

The Focus

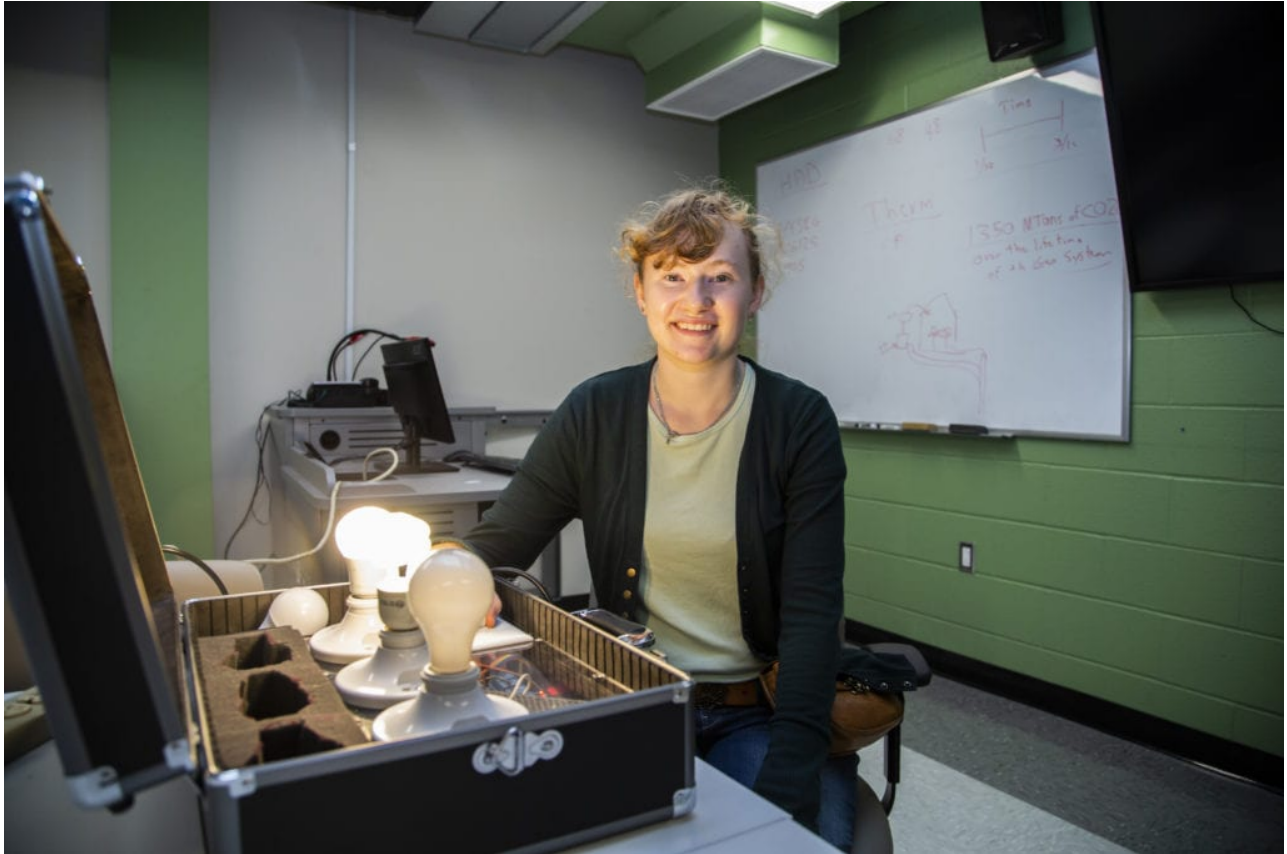
faculty / staff e-newsletter

Posts published from September 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019, from news.sunybroome.edu/focus.

STEM Star: Diana accelerates her engineering future

September 24, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



Diana Kelly in SUNY Broome's Sustainability Sandbox lab.

Students take time off from college for various reasons, ranging from personal challenges to opportunities for work or travel.

Diana Kelly took a year off to intern at a particle accelerator, a massive machine that uses electromagnetic fields to move charged particles – think protons and electrons – at velocities close to the speed of light. Perhaps best known for their role in particle physics research, accelerators are also used in medicine, industry and even national security.

A Danby native, Diana first visited Cornell University's Wilson Synchrotron Laboratory on an Ithaca High School field trip.

"I went and I loved it, and I was completely blown away. It was fascinating how they used engineering and science to do something that powerful," she remembered.

She arranged another tour, and ran into a family friend who connected her with the Synchrotron staff. A formal interview led to a weeklong volunteer opportunity and a summer internship. She ended up working for two years at Cornell University's Wilson Synchrotron Laboratory, an incredible opportunity for the SUNY Broome Engineering Science major.

She learned AutoCAD, audited courses at Cornell – as the only undergraduate in accelerator physics – and collaborated with professors and engineers on engineering design.

“It was a phenomenal opportunity and I learned so much,” she said. “Not only was I a minion for the engineers, I was doing full-fledged engineering design work.”

In fact, much of that work would have otherwise been done by a full-fledged engineer, including projects that she ran as the only non-physicist, she pointed out.

While accelerators and particle physics expand our future knowledge and technology, Diana's interests originally took her in the other direction: archaeology. A member of the New York State Archaeological Association since the age of 14, her passion shifted when she took a Project Lead the Way course in engineering design in high school.

“I fell in love with it, the combination of art and science. I loved Leonardo da Vinci as a kid, and I found that I loved doing technical drawings,” she said.

And, as unlikely as it seems, there is a thematic connection between her two interests. “Archaeology is reverse-engineering the past. With engineering, you take the scientific method a step further and see how you can do something new with what you have learned,” she explained.

[Learn more about Engineering Science at SUNY Broome.](#)



‘A welcoming environment’

Diana initially attended York College of Pennsylvania, but health issues prompted her to return home. The opportunity at the Synchrotron followed, but soon she needed a path to complete her education.

Because she has severe food allergies and must carry an EpiPen, residential colleges are risky for Diana, and commuting from her Candor home is the best option. Welcoming to commuter students, SUNY Broome also offers a path to Binghamton University, where she plans to transfer after graduating in May 2020.

Still, she didn’t know what to expect at her new school and initially felt nervous – a feeling that soon abated.

“I found such a wonderful, welcoming environment. The professors here are so helpful! I really like it here and have learned a lot,” she said. “It’s different from a four-year school, and the way people interact with it; more student treat going here like a job. It made it easier to be a commuter student here.”

She enjoyed the class in sustainability she took with Engineering Science Professor Robert Lofthouse and her physics class with Professor Glenn Modrak, as well as Calculus II with Professor Tom Reid. “He was so good at explaining calculus, how it works and why it works the way it does,” she said.

The engineering science orientation was invaluable, too, including speakers that linked students with local engineering firms – connections that may prove valuable as they embark on their careers.

In addition to preparing her academically, SUNY Broome offered multiple opportunities for Diana to apply her skills and knowledge in the field, and even educate the larger community. She demonstrated green technologies during the [Clean Energy Open House](#) last semester, [joined her fellow Hornets in presenting research at the Chancellor’s Showcase in Albany](#), and [chatted with SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson herself](#) during her first visit to campus in Fall 2018. During the summer, she interned at AMETEK Aerospace, working with engineering documents.

Outside of the classroom, she is a member of the Engineering Science Club and Hiking Club, trekking out to the Adirondacks with the latter.

Long-term, Diana plans to become a mechanical engineer. Her horizons are open: perhaps aerospace, or sustainability, or particle acceleration.

“I like research, design, the entire process,” she said.



Diana Kelly in SUNY Broome's Sustainability Sandbox lab.

Public service: Legislature honors Dr. Battisti

September 20, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



Dr. Francis Battisti and his wife Helen with the Broome County Legislature

When the Broome County Legislature recognizes an individual, the chair typically reads a page or so of that person's accomplishments.

For Dr. Francis Battisti – SUNY Broome alumnus, dedicated professor and, most recently, the college's executive vice president and chief academic officer – the accolades ran to multiple pages. Legislature Chairman Daniel J. Reynolds gladly read them all at the governing body's Sept. 19 meeting.

"He's had one of the most dedicated careers in Broome County's history," Reynolds said. "He's been a fantastic mentor to many people."

Dr. Battisti has been involved with higher education and with SUNY Broome for 50 years, and began his career as one of the college's first counselors. [Read more about Dr. Battisti and his SUNY Broome legacy here.](#)

While he left his administrative position over the summer, he prefers that you not call it retirement. A motivational speaker and consultant focused on individual, organizational and community transformation, he plans to continue this work around the country, as well as spend time with his wife, sons and seven grandchildren.

During the Sept. 19 meeting, Dr. Battisti not only received a framed and signed resolution from all of the county legislatures, but also a standing ovation.

More than 70 years ago, a different Broome County Legislature approved a bill establishing the New York State Institute of Applied Arts & Sciences at Binghamton – one of only five in the state, and a forerunner of the community college system. The initial bill covered only five years – “an experimental amount of time,” Dr. Battisti explained.

At the time, leaders didn’t assume that the college would be successful. In fact, the original buildings on the Front Street campus were built in such a way that they could be repurposed for industrial use, Dr. Battisti said.

It soon became apparent, however, that the college now known as SUNY Broome was a fantastic success, growing from only 300 students in its initial class to more than 7,000 today. Dedicated faculty and staff – such as Dr. Battisti – play a role in that success.

“You’re definitely the example of what public service is all about,” Reynolds said.

[SUNY Broome will celebrate Dr. Battisti’s career with an Oct. 10 dinner and roast! Click here to learn more.](#)

Persistence personified: Dottie returns to SUNY Broome to finish her Accounting degree

September 16, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



When it comes to earning a degree, the journey is different for everyone – hastened by urgency or hindered by circumstances, accomplished at a swift run or a winding stroll.

For Dottie Curyto, that journey took more than 40 years – juggling the joys and obligations of family and career along the way.

She started at Broome Community College – as the name was then – back in 1978. Soon after, she met her husband, tied the knot in January 1981 and began working full-time.

“Life just happened,” she remembered. “We only had one car and my husband is a union carpenter, so he needed it. I tried going at night, but then I had a baby in 1983. It kind of got away from me.”

After spending two years at BlueCross BlueShield, she started at Security Mutual in 1981 and stayed for 37 years, mostly in the disability claims area. Supervisors changed through the years and, recently, so did her employer: Security Mutual sold the division, and Dottie found herself under new management.

The changes inspired her to return to SUNY Broome in 2016 and finish that accounting degree she had long set aside. Of course, there have been some changes to the enrollment process since 1978.

“They had to get my records off the microfiche,” she remembered.

[Learn about our Accounting degree program.](#)

Life, of course, has a habit of intervening. Due to some health challenges along the way, she finished in three years rather than two, earning her Accounting degree in May 2019.

During her first semester back, she found herself in a course called “The Freshman Experience” that was initially daunting, but she forged connections with students of all ages. “I met some nice gals and guys in the class,” she said.

She ended up retaking the accounting courses from her initial go at college, and earned higher grades the second time around. One early obstacle: Learning to navigate the new technologies that are now part of so many courses. Dottie’s son and daughter helped her conquer the computer, and she even took some accounting classes online; she found that she enjoyed the flexibility that online classes offer.

“It was a kind of scary at first, but after you do it, it’s not really that hard,” she reflected. “It’s really convenient. You can go home, log onto your computer and do your work.”

She found her professors to be helpful, accessible guides along her path. Favorite professors included Patrick O’Bryan in accounting, Gian Roma in business and Martin Guzzi, also the college’s director of enrollment services, who taught microeconomics and the freshman experience.

A course in Excel spreadsheets proved beneficial to her current job, and a course in forensics sparked her interest. Challenging courses not only taught the subject matter at hand, but inspired her confidence.

“Statistics really worked my brain, but I’m proud! My nephew got a C and I got a B,” she said.

She’s unsure what future path she will take, but having a college degree gives her additional options.

“There are a lot of things to think about,” she said.

[Are you an older adult thinking about enrolling in college? SUNY Broome is for you! Click here to learn more about our resources for older adults.](#)

In the Community: Professor Bacon to appear in ‘First Ladies’

September 16, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



SUNY Broome Theater Director Katherine Bacon will appear as Lady Bird Johnson in an upcoming production of *First Ladies* by local playwright/producer Judith Present at 2 p.m. Sept. 22 in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

First Ladies has been performed at museums, historical societies and small theaters throughout the region for several years. This performance is at Scranton's Century Club as a fundraiser; the club is located at 612 Jefferson Ave. Refreshments will be served. Tickets are \$15 and reservations may be made by calling (570) 342-0204.

First Ladies gives presidents' wives a chance to tell their story. Dolly Madison, Mary Lincoln, Mamie Eisenhower, Lady Bird Johnson and Nancy Reagan are the featured wives. First ladies are never voted for nor do they get paid, yet without them what would our presidents have done? The "ladies" give an honest assessment of who they are and how they affected their husband's presidencies. The other actresses appearing in the show are Maryann Johnson, Lisa Dutcher, Bonnie DeForest and Dawn Gould.

SUNY Broome lends a hand during the Day of Caring

September 13, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



SUNY Broome lent a hand during the United Way's annual Day of Caring.

Executive Director of Housing Amy Zieziula, Residence Directors Alexandria Donkor and Pamela Alvarez, Ellie Hogg of Housing and student Bre'Anna McQueen volunteered at Family Planning of South Central New York, where they assembled new patient information packets, as well as free menstrual and condom packets that are used for various tabling events.

Holding down the afternoon shift were Lauren Bunnell of Business & Professional Studies, Melissa Martin of Counseling, Maureen Breck of Academic Affairs, Leslie Reid of Academic Services, Jeanie Kumpon of the Applied Learning & Career Center, Kate Taylor of Advising and Val Carnegie of the Bachelor Partnership Center.



The Legacy: Dr. Battisti leaves a lasting impact on the college he loves

September 12, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer Francis Battisti during Commencement

The very first time Francis Battisti set foot on campus involved, of all things, a cow's eye.

It was eighth grade and the future Dr. Battisti was, he admitted, a somewhat indifferent student. Hoping to spark his interest, his teachers in the Union-Endicott had him dissect a cow's eye for a science competition. He qualified for regionals at Broome Technical Community College.

"I still remember walking into the main gym and thinking I was at Harvard," he said. "The place was amazing to me."

By its various names – Broome Tech, BCC, and now SUNY Broome – the college continued to inspire and motivate Dr. Battisti for more than 50 years.

He is now embarking on a new chapter in his life and career. While he handed the reins to the new Vice President for Academic Affairs – Dr. Penny Haynes, another SUNY Broome alumna — he would prefer that you didn't call it retirement.

"I don't view this next step as a retirement. I'm going to work on a book about retiring retirement," he said with a smile. "I'm leaving the college, but there's more I have to do."

Outside the college, he is a motivational speaker and consultant focused on individual, organizational and

community transformation. He plans to continue this work around the country, as well as spend time with his wife, sons and seven grandchildren.

And, of course, he'll give back. When he does consulting work – say, strategic planning for an organization, which was on the docket for August – he donates his services the next day to another group, one that can't afford his services.

“My philosophy is strength-based servant leadership, to bring the best out of ourselves and use our strengths to overcome obstacles,” he explained. “I give and I receive.”

SUNY Broome has many dedicated faculty and staff, but few will likely exceed Dr. Battisti's 49 years of dedication to the college and its students, reflected SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm.

“One thing we know for sure from his indomitable, energetic character is that he will remain as busy as ever with his growing family, now with grandchildren, and getting back to his own consulting and speaking business. God bless him going forward in his next chapter of life,” said Dr. Drumm.

[**SUNY Broome will celebrate Dr. Battisti's career with an Oct. 10 dinner and roast! Click here to learn more.**](#)



Dr. Battisti, Dr. Ross and Stinger during Move-In Day

Counselor, Professor, VP

Education was a luxury not afforded to Dr. Battisti's own parents, who ran a busy Endicott restaurant. His father had left Italy at the age of 14, and his mother dropped out of school to take care of her family.

In high school, Francis became class president, although his plans for his post-graduation future were somewhat hazy. The nation was in the throes of the Vietnam War, which presented him with a stark choice:

He could enlist, work in his family's restaurant or enroll at Broome.

He chose Broome.

He entered the Business Technology program in 1966, graduated in 1968, and then transferred to SUNY Albany to complete his bachelor's degree in business administration, with an emphasis on finance. But a career in finance didn't appeal, and he found himself intrigued by a 36-credit program in counseling and personnel services.

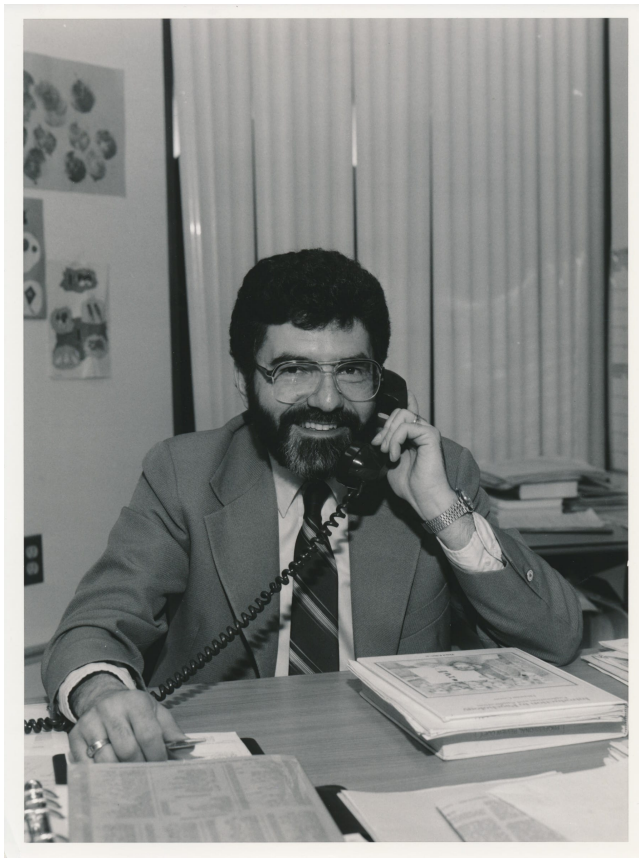
"It was all experiential. I had the greatest fun of my life," he said.

He knocked out the program in two summers. It was 1971, the same year that Broome Tech changed its name to Broome Community College – and formally adopted an open admissions policy. To aid this transition, the college hired five full-time counselors – the first on campus – to provide personal, career and educational counseling to an increasingly diverse roster of students. Francis was one of those five, hired by director Gary Smith.

He found that personal counseling drew him, and consequently earned his second master's degree in Social Work from Syracuse University in 1978. That same year, he became director of counseling services at the college. In 1981, he became dean of academic services and, in 1984, a professor in the Psychology department. He remained in the classroom until 2012, when he joined the Administration as executive vice president and chief academic officer.

Through the years, he forged lasting and meaningful relationships with many of his colleagues. Perhaps one of his most meaningful was with the late theater Professor Angelo Zuccolo. The two started their SUNY Broome careers on the same day in 1971 and became close friends, sharing a house and engaging in public speaking gigs together.

In fact, Zuccolo taught Dr. Battisti the skills he uses to this day as a speaker and consultant. The premise: The two could cadge a free meal by speaking to community groups. Angelo would speak first and connect to Francis' presentation, gently guiding him in the speakers art. The two had other adventures – bringing 30 of Angelo's theater students to Norway in 1974, for example – and Francis was the godfather to his friend's two daughters.



Dr. Battisti during his early days at SUNY Broome

Shaping the college

Look around, and you can see his impact on every aspect of SUNY Broome. Dr. Battisti – he and his wife Helen both earned their Ph.D.s from Marywood University the same year – has developed courses, offered seminars in human potential and, with professors Richard Romano and Doug Garnar, helped establish the campus childcare center.

In the 1980s, he and Professor Margherita Rossi established a grant-funded gerontology project that gave students applied learning opportunities at local nursing homes. In the 1990s, he offered an online course – one of the college’s first. Dr. Battisti, who earned both the SUNY Distinguished Professor Award and the Chancellor’s Award during his teaching career, also built synchronous courses that linked students in SUNY Broome classes to other remote locations.

During his 50-year career, he worked for every president in the college’s history – including the founding president, Cecil Tyrrell. While he didn’t know Tyrrell personally, he found much to admire.

“He had a vision. He was one of the movers and shakers of community college. He helped create it,” he said.

Dr. Battisti – who applied for the college’s top job during the last presidential search — also finds much to admire in the college’s current president, Dr. Kevin E. Drumm. Under Dr. Drumm’s leadership, the campus has transformed dramatically – including the addition of the Natural Science Center and Student Village, the transformation of the Mechanical Building into the Calice Advanced Manufacturing Center and, now, the return to the college’s downtown roots with the new Culinary & Event Center.

“The guy he’s hiring wanted his job – that says something that he took a chance on me. We will disagree sometimes, but I felt a real ability to have a give and take,” Dr. Battisti said.

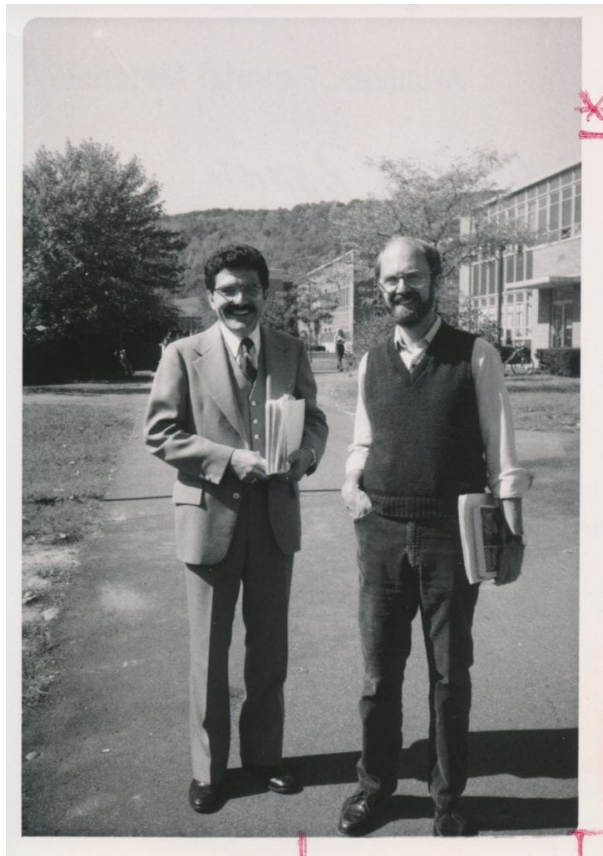
The role dearest to Dr. Battisti's heart has been as a faculty member. He approached classes as laboratory spaces – places of experiment and exploration, where students can learn not only about the subject at hand, but about themselves. He has always made an effort to connect with students outside of the classroom, too, including the Taste of Success initiative, in which he met a half-dozen students for breakfast to chat about their future plans, and how the college is – or isn't – meeting their needs.

A few years ago, Dr. Battisti was approached by another college – he won't drop names – for a presidency, but chose to stay at his alma mater. Why?

"I love our community and I think Broome more than any other organization has impacted the community. Everyone has impact, from academics to ice skating," he explained. "It's been home. I've had the ability to be creative here. I didn't have a supervisor or colleagues I didn't like. They're just good people, besides being experts in the field."

In fact, SUNY Broome has been a home to his entire family. His sister and brother attended the college, as well as his wife and three sons: Paul, Brian and Christopher. In his later years, even Dr. Battisti's father took a few courses, and his granddaughter will attend next year.

"There are connections with community, family and colleagues. It's just the connections," he reflected. "I've made every graduation except one. We're so fortunate to see the fruits of our labor. That, to me, is impactful."



The future of Broome

As the Southern Tier evolved through the decades – with the rise and then departure of massive companies such as IBM and Endicott Johnson, shifts in technology and demographics – so, too, has its community college.

Facilities, degree programs, methods of instruction – change has been a constant companion, from that

decision to adopt open admissions in Dr. Battisti's first year. He leaves the college at another such tipping point in education, when the campus community is earnestly debating its future trajectory.

The magnet programs of the future may lie in culinary arts, controlled environmental agriculture or systems engineering – or something entirely different.

“Life is evolutionary; it's like age. Whether I am aware of my age or not, I'm getting older,” he mused. “As an organization, we're changing, whether we know it or not. Can we redirect some of that change in the ways that we want?”

“Everything we have today has been based on ideas from the past,” he continued. “Let's take the best of our past to create our future.”



Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer Francis Battisti

The passing of Stephen Stalker

September 11, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



Stephen Stalker, who taught cello for many years in SUNY Broome's Music program, passed away Sept. 6 at home. He was 76.

A Missouri native, he graduated from the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. According to his obituary, he taught at the Interlochen Center for the Arts and was principal cellist of the Oklahoma Symphony before moving to Binghamton in the mid-1970s to join the string quartet residency program at Harper College.

Donations in his memory may be made to the United Way of Broome County. [Click here to read his obituary.](#)

Never forget: SUNY Broome remembers Sept. 11 with annual ceremony

September 11, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



The campus community gathers to remember 9/11 on Sept. 11, 2019.

Many of today's SUNY Broome students are too young to remember 9/11 – assuming they were even born when the tragic events unfolded 18 years ago.

Those who were teens and adults during the massive terrorist attack on American soil invariably remember what they were doing when the first airplane struck the World Trade Center. It's an event so seared into the national consciousness that only a date is required to evoke it.



SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm reflects on 9/11 as a sign language translator interprets his speech.

Broome County Executive Jason Garnar was teaching when a student rushed into the classroom with the news. “I remember coming home. I remember what it smelled like,” the SUNY Broome alumnus said during the college’s annual 9/11 remembrance ceremony.

SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm was at a meeting when word came, and participants turned on a television to watch. His wife was pregnant with their son, now a senior in high school. A colleague called her daughter in Manhattan for firsthand news and, ending the call, reflected, “We haven’t done enough.”



Law enforcement and elected officials gather for SUNY Broome's 9/11 remembrance ceremony in 2019.

"The first thing I thought about was: What was the world my son was going to grow up in?" President Drumm said, his voice thick with emotion. "Seventeen years later, now we know."

There are bright spots in that world. An Israeli friend once said that the United States could probably expect similar terrorist attacks with some regularity, Dr. Drumm said. That hasn't panned out, thanks to the efforts of law enforcement and Homeland Security in thwarting similar incidents.



Broome County Executive Jason Garnar, center, reflects on 9/11.

But the generation now reaching the age of majority has grown up in a changed world. Troops remain in Iraq and Afghanistan, the longest-running war in the nation's history, Dr. Drumm said. Terrorism has been part of the daily news cycle for as long as they can remember – often domestic in origin. Many have been exposed to lockdown drills during their K-12 years, and grow up preparing to encounter an active shooter.

“In short, they have always known a world where life is fragile,” he said. “And that’s why we gather at this flagpole every single year – even 18 years after so many lost their lives. Because 9/11 has changed us, all of us, whether we remember it or not.”



Bagpipers play “Amazing Grace” at the start of SUNY Broome’s annual 9/11 ceremony.

The ceremony did more than remember the lost. It also honored the first-responders – the firefighters, paramedics and police officers – that responded not only that fateful day, but every day since, rushing toward scenes that would break anyone’s heart to save lives and make the world a safer place.

These include the students in the [college’s Criminal Justice and Emergency Services programs](#). Nearly 90 percent of the nation’s first-responders receive some or all of their training at a community college, President Drumm noted.

After the terrorist attacks, Broome County’s first-responders headed three hours south to lend a hand in the rescue efforts at the World Trade Center, Garnar noted. In a time of tragedy, they had only one thought: How can I help?

“That day showed how humanity is: It showed how evil and low humanity can be, and how amazing humans can be,” he said.

Head Start: SUNY Broome Fast Forward courses are now tuition-free

September 10, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



Students in Richard Wheeler's Fast Forward classes at Binghamton High School.

High school students can now take college classes at SUNY Broome tuition-free, as part of the Fast Forward program.

Although Fast Forward courses have always been offered at a significant discount, SUNY Broome has eliminated tuition for the program starting in the Fall 2019 semester. The New York State Budget for 2019-2020 permitted community colleges to take this step in support of New York's Every Student Succeeds Act, which was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in January 2018.

"We are truly excited to offer this option to high school students who want to get a head start on their college career," said SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm. "We are grateful that the state's decision allows us to remove the financial barrier, and make this program available to all students who qualify."

"Fast Forward has been a popular option at our local high schools, and for good reason: They get a great start on their college education," added Chief Academic Officer and Executive Vice President Penny Haynes. "We are grateful to the dedicated instructors – both in the participating high schools and here at SUNY Broome – who continue to make this program so successful."

Fast Forward students take SUNY Broome courses at their local high school during a normal school day, and earn high school and college credit simultaneously. Courses are taught by high school teachers in cooperation with SUNY Broome's academic department chairs. The Fast Forward Program at SUNY Broome Community

College is accredited by the [National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships](#).

SUNY Broome offers Fast Forward classes at no cost to the student or the participating high school. Residency forms are still required for Fast Forward registration. Please note that Fast Forward isn't the same as Early College, in which students take classes on the SUNY Broome campus.

Students generally qualify for Fast Forward if they have earned at least 85 in the subject area of a course they wish to take, although some courses have more specific requirements.

Currently, Fast Forward offers more than 200 classes in the following high schools:

- Bainbridge-Guilford
- Binghamton
- Broome-Tioga BOCES
- Chenango Forks
- Chenango Valley
- Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES
- Delaware Academy
- Deposit
- Greene
- Harpursville
- Henninger
- Johnson City
- KIPP NYC College Prep High School
- Maine-Endwell
- Newark Valley
- Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES
- Oneonta
- Ross Corners Christian Academy
- Schenectady
- Seton Catholic Central
- Sidney
- Susquehanna Valley
- Union-Endicott
- Vestal
- Walton
- Whitney Point
- Windsor

For more information, visit www.sunybroome.edu/ff.

Photos: The SUNY Broome Balloon takes flight

September 10, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized

Up, up and away! Student Activities and Tutoring Services teamed up to bring a hot air balloon to campus — giving Hornets an eagle-eye view of their hive.

Check out photos here:



Avant-garde and cutting edge: Take a peek inside the new Culinary & Event Center

September 5, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



The new Culinary & Event Center includes many historic touches, such as these iron railings.

SUNY Broome's new Culinary Art AOS degree program has many perks, from fascinating classes to the ability to hone your skills in the field.

And, of course this one: "It's the only degree program where you can eat your homework," joked Dr. Rey Wojdat, chair of the college's Hospitality Programs, as he led the Binghamton Rotary on a tour through SUNY Broome's future Culinary & Event Center (CEC).

Once open in the Spring 2020 semester, the CEC will house the college's popular Hospitality programs, which include Culinary Arts, Event Management, Lodging and Casino Management, and Restaurant Management. An online Hospitality Management degree program is also currently in the works, Dr. Wojdat said.

Hands-on applied learning is critical in the hospitality industry, which is why a top-notch learning environment is such an asset. "We're creating critical thinkers who are willing to work," Dr. Wojdat said.



Dr. Rey Wojdat (center) leads Binghamton Rotary club members on a tour of the Culinary & Event Center.

[Learn more about SUNY Broome's new Culinary Arts program.](#)

The project was years in the making, and Dr. Wojdat credited SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm for his vision, and Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs Michael Sullivan for sewing together the complex funding for the \$20 million project.

On Sept. 3, the historic building echoed with the sounds of construction, as workers continued to transform the formerly library into a top-notch hospitality training center. Originally build in 1903 in the Classical Beaux-Arts style, the building contains many historic touches, from the plaster to the painstakingly restored woodwork, a terrazzo floor with a Grecian key pattern, and two faux fireplaces in the main-floor student lounge.



This entrance of the Culinary & Event Center will be used for special events. The day-to-day entrance is located in the addition in the rear.

“The project actually causes urban regeneration,” said Dr. Wojdat, who studied the impact of the facility for his doctoral dissertation. “And the building is magnificent. It has a history that really extends to a lot of people’s childhoods.”

Some of the features were damaged in the 18 years the building stood vacant and were recreated as a result, such as the iron balcony railings with their ornate swirling pattern. Others were new although they maintained the classic look, such as the period-style doors awaiting installation and the subway tile in a downstairs bathroom.

An airy space on the top floor will become a destination for weddings and other events, providing the facility with a revenue stream. A computer lab, student lounges and faculty offices – Dr. Wojdat chose the one with the exposed brick – are all taking shape, as well as a formal dining room and a cocktail lounge under a striking skylight. The facility will be heated by a high-efficiency computerized boiler system that can be controlled remotely, and includes an addition in the back that will function as the main entrance.



The skylight above the Culinary & Event Center's cocktail lounge.

Awaiting installation but sure to be a major highlight are the kitchen facilities and production labs. These include a beverage instruction lab, where up to 16 students at a time will learn the ins and outs of mixology on top of the line equipment. Fun fact: the mixology lab also contains the Carnegie Library's old safe, which will be turned into a historical display.

A Continuing Education kitchen will accommodate up to 14 students and is less commercial in focus, more suited to community classes, Professor Wojdat explained. There's a demonstration kitchen with tiered seating that can seat 26, as well as recording capabilities for asynchronous learning, podcasts and Youtube.

Side by side, a pair of production kitchens will offer a range of amazing amenities, including video screens that allow all students to view the instructor. These kitchens are changeable and can be adapted to a wide range of courses – in essence, doing the job of multiple kitchens at larger schools.



Aubrey Vroman from the Admissions office walks in the Culinary & Event Center's large event space.

"To me, this is amazing. No one has this kind of stuff anywhere," said Dr. Wojdat, as Binghamton Rotary members explored one of the production kitchens with an impressive window view of downtown Binghamton.

The Culinary & Event Center – and the programs they house – aim to be "avant-garde and cutting edge," he said. One example: The program will feature a class in bean-to-bar chocolate-making that is sure to be a draw.

"We're hoping people come back to enrich their skills. There's a drastic need," he said.



The addition to the Culinary & Event Center, still under construction

From the desk of the President: Commencing another year

September 3, 2019

Categories: Uncategorized



Colleagues: It's hard to believe that another summer is coming to an end so quickly with the advent of the 19-20 academic year now a week in. Thank you to our enrollment team—writ large—for all the work done over the summer by so many staff and faculty.

In keeping with our longtime theme of Continuous Improvement x Continuous Innovation, (CI)², during Fall Assembly I emphasized a more focused theme for this year: Innovation, Differentiation and Graduation.

Graduation emphasizes our continuous emphasis on student success. It will always be with us as our highest priority after academic quality.

Differentiation is a form innovation that looks for us to operate in ways that are unique to SUNY Broome and no other community college in New York. So many of the great things we do here can be “claimed” by most community colleges. Therefore, to truly differentiate Broome within our rapidly shrinking market, in order to attract more of that smaller market, we must consider noticeably different ways to operate within a world changing more rapidly than ever. Given that our world is truly changing more rapidly than ever, we can't claim that we've changed as dramatically to keep up while we have done much for sure. No longer is slow and steady improvement enough to thrive in our now hyper-competitive world of higher education. What once worked for an advanced technical economy just doesn't work well any longer within the lightening speed of a digital economy. We need look no further than the ubiquitous smartphones that drive so much of what we all do today. That technology changes roughly every 6 months or even sooner. Thus within just 18 months Samsung has gone from the S7 to the S10 smartphone and this is what our Gen Z students are accustomed to, not to mention the ease and convenience of Siri and Alexa for basic information for which we once needed an encyclopedia for quick reference. Today that information is at our fingertips 24/7 and accessible in split seconds. The distance learning universities out there have harnessed this technology and they are skimming from our student base every day with their fully flexible offerings.

I think most of you know that I formed a “Think Tank” last year so I could have more routine discussions around possible innovations with a broader group than my immediate senior staff. One of the ideas we've bandied about is the notion of a shorter class week. This would not be a national innovation by any means but if we could pull it off I think we'd be the first in New York. There certainly are other ways to differentiate Broome and this is just one we are considering. Further, to add to our need to differentiate ourselves among colleges in New York, the advent of the Excelsior Scholarship means we now need to differentiate ourselves from our senior SUNY sister colleges and universities like never before. Previously our cost differentiated the 30 SUNY community colleges from our sister “StateOps,” but now, based on appearances, that is no longer the case for families earning less than \$125k per year and that's our core family who has someone attending here. New York is the only state where this is the case, that our price point no longer appears to differentiate us from other public senior colleges and universities. In all other states where so-called (free tuition) promise programs exist, it is only among community colleges.

If you have ideas for how we can do things very differently around here, while not changing our focus on quality courses and programs (4-day class weeks would not change the time in class, for instance), please let your Shared Governance representative know or contact a member of the Think Tank to bring it to one of our meetings. Or you can just send me an email of course. Think Tank members are: Dani Berchtold, Denise Abrams, Erin Ohara-Leslie, Fermin Romero, Giovanni Scaringi, John Petkash, Larry Allen, Lisa Strahley,

Maureen Kollar, Michelle Snyder, Rachael Hagerman, Rey Wojdat, and Dave Zeggert.

Yours in innovation, differentiation and graduation; and thank you for all you do for our students! Hard to believe that 2020 is just about here...

-Kevin

Kevin E Drumm, PhD President SUNY Broome Community College