

Lift-Off! Event invites Hornets to 'Imagine Success' **updated with videos**

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To change your life, you have to show up and follow through.

That was the message behind Lift-Off, SUNY Broome's first Imagine Success event of the semester. Hornets were introduced to the dazzling variety of campus services that will help them succeed, as well as to a wide variety of clubs.

Lift-Off's goal is to introduce students to academic services early on – rather than wait until they're on the verge of failing a class. The goal of Imagine Success is even larger: to see more students walking down the aisle at commencement, degree in hand.

"Pick that goal, whatever it is, and never, ever give up," advised SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm, a community college graduate who, like many students today, worked while receiving his education.

While times are economically tough for many, a college education is a proven means for the disadvantaged to rise out of poverty. And that's not just true for degrees from four-year schools, noted Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer Francis Battisti, a SUNY Broome graduate himself and the first in his family to go to college.

So was one of Dr. Battisti's students: Binghamton City Councilwoman Lea Webb, an award-winning community organizer and activist who went on to earn a Psychobiology degree from Binghamton University. When she began at SUNY Broome, Webb admitted that she made some mistakes – juggling 18 credits, employment and volunteer efforts in her first year.

But she persevered. While her parents never attended college, they encouraged all of their children to pursue education, she said. Students need to have more than passion; they need to have a vision of who they want to be, and dare to dream, she said.



Dr. Francis Battisti and Lea Webb

“When I think about the power and influence of education, it is the passport to everything in our society,” she reflected.

As a student, Webb wouldn’t have been successful without support, including tutoring through the Learning Assistance Department and the EOP program. Her entire family attended her graduation, coming from as far as Philadelphia, an experience she remembers proudly. Currently, she is returning to school to earn her master’s degree and ultimately her doctorate.

Network heavily, and surround yourself with people who will support you in every way – not just successes, but your failures, Webb advised students. And, noted President Drumm, be willing to explore, make discoveries and – above all – work hard.

“There’s a lot more to do at college than simply go to classes and go home,” he said.

Learning about clubs

Outside the Baldwin gym, students learned about campus clubs while munching on free popcorn and cotton candy. Offerings included the Garden Club, with a table of plants; the Communications Club; Chemistry Club, BECA; the Anime Club; International Student Organization; and many more.

At the Hospitality Club table, members Leah White and Gabrielle Baxter chatted with fellow students. You don't need to be a hospitality major to be a part of the club, noted White, who has held positions ranging from equipment manager to soup sales.

In fact, Baxter – the club's secretary – is a Liberal Arts major. Having participants with different backgrounds can be a plus, she noted.

"It's great to get a different perspective on things," she said.

The club puts on a variety of events, often working with other clubs. They go on trips and also do charitable work benefiting organizations such as Toys for Tots. In addition to developing job skills and teamwork, it's also a lot of fun and a great way to make friends, White added.

Meanwhile, at the next table over, Edwin Estrada checked out the range of musical programs the campus offers.

"If I join this club, I can play an instrument?" he asked Music Instructor Heather Worden. "I play guitar and piano."

"You're in the right place," Music Coordinator Brenda Dawe said with a grin.

In the end, Estrada jotted down information for the Guitar Ensemble and jazz group, with plans to follow up.

“I’m the type of person who likes creativity,” he said. “I love freestyle and playing from the heart.”

Looking ahead

Lift-Off is the first of multiple Imagine Success events, including:

- Who Wants to be a Graduate?, a fun game show from 11 a.m. to noon Sept. 22 in Decker Room 201
- Money 101 from 11 a.m. to noon Oct. 6 in Decker Room 201
- Save Your Semester from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 21 in the Student Center Lobby
- Got Questions? from 12 to 4 p.m. Nov. 11 in the Student Center Lobby
- Keep Calm and Ace Your Finals from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 8 in the Baldwin Gym

**Scenes from List-Off: Imagine
Success.**

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