

SUNY Broome working on new Master Plan: Campus sees ongoing transformation

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Over the past four years, SUNY Broome's nearly 60-year-old campus has undergone a tremendous transformation. Building on that success, the college is now creating a roadmap for the future with a new comprehensive facilities plan that integrates its academic plan and educational programs.

The process is already underway. Associate Vice President and Dean of STEM Kelli Ligeikis has been named the campus facilitator, and brings experience from the design of the new Natural Science Center, which opened in Fall 2013.

"I am very excited to be the facilitator for the Master Planning process, an initiative that will be integral to the success of our students and College for many years to come," said Dean Ligeikis, who is also a professional engineer. "We will be looking for campus-wide involvement, so I would encourage all to participate as we solicit your feedback in this process. This is an exciting initiative so please don't be shy. We want and need your input! I look forward to working with all of you on this important project."

The college has hired Passero Associates, a Rochester firm, to assist with the planning process.

In the SUNY system, community college master plans typically span seven to 10 years and set priorities on what will be renovated or built, according to Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs Regina Losinger. The last comprehensive campus facilities plan was completed in 2007.

This newest plan will cover at least the next decade and include any potential plans SUNY Broome might have to expand its presence outside the main campus on Front Street, as well as any needed updates to the academic plan, according to Losinger and Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer Francis Battisti.

Overall, the new plan will address the needs of SUNY Broome's student population, which has been growing in recent years, bucking state and national trends.

"Our enrollment is going up, which is unique among SUNY's community colleges," Battisti said. "One of the reasons is our quality educational programs."

Those programs have spurred the creative use of campus space – made easier by the ongoing improvements, he said.

Part of the planning process will involve the exploration of green initiatives, especially solar energy. Passaro Associates will bring their Solar Team to campus over the next few weeks to explore possibilities of the latter, and an exploration group will include several professors whose interest and expertise lie in this area. Reducing the campus' carbon footprint also will be under consideration.

In mid-March, discussions will begin on campus regarding facilities and academic needs, including an inventory of how rooms are currently used. The process is expected to be completed in October.

"We're jumping right in," Losinger said.



**SUNY Broome's new Student Village opened in
Fall 2014.**

Ongoing transformation

Five years ago, SUNY Broome's Dickinson campus was in dire need of renovations. Core campus buildings were little changed from their construction in 1956, and required significant renovation and technology upgrades to keep up with campus needs. The last new classrooms – Decker Health Sciences – were built in the late 1990s. And with only \$50,000 in the operating budget for deferred maintenance, SUNY Broome was dead last among the state's 30 community colleges for both spending per student and per square foot.

Under the leadership of SUNY Broome President Kevin E. Drumm, the campus has undergone a startling revitalization.

Two of the most prominent projects include the \$21.47 million construction of the Natural Science Center and the \$18.1 million Student Village residence hall. The first, which opened in Fall 2013, brought the first new classrooms in 15 years. The second, which opened in Fall 2014 with a full capacity of 365 residents, transformed SUNY Broome into a residential campus for the very first time in its nearly 70-year-history.



The Natural Science Center opened in Fall 2013 and brought the first new classrooms to campus in 15 years.



The Darwin R. Wales Center, one of the original campus buildings, underwent a dramatic renovation in Summer 2014.

The Darwin R. Wales Center – one of the original campus buildings from 1956 – also underwent a dramatic transformation when it was renovated both inside and out. The price tag – \$4.7 million – was just a fraction of the cost for building new. The renovated building – home to more than 14 campus services and functions, including administration – opened this summer.

While these were the most prominent projects, they were far from alone. From 2011 to 2014, the campus has undergone more than 140 facilities improvements, ranging from the water and sewer infrastructure, roofs and HVAC systems to the bookstore, dining hall and restroom spaces, as well as many academic services spaces. The ground floor of the Cecil C. Tyrrell Library, damaged in the 2011 flood, has been restored. The Campus Services building has seen new life as a home for the music department, now all in one place.

And work continues: plans are underway to rehabilitate other core buildings that date back to the original campus, as well as turn the historic Carnegie Library in downtown Binghamton into a home for the college's hospitality programs.

State funds for the core-building rehabilitation project – estimated to cost around \$10 million – are already in place, and the college hopes to renovate a building every other year. The state funds comprise half of the project

cost; the other half is a local match that can involve county funds, fundraising or other sources of revenue. Large projects such as building construction and rehabilitation are funded through a separate capital budget, while maintenance falls under the operational budget.

Last year, SUNY Broome also received \$6 million in NYSUNY 2020 funding for its piece in the Southern Tier High Technology Incubator. The funding will help create the SUNY Bridge to Entrepreneurial Excellence (SUNY-BEE), which will nurture a vibrant start-up community for student-led ventures and add another floor to the downtown Binghamton facility.

Overall, more than \$70 million in funding from state, local and county governments, grants and private capital were invested to improve facilities.

Along the way, existing capital projects were reviewed and, if completed, closed out, freeing up dollars for priority projects. Millions in unallocated SUNY capital funds were shifted to priority projects as well, and the annual operating fund for small renovations and deferred maintenance was increased to \$650,000 to provide adequate funding for improvements and maintenance. As a result, SUNY Broome is no longer at the bottom for spending per pupil or square foot; it's moved up six places, Losinger noted.

The college has long been home to exceptional academic programs, and its facilities are now following suit.

"I always wanted campus facilities to reflect the quality of our academics," Losinger said.

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