



CANTON



2024-25

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT CANTON

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



We started the year off extremely well by maintaining our highest U.S. News & World Report rankings – an achievement that affirms the work we’ve put forth to establish our standing as a premier college of technology.

With that standing comes the responsibility to consistently develop innovative, cutting-edge degrees that keep pace with rapidly evolving technology, particularly AI. This year, we announced a Data Science and Analytics program, which builds on the success of our Cybersecurity degree. It offers a curriculum that is distinct among its peers, blending data science with data analytics, mathematics, statistics, AI, and computer science. And for those who want advanced training to combat cyber crime, an online master’s degree in Cybersecurity is currently in the self-study readiness review process.

An infusion of state funding from Gov. Hochul will also help us to remain a tech-sector leader. The groundbreaking \$8 million investment to establish one of three SUNY Regional Nursing Simulation Centers will provide the equipment, along with the faculty and space, to strengthen New York’s healthcare workforce.

We have made progress on two multi-year projects that will have far-reaching effects in the community. The completion of site selection, concept design, and cost estimate for a new child care center moves us closer to providing much-needed access to this service in the North Country. Our investment commitment to this initiative augments generous state funding, and we will be working with our legislators in the coming year to fill in any funding gaps. In addition, our vision to establish a new Entrepreneurship Center in downtown Canton received \$2 million in support from a NY Forward grant in May.

A digital concept of the Entrepreneurship Center.



Our mission as a college of access is always at the forefront, and in October, we invited our local elected officials to speak with ASAP|ACE students about their personal educational journeys. Assemblymember Scott Gray pledged his commitment to advocate for its continuation. On the federal level, the Department of Education renewed funding for our TRiO Student Support Services until 2030.

The achievements above are just a sampling of this year’s highlights. The following report details many more accomplishments that are illustrative of the momentum we have been building for decades.

Go Roos!

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the President of SUNY Canton.



SUNY Canton does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, national origin, sex, gender, or disability.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Strategic Plan Goal 1: Promote Academic Excellence

The cornerstone of SUNY Canton’s strategic plan is to provide the resources, environment, and faculty expertise students need to think critically and excel academically.



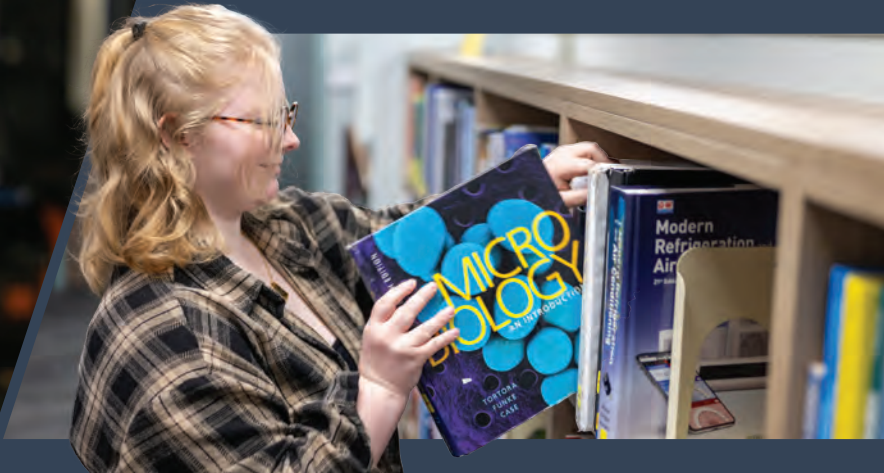
Cyber Warriors

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and state elected officials visited campus in November to encourage students to apply to the Department of Defense (DoD) Cyber Service Academy scholarship program, which provides full college tuition in return for public service in the DoD or the Intelligence Community (IC). Successful applicants will serve one year in the DoD or the IC as a civilian employee for each year of their scholarship.



Groundbreaking Investment

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced the College would receive an \$8 million SUNY Nursing Simulation Capital Investment Grant for the establishment of a SUNY Regional Nursing Simulation Center. This investment will allow an expansion of equipment, staff, and physical learning spaces to offer enhanced simulation experiences to students.



Open Access

Expansion of Open Education Resources (OER) continued last year resulting from faculty adoption in more than 200 course sections. Since 2017, OER adoption has saved students nearly \$2 million.

The Alumni Association and the Southworth Library have launched the “Roo-Source Textbook Program,” which allows alumni to donate toward the purchase of textbooks for students who are experiencing financial difficulty. Students return the materials to the library at the end of the semester, where the resources can be used by future students. Approximately \$2,000 was raised in the inaugural year.

The College’s physical and e-textbook reserve collection of approximately 600 titles continues to be heavily utilized by students and creates thousands of dollars in cost savings per student.



STEM Equity

The New York State Association for Career and Technical Education (NYSACTE) Postsecondary State Career Technical Education (CTE) Leaders Fellowship selected Assistant Professor Dr. Stacia R. Smith as a 2025 fellow. Dr. Smith has taught computing and technology courses in the Decision & Graphic Media Systems department since 2009. The NYSACTE Fellowship strives to address the growing shortage of postsecondary CTE leaders by closing representation gaps and removing barriers to leadership advancement within New York State.



Solid Advice

Associate Professor Dr. Puttagounder Dhanasekaran Swaminathan, who teaches in the Mechanical Engineering Technology program, was recognized by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) with a Distinguished Faculty Advisor Award. He has 27 years of industry experience and is the faculty advisor for the SME student chapter, which has been recognized with gold status.

Drive Time

Alumni financial support facilitated the purchase of a Freightliner Cascadia and new trailers for the College’s CDL program. The addition of the new truck offers new opportunities to drive and test in both manual and automatic transmissions.



Ready Player One

Innovative student capstone projects included the unveiling of a multiplayer video game, called “Fragments of Arundos,” which was developed by a team of Game Design and Development students led by nontraditional student Jonathan T. Zimmermann. The team aims to release the game on Steam, a digital game distribution platform, later this year.



Study Aids

The College received more than \$120,000 in federal funding through a Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education grant to purchase human and animal anatomy models, drones, and 3D printers. The resources will be used by the Betty J. Evans Tutoring Center and the Canino School of Engineering Technology.

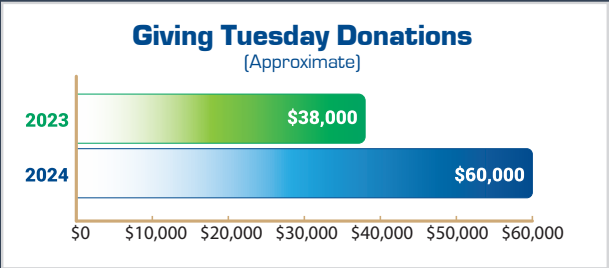
Tech Partners

The College is a new member of the Northeast Regional Defense Technology Hub, a regional coalition of public and private tech-sector leaders. Membership enables students and faculty to access grant opportunities through the multi-state network.



#GivingTuesday

Drawing on the support of alumni, faculty, staff, parents, and friends, the Canton College Foundation exceeded its fundraising goal by \$20,000 during its 2024 #GivingTuesday campaign. Approximately 200 donors contributed more than \$60,000 to the campaign, which was nearly a 40% increase in donations from the year prior.



Donor Impact

The Canton College Foundation raised nearly \$2 million in 2024-2025 and distributed approximately \$750,000 in 425 endowed and annual scholarships.

Eye on Alzheimer’s

Assistant Professor Dr. Mehdi Ghayoumi received a \$50,000 National Science Foundation I-Corps grant to market an advanced eye-tracking system to detect early indicators of neurodegeneration and Alzheimer’s Disease. The system will analyze eye movement data to identify subtle ocular biomarkers suggesting cognitive decline. The funding will support the customer discovery portion of the commercial project’s potential to offer the assessment tool.



STREAMLINE & SIMPLIFY

Strategic Plan Goal 2: Improve Operational Effectiveness

Examining processes and procedures across campus to identify efficiency opportunities, while aligning the budget with strategic initiatives and seeking out external funding sources, will increase our effectiveness, keep us competitive, and improve the student experience.



Resource Ready

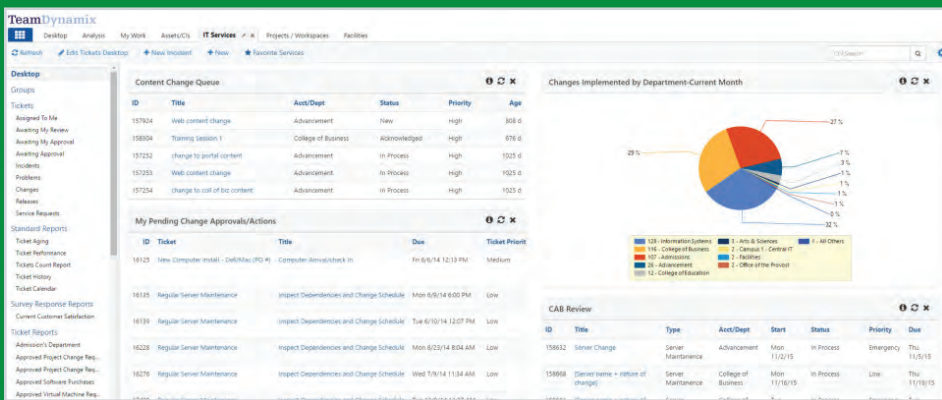
The increased demand for grocery essentials from the Renzi Food Pantry necessitated efficiency operation adjustments. In response, the Student Affairs Division implemented new software and online tools, supported by SUNY funding, that streamline the student request process and offer more immediate access to the pantry's inventory. The pantry's footprint and hours were also expanded to meet the increased need.



Digital Age

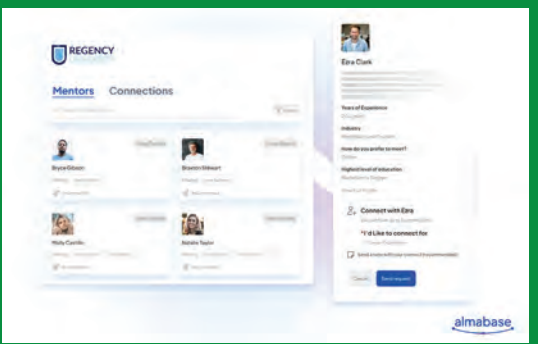
The Department of Information Services has refined and expanded its lab, software, and online resource-usage tracking capabilities to identify underutilized contracts and software, resulting in approximately \$30,000 in savings. The department is also participating several SUNY-wide initiatives to enhance security, communications, and collaboration:

- The College is part of an 11-campus cohort that is preparing to deploy Microsoft Teams Calling in the next 12 months. Teams Calling is the company's integrated VoIP solution, offering a cost-effective and secure alternative to traditional phone systems.
- The SUNY-hosted model of Guardian 365 Security Service, which provides around-the-clock managed cybersecurity services, began a pilot test in August 2025.
- The College is leveraging the SUNY-wide contract for Teamdynamix, a cloud-based software platform that streamlines workflows, automates tasks, and conserves employee resources. Information Services has purchased the licenses and has begun mapping and digitizing processes.



Canton Connections

The Canton College Foundation implemented a new software program, Almbase, which has improved the ability to communicate and engage with alumni, specifically, crowd funding initiatives and networking events. It also assisted in organizing an all-Greek reunion and will host a new alumni-student mentorship program beginning this Fall.



Strategic Shifts

Throughout 2024-2025, the College Association examined and improved a number of internal operations to minimize costs while enhancing services, including:

- Completing an initiative to identify and disburse unused Roo Express (flexible spending account) funds more efficiently.
- Augmenting weekly evening hours at the Campus Store contributed to a \$49,000 increase in express sales.
- Adding dining stations in Chaney Dining Center during weekend service for meal plan holders.
- Including ingredient labels for retail and fresh vending products to assist with allergen monitoring.
- Standardizing weekly dinner service at retail food areas resulted in a 67% sales increase.
- Cost-analyzing and switching the association's property and casualty insurance vendor, saving nearly \$20,000 per year.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Plan Goal 3: Optimize Enrollment

Ensuring a SUNY Canton education remains accessible to the broadest range of learners — from traditional college-age students to working professionals — is accomplished by developing and refining innovative, in-demand, and flexible programs. Focusing on the best practices that attract and retain successful students of all backgrounds and life stages keeps the College competitive.



Ahead of the Curve

The announcement of a new Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Analytics degree in October adds a new dimension to the College's tech-focused program portfolio. The interdisciplinary curriculum combines data science with data analytics, mathematics, statistics, artificial intelligence, and computer science. This degree is unique not only in SUNY, but in the nation as well.



Operation Fee-Free

In June, the Admissions Office announced an initiative to waive comprehensive student fees for active-duty, reservist and National Guard service members beginning Fall 2025. This new program has the potential to save full-time students up to \$6,500 over the course of four years. A billboard campaign near Fort Drum in Watertown began in the Summer to promote this new program.



Job-Ready Skills

Supported by a SUNY grant, the College offered a no-cost, two-month advanced manufacturing pre-apprenticeship program for area residents of all ages and career stages. In addition to offering courses to earn industry credentials, the program included career services counseling and opportunities to meet with representatives from area businesses.



Learning Experience

The Center for Workforce, Community, & Industry Partnerships held its second year of Summer day camps to connect kids with peers and allow them to explore shared interests. Designed for a variety of grade levels, 12 themed camps aligned with some of the College's most popular STEM-related degrees.

Summer Start

In response to an increase in student interest for an online Summer start option, the Division of Academic Affairs has expanded this opportunity for the Applied Psychology, Cybersecurity, Early Childhood Care and Management, Early Childhood Studies, and Healthcare Management programs. This option offers maximum flexibility for non-traditional learners and allows continuous enrollment for military-connected students.



Skill Sets

The College continues to expand its microcredential offerings to add value to an existing traditional degree or used alone to increase skills in a convenient, short-term learning option. Several programs received external funding support to allow more New Yorkers to upskill in high-need areas:



- A grant from the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities covered tuition, certification, fees, books, and support, as well as a stipend, for students who completed any of SUNY Canton's Direct Support Professional microcredentials.
- A grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation supported the creation of two no-cost microcredentials: Peer Support for Health and Wellness and Peer Support for Older Adults.



College in High School

The Center for Workforce, Community & Industry Partnerships has significantly grown the College's no-cost dual enrollment program in St. Lawrence County, which gives high schoolers a head start on their college degree. More than 1,000 10th to 12th graders earned college credit in 94 courses in 2024-2025. The program familiarized them with the College's academic programs, while saving them time and money.

CLEARING THE AIR

Strategic Plan Goal 4: Focus on Sustainability

Incorporating energy-efficient systems into campus operations, as well as prioritizing sustainability in our curriculum, aim to reduce our environmental footprint and prepare students to be eco-friendly citizens.



Pure Energy

The Center for Workforce, Community & Industry Partnerships partnered with the Adirondack North Country Association to offer several no-cost clean energy-related workforce trainings throughout the summer, which were funded by a NYSERDA Clean Energy grant. Training in energy audits, solar panel installation, heat pump training, and EV maintenance were open to anyone with an interest in eco-friendly systems.

Waste Not

The College Association continues to incrementally implement sustainability initiatives to achieve compliance with NYS Executive Order 22, making several operational changes over the past year in pursuit of this goal, notably:

- Removal of plastic containers, plastic soda bottles, and individual condiment containers at retail and dining locations.
- Implementation of compostable cutlery.
- Addition of to-go water alternatives in aluminum or compostable-friendly packaging.
- Establishment of a partnership with North Country Compost to compost meat and dehydrated foods (in addition to fruit and vegetable waste).



Diversity and Appreciation

The celebration of cultural heritage months included performances and presentations by African, Latino, and Native American artists. The duo of Docta and Simon blended African music and storytelling; Angelica Maria performed spoken word poetry to explore Latino identity, belonging, and resilience; and Cody Blackbird performed the Native American flute to foster a greater appreciation for Indigenous music and storytelling traditions.

Support System

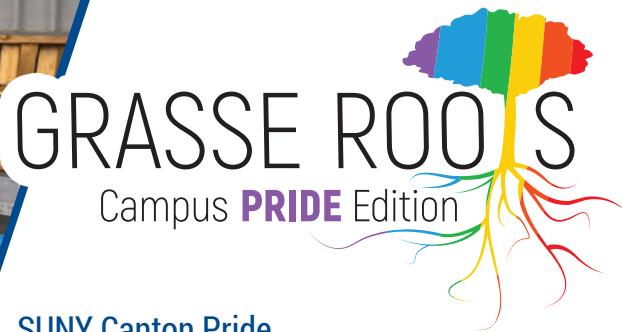
The Student Accessibility Services office launched a new support program called P3: Parents, Peers, and Professionals, which is designed to assist autistic and other neurodivergent students in navigating college. The three support pillars of parents/caregivers, student peers, and College employees work in tandem to support those who live and learn a little differently.



EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE

Strategic Plan Goal 5: Enhance Diversity & Welcome

Every member of the College community is responsible for upholding the campus ethos, “Everyone is Welcome Here.” An ongoing commitment to diverse programming, coupled with implementing more inclusive policies and supporting students from all backgrounds, helps create and maintain an environment where everyone can succeed.



SUNY Canton Pride

In honor of campus pride month, SPECTRUM, the College’s LGBTQIA+ student club, published a special issue of “GrasseRoots” student literary magazine in April. The publication featured stories, poetry, creative non-fiction, digital artwork, and animations that reflect the individuality and character of our students, staff, faculty, and alumni.



Safe Spaces

The Residence Life Office expanded the LGBTQIA+ themed housing during the past year to offer more opportunities for these students to live in close proximity to their fellow community members and allies. Plans to further expand the housing to an entire residential wing in 2026-2027 is underway.

International Flavor

The College Association endeavors to ensure their food service meets a diverse community’s dietary needs. Programs that were refined and improved in 2024-2025 include:

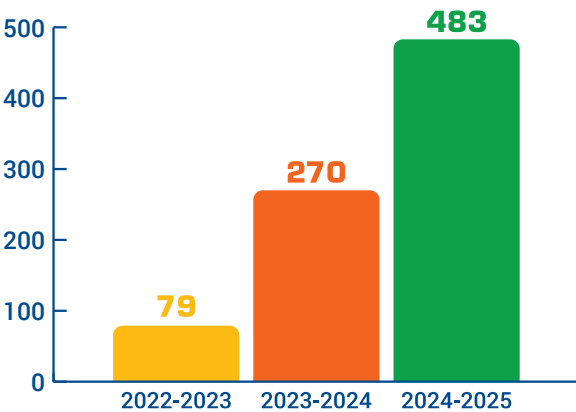
- Pick-up meals for those who observe Ramadan.
- Complimentary meal passes for students facing financial difficulties.
- Meal-planning to accommodate international students.
- Twice monthly international menu options at Chaney Dining Center to ensure a diverse culinary experience.

Finding Balance

With the support of SUNY funding, the Office of Well-being Programs & Initiatives expanded its outreach to students. In total, more than 130 programs were held in 2024-2025, including Fresh Check Day, a suicide-prevention program, that features peer-to-peer messaging in a positive, fun setting. Attendees learned how to connect and use campus and community mental health resources.



Renzi Food Pantry Students Served



Fighting Food Insecurity

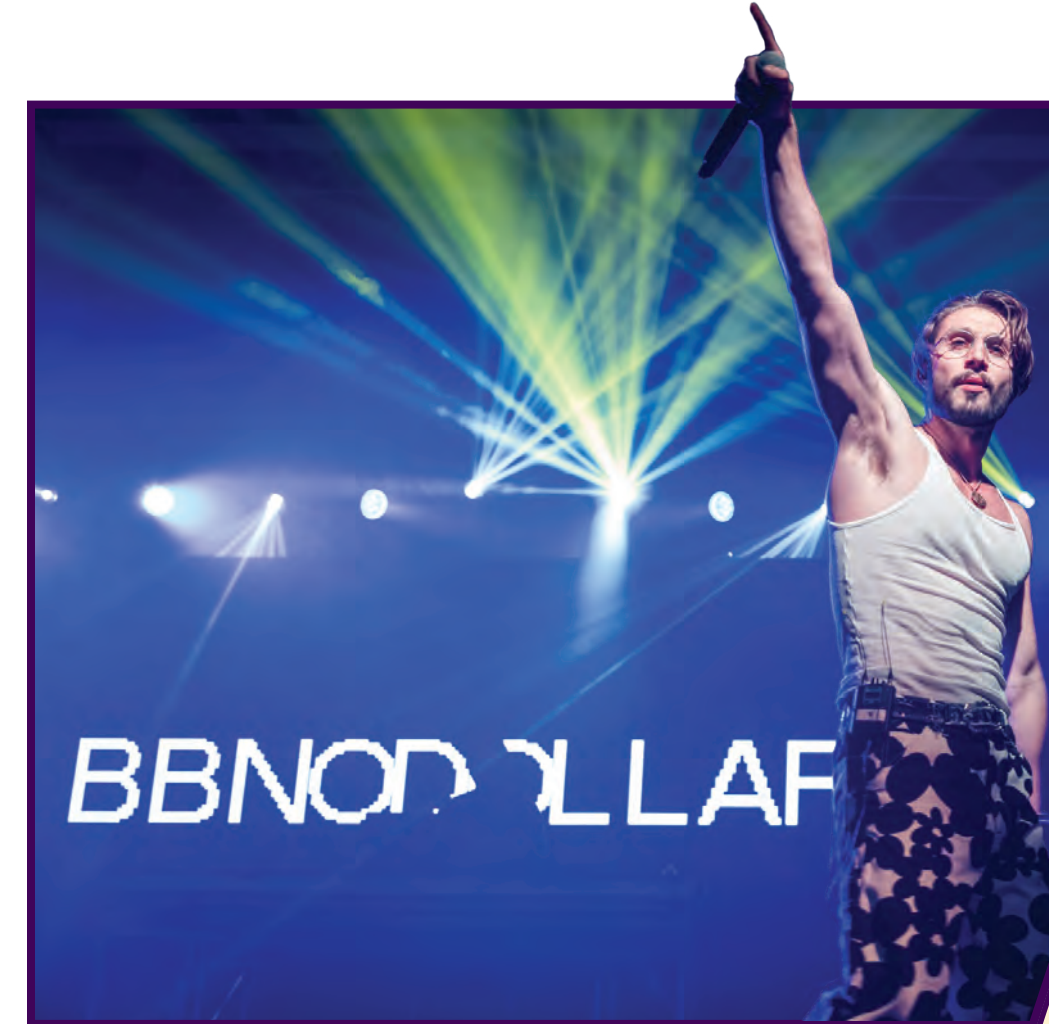
With the assistance of SUNY funding, the Renzi Food Pantry was able to serve substantially more students in comparison to years prior. The continuation of the River-view Correctional Facility’s free fresh produce program was also heavily utilized by food pantry patrons.



A VIBRANT CAMPUS

Strategic Plan Goal 6: Create a Robust, Active, and Enriching Campus Life

We are committed to creating the best student-life experience possible by investing in our infrastructure and continuing to enhance relationship- and community-building opportunities that make SUNY Canton feel like home.



Viral Moment

Canadian rapper and singer-songwriter phenomenon bbno\$ (baby no money) headlined the College Activities Board's Spring 2025 concert. Hailed by Rolling Stone magazine as "a viral pioneer" who rose to fame in 2019, bbno\$'s hit single "Lalala" earned more than 1 billion streams worldwide and triple platinum status due to its momentum on TikTok.

Furever Friends

In response to increased student interest in living on campus with their canine companions, the Residence Life Office expanded dog-friendly housing to two floors in 2024-2025, and will add a third floor in 2025-2026.



Fun and Games

The Office of Student Activities, Involvement & Leadership, in conjunction with the College Activities Board, the Student Government Association and Greek Organizations, held more than 300 student events throughout the past academic year. Programming ranged from educational presentations and performances to interactive, fun activities. Highlights included a "foam dance party" and "goat yoga," which combines stress-relief with animal therapy.



SUNYAction

The Roos completed their first year as full members of the SUNYAC. The women's basketball team earned the College its first playoff win in the new conference, and men's and women's hockey also advanced to conference playoffs.

Core Memories

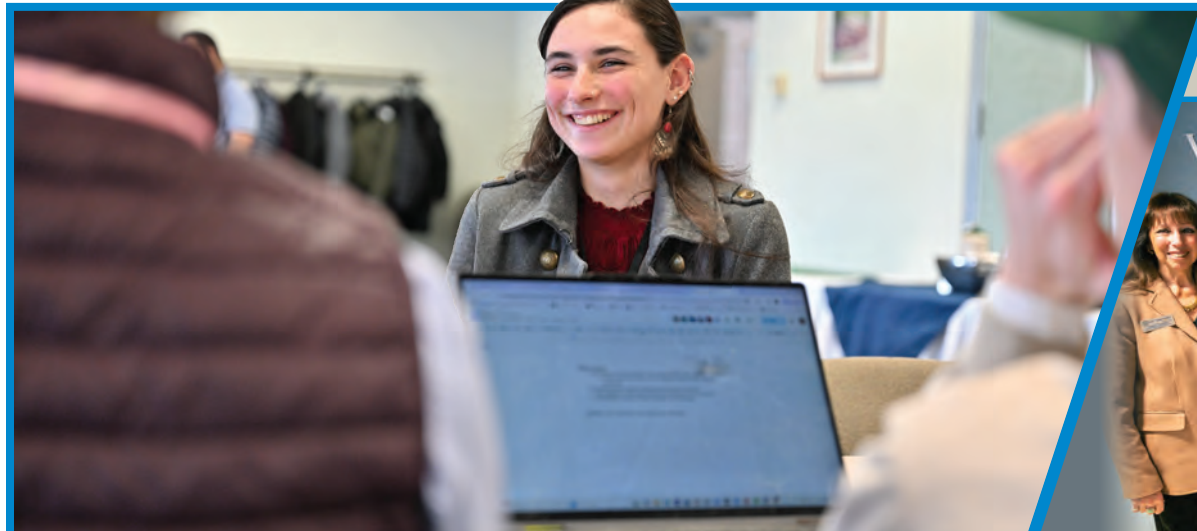
More than 70 Special Olympians traveled to campus to compete in the 2025 New York State Special Olympics Summer Games. Nearly 100 student-athletes and volunteers helped make the day an unforgettable experience for participants. Olympians competed in basketball, track and field, and more.



OUT FRONT

Strategic Plan Goal 7: Build Greater Awareness of SUNY Canton

Telling the SUNY Canton story through proactive media engagement and creative marketing initiatives strengthens our reputation as a premier college of technology. Developing mutually beneficial strategic partnerships with civic and private organizations expands our visibility and provides value to the local economy.



Entrepreneurial Spirit

The first North Country Launch Day brought together nearly 50 area college students to collaborate on business ideas and connect with peers, mentors, and resources. Organized in conjunction with Clarkson University's Shipley Center for Innovation, this dynamic challenge included diverse teams from Jefferson Community College, St. Lawrence University, SUNY Plattsburgh, SUNY Potsdam, and SUNY Canton.



Creative Edge

The Office of Public Relations earned three awards for outstanding creative work from the SUNY Council for University Advancement (SUNYCUAD). The team earned a Best of Category in the "Excellence in DEI Strategy" group for a light pole banner redesign project, and two Judges' Citations in the "Excellence in Research Writing" and "Excellence in Magazine Design" categories.



Lasting Legacy

The Canton College Foundation championed an effort to rededicate a Wicks Hall lab space for Professor Emerita and college-wide Hall of Fame member Virginia M. McAllister, who is credited with creating the nursing program. The project was spearheaded by Nursing Professor Emerita and patron Linda L. Fay, who passed away two weeks before the naming ceremony in November 2024.



Honoring History

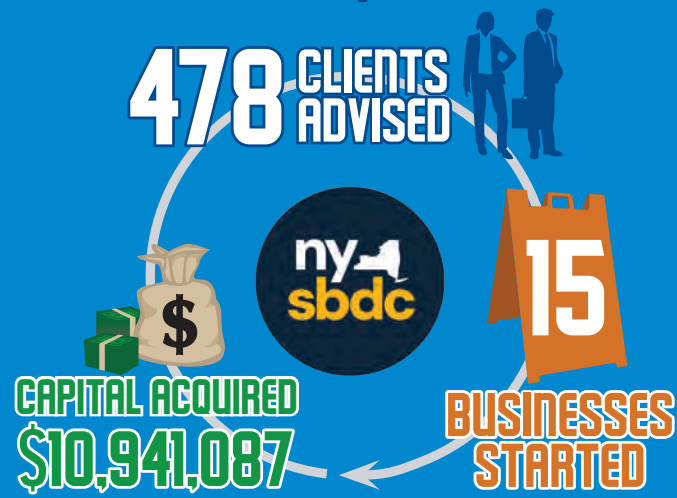
A Canton College Foundation fundraising campaign facilitated the naming of the ice arena in honor of legendary men's ice hockey coach, Terry Martin. The former head coach led the team to 12 national junior college athletic association championships in 25 years and was beloved by his players. His career record from 1974 to 1999 was 527-211-29 and included a 102-11-8 mark in his final four seasons.



Good Business

Martin's Pretzel Bakery, owned by Josiah Martin, was the winner of Small Business Development Center's 2025 Phoenix Award. The entrepreneur was selected from more than 20,000 SBDC clients served in 2024 by 20 centers across New York State.

SBDC's Economic Impact in FY 2024-25



Concrete Learning

Student researchers asserted that using lightweight concrete could be a solution to building fire-resistant homes in the wake of devastating wildfires in California. The College's Civil and Environmental Engineering Technology program hosts an American Concrete Institute student chapter, advised by Associate Professor Dr. Saeid Haji Ghasemali. Students participate in an annual competition to create strong and lightweight glass fiber-reinforced concrete formulas.



True Detective

Associate Professor Dr. Kelly R. Ficner appeared in episodes of the U.K. true crime television show "Killers Caught on Camera." Drawing on her experience with the St. Paul Police Video Management Unit, she has established herself as an expert criminalist and is frequently called on to add authenticity for shows. She has previously appeared on the ABC docuseries "Me Hereafter" and Investigation Discovery's "See No Evil." All three of her appearances are related to the 2013 murder case of Kira Steger, a 30-year-old clothing store employee at the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn.





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