

START-UP NY brings its regional meeting to SUNY Broome

May 8, 2015

Representatives from SUNY Broome, Binghamton University, Cornell University and Corning Community College gathered in Decker 201 on May 7, working on plans to help vitalize the region's economy.

The regional meeting of [START-UP NY](#) also drew Leslie Whatley, appointed as the program's executive director by Governor Andrew Cuomo; Jeffrey Boyce, director of research-supported economic development for the SUNY system; and real estate brokers.

"Right now, the focus is on projects," said Boyce, noting that START-UP NY has made at least four laps throughout the state with the aim of promoting economic development.

The START-UP NY economic development initiative was developed by Cuomo to establish tax-free areas for existing businesses looking to expand, and to help attract new businesses to New York through partnerships with college and university campuses. Eligible businesses will have the opportunity to locate on or near participating campuses and take advantage of the opportunity to operate tax-free, spurring regional economic development through job creation and expansion.

"It's working," said Whatley, noting that 110 companies have joined the program along with 69 schools. Another 18 draft plans are in process, with a dozen private applications also on the way.

She acknowledged that the program has come under criticism for creating too few jobs, but stressed that the program needs time. To address questions about the program, START-UP NY has also embarked on a "roadshow" throughout the state and will be at Binghamton University on Tuesday.

"The jobs don't come overnight," she said. "Hiring has to be done thoughtfully."

The purpose of the May 7 meeting was to connect the colleges and universities with the brokerage team. Universities often have unique assets, often connected to research, that companies may be drawn by.

SUNY Broome, [which had its START-UP NY plan approved last summer](#), has drawn interest in the agricultural sector, manufacturing and food processing. High-tech manufacturing also may be a possibility, as well as manufacturing related to the hospitality industry, said Debra Morello, vice president for student and economic development.

“We’re in the process of building our clean lab and revamping our assembly line equipment,” she said.

However, she noted that companies the college has spoken with appeared interested in having their main operations off-site rather than on-campus.

Even so, keeping an office on campus – even when the main operations are elsewhere nearby – can prove beneficial to colleges, giving them a way to interact with the companies daily, Boyce noted. That’s an important factor in internships and other forms of on-the-job learning. Morello agreed, noting that the role of students is significant when it comes to such partnerships.

“The strategic goal of the college is applied learning,” she said.

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