and innovative knowledge to the students they teach.”**

Joining Mullen and Hagenbuch on the team of five associate deans is Julie Gedro, who has been with the college since July 2003 and will now oversee the Business, Management and Economics faculty. She is excited about what this change means for her colleagues.

“For as long as I have served at Empire State College, we have pined for opportunities to connect more closely with our colleagues to

share knowledge, research, and teaching and mentoring practices,” says Gedro. “This new structure has the potential to foster these collaborations in ways that we have imagined, and are yet to imagine.”

Also on the associate deans team are Frank VanderValk, who is leading the expansive group now known as Social and Behavioral Science, and John Lawless, who will oversee the clustering of faculty in Community and Human Services, and is particularly excited about the benefits for Human Services students.

“ESC 2.0 will bring together a diverse and strong pool of Human Services faculty, professionals and staff,” Lawless says. “This will help ESC students to develop Human Services programs to achieve their goals to further their careers, attend graduate school or meet personal goals.”

Another bit of magic about the group is that they are not all located in the same place; like the faculty they will guide, they are sitting in offices around the state.

Gedro and Mullen are located in the college’s new building in Rochester, Hagenbuch has an office in Latham, VanderValk is working from Saratoga Springs and Lawless, who kiddingly says his home office is I-90, actually is operating from Syracuse.

These five leaders oversee and guide the academic activities of the majority of the college’s undergraduate faculty members under the leadership of Nikki Shrimpton, who is in the newly created role of dean of undergraduate studies, having previously served the college as a member of the faculty and dean of the

Central New York Center. Adding another element to the re-engineered organizational structure of the Office of Academic Affairs is Lisa D’Adamo-Weinstein, who has been named dean of Academic and Instructional Services, also a new position. (See page 13, “Profile.”)

Another exciting change has been undertaken to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the Registrar, and also to ensure the college is positioned to be a national leader in assessing and credentialing learning. To that end, the functions that for many years have been housed in the Office of Collegewide Academic Review are being distributed into two new units:

- Transfer, Degree Audit and Graduation Services within the Office of the Registrar, will oversee evaluation and articulation of pre-evaluated advanced standing (transfer, military, standardized examinations, etc.), degree program concurrence, degree audit and academic clearance for graduation.
- A new Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning (CL2) is charged with providing internal and external leadership in the areas of prior learning assessment, professional learning evaluations, competency-based education and other related practices that support the credentialing of pathways to enhance students’ economic opportunities, social mobility and talent development in workplace and in educational settings.

In the wake of all this centralizing of services for students, some have asked what will happen to the college’s physical locations around the state. Many are getting much needed physical improvements and face lifts. Each is being assessed within the scope of a strategic plan for matching the college’s physical footprint across the state with its enrollment strategy for growth. And all of them are morphing into places where students from across the state can gather, in person and virtually, regardless of what, where or how they are studying. New technology-based approaches to delivering learning will enhance these spaces for students who wish to engage with other students and with college faculty and staff for learning, academic support and socializing.

Associate Dean Frank VanderValk nicely summed up the anticipated benefits of all these changes. “It will be exciting to see how the reorganization of the college better connects students to our outstanding faculty and to all of the exciting academic opportunities we have to offer.”



# Getting to Know the New Deans

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Five associate deans are now leading the following undergraduate academic areas that the college has been approved to offer by the New York State Education Department.



Julie Gedro

Business, Management and Economics is led by Julie Gedro, who has been at the college since July 2003, is certified as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) by the Society for Human Resource Management and formerly was a human resource management and development practitioner in finance, technology and telecommunications. She holds a B.A. in Economics and English from the College of William and Mary, an MBA in Information Systems from Kennesaw State University and a Doctorate of Education in Adult Education and Human Resource Development/Organizational Development from the University of Georgia.



John Lawless

Community and Human Services is led by John Lawless, who has been with the college since September 2006 and has served as an associate professor and mentor, as well as a faculty associate and director of outcomes assessment. Formerly, he was an assistant professor at Drexel University and a clinical supervisor in mental health centers. He holds a B.A. in Psychology from Binghamton University, an M.F. in Counseling Psychology from SUNY Albany, an MPH in Public Health from Drexel University and a Ph.D. in Child and Family Development from the University of Georgia.



Megan Mullen

Humanities, including The Arts, Cultural Studies and History Studies is led by Megan Mullen. Previously, she was associate dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, where she spent 17 years in a variety of roles before joining Empire State College in July. Mullen earned her B.A. at Bucknell University in French and Canadian Studies, an M.A. in Canadian Studies at Carleton University, an MLS at the University at Albany and a Ph.D. in Radio-Television-Film at the University of Texas-Austin.



Brian Hagenbuch

Science, Mathematics and Technology is led by Brian Hagenbuch, who most recently served as program director in the Natural Sciences at Excelsior College. Previous to that, he was dean of Math, Science, Technology and Health at Schenectady County Community College and served in various environmental science and sustainability roles at Hartwick College. He holds a Bachelor of Science from Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Science from the University of Florida, both in entomology, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences from Antioch University-New England.



Frank VanderValk

Social and Behavioral Science, including Education Studies, Human Development, Interdisciplinary Studies, Public Affairs and Social Sciences is led by Frank VanderValk, who joined Empire State College in 2005 as an assistant professor and academic area coordinator. In 2011, he was promoted to associate professor. He previously taught at SUNY Oneonta, the University at Albany's Rockefeller College, the College of Saint Rose and Schenectady County Community College. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Calgary and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University at Albany.

# ACHIEVEMENTS



**Richard Savior**

**Richard Savior**, assistant professor of Business Management and Economics in the Metropolitan region, has been named a Fulbright Specialist Scholar. The Specialist Program, funded by the U.S. Department of State, serves to promote the international engagement of academic scholarship by building links between U.S. and overseas institutions. In awarding this scholarship, the Fulbright Commission recognized a professional and academic career that has taken Savior to more than 25 countries across four continents.

**Luis Camacho**, visiting assistant professor in Business, Management and Economics, at the Staten Island location, presented the research paper, "Impact of Synchronous Virtual Classrooms in Graduate Business Students," accepted by the peer-reviewed Latin American Council of Management Schools conference. The article also was published in the CLADEA academic journal. The conference was held in Medellin, Colombia.



**A. Tom Grunfeld**

Metro Mentor **A. Tom Grunfeld** delivered the keynote address at an international conference titled, "International Symposium on Cultural Inclusion: Dimensions of Cultural Security for Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities," held at the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, Germany.

**Andrea Hennessy** has been named associate vice president for Enrollment Management and Marketing. She has served as associate professor in the Adult Programs Division at Nyack College, and later as academic dean there, overseeing admissions, financial aid, registrar and academic offices for the Adult Programs Division. She also developed Nyack's curriculum for the Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and the distance-learning program for the institution and was vice president of Enrollment and Marketing. At SUNY Empire, Hennessy will develop strategies and execute the vision for marketing and enrollment management efforts for the college. She will oversee marketing, the Office of Veteran and Military Education and the college's 1 Stop Student Services initiative.

**Karen Tanski Hewison** has been named senior director of marketing and creative services at SUNY Empire. She will be responsible for managing the marketing and creative services team. In addition, she will be developing, in collaboration with several OEM teams, the college's recruitment and retention efforts, as well as improving and strengthening the college's brand by ensuring marketing efforts and creative services are strategically aligned and supportive of the college's overall strategic mission and vision. She previously worked as a marketing manager for Sprint for 11 years, managing national digital and print marketing campaigns for its mobile division.



**Barrie Cline**

Artist **Barrie Cline '01, '04**, an alumna who also oversees The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies' Workers Art Coalition and teaches at the Labor Center, had a fellowship in Jerusalem and kept a public, online journal about her experience. She formed the Workers Art Coalition in 2014, dedicated to engaging in art and movement-building projects that take place within the public realm.

Mentor **Peggy Tally's** recent book, "The Rise of the Anti-Heroine in TV's Third Golden Age," was showcased by Cambridge Scholars Press in its marketing campaign.

Mentor **Valeri Chukhlomin** presented on the basics of MOOC-making and the lessons derived from developing a series of Coursera MOOCs at the SUNY Center for Online Teaching Excellence conference.



**Sewon Kim**

Associate Professor **Sewon Kim**, Business, Management and Economics, published two articles in refereed academic journals. The co-authored articles included "Perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness within South Korean and British private sector companies: A derived etic comparative study," in *Human Resource Development Quarterly*; and "Enhancing work engagement: The roles of psychological capital, authentic leadership, and work empowerment," in the *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*. He is the current chair for the Academy for Human Resource Development Malcolm S. Knowles Dissertation Award.



Long Island Mentor **Joe Welfeld** presented at the Fall Managed Care Forum in Las Vegas. The forum was sponsored by The American Association of Integrated Healthcare Delivery Systems, The American Association of Managed Care Nurses and the National Association of Managed Care Physicians. Welfeld's topic was "Value-Based Payments and Post-Acute Care: Dynamic Challenges and Solutions" and focused on how value-based payments being introduced across the spectrum are emphasizing smooth care transitions.



**Bidhan Chandra**

Professor **Bidhan Chandra** received the Altes Prize for Exemplary Community Service for promoting global cultural diversity awareness initiatives throughout SUNY Empire State College and beyond the state's borders. "I am very pleased and humbled by this great honor,"

said Chandra. "I strongly believe in global cultural diversity. This makes our world more beautiful and exciting. We would be living a very boring world if everyone looked and behaved exactly the same way in a social or work context." Chandra coordinates and teaches undergraduate courses in the area of international business and management in the college's division of business.

A collaboration between undergraduate alumna **Anne Whiting '13**, a mentee of **Anant Deshpande**, associate professor and academic area coordinator in Business, Management and Economics, has resulted in publication of the article "Towards a Better Understanding of American Disability Act and its Implications" in the International Journal of Management and Applied Science. Whiting is project manager at AnnieKaze, an entrepreneurial marketing, management, and content development company. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Strategic Marketing Management at the college and has published in print and digital publications.



**Elana Michelson**

Mentor **Elana Michelson** received the 2016 Cyril O. Houle award for Outstanding Literature in Adult Education in recognition of her book, "Gender, Experience, and Knowledge in Adult Learning: Alisoun's Daughters." The award was established in 1981 to honor the scholarship and

memory of Cyril O. Houle, professor of Adult Education at the University of Chicago. It is given annually by the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education for a book published the previous year that reflects universal concerns of adult educators and exemplifies outstanding literature in adult education.

Assistant Professor of Business, Management and Economics **Sarah Hertz** attended the Northeast Business and Economics Association conference. She presented her paper, "Implications of Pension and Other Post Retirement Benefit Recognition Biases on Leverage Ratio Components," which was recognized with the Best Paper Award.

Associate Professor and Academic Area Coordinator **Nicola Marae Allain's** translation of Philippe Beck's "Poésies didactiques" has been released by Univocal Publishing. French poet Beck won the French Academy's Grand Prix de Poésie in 2015.



**Kim Stote**

Associate Professor **Kim Stote** has been appointed interim associate dean for Health Professions. Stote has successful records in both teaching and scholarship, as well as experience with new program development at Empire State College. She has engaged in accreditation

activities, managed small and large grants and has working knowledge of outcomes assessment. Stote now is part of the Office of Academic Affairs leadership group and will work closely with the Office of Enrollment Management, the associate deans and the deans for the School for Graduate Studies and the School of Nursing to identify and build health-related programs.

Members of the Empire State College community contributed to the fourth issue of the annual publication "Explorations in Adult Higher Education." This occasional paper series, developed by Editor **Alan Mandell**, college professor of adult learning and mentoring, Associate Editor **Karen LaBarge**, senior staff assistant for faculty development, and colleagues from within and outside SUNY Empire, features writings based on the college's Revisioning Adult Higher Education webinar series, which explored opportunities and challenges in higher education today. Cover artwork, "Untitled Translation II," (2014), a gelatin silver print, was created by **Steven Phillip Harris '12**. Writing was contributed by faculty members **Peggy Tally** and **Gina Torino**, **Joseph Moore** (former president of both Empire State College and Lesley University), **Jacob Remes** and **Lynne M. Wiley**, visiting associate professor.

**Melinda Blitzer**, associate professor for Human Development in Old Westbury, presented a paper at the Joint International Conference themed On Knowing and Being Known, in Reykjavik, Iceland. She presented on a panel called, "Transference and Countertransference in Helping Patients Know Themselves." Her paper was titled "The Analyst's Courage and Vulnerability in Countertransference."

**Lisa Parkins**, Arts mentor and MALS core faculty, presented at the International Conference on the Arts in Society 2016 at UCLA, Los Angeles. Her presentation was a performance workshop titled, "Towards an Ecological Chorus: Ritual Voices in the Theatre of Nature."

**Rosalind October-Edun**, a mentor in Community and Human Services, completed her doctorate in Advanced Behavioral Studies at Capella University. Her dissertation is titled, "The Lived Experience of Counselors Working With English-Speaking Caribbean Immigrant Parents Who Use Physical Discipline With Their Children: A Phenomenological Study." This study contributes to the area of Caribbean Studies and Individual and Family Studies, exploring the importance of counselors receiving education and training in cultural sensitivity and cultural competence to better serve English-speaking immigrant parents who use physical discipline with their children. **Lear Matthews**, a colleague/mentor in CHS, and October-Edun co-authored a chapter in his edited book that addresses issues of English-speaking immigrants.



**Anita DeCianni-Brown**

"Becoming and Staying Relevant in Today's Turbulent Global Economy" was the topic **Anita DeCianni-Brown '12, '15**, in the Office of Student Affairs, discussed on Vox Pop on WAMC radio. She touched on job search strategies, recognizing shifts in workforce demands, career ladders and career nets, and the importance of adding layers of skills and connections to transition between work environments.

**Rosalyn Rufer**, associate professor in the School for Graduate Studies' Business, Management and Leadership Division, was named interim associate dean of the School for Graduate Studies. Rufer has been with Empire State College for more than 15 years, teaching courses in marketing and strategic management. She brings experience in program development, assessment and accreditation and will be working to strengthen existing graduate programs and expand into new areas and degree levels.

Master of Adult Learning Mentor **Dianne Ramdeholl** gave two paper presentations at conferences in the United Kingdom and Austria. She co-presented "Austerity and Adult Literacy: At What Cost and to Whom?" at the Standing Conference on the University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults in Leicester, U.K., as well as a paper at the University of Vienna titled, "Talking Back: Resisting Neoliberalization in the Academy through Feminist/Womanist Lenses" at the International Sociological Association in Vienna.

Mentor **Mark Soderstrom** presented his paper, "Native Suns: Colonialism, Race, and Resistance in Speculative Fiction," at the Marxist Literary Group Institute on Culture and Society.



**Shantih Clemans**

Community and Human Services Mentor **Shantih E. Clemans**, as part of the International Association of Social Work with Groups annual symposium at NYU, presented a paper titled "The beauty and complexity of teaching and mentoring adult students in study groups:

Reflections on identity, authority, flexibility, community, and learning from experience."

**David Starr-Glass**, a mentor with International Programs (Prague), published two chapters in edited books released by IGI Global. "Prior Learning Assessment: Accelerating or Augmenting the College Degree?", is included in René Cintrón, Jeanne Samuel and Janice Hinson's (eds.) new volume "Accelerated Opportunity Education Models and Practices," and "The Pedagogic Possibilities of Student-Generated Case Studies: Moving Through the Looking Glass," appears in "Case Studies as a Teaching Tool in Management Education," a volume edited by Dominika Latusek of Kozminski University, Poland.

**Rhianna Rogers** and **Menoukha Case** are co-authors of a chapter in "50 Events That Shaped American Indian History: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic," published by ABC-CLIO. The chapter, "Haudenosaunee/Iroquois Influence on the U.S. Constitution, 1789," explains, "For the better part of U.S. history, very few outside of Indian Country, academia, and the U.S. federal government were aware of the Haudenosaunee/Iroquois' influence on the development of American governmental systems. In fact, many foundational works in the field of American government have, consciously or unconsciously, excluded references to Haudenosaunee/Iroquois contributions." Case also published an extensive encyclopedia entry on "Gender in Yoruba Culture and Religion" for The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies.



**Jason Russell**

School for Graduate Studies faculty member **Jason Russell '02** was elected president of the Canadian Committee on Labor History at the organization's meeting in Calgary, Alberta. Russell also was part of a panel at the Canadian Historical Association Conference while

in Calgary titled "Canada's History of Capitalism: New Directions and New Narratives."



**Nazik Roufaiel**

**Nazik Roufaiel**, area coordinator of Accounting and professor of Accounting and Finance, presented two papers and chaired two main sessions at the International Conference on Management, Leadership, and Strategic Development held in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

The conference was organized and hosted by the Global Institute for Leadership and Management Development. Her presentations were titled “Women in Leadership, Politics, Business and the Boardroom: Imbalance and Inequality” and “The Role of Emotional Intelligence Leadership Theory in Today’s Business Communication and Its Impact on Leadership Quality and Motivation.” Roufaiel is the recipient of the Gold Medallion of Leadership sponsored by the Institute of Management Accountants.

**Nan Travers**, director of the Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning, **Tai Arnold**, interim vice provost for academic administration, Mentor **Diane Gal**, Faculty Instructional Technologist **Nathan Whitley-Grassi**, Director of Academic Support Services **Aimee Woznick** and Mentors **Michele Forte** and **Donna Mahar** have received SUNY IITG (Innovative Instructional Technology Grant) funding for projects designed to position SUNY as a leader in innovative instructional practices, while enabling the system to take programs that work at one campus and expand them across SUNY to benefit more students and faculty. Their projects include:

- Travers: Designing Competency-Based PLA Pathways to Scale Up Completion and Learner Success
- Arnold and Gal: The Programmatic Learning Environment Prototype
- Whitley-Grassi: STEM Open Educational Resources (OERs): Development and Integration of STEM OERs Across SUNY
- Woznick: Using Targeted OERs to Develop Core Academic Skills in the Disciplines
- Forte and Mahar: Scaling the Metaliteracy Badging System for Open SUNY: Collaborative Customization for Teacher Education Programs, with a University at Albany-led team

SUNY Empire’s business faculty presented at the 76th Academy of Management Annual Meeting in Anaheim, Calif. Professor **Alan Belasen**, MBA Program, chaired a refereed paper session and was the discussant of “Management Education and Development for a Better World” on the topics of responsible management, positive business ethics and leadership for sustainability. Belasen also was the recipient of the Outstanding Reviewer Award by the Management Education and Development Division, his fifth in 15 years.



**Eric Strattman**

**Eric Strattman '99** has joined the Office of Academic Affairs as the new academic projects specialist. Strattman comes to Empire State College from MIT administration. He manages OAA’s academic content on websites and in college publications, and coordinates academic publication development.

Mentor **Gennaro Bonfiglio**, battalion chief in the Fire Department of New York, participated in the Naval Post Graduate Schools’ seminar on homeland security in Monterey, Calif. He collaborated with deans, faculty and higher-education professionals across the United States and abroad to discuss threats and solutions in homeland security, including cyberterrorism, social media-based radicalization of Americans and active shooter/suicide bomber attacks.

Three staff members who created an automated early-alert system to identify at-risk students at the beginning of the term and provide follow-up intervention received SUNY Empire State College’s James William and Mary Elizabeth Hall Award for Innovation. **Carl Burkart**, director of student and academic services, Metropolitan region, **Brett Sherman**, director of academic support, Metropolitan region, and **Stephen Simon**, assistant director for new applications and hosted systems, Information Technology Services, developed a survey system that helps identify students at risk of failing in time for staff to address their issues and help them succeed.



**Amy Tweedy**

**Amy Tweedy** has been named director of outcomes assessment in Decision Support. Tweedy will oversee analysis and research in collaboration with faculty, administrators and professional staff to support continuous improvement of the teaching and learning environment, as well as

assess initiatives and data management, with particular attention to Middle States accreditation requirements, and conduct research to support assessment initiatives. She also will provide consulting support to administrators, faculty and staff to ensure best practice of assessment and program delivery involving student engagement, student success and student retention.

Mentor **Desalyn De-Souza** and, together, mentors **Dana Gliserman Kopans** and **Kim Stote** have been named Scholars Across the College for 2016-2017 and are available to share their ideas, research, reading, writing and professional activities with members of the college community.





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## The <sup>New</sup> Student Information Center

by Kirk Starczewski

**T**en years ago, the college's Student Information Center (SIC) launched its first decade of service to students, answering their questions and connecting them to the right people and resources to make their educational journey a success. Since those early days, SIC has enhanced service with new technology, new ideas and new programs, meeting student needs more efficiently and effectively.

The staff includes six members in Saratoga Springs, one in Syracuse and one in Latham. Team members in Saratoga Springs include Deborah Usas, Kristen Barkenhagen, Andrew Conroy, Kylene Clark, Shayne Aldrich and Interim Director Kristin FitzSimons. Stacy Ballo, is located in Old Westbury.

A number of former SIC staff now hold other roles in the college, including founding staff Susan McFadden, special events coordinator, and Erin White, coordinator of student services in the School of Nursing, as well as Jennifer Howk in Financial Aid. The longest tenure in SIC is held by Stacy Ballo and Deborah Usas, each for eight years.

“It takes a special person to work in SIC,” states FitzSimons, who worked in the call center before. “You have to sustain a high level of alertness and service all day long. It’s amazing to watch how quickly they all work to provide students satisfaction quickly.” FitzSimons adds that staff members are generalists on all aspects of the college, especially financial aid.

FitzSimons manages the call center, provides a bit of marketing and develops the transition of the college to the 1 Stop Student Services initiative. She joined SIC in March, after serving as the assistant director of admissions.

During its first decade, SIC representatives responded to more than 1.2 million calls for assistance – an average of 750 inquiries per day. The busiest times of the year are September and January, when each representative will field about 120 calls a day. They answer student questions about admissions (applications, official transcripts, immunizations), registration (transcripts, loan deferments, withdrawals), financial aid (awards, grants, scholarships, student loans, appeals), student accounts (billing, balances, payment plans, residency), and more.

Most questions deal with functional service areas of the college. The largest number of questions (65-70 percent) are about financial aid. Kristina Delbridge,

director of financial aid, considers SIC “our front line for students’ questions. Their triage of requests and their knowledge of financial aid lets them direct any request to the right staff member, saving us all time and providing satisfaction faster.”

The calls do vary, depending on the time of year. “Staff always try to give a student the best answer; sometimes it takes three minutes, sometimes it takes 30,” FitzSimons explains. “Emotional aspects play a part in the call, and staff need to pull out what is really needed by the student and determine the best person to address the issue. There is a high degree of finesse in this. In the spring, we also have a lot of calls from students about to graduate. They’re so excited and thankful, you can feel their joy and it just makes our day knowing we were a part of it.”

Andrew Conroy chimes in, “I love being the answer man, figuring out what the student wants and giving the right answer quickly.” Barkenhagen, who also serves as editor for the SIC’s SharePoint knowledge base, also says most of the students calling in are thankful. “They just want to get through the application process, complete their education and get better jobs. They all have individual, unique needs,” she adds.

SIC uses a number of tools and technology provided by the college’s Information Technology Services – including email and cloud computing tools SharePoint, OneDrive, OneNote and Skype – to ensure that staff have access to the same information, SIC’s SharePoint knowledge base. According to Conroy, all changes to the college’s staff contact information are recorded in the OneNote directory. The SIC knowledge base – college policies and procedures – are housed in SharePoint.

“Staff always try to give a student the best answer; sometimes it takes three minutes, sometimes it takes 30 ...”

left, Kristin FitzSimons, interim director of the Student Information Center with staff member, Kylene Clark.

right, Student Information Staff, Andrew Conroy, Kristin FitzSimons, Deborah Usas, Kylene Clark, Kristen Barkenhagen, Shayne Aldrich and Stacy Ballo.



SIC training has changed since the beginning, when the original crew – mostly hired from outside with little previous knowledge of the college – was given two weeks of training before staffing the phone lines. Now, new staff members go through two to three months of training before answering calls.

The plan is to use the new CRM system for case management, so calls can be tracked as they move on to resolution. Most times, staff does not know the final outcome once a call has been handed off to the proper

office. Quantifying these calls will give SIC a better picture of success.

“No one at the college is faster at adapting to change,” states FitzSimons. “I’m proudest of their work on the 1 Stop program. They are always thinking of ways to make the development of 1 Stop work better to serve students.”

What is the one thing they wish they could change about SIC? “That’s easy, our phone number,” laughs Kristen Barkenhagen. “It’s one digit off from Geico’s. That lizard should give us a commission for all the people who call us first and we send them to him.”



Shayne Aldrich answers students' inquiries.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©2016 SaratogaPhotographer.com

“ This site touches on just about every office across the college, providing a seamless process to answer and satisfy a concern.”

## Innovative 1 Stop Shop is Up and Running

The Student Information Center is now at the center of the college’s innovative 1 Stop Student Services, continually improving the college’s services to its students.

This program provides each student a single point of contact to access information and services, through a combination of virtual and person-to-person channels. Located at 111 West Ave., in Saratoga Springs, it comprises the Student Information Center, Admissions Office, Business Office, Financial Aid, Office of the Registrar, Student Accounting, the Office of Veteran and Military Education, the bookstore and retention service specialists. The program also collaborates with student academic services and academic support.

The program’s webpage offers 24/7 virtual self-service features, where students can search for answers to their

questions, obtain forms and request services. Students also can obtain information by dropping in to the nearest college location, or by phone, email and, eventually, Skype, chat and other modes of telecommunication.

The long-term goal is to create a structure by which students can obtain their information and answers virtually, 80 percent of the time, saving time and empowering them to obtain information and service without “waiting in line.” The remaining 20 percent will be handled through person-to-person interactions, using various communication modes.

“This site touches on just about every office across the college,” adds SIC Interim Director Kristin FitzSimons, “providing a seamless process to answer and satisfy a concern.”



# PROFILE

by Mary Caroline Powers

## Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein

**Current position:** Dean of Academic and Instructional Services, responsible for oversight of a network of academic and instructional services including academic support, curriculum and instructional design, disability services, instructor development services and the library.

**Hometown:** Town of Fort Salonga, North Shore of Long Island, N.Y. Her parents still live in her childhood home.

**Previous experience:** Director of Academic Support at ESC, director of the Academic Excellence Program at the United States Military Academy and coordinator of academic support services for the student-athletes at American University in Washington, D.C.

**Education:** Ph.D. and M.S., in Language Education, TESOL Certificate, Indiana University – Bloomington; B.A., English and General Literature, Binghamton University.

**Path to education:** She was the first in her family to go to college. Started as a political science major, then changed to English. Went into a master's program in Renaissance and Medieval Literature, ultimately switching to education because, "I loved teaching more than medieval tapestries." Doctoral research about how people, particularly first-generation women, successfully learn in college.

**Favorite food:** My mother's enchiladas and arroz con pollo.

**Favorite color:** Purple.

**Favorite literary genre:** Science fiction, fantasy.

**Outside interests and activities:** An avid nature photographer particularly interested in close-ups of flowers, animals and insects. She also enjoys taking photos of all the players at sporting events for her son's teams. Started taekwondo two years ago, working toward a blue belt. Has sparred in two tournaments and took first place in board breaking at her first competition.

**Little known fact:** She drove a campus bus to pay her way through the last two years of her undergraduate degree, where she learned about



PHOTO CREDIT: ©2016 SaratogaPhotographer.com

Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein

the huge responsibility for the health and safety of those in your charge.

**Bucket list:** To spend a month in Cambodia with husband and son, who was adopted when six months old in 2001, from Cambodia. At the time, they spent a week in the capital city, Phnom Penh, and fell in love with the Khmer people. Now wants to return to really explore Cambodia and learn more about the culture and people of what her son calls his "born country."

**Best advice gotten:** "My father has always advised that we need to do what is right, not necessarily what is easiest, and to give 1,000 percent effort."

**Why ESC:** "I love the mission of the college, the flexibility of learning for our students. My mother is an ESC graduate. She earned an associate degree when she was in her 60s. I fell in love with what ESC did for her."

# Role of Chief Diversity Officer Grows in Importance on College Campuses

by Hope Ferguson



PHOTO CREDIT: Pedro Tavares

Scene from a New York City demonstration following the 2016 presidential election.

Many colleges and universities were building portfolios for chief diversity officers in the years prior to the election of President Donald J. Trump.

The move is largely in response to a rapid diversification of the United States, due to increased immigration from black and brown countries, coupled with a high birth rate among Latino Americans. Since 2012, most babies born in the U.S. are of color, foreshadowing a nation of many colors, with no overwhelming majority group.

From a pragmatic standpoint, if colleges cannot reach out to the burgeoning group of young people who are increasingly of races other than white, their institutional futures could be imperiled.

Pressure also has come from the students themselves, sometimes in the form of grassroots protests and sometimes as formal requests, leading many institutions of higher learning to put diversity front and center as an institutional goal. The State University of New York is among those institutions. SUNY Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Alexander Cartwright, in addressing the attendees at the Association of Council Members and College Trustees in early October 2016, made SUNY's commitment crystal clear: "Our Equity and Inclusion Policy goal is to make SUNY the most inclusive university in the world."

The SUNY Equity and Inclusion Policy came after the establishment in 2007 of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI), to provide leadership and strategic direction to all 64 SUNY campuses. Under the leadership of Carlos N. Medina, vice chancellor and chief diversity officer for SUNY, the office was charged with strengthening diversity as "an integral component of academic excellence," covering all aspects of the university experience from hiring, tenure and affirmative action, to access and accommodations. A diversity policy was adapted by the SUNY Board of Trustees in 2015, mandating the establishment of chief diversity officers across the SUNY system.

"Chief diversity officers at every single campus give us an opportunity to have people dedicated to doing this work, to providing platforms for meaningful dialogue, creating

inclusivity and excellence, not just for students but also for faculty and staff," Medina said. "It helps us to figure out how to attract and keep diverse students, faculty and staff, and to help them feel they belong and can succeed."

According to The New York Times, 75 people with the title have been hired by colleges and universities in the last 18 months alone, one of them by Empire State College. The college welcomed its first chief diversity officer for institutional equity and inclusion last fall. Elliott Dawes (see sidebar) comes to SUNY Empire after a distinguished career in law, civil rights and academia.

There have been critiques of the resources spent on such positions. In The Atlantic, David Frum, former George W. Bush speechwriter, wrote that these positions are part of bureaucratic bloat, contributing to the high cost of a college degree. However, in light of the surprise election of Trump, who ran a campaign based in part on restricting immigration that many felt was intolerant, there's heightened awareness of the importance of giving resources to offices that have diversity and inclusion as their charge. Some campuses have seen acts of outward racism since the election; yet even "micro-aggressions," defined as small acts of incivility, can make someone feel as unwelcome as more overt actions do, particularly if the institution has no policies in place and is not leading

from the top on issues of diversity and inclusion.

Merodie A. Hancock, president of the college, issued a statement last November acknowledging that many people across college campuses were feeling a heightened sense of fear and intimidation following the election. The Southern Poverty Law Center logged some 900 incidents of hate tied to the election, according to the Huffington Post.

“In a time when values we hold dear are being debated and people do not feel safe for a number of reasons, we, as an institution of higher education, must reaffirm our

commitment to the ideals of free speech, and to equity, inclusion and pluralism,” Hancock wrote. “This commitment has been a part of the Empire State College fabric since Ernest Boyer, Nelson Rockefeller and James Hall first envisioned this innovative college dedicated to access, inclusion and, above all else, student success. ... While the college is changing as the world changes around us, this charge is perhaps as relevant as it has ever been.”

Hancock has supported the establishment of online “safe spaces,” where Empire State College students and, separately, members of the faculty and staff can engage

in open discussions without fear of repercussions about difficult issues facing society. Each space has guidelines for use that emphasize the expectation that participants conduct themselves with civility, and remain respectful of divergent opinions, differing ideas and the richness of the various cultural norms individual members of the college community value.

For those who believe such spaces may not adequately address their concerns, New York’s Gov. Andrew Cuomo, has set up a hotline for residents to report cases of bias and discrimination at 888-392-3644.



**Elliott Dawes**

## New Chief for Diversity and Inclusion Joins College

In September, the college named civil rights attorney, professor and academic/student administrator Elliott Dawes to the newly created position of chief diversity officer for institutional equity and inclusion. Dawes brings wide-

ranging experience in higher education and law to the post, having served as university director of The City University of New York’s Black Male Initiative, assistant dean for multicultural affairs at Hofstra University School of Law, associate professor in the Department of African American Studies at CUNY’s John Jay College of Criminal Justice, associate attorney for a law firm and trial attorney in the Educational Opportunities Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice.

**Q.** How do you define diversity and why is it good to take concrete steps at a policy level to increase diversity at a college like SUNY Empire?

**A.** I believe that the public goods associated with diversity, equity and inclusion are directly aligned with the access and opportunity mission of Empire State College. I tend to think of diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education in terms of outcomes, which include fostering the inclusion of people from traditionally excluded groups, providing support for members of groups that continue to be underrepresented in higher education, and encouraging a free exchange of ideas and information throughout the college that uses and includes all

segments of the community, respects dissenting and alternative perspectives and values civility and respect.

**Q.** How do you institutionalize diversity and inclusion policies and practices in a way the college community will embrace with both their hearts and their minds?

**A.** In bridging the gap between theory and practice, an effective chief diversity officer should solicit the ideas, perspectives and input of diverse members of the college community when developing and implementing new programs, policies and practices that are related to equity, diversity, inclusion and opportunity. I hope to host ongoing and continuous formal and informal discussions, workshops, trainings, lectures and seminars on equity, diversity, inclusion and opportunity for the college community throughout the academic year. I expect that new ideas will emerge from these campus discourses that will inform future diversity-related policies, practices and program activity.

**Q.** What drew you to Empire State College?

**A.** I see my role here at SUNY Empire as a continuation of my past academic/student services work that has supported many undergraduate, graduate and law students, particularly first-generation students from underrepresented populations. Because of my great admiration for the college’s mission, I am grateful for this professional opportunity and thank President Hancock and the search committee for selecting me as the college’s inaugural chief diversity officer for institutional equity and inclusion.





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# Doors Open Wide for SUNY Empire's Nursing Grads in Burgeoning Field

## Education Means Opportunity

by Helen Susan Edelman

In September 2008, 40 registered nurses became the first students in Empire State College's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program – the RN to B.S.N. – a rigorous curriculum designed specifically for registered nurses wishing to advance professionally by earning baccalaureate credentials. In January 2014, 30 registered nurses with bachelor's degrees enrolled in the college's new Master of Science in Nursing Education. By September 2016, there was a combined total of 1,175 students in the School of Nursing's bachelor's and master's programs, which

includes 140 undergraduate and 60 graduate nursing students. With Dean Bridget Nettleton at the helm, the burgeoning program boasts an 80 percent retention rate and 350 alumni with wide-ranging careers, such as bedside nursing, missionary work, nursing administration, teaching and health industry entrepreneurship.

The astounding growth in School of Nursing enrollments reflects the rocketing trajectory of the profession. Nurses comprise the largest health care provider group in the United States, with more than 3.1 million

registered nationwide, up from about 1.7 million in 1980. That is almost four times the number of physicians. And, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects nursing will grow more than any occupation in the nation between now and 2018.

Because many nursing students also are working adults, SUNY Empire's flexible, affordable, online programs are designed to be completed, part-time, within two to three years, according to Nettleton. Clinical or capstone experiences take place in the student's home community. B.S.N. students who

# “Our nursing programs are designed to prepare nurses to function as leaders and full partners on interdisciplinary teams ...”

need general education credits may enroll at SUNY Empire or any regionally accredited institution to earn them. In addition, requirements can be met through prior learning assessment, independent study or successful completion of selected examinations.

The nursing curricula at both the bachelor's and master's levels are developed by teams of nursing faculty, curriculum and instructional designers and subject matter experts, and include both required and elective courses, such as Pharmacology, Nursing Informatics, Professional Issues and Leadership and Multigenerational Nursing. To support students, the nursing program now comprises seven full-time faculty members, a clinical coordinator, two academic advisors, a curriculum instructional designer, a student services professional and support staff.

Historically, RNs prepared for licensure through associate degrees earned at community colleges or hospital-based diploma programs, and were hired for jobs in hospitals, private practices, health maintenance

organizations, public health agencies, primary care clinics, home health care, nursing homes, outpatient surgery centers, nursing school-operated long-term care centers, insurance and managed-care companies, schools, mental health agencies, hospices, the military, industry, nursing education and health care research.

In 1980, almost 55 percent of employed RNs held a hospital diploma as their highest educational credential, 22 percent held the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and 18 percent an associate degree. But, by 2008, a diploma was the highest educational credential for only 13.9 percent of RNs, while the number with bachelor's degrees had climbed to 36.8 percent, with 36.1 percent holding an associate degree as their top academic preparation. In 2010, 22,531 RNs with diplomas or associate degrees graduated from B.S.N. programs in the U.S.

Today, more than 61 percent of registered nurses have B.S.N.s and many are enrolled in Master of Science in Nursing Education or Nursing Administration programs, both of which are available at SUNY Empire. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, there has been a remarkable surge in the numbers of RNs

with a master's or doctoral degree in nursing or a related field, more than doubling since 2000 to about 30,000 nationwide, with demand nonetheless far outstripping supply for RNs prepared for advanced practice, clinical specialties, teaching and research roles. SUNY Empire's new master's programs in nursing education and nursing administration are designed to flow into that ever-expanding pipeline.

As the health care environment has become more complex, the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice has recommended that at least two-thirds of the basic nurse workforce hold baccalaureate or higher degrees in nursing. Indeed, Nettleton points out, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Health and Medicine Division (formerly called the Institute of Medicine), in its report "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health," called for 80 percent of nurses to have a B.S.N. by 2020. Many hospitals already are adopting those standards, further motivating nurses to advance their education, credentials and clinical knowledge.

The reasons the pressure is on for nurses to continue studying are well-documented, Nettleton points out. According to a report from the Tri-Council for Nursing, representing the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Nurses Association, American Organization of Nurse



PHOTO CREDIT: ©2016 SaratogaPhotographer.com

upper left, Christine Santangelo '14 with a patient at Saratoga Hospital.

bottom left, Bridget Nettleton, dean, Empire State College School of Nursing; Cathy Catrambone, president of Sigma Theta Tau International; Mary Lee Pollard, dean, School of Nursing, Excelsior College.



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**Nursing students attend induction ceremony for the Tau Kappa at-Large Chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.**

Executives and National League for Nursing, hospitals with higher percentages of bachelor's-trained nurses have lower rates of mortality from congestive heart failure and fewer decubitus ulcers, postoperative deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary emboli. And, an average reduction of 2.12 deaths out of 1,000 patients is associated with each 10-point increase in percentage of inpatient RNs holding B.S.N.s. In one landmark study, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing found that a 10 percent increase in the proportion of nurses with a bachelor's degree was associated with a 5 percent decrease in the likelihood of surgical patients dying within 30 days of admission.

Nettleton adds that the length of stay in the hospital is shorter and community-based care is less expensive in settings where nurses have at least a B.S.N. Also, she adds, nurses with advanced credentials are happier in their jobs, which improves performance.

The nursing profession has evolved far away from the traditional stereotype of nurses being physicians' helpers. Today's nurses are expected to demonstrate independence in clinical decision-making and case management, perform traditional clinical care, educate patients and their families. They also may be called on to design, manage and

coordinate patient care as part of – or head of – a team that might include a physician, social worker, physical therapist, respiratory therapist, occupational therapist, psychiatrist, RN, licensed practical nurse, or others involved in an integrated treatment plan for hospital- or community-based patients who may have complicated or multiple medical conditions needing coordinated care.

It is no surprise, then, that the American Association of Colleges of Nursing counts about 700 RN-to-B.S.N. programs and 160 RN-to-M.S.N. programs in the United States. And, it is no surprise that SUNY Empire's success is accelerating at high speed with the indefatigable Nettleton at its helm. She has established for the School of Nursing wide-ranging goals, including seamless academic progression, collaborative and dynamic learning environments through mentoring relationships and technology, promotion of professional values, including lifelong learning and professional role development, enabling students to reach their full potential, faculty development, and the expansion of accessible, affordable programs of study to meet the needs of the adult learner.

"Our mission is congruent with the college's mission to create and foster learning environments that

promote critical thinking, social responsibility and lifelong learning," she says. "Our nursing programs are designed to prepare nurses to function as leaders and full partners on interdisciplinary teams in complex health care environments within a global community. Our students and graduates are at the center of everything we do."

Nettleton, a Capital District region native and resident, knew she wanted to be a nurse by age 16, when she took a job in central supply at St. Peter's Hospital in Albany, N.Y., restocking floors and interacting frequently with nurses. Her comfort level in the health care delivery environment was already high, and her curiosity piqued, by the many nurses in her family who had attended diploma programs. They urged her to get a bachelor's degree. "It will serve you well," they told me," she recalls. "It was an understatement."

Nettleton attended the University at Albany's nursing program, which has since been phased out, then worked as a nurse doing hands-on patient care at St. Clare's Hospital in Schenectady, Albany Medical Center, and Samaritan Hospital, in Troy, N.Y., working with a wide spectrum of patients and their families in roles from diabetes educator to helping post-surgical patients. She also taught across the



nursing curriculum for nine years, first at Albany Medical Center and then at Samaritan Hospital's School of Nursing, where she also served as director for three years. Her next professional leap was to Excelsior College, where she led the School of Nursing for eight years, until 2011, when she accepted the deanship at Empire State College's School of Nursing.

"I knew, based on my legacy at Excelsior, that I could grow the RN to B.S.N. program and develop master's degrees in both nursing administration and nursing education," she says. Nettleton, who also is a certified nurse educator, has a doctorate in Educational Administration and Policy Studies from the University at Albany, where she focused on the reliability of faculty rating nursing students' clinical performance.

Nettleton points to the high-status reputation of a SUNY degree, accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, visible success of alumni, excellent faculty, as well as the college's affordability and flexibility as factors propelling enrollments. Also, students can start their coursework in both September and January, an idea Nettleton piloted, which doubled enrollments.

"We let colleagues in the field know about our wonderful degrees and the students came," she said. "It has mostly been word of mouth that has brought them here."

And, the college has attracted high-achievers. Now, the School of Nursing, jointly with Excelsior College, is affiliated with the Tau Kappa at-Large Chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, an

organization that seeks to advance world health and recognize nursing excellence in scholarship, leadership and service. To become a member, a student must maintain a 3.5 or better grade point average, a significant achievement.

One vision Nettleton hopes to see drive nurses to seek B.S.N. and M.S.N. credentials is "B.S.N. in 10," a proposed nationwide initiative to benefit patient care and RNs' careers that would require RNs to earn a B.S.N. within 10 years of being licensed. Both the New York State Nurses Association and New Jersey State Nurses Association have been tireless in their determination to gain legislative support for the initiative, efforts Nettleton worries might be thwarted by politicians. She explains B.S.N. in 10 would be especially important going forward as more hospitals achieve "magnet status," an award given by the American Nurses' Credentialing Center, an affiliate of the American Nurses Association, to hospitals that satisfy a set of criteria designed to measure the strength and quality of their nursing. At a magnet hospital, nurses deliver excellent patient outcomes, have a high level of job satisfaction, a low turnover rate and appropriate grievance resolutions. Magnet status

also indicates nursing involvement in data collection and decision making in patient care delivery.

"B.S.N. in 10 would carry the same message of professionalism as the requirement that teachers get a master's degree," Nettleton says. She is further excited by the prospects for nurses completing M.S.N.s, in either education or administration, which enables them to join teaching faculties and work in top management positions in the health care industry. As people live longer, she anticipates needs for more nurses in the areas of end-of-life and hospice care and chronic illness, noting that nurses will have important roles in the assessment of such patients and in ensuring their quality of life. She also sees potential for more nurse involvement in the health and wellness arena, with Americans' waxing enthusiasm for physical fitness.

"I tell my students that medicine is about 'cure' and nursing is about 'care'. And there is a difference. Nursing is not just a paycheck," says Nettleton. "Nurses make a creative, day-to-day difference for patients and their families, it's hard work, but nurses often feel their work is an avocation. I, myself, love nursing."

## Nursing Studies Scholarships

Dyson Foundation Scholarship in Nursing

Fred and Floy Willmott Foundation Scholarship in Nursing

Hohenhaus Family Nursing Scholarship

Julia O. Wells Memorial Education Foundation Scholarship

Mohawk Valley Medical Associates Scholarship

Nancy C. Harvin "Bless Your Heart" Scholarship

New York Community Bank Foundation Scholarship in Nursing

Stat Staff Professionals Nursing Scholarship

T. Urling and Mabel Walker Endowed Scholarship in Nursing

**These scholarships are made possible by generous donations to the Empire State College Foundation.**

**For more information, go to [www.esc.edu/scholarships](http://www.esc.edu/scholarships)**

# Christine Santangelo: Transformation through Education

by Helen Susan Edelman



Christine Santangelo '14 discusses a patient case with a Saratoga Hospital colleague.

Christine Santangelo '14 already had decades behind her as an RN with an associate degree when she enrolled in Empire State College's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

"I tried other colleges, but was treated like a new nurse, fresh out of school. Empire State College acknowledged and valued my years of experience and I was able to apply it," she says. "I had been worried I didn't have the self-discipline for online study, or that I might not have the computer skills, but the technology helpdesk at Empire State College was extremely supportive. And, because online courses are modules with structured timeframes, I knew my deadlines. When I traveled, I brought my computer and did not fall behind. Empire State College was perfect for me." She completed the program in two years.

Now director of a medical/surgical telemetry unit at Saratoga Hospital, Santangelo already had risen high in the ranks before she returned for the B.S.N., a testament to her clinical skills and interpersonal instincts, but, she says, "With further education, my leadership style changed. Earlier, I felt I had to do everything myself. I learned to let go and enabled my staff to grow personally and professionally, as I had."

One aspect of her student experience that Santangelo found gratifying was working with the School of Nursing to plan her educational program, "so that I knew exactly what was expected, and when, from the moment I started with my first course, right through to graduation. The planning process allowed me to reflect on the essence of nursing, really invigorated me and was very fulfilling. When I needed guidance, I always got it and now I participate in administrative decision-making at the hospital, mentor my staff of 95 and still do patient care on the unit. I have the best of both worlds – on the floor and in my office."

She is a strong advocate for the educational advancement of the nurses she supervises, wanting them to be able to manage the unit in her absence, participate in evaluations, hiring and disciplining personnel and advance their own credentials.

"I don't just encourage them, I accommodate them," she says. "I will do anything to support my staff. I'm a nurse, a director and a real person to them."

With her back-up, two members of her staff have become nurse practitioners and four with B.S.N.s are going for their master's.

"This means there are nurses at the bedside with master's degrees," she points out. "It's very good for patients. You can see the difference in nurses who go back to school – they become much more critical thinkers."

She credits her own success to "others who saw something in me I didn't see in myself: leadership skills."

Returning to school, she emphasizes, requires family and employer support. She praises Saratoga Hospital, which offers tuition reimbursement and scholarships, as well as free certifications in areas of specialization and on-site, college-level education. The hospital's hiring practice is to "look within first," encouraging its own nurses to go back to school, rather than automatically recruiting from outside.

"Nursing has become more complex and nurses need to be prepared to respond to that," says Santangelo. "We have to educate patients and their families to manage health care after discharge, as we don't want patients to need to be readmitted, which impacts health and healing, raises costs and, under new Medicare regulations, can reduce hospital reimbursements."

"My message to nurses seeking to further their education is, 'You can do this.'"

# David Theobald, RN, B.S.N. '13: Nurse-Entrepreneur “Walks the Walk”

by Helen Susan Edelman

**D**avid Theobald wanted to “walk the walk,” so the registered nurse turned entrepreneur, with an Associate in Nursing from St. Elizabeth Hospital in Utica, N.Y., enrolled at Empire State College in 2011 to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

It made perfect sense. Theobald, founder of three successful health care-related companies, felt that in his leadership position in the industry, he needed to be a role model for his hundreds of nurse employees, as well as a business owner who could show health care executives that he knows the future of nursing and better patient outcomes require advanced education. Theobald also had delivered hands-on care to patients at Samaritan Hospital, in Troy, N.Y., and appreciates nurses’ daily challenges.

His first undertaking, Stat Staff Professionals, established in 2002, addresses the nursing shortage by placing registered nurses across the country in acute and intensive care units and emergency departments.

“Through collaboration and hard work, we turn staffing challenges into opportunities that drive change,” Theobald says.

Stat Staff promotes “ethics in nursing,” a cornerstone of what Theobald calls, “one of the most trusted professions in today’s world.” The Guide to the Code of Ethics for Nurses by the American Nurses Association states that a nurse should practice compassion and respect

for the inherent dignity, worth and uniqueness of every individual.

Stat Staff employs about 100 nurses for per diem and contract assignments, and works with 300 more through subcontractors. Theobald believes so strongly in the importance of nurses earning bachelor’s degrees that he offers scholarships to employed RNs who go on for more schooling, as well as free recertification training, tuition reimbursement, reimbursement for gym membership, a 401K and paid time off. The benefits attract and retain professionals who can be choosy because of the market demand for highly skilled nurses.

As Stat Staff grew, Theobald recognized an unfilled niche in community health and in 2008 established Adirondack Health and Wellness to provide RN-staffed corporate wellness services to area businesses, such as on-site flu clinics, wellness screenings, CPR classes and automated defibrillator instruction.

His most recent endeavor is the innovative Davin Informatics, a company that creates unique custom management software systems to manage health care facility staffing, credentialing, reporting and billing.

All three companies are headquartered in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

As a boss and a clinician, Theobald understands the difficulty of returning to school as an adult. The hiatus between his own degrees reflects competing claims on his time as a husband, father and business



PHOTO PROVIDED

**David Theobald '13 leads three health care related companies.**

owner. He tried at one point to study at SUNY Institute of Technology (now SUNY Polytechnic Institute), but found it too stressful.

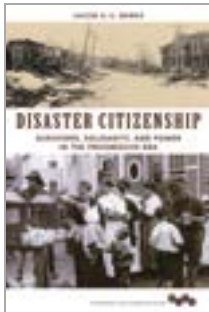
“Empire State College offered a local solution, distance learning, a good education and flexibility, so I could continue to focus on family and business as I studied,” he says. “It was time for me to earn the B.S.N., to be a frontrunner in my own industry. I understand the pressure.” Undaunted, he is currently enrolled in SUNY Empire’s Master of Science in Nursing Education program and his wife, who works with him, also is enrolled at Empire State College, working toward an MBA.

“My nursing education has given me versatility,” says Theobald. “I highly encourage RNs to think like entrepreneurs: collaborate, create and innovate to improve our health care system.”



# PORTFOLIO

by Hope Ferguson



## **Friends in Times of Need** **Jacob Remes** **Former faculty, New York City Region**

With recent floods in Louisiana and fires in California, Americans have grown accustomed to disaster on their television screens. Former Historical Studies Mentor Jacob Remes uncovers the dynamics of disasters in his “Disaster Citizenship: Survivors, Solidarity and Power in the Progressive Era” (University of Illinois Press). The book is a social history of two disasters on the Canadian-American border: the Salem Fire of 1914 and the Halifax Explosion of 1917. Remes uses his study to explore the natural networks that spring up during disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where neighbors assisting neighbors often prove to be more effective, at least in the beginning, than trained social workers and government agencies. Labor historian James Green writes, “Remes has revealed the power of informal networks and solidarities that existed in poorer communities, particularly during disasters, and he has highlighted the ways agents of state intervention failed to understand these strengths and their domestic significance.”



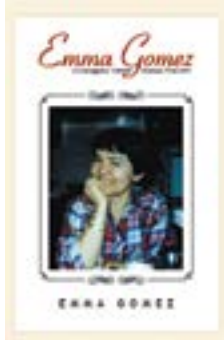
## **Fingering the Keys to Classic Jazz** **Paul Serrato '95** **New York City Region**

Close your eyes and listen to Paul Serrato's latest jazz CD, “Urban Fingerprints,” and you are immediately transported to a cool downtown jazz club in New York City. Serrato's virtuoso piano playing weaves through all 10 of the featured compositions, eschewing anything jarring or discordant. In turn playful, thoughtful, energetic and joyful, the entire album displays his classical piano training and the respect the composer and arranger has for classic jazz. Teaming up with bassist Hilliard Green, Serrato's influences include jazz giants Art Tatum, Eddie Palmieri, Tom Jobim and Horace Silver. “Urban Footprints” is Serrato's 10th CD and was recorded at the Broome Street Studio in New York City. “The Broome Street lower East Side New York neighborhood instilled a charged energy that couldn't help releasing creative juices” said the Omaha, Neb. native. Produced by Graffiti Productions, his CDs are available at CDBaby.com.



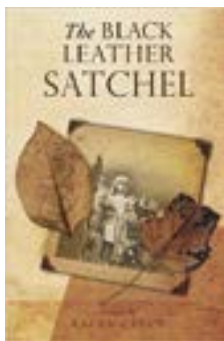
## **The Many Perks of Puttin' Up** **Garry Allen '00** **Hudson Valley Region**

Gary Allen '00 has added a new gastronomical book to his previous volumes on food, “Can It! The Pleasures and Perils of Preserving Food” (University of Chicago Press). He covers the history of preserving foods through canning or pickling, the reason (to make food for times of scarcity), and the result (often a savoriness the Japanese call umami – think ketchup and soy sauce) to boost flavor. “The preservation process fundamentally altered the food, creating new and different textures,” he noted to his hometown newspaper, the Kingston Times. Sometimes early experiments in preservation led to food we know and love today, like milk to cheese, which was called “milk's leap into immortality.” Allen is an avid canning and pickling aficionado, having recently concocted habanero apricot preserves. Allen worked at the Culinary Institute of America for 13 years and earned his degree in gastronomical design and literature.



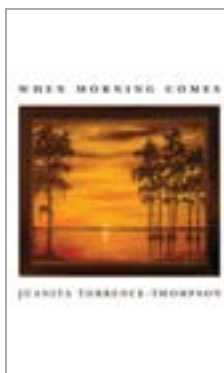
### **A Brave Woman's Moving Memoir Emma Gomez '79, '81 The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies**

Emma Gomez '79, '81 has penned her memoir, "Emma Gomez: A Courageous Woman Displays True Grit." The self-published book, describing the challenges and rewards of being a Hispanic woman working on labor issues, was suggested to her decades ago by her mentor. One of 10 children, Gomez emigrated from Puerto Rico to New York City and enrolled in college in her early 40s, where she earned a degree from The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies. She was a groundbreaker and strong Hispanic woman "in a world not quite ready to accept her and her high aspirations," her book blurb reads. Through marriage, motherhood and work on labor issues affecting women, Gomez is described by reviewer James G. Nolan as someone who has "given unselfishly of herself to all without prejudice, seeking to give rather than receive." Gomez was valedictorian of her class in 1981, the first Hispanic, Puerto Rican and woman to have accomplished this.



### **Childhood Trauma Leads to Advocacy Paula Czech '89 Northeast Region**

Paula Czech has published what a reviewer termed, a "mesmerizing" account of how she overcame the trauma of childhood abuse. In "The Black Leather Satchel," Czech details how she found "angels" along the way that helped her to overcome the emotional trauma of abuse by her stepfather, whom she was able to stand up to at age 11. Each "angel" showed her that there was a way out – from a landlord who became a surrogate parent and advocated for the girl to leave home to attend school, to neighbors and college professors who, through their support, gave her the confidence needed to go on. Czech grew up to become a registered nurse, with a career that spanned 50 years, and earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Community and Human Services, with a concentration in mental health from Empire State College. Now in retirement, she still advocates for victims of childhood sexual abuse and tries to convey that survivors can find peace after the devastation.



### **A Life Recalled Through Poetry Juanita Torrence-Thompson '83 Long Island Region**

Juanita Torrence-Thompson's newest collection of poems "When Morning Comes," is written as a retrospective on a life – in particular, the life of an African-American woman who grew up in New England. A prolific poet and editor-in-chief of Mobius, The Poetry Magazine, Torrence-Thompson's poetry has been translated into 15 languages and appears in 12 anthologies and dozens of magazines. These poems cross the decades, and, in the mode of a memoirist, according to one reviewer, recall relationships, childhood events, travel, celebrities, political concerns and, most poignantly, the loss of loved ones, including parents and spouse. Reviewer and award-winning poet Daniela Gioseffi writes that Torrence-Thompson "has an ability to charm her reader with a simplicity of expression, and an accessible style that brings back one's own memories."



## Center for Distance Learning

**Lisa Brescia '08**, a noted Broadway actor in such performances as Elphaba in "Wicked" and "Mamma Mia!," will make the move to academia, taking on a new "role" as assistant professor of acting at Missouri State University's Department of Theatre and Dance.

**Sean Britton '11** has been named director of public health for the Broome County Health Department in New York. Britton started with the department in August 2013 as the public health emergency preparedness coordinator. He previously served as deputy director of public health. Britton has a bachelor's degree in Community and Human Services with a concentration in emergency management from SUNY Empire and is pursuing a master's degree in public administration at Binghamton University.

**Joseph Centanni '16** is captain with the Inspectional Services Bureau at the Troy Police Department, a post he has held since 2014. He is responsible for investigating confidential, disciplinary and personnel matters, including unauthorized use of force, theft of evidence, narcotics use and officer-involved shootings resulting in homicide. Centanni began his law enforcement career in 1990 as a public safety officer at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. In 1995, he joined the police department in the City of Troy in New York, and was promoted to sergeant in 2001 and to captain in 2011. He earned his degree in Community and Human Services, with a concentration in criminal justice.

**Rachel Enders '13** joined Klepper, Hahn & Hyatt, a Syracuse, N.Y. engineering and architectural firm, as a human

resources coordinator. She worked in higher education for five years as a payroll and benefits administrator and senior transportation manager, and also has worked in human resources in the banking industry. She earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from the college.

**Kelly Eley '16** has joined Loptr, an information security company in East Aurora, N.Y., as a consultant. She works with Loptr's leadership in building virtual security teams, security research and database development. She holds her bachelor's degree in information technology from the college, and is working toward a master's degree in cybersecurity through Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

**Lisa Feng '14, '16**, who earned her Bachelor of Science in Community and Human Service, has joined AmeriCorps. She is a two-time AmeriCorps alumni and Segal Education Award recipient who has done community and youth service projects both professionally and personally, and was recognized for her volunteer services during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2007. She works in the Centerville Community School District with at-risk students in a Title 1 school district in rural Iowa. She received four years of training and certification through the Corporation for National & Community Service, a federal agency, in volunteer recruitment, disaster response, citizenship, communication and youth development.

**Barbara File Marangon '11** will be teaching ballet at the University of Oklahoma on a graduate assistantship. She received the Ballet Russes Fellowship and earned her B.A. in The Arts from SUNY Empire.

**Joshua Jacobs '15** has been honored by the Glens Falls Post Star of upstate New York as one of "20 Under 40," celebrating young leaders. He received his B.S. in Business, Management and Economics from the college. Jacobs is the system administrator for Informz, specializing in information and technology services. He has special expertise in cloud computing and thin client technologies, writing terms of service contracts and acceptable-use policies, and designing, configuring and installing VPN site-to-site tunnels with 256-bit AES encryption.

## Central New York Region

**Chris Akin**, a student, earned the data center architecture account manager certification from Cisco. Akin is an account manager at Teracai, a North Syracuse, N.Y. provider of networking, data center and services. The designation helps Teracai achieve Cisco's data center architecture specialization. Akin, who has been with the company for one year, is working toward his bachelor's degree in business, management and economics.

**Constance Avery '02** exhibited her acrylic ink paintings in a show, "As I See," at the Central Arts Gallery in Syracuse in September. Avery has worn hearing aids from age five. She was an LPN for many years before being diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa at age 30, and later Usher's Syndrome. At 43, she decided to return to her first love, art, despite the difficulties with her vision. Her latest body of work is in reaction to experimenting with acrylic ink, expressive painting and images inspired by memories of stained glass creations by her youngest brother, who also was an artist and struggled with RP/Usher's. Applying the acrylic paints in varying consistency and wiping

it away creates the illusion of stained glass. The movements and special effects created by these methods are what attract many of her clients to her artwork.

**Katrina Kapustay '15**, who earned her bachelor's degree in Community and Human Services, joined the Madison County, N.Y. Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association as an associate program director, where she is responsible for delivering programs and services to the chapter's 14-county area. Kapustay was the community health advocate coordinator and certified health care navigator for the Greater Watertown North Country, N.Y. Chamber of Commerce. She earned an associate degree at SUNY Cobleskill and a bachelor's degree in Community and Human Services from SUNY Empire.

**Ted Daniels '14**, who earned an associate degree in Community and Human Services from the college, is a case manager for Catholic Charities. He is pursuing his bachelor's degree, which will be completed in December 2016 in Community and Human Services. "This is often an overlooked population of consumers. It is my hope and desire to help alleviate the discrimination and political barriers that these individuals encounter on a daily basis. My education, coupled with my work ethic, is how I will help to empower these individuals," he wrote.

## Genesee Valley Region

**David Inzana '15** was named the director of security for Hilton Central School District in New York. Inzana previously served as a captain with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, retiring after 25 years of service. He earned his bachelor's degree in public administration from the college.



Jeanne Lindsay '87 was profiled in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle a few months before her 90th birthday. The article honored her prolific work as a watercolor artist. She has received more than 100 honors and awards of the highest standing for her botanical images, including membership in the Watercolor USA Honor Society.

### School for Graduate Studies

Steven F. Cheeseman '10, Ed.D. is superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., which includes Bethel, Bridgeport, Brookfield, Danbury, Darien, Easton, Fairfield, Georgetown, Greenwich, Monroe, New Canaan, New Fairfield, Newtown, Norwalk, Redding Ridge, Ridgefield, Riverside, Shelton, Sherman,

Stamford, Stratford, Trumbull, Weston, Westport and Wilton. Cheeseman served as associate superintendent of schools in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Long Island, and assumed his new responsibilities in June. He is responsible for more than 9,000 students and 1,000 faculty members in the 31 elementary and high schools sponsored by the Diocese of Bridgeport. He also will chair the Diocesan Education Commission formed in 2014 to reorganize Catholic education and lead a strategic planning process, now underway, to ensure its viability and vitality in the future.

Colleen Culley '13, who graduated with a Master of Liberal Arts degree, has been appointed visiting assistant professor at Alfred University for this academic year. Her

scholarship covers movement, dance, politics and work. She worked extensively with mentor Adele Anderson. Her final project was called, "Get a Foot in the Door: The Dance of Late Capitalism."

Kathy Grimes '10, '13, administrator for the Highlands Living Center, in Pittsford, N.Y., was recognized last spring by The American College of Health Care Administrators with the Eli Pick Facility Leadership Award, which recognizes administrators whose teams have achieved exceptional organizational quality. Grimes was among 248 recipients honored for providing exemplary leadership to their respective organizations. To earn recognition, administrators must have achieved exceptional results on three years of skilled nursing facility surveys, including

high scores for quality, safety and customer satisfaction with a minimum of 80 percent facility occupancy during the three-year period of review.

Penny Jennings '03, '06 has been named commissioner of human rights for Rockland County, N.Y. Jennings graduated with an M.A. in Social Policy. She went on to earn her doctorate at Northeastern University.

Judy Lekoski-Eurich '10 is a major gift officer at University of North Carolina, at Charlotte.

Dana McClure '03 was appointed development coordinator for the Agricultural Stewardship Association in Greenwich, N.Y. She comes to ASA from The Corporation of Yaddo, where she served as development associate for the past 11 years. She brings with her a combination of data



"Supporting Empire State College gives people who might not otherwise have a chance to earn a degree the opportunity to do so."

– Anne Sonne '89

## Leaving a legacy. Creating a lasting impact.

A certified educator in Pennsylvania, where she taught junior high school French for many years, Anne Sonne '89 chose SUNY Empire State College for her master's when she and her family relocated to New York. The accessibility and flexibility of the college allowed Anne to go on to obtain her New York state teacher certification.

As an alumna, Anne's connection to SUNY Empire State College endured, and, when the time was right, she joined the Boyer Legacy Society. The Boyer Legacy Society honors our most committed donors, who have named Empire State College as the beneficiary of a planned gift.

To explore ways you can join Anne in leaving a legacy and creating a lasting impact, you can visit [www.esc.edu/PlanGifts](http://www.esc.edu/PlanGifts), email Toby Tobrocke at [Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu](mailto:Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu) or call 800-847-3000, ext. 2372.

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Every day.**

On behalf of the students, faculty and staff of SUNY Empire State College, we thank our generous donors for their support in 2016.

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management, event planning, research, reporting and analytic skills. McClure serves on the board at Dunham's Bay Fish & Game Club and enjoys volunteering for Odyssey of the Mind and at Lansingburgh's Vex Robotics competition. She earned her Bachelor of Science from the college in Business, Management and Economics and her MBA in management from the college. The ASA is a nonprofit land trust helping landowners conserve farmland in Washington and Rensselaer counties in the upper Hudson River Valley.

**Tina Mueller '09** was named president of Integra Discovery Services, a Liverpool, N.Y. company that provides testing services. She has been a forensic substance technician since 2012. After earning her bachelor's degree from SUNY Cortland, she earned her master's degree from Empire State College.

**Miriam Romais**, an MBA student, presented a photo project, "Hersteading: Cold Antler Farm" at Saratoga Arts, last summer. An artist talk with Romais and homesteader and author Jenna Woginrich, of Cold Antler Farm was featured. On her website, Romais said, "Hersteading" is a photo project about the energy, life, love and challenges of a young woman building her dream life on her own farm in upstate N.Y. A renaissance woman, Jenna Woginrich is not just a homesteader; she is an apprentice falconer, archer, fiddler, martial artist, designer, author and fierce believer in creating the life you want, even if others don't quite understand.

**Carol Witkowski (C.W.) Turner '12**, a MALS student whose final project consisted of a full-day workshop for middle school girls, had its most recent iteration in the Corning, N.Y., area last summer. The two-day Full STEAHM Ahead! (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Health and Math) workshop at

Corning Community College was aimed at girls ages 11 to 13 who were going into seventh and eighth grades. The program expands on the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) concept used in area schools. The STEAHM program obtained a grant that enabled organizers to offer the workshops free of charge to 24 girls. Next year, organizers hope to secure enough grant money to double that number.

**Melva Visher '83, '96** was elected to The John R. Oishei Foundation's board of directors. She serves on the board of trustees of several nonprofit organizations, including the SUNY Empire State College Alumni Federation. Visher is clinical assistant professor and program director of Health Information Management at Medaille College in Buffalo, N.Y. Her professional experience includes 38 years at Kaleida Health, from which she retired in January 2012 as vice president of community health. A successful grant writer, she generated more than \$45 million in local, state and national grant funding over the course of 10 years in support of community health programs at Kaleida. Visher earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and a Master of Arts degree in Business and Policy Studies from SUNY Empire. She completed a two-year post-baccalaureate certification in medical record administration at Daemen College (1988), an 18-month Health Leadership Fellowship Program of the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York.

**Hudson Valley Region**

**Winnie Furnari '92, RDH, M.S., FAADH**, was recognized as the Crest and Oral-B/American Dental Hygiene Association educator of the year. She was recognized when more than 2,000 people gathered for the 2016 American Dental

Hygienists' Association Center for Lifelong Learning at the 93rd annual session in June 2016. Furnari received her Bachelor of Science in Educational Studies and has worked toward her Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from the college.

**Ryan Hunlock '13** graduated from The Sage Colleges, Graduate School of Health Sciences, with a Master of Science in Forensic Mental Health. He earned his B.S. from SUNY Empire, and his associate degree in individual studies from SUNY Ulster.

**Jeannette Provenzano '93** was honored by the Ulster County, N.Y. Italian American Foundation at an annual Italian festival in October. She was one of two Italian Americans chosen for her achievement and contribution to the community. Provenzano is a former Ulster County legislator. In her 26 years in the legislative body, she served both as Democratic minority and majority leader. In addition, she raised seven children as a single mother, while working full time. She earned her associate degree from the college.

**David Mazzetti '10**, a member of the college's foundation board and president of Mazzetti, Buscetto and Associates, in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., was recently honored and is now a member of the Ameriprise Financial Diamond Ring Club. Advisors earn this prestigious distinction by achieving many years of consistently high performance that includes an exceptional commitment to financial planning and superior client service. Diamond Ring Club members make up less than seven percent of the entire Ameriprise salesforce.

**Suzi Teo '16** is the curator for the interdisciplinary art exhibition, "Interlude." Using the example of Black Mountain College,

North Carolina – an innovative experimental art program dating back to the 1950s, Teo's goal is to include a variety of Empire State College students and alumni working across disciplines – from social engagement to traditional art forms – to highlight the innovative nature of Empire State College. The exhibition is sponsored by the Metro Art Club and ran from Dec. 9, 2016, to Feb. 18, 2017, at the Hudson Gallery at the college's Manhattan location.

### International Programs

**Hady Aouad '10**, finance manager with RAMACO and RAFA Group – based in Qatar, with branches in Lebanon, Cyprus and the United States – has been appointed to the Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors; the first alumnus from International Programs ever to serve on the board. The board takes a leadership role in the fund-raising efforts of the college, oversees student groups and provides guidance to the Alumni and Student Relations Office on alumni and student issues. It meets twice a year and has geographic representation, as well as representatives from the college's areas of study. Aouad, who has previously worked for FedEx and PricewaterhouseCoopers, said, "I am so proud of being a graduate of SUNY Empire, and I am happy to give back to the institution that helped me reach where I am."

**Mazen Baajour '03**, who earned his B.S. in Business, Management and Economics, is a business development manager at the National Establishment for Agricultural and Industrial Sulphur. He enrolled in Cyprus after completing three full years and majored in management information systems from Saudi Arabia, he reports that it is "going well."

### Long Island Region

**Gerard A. Geisweller '16** has enrolled in St. John's University School of Law.

### New York City Region

**Nancy Azara '74** took part in a number of shows last summer and fall. The artist was one of several artists to have work in "So Much, So Little, All at Once," at Regina Rex Gallery in New York City, in April and May. She also was part of the 32nd Fine Print Fair at the Cleveland Museum of Art last September. Azara had a 17- by 14-inch printed recto and verso (back and front), in the show. In addition, she was in "On Knowing and Unknowing: A Material Narrative," during the month of October at Ortega y Gasset Projects in Brooklyn, N.Y. "Nancy Azara paints, carves, traces, cuts, and moves around her materials in a way that negotiates raw instinct with thoughtful deliberation with a very specific and intricate thinking," said fellow artist Zahar Vaks. "The work embodies serious play ... There is a definite sense of knowing the materials, yet the forms and imagery continue to unravel into the unknown."

**Julie Forlenza '14** was profiled on her hometown website, Staten Island Live, for the pet-sitting business she started, Rufflavin Services, that offers dog walking, hand-drawn "doggie portraits" and in-home pet sitting. She started her college education at the Fashion Institute of Technology, later transferring to SUNY Empire.

**Marvenia Knight '12** had an exhibit at the King Manor Museum of photographs of wildlife at Baisley Pond, Jamaica, Queens. Knight was born in Sunbury, N.C., a small rural town surrounded by nature, which inspired her dedication to capturing natural aesthetics. She studied graphic design and photography at Parson New School, as well as at Empire State College.

### Northeast Region

**Wayne Getman '75** is the president of the Kuyahoorra Valley Historical Society, that encompasses the Kuyahoorra Valley – which encompasses Newport, Middleville, Norway, Fairfield, Poland and Cold Brook, N.Y., after retiring from a 27-year professional career with the Boy Scouts of America. He earned his degree in environmental sciences.

**Nancy Keelen '91, '96** had her watercolors featured at the Clifton Park – Halfmoon Public Library in Saratoga County, N.Y., in July. Keelen always loved painting, though it became a much bigger part of her life after she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015 and was bedridden for several weeks after multiple surgeries. "I was held hostage in my house, so I brought out the watercolors and the paints. It helped calm my nerves and take my mind off the disease," she told a local newspaper that featured her story.

### Niagara Frontier Region

**Terry C. Burton '13** was appointed general counsel to Calamar. He earned his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania and holds a master's degree from the University at Buffalo. He earned undergraduate degrees from both SUNY Buffalo and Empire State College.

**Perry Dewey '86** was named district superintendent for the Delaware Chenango Madison Otsego (DCMO) BOCES in Central New York. He was superintendent of Madison Central School. "I'm really looking forward to the challenge," Dewey told a local newspaper. He started his post in early October 2016.

**Dawn Hunt '11** was selected for a 2016 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service at SUNY Fredonia. Hunt joined that campus 13 years ago, and has



served as a secretary 1 and the “face of the office,” in the Department of Biology since 2009. Hunt previously received the Barbara Saletta Meritorious Service Award, established through the Fredonia College Foundation. She earned her associate degree in Business Management and Economics from SUNY Empire and completed the medical office assistant program at Jamestown Business College.

**Michael Kessler '01**, a business unit manager, has retired from Cutco Cutlery Corp. He joined the company in 1977 as a materials manager and oversaw warehouse operations in 1979. Kessler earned an associate degree from the college, and his bachelor's degree from Houghton College in Western New York.

**Brandon Vizzi '10** was named one of “30 Under 30” by Buffalo Business First. The designation recognizes young people's achievements in work and community. Vizzi is an emergency department technician for Erie County Medical Center. He is co-founder and director of Brothers Without Borders, Inc., an organization that supports emergency services workers.

He is a volunteer firefighter, AEMT, and rescue diver with the Ellicott Creek volunteer fire dept. His future plans include traveling around the world and continued outreach to emergency services across the world through Brothers Without Borders. He also wants to scuba dive the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Before he turns 40, he wants to see Brothers Without Borders expand to have chapters all over the world.

### School of Nursing

**Patrice Chunilal '15** BSN is employed as an Emergency/Trauma ICU nurse in Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan.

**Eoin Coffey '16**, who earned her Bachelor of Science from the School of Nursing, was published in the Worldwide Leaders in Healthcare, joining the prestigious ranks of the International Nurses Association.

### In Memoriam

Associate Professor of Business, Management and Economics **Deborah A. Noble, Ph.D.**, originally from Belleville, Ala., died Sept. 30, 2016, in New York City after a long illness.

She first joined Empire State College in 2003 as an adjunct instructor in the Verizon Corporate College Program, following a successful career in increasingly high-level positions in Verizon and its predecessor telecommunications companies. Subsequently, she became a member of the faculty group at the Brooklyn location.

Noble taught across the Business, Management and Economics curriculum, primarily in management, strategy and organizational behavior. Her research focused on organizational citizenship. She made a significant contribution to revising the BME Area of Study and concentration guideline.

Noble was very active in the Eastern Academy of Management, serving on planning committees, reviewing conference paper submissions and presenting in the U.S. and at international conferences in China, Brazil and Peru, among other places.

## Please Stay Connected!

Tell us what's new with you. Do you have a new job, a promotion, an award, a new publication, new exhibit, etc.? We'd love to hear from you. Send us your news and photos. Go to: [www.esc.edu/Alumni-Info](http://www.esc.edu/Alumni-Info)

## Letters to the Editor

The following messages were received by various staff members associated with the production of the summer issue of Connections.

---

The new issue of Connections is really one of the most attractive alum mags I have seen anywhere. The theme of food and wine is a winner, and the way you have integrated the people and activities of the college is informative about the college. Possibilities for graduates are inspiring. Good show!

LeGrace Benson  
ESC faculty emerita  
Ithaca, N.Y.

---

Terrific job with the magazine. I really enjoyed reading it, especially the opening column.

Tony Esposito  
Empire State College Council member

---

I just received my copy of the ESC magazine. A homerun – great content and design!

Please share kudos with your team.

Cheers,  
Dan Lundquist  
Retired vice president for marketing and enrollment management at the Sage Colleges. Previously served at Union College in Schenectady and at the University of Pennsylvania

---

What a beautiful, inspiring and informative issue!

It reached me all the way down here in D.C. ... and made me homesick!

BRAVO!

Nancy Kymn Harvin Rutigliano, Ph.D.  
The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences – visiting scholar  
Empire State College faculty

---

I wanted to tell you how wonderful your college magazine looks. Thank you for sending me the current issue and I hope to see you soon.

Warm regards,  
Matt Barney  
Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving  
SUNY Cobleskill

---

Just got a copy of Connections in the ESC mail. It looks really good; chock full. I shall start reading through it tonight.

Bob Congemi  
Faculty member

---

The Summer issue of Connections is ... is absolutely delicious! Well done to all – a treat to digest ...

I could go on and on ...

Seriously – one of the best produced, (oops – did it again)

Ok, I'm done now, may I please be excused?

Shelley B. Dixon, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Academic Services



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As a strong college community with a global footprint, we want to inspire philanthropy on all levels by establishing these three key philosophies:

- **Promote** – We will tell the story of what philanthropy means to our college community and help spread the mission and vision of this initiative for all.
- **Educate** – We will constantly educate the college community by sharing student, alumni and faculty philanthropy spotlights while showing how gifts to the college are transforming the student experience.
- **Engage** – We will host collegewide fundraising drives encouraging participation among all locations and programs, as well as promote local events within all our communities and how to join the effort.

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SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

# ALUMNI Awards

## ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS

We are accepting nominations for the inaugural Alumni Awards Program. Nominations are still open, but will be closing soon.

If you know any exemplary alumni who have made a lasting impact on society and Empire State College in the following areas, we invite you to go online and complete the nomination application:

- Emerging Leader
- Community Impact
- Distinguished Leader

To submit nominations, please visit [alumni.esc.edu](http://alumni.esc.edu)



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recycled paper*



PHOTO CREDIT: Canal Town Photos

**Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies at the College's New Rochester Location** – from left, Robert Duffy, president and CEO of the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce and former NYS lieutenant governor; Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Morelle; Town of Brighton Supervisor William Moehle; SUNY Empire State College President Merodie Hancock and State Sen. Joseph Robach.