

Learning the culture: SUNY Trustee visits campus

April 8, 2015

As SUNY Broome students drifted into the conference room, SUNY trustee [Eunice Lewen](#) greeted them with a smile and a series of earnest questions. Where are you from? What are you studying? How do you connect with other students, and balance your work life with school?

Lewen, who was appointed to the State University of New York Board of Trustees in 2010, made the trip from Buffalo on April 8 to see SUNY Broome firsthand. It's part of her commitment to visit all 64 campuses in the SUNY system – a goal she expects to complete by the year's end.

"It's an exciting experience to visit the campuses," she explained. "Each campus has its own characteristics and its own culture."

While the driving rain prevented a campus tour, she had the opportunity to discuss the college with President Kevin E. Drumm and, over lunch, with seven members of the Student Assembly.

Like many of his peers, Thomas Flynn chose SUNY Broome because it's local and affordable.

"It's a great education," said Flynn, an individual studies major looking to earn a degree in political science and work on sustainability issues. "They have great teachers here and they really care about student success."

While Melinda Pittman hails from the Ithaca area, she said she chose SUNY Broome over Tompkins Cortland Community College for its course offerings and its culture. An individual studies major, she's looking to major in psychology after she transfers to a four-year school, and ultimately attend law school and earn a doctorate.

Lewen asked students whether SUNY Broome presents them with leadership opportunities. There are many, students told her, whether it's serving as a Student Senator, heading a local club or even starting a new organization.

Shared governance gives SUNY Broome students a voice on campus, said Student Trustee Aisha Mortenson, a nursing student who also is the community college representative for the SUNY Student Assembly. She was surprised to find out that other colleges don't offer students the same opportunity.

"We're here because of you, so your voice has to be at the table," Lewen told the students.

Student involvement also has led to positive changes on campus.

“Recycling here was started by students after I arrived,” said President Drumm, noting that the campus didn’t recycle bottles, cans or paper at that time. The Ecology Club brought the matter to the Student Assembly, and the college administration ultimately put it in place.

“We put the whole program in place as a result of the students’ efforts,” Dr. Drumm said.



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