

THE MAGAZINE OF FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE

# FSC NOW <sup>2022</sup>

## A CAMPUS TRANSFORMED

A decade-long transformation of FSC from the "Aggie" School to future-focused, modernized facilities and programs.



### COLLABORATION, INNOVATION, EDUCATION

The Estée Lauder Companies to support STEM education and job opportunities.

### A LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

The field of competitive video gaming, or Esports, is here to stay.





DELORES QUINTYNE—civil rights pioneer, community activist, and trailblazer—was honored on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, when Conklin Hall was rededicated as Delores Y. Quintyne Hall.

## FSCNOW

FSCNow is published annually by Farmingdale State College's Office for Marketing & Communications. Additional original web content is available on our website at [fscnow.farmingdale.edu](http://fscnow.farmingdale.edu).

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A LETTER FROM

## President Nader

It is hard to believe that this is the fifth edition of *FSCNow*. When we first decided to create an annual campus magazine, I had no idea how it would be received. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. *FSCNow* has become a source of pride for our alumni, faculty, and staff. It's proven an ideal way to celebrate our achievements and outline the College's road ahead.

This issue includes stories that underscore Farmingdale's mission and success. These stories help us appreciate some of the people who help make Farmingdale a special place. Some spotlight our faculty and staff; others feature notable alumni and donors. As you would expect, many articles are focused on our students.

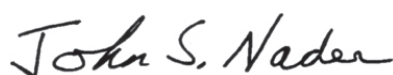
Students are at the heart of all we do, and it shows. The College continues to thrive, even in a challenging environment. Our enrollment remains strong, and we celebrate a student body that is among SUNY's most inclusive. The last year has been remarkable. The College received two of the largest gifts in its history. We opened a program in Computer Science as well as a new Center for Criminal Justice Studies. We have launched an Honors Program to recruit outstanding students to each of our four schools. We have successfully recruited The Estée Lauder Companies to the Broad Hollow Bioscience Park, which will provide support for scholarships and programs. In addition, we are undertaking over \$250 million in projects that will transform the campus.

As always, the success of our graduates is remarkable: their earnings rank among the very highest of recent SUNY alums. Students in our Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Medical Laboratory Science, and Aeronautical Sciences have attained pass rates at or close to 100 percent on licensure and certification exams. The early career earnings of our graduates rank in the **top 2 percent nationally**, according to *CollegeNet's* Social Mobility Index.

Our position as one of the very best values in higher education is nearly unrivaled. To highlight these successes, we've started a Metrics That Matter campaign that reflects the success of our students, our achievements, and our place as a true engine of opportunity for our students and for Long Island.

Our vision remains consistent: new academic programs that build on our success, enhancing student engagement, supporting faculty achievement, upgrading our buildings and grounds, and a more ambitious fundraising program that matches the needs of our students and our aspirational goals.

I know that you will enjoy this newest edition of *FSCNow*. The magazine has proven to be a great way to share our stories with those who care most about the College. Happy reading!



John S. Nader, PhD  
President, Farmingdale State College



STUDENTS ARE AT  
THE HEART  
OF ALL WE DO,  
AND IT SHOWS.

# FSCNOW



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 When you see this icon, visit [fscnow.farmingdale.edu](https://fscnow.farmingdale.edu) to view additional content and videos.



**2013**

**2014**



**2021**

**2015**

**COMING SOON**

Dewey Hall, Roosevelt Hall, and Thompson Hall Renovations,  
and the Laffin Hall Welcome Center

2013 | 1. Children's Center, 2. Campus Center, 3. Solar Carport  
2014 | 4. Nold Hall Athletic Complex Renovation

2015 | 5. School of Business Building, 6. Smart Energy House  
2021 | 7. Quintyne Hall Dedication, 8. Academic Mall





# A CAMPUS TRANSFORMED

**A decade-long transformation of FSC from the "Aggie" School to future-focused, modernized facilities and programs.**

For decades, Farmingdale State College was synonymous with cows. Originally founded in 1912 as the New York State School of Agriculture on Long Island, FSC retained its aggie-school identity long after the departure of the last bovine.

A slow and steady campus transformation has been replaced by giant strides. The rapid and extensive physical and academic expansion at the campus over the past 10 years not only pushed FSC front and center on Long Island's radar, but got the state's and the nation's attention as well. Few vestiges of Farmingdale's agricultural past remain, replaced by wind turbine-building facilities, airplanes, and up-to-date science and engineering laboratories.

And more changes are underway: renovations, new construction, and new courses designed to modernize the College while preserving its intimate feel. "The investment of nearly \$250 million in capital projects over the next five years will dramatically transform the campus," said Gregory W. O'Connor, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. "From the much-needed repair of critical building systems and infrastructure to large-scale interior renovations, these initiatives will enable Farmingdale State College to continue to provide outstanding education well into the future."

The campus is currently working with the State University Construction Fund to develop a scope of work for a new Facilities Master Plan (FMP) that will include plans, targets, and objectives for the next 10 years of development on campus, O'Connor added.

The College was established to meet the needs of Long Island, and originally those were farming and industrial, noted William Steedle, an alumnus from FSC's class of 1981 and parent of three children who attended FSC.

Steedle, now Assistant Dean of the School of Business and Associate Professor of Visual Communications, noted that FSC is the oldest public college on Long Island, adding, "We have always been tied directly to Long Island's economy."





ROOSEVELT HALL ENTRANCE

One of FSC's strengths continues to be its remarkable ability to anticipate and act on the local economy's needs. Between 2009 and 2017, Farmingdale had a \$2.51 billion impact on the region, according to the Long Island Association.

"We pivot well," according to Steedle. "We identify the needs in the area and respond. It's exciting to see. We went from cows, chickens, and pigs. I've been here 41 years and never been bored. If you pivot, you stay on top. It's always been about telling Farmingdale's story."

The small regional college that graduated 15 students in 1917 is now the school with the second-largest undergraduate population on Long Island and a recognized leader in applied learning.

Over the past decade, the College has opened a new School of Business building, the Campus Center, and Bunche Plaza, renovated Nold Athletic Complex, and renovated Conklin Hall and renamed it Quintyne Hall. Enrollment grew to 10,000 for fall 2018, 2019, and 2020. New academic programs that complement existing strengths help to attract students, including Computer Security Technology, Business Analytics, Cannabis Management, Wind Turbine Construction, and Sport Management.

Yet, even as FSC expands, it retains a certain intimacy. "As much as we've grown, we still have a small college feel," Steedle said. One of the biggest changes was the upgrade from a two-year to a four-year college starting in 1993, and while that was necessary for the College's viability, it wasn't completely painless.

The completion of the Campus Center in 2013 was another milestone. With more than 90 percent of the population commuting, there were few places for students to congregate between classes. Jack Petrich, an alumnus and the former Assistant Director of Physical Plant and alumnus who retired last year after 47 years, recalled that during his student days he would eat lunch in his car. "The Campus Center was a great improvement for students to congregate," Petrich added. "It was a major project to get that up and running."

FSC is launching itself into the future with new construction and renovations on campus, thanks to college funds and additional money from the New York State Construction Fund.

"There is something truly special about seeing students, faculty, and staff enjoying brand new space that we work so hard to develop or improve," O'Connor said.





LAFFIN HALL WELCOME CENTER

“We must work to embrace our long and storied history and preserve the classic architecture and design of these facilities, while enabling the upgrade of building systems and investment in new technology for teaching and learning,” he continued. “This is a truly rewarding experience and it will serve as a legacy of our dedication and commitment to our purpose as an institution of higher education.”

Currently underway are a complete renovation of Roosevelt Hall, at a cost of \$29 million, to provide more space for student activities and a modern multi purpose room; renovations to the first floor of Knapp Hall to provide more space for student services; replacement of windows and the roof at Lupton Hall; repairs to the façade of Gleeson Hall; improvements to several parking lots; and the construction of a new underground utility infrastructure.

Projects under design and scheduled to start in 2023 include extensive renovations to Thompson and Sinclair Halls; construction of a new welcome center on the first floor of Laffin Hall; renovations to the first floor of Dewey Hall; improvements to campus

restrooms; additional replacement of windows at Lupton Hall; a new steam distribution system; and improvements to the grounds.

Awaiting approval and funding is the proposed construction of a 40,000-square-foot Center for Computer Science and Information Technology Systems building at a cost of \$63.3 million. The building is being designed to accommodate seven academic programs and about 2,000 students.

People have been impressed that the College has maintained so much green space while undergoing so much construction, said Library Director Karen Gelles, who has worked at the College for more than 20 years. “Parents see the value. When you invest in the facilities, it attracts kids. When they come to open house and see the beautiful facilities, they see themselves having fun here in those spaces.”



DEWEY HALL RENOVATION

FSC continues to be focused on student-centered learning that prepares graduates to be exemplary citizens, equipped to excel in a competitive, diverse, and technologically dynamic society serving as an engine of opportunity for Long Island and beyond.



# COLLABORATION, INNOVATION, EDUCATION

FSC partners with The Estée Lauder Companies to support  
STEM education and job opportunities.





A new and innovative partnership is bringing an anchor tenant to the Broad Hollow Bioscience Park (BHBP) while delivering a five-year commitment of funding to support the newly launched Honors Program at FSC.

In February, Farmingdale State College (FSC) announced that The Estée Lauder Companies (ELC) will lease 40,000 square feet at BHBP's vacant building located on the FSC campus. Estée Lauder expects to create 30 new bioscience jobs at the BHBP site.

The partnership agreement, which was widely lauded by state officials, brings a premier bioscience tenant to the Bioscience Park. The alliance between the College, Estée Lauder, and Broad Hollow provides revenue from the ELC partnership agreement that supports the College's Honors Program and offers internships, co-ops, and research opportunities to FSC students. The lease agreement was completed in 2022 after two and a half years of negotiation between FSC, BHBP, ELC, and the Empire State Development Corporation.

The agreement directs \$1.75 million over five years to the Farmingdale College Foundation to support scholarships and programming at FSC. In addition, internships for Farmingdale students and applied learning opportunities at the labs are scheduled to start in fall 2022.

FSC is working with ELC to develop opportunities to support applied education programs for students and faculty research in the science and engineering programs, said Dr. Laura Joseph, EdD, FSC's Senior Vice President and Provost. "With the close proximity of our campuses, we expect

that opportunities to engage faculty in synergistic research activities will be promising, especially across bioscience, chemistry, and manufacturing/mechanical/electrical engineering technology."

Estée Lauder presently employs a number of Farmingdale grads and has begun recruiting FSC grads for new positions.

Tara Sooknauth, an Associate Scientist at Estée Lauder and a 2010 FSC graduate with a degree in Science, Technology, & Society, said she works on a range of products. "I learn something new every day," said Sooknauth, a Syosset, New York, resident. "It's great that I can apply science to makeup, which I didn't know was possible until I started working there."

Gary Nasta '06, the Director of Environmental Programs for ELC, said the company is working on ways to improve its sustainability practices, and that opens new doors for FSC graduates. "I think it's great," he said about the partnership. "We can get Farmingdale students involved." Classes in facility management and energy efficiency at FSC helped him get his job at Estée Lauder, he added.

"We are very proud to collaborate with Farmingdale State College and SUNY to further fuel research and development innovation and empower STEM leaders of tomorrow across Long Island and New York State," said Lisa Napolione, Senior Vice President of Global Research & Development at The Estée Lauder Companies, in a prepared statement. "Our collaborations with universities around the world help us stay on the cutting edge and advance our commitment to scientific excellence and delivering the highest quality, breakthrough prestige beauty products to consumers."

**ESTÉE  
LAUDER**  
COMPANIES

*"We are very proud to collaborate with Farmingdale State College and SUNY to further fuel research and development innovation and empower STEM leaders of tomorrow across Long Island and New York State."*





# ENGINEERING A BETTER FUTURE

**Murray Pasternack '60** funds a new lab for radio frequency and microwave technology.

The last time Murray Pasternack set foot on the Farmingdale State College campus was June 1960. It was graduation day, and it was raining.

More than 60 years later, the California transplant who left New York in 1965 found himself back on somewhat familiar ground. Honored at the FSC gala for his leadership in technology and business in November 2021, Pasternack was taken aback by all that had changed—not the least of which was the College's name. "It was New York State School of Agriculture on Long Island back then," he notes.

But one thing hadn't changed, much to Pasternack's dismay. "They still had the same radio frequency equipment in the engineering labs from when I was a student in the 1950s! It was clear they needed some help."

## **An Unprecedented Act of Generosity**

The seed of an idea was planted during that trip.

"As a great engineer and a philanthropist, Murray wanted to understand the problems and challenges so that he could determine how to fix them," says Matthew Colson, Vice President of Development and Communications.

The result of that tour was a gift of unprecedented generosity. In March 2022, Pasternack became the largest single donor in the school's history with a gift of \$1.4M to endow the Murray Pasternack '60 Lab for Radio Frequency and Microwave Technology. The gift will help the school upgrade the lab, transform its radio frequency equipment, and expand course offerings to make the department a leader in educating radio frequency engineers.

"It is important to me that we build a lab where they can train the next generation in this technology," Pasternack says. "The need for wireless is growing at a time when the

number of engineers is decreasing. I aim to reverse the trend."

## **Fondly Farmingdale**

Despite a storied career and degrees in physics and law, Pasternack delights in giving back to what he calls the last school he went to during the day.

"I went to night school to get my other degrees, and I don't have many fond memories of that time. I was in class, and I was commuting. It was a lot," he recalls. "But Farmingdale left a mark."

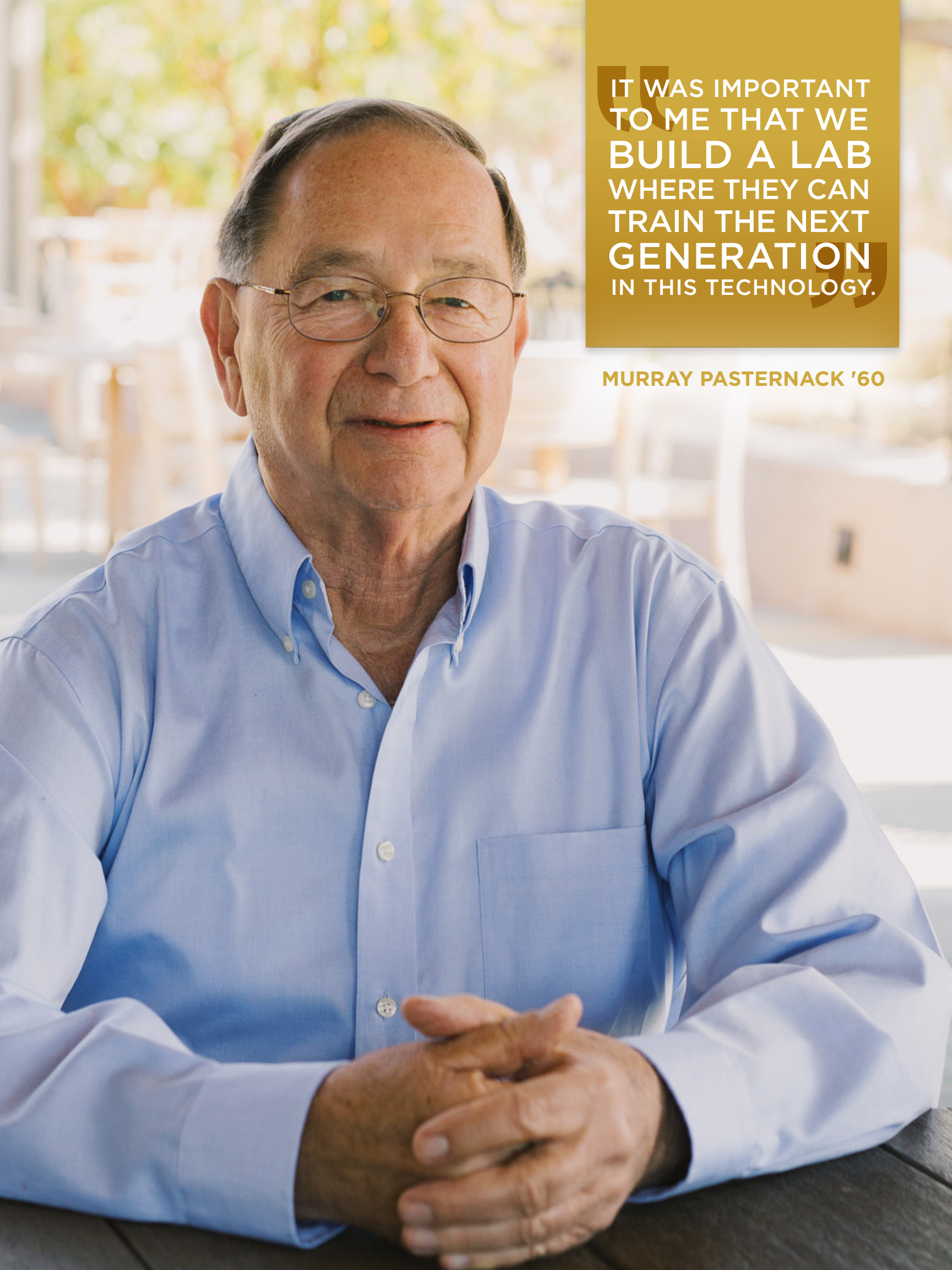
A self-described "C" student, Pasternack worked his way through college (which is why, he insists, his grades suffered—he was too busy working to study). But he has vivid memories of his electrical engineering classes with Professor E. Norman Lurch, whose influence helped propel Pasternack to success.

Among his post-FSC design achievements were the monopulse radar receiver for the Gemini space program, used in 1965 to accomplish the very first rendezvous in orbit, and a transceiver used by downed US Navy pilots to communicate with rescuers during the Vietnam War.

Additionally, he founded Pasternack Enterprises, a world-class supplier of radio frequency and microwave components.

Now in the process of retiring at age 81, Pasternack is focusing on giving back to the places that have left strong impressions on him. In addition to his donation, Pasternack has FSC students working at one of the companies he has invested in. He wanted to build something that would benefit them today as they train in the lab and prepare them for tomorrow as they enter the workforce. "This is a good arrangement for everyone. Farmingdale educates them in my lab, then we can hire them on after graduation."





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**MURRAY PASTERNAK '60**



# EMPLOYING TOP TALENT

Deloitte Principal **Oniel Cross '04** champions access to top tier employer.

Oniel Cross came to the United States from Jamaica when he was 19 to go to college and launch his professional career. With plans to study computers and the goal of working in cybersecurity, Cross looked at several schools before selecting Farmingdale. Among his criteria: a school where he could work full time, finish his courses quickly, and study with top-notch professors. FSC fit the bill perfectly, and he enrolled in 2000.

In 2004, Cross graduated with a BS in Computer Security, a member of one of the first graduating classes to complete the program. He especially credits the foresight and vision of Professor John Kostanoski at the Center for Criminal Justice Studies, who Cross notes “was way ahead of his time in his thinking about cybersecurity.”

After FSC, Cross spent time in Afghanistan and Iraq, working in computer networks and IT Infrastructure capacity development for the government during the conflicts in the Middle East, then relocated to Washington, DC. While working in the Beltway, he earned a reputation as someone who was results-driven, and after some time supporting the Business Technology Agency, he landed an opportunity with Deloitte in 2010. Deloitte, one of the top four consulting firms, provides audit, consulting, tax, and advisory services to many of the world’s largest brands.

Hired as a manager and having risen to the rank of principal, Cross now wants others from FSC to have the opportunity to follow in his footsteps.

## What’s Your Source?

Oniel Cross learned a lot of lessons at Farmingdale State College, but one question stuck with him above all others: “What’s your source?”

“During my freshman year at FSC, I took a comparative history course with Professor Lovizio. One day, after I handed in my paper, he stopped me in my tracks and challenged me on how I drew my conclusions. It’s true, I hadn’t

done much research—I think I only cited one *New York Times* article.

“Lovizio taught me to slow down, analyze the authors’ goals, and explore whether or not information could be manipulated.”

Today, Cross applies this inquiry about trusted sources every day in his work as a principal in Deloitte’s public sector technology practice.

“Now I channel Professor Lovizio when I ask my team, ‘Where did this data come from? Did you ask the right questions? Were they leading or open-ended?’ In life, I tell them, we have to look at the angle from which information is coming and draw insights about its origin and purpose.”

## A New Source of Talent

Cross says it’s no secret that in the past, big firms like Deloitte traditionally mined talent from Ivy League universities. That’s changing, and Cross wants FSC to become a feeder school.

“I would argue to anyone that FSC has the best students and professors of just about any school, and its diversity is a major asset,” he says.

Based on Cross’s suggestion, Deloitte has developed a new relationship with the College and has recently recruited several talented students for internships and full-time roles through the Nexus Center for Applied Learning and Career Development.

Deloitte is currently looking for students with cyber and IT skill sets, as well as those majoring in Environmental Science, Accounting, and Business. As one of the Big Four professional services organizations and the largest in the world by revenue and number of professionals, Deloitte receives over 150,000 job applications annually. Cross emphasizes that FSC alumni have, like him, demonstrated that they’re primed and ready to compete.



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OF JUST ABOUT  
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ITS DIVERSITY IS A  
MAJOR ASSET.

ONIEL CROSS '04





# DARING TO DREAM

From undocumented to doctor, **Mario Mejia '19** sets his sights on the future.

“Always have a Plan A. And a Plan B. And also a Plan C.”

That advice from FSC education counselor Ken Grotell has stuck with Mario Mejia. And it served him well, he says, as he prepared to graduate from SUNY Upstate Medical University in May 2022 and enter the professional world as a doctor of physical therapy.

Mejia met Grotell when he was a part of FSC’s TRIO Program—a selective program for first generation students who may need extra support to stay in school, finish a degree, and pursue graduate study. Grotell’s words struck a chord, because Mejia’s life has always been a bit out of his hands. To get where he is, he’s had to rely on others, make and remake expectations, and hope for the best.

## A Dreamer’s Dreams

His story begins in high school, when Mejia ruptured his ACL, a ligament in his knee, playing football. It was during his rehabilitation that he became interested in the science of physical therapy. As he learned more about what it might take to pursue advanced study and work in a health care setting, he became dispirited.

Mejia was an undocumented immigrant, brought to New York from Honduras by his parents when he was just five years old. And though he considered himself an American and Hempstead, New York, was the only home he could truly remember, he knew his status could make it difficult to pursue higher education or a career in medicine.

But in the summer of 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigration policy came online, allowing people like Mejia, who were brought to the country as children, to avoid deportation and obtain work permits.

Suddenly, a world of possibilities lay before Mejia: college, graduate school, and becoming a doctor.

## A Helping Hand

But still, there were certain paths that were unavailable to Mejia as a Dreamer. DACA recipients couldn’t apply for federal financial aid, including student loans and grants.

“My family is incredibly hardworking, but there was no way we could have afforded college, let alone physical therapy school,” he says. That’s where the Tortora Sillcox Family Foundation came in.

In 2015, Mejia received a full academic scholarship from the Foundation to attend Nassau Community College, and two years later he was one of six scholarship recipients to attend FSC as part of the inaugural Sillcox Scholars Program.

FSC was a perfect fit, Mejia says. “It was by far the best option for me. I was working full time, living at home, and it was close by. Most of all, it met all the criteria I needed to go on to PT school.”

Now that’s he’s near the end of a seven-year educational journey made possible by philanthropy, Mejia is looking forward to a time when he can give back. His first goal is to start a foundation to help students like him.

“I was only able to achieve what I have because someone believed in me and sponsored me on my path to becoming a doctor,” he says.

Mejia’s second goal is to open a nonprofit physical therapy clinic in his home country of Honduras. For the moment, though, he is focused on the finish line: graduation.



I WAS ONLY ABLE  
TO ACHIEVE  
WHAT I HAVE  
BECAUSE SOMEONE  
BELIEVED IN ME.

MARIO MEJIA '19





## THE HANDS-ON APPROACH

**Chloe Hung '06**, CEO of Autel, has done it all—and continues to use a hands-on approach.

Many iconic American companies got their start in garages. From Microsoft and Apple to Amazon and Hewlett-Packard, many global businesses started small—really small. But CEO Chloe Hung (BS, Management Technology '06) may be the first to lead one that started in a house behind a gas station.

In fact, she had to ask for directions at that very station when she interviewed with Autel US, Inc. founder Gary DeLuca in 2011. Soon after she found the headquarters house, the startup hired Hung as employee number two. Today, just 10 years later, she leads a team of nearly 150 at the quickly growing automotive diagnostic tools and accessories developer and distributor.

It's been quite a journey for someone who didn't even know how to drive when she came to the United States in the early 2000s.

### From Hong Kong to Long Island

Hung left her family behind in Hong Kong at age 17 to pursue an education in the United States. After a short stint in English language classes in New York City, she joined her cousin, Farmingdale Professor of Engineering Jeff Hung, and settled into student life on Long Island.

“Living with my uncle and cousin was great. I had rides to campus, I could study in his office, and he helped me with my English,” Hung recalls. But her time at FSC wasn't just about staying within her comfort zone. She helped create an Asian student club, and during their weekly meetings they would hang out together, watch movies as a group, or discuss book club selections.

International students, Hung acknowledges, have more barriers to overcome, especially when it comes to language. But she praises the environment at FSC as being especially welcoming.

“It is cozy is how I would say it,” she says. “It's smaller, the professors are accessible, and you won't get lost.”

She is especially encouraging to those following in her footsteps, and with her CEO cap on she offers this advice: “Speak up and be brave.”

### Autel Seeks FSC Grads for Growing Workforce

It was Hung's ability to speak both English and Chinese that ultimately landed her the job with DeLuca. At the time, Autel was importing automotive products from China to distribute in the US, and Hung had a hand in just about every aspect of the business.

“I did everything, from packaging and mailing to accounting. Now I can tell people I've literally done every job there is to do here at Autel, and I can be very hands-on in helping our people succeed,” Hung says.

With new products coming out all the time—including electric vehicle chargers—she seeks workers who are interested in sales, tech support, and customer service. She says that FSC grads with experience in automotive technology and IT would be among her top choices.

Hung aspires to grow the company and possibly open a manufacturing facility in the United States. Within the next three to five years, she also hopes to achieve one of the most iconic American business milestones: going public.

As she steers Autel into the future, Hung emphasizes that business management skills from FSC served her well. She tells us with pride: “Without a doubt, I'm here because of Farmingdale.”



SPEAK UP  
AND BE  
BRAVE.

CHLOE HUNG '06



# DISCOVER THE METRICS THAT MATTER

## Metrics That Matter for today's college students.

Students have, no doubt, been exposed to the seemingly endless array of college rankings. Colleges often tout their place in these rankings, many of which mean little to most prospective students. In fact, some of these ranking systems have become the subject of much criticism. That's why we've launched our Metrics That Matter campaign to highlight the strength of the Farmingdale experience. Included within this article is a selection of the metrics that highlight FSC's student outcomes.

The choice of a college is a deeply personal one. A great college experience is largely about "goodness of fit."

For thousands of students, FSC is that fit. Students care most about the quality of their specific program of study, their engagement with faculty members, the opportunities to apply what they learn, and the experiences they will have on campus.

Of course, they want to know how much they will pay or borrow and, most important, what their diploma will bring after graduation. Media attention has often focused on student debt and the increasing cost of a college degree.

But the headlines are not the trend lines. Now more than ever, the value of a college degree makes it a great investment for millions of young people.

*For many students it may not be necessary, or advisable, to borrow heavily for college.* This is a buyer's market, and nearly all colleges are eager to recruit and support motivated students. Especially in New York, there are great educational values, and Farmingdale is among the very best. More than half of our graduates leave with a diploma and without debt.

For our graduates the economic returns from a college degree remain high, especially in some of the College's premier programs. Students who major in fields such as the health and computer sciences and engineering graduates can recover their investment in education in a few short years. For students seeking a degree to launch a career or position themselves for graduate school and apply what they've learned, FSC is a gateway to success.

Potential students should inquire about job placement rates, internships, and other applied learning opportunities. With these metrics in mind, we tell students that Farmingdale graduates rank in the **top 2 percent nationally** in early career earnings, according to *CollegeNet's* Social Mobility Index, and 90 percent are at work or in graduate programs within six months.

For those seeking degrees that lead to licensure or certification in the health professions, our graduates excel on required regional or national exams, with pass rates of 100 percent in recent years.

What are the metrics that matter? There is no single answer. But for thousands of students, it's apparent that FSC is a shining example of what's right in higher education.

 Discover all of the Metrics That Matter: Visit [fscnow.farmingdale.edu](https://fscnow.farmingdale.edu).





## JOB READY

94% of graduates are employed six months after graduation or enrolled in graduate school.



## TOP TIER

The *Wall Street Journal* ranks 14 FSC programs in the top 25% nationally in early career earnings. Eight of them are in the top 10%.



## SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION

FSC's Small Business Development Center serves over 2,200 local businesses, generating over \$40 million in economic impact. (*CollegeNet*)



## ENGINEERED FOR SUCCESS

ITEEA ranks FSC #2 nationally in degrees awarded to underrepresented minorities and #4 nationally in degrees awarded to women.



## NO DEBT/LOW DEBT

FSC ranks #4 among NYS public colleges for the lowest student debt, and 55% of bachelor's graduates leave with no debt.



## INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Winner of SUNY's inaugural award for excellence in diversity, inclusion, and social justice.



# HELPING HANDS REACH HIGHER

**Daniela Figueroa '24** wins coveted Civic Fellowship while giving back to her community.

The desire to work hard and effect change sets Farmingdale State College sophomore Daniela Figueroa apart and continues to earn her recognition.

Figueroa, a Psychology major and English minor who lives in Hempstead, was named one of 173 student civic leaders in the Campus Compact's 2022-2023 cohort of Newman Civic Fellows. The program recognizes students who are committed to making improvements in their own communities and in broader society. Through Campus Compact, students participate in a year-long series of networking and educational opportunities stressing personal, professional, and civic growth.

"I was shocked when my counselor told me about the fellowship," Figueroa said. "At first I didn't know what I did to deserve this."

In June 2022, she is headed to Brown University for almost three months as part of the Summer Research Early Identification Program. The program is designed to prepare students considering pursuing a doctorate. Figueroa plans to research how parent-teacher organizations, school booster clubs, and other parent/community groups affect student outcomes. She is aiming for a career in education, starting as a teacher and then earning a doctorate in educational policy with the goal of becoming a school administrator.

Her 12th grade English teacher understood the struggles immigrants face, and he influenced her decision to be an English teacher and help kids, Figueroa said.

"She is a wonderful combination of academic drive and passionate drive," said Dylan Gafarian, Academic Counselor and the Administrative Coordinator

for the Newman Civic Fellowship. "She wants to effect change in the most effective way possible." He joked that Figueroa is having trouble deciding which one of the causes in which she already is involved to pursue for her fellowship project.

A child of Honduran immigrants, Figueroa said her parents stressed the importance of education from the time she and her older sister were young. "College has been on my mind since I was little," she said. "My parents said an education was the best thing we could get here." Her sister graduated from college and is now working as a nurse. "She is my rock," Figueroa said.

She grew up bilingual, speaking Spanish at home and English at school, and she and her sister spent many hours while growing up reading and translating documents and mail for their parents. Her mother works as a housecleaner and her father as a landscaper. "They made their own schedules and worked very hard," said Figueroa.

While in high school, Figueroa worked for Planned Parenthood, teaching sex education to classmates and mentoring younger students. She also went to Albany to lobby for the passage of bills related to sex education.

Figueroa joked that now she spends most of her time in the FSC library, but she still keeps busy helping freshmen in the RAM program, tutoring students at her former high school, and participating in campus tours when Hempstead High School students come for a visit. She has also been involved with campus cleaning projects. "Anything that has to do with helping the community, I'm part of," she said.

“MY PARENTS SAID AN EDUCATION WAS THE BEST THING WE COULD GET HERE.”





DANIELA  
FIGUEROA '24



## A BRIGHT FUTURE

**Cesar Hernandez '21** to study pathology of diseases in Copenhagen.

When Cesar Hernandez was a child in El Salvador he was diagnosed with sickle cell disease, which forced him to spend weeks at a time in a hospital, where he often talked with other patients struggling with their chronic illnesses.

“As a sickle cell patient during that time, I had an early introduction into the world of medicine,” said Hernandez. “I had interactions with patients with chronic conditions and I was always curious about how physical health affected mental health. And the interest stayed with me.”

Not only did the interest remain with him, it expanded and intensified to the point where Hernandez’s neuroscience research on campus and at other labs earned him a Fulbright Award, one of the most prestigious scholarships in the world. In August he is off to Copenhagen, Denmark, for a year to study the pathology behind mental health and how the brain processes illness.

Hernandez plans to research how genetic mutations in the Danish population affect the functioning of the nervous system, leading to psychiatric diseases. He will be working in a research lab at the University of Copenhagen. When he returns to the United States, Hernandez plans to enroll in a doctoral program for neuroscience.

This is actually his second Fulbright Award. He was selected for the Fulbright-MITACS Globalink Program to conduct advanced research at a Canadian university, but opted to do in-person research at the University of Alabama instead.

Hernandez spent hours in labs as a student at FSC, conducting research as an Applied Psychology major and Biology minor as well as working with mentors. “My favorite part of being in the lab is learning new techniques to apply to

different research topics and exploring different areas of science,” he said.

FSC faculty and other mentors have nothing but praise for Hernandez. “This is such a great thing for him,” said Lisa M. Cullington, PhD, Associate Director of the Research Aligned Mentorship (RAM) program, in which Hernandez participated, and FSC’s Fulbright Program Advisor. “He has a really strong research mindset. He really understands how to comprehend a topic and move it along.”

“I was immediately impressed by the questions he asked and his critical thinking skills,” added Dr. N. Sumru Bayin, PhD, group leader at the Gurdon Institute at the University of Cambridge. She worked with Hernandez when she was affiliated with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Hernandez also can identify important knowledge gaps in the field, she added.

Hernandez’s illness may have spurred his passion for research, but he rarely mentioned it, said Dr. Erwin Cabrera, Director of the RAM Program and faculty member in biology, who mentored Hernandez.

“I took Cesar on as a mentee during the pandemic, because I wanted to establish his theoretical knowledge,” said Cabrera. “Hernandez is driven to understand the pathology behind mental health and how the brain processes illness,” he added. “He is trying to connect the psychology with biology.

He is a first-generation American and he wants to do well for himself and his family. Research is knowledge-seeking. He is hungry for it.”

After completing his PhD, Hernandez said, his goal is to continue doing research in academia or for the biomedical industry. “I started doing research to try to help other people,” he said. “I know what it’s like to live your life hoping some scientist finds a cure for your disorder. I want to do my part.”

“I STARTED DOING RESEARCH TO TRY TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE.”





CESAR  
HERNANDEZ '21



## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

**Geraldine Donlin '24** juggles it all—she's a mom, a student, a full-time nurse, and more.

After 37 years of working as a nurse and raising four children on her own, Geraldine Donlin had earned the chance to slow down.

Instead, she signed up for FSC's online RN to BSN program, not because she needed a BS to advance her career, but because she always wanted one.

"I've been successful, even though a lot of places require a bachelor's degree, but I don't need it," said Donlin, 54. "I'm finally getting back to doing things for myself." Her youngest son, 17, is considering studying architecture at FSC.

Donlin usually takes two courses a semester, all while working full time at Good Shepherd Hospice and doing clinical hours. "You have to have balance in your life, otherwise you have no joy," she said.

Among her challenges were learning the platform used for online classes and maintaining the organization, self-motivation, and self-discipline required to keep all the balls in the air—plus working 12-hour shifts at her job and being a mom.

Donlin's children provide encouragement and tech support. "My kids were happy and proud that I decided to do this. It's something I spoke of often and they all knew it was a wish of mine." The professors have been very flexible and supportive, at times allowing her to arrange assignments around her work schedule. "When you take a program online, you actually have to work harder and hold

yourself accountable to get the work done," Donlin said.

Donlin's skills and work ethic are exemplary, according to Monica Diamond-Caravella, Associate Professor of Nursing. "Geraldine is one of the most extraordinary students we've ever had in the RN to BSN program," she said. "Her writing is at the graduate-student level and she shows intellectual curiosity and a love of learning. She excels in the face of challenges."

Donlin received her associate's degree from Borough of Manhattan Community College and spent most of her career in clinical settings, the majority in cardiac rehabilitation programs. Before that, she studied business in high school. She worked in a law firm after graduation and was doing well enough that people encouraged her to become a paralegal or even go to law school. But one of the attorneys with whom she worked said she didn't seem happy with law, and suggested she talk with some nurses he knew.

While many nurses say the desire to help people drew them to the profession, Donlin said it was the prospect of not having the same daily routine that lured her. "I love helping people, but it was more about doing something different every day," she said. "You experience so many different things in a day." Once she completes her BSN, Donlin said, she would love to get certified as a nurse practitioner, but has not decided whether to pursue that. She draws inspiration from a quote by Melanie Laurent: "I'm not scared of growing old, I'm just scared of not achieving everything I want to do."

**"I'M NOT SCARED OF GROWING OLD, I'M JUST SCARED OF NOT ACHIEVING EVERYTHING I WANT TO DO."**





GERALDINE  
DONLIN '24



# THE FUTURE IS AT FSC

As the Farmingdale State College campus continues to expand, new programs are filling out the schedule, providing students with new opportunities and challenges.



## Honors Program

The FSC Honors Program is proud to welcome its first cohort of 21 students in fall 2022, spanning each of the College's four schools. Deeply rooted in FSC's mission as one of SUNY's Colleges of Technology, the Honors Program focuses on engaging students outside the classroom. The Honors Program offers high achieving students an opportunity to be part of a dynamic and vibrant academic experience that combines academic rigor inside and outside the classroom while providing access to prestigious scholarships and fellowships. Students will connect with the campus and surrounding communities through service throughout their academic careers.

"I've wanted to see this for many years," said Laura Joseph, Senior Vice President and Provost. "There is a group of students on Long Island who are high-achieving and don't look at Farmingdale. I've been wondering how we can attract them."

Students in any major can apply to the Honors Program. They will be required to attend the annual luncheon, enroll in various honors seminars, complete mentored research projects, attend conferences, and participate in community service. These activities help to develop well-rounded students who become high performers in the Long Island workforce and are engaged with their local communities. The Honors Program at FSC aligns with FSC's mission of delivering exceptional academic and applied learning outcomes for Long Island and beyond.



## Cannabis Production and Management Certificate

Farmingdale is fast becoming a leader in this newly emerging industry. The Cannabis Production and Management Certificate Program is thriving. "We have a full enrollment for the fall," says Dr. Laura Joseph, Senior Vice President and Provost. "The timing [of the program's launch] was perfect because it coincided with New York legalizing marijuana possession and use by those 21 and over in September 2021," she added.

The program will prepare graduates to become growers, budtenders, dispensary staff, product managers, and marketing/sales associates.



## Wind Turbine Technology Certificate

The Wind Turbine Technology Certificate Program prepares students for careers in wind technology. The demand for wind turbine technicians continues to rise, and the skill set of the US workforce has not caught up. By 2030, the United States could generate 20 percent of its energy from wind. This certificate prepares graduates to be job ready in this growing industry.





## Human Resources Management Certificate

Starting in fall 2022, students and working professionals can complete an 18-credit online program to earn a certificate in Human Resources Management (HRM). The program is designed for those looking to build their skills in areas including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation, and general business management.

The program is perfect for professionals or students who want to upgrade their skills. The curriculum comprises six three-credit courses, including employment law, leadership and ethics, and an elective. Among the electives are teamwork and team building and organizational behavior. Courses in the HRM Certificate Program may count toward a degree as either required courses or electives.



## Joint Admissions Programs

FSC has established many joint admissions programs. These programs allow a student to be admitted to both their community college and FSC. Students enrolled at Nassau, Suffolk, or Westchester Community Colleges complete their associate's degrees and then attend Farmingdale to earn their bachelor's degrees. Farmingdale administrators can track students' progress at the community college before they arrive at FSC to ensure that a student will receive the necessary resources to graduate successfully. These programs are yet another way FSC is partnering with institutions in the area to help more students graduate.



## Microcredentials

Farmingdale is emerging as a SUNY leader in issuing microcredentials. These are credentials that verify, validate, and attest that specific skills and competencies have been achieved. Microcredentials can be offered on campus, online, or in a hybrid format and can be credit or non-credit-bearing. FSC currently offers 17 microcredentials spanning a range of topics, including community and civic engagement, sustainable horticulture, developmental science, financial mathematics, and economic and financial analysis.

“Microcredentials allow employers and the College to quickly adapt to the changing needs of organizations and industry by providing career readiness training and helping organizations keep their competitive edge,” says Dr. Justin Dolce, Academic Project Coordinator and Chair of the Microcredential Review Board. “Microcredentials allow employees and students to upskill and showcase a more comprehensive skill set to employers.”

The microcredentials being offered are the foundation of investing in the development of skill-based hiring to boost the Long Island economy. Credit-bearing microcredentials feature clusters of content across several credit-bearing courses that build to a requisite body of knowledge and usually can be applied to a degree program. Non-credit-bearing microcredentials feature regional workforce training to teach current and potential workers the skills needed to help maintain an organization's competitive edge. In addition, non-credit-bearing microcredentials can be activities outside the classroom, including career development, applied learning, and campus and civic engagement. These co-curricular activities enhance students' career prospects and job readiness.



# A LABORATORY Romance

**FSC Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences creates fund for first-generation students in beloved wife's memory.**

The late Violet Adair ('59), mother, grandmother, accomplished plant scientist, and beloved wife of Dr. Charles Adair, Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences, is being remembered through a \$100,000 scholarship fund for first-generation students established by her husband.

"This place means so much to us," Dean Adair said. "I wanted to do something to honor Violet's life and connection to FSC and create lasting impact."

Violet passed away in May 2020 from Covid-19. She and Charles were together for 57 years.

They met in a biology lab at Cornell University, where Charles was a graduate student and Violet a lab technician pursuing a bachelor's degree. Charles remembers details like her breath smelling of the ether she used to sedate fruit flies.

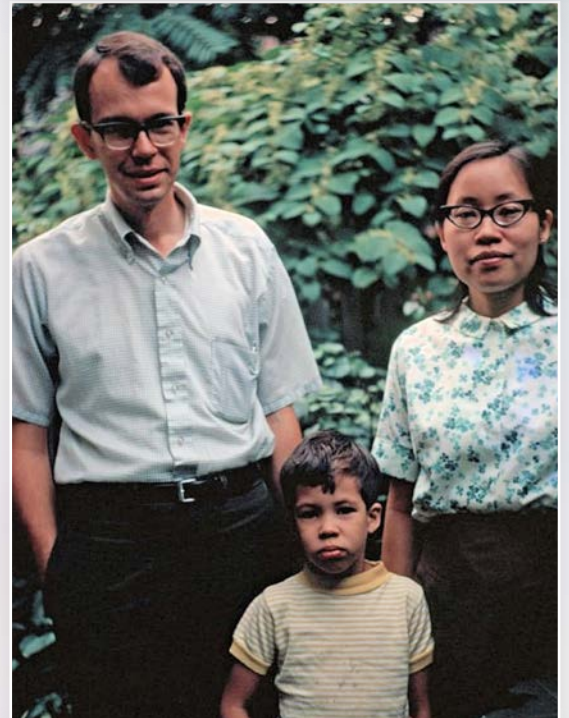
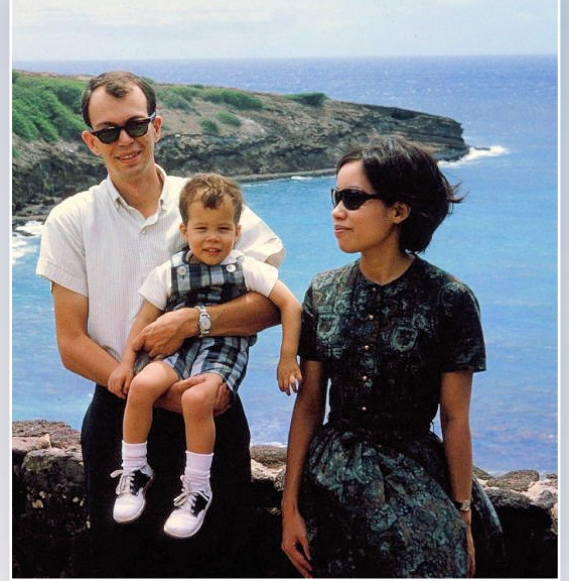
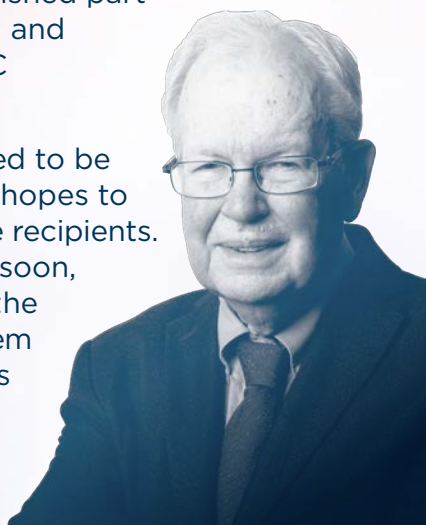
He talks of their "laboratory romance" and Violet's stories, like growing up with Chinese-speaking parents in Brooklyn, and how they encouraged her love of gardening but were dismayed that she used their small urban backyard to plant ornamental flowers instead of vegetables.

Violet was proud of becoming the first in her family to earn a college degree, an AS in Biotechnology Horticulture from Farmingdale. Charles will never forget how she beamed when she spoke of the campus gardens.

Charles joined the FSC faculty as a biology professor in 1975, after the two traveled and taught around the world. Though Violet stepped away from teaching and research to raise their two children, she remained a cherished part of the College family for 46 years, and Charles became a pillar in the FSC academic community.

The first scholarships are scheduled to be awarded in fall 2022, and Charles hopes to be among the first to welcome the recipients.

"I have no plans to retire any time soon, so I hope to meet some of those the donation helps and share with them Violet's story," he said. "My hope is that the scholarships will be transformative, just as FSC was for Violet."



*This generous gift will keep Violet alive in spirit at FSC for many years to come. If you are inspired and would like to learn more about how to set up your own scholarship fund in memory of a loved one or to make a gift to an area that means something to you contact The **Office of Development & Alumni Engagement** at [foundation@farmingdale.edu](mailto:foundation@farmingdale.edu).*



# YOUR LEGACY IS THEIR FUTURE

## FARMINGDALE'S PLANNED GIVING

"I am a firm believer that one should give back to society. I want to support the continuing efforts of President Nader in raising the profile of the College to the next level. Private funding is essential for FSC to fulfill its mission; tuition and fees alone cannot pay for everything.

In 1959, I earned an associate's degree in Highway and Bridge Construction from Farmingdale. This was the catalyst for me to eventually earn an MBA, which was key to my successful career at Ford Motor Company.

For this reason, FSC is in my estate plan so others behind me will have the same opportunity."

**LEE A. BOWEN '59**



The 1912 Legacy Society was established to honor the thoughtful generosity of those who have included Farmingdale State College in their estate plans or who have made and documented a gift to Farmingdale for future support of the College. Through their planned gifts, members of the 1912 Legacy Society will ensure that Farmingdale remains an engine of opportunity for the future of Long Island and beyond.

Visit [myfarmingdalelegacy.org](https://myfarmingdalelegacy.org) for additional information. To discuss a planned gift, please contact the Office for Development & Alumni Engagement at [foundation@farmingdale.edu](mailto:foundation@farmingdale.edu) or call 934-420-2142.



WHILE MANY OF THE  
**STUDENTS**  
ARE LOCAL,  
IT IS STILL IMPORTANT  
FOR THEM TO BE  
GLOBALLY READY.

**DR. YETUNDE  
ODUGBESAN-OMEDE**





# Local Roots, Global Reach

**Dr. Yetunde Odugbesan-Omede** is sowing the seeds of global awareness in our community's soil.

A woman of the world, Dr. Yetunde A. Odugbesan-Omede nevertheless believes the seeds of global awareness are sown in community soils. "It's important to have local roots and a global reach," she said.

As Acting Director of the Office of Community and Civic Engagement and Professor of Global Affairs and Politics, Odugbesan-Omede urges students and other people to get involved in their communities, but to not stop there; she wants them to realize that issues affecting local communities are the same issues that affect people around the globe. "It is our responsibility to develop the next generation of transformational leaders who will be equipped to solve some of the most pressing global issues of our time," she said.

A lecturer, author, consultant, and entrepreneur as well as an academic, Odugbesan-Omede teaches courses on comparative politics, global politics, African politics, imperialism, American foreign policy, and women in comparative political development at FSC. But more than that, she encourages her career-focused students to look at what is going on beyond the borders of FSC's campus, Long Island's shores, and the country.

"We're preparing them for the world we live in and we want them to understand civic engagement and public service," explained Odugbesan-Omede. "While many of the students are local, it is still important for them to be globally ready. It is imperative for students to understand politics and the global roles they will have to play. They have to be prepared to work in a global world. There is so much to build on here."

One way to help get them ready is to weave a global component into most, if not all, courses. "In every single major you can connect globally," she said. "Corporations are global. We are seeing corporations, technology, and cybersecurity—all are industries with no boundaries. It is seeing the connection between local and global."

As the CEO of Yetunde Global Consulting, Odugbesan-Omede focuses on human capital

management, leadership development and training, organizational management, and global business strategies. She also tells students that wherever they go, they should ask themselves how they can do the most good. "I try to give [students] the idea of how to move the needle." She has been moving her own—and other people's—needles for decades.

The daughter of Nigerian immigrants, Odugbesan-Omede went on to research corruption in African countries. Many Nigerian parents are extremely focused on education and encourage their children to pursue law, medicine, or engineering. She was fortunate that hers took a broader view. "My parents said, 'Do what you want, just be the best at it.'"

The amount of knowledge and experience she brings to FSC is staggering. She earned master's and doctoral degrees in Global Affairs from Rutgers and studied at other universities and institutions, including Harvard University, and received a Fulbright under the Fulbright Specialist Program. Odugbesan-Omede also has taught leadership seminars for young women in Nigeria, South Africa, and the US through an organization she started, Young Woman's Guide, Inc. She also authored a book with the same title for women who could not attend programs in person. The program provides young women worldwide with "holistic leadership development." And she has a huge collection of podcasts, many focusing on balancing different personal and professional aspects of life.

Odugbesan-Omede's most recent book, *Balance*, also offers guidance on juggling life, work, and family, at which she excels; she is married and the mother of three children. *Balance* is something she wants for her students as well. "For me, it's about building well-rounded students. That will make them more competitive."

Doing what she can to help students succeed remains a priority. "It's been a thing for me; I want to see other young people find a way. I had people help me. I want to pay it forward."



AS THE DIRECTOR OF  
**THE ATHLETIC  
COMMUNITY,**  
I AM CONSTANTLY WORKING  
TO PROMOTE US.

**TOM AZZARA**





# FSC'S NEXT SEASON

**Tom Azzara** steps up to the plate as FSC's next Director of Athletics.

FSC's new Director of Athletics, Tom Azzara, has plenty of experience to call on, after working in the athletic office for 30 years and serving as Director of Athletics for Compliance and Operations since 2016. That also was the year Azzara and long-time Athletic Director Michael Harrington begin splitting the job.

Harrington spent almost 40 years at the College and left the Athletic Department in solid shape and well positioned for the future, according to Azzara. For his part, Harrington called Azzara the perfect person to succeed him. "How lucky are we to have Tom taking over," he said. Azzara originally came to campus for a one-year sports management internship and put down roots. "I've seen the complete transition of this College, both academically and athletically—from delivering mostly two-year degree programs to now a majority four-year institution and from junior college athletics to the NCAA."

"We have so many state-of-the-art facilities, I just want to build on what we have and strengthen those," Azzara continued. "As the Director of the athletics community, I am constantly working to promote us." The Athletics Department can raise the visibility of the entire College, as well as that of prospective students and alumni. The number of people at Rams' athletic events, including students and alumni, continues to increase, he added.

An outstanding staff makes his job easier. "I surround myself with talented people and let them do their thing," Azzara said. "I function as the quarterback and believe in laughter." The department also has been hiring more full-time coaching staff, a trend Azzara wants to continue. He has his own impressive coaching stats: In the 15 years he coached the FSC golf team, from 2001 to 2016, it won eight Skyline Championships. He also coaches boys' high school ice hockey and is an avid golfer.

Among Azzara's goals are to help the College's existing teams continue to grow in popularity and success and increase the visibility of FSC sports on the national level. He would like to expand athletic recruiting beyond Long Island.

FSC athletes face more challenges than students at other colleges; about 90 percent of Farmingdale athletes work more than 20 hours per week and have a full course load, in addition to putting in practice hours and participating in games.

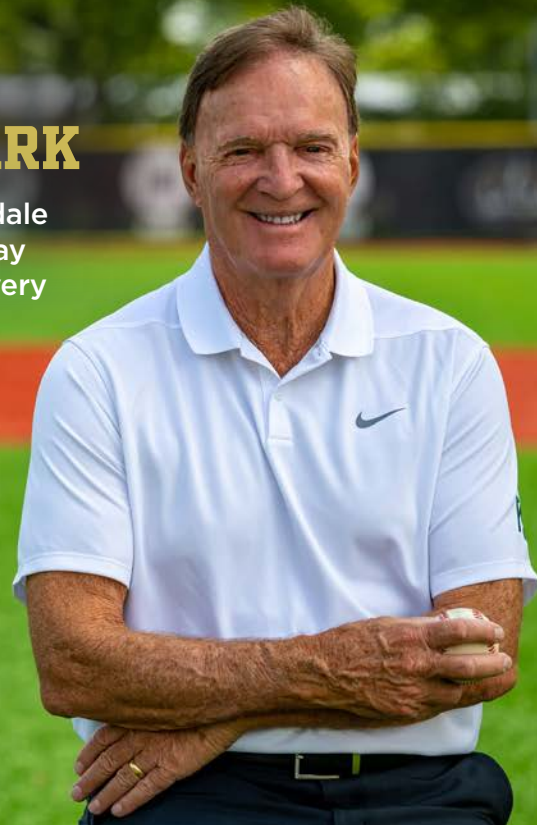
Ensuring that those hardworking student athletes thrive is another priority. "We want the athletes to continue to surpass the rest of the student body in terms of retention, graduation, and grade point average," Azzara said. "We want them to have a great experience while they are here and we want them to graduate." Azzara and his staff have just the tools to make that happen.

## FSC'S MVP KNOCKS IT OUT OF THE PARK

It's no secret why Michael Harrington spent nearly 40 years at Farmingdale State College, including 22 years as Director of Athletics. He couldn't stay away. "I loved the people and the coaches, and I loved going to work every day," Harrington said.

Harrington oversaw a wave of improvements to FSC's athletic facilities over the past 17 years, including \$20 million worth of renovations to Nold Athletic Complex, new baseball and softball stadiums, and improvements to the track, lacrosse, and soccer fields. He co-developed the Sports Management minor, which is now a popular major. The planned future campus improvements will only increase FSC's appeal, Harrington said.

Since retiring, Harrington has been playing tennis and golf and spending time with his wife and five grandchildren.







I VOLUNTEER  
AT A FARM  
IN UPSTATE NEW YORK,  
SO I UNDERSTAND  
THE CHALLENGES  
FACING FARMERS.

DR. EUGENE KWAK



# Agritecture: Design, Grow, Sustain

**Dr. Eugene Kwak** combines volunteer farming work and architecture to build a more sustainable future.

Architecture and food systems may not connect in everyone's mind, but to FSC Architecture Professor Dr. Eugene Kwak, it's a connection more people need to make.

A few years ago, Kwak began researching food systems, regional food access, and the dwindling number of farmers and saw a crisis in the making, even before the coronavirus pandemic. Living in New York City, Kwak and his wife got hooked on fresh produce from upstate.

He spent two years volunteering weekly with two nonprofit agencies supporting farming, agriculture, and education. Kwak also was a student of regenerative food systems and the state's farming culture.

"I love the outdoors; I feel better when I am connected to nature. I volunteer at a farm in upstate New York, so I understand the challenges facing farmers," Kwak said. "They still need farming hands. The dire problem facing farmers is the number of old farmers and fewer young farmers."

As part of his most recent project, "Togather," Kwak bought land in upstate New York, built a two-family house, and found a farming family through New York Farm Finder, a website that matches potential farmers with farmland, to live in one of the house units. Kwak stays in the other part of the house on weekends and vacations to help on the farm. The family has a 30-year free land lease and pays rent for the house. While Kwak helps on the farm, his wife is involved with fundraising.

His interests in the food system and climate change also inspired him. "How food is grown impacts the environment; corn, soy, and meat make a huge contribution to climate change because of the way they are produced," Kwak noted. He also began to focus on climate change from an architect's perspective. "Data shows that buildings contribute to greenhouse gases and to what is happening

in the environment," he said. "Architects are pledging to build more sustainable buildings. As an architect, I can use my skill set to create a new model." Kwak is a licensed architect and an Assistant Professor in FSC's Department of Architecture & Construction Management.

Since he described to his classes how he built the house, students have been much more engaged, Kwak said. "The house has a lot of green and sustainable components, which we talk about. Anything unconventional is cool. It's an inspiring, motivating story. They can see how they can use their skills for a greater purpose. Students have become more productive because not only are they building buildings, but they see they can have a greater impact."

During a summer project, some students worked with the Horticulture Department and designed outdoor furniture that included raised plant beds as a way to incorporate nature.

Now in its third season, Kwak's Hidden Acre Farm is a regenerative farm without fossil fuels, fertilizer, or power tools. "It's healthier for consumers and the environment," Kwak noted. "They are reintroducing natural habits that capture carbon and they also are stimulating the local economy." The farm's revenue has been increasing since 2019. Besides hiring local people, the farm also donates surplus produce. Every Sunday, the family drives to Brooklyn to sell their harvest.

As a member of the American Farmland Trust, Kwak thinks all property owners should be better educated about what is involved with farming. "The farm can become a venue to test different ideas, such as solar panels," he noted.

While landowners and farmers haven't always had the best relationships, Kwak is hopeful that other property owners will follow his example and invite farmers to use their land and help combat climate change.





# THE NEXT GENERATION

**FSC's Class of 2022** is persistent, resilient, and ready for the future.

In conversations about the Class of 2022, one word resonated: resilient.

The COVID-19 pandemic shut down FSC and the world in March 2020, forcing students to take classes online for three semesters and to find innovative ways to complete projects, labs, and hands-on work.

During the College's commencement, speakers praised the students' resiliency and flexibility during the worst of the pandemic. "To all of our graduates today we say: you have succeeded during the most difficult time in the modern history of higher education," said President Dr. John S. Nader. "Your stories and experiences exemplify the very best that public higher education has to offer. Perhaps no group of students has ever displayed such persistence and perseverance on the path to their degrees."

The Class of 2022 should be entitled to put front-and-center on their resumes. "I made it through 2020. Enough said," joked actor Rushi Kota, '09, the keynote speaker. "You should all give yourselves a huge round of applause for being the most versatile generation, who so quickly

were able to adapt to a landscape so drastically different from what you signed up for."

Still, those life lessons were hard to appreciate while living through them. Delmy Santos Vigil of Brentwood, a Bioscience major and SUNY Chancellor's Award winner, plans to attend medical school. Santos Vigil had to do her assignments while supervising three younger siblings doing schoolwork online. "I had to be a better advocate for myself. I had to do more reaching out and attend more online office hours because we were lacking face-to-face interactions."

Dean Dr. Barbara Christe put it best: "I saw a big improvement in collaboration and teamwork, especially with the capstone [final] project," she said. "They learned about getting information remotely. The group work experience was so different, but they still have a highly employable skill set valued by employers."

Congratulations to the Class of 2022! You overcame the stress, uncertainty, and isolation, persisted, and left school with new skills, ready to work in person or remotely and pivot when necessary.

➕ [View additional content at fscnow.farmingdale.edu.](https://fscnow.farmingdale.edu)





***“To all of our graduates today we say: you have succeeded during the most difficult time in the modern history of higher education.”***

PRESIDENT JOHN S. NADER



## THE COMMENCEMENT BABY

**Gabriella Cordi '22** Crosses the Stage

Ever since Gabriella Cordi arrived on campus four years ago, she was known to many as the “commencement baby.”

That’s because Cordi, a Farmingdale resident and member of the Farmingdale State College Class of 2022, was born during the 2000 graduation ceremony on May 21, at which her grandfather was the grand marshal and her grandmother was accompanying honorary degree recipients.

“It was such an exciting day; we were pulled in multiple directions,” said retired English professor Cornelius (Neil) McAdorey, Cordi’s grandfather.

Cordi’s mother, Victoria, was familiar to many of the faculty. “The buzz in the robing room was that Vicki was in labor,” joked Margaret McAdorey, Cordi’s grandmother, who attended FSC and later worked in the provost’s office.

The faculty kept mouthing during the ceremony, “Any news?” Margaret McAdorey said. She was getting news via cell phone and signaling to her husband with a thumbs down when there were no updates. Finally, she flashed a thumbs up: It’s a girl!

“Some professors said my grandmother came running up the aisle saying my mother was in labor,” according to Gabriella Cordi.

Gabriella Cordi is the third generation of her family to attend FSC. She majored in Science, Technology, and Society and will attend an accelerated dual nursing program at Molloy College, with the goal of becoming a nurse practitioner.

“She set her goals, met them, and now is moving on,” noted Margaret McAdorey.





# A LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

The field of competitive video gaming, or Esports, is here to stay.

Esports, the evolution of competitive video gaming, has found huge success and an avid fan base at Farmingdale State College.

With 150 members and 15 teams, the Esports program is the most popular activity on campus. Not only are members having fun, they are learning valuable, employable skills, which many companies covet.

“It’s such an up-and-coming field; you learn teamwork skills, collaboration, and leadership skills, all transferable to the workplace,” said Ashley Perrone, an applied learning counselor at the Nexus Center. “The experience is starting to show up prominently on resumes.”

College officials are using the Esports club as a recruitment incentive. The goal is for FSC to become one of the top programs in the region and a top school choice for gamers.

The success of the Esports team has begun attracting sponsors. Working closely with the Farmingdale Foundation, the team recently secured its first sponsor, G Fuel, a local energy drink based in West Babylon, New York, which became The Official Energy Drink of Esports®.

Proficient Esports players are attractive to employers. Gamers can work and interact with others remotely, and have a high level of technical knowledge. “Esports brings teamwork to the workforce,” noted FSC’s Assistant Recreation Director Rodolfo

Chacon, Jr. ’17, a gamer who is pursuing his master’s degree in college athletic administration.

Overall, the Rams have an impressive record: they are back-to-back East Coast Conference Esports champions and have won six conference titles. The club draws students of all different ages and backgrounds. About half of the participants are women, shattering another stereotype. Among the games in which the club competes are *Call of Duty*, *Valorant*, *League of Legends*, *Halo*, *Fortnight*, and *Super Smash Brothers*.

In May, the Rams’ *Valorant* team competed in the Collegiate Esports Commissioners Cup (CECC). Even though the Rams were ranked 13th, they made a powerful showing against some of the top teams in the country. The Rams lost to the number 5 ranked Rutgers University in overtime and managed to tie the University of Houston, the number 2 seed.

“It’s a growing program and the College recognizes the value,” according to Shaun Fean, Director of Campus Recreation. “They see what Esports can bring.”

Unlike most activities on campus and elsewhere that were forced to shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Esports thrived. Viewership of live-streamed competitions shot up during lockdown, generating a whole new group of fans for the Rams. The students also have live-streamed events to raise money for charities.





# SECURING FSC'S FUTURE

Pete Grizzaffi is leading FSC into the future through cybersecurity.

Farmingdale State College's new—and first—Chief Information Security Officer, Pete Grizzaffi, came to the College in March 2020, three days before the campus shut down due to the pandemic. Grizzaffi suddenly was tasked with moving FSC's classes and business operations online.

“Changing our educational delivery model overnight was not easy, and it introduced a whole host of challenges for faculty, staff, and students, as well as for Information Technology (IT),” Grizzaffi said. “In the end, the IT team and the whole campus really stepped up and partnered closely to build out new systems and enable academic offerings that will benefit us for years to come.”

All of that access, though, means more vulnerability. The College's network security system fends off thousands of attacks daily, and more than a million annually. FSC has a strong cybersecurity system and is constantly assessing it, Grizzaffi said. FSC periodically enlists “white hat hackers”—ethical hackers who test the network for weaknesses.

But the threats are constantly changing. “Hackers are not just one person in a basement; now there are countries and organizations who are dedicated to breaching networks,” said Grizzaffi. Hackers can buy malicious programs and even access help desks to assist them in deploying viruses, malware, or ransomware. “The level of sophistication is amazing,” he added. “It's becoming more necessary to upgrade our defenses. We need to ensure that every year we have a better system.”

+ View additional content at [fscnow.farmingdale.edu](https://fscnow.farmingdale.edu).



## CYBERSECURITY TIPS

1

Create complex passwords and passphrases whenever possible.

2

Use multi-factor authentication to secure your most sensitive information.

3

Don't approve a multi-factor authentication request unless you initiated it.

4

Install antivirus software on all of your devices.

5

Don't get phished. Think before you click on an email, text, or social media message.



# INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

**James Durant '68** and **Meero Kalo '21** have a lot in common. Both earned degrees in the field of aviation. Both worked on campus for the Admissions Office and as residential life assistants. Meero's career goal has always been to become a professional airline pilot for a major carrier based out of JFK International Airport. James retired from JFK as Airport Duty Manager 20 years ago.

Most recently, James invested in Farmingdale's future by establishing the James Durant '68 Scholarship in Aviation. Meero was the first recipient of that scholarship.

When asked what Meero would say to his donor before having the opportunity to meet James in person, he said, "Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I appreciate the generosity and the help, as it will get me a few flight hours and much needed experience! Seeing this has encouraged me to possibly do the same with future generations of aviators. I would love to help another fellow aviator in the future once I am all settled!"



**FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE**  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

To continue the legacy of a Farmingdale education and learn more about how your gift can transform the lives of our students, contact the Office for Alumni Engagement & Stewardship at [alumni@farmingdale.edu](mailto:alumni@farmingdale.edu) or call 934-420-2369.





## MISSION STATEMENT

Dedicated to student success, Farmingdale State College delivers exceptional academic and applied learning outcomes through scholarship, research, and student engagement for Long Island and beyond. FSC's commitment to student-centered learning and inclusiveness prepares graduates to be exemplary citizens, equipped to excel in a competitive, diverse, and technologically dynamic society.

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Kevin Jordan, EdD, *Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence and Chief Diversity Officer*

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Pete Grizzaffi, MS, *Chief Information Security Officer*

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