

THE MAGAZINE OF FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE

# FSCNOW <sup>2024</sup>



## **KALENA RICKETTS, '24**

BALANCING IT ALL,  
ON THE COURT  
AND IN THE CLASSROOM

### **REIMAGINING HIGHER EDUCATION**

Flexible Learning Empowers  
FSC Students to Succeed

### **GREENLEY GOES GOLD**

Greenley Library Celebrates  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### **FARMINGDALE FLYING HIGH**

Flight Instructors Perform  
at Jones Beach Air Show



**SINCE ITS INCEPTION**, I have written an opening letter for each edition of *FSCNow*. This will be my last. As I close my time at Farmingdale, I write with very mixed feelings, but also with great pride in all that the College has accomplished.

Farmingdale State College has never been in a better position. Our enrollment is strong, our finances are sound, we are undertaking over a quarter of a billion dollars in new construction and renovation, and we have far surpassed all previous fundraising records. We continue to add full-time faculty, create programs in areas of strength, improve our buildings and grounds immeasurably, and fill our residence halls, all while engaging and supporting our students in ways previously unimagined. These are just a few of the areas which we began working on eight years ago.

When I arrived in 2016, I said that I would be the College's storyteller-in-chief. A president is far more than that, but in telling those stories, our reputation has soared and our recognition has improved greatly.


When we launched *FSCNow* in 2018, I hoped for a magazine that would convey Farmingdale's great stories in engaging ways to a broad audience across the FSC community. Every edition has exceeded my expectations.

This edition of *FSCNow* is no exception, and brings the FSC story to life with even more energy and color. It includes several articles featuring remarkable students as well as faculty, staff, and alumni of note. In addition, there are stories about our ongoing efforts to improve academic laboratories, our ever-expanding sustainability efforts, a unique scholarship program, and a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Greenley Library.

Candidates for campus presidencies are often asked a simple question: "Will you come to love the college?" For Kathy and me that answer was a resounding "Yes!" Now, and forever. That is because of you, the campus community, and most importantly, because of our students. We have met hundreds of them over the past few years. FSC students are indeed decidedly different. Each day they renew our faith in higher education and our appreciation of Farmingdale's mission.

I cannot close without acknowledging the countless friends of the College who have encouraged and supported us over these eight years. I do not have sufficient words to express my thanks. My cabinet colleagues and those who carry out the daily work of the president's office have been unfailingly loyal, highly competent, and, most importantly, genuinely caring.

Because of all of you, the College will thrive for years to come.



John S. Nader, PhD  
President, Farmingdale State College









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## FSCNOW

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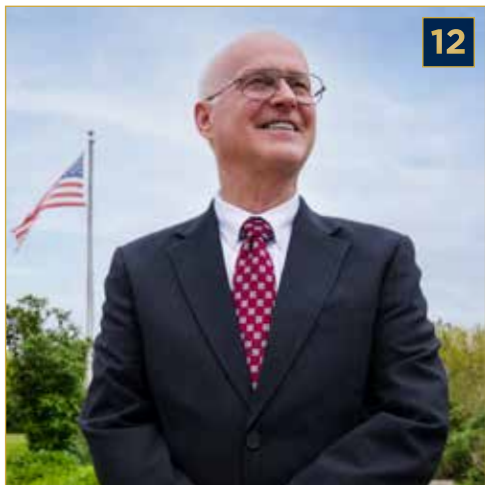
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State University of New York





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# REIMAGINING HIGHER EDUCATION WITH FLEXIBLE LEARNING

A Supportive Online Community to Empower Students to Succeed

BY DANIELLE DIMURO

In today's rapidly evolving landscape of academic innovation and community engagement, exciting developments are underway at Farmingdale State College (FSC) that promise to reimagine higher education and professional growth.

Traditionally, programs at FSC have been predominantly offered as face-to-face instruction with minimal online components.

"At Farmingdale, we've seen the adaptability and resilience of our faculty and students to quickly pivot to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic," said FSC Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Laura Joseph, EdD. "A wave of innovation is sweeping through as we identify new ways to offer the flexibility to choose between in-person and virtual learning to better meet the varied needs of our diverse student population, many of whom have responsibilities beyond the classroom."

FSC is enhancing learning options in three ways, by integrating the core curriculum online, implementing more flexible instruction options, and creating a cohesive and supportive environment for online students.

## INTEGRATING CORE CURRICULUM ONLINE

One of FSC's key initiatives is to expand and enhance its distance learning offerings and provide a comprehensive online education experience for students across various programs. The goal is to target programs with the potential for full online delivery.

Currently, FSC offers five bachelor programs (geographic information systems, dental hygiene, nursing, and artificial intelligence management) and one certificate (cannabis production and management) that are fully online.

The College is transitioning select programs to a hybrid format, blending traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning. For example, the Professional Communications and Media (PCM) Program is gradually moving its core curriculum online, providing students with the flexibility to choose between in-person and online modalities. This empowers students to make decisions based on their preferences and personal circumstances.





## COHESIVE, SUPPORTIVE, AND ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT

Central to the success of any distance learning initiative is establishing a solid, cohesive, and supportive environment for online students. FSC is developing the infrastructure to provide seamless access to the resources and support online/remote students need to succeed.

Procedures are being refined to accommodate online students, ensuring a smooth transition into the program.

“From the moment they apply to the day they graduate, we want students to feel a connection to the Farmingdale community,” said Joseph. “Once enrolled, students can take advantage of a range of online resources, including virtual advising, tutoring services, and access to digital libraries and research databases.”

However, the online experience goes beyond academics. Efforts are underway to develop co-curricular activities and extracurricular opportunities accessible to online students. These could include virtual clubs, networking events, and professional development workshops to help students engage with their peers, faculty, and alumni.

“Our commitment to enhancing distance learning underscores our dedication to providing accessible, high-quality education to students, regardless of their location or circumstances,” said Joseph. “By leveraging technology, fostering community, and continuously refining its online offerings, Farmingdale is shaping the future of education and empowering students to succeed.”

## HIGH-FLEX MODALITY INSTRUCTION

During the spring 2024 semester, faculty members piloted the high-flex modality instruction in English and business. This innovative approach is designed to offer students the flexibility to attend classes in person, virtually and synchronously (live), or asynchronously. The asynchronous approach allows students to engage with course materials and complete learning activities at their own pace and on their own schedule. The goal is to ensure that learning objectives are met regardless of the mode of instruction.

“Farmingdale aims to accommodate its student population’s array of needs and schedules by exploring such flexible teaching methodologies,” said Joseph.

“This approach recognizes the distinct needs and preferences of learners in today’s digital age while also leveraging technology to enhance teaching and learning outcomes,” she added.





# FLYING HIGH

## FSC Flight Instructors Perform at Jones Beach Air Show

BY CHRIS MAIO

Every year since 2013, Farmingdale State College (FSC) has participated in the Bethpage Federal Credit Union Jones Beach Air Show. With more than 350,000 visitors over Memorial Day weekend, the Air Show is a celebrated highlight of Long Island's many summer events. With some of the greatest aviation acts in the world, headliners include the U.S. Air Force flight demonstration team, the Thunderbirds, the U.S. Navy flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels, and many other renowned aircraft performers.

FSC is proud to participate in this showcase event with a demonstration flight of five College-owned Piper PA 28 aircraft. Certified flight instructors, most of whom are FSC Professional Pilot Program graduates, perform introductory flight maneuvers featuring five consecutive, oval, "racetrack" patterns over show center. With a voice-over announcing the pilots by name, the demonstration is designed to provide a real-world display of how these extraordinary performers get their start and highlights the strong pro-pilot training Farmingdale provides.





FSC is home to the only four-year professional pilot degree program in New York State. Located fewer than two miles from the main campus, Farmingdale's Aviation Flight Center serves as the primary hub for flight training with a fleet of 17 aircraft that the College owns and operates. The main campus houses a fully interactive air traffic control simulator that provides simulation in both tower and radar positions. Students can

earn one of two Bachelor of Science degrees in aviation administration, or aeronautical science: professional pilot, with minors in Air Force ROTC, aviation administration, or aviation flight. A drone pilot certification course is also available.

To learn more about aviation at FSC, visit: [farmingdale.edu/aviation](https://farmingdale.edu/aviation).







## TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP

### Sillcox Scholars Program: A Force for Change

BY JODY FISHER

In the vast realm of higher education scholarship programs, where financial aid often serves as a lifeline for students, the Sillcox Scholars Program at Farmingdale State College (FSC) stands out as innovative and uniquely personal in its reach and impact.

“There’s no other program like it,” said Dylan Gafarian, EdD, director of the Research Aligned Mentorship Program and institutional coordinator for Sillcox and TheDream.US scholarships. “I’ve personally seen students who start out struggling go on to graduate with honors. It works, because of how comprehensive a program it is.”

More than just a scholarship, the Sillcox Scholars Program is a force for success for its recipients. The program is remarkable and profound in its impact, as it strives to remove the significant barriers first generation students face. Services range from personal advisement to financial aid, emergency housing, and legal support to resolve immigration issues.

“A lot of the students have challenging home lives, or need to work to support their families,” said Ken Grotell, Sillcox student advisor and TRIO education counselor. “Now they’re thrown into college. It can be daunting. We work with them and our team to help get them on the right path.”

Established initially at Nassau Community College in 2008, the program has focused on academic merit, character, leadership, and a resolute commitment to educational advancement. Since then, the Sillcox Scholars Program has expanded to

include FSC and a number of other State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) institutions.

FSC has emerged as a leading partner among Sillcox Scholars schools, with the highest enrollment among four-year degree institutions. Along the way, Mark and Leslie Sillcox have joined FSC’s growing roster of the largest donors in the College’s history.

The numbers don’t lie: More than 115 students in the Sillcox Scholars Program have enrolled at FSC, and it has fueled an impressive 89% graduation rate. Of those, 71% graduate with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, a testament to their dedication and the program’s unwavering support.

**“We saw, with every student, how individual and distinct their needs were. So, we worked to find the people and the resources to give them what was required to succeed.”**

*Leslie Sillcox*

Even more impressive is the transformative effect the program has had on the lives of its recipients.

“The personal involvement of Mark and Leslie can’t be overstated,” said Bryan Garcia, FSC senior director of support programs. “They know the students. They set the tone of the program. It trickles down to real change.”





“We knew we wanted to make a lasting mark on education,” said Leslie Sillcox. “The program has evolved over the years to rise to the challenges identified along the way. We saw, with every student, how individual and distinct their needs were. So, we worked to find the people and the resources to give them what was required to succeed.”

Therein lies the holistic philosophy that is central to the success of the Sillcox Scholars Program. Through mentoring, financial assistance, and administrative guidance, the program ensures that each scholar receives the support and tools to achieve their academic goals and thrive in their personal lives and career paths.

“Through their generosity and dedication to our shared Long Island community, Mark and Leslie have opened doors of possibility for countless students, empowering them to realize their full potential,” said Matthew Colson, vice president for development and alumni engagement at FSC. “They have created life-changing opportunities for so many students, with outcomes that have established the Sillcox Scholars as a model program for scholarships moving forward, enabling hundreds more students to benefit from their vision. The Sillcox Scholars Program exemplifies the power of philanthropy to create transformative change.”

Indeed, the stories of the students in the program serve as compelling evidence of its impact. From coveted positions at companies like Bloomberg and Google to research accolades and acceptance into top medical schools, the achievements of these scholars are as diverse as

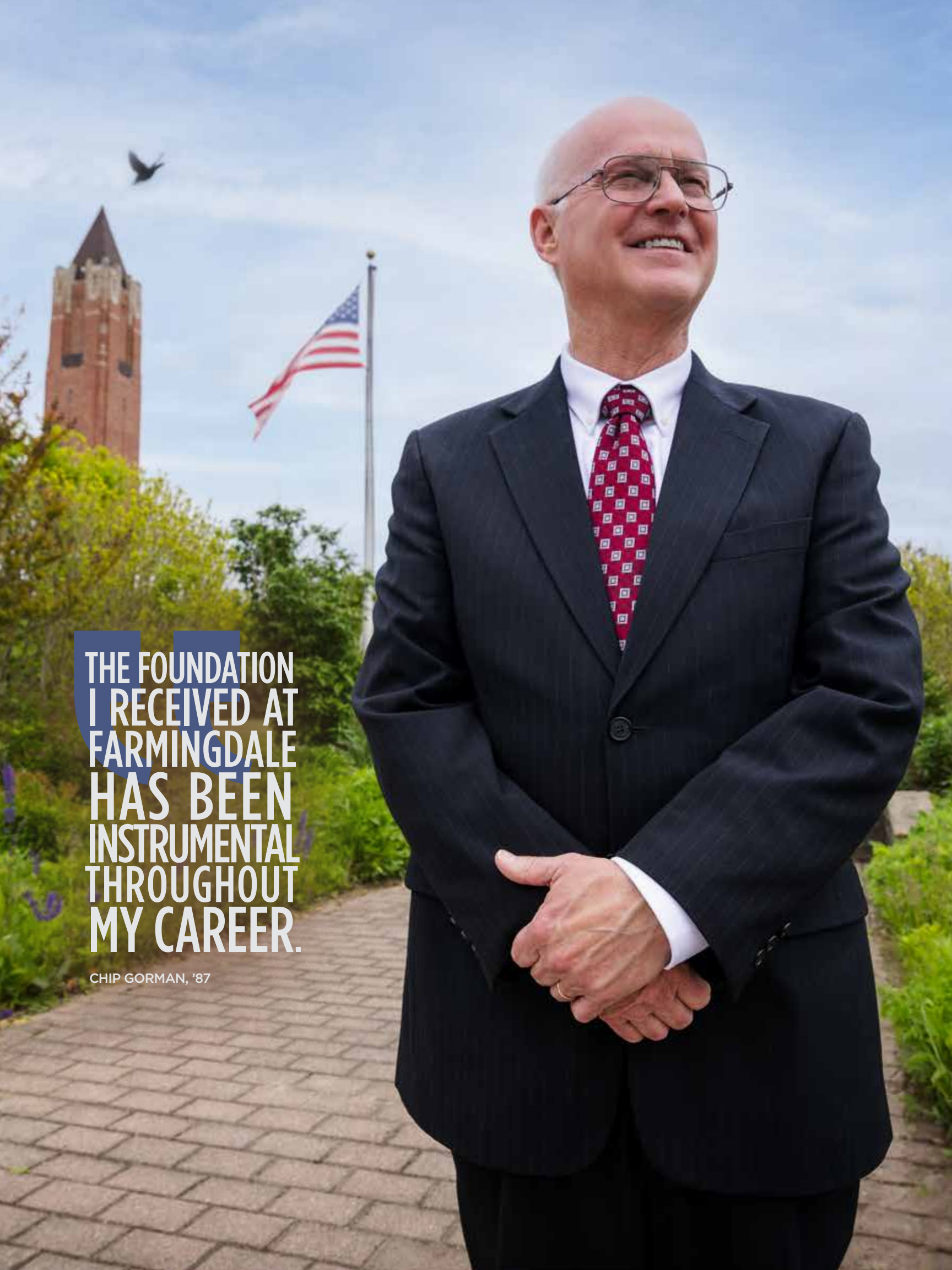


*Ten Sillcox Scholars were awarded degrees in May 2024.*

they are impressive. They have been designated prestigious Newman Civic Fellows and have been appointed Research Scholars at Brown University, Harvard University, University of South Carolina, and University of California San Marcos. Some have received the President’s Gala Award for Student Excellence and the Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence, the State University of New York’s (SUNY) highest honor. Additionally, 10 students have taken part in Farmingdale’s Summer Undergraduate Research Institute. Each success story demonstrates the irreplaceable and impactful support and guidance provided by the Sillcox Scholars Program.

“We take students who are just trying to get their degree and turn them into scholars,” said Gafarian. “When they are given that opportunity to rise to the challenge of achieving something beyond what they set out to do, they will excel.”



A man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red patterned tie, stands outdoors with his hands clasped. He is smiling and looking upwards. In the background, there is a brick tower, an American flag on a pole, and a bird flying in the sky. The scene is set on a paved walkway with greenery.

**THE FOUNDATION  
I RECEIVED AT  
FARMINGDALE  
HAS BEEN  
INSTRUMENTAL  
THROUGHOUT  
MY CAREER.**

CHIP GORMAN, '87



## A CHIP OFF THE FSC BLOCK

**Chip Gorman, '87,** Touches Millions of Lives Overseeing Long Island's State Parks

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

If you have been on Long Island, you may not know George “Chip” Gorman, Jr., '87, but you have almost certainly seen his work. As Long Island regional director of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Gorman manages 30 million visitors annually to his office's 33 state parks, which include world famous beaches, golf courses, arboretums, preserves, and historic sites.

A devoted public servant for nearly 50 years, Gorman first joined the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation in 1977 as a park and recreation aide at Jones Beach State Park. There, his exceptional work ethic caught the attention of his supervisors, and he was quickly moved over to the Jones Beach Marine Stadium—now Northwell Health at Jones Beach Theater.

“The assignment I had was cleaning up the bathrooms, scraping gum off the backs of the seats, all of the clean-up and maintenance work,” he said. “Every day I got there, and I would go over and get my little list of projects, mainly cleaning, and I would do that. And they obviously liked me because I did the work, and I could work independently.”

Before long, Gorman had done “every seasonal task that was required,” and “every year I got promoted.” He even met his wife of 42 years, Ann Marie Gorman, at Jones Beach State Park. They now have three grown children and four grandchildren.

For Gorman, it all started when he was a child growing up in Wantagh, New York. “One of my fondest memories is my family traveling down the Wantagh State Parkway, with all the kids in the car—my parents had seven children—and we would all be told, ‘Look for the pencil in the sky as you're heading down to Jones Beach! See who can be the first to see it!’ So that was always fun. And then, going down to Jones Beach, playing on the sand, going into the swimming pool, so, very fond memories of Jones Beach.”

In 1977, Gorman also started as a criminal justice major, taking night classes at Farmingdale State College (FSC). High frequency hearing loss kept him from a career as a police officer, but “the

foundation I received at Farmingdale has been instrumental throughout my career,” he said.

“I loved it,” he said of his FSC experience. “The teachers were great. They were helpful and that's one of the reasons that I have my degree. They were really supportive of the students, and it was a learning environment that was very positive, so you wanted to learn. They are the reason I graduated. I can say that without hesitation.”

***“You are the expression of Long Island's soul—thank you for that.”***

*Erik Kulleseid, former commissioner of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation*

Gorman has had a profound impact on the Long Island region. His leadership has guided the annual Bethpage Federal Credit Union Jones Beach Air Show, dozens of July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks Spectaculars, world-renowned summer concerts, expanded parks programming, massive infrastructure improvements, environmental initiatives, an Ironman competition, Children's Summer Theater, two U.S. Opens, two PGA tours and a PGA Championship, mass COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites, shark sightings, wintertime sledding at Bethpage State Park, and the occasional beached whale.

“You are the expression of Long Island's soul—thank you for that,” wrote Erik Kulleseid, former commissioner of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, in a note to Gorman. “Your humility and dedication to this agency is legendary. You set a tone of competency and ‘can do’ spirit that marks our Long Island program.”

“But all of that, it goes to the same thing—it's the staff,” Gorman said of the force behind his successful career. “It's the park workers, it's the park police, it's the lifeguards, it's the managers. They're the ones who make it successful, and they work extremely hard. And that's why these big events are a success—period. There is a saying that I use: I need the employees more than they need me. And that's very true. I need them more than they need me.”



## RENAISSANCE MAN

### Clyde Vanel, '97, Continues Soaring to New Heights

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

Farmingdale State College (FSC) alumnus Clyde Vanel, '97, knows how to masterfully navigate a variety of situations.

From the ins and outs of the judicial system as a skilled intellectual property attorney, serving as an honorable member of the New York State Legislature, and owning and operating multiple businesses, to piloting an emergency aircraft landing, Vanel has done it all and then some.

Vanel grew up in Cambria Heights, Queens. The third oldest of 10 children, he was “navigating the politics of a big family” from a young age and often had to assist his parents, who had emigrated from Haiti and did not speak English.

“I was kind of like their lawyer as a kid,” he said. “But they believed in education and hard work. And they instilled some of the most basic principles of respect, hard work, and education. They told me, ‘The doors in this country will unlock. You can go almost anywhere.’ My upbringing really helped shape who I became.”

Vanel went on to earn an associate of applied science degree in aerospace technology and a Bachelor of Science in aviation administration from FSC. He also served for two years as the Student Government Association president—his first introduction to lobbying at New York State’s capitol.

“My experience as student body president at Farmingdale, oh my gosh, that changed my life,” he said. “It took me on a new trajectory. It actually got me interested in becoming an attorney. It gave me so much experience with politics, with law, with business, with operating a budget.

“It was invaluable now that I think about it. Invaluable. It helped advance me, years beyond my age. It was such a great experience,” he added.

A New York State assemblymember since 2016, Vanel has sponsored numerous landmark bills, such as legislation to create a robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence (AI) commission; license high-risk AI systems; and create a cryptocurrency and blockchain study task force.

“I am glad to call Assemblymember Vanel a great friend,” said New York State Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre. “He is a leader in his community and here in the legislature. In the emerging age of AI, Assemblymember Vanel has been the champion of multiple pieces of legislation around the issue. Many of my colleagues look to him when they have any questions around technology, including myself.”

“You’re always successful when you’re serving people,” Vanel said. “That’s when you know that you’ve done well and you’re doing your job well—when you’re making a difference in people’s lives.”

A seasoned recreational pilot, Vanel made headlines early last year for a successful emergency landing on a beach in Shoreham, New York, when his Beechcraft’s single engine lost power.

“I was trained in this emergency situation,” he said. “I was over the water, and it just happened to be low tide. There was enough beach that was exposed for me to put the plane down on. If it hadn’t been low tide at that time, I don’t know if I would have survived.”

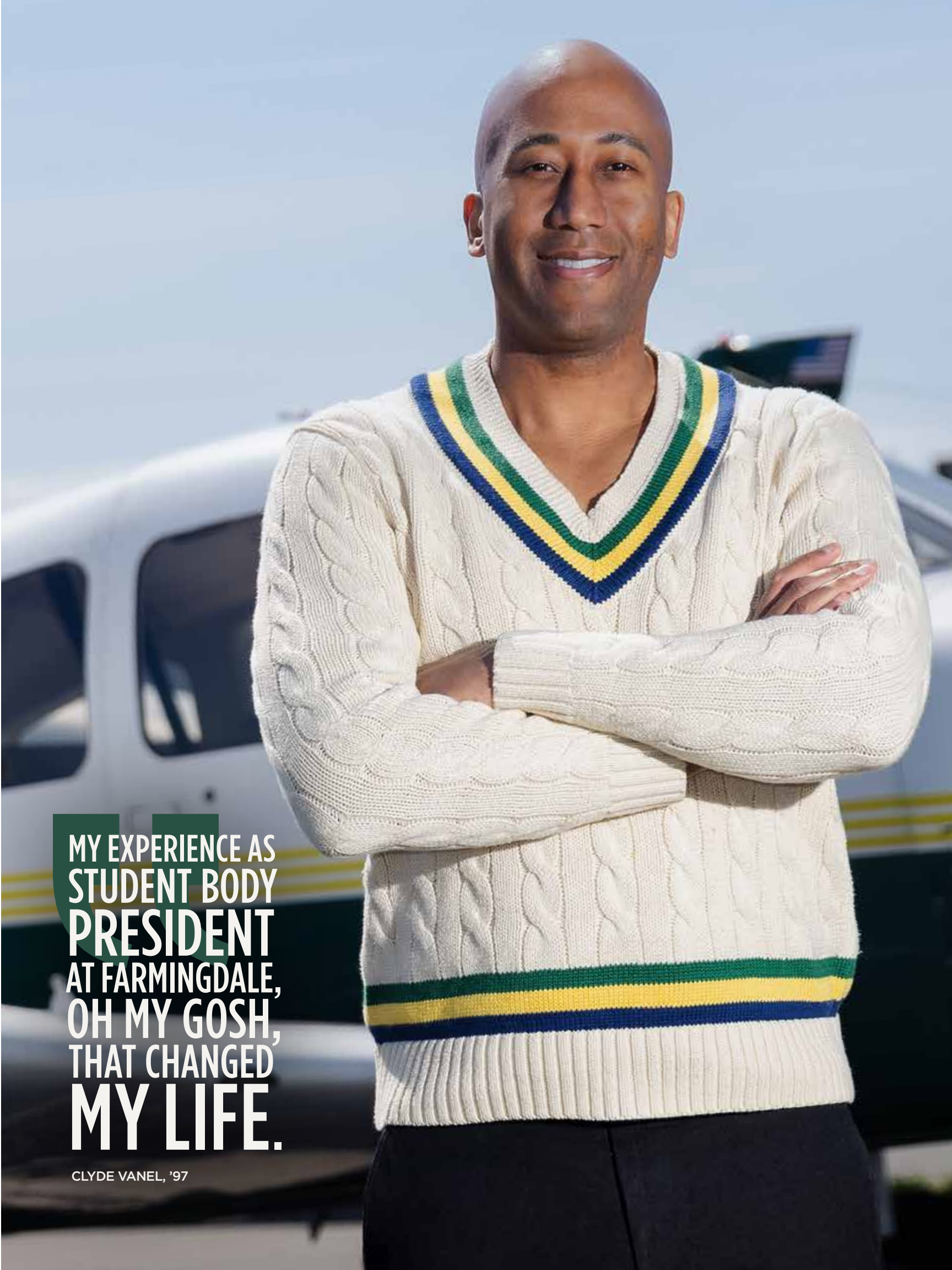
Vanel continues to make an impact. In 2014, he founded the New York Metro chapter of the Black Pilots of America, Inc. (NYMBPA), a non-profit that works to increase diversity and opportunities for underserved communities in the field of aviation. In November 2023, he announced the Clyde Vanel, '97 Flight Fee Scholarship, which will go to support every student in FSC’s Professional Pilot Program.

Vanel said he is grateful to be able to give back to an institution that gave so much to him.

“Farmingdale has been seminal in who I am,” he said. “I mean, just talking about this makes me realize how important Farmingdale was for me. At Farmingdale it’s about instruction, and learning, and training—for people. And it’s not about instructional training for training’s sake, it’s about building people for the world. Preparing them to go do good things in the world.

“I want to continue to seek growth and learn,” he added. “And I want to continue to help people and make a difference.”





MY EXPERIENCE AS  
STUDENT BODY  
**PRESIDENT**  
AT FARMINGDALE,  
OH MY GOSH,  
THAT CHANGED  
**MY LIFE.**

CLYDE VANEL, '97



## SHE'S GOT MOXXIE

### Jenna Natale, '16, Takes on New Role Supporting Local Women

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

Jenna Natale is a people person—a Long Island people person.

A Farmingdale State College (FSC) professional communications 2016 graduate, Natale has skillfully parlayed her degree into a successful career spotlighting, and inspiring, others in her community.

“I love people,” she said. “I love people and I love connecting people. And I love talking about amazing people.

“I also love Long Island,” she added immediately. “I always knew that I wanted to live on Long Island. I knew—probably from growing up on the South Shore and seeing how beautiful Long Island is.”

Natale, who is from Lindenhurst, New York, joined the Moxxie Mentoring Foundation, Inc. as associate executive director earlier this year. The Suffolk County-based non-profit works to cultivate professional advancement for local young women and women in job transition through mentorship, development programs and trainings, and networking events.

“After I had my daughter, I realized how hard it is for women to go back into the workforce,” said Natale, who is also a past mentee and volunteer with the organization. “I stayed in the Ms. Moxxie Program postpartum, and that was my lifeline. Those meetings and those women were literally piecing me back together. And when I went back into the workforce and I had my first big flop, because I was still a little frazzled, they were the ones who were giving me tips.”

After her positive experience, Natale now feels driven to lead other women, who “like me, want to live, work, and be here on Long Island, and build those connections to make it happen.”

“I was so happy with the support I had and then frightened for other women, who maybe didn't have the network, and family support system I had,” added Natale. “I came to Moxxie to help empower other women.”

“Jenna was one of our star mentees, and her mentors and I saw her blossom into the intelligent,

savvy, multitalented, and compassionate businesswoman she is today,” said Beth Meixner, Moxxie Mentoring Foundation founder and executive director. “Moxxie is proud to now have Jenna as our new associate executive director to help bring our non-profit into the next chapter of growth with a younger, fresher perspective.”

Over her career, Natale has earned numerous high-profile community positions and recognitions, including as a Long Island Association (LIA) Young Professionals committee member; a listee on *Editor & Publisher's* 25 Under 35 2019; a member of Long Island Elite; Long Island Coalition Against Bullying board chair; and as “one of the youngest professionals ever elected” to the LIA Board.

In her personal time, she enjoys teaching self-defense as a black belt and instructor at Lionheart Jiu Jitsu. “I love working with people and helping them find their strength,” she said.

As a first-generation student at FSC, Natale took her first journalism course “to prove to my mother that I didn't want to be a journalist,” she quipped. But Nancy Macri, Natale's mother, knew it was a perfect fit. “From the time Jenna first learned words she wanted to use them,” Macri said.

Natale ended up liking the class and, through her professor, landed a summer internship at *Long Island Business News (LIBN)*, a publication dedicated to Long Island commerce, which eventually led to a full-time position as its associate publisher.

“So, Farmingdale, quite literally, walked me across to my career in media,” she said.

“I ended up falling in love with it,” Natale said of her nearly 10 years at *LIBN*. “Because, unbeknownst to me, it put together everything that I was infatuated with as a kid. I just didn't have the foresight to see it at the time. I love people, I love Long Island, and I love the business community here.

“We do business so differently here; and it's a good thing, in my opinion,” she added. “And the more I can share that with younger generations, the happier I'll be, because we have so much to offer on Long Island.”



**FARMINGDALE,  
QUITE LITERALLY,  
WALKED ME ACROSS  
TO MY CAREER  
IN MEDIA.**

JENNA NATALE, '16







## IT IS EASY BEING GREEN

Creating a More Sustainable Place to Live, Work, and Learn

BY MAIA ROSEVAL

Farmingdale State College (FSC) may have evolved from an agricultural school into a technological college since its 1912 inception, but the school's inherent connection to the environment has never wilted. As a designated Bee Campus and Tree Campus, FSC is dedicated to making its operations more sustainable. As highlighted in the College's Eight for '28 strategic plan, promoting energy conservation and sustainable practices are some of its top priorities.

To reach both internal and state-mandated goals, FSC's Office for Sustainability has initiated various new programs with the integration of campus-wide waste reduction, reuse, and recycling at the forefront. The College has made significant improvements across campus to make it easier and more convenient to waste less. As the campus phases out single-use plastics and transitions to more sustainable alternatives, it has prioritized the appropriate infrastructure improvements as well. For example, new hydration stations have been installed in the Campus Center, Delores Quintyne Hall, and the School of Business building, enabling everyone on campus to fill their reusable water bottles with chilled, filtered water.

***“All of these efforts are designed to bring about a paradigm shift toward greater resilience within our campus community.”***

*FSC President John S. Nader, PhD*

Reducing waste requires more than just the proper infrastructure; it requires educating the campus and local community about why it's important to do so. Through a \$20,000 grant received from the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute's Community Grant Program, FSC has launched the Long Island Sustainability Series, an educational series teaching Long Island residents how to reduce their environmental impact through actions such as waste reduction. In its first two months, the program has educated more than 100 Long Island residents about pollution prevention methods.



Additional new programs have been introduced to increase operational sustainability. Beginning in 2023, the Office for Sustainability has hosted biannual Green Giveaway events, where lightly used items are collected, sanitized, and recirculated back into the campus community at no cost. Items that typically would have been thrown out, such as clothing, dorm items, or textbooks, can now be donated to the Green Giveaway program and kept out of a landfill. In the first year alone, Green Giveaway has kept over 1,000 pounds of items from being discarded. This program embodies the very essence of sustainability: it's good for the environment, it's equitable, and it's economically viable.

“All of these efforts are designed to bring about a paradigm shift toward greater resilience within our campus community,” said FSC President John S. Nader, PhD. “We want to raise awareness and improve our performance in both energy usage and the impact our campus has on the environment.”

Engaging the campus community through various events and programs has gotten the campus excited about sustainability, particularly during FSC's Earth Week events each April. Earth Week is an event-filled collaboration between the Office for Sustainability, the Office of Student Activities, Campus Recreation, and various academic departments. Events have included tree plantings, Green Giveaways, educational documentaries,



clean-up hikes, and outdoor workout classes. Throughout the week, students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to be more conscious about their actions and build sustainable habits that they can take with them when they leave FSC.

Campus members can engage in sustainable activities not just during Earth Week, but year-round. With the support of Bethpage Federal Credit Union and Pedal Share, FSC launched its first-ever bikeshare program in 2023, which allows users to rent bikes to get to local destinations or ride recreationally. The FSC stations are among the most popular across Long Island, with over 380 rentals in their first year. In addition, FSC's Giving Garden now provides opportunities for students to learn about native plants, gardening, pollinators, and food security. In its first year, the community-run garden donated over 200 pounds of organic produce to the FSC Food Pantry. Esther Sherry, '23, a horticulturist at Bethpage State Park, spearheaded the revival as a senior at FSC.

"I am so thankful we restored the Giving Garden at a time when people on campus really needed it," said Sherry. "It is a space where the entire campus community can spend time outside and enjoy nature. The appreciation for the environment and where our food comes from stems from involvement such as this. That's our goal with this garden, and we are excited to see its continued growth."

**Esther Sherry, '23**





## SERVING UP LEADERSHIP

**Kalena Ricketts, '24:** Balancing It All, on the Court and in the Classroom

BY NICOLE MILLER

Kalena Ricketts, a nursing major in her senior year and middle blocker for Farmingdale State College's (FSC) Women's Volleyball team, has it all and then some. Being named a member of the 2022 and 2023 Academic All-District Women's Volleyball Teams, 2023 co-player of the year for the Skyline Conference, and All-Skyline Conference first team three seasons in a row are just a few of Ricketts' accolades. But how does she manage it all? She sums it up with one word—community.

Born and raised in Bay Shore, New York, to parents Jenine Jordan and Ian Ricketts, she moved to Cambria Heights, Queens, at age 6 and lived with her mom and grandmother. During high school, Ricketts' grandmother fell ill, and while spending time with her at North Shore University Hospital, Ricketts observed how caring the nursing staff was. "They became like family to us," she said. The nurses even sent flowers to her grandmother's funeral. This generosity and kindness spiked her interest in pursuing a career in nursing.

While searching for colleges, it was important to Ricketts to make sure she could pursue both her enthusiasm for nursing and her passion for volleyball. However, many colleges would not permit students to study nursing while playing an NCAA sport, due to the rigor and commitment of the major. Then she found FSC, which permits student athletes to choose any course of study. "FSC gave me an experience I wouldn't get anywhere else," said Ricketts.

Also a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Council, Ricketts serves as a coach for South Bay Volleyball Club in Melville and as a nursing assistant at Cohen's Children's Hospital in Queens.

"Kalena is an outstanding, well-rounded young lady," said Kellie Block, coach of FSC's women's volleyball team. "She handled playing volleyball, academics, and serving as president of the Student Nurses Association (SNA) while still maintaining a social life and being an active nurse all at the same time. She managed this incredible workload with gratitude and grace. FSC is so lucky to have her as a role model for all incoming students."

During her time as president of the SNA, Ricketts sponsored several successful nursing gear fundraisers. Additionally, Ricketts participated in health fairs and in community-wide activities both on and off the Farmingdale State College campus. She also represented the SNA at the annual convention of the Student Nursing Association of New York State in New York City, where more than 300 student nurses were in attendance.

"In her role as president of the SNA, Kalena was a role model to her classmates and helped to arrange for interesting topics/speakers at the SNA meetings," said Nancy Maggio, DNP, associate nursing professor at FSC.

Ricketts said time management is the most challenging part of balancing it all. "Sometimes I bite off more than I can chew, but my support system always keeps me grounded and helps me get everything done. I am so grateful for them," said Ricketts.

"I really couldn't have done all this without my parents and brother, Larry Robinson, my coaches, Kellie Block and Brooke Cole, my professors, who work overtime to take care of the students in the nursing program, and my friends and teammates."

So, what's next for this rising star? She is using her COVID year of athletics eligibility to play Division II volleyball at Adelphi University and plans to apply for its Master of Science degree in nursing. Her goal is to work in a NICU or PICU.

"It was always my dream to play Division I or II, so it is surreal that I now have this opportunity to play Division II volleyball," she said. "I'm excited to see how I perform at the next level and to make new memories."





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NEW MEMORIES.**

***- Kalena Ricketts, '24***



## DESTINED FOR SUCCESS

**Destini Buchanan, '24:** Leading by Example

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

As a young student growing up in Jamaica, West Indies, Destini Buchanan's teachers knew there was something special about her.

"I've always been very shy," she said. "But in high school, I felt that a lot of the staff and faculty saw something in me and always pushed me toward leadership roles and nominated me for positions and awards. So that's how I originally got started in leadership."

Now a Farmingdale State College (FSC) bioscience major and business management minor, Buchanan is also pursuing a Certification in Cannabis Production and Management. She stands out in FSC's campus community for her student advocacy and commitment to inclusion. She served as FSC Student Government Association vice president for two years before becoming president for the 2023-2024 term. Moreover, she serves as FSC unit secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and vice president of FSC's Afro-Caribbean Club.

The recognitions keep coming. Buchanan has received two FSC Campus Life Awards for Student Government Leadership, a 2023 FSC President's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Student Leadership Award, a 2024 Student Achievement Award from New York State Senator Monica Martinez, and most recently a 2024 Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence—the State University of New York's (SUNY) highest student honor.

"Destini is an impressive young woman with a noticeable intellectual prowess," said Kevin Jordan, EdD, FSC vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence and chief diversity officer. "She is focused and has a determination that is sustained by her excellent self-management skills. She is a balanced listener and has the ability to build relationships and community. Excellence is not a static attribute, but is dynamic—ergo, always in the process of achievement. Destini consistently models this philosophy. I have no doubt about her success."

Professionally, Buchanan has held several healthcare positions and currently works at a

local urgent care center as an advanced clinical associate, "which mixes medical assistant and scribing," she said. Buchanan also volunteers weekly as a crisis hotline counselor. After college, she plans to pursue a career as a physician with a focus on overcoming inconsistencies in care for underrepresented populations.

"My first experience with healthcare would definitely be with my grandmother's health battles, which started when we were in Jamaica," said Buchanan, who moved to New York in 2019. "That's where it all started. I've been able to meet a lot of healthcare professionals and to just see the care. And one pivotal experience for me was meeting an African American anesthesiologist. She was very empowering.

"From those experiences I feel like being pre-med and doing the task of clinicals and working in the healthcare field has solidified my choice to be a physician," she said.


For Buchanan, caring for others is extremely rewarding and she often gets positive feedback from her clients and patients. "A lot of times they are like, 'Thank you for just giving me a voice or giving me a space to actually speak because oftentimes I feel marginalized.' So, it's very, very self-fulfilling for me," she said.

Buchanan credits her family and upbringing with instilling her industriousness and determination. "We were hardworking people," she said. "If we needed it, we would have it through hard work. I believe a lot of my values and beliefs and how I see things and how I go about life is based on growing up in Jamaica."

She is thankful to FSC for helping pave the way for her future success.

"I love Farmingdale," she said. "I'm tearing up right now. I always tell people I love Farmingdale so much. The opportunities here—especially coming from a place where I didn't really have many opportunities. Farmingdale has done so much for me. So, I'm very happy. And I'm very grateful."



A woman with dark hair in braids, wearing a white lab coat and gold jewelry, is looking through a white LINTON 2350 microscope. She is in a laboratory setting with various pieces of equipment, including a rack of black pipettes with colored caps (yellow, red, blue) and a blue storage box. The background is slightly blurred, showing a typical lab environment.

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– *Destini Buchanan, '24*



## ENGINEERING A BRIGHT FUTURE

**Kelly Wylie, '25:** Building a Career and a Community at FSC

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

From student programming to circuit board programming, Kelly Wylie, '25, a mechanical engineering technology major at Farmingdale State College (FSC), is a whiz.

What started as a friendly sibling rivalry with her older brother, Joseph Wylie, '24, an FSC cybersecurity major, has transformed into Wylie's successful college experience. Now Student Government Association (SGA) vice president, Sigma Delta Tau president, secretary of the RAM Motorsports Club, and a student assistant in the Office of Student Activities, Wylie is also president and founder of FSC's popular Rambots (robotics) Club.

"My brother, he's 16 months older than me," said Wylie, who grew up in Seaford, New York. "I kind of followed a lot of things he did, because we were so close in age. We were a little bit competitive with each other—or at least I was," she quipped.

Wylie's "if he can do it, I can do it" mindset and determination would bring her to join several clubs through elementary, middle, and high school, including student government, which she immediately loved, and robotics, which she immediately didn't.

"At my first meeting I remember very clearly sitting down and saying, 'This is not for me.' It just didn't make sense in my head, and I didn't think that I was going to like it," she said. "But I stuck with it anyway, and soon I was like, 'Oh, this is exactly what I love to do.'"

Engineering runs in Wylie's family, with her grandfather, her father, and her mother working in locomotive engineering. "I definitely look up to my mom for succeeding in a male-dominated environment as an engineer," she said. During an FSC open house visit, "I got to see one of the lab rooms in Lupton, and that's when my mom knew I really wanted to go into engineering too, because she could tell how excited I was," Wylie added.

Wylie has remained active both on and off campus, serving as a Rambassador campus tour guide and orientation leader for the Office of Admissions, organizing a wide variety of campus events,

including student career development workshops, food donation efforts, and fundraising for local charities, and completing a summer internship with Zebra Technologies in Holtsville.

"Kelly epitomizes the essence of an FSC student, seamlessly being involved in activities with grace and purpose," said Lukas Miedreich, FSC director of the Office of Student Activities. "True achievement is not just about excelling in one area but embracing the holistic experience of campus life. She is involved in all facets of campus life from SGA, to Greek Life, to student clubs and student employment."

With her "full calendar," Wylie lauds FSC for welcoming and encouraging her array of interests.

"The reason that I join all these clubs, and started a few, is because I want everyone to find their place where they just feel welcomed and supported," she said. "I love Farmingdale because I feel like it gives me a lot of opportunities. I always say you can be as involved or uninvolved as you like, so I feel like it caters to a really diverse group of students. It's mainly a commuter school, but there's so many different ways to get involved. And I feel like we have really good resources, especially with our Office of Student Activities. I feel like everyone really wants to help you succeed."

"We have a really supportive environment at Farmingdale, especially for women in STEM," she added.

After graduation, Wylie is gearing up to pursue a master's degree in engineering management and would like to go into sales engineering or program management. No matter where she goes, Wylie plans to give back to her community.

"I need to be fulfilled and driven by something," she said. "My mom actually said that to me the other day. She's like, 'You're going to need to find a hobby where you're giving back in some way.' Because I feel like something's missing without that. So, I'm sure wherever I go next, there's a lot of opportunities to volunteer for different things that I'm really passionate about. I would love to be able to help out a good cause."





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WOMEN IN STEM.

- Kelly Wylie, '25





## THE NUCLEUS OF BIOLOGY AT FSC

Cultivating Collaboration, Discoveries, and Breakthroughs With Every Experiment

BY DANIELLE DIMURO

Hale Hall, the long-standing home base for Farmingdale State College's (FSC) Biology Department, has had a transformative journey spanning several decades. In 2003, the introduction of the Bachelor of Science degree in bioscience marked a significant milestone in the department's evolution. However, a setback occurred in 2004 when a massive water leak forced the Biology Department to vacate Hale Hall, dispersing the faculty, staff, and lab equipment across the campus.

Despite this setback, the revitalizing of Hale Hall was completed in 2011 and the Biology Department returned to its rightful home, beginning a new chapter in the department's history characterized by innovation, collaboration, and academic excellence.

Hale Hall houses nine biology laboratories and four preparation rooms. Each lab features specialized workstations tailored to different areas of study, including genetics, microbiology, anatomy & physiology, ecology, molecular biology, and more. Students have access to advanced equipment and resources relevant to their coursework and research interests.

"We're dedicated to offering students authentic, state-of-the-art lab experiences by continuously updating our equipment," said Sarah Gross, PhD, chair of FSC's Biology Department. "From flow cytometers and rotating fluorescent microscopes

in cell biology to DNA sequencers in molecular biology, we provide cutting-edge tools."

The preparation or "prep" rooms play a crucial role in supporting biology education and research by providing a controlled environment for the safe and efficient handling of biological materials. The prep rooms, which are used by a dedicated team of instructional support technicians and specialists, contain equipment and supplies needed for tasks such as dissection, staining, microscopy, and specimen storage. They are exceptionally well organized, with supplies neatly arranged and readily accessible. Cabinets and shelves are fully stocked with a comprehensive array of reagents, consumables, and equipment, ensuring that faculty and students have everything they need to conduct experiments with precision and accuracy.

With safety as a top priority, students are trained in proper laboratory techniques and protocols before conducting experiments. The labs are equipped with safety equipment such as eyewash stations, emergency showers, fire extinguishers, and fume hoods to ensure a safe working environment.

"The layout of the labs is designed to encourage collaboration and teamwork among students, which fosters a sense of community and helps students learn from each other's experiences and perspectives," said Gross.





## NOTEWORTHY EQUIPMENT

Technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing the learning experience within the biology labs. Students utilize advanced software for data analysis, simulations, and virtual experiments, augmenting their understanding of complex biological concepts.

In May 2023, FSC made a significant investment of nearly \$180,000 and purchased the Invitrogen Attune CytPix Flow Cytometer, a powerful tool for cell analysis that offers enhanced imaging capabilities. Flow cytometry is a technique used in laboratories to analyze and sort cells based on their physical and chemical characteristics. Its high-speed analysis, multicolor capabilities, user-friendly interface, and versatility make it a valuable instrument for researchers seeking to explore the complexities of cellular biology.

In December 2023, FSC received the QuantStudio 5 Real-Time PCR System as a generous gift from Enzo Biochem. This advanced tool is used in laboratory settings for real time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) experiments. It plays a vital role in amplifying and monitoring DNA in real-time during PCR processes. The system is indispensable for various tasks, including gene analysis, pathogen detection, and genetic testing.

The Anatomage Table is an advanced virtual dissection platform with a high-resolution

touchscreen display for exploring detailed 3D anatomical models. It recreates skeletal systems, organs, and tissues with exceptional accuracy, providing a deep understanding of human anatomy and spatial relationships. This highly immersive and interactive learning experience enhances students' comprehension of anatomical variations, and is used to supplement the anatomy and physiology laboratories.

FSC's new Bioscience Aquarium Lab, unveiled in September 2023, is a cutting-edge facility in Gleeson Hall, next door to Hale Hall. Supported by local vendors and designed for teaching and research, this is a valuable asset for exploring Long Island's aquatic ecosystems. Equipped with gear and custom-built tanks, it offers hands-on learning opportunities for students in biology courses.

Overall, the biology labs at Farmingdale State College are a testament to the College's dedication to excellence in scientific education, providing students with the tools, resources, and opportunities needed to thrive in their academic and professional pursuits.

"In our labs, students are not just conducting experiments," said Gross, "they are laying the foundation for future discoveries and breakthroughs in the field of biology."



# LITTLE WINS LEAD TO BIG CHANGES

## Christine Freaney Inspires Student Success and Belonging

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

For as long as she can remember, Christine Freaney has been driven to excel in whatever she does.

Growing up in Long Beach, New York, she competed in sports with grit and determination and later played Division I softball as a pitcher at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), where she received a BA in physical education.

“If I find something I like, I want to do it really well,” she said. “That’s how I’ve always been. If I’m focused on something, I want to know what’s the highest level and how can I achieve it.”

Her professional accomplishments are a testament. Freaney, Farmingdale State College (FSC) assistant professor of nutrition science and health promotion, became focused on public health as a UNCW undergraduate student and went on to earn a Master of Health Administration from Hofstra University and a PhD in health and human science from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, then became a nationally master certified health education specialist (MCHES).

Freaney also held a vital role in administering a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded tobacco education, prevention, and cessation grant for a municipal health department in North Carolina. There she worked to gain support from both the community and county legislators to get life-saving policies passed into law.

“When you’re asking people to change their behaviors, when you’re asking for policy changes, it’s a slow process and you have to celebrate each little win,” she said. “I always tell students, ‘You have to be okay with 99 nos to get that one yes.’ And that’s what you live for. It’s those little wins that lead to the big changes. That’s important to recognize when you’re working in community health.”

Freaney, who joined FSC’s faculty in 2021, now focuses her research on healthcare disparities and outcomes among LGBTQ+ populations and aims to guide FSC students into successful futures helping others.

“Her teaching style has made a significant impact on me as a student and as a medical professional,” said Nicole Glasser, ’24, a health promotion and wellness major. “Her morals, values, and ethics are unparalleled and shine through in her teachings. I am grateful to have been able to learn from her and acquire different perspectives that I may never have discovered or explored on my own.”

Anastasia Hansen, ’24, a health promotion and wellness major, agreed. “Dr. Freaney epitomizes excellence as an educator through her passion and commitment to creating an enriching learning environment,” she said. “Her passion for health promotion is admirable as well as infectious. Dr. Freaney consistently goes above and beyond to provide guidance and leadership and empowers her students to reach their full potential in their studies.”

For Freaney, who serves as FSC Pride Club faculty advisor, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Council co-chair, and DEI curriculum committee co-chair, it is rewarding to help supply a talented and diverse workforce for the region.

“The field is growing, and there’s a need for our students,” she said. “We have a lot of diversity in our classes now, and having them graduate and bringing their diversity to the workforce has many benefits. I’m proud of Farmingdale’s diversity and I’m proud that we’re providing a diverse workforce. It will improve the experience of others in so many ways.”

“Dr. Freaney was able to relate many course lessons to real-life events,” said Barakova Dieujuste, ’23, a safety and health inspector for the New York State Department of Labor. “I was inspired by her passion. I remember my first class with Dr. Freaney and thinking, ‘Wow, maybe I could do this too. Maybe I could help people too.’ My first job as a health educator, I flew past the interviews just for knowing Dr. Freaney and having that connection. Dr. Freaney has a gift for making people feel seen and understood. Her gift has changed my life for the better, and I am forever thankful.”





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CHRISTINE FREANEY, PhD



## ONE STELLAR PROFESSOR

**Edmund “Ned” Douglass** Brings Cosmic Connection to FSC

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

When Farmingdale State College’s (FSC) Edmund “Ned” Douglass was about 14 years old, he and his father would go on walks behind their Maryland home and explore the night sky. Douglass admitted that while he “felt cold” from both the evening air and the incalculability of the universe, he was drawn in.

“It did give me a bit of an empty feeling and a sort of chill, looking at pictures of galaxies and stars and the vastness of space,” he said. “And my dad would take me out back in the field with binoculars and point out different stars, and star clusters, and constellations. There was an interest in getting a sense for our place situated within this vast cosmos.”

After high school, Douglass went on to study physics at the University of Pittsburgh, until a six-hour Greyhound bus ride his freshman year changed his course.

“It gave me a lot of time to read whenever I was traveling home,” he said. “And one weekend I read Stephen Hawking’s *A Brief History of Time*, which is a description of fundamental physics and the origin of the universe and how we’ve come to understand the most basic components that shape the grandest scales of existence. And that—that blew my mind. That changed my direction. That weekend, I went back and I changed my major to add astronomy.”

After college, Douglass went straight into a PhD program, and in 2012, received a doctoral degree in astronomy from Boston University, where he studied clusters of galaxies, the largest gravitationally bound systems in the universe. The day after completing his dissertation, he was on a plane to Egypt to begin a teaching fellowship at the American University in Cairo. Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had just stepped down from power, and Douglass’ courses in physics theory and “applying scientific reasoning to everyday life” were partially eclipsed by the city’s political turmoil and civil unrest.

“It was exciting being there and teaching scientific thinking and how to address problem solving,” he said. “There was a lot of political rhetoric that was

flying around, a lot of propaganda. And this class was, in a way, how to sift through all of that, to really understand what’s going on. You know, not to be hoodwinked, not to be misled. That’s what we were aiming to do, trying to provide some reliable process within a time of tumult.

“I think science and scientific thinking is always something that you can fall back on,” he added.

In 2014, he joined the physics faculty at FSC and in 2017 became chair of its Science, Technology, & Society (STS) Department. “Dr. Douglass has reimaged and redesigned the STS program during his time as chair of the department,” said Thomas Ward, PhD, dean of FSC’s School of Arts & Sciences. “He has led Farmingdale’s largest major through changes in curricular offerings and the hiring of the first full-time faculty in the program’s history. Our students have benefited tremendously from his skilled leadership and academic expertise.”

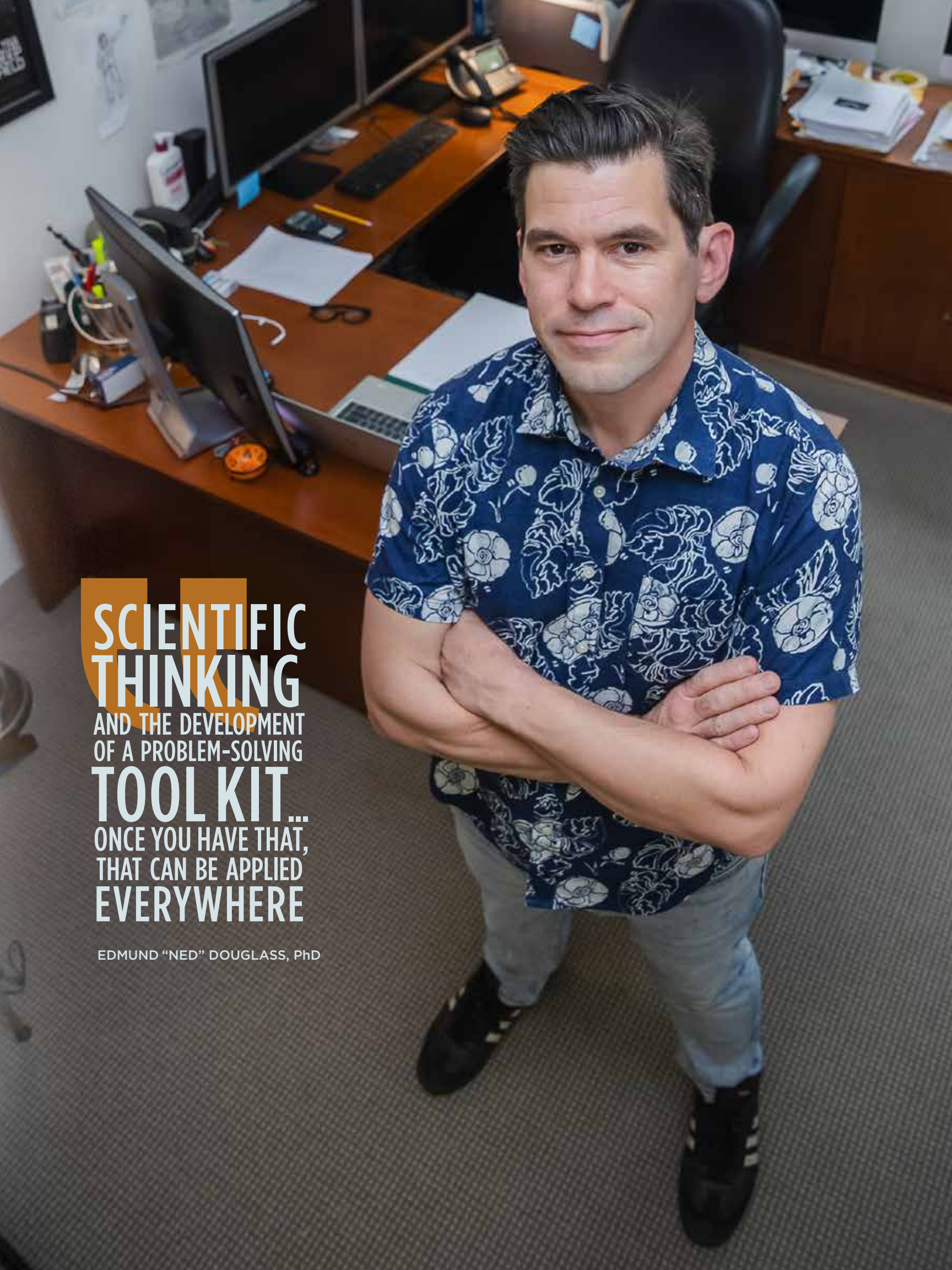
“FSC’s new STS curriculum is built around scientific thinking and the development of a problem-solving tool kit,” said Douglass. “Whether you are in a laboratory, in the midst of a revolution, or working through more mundane, unstructured problems encountered on the job, it is extremely useful to be able to approach such challenges from a scientific perspective, with a time-tested method for the acquisition of reliable information.”

Douglass also enjoys sharing his enthusiasm for research with his students and is passionate about teaching them to “contextualize their existence in this grander scheme.”

“I want students coming out of my classes feeling something bigger or feeling that they’re part of the consequence of 13.8 billion years of cosmic evolution. And we’re not just hidden in some corner of the universe, but we are the universe thinking, and feeling, and experiencing itself,” he said.

“Putting yourself in that frame of reference can help to allow yourself to step back from smaller things that can bring you down,” he added. “Once you have that, it can be applied everywhere outside of a physics classroom.”





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EDMUND "NED" DOUGLASS, PhD



## TAKING A “BETTY BITE” OUT OF LIFE

**Dylan Gafarian** Shares Positivity and an Unforgettable College Experience

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

American actor and comedian Betty White once said, “It’s your outlook on life that counts.”

Dylan Gafarian, EdD, Farmingdale State College’s (FSC) Research Aligned Mentorship (RAM) Program director since April 2023—and a huge Betty White fan—could not agree more. He even met Betty White once and has “one really bad, blurry photo” to prove it. Just ask his dog, Betty Bite.

Gafarian, who joined FSC’s staff in 2018, applies his positive, can-do outlook to drive powerful campus initiatives that have impacted thousands of students, such as the Summer Undergraduate Research Institute, the annual IGNITE Symposium, and specialized scholarship programs, as well as the RAM Program’s collaborative learning workshops, mentored research opportunities, and service-learning experiences.

“Our students get involved with undergraduate research as early as possible,” he said of the program, which supports students who qualify as low-income, first-generation, or from a historically minoritized community. “We also assist them holistically. We don’t just talk about grades. We want to learn more about them and their future passions and goals. They come in as first-year students, and they walk away with a more developed identity of who they want to become.”

“Dylan has been the heart and soul of RAM from the moment he began working for the program,” said Sarina Turbendian, RAM Program operations manager and academic advisement assistant. “He truly cares about the students and the work we do, and his tenacity, innovation, and creative mindset have fostered the growth of several new programs.”

Gafarian’s enthusiasm to give FSC’s students an exceptional college experience began from his own health challenges growing up in Farmingville, New York. His “pretty regular childhood” was interrupted when he became ill at just 12 years old. Missing school and sports practices, Gafarian traveled between appointments and out-of-state facilities as his doctors struggled to diagnose him.

“When I was about 13, we went to the Mayo Clinic, which is the ‘big, bad’ hospital,” said Gafarian, who

was later diagnosed with IgG4-related disease. “And as I’m getting ready to leave for the flight to come home, they say they want to run one more test. My bags are packed, I’m ready to go out the door, and they stick me with another needle. But I just wanted to get home for soccer—like a real kid. That experience put a lot of things into perspective for me.”

When Gafarian was ready to attend St. Joseph’s University to pursue his BA in journalism and new media, he vowed to make his college experience truly memorable.

“I jokingly say I’ve always had the quintessential old soul,” he said. “But I was kind of forced to grow up early. And then when I got to college, I decided, you know what? I’m going to have a great college career. And I did. I was involved in literally every club and organization. I started an internet radio station, I was a part of the campus activities board and the student government. I was there all the time and I got more free t-shirts than I knew what to do with.”

In fact, Gafarian loved college so much he wanted to find any way to stay in higher education. This would lead him to receive an almost “braggadocious” number of degrees, including an MS in creativity and change leadership from Buffalo State College, an MEd in higher education leadership and policy studies from Hofstra University, a graduate certificate in multicultural education from the State University of New York at New Paltz, and ultimately an EdD in educational and policy leadership from Hofstra University.

Today, Gafarian, who was recently voted “most likely to tell dad jokes” by his team, is elated to continually share his fondness for higher education with FSC’s students.

“I love it. I really do love what we get to do here,” said Gafarian. “I wanted to build a community, build the friendships of the students, build their interest in research and critical thinking. I want them to walk away with what I walked away with in college. And they’re walking away with even more experience than I ever had. They’re doing amazing and they make me proud every day.”



I REALLY DO  
**LOVE**  
WHAT WE GET  
TO DO HERE.

DYLAN GAFARIAN, EdD







# GREENLEY GOES GOLD

## Greenley Library Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

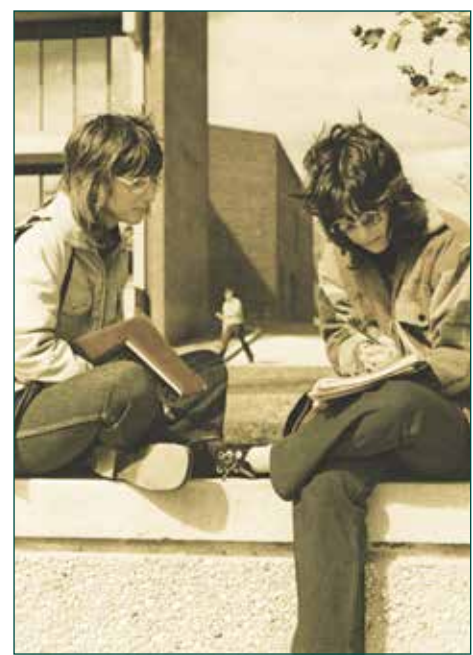
BY KAREN V. CONTINO

This past year, Farmingdale State College's (FSC) Greenley Library celebrated its golden anniversary. Fifty years ago, the four-floor brick-faced building that saliently stands between Hale Hall and Bunche Plaza officially opened its doors to the FSC campus community. Richard Nixon was U.S. president and Charles W. Laffin, Jr. was FSC president, a gallon of gas cost 40 cents, "Midnight Train to Georgia" by Gladys Knight & the Pips was *Billboard's* number one song, and the handheld cordless phone, which weighed over two pounds, had just been invented.

Before its opening, FSC's library had many locations over the years, including Thompson Hall and Whitman Hall, where it occupied both floors of the southwest wing. "When the library moved, the staff brought books in shelf-list order from Whitman to Greenley on carts," said Karen Gelles, who has been FSC's library director since 2017.

Greenley Library is named after Thomas D. Greenley, Sr. (December 14, 1905–September 1, 1971), a painter, printmaker, muralist, and illustrator,

who was a beloved member of FSC's faculty for over two decades. Greenley was a devoted member of FSC's Library Committee and worked to improve its art collection. Several of his works can still be viewed on campus, including a large painting in Delores Quintyne Hall.



"It is fitting that the cultural and intellectual center of our campus is named to honor an artist and scholar," noted a former colleague of Greenley.

Over the last half-century, Greenley Library has seen many upgrades and improvements, including a major building-wide renovation completed in early 2015.

"In the pre-internet era the reference books were much more heavily used and deserved a prime







## “CHECK OUT” THESE GREENLEY LIBRARY FACTS:

- The most frequently checked out items include laptops, bones, muscles, and teeth.
- Greenley Library has housed many things over the past 50 years, including a production studio used for courses broadcast on local television.
- A large-format poster printer is available to students and staff at affordable rates.
- Special collections include many items from the 1800s, and the College Archives house thousands of photographs from FSC’s early history.

location, but the stacks blocked the beautiful windows,” said Gelles. “By moving our reference collection to the edges of the floor we opened up the space, making the entire main level much brighter and more inviting. The usage of the facility has exploded since then, with students filling every table and seating area during our peak hours,” she added.

Today, Greenley Library embraces an “information commons” model housing over 70,000 books and multiple student support centers, programs, and departments, including FSC’s Center for Academic Success & Tutoring (CAST), Research Aligned Mentorship (RAM) Program, and Nexus Center for Applied Learning & Career Development. It also offers an enormous

collection of digital resources including eBooks, eJournals, and videos. “Like most libraries, Greenley’s collections have moved increasingly toward digital resources in the past 25 years,” said Gelles.

But throughout its long history, Greenley Library’s most valuable resource has been its staff. “The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building is a fun time to celebrate the facility, but without the staff and the services they provide, it’s just a building,” she said. “Greenley has always been a place students could go to find information or to get help from library staff, and that tradition continues.”







## WITH HONORS

### Breakout Program to Begin Third Successful Year

BY KAREN V. CONTINO

In fall 2022, Farmingdale State College's (FSC) Honors Program welcomed its first cohort of 20 students from each of FSC's four schools. Now entering its third year with an expected cohort triple that size, there is a lot to celebrate about this program focused on academic excellence and civic engagement.

"The Honors Program deepens Farmingdale State College's dedication to student success," said Program Director Katelynn DeLuca, PhD, assistant professor of English and composition, who helped develop the program. "With the guidance of the Honors Faculty Council, the students are driven, curious, intelligent, and inspiring."

"This outstanding FSC program offers our students a dynamic and enriched college experience, and we look forward to its continued success," said Laura Joseph, EdD, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. "Enrollment projections for this coming fall semester will bring our program to 60 participants, with a goal of 80 by 2025."

"Provost Joseph's vision for a unique Farmingdale Honors Program is coming into sharp focus," said Christopher Malone, PhD, associate provost. "The Honors Program had a breakout year. Under Dr. DeLuca's leadership, we have added rigorous and exciting new honors courses and held dozens of extracurricular events, and students received grant funding to build community engagement projects outside of campus."

The Honors Program is funded entirely with \$2.5 million in philanthropic support from alumni Murray Pasternack, '60, and Frank Geremia, '62, the Broad Hollow BioScience Park, and the Farmingdale College Foundation. Incoming first-year students in any major can apply to the

program, which offers enhanced experiences including academic counseling and advisement, service and leadership opportunities, lectures, networking events, and mentored research.

"The Honors Program creates a community where all academic disciplines come together, and it comes with a lot of benefits," said Maria Naeem, '26, a security systems major who joined the program in 2022. "You get so many different perspectives, and you can see how different majors connect."

Additionally, FSC's program recently joined the Northeast Regional Honors Council and the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) to connect students to a broader honors community. Last November, nine honors students attended the NCHC national conference, where they collaborated with students and faculty from across the country. More conference trips are planned for this coming year.

Overall, the program's activities help develop well-rounded students who become invaluable in the Long Island workforce and create meaningful civic relationships.

"I definitely know that this experience in the program has prepared me for my future," said Kayli Villalta, '25, an applied psychology major. "The guidance I receive is a tremendous strength I will have because the entire honors board has shaped me as a student and a member of the community. I have participated in seminars that will shape my research and push me to think beyond academia, because as honor students we are the leaders of tomorrow. I look forward to pursuing my higher education through a much brighter lens and applying my education in the real world."



# YOUR LEGACY IS THEIR FUTURE

## FARMINGDALE'S PLANNED GIVING

“Some dreams come to us later in life. Mine did, and I want to encourage others like me to know that there are people who believe in them and want to help them make their dreams a reality.”

**LINDA BULLOSS, '83**



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**.









# DESIGNING, BUILDING, TESTING, LEARNING

Lupton's Labs Spark Innovation

BY CHRIS MAIO

Home to Farmingdale State College's (FSC) School of Engineering Technology, Lupton Hall is the largest academic building on campus. An intricate maze of classrooms, faculty offices, and laboratories, Lupton serves the School's 2,400 students and approximately 78 full-time faculty and staff. More than 8,500 students have graduated from FSC's School of Engineering Technology since its inception.

The focus of engineering technology education is the implementation of technical innovations and solutions. The building's 22 labs serve as innovation hubs within the School and facilitate the technology requirements for approximately 100 courses.

Within Farmingdale laboratory spaces, learners validate theories and utilize state-of-the-art monitors, testing equipment, robots, and a wide variety of machinery to develop a solid foundation in the applications of technical concepts. The School dedicates extensive space to these applied learning spaces, regularly upgrading the technologies with input from local employers to ensure the labs remain contemporary and relevant.

"Lectures and labs go hand in hand," said Bahar Zoghi, PhD, assistant dean in the School of Engineering Technology and acting chair of the Civil Engineering Technology Department. "We lecture and conduct experiments in the same space, so our lab rooms are designed to serve as teaching spaces as well. Our labs are maintained the same way we would maintain a classroom or lecture hall, to ensure a seamless experience for our students."

A visit to Lupton's labs reveals loft-like spaces, many with sprawling windows and skylights, creating an ideal environment where students, faculty, and the instruction support team can work and learn. Since they double as lecture and experiment spaces, the labs are designed to offer maximum flexibility for the professor to teach in a way that is ideal for the specific topic. For example, equipment is often housed along the outer walls of the lab, with movable tables and chairs in the center of the room to facilitate engaging discussion, said Zoghi. The criteria of the accreditation body, ABET, specify that programs must offer learning spaces that are "available, accessible, and systematically maintained and upgraded." Laboratory spaces are meticulously organized, cleaned, and maintained to foster student learning and to promote a safe environment.



DESIGNING, BUILDING, TESTING, LEARNING  
LUPTON: A HUB FOR

# INNOVATION

Following are highlights of seven of the 22 labs in Lupton Hall:



LUPTON 124A

## THE MURRAY PASTERNAK '60 LABORATORY FOR RADIO FREQUENCY (RF) AND MICROWAVE TECHNOLOGY

The newest lab in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology Department was established in 2023 with a generous donation from a highly successful alumnus, Murray Pasternack, '60. This state-of-the-art lab comprises industry-leading equipment, including vector network analyzers, spectrum analyzers, and RF signal generators. It provides students with unique applied learning opportunities in this rapidly growing field. The lab is used in several courses, capstone projects, and student-faculty research and serves as an essential tool for recruiting outstanding students and faculty.



LUPTON 275

## ARCHITECTURAL/CONSTRUCTION DESIGN STUDIOS

Supporting the architectural engineering technology and construction management engineering technology project courses, this dedicated space provides students with the technical resources and environment necessary for their coursework and projects. Students use workspaces and various technologies and software to undertake projects ranging from the design of residential and non-residential buildings to the creation of comprehensive studio projects that blend multiple architectural and engineering concepts. The space also provides a platform for students to exhibit their work, enabling peer, faculty, and external review.



LUPTON 132

## CLEAN LAB, HYDRAULICS, AND STRUCTURES

The center of FSC's Civil Engineering Technology Program, this lab houses some of the core theory and lab courses in the program, such as statics, elements of strengths of materials, hydraulics, structures, and the capstone project. The lab specializes in applied learning through the use of advanced material testing equipment and hydraulic/hydrology testing equipment so students can gain a deeper understanding of the course material.





LUPTON 137

### MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION LAB

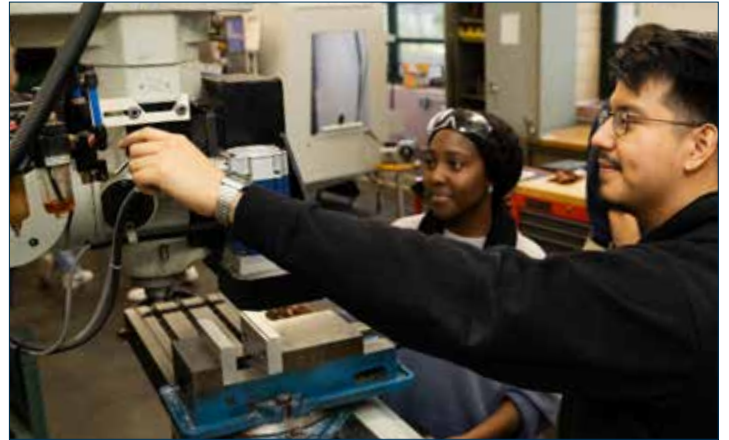
This lab specializes in geotechnical courses in the Civil Engineering Technology and Construction Management Departments, such as soil foundations, earth structures, and civil engineering materials. These courses teach students how to analyze the mechanical properties of soils, aggregates, asphalt, and concrete through hands-on experiments.



LUPTON 181

### MANUFACTURING LAB/MACHINE SHOP

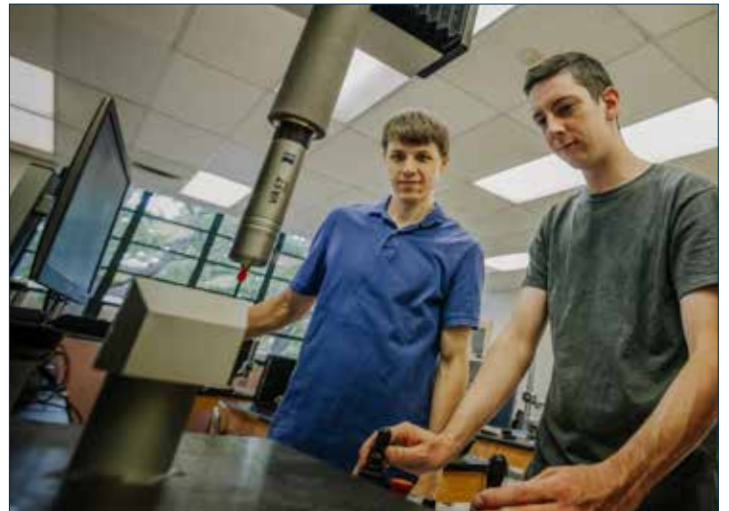
The Mechanical Engineering Technology Department's machine shop is home to more than 35 manufacturing machines, eight computer numerically controlled machine simulators, and 16 computer stations. This space hosts lecture and lab sections of manufacturing processes and advanced manufacturing processes, enabling seamless integration of theoretical knowledge with real-world practice. After mastering foundational concepts, students create G-code programs from their computer-aided design (CAD) drawings to help bring their designs to life.



LUPTON 184

### QUALITY CONTROL LAB

In the Mechanical Engineering Technology Department's quality control lab, students in quality control and statistical quality control courses discover the intricacies of part inspection and delve into metrology using an extensive array of measuring equipment. From digital micrometers and calipers to sophisticated coordinate-measuring machines, students have the tools to examine various parts and geometries with meticulous attention to detail. Covering topics ranging from precision gauge blocks to geometric dimensioning and tolerancing, students gain practical experience in calibration, inspection methodologies, and statistical quality control.



LUPTON 124B

### ROBOTICS LAB

Within the Mechanical Engineering Technology (MET) Department's robotics lab, students hone their skills in programming robots for industrial applications. With a combination of educational and industrial collaborative robots, students delve into robot programming, including motion planning, object measurement, speed control, sorting algorithms, and peripheral device control. The lab hosts lectures and labs for robotics, as well as various other MET courses covering computer-aided design (CAD) software, stress analysis simulations, and automation technologies.







## INSPIRING THE FSC COMMUNITY

FSC Welcomes Motivating High-Profile Guest Speakers

BY NICOLE MILLER

### ELI MANNING

Elite quarterback Eli Manning came to campus to talk to the FSC community about leadership, mental preparation, and philanthropy.

“I think leadership is a position that is earned, it’s not something that is given to you,” said Manning. The two-time Super Bowl champion and MVP sat down with FSC President John Nader as part of FSC’s Homecoming events to talk to a packed gymnasium of students, faculty, staff, and die-hard New York Giants fans.

Manning told the audience, “I just encourage you; little things can make a big difference.” Manning supports several organizations, such as Tackle Kids Cancer with the Hackensack University Medical Center, the March of Dimes, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, the American Red Cross, and the Robin Hood Foundation, where he most recently helped with the organization’s massive fundraising efforts for COVID-19.

When asked about mental preparation, Manning quoted previous New York Giant Head Coach Tom Coughlin, stating, “He believed that you didn’t win football games on Sunday. You won football games Monday through Saturday—in your work, in your practice, in your field of study,” a message FSC students can relate to.

Manning signed off with a last bit of advice for the audience. As a leader, when things go bad, “You’ve got to be willing to take the blame and put it on your shoulders. I think it’s just earning that respect from your teammates. Once you’ve done that, you can be a leader.”

### GIANCARLO ESPOSITO

Celebrated television, film, and stage actor, director, and producer Giancarlo Esposito was welcomed to campus in February as part of FSC’s Black History Month celebration. “FSC concluded its celebration of Black History Month in stellar fashion,” said Frank Rampello, FSC student advocate. “Attendees walked away with a few life lessons, fun insider tales from behind the camera, and a fresh outlook on building a more inclusive perspective.”

Esposito, who starred in hit television shows such as *Breaking Bad*, *Better Call Saul*, and *The Mandalorian*, offered this advice to the standing-room-only crowd: “All you have to do is show up with all of your being, be present, listen, be a collaborator, take criticism. Don’t take it personally. It may feel that way, but don’t take it personally. Enlist collaborators, enlist all the help you need to get where you know you belong. Create your intention every day that you live, and all will come to you.”

Esposito’s message about being proud of your heritage and embracing your culture was heard all over campus. Audience members left the event feeling empowered. He ended with one final piece of advice: “If, in your life, you don’t feel this level of passion that’s being exhibited to you tonight, if you don’t feel a kernel of that passion in your own life, then find a way to connect with it.”



# REDEFINING ENROLLMENT

Rohan Howell Brings More Than 20 Years of Experience to FSC

BY CHRIS MAIO

In January 2024, Farmingdale State College (FSC) welcomed Rohan Howell as its inaugural vice president for enrollment management following a national search. As a member of the President's Cabinet, Howell is charged with redefining enrollment management at FSC.

Howell provides strategic direction for the development and implementation of data-informed strategic enrollment plans, reflecting higher education trends and campus goals, with particular focus on market analysis and positioning. He has ambitious plans to optimize recruitment efforts through targeted outreach, leveraging technology for streamlined processes to deliver the highest level of customer service at every stage in the admissions funnel.

With oversight of the Offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, Transfer Services, and International Education and Programs, Howell aims to foster a culture of collaboration and unity within the division of enrollment management, drawing on the strengths of FSC's established teams. He will implement initiatives that are aligned with the FSC mission and Eight for '28 strategic plan. Enrollment and retention go hand in hand, so Howell will work closely with the Provost's Office to help shape and support student retention while growing enrollment. He will also identify opportunities to build enrollment in new and low-enrolled programs, while bolstering FSC's strong existing programs.

"FSC has long been a leader in student enrollment in the State University of New York (SUNY) system. Rohan will work to further enhance our growth in enrollment, collaborating with campus departments to recruit new student populations from Long Island and across New York State," said FSC President John S. Nader, PhD. "I am confident his thoughtful and innovative approach will raise FSC's profile among diverse student populations and new markets. We are excited to have him on board."

Howell brings a wealth of experience as a proven leader in enrollment strategies at public and private institutions, including several in the SUNY system. He most recently served as dean of admissions at SUNY Maritime College beginning in 2016. In this role he was responsible for developing and implementing their enrollment plan, overseeing undergraduate and graduate admissions, scholarships, and programs that expand access to higher education for students from diverse and underserved backgrounds.

His earlier experience includes appointments as director of undergraduate admissions at William Paterson University; director of admissions, recruitment, and retention at SUNY Orange; and senior associate director of admissions at Montclair State University. He served as acting dean of admissions and assistant dean of admissions at Stony Brook Southampton, where he launched the Office of Undergraduate Admissions from inception, promoting the new Southampton campus and its unique programs.

Howell received an MBA in general management, a BS in airway science management, and a Post-Master's Certificate in total quality management, all from Dowling College.







## DRIVING OUR COMMUNITIES FORWARD

Campus Food Pantry Expands With Support From SUNY and Local Partners

BY CHRIS MAIO

To see true Farmingdale State College (FSC) service at work, stop by Greenley Library 114 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. It's a small space with a big heart and a growing capacity to help and support those in need. From a visitor who shared it was either textbooks or groceries that week, to a resident student picking up dorm room sundries, the FSC Food Pantry is open to all students, faculty, and staff with a valid FSC ID card.

"As a biology professor, in my interactions with students I hear about their struggles and the financial stressors in their lives," said Carly Tribull, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Biology, who championed the Food Pantry and got the initiative off the ground. "Our goal was to help relieve some of that stress where we can, enabling them to focus on their studies and helping to set them on a good path. We want this to resonate throughout the entire campus community."

The FSC Food Pantry is an on-campus resource for free, healthy food selections and a judgment-free place for community members in need of assistance. It served approximately 210 unique patrons in its first year, many of whom were repeat visitors. Based on the success of the program and established need, FSC secured an additional \$50K in funding from the State University of New York (SUNY) to purchase food and to staff the Food Pantry with a full-time employee, Shalini Outram, PhD, adjunct professor in biology and a Food Pantry volunteer. In addition, SUNY's Office of Military and Veterans Affairs provided the funding for a new refrigerator, and in fall 2023 the Food Pantry was able to offer fresh items such as milk, eggs, butter, fruit, and vegetables. The recently opened FSC Giving Garden, run by the FSC Office of Sustainability, harvested, washed, and prepped more than 200 pounds of organic produce that has helped stock the Food Pantry during harvest season. These enhancements helped the Food Pantry serve even more visitors, with 447 unique patrons in fall 2023 alone.

Opened in spring 2022, the Food Pantry operated in a limited capacity to establish the need and demonstrate viability for the program. During that first semester, users submitted an online form to order items and Food Pantry volunteers shopped

per order and packed bags for user pickup. FSC partnered with Auxiliary Service Corporation to provide funding, and Island Harvest joined in fall 2023, donating food and supplies. The Food Pantry relocated to a new, larger space in Greenley Library, which enabled users to visit the pantry and select items in a more traditional "shopping" model. In addition to funding and partnerships, organizations on campus, including FSC's Nursing and Dental Hygiene Departments and several Greek societies, have donated funds, food, and toiletries.

The Food Pantry is now managed by Outram and the FSC Food Pantry Task Force, with a crew of 25 faculty, staff, and student volunteers. Volunteers work one-hour shifts weekly, assisting visitors, unpacking food, and stocking shelves.

"We are so grateful for our partners and for the generosity of SUNY and their support of this important initiative," said Greg O'Connor, executive vice president and chief financial officer. "The commitment of our faculty, staff, and students who volunteer their time to the Food Pantry represents just one of the many ways in which our campus community comes together to support each other in times of need."

### FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER

Food insecurity is a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. It is important to note that although hunger and food insecurity are closely related, they are two distinct concepts. Hunger refers to a personal, physical sensation of discomfort, while food insecurity refers to a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level.

Additional resources for members of the FSC community who require more long-term assistance include:

- FSC Health and Wellness Center
- The INN in Hempstead
- St. Killian's Food Pantry (for local Farmingdale residents)





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# HEARTBEATS OF SUPPORT



## Sponsor a Personalized Stethoscope

The stethoscope is a prized possession and iconic symbol of one of the most powerful industries in the world—nursing.

The FSC Alumni Association welcomes future nurses by presenting each incoming nursing student with their very first personalized stethoscope, gifted to them by an alumnus, parent, colleague, or friend of the College, *like you*. Your gift of \$175 will sponsor the purchase of one 3M™ Littmann® Classic III™ stethoscope for a first-year student.

Show first-year nursing students that the circle of alumni support surrounding them is strong and that we welcome them into our FSC nursing family.

To learn more about the stethoscope program, visit [farmingdale.edu/stethoscope](https://farmingdale.edu/stethoscope).



The Farmingdale Alumni Association is an independent, non-profit organization that cultivates mutually beneficial relationships between Farmingdale State College and a growing community of 100,000 alumni. The Association provides programs and services, facilitates communication with alumni, and seeks to strengthen alumni bonds of friendship, scholarship, and community.

**Mable Philipose, '24**  
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Contact the Farmingdale State College Alumni Office at 934-420-5218 or email [alumni@farmingdale.edu](mailto:alumni@farmingdale.edu).





## 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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Gregory W. O'Connor, MBA, *Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer*

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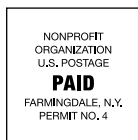
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## THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT!

*Thank you, John and Kathy.  
You have left a positive  
and enduring mark on  
the hearts of so many, and  
your leadership will always  
be a point of pride at  
Farmingdale State College.*

