

# 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT



**EMPIRE STATE**  
UNIVERSITY





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# AN INTRODUCTION FROM PRESIDENT VOLLENDORF

In the year since we finalized our strategic planning framework, Elevate '28, we have fleshed out objectives and measurable goals. By involving stakeholders across the institution in an iterative process, we were able to ensure a robust feedback loop in this first year of strategic plan implementation. The emphasis on inclusion helped us ensure that faculty and staff across the university developed and began to deploy their tactics at the department and unit levels to help us reach our goals. In many cases, baselines had to be established so measurable, achievable goals could be set. Over the year, division leaders established most of those baselines. Work then began toward reaching those goals. In two divisions—the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Office of Information Technology Services—leadership was not hired until the year was underway; objectives for those divisions have been created and now form part of the overarching strategic plan.

## Highlights from 2023-24 included:

- Aligning the budget request and approval process with the university's strategic plan and strategic priorities
- Creation of the university's first-ever Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, which outlines the goal of reaching 20,000 students by 2028
- Completion and launch of a full-scale Academic Program Planning process that identified programs for development and a plan for staffing and resourcing those programs as they are launched
- Launching two new opportunity programs (Presidential Scholars Opportunity Program and Veterans and Military Opportunity Program) in support of inclusive education and increased retention goals
- Establishing a Corporate and Foundation Relations (CFR) program and a corporate relations cross-divisional working group
- Launching a new [SUNY Empire News](#) site with information to elevate faculty expertise and provide resources for media outlets

In 2023-2024, the budget office integrated university-wide strategic objectives and goals into the budget process. The budget guide distributed to all account managers in March 2024 emphasized strategic financial budgeting and identified guiding principles for resource planning. In addition, a request tab was added to the budget workbook to enable each divisional account manager to align investments to their strategic plan objectives and goals. These investments will be revisited during the 2025-2026 budget process to evaluate success and consider ongoing resources. We will continue to refine this process for the 2025-2026 budget year.

While 2023-24 was a year for laying groundwork, 2024-25 will be the first full academic year with fully articulated objectives and goals. This coming year will give us the opportunity to focus on established objectives and goals. This work will entail reviewing and revising existing objectives and goals to ensure that they encompass all of the work being done to advance our strategic plan. One emerging area for more attention is generative artificial intelligence (AI), as this is an increasingly critical area for teaching, learning, and operations in higher education.

In the pages that follow, we have presented a summary of 2023-24 activities for each division, oriented by strategic priority area and objective. In many cases, goal language has been updated to reflect baseline measures established throughout the year or otherwise revised for clarity. The most current objective and goal language is reflected in this report, while the original objective and goal language published in August 2023 appears in the [appendix](#).

We are grateful to everyone at SUNY Empire for bringing our strategic plan to life and advancing the important work of Elevate '28.

With gratitude,

Lisa Vollendorf, Ph.D.  
President





# UNIVERSITY MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

## MISSION

Founded in 1971 as the innovative campus of the State University of New York, Empire State University empowers learners from diverse backgrounds to achieve their educational goals. We have decades of experience providing educational access through online teaching and learning, individualized instruction, mentoring, and prior learning assessment. We build on our students' experiences to promote their growth and drive upward mobility and economic development in New York state and beyond.

## VISION

Empire State University is a national leader for high-quality, flexible, and affordable education. We stand alone among public institutions nationwide in our ability to provide impactful academic experiences to learners of all ages.

## VALUES

- Access
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Flexibility
- Innovation

Our values serve as a guiding force for everything we do in service to our students, their families, and their communities. Our values infuse all of our priorities, decisions, and actions.





# OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

## Summary of 2023-24 Activities

Strategic planning activities in the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) for the 2023-2024 academic year consisted of identifying preliminary goals and tactics to support top-level strategic objectives and university-wide strategic priorities. In many cases, goal language has been updated to specify the intended rate of change relative to the baseline measures established over the last year.

### Highlights from 2023-24 included:

- Launching a first-term advising initiative to increase first-to-second-term retention
- Launching six new academic programs in the 2023-2024 academic year with 30 new academic programs currently under development or revision
- Creating a University Assessment Council (UAC) to inform academic assessment processes and share best practices related to student learning assessment and data utilization
- Developing grant-funded tools to identify credit for prior learning early in a student’s academic career

## Strategic Priority: Student Success

| OBJECTIVE 1  | OBJECTIVE 2   | OBJECTIVE 3  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><i>Increase student success by reducing or eliminating barriers to enrollment, retention, and completion.</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 1:</b> Increase the three-year average of first-to-second-term retention rates for matriculated students by 3% by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Increase overall undergraduate and graduate graduation rates by 3% for matriculated students by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Increase re-enrollment rates of students who have been inactive for less than three years by 3% by the conclusion of the plan.</p> | <p><i>Improve the student experience.</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 1:</b> Enhance and expand opportunities for student engagement and university activities by 1% annually.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Boost student satisfaction with student services and co-curricular engagement opportunities by 5% by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Ensure 90% of academic affairs units meet 90% of performance benchmarks by the conclusion of the plan.</p> | <p><i>Reduce or eliminate equity gaps on student success metrics for underrepresented and/or historically underserved students.</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 1:</b> Reduce the equity gaps in overall course completion rates for historically underserved student populations by 3% (8.3% to 5.3% for undergraduate students; 4.7 to 1.7% for graduate students) by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Reduce the equity gaps in first-to-second-term retention rates for historically underserved student populations by 3% by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Reduce the equity gaps in graduation rates for historically underserved student populations by 3% by the conclusion of the plan.</p> |

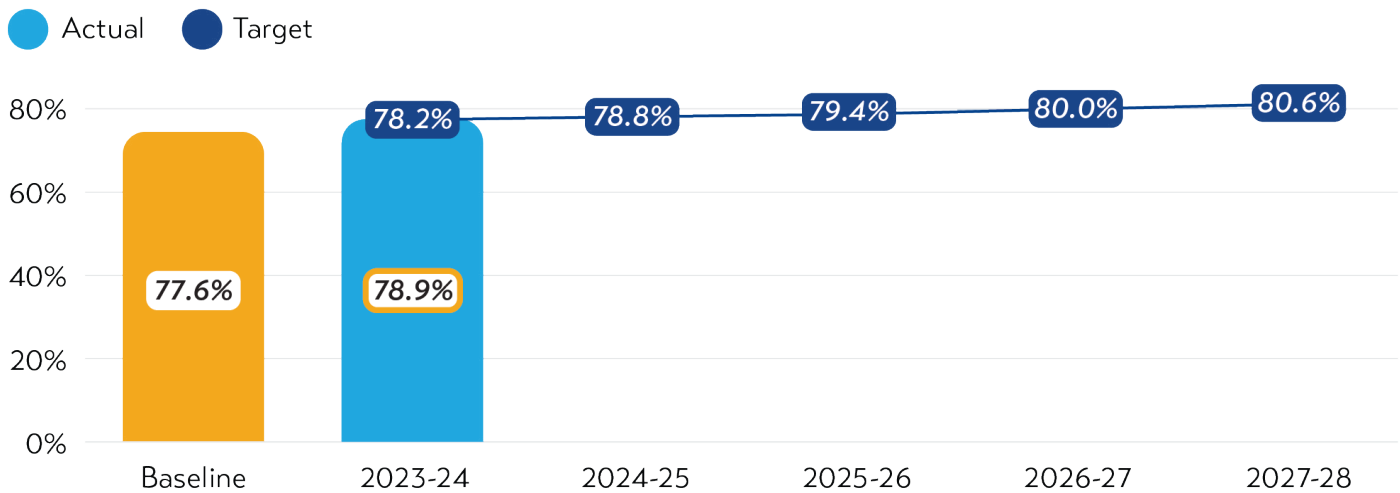
## First-to-Second-Term Retention

First-to-second-term retention is a strong indicator of a student’s likelihood to persist through degree completion. OAA implemented key first-term support initiatives during the 2023-24 academic year, including:

- Refreshing online orientation and shifting to a new platform (Campus Groups) that promotes student engagement from the beginning of a student’s journey at SUNY Empire
- Implementing a first-term advising initiative to provide new students with individualized course recommendations
- Assigning student success coordinators to all undergraduate students and connecting students to support services

Given our retention increases in recent years, we have established a positive trend line for fall-to-spring retention rates. Our baseline measure for fall-to-spring retention is 77.6%. This is the average first-term retention rate for undergraduate student cohorts that initially enrolled in fall terms between 2019 and 2022.

## Matriculated Undergraduate First-to-Second-Term Retention (Fall to Spring Re-enrollment): Baseline vs. 2023-24 Actual and Overall Target



Data Source: Decision Support Retention Cube 2.0. Fall to Spring baseline represents the average retention rate for fall cohorts 2019-2022.

## Clarifying Degree Pathways

Providing clear degree pathways is key to promoting student retention and success. Faculty and staff continue to prioritize eliminating barriers to student degree completion. This work includes:

- Revising SUNY Empire’s undergraduate student degree planning materials for clarity
- Launching three undergraduate degree programs to support timely completion pathways
- Revising academic policy to streamline degree pathways and update curriculum
- Creating new mentoring/advising resources to drive student success



**2,485  
TOTAL DEGREES  
AWARDED**

### TOP 5 UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

(Based on Bachelor’s Degrees Awarded, 2023-24)

- Business, Management and Economics
- Community and Human Services
- Psychology
- Science, Mathematics and Technology
- Educational Studies

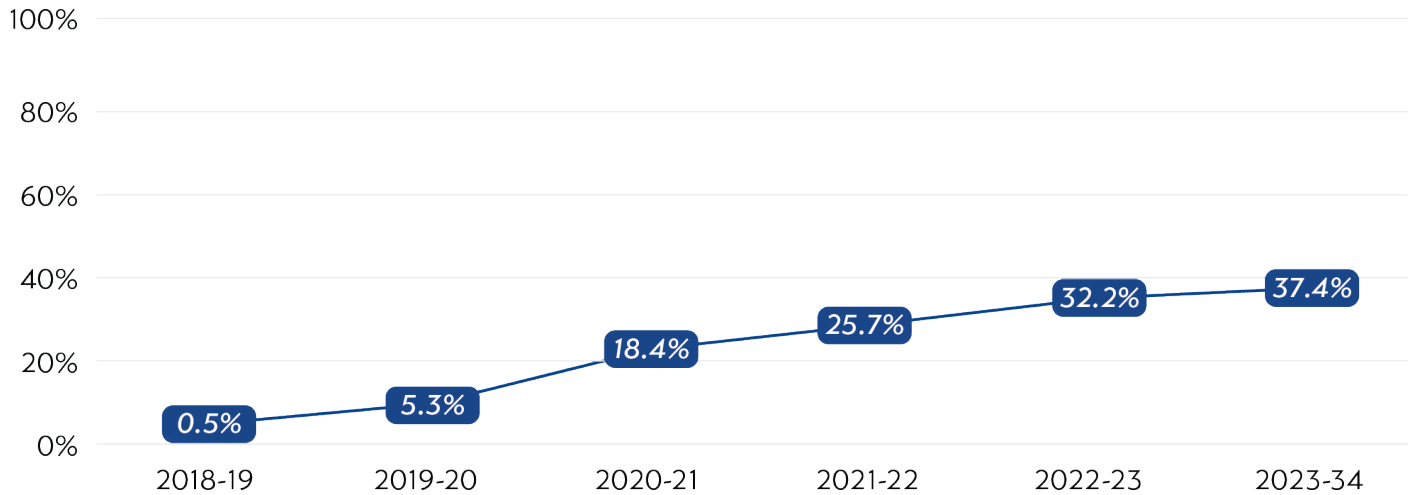
### TOP 5 GRADUATE PROGRAMS

(Based on Master’s Degrees Awarded, 2023-24)

- Business Management
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Nursing Administration
- Information Technology
- Adolescent Education

Data Source: Banner. Degree awards retrieved from the Decision Support Dashboard Landing Page; Degrees Awarded App. Metrics based on academic year; 2023-24 degree award count is current as of July 29, 2024.

## Percent of Matriculated Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Structured Programs by Academic Year



Data Source: Banner. Based on undergraduate program headcount retrieved from the Decision Support Dashboard Landing Page; Student Enrollment App. Metrics based on academic year. Note: Undergraduate Nursing programs, undergraduate certificates and teach-out programs excluded.

## Student Engagement and University Activities

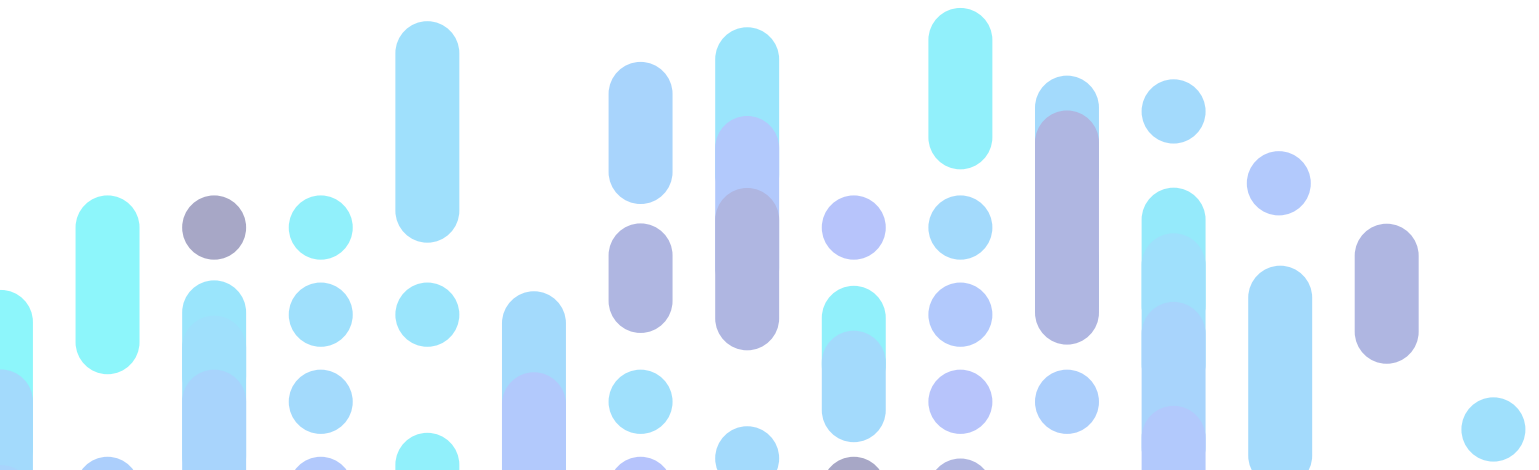
Engagement opportunities are designed to support our students' academic progress and skill development—from single, targeted workshops to large, university-wide events that include online and in-person academic and social programming. OAA surveyed academic units to quantify the academic engagement activities offered during the 2022-23 (fall-to-summer) period. This survey yielded a baseline of 522 student engagement opportunities; our goal is to increase those opportunities by 5% annually.

## Closing the Equity Gap

The university has committed to closing equity gaps for historically underrepresented students.

In 2023-2024, OAA:

- Launched two additional opportunity programs, which feature extended orientation, intensive advising, cohort-based programming, and need-based student financial support in targeted programs
- Implemented evidence-based approaches, and equity-lens design strategies to inform course review and revision
- Supported 38 faculty who completed Lumen Circles equity-focused teaching fellowships
- Launched a \$22,350 SUNY grant-funded initiative to move to open educational resources, prioritizing courses with significant equity gaps



# Strategic Priority: Academic and Inclusive Excellence

| OBJECTIVE 1   | OBJECTIVE 2  | OBJECTIVE 3   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><i>Strengthen the quality, breadth, and currency of degrees, certificates, and other learning opportunities to meet the needs of students, employers, and communities.</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 1:</b> Increase the number of academic programs that align with high-need areas by 15 credentials by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Increase the number of programs that explicitly align program learning outcomes with external standards, requirements, expectations, and/or needs by 3% by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Increase student satisfaction with academic offerings by 5% by the conclusion of the plan.</p> | <p><i>Expand and scale our approaches to effective, innovative, and inclusive teaching and online learning.</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 1:</b> Ensure 99% of courses/course sections offered in the Learning Management System meet all course design standards in the established rubric by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Ensure that at least 75% of courses utilize inclusive pedagogical practices by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Ensure at least 75% of line-based faculty and teaching professionals meet their annual professional development and pedagogical goals related to teaching and learning by the conclusion of the plan.</p> | <p><i>Promote the full range of possibilities for how and where students gain knowledge and provide avenues to evaluate and credential that learning.</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 1:</b> Increase students' utilization of prior learning into their degree programs by 4% (52% to 56%) by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Reduce the equity gaps in prior learning use by historically underserved students by half (4% to 2%) by the conclusion of the plan.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Increase the number of students who engage in applied learning opportunities by 10% (777 to 854) by the conclusion of the plan.</p> |

## Increasing Academic Programs in High Demand Fields

OAA streamlined program development processes and created new supports for faculty including a portal page to house program-development resources. Program development in areas such as cybersecurity and respiratory care will move the university toward its goal of launching 15 new academic programs by Fall 2028. Notable developments to date include:

- Completing a comprehensive environmental scan to identify program areas that match student demand and serve New York state's workforce development needs
- Launching six new academic programs in 2023-2024, including cybersecurity, public health, and digital media arts to address high market demand in those fields
- Managing more than 30 academic programs in various stages of development

## New Program Development: Baseline vs. Overall Target

| Goal                              | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | Target Total New Programs Launched by Fall 2028 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Academic Programs Launched</b> | 5                | 6       | 20  |

Data Source: Office of Academic Affairs, Metrics based on programs launched in an academic year.

## Valuing Students' Prior Learning

A core component of SUNY Empire's educational philosophy is recognizing students' college-level learning gained through nontraditional means, such as professional training, self-study, or work experience. Identifying, evaluating, and crediting this learning contributes to student success. We have enhanced our ability to provide credit for prior learning by:

- Partnering with the NYS Department of Labor to incorporate Coursera-based learning into SUNY Empire degree pathways
- Developing grant-funded tools to identify credit for prior learning early in a student's academic career
- Building more resources for students seeking to transfer credits earned through professional training and certifications

## Prior Learning Usage: Baseline vs. Overall Target

| Goal                 | 2022-23 Baseline Data | Overall Target |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Prior Learning Usage | 52.8%                 | 56.0%          |

Data Source: Decision Support. Metrics based on bachelor's-degree-seeking students cleared for graduation with some form of prior learning noted, relative to the overall number of bachelor's-degree-seeking students in an academic year.

## Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Create a teaching and learning environment that promotes mutual respect, advances clear communication, and engenders a culture of belonging, trust, and inclusivity.*

**Goal 1:** Increase satisfaction within the OAA community of faculty and staff based on aggregate satisfaction measures from the SUNY Empire Workplace Climate Survey by at least 4% within the next two survey administration cycles.

**Goal 2:** Reduce gaps in satisfaction between demographic subsets of the OAA community based on aggregate satisfaction measures from the SUNY Empire Workplace Climate Survey by half within the next two survey cycles.

**Goal 3:** Increase students' sense of belonging, trust, and inclusivity by 3% by the conclusion of the plan.

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Fully implement robust continuous improvement processes and effectiveness tracking across the division.*

**Goal 1:** Achieve 100% of academic affairs' units completing annual continuous improvement processes/ reporting that includes closing the loop data in three years.

**Goal 2:** Reach 100% of academic affairs' units utilizing at least one data dashboard to track unit level key performance indicators in three years.

**Goal 3:** Ensure 100% of performance programs and annual plans include measurable goals or objectives aligned with the strategic plan by 2025-26.

## Increasing Satisfaction with Workplace Climate

OAA is committed to improving the university's workplace climate. SUNY Empire will administer its next internal climate survey in late 2024/early 2025. Results will inform tactics to address workplace climate.

### OAA Aggregate Satisfaction Rates: Baseline vs. Overall Target

| OAA Aggregate Satisfaction Rates | 2021-22 Baseline Data | Overall Target |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Faculty                          | 45.6%                 | 49.6%          |
| Staff                            | 57.1%                 | 61.1%          |

*Data Source: Decision Support. Climate Survey Analysis, based on faculty and staff response data collected through the 2021-22 SUNY Empire Workplace Climate Survey.*

## Data Dashboards

Decision Support's dashboard landing page went live in Spring 2024. The page provides centralized, on-demand access to data and insights that enable better planning, decision-making, and measurement of institutional effectiveness across the university. Empire State University community members can access business intelligence dashboards developed by Decision Support about student enrollment, student success, faculty and staff, strategic planning, degrees awarded, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Establishing self-service business intelligence resources has been a long-term goal for Decision Support, guided by the recurring needs of leadership, faculty, and staff, and our transformation into a more data-informed university. Featured dashboards align with the university's strategic priorities and support assessment, program review, and accreditation efforts, and they inform decisions about deploying resources to close the equity gap for student success.

Over the coming year, OAA leaders will work with units and the Office of Decision Support to identify key performance indicators and ensure data dashboards track accordingly. Results from a survey to OAA unit leaders were used to establish an initial baseline on dashboard usage.

### Data Dashboard Use: Baseline vs. Overall Target

| Goal  | 2023-24 Baseline Data | Overall Target |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| Academic Affairs Units Utilizing Dashboards | 56.0%                 | 100%           |

*Data Source: Survey to OAA Units, January 2024.*

## University Assessment Council

To promote organizational effectiveness, OAA created a University Assessment Council (UAC) in early 2024. The UAC informs academic assessment processes, explores potential approaches, and shares best practices on student learning assessment and data utilization to enhance teaching and learning. Primary objectives include:

- Creating an institutional assessment plan for student learning
- Developing and reviewing procedures for academic assessment and program reviews
- Offering feedback on assessment survey instruments

The UAC also advises OAA on academic assessment and program reviews, including courses, programs, and general education.

# Strategic Priority: Raising Our Public Profile

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Position Empire State University as a SUNY leader in effective and innovative applied teaching and learning and student success.*

**Goal 1:** Increase partnerships with external organizations that include opportunities for students to engage in applied learning with the partner organization by 20% (from 391 to 469) by the conclusion of the plan.

**Goal 2:** Increase funding dollars generated through grant- and contract-funded projects that support applied teaching and learning and student success activities by 10% each year (from \$3,590,342 to \$5,256,620) by the conclusion of the plan.

**Goal 3:** Increase externally facing awards and presentations of Empire State University applied teaching, learning and student success activities by 2% annually by the conclusion of the plan.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Become a SUNY leader in applied scholarship and creative activities.*

**Goal 1:** Increase external/externally facing applied scholarship, publications, presentations, and creative activities by 5% each year (from 452 to 549) by the conclusion of the plan.

**Goal 2:** Increase grant and contract funding for applied research and creative activities by 10% each year (from \$3,083,037 to \$4,513,874) by the conclusion of the plan.

**Goal 3:** Increase external awards for scholarships and creative activities by Empire State University faculty, staff, and students by 5% each year (from 13 to 16) by the conclusion of the plan.

## OBJECTIVE 3

*Establish and grow centers for distinction of SUNY, state, and national renown.*

**Goal 1:** Establish three new centers for distinction by the conclusion of the plan.

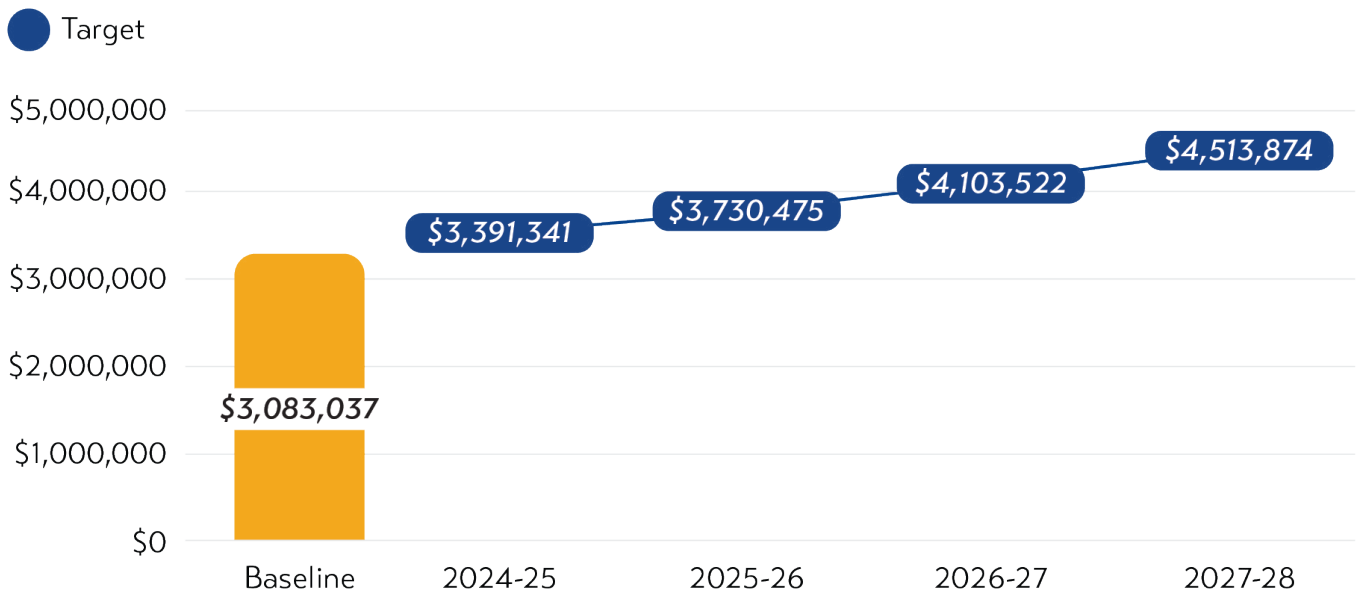
**Goal 2:** Raise at least \$1M from external awards to fund centers for distinction by the conclusion of the plan.

**Goal 3:** Targeted outreach and training for at least 300 faculty, staff, community members through these centers of distinction by the conclusion of the plan.

## Increasing Grant and Contract Funding for Applied Research and Creative Activities

Grant and contract funding is critical to support applied research and creative activities that raise the university's public profile. The baseline for this goal, which parses funding for research and creative activities, is \$3,083,037. We aim to increase grant and contract funding by 10% each year for the next five years, resulting in a targeted amount of \$4,513,874.

## Grant and Contract Funding: Baseline vs. Overall Target

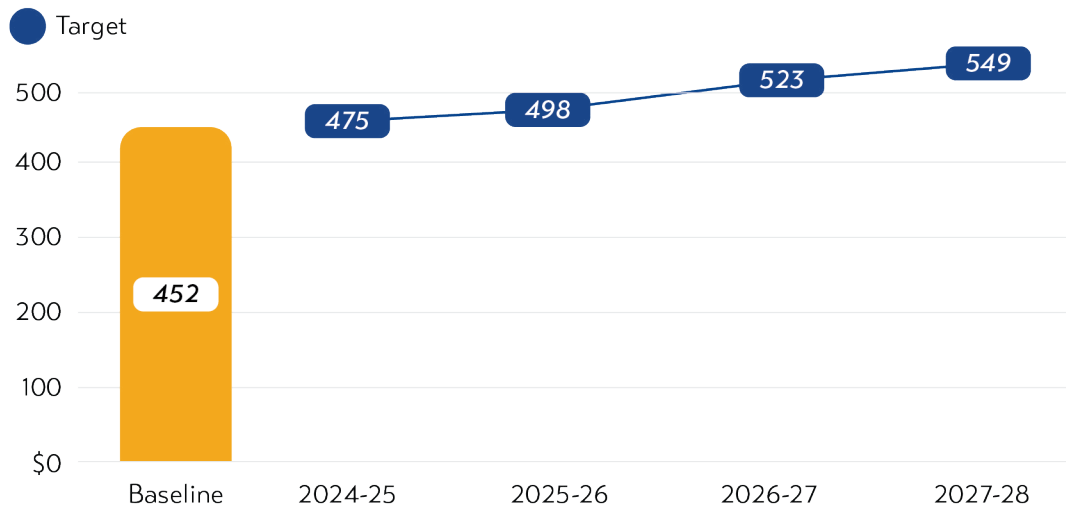


Data Source: Office of Sponsored Programs, as of April 29, 2024. Based on active awards qualified by Sponsored Programs as "research and creative activities".

## Increasing Publications, Presentations, and Creative Activities

To be a SUNY leader in applied scholarship and creative activities, SUNY Empire aims to increase externally facing scholarship, publications, presentations, and creative activities. Members of the SUNY Empire community have reported 452 publications, presentations, and creative activities in the past year. Assuming an increase of 5% each year for the next four years, we expect that number to increase to 549 by 2028.

## Publications, Presentations and Creative Activities: Baseline vs. Overall Target



Data Source: Survey to SUNY Empire Community, January 2024.

## Establish and Grow Centers of Distinction

Centers of distinction will showcase SUNY Empire's vibrant academic community and raise our profile with grant agencies, the higher education sector, and the public. SUNY Empire plans to establish three new centers of distinction that will help the university participate in state and national research and education programs. Centers of distinction will bring together members of the SUNY Empire community using multi-disciplinary approaches to address real-world challenges. They will be self-supporting net contributors to the university's budget.



# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

## Summary of 2023-24 Activities

The Office of Administration and Finance is committed to its fiduciary and compliance responsibilities across SUNY, the Research Foundation, and the Empire State University Foundation. Over the last year, the department reviewed SUNY policies and guidelines and implemented them in procurement, travel, contracting, accounting, and reporting processes.

Administration and Finance also established individual processes for SUNY, the Research Foundation, and the Empire State University Foundation to ensure each entity maintains compliance. A campaign to train departments on fiscal stewardship and prudence is underway. The Office of Human Resources also began implementing service-oriented offerings to support and recognize employees and supervisors.

### Highlights from 2023-24 included:

- Implementing checks and balances system to ensure accounting practices for all entities are accurate, compliant, and timely
- Creating a university-wide chart of accounts, divisional frameworks, and related roll-up reporting in SUNY's online system
- Strengthening e-procurement software instruction and training materials
- Streamlining procurement and travel processes in accordance with SUNY and NYS policy and practices
- Migrating paper onboarding documents for new employees to an online module

## Strategic Priority: Student Success

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Develop a strategic-plan-centered budgeting model that can be widely implemented and assessed for effectiveness throughout the university structure.*

**Goal 1:** Create a budget rubric that prioritizes budgeting in support of strategic plan initiatives and measures initiative success year over year.

**Goal 2:** In year one, create an ITS project prioritization process and rubric in alignment with strategic priorities. \*

\* This goal was subsumed under the Office of Administration and Finance before Marty Gang assumed leadership of ITS in December 2023.

**Goal 3:** Beginning in year three and continuing through year five, assess the impact to the initiative metric by comparing the investment against increases in retention rates year over year to determine continuation of funding.

### Budget Rubric

When work began on this objective and goal, we determined that the language of both needed to be modified to be measurable. Original goal language appears in the [appendix](#).

In the current budget cycle, budget requests of \$1,000 or more above or below the total account budget from the prior year require a description and justification, with explicit alignment to the university's strategic plan. Funding requests will be assessed during the next budget cycle, and funding allocations will be evaluated based on evidence and impact.

# Strategic Priority: Academic and Inclusive Excellence

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Develop a SUNY Empire talent management plan that identifies and supports the recruitment, development, and retention of a diverse employee base.*

**Goal 1:** Require compliance with meaningful implicit bias training for all faculty and staff that agree to serve on search committees so that 100% of search committee members complete training every two years.

**Goal 2:** Implement ongoing advertising and recruitment possibilities to a wider audience and increase underrepresented faculty and staff recruitment by 2% each year for five years.

### Bias Training

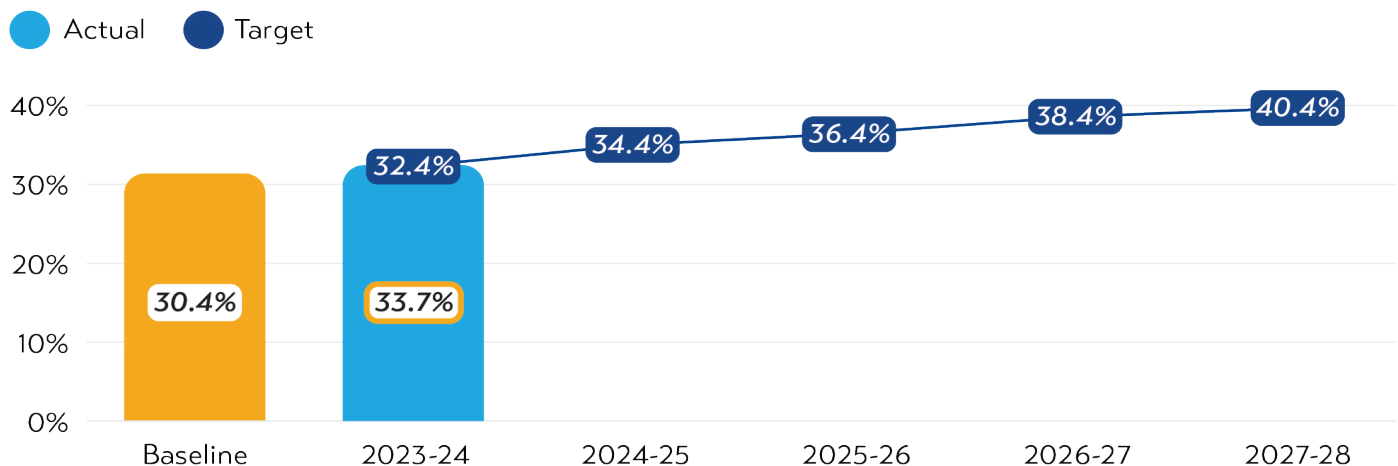
Bias training will help create a more inclusive culture by helping employees recognize inherent bias when hiring for open university positions. We are researching pathways that best meet the university's needs, with implementation expected in Fall 2025.

### Advertising and Recruitment

Administration and Finance established a baseline using data collected over the last fiscal year through the university's HR software platform, Interview Exchange/Hirezon. Applicants from historically underrepresented groups comprised 30.4% of total job applicants in 2023-24. This value will serve as our baseline from which to improve.

During 2023-24, advertising on the SUNY Empire website, Higher Ed Jobs, and Indeed yielded higher percentages of applicants from historically underrepresented groups than any other source. Efforts are underway to improve our internal website postings, and SUNY Empire is working with Job Elephant and LinkedIn to expand applicant pools.

### Percentage of Underrepresented Applicants: Baseline vs. Overall Target



*Data Source: Hirezon applicant data from the Office of Human Resources (as of July 25, 2024). Based on applicants that reported a race or ethnicity. Historically underrepresented applicants are those reporting an ethnicity of Hispanic or Latino, or report identifying as non-white or affiliated with two or more races. Metrics based on fiscal year.*

# Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Create and maintain a service-oriented, compliant infrastructure within administration and finance that is centered on strategic priorities in service to student, faculty, and staff success.*

**Goal 1:** In year one, all operational units will create and communicate clear and accessible documentation to guide faculty and staff in relevant processes and procedures.

**Goal 2:** In year three, assess user satisfaction and establish a baseline to measure services throughout the division. Increase overall user satisfaction by 10% (year over year). Utilize yearly surveys to assess effectiveness.

**Goal 3:** Annually review processes with working groups comprised of stakeholders across the university who can help guide improvements and future priorities.

**Goal 4:** In the first year, refine, communicate, and promote ITS project prioritization and the project management intranet dashboard with completion dates and timelines in alignment with strategic priorities. \*

*\* This goal was subsumed under the Office of Administration and Finance before Marty Gang assumed leadership of ITS in December 2023.*

### Documentation and User Satisfaction

All departments have created, communicated, and posted online clear documentation to guide faculty and staff in relevant processes and procedures. Virtual training and drop-in sessions are held regularly. The Office of Administration and Finance is preparing to distribute a division-wide survey in early fall 2024 to assess user satisfaction and establish a baseline.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Strengthen the administrative foundation of the Empire State University Foundation with sound, compliant, and streamlined policies, processes, and reporting so the executive director and the board can focus on increasing their philanthropic engagement.*

**Goal 1:** In year three, implement a relevant account management software program that can appropriately identify and report on the various program funds, budgets, and accounts managed by the Empire State University Foundation.

**Goal 2:** In year two, develop monthly reporting and send it to all account holders 10 days after the end of each month.

**Goal 3:** In year one, draft and implement sound policies and processes in accordance with SUNY Policy 9600.

### Policies and Processes

The university has drafted, implemented, and distributed to account managers sound policies and processes in accordance with SUNY Policy 9600. Account balance reporting takes place quarterly. We expect to achieve monthly reporting in year two.

# Strategic Priority: Raising Our Public Profile

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Strengthen and elevate awareness of the university by highlighting and promoting its physical footprint across the state and suggesting where and how to align our presence with our priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.*

**Goal 1:** In year one, develop a baseline requirement for a physical presence and assess current location agreements across the state to evaluate the need for that presence.

**Goal 2:** Beginning in year one, develop relationships with community college facility colleagues across the state to create a catalogue of unused space at their locations. Assess where there might be mutual benefit for a SUNY Empire presence to be co-located among their student population.

## Space Management

We launched an internal operations webpage that summarizes information on all SUNY Empire locations, including costs, lease-end dates, and visitor/student in-person presence. Since 98% of instruction is delivered online, we continue to evaluate space requirements as location leases expire. Lease savings are returned to the university's operating fund and are redistributed throughout the institution through annual budgeting requests.

We continue to develop relationships with community colleges and agencies across the state to identify mutually beneficial co-location opportunities. We co-located our Hartsdale location in July 2024 at Westchester Community College in Yonkers for an annual net cost savings of \$319,284.

An objective to raise our public profile through the Office of Human Resources will be added to our strategic plan in the upcoming year.





# OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT

## Summary of 2023-24 Activities

Our advancement team evolved in 2023-2024. We hired an executive director for corporate and foundation relations and a prospect researcher, and we restructured for operational effectiveness. The following is our report on strategic plan goals established for fiscal year 2023/24.

### Highlights from 2023-24 include:

- Completing division restructuring; established performance plans with clear metrics for the entire team
- Launching pilots for testing (and to inform ongoing planning): crowdfunding, loyalty society, and combined current student/alumni events
- Raising \$121,586 through 285 donations to Go Higher for Empire (our Day of Giving)
- Introduced the Foundation's Special Project Fund granting program; as of this writing, \$144,000 has been awarded to 17 internal grantees
- Launching a Corporate and Foundation Relations (CFR) program and established a corporate relations cross-divisional working group

## Strategic Priority: Student Success

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Broaden alumni engagement to help students build connections to the institution and each other.*

**Goal 1:** Conduct an initial audit to establish a baseline of alumni engagement with departments across the university and create a collaborative group from those departments to strategize the most effective use of alumni to contribute to student success. After the audit, expand alumni engagement to help students build connections to the institution and each other by an identified percentage annually, based on baseline.

**Goal 2:** In year one, work with the alumni board to clarify mission, priorities, and short-term, measurable goals, and strategies for achieving them. In years two through five, implement working groups focused on those short-term goals, and create mechanisms for goal tracking and membership review process.

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Grow support for university strategic priorities, with a focus on student success initiatives.*

**Goal 1:** Establish annual revenue goals for individual programs in year one. Revisit annually to determine if additional funds are needed and to gauge success and sustainability of funding for programs for students and donor perspectives.

### Audit

Advancement began conducting an informal audit of other universities in the alumni space. A formal audit is expected in year two. Alumni Engagement partnered with Student Success on joint events and with Career Services to provide alumni speakers for a range of events. A survey on communication and engagement preferences was distributed to all alumni in June 2024. Results will inform future planning.

## Alumni Board

In Fall 2023, the Alumni Board established working groups for events, alumni awards, and the Day of Giving. Historically, turnover in this group has been high, and recruiting new members is challenging. The director of alumni engagement will be tasked with working on high-level strategies for this group.

## Annual Revenue Goals

Advancement is working with the finance team to clarify program budgets. Program leads must establish a need and case for funding so the Office for Advancement can articulate that need to potential donors. Work to establish revenue goals for specific programs will continue in year two.

Our new executive director of corporate and foundation relations collaborated with program leaders from Student Success to submit three Foundation proposals in Spring 2024. Two requested funding for Prior Learning Assessment fees for students in the Empire Promise Program, and one requested support for basic needs, such as the virtual food pantry and fees for Chromebooks.

# Strategic Priority: Academic and Inclusive Excellence

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Build university-wide awareness of SUNY Empire philanthropic opportunities to empower academic/program faculty and staff to participate in and support academic and inclusive excellence initiatives.*

**Goal 1:** In year one, develop a leadership training program (cabinet, deans, and director levels) to build capacity for community and fundraising engagement that promotes SUNY Empire's academic and inclusive excellence. In years two through five, expand participation with a goal of training 100% of leadership by the conclusion of the plan.

**Goal 2:** In year one, develop tools to educate faculty and program-level staff on seeking outside funding, and establish a schedule for presenting/engaging with each department on an annual basis in subsequent years, with a goal of at least one member of each department trained by the conclusion of the plan.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Engage the Office of Advancement as academic and inclusive excellence strategic goals are established by other divisions to support funding opportunities.*

**Goal 1:** As early as possible in the strategic plan and priority development process, identify programs and initiatives with the best potential for collaboration and fundability; implement the collaboration in years two through five through pursuit of outside funding; increase requests to outside funders, as well as funding by identified percentage annually relative to the baseline metric.

## Leadership Training

Leaders across the university participated in two sessions with an outside consultant in September 2023 and March 2024 to help shape "big picture" fundraising ideas. To date, the management team has met with 80% of deans, academic leadership, and program directors in individualized trainings to mold "fundable" ideas and help the community understand their role in fundraising. A list of 34 potential ideas has been created and reviewed by the provost and president.

## Faculty and Staff Education

We focused this first year on leadership training and understanding which tools and education would be most helpful. We created a rubric to help faculty and staff determine whether their ideas/programs are suitable for outside funding and the steps needed to make funding a reality. Advancement will hold a poster session at the 2024 Fall Academic Conference and have a quarterly presence in meetings with deans. An internal RFP process to increase faculty/staff knowledge of CFR funding opportunities will roll out in Fall 2024.

Additionally, we are enhancing awareness of Foundation activities among faculty and staff by labeling all community engagement events as “funded by the Empire State University Foundation.”

Our CFR program was established in FY2023-24; an executive director of CFR was hired in December 2023, and works with the Sponsored Projects Office, the Partnership Office, Government Relations, and the President’s Office to seek and refine “fundable” ideas that align with priorities established by institutional funders.

## Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Reinvigorate Foundation Board to increase contributions (time, talent, treasure) to institution.*

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**Goal 1:** In year one, work with the appropriate committee of the Foundation Board to holistically assess the current board. In years two through five, seek to add 5-7 new board members with skills and capacity that diversify the board membership and meet University needs.

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**Goal 2:** Increase board giving by 2% annually, with \$250,000 set as the baseline.

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Review and restructure Office for Advancement operations to maximize effectiveness and grow staff engagement with other departments.*

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**Goal 1:** Align performance programs, resources, and professional development opportunities with strategic priorities, including the establishment of metrics for all team members.

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**Goal 2:** In year one, review data systems and ease of reporting measurables, streamline processes, and implement appropriate software solutions to enable accurate, timely reporting on relevant data. In years two through five, implement a continuous improvement, evidence- and accountability-driven advancement operation.

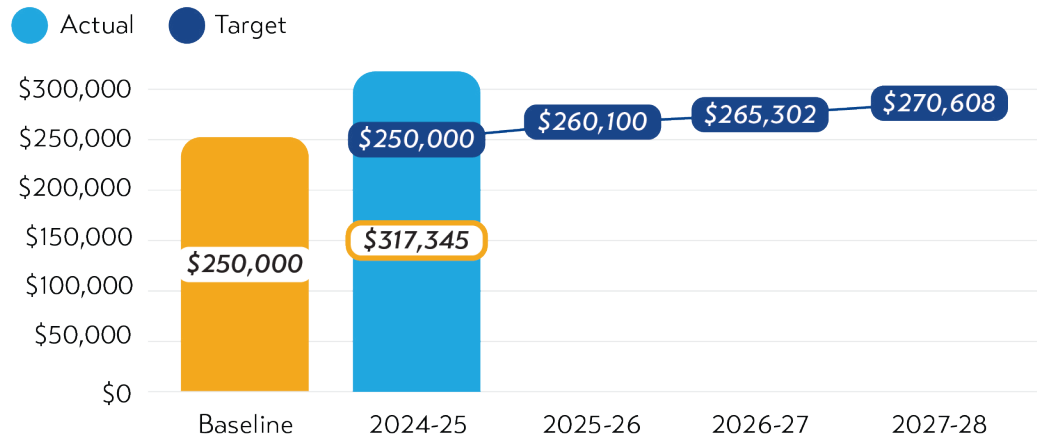
## Board Assessment

We have assessed the current board and identified areas for greater representation. We also added a new member in the spring. The Advancement team has presented a slate of board prospects who are alumni and is working on a list of prospects from the community. The board’s nominating committee, which is responsible for recruiting new members, is also revising board roles/responsibilities to reflect giving expectations.

## Board Giving

One hundred percent of board members made gifts in the 2023-24 fiscal year, totaling \$317,345.

### Board Member Giving: Baseline vs. Overall Target



### Internal Restructuring

Advancement restructuring is complete with the creation of a three-person management team under the vice president. Performance programs with metrics are completed for 100% of Advancement team members.

### Data Systems

We created a monthly report of fundraising results, which is distributed to the team and leadership. The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database replacement is now underway. This CRM will provide more timely and detailed reporting, the ability to automate labor-intensive tasks, and the ability to read and enter data via mobile devices.

## Strategic Priority: Raising Our Public Profile

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Increase contributed revenue to support strategic goals established by other departments.*

**Goal 1:** Increase revenue (total philanthropic commitments) by 2% annually from a baseline set at \$1,000,000 in 2023-24.

**Goal 2:** Grow donor retention rate by 1% annually from a baseline set at 51% in 2023-24.

**Goal 3:** Reinvigorate employee giving by 1% annually from a baseline set at 13% in 2023-24.

**Goal 4:** Build out the Corporate and Foundation Relations program with the following goal:

- In year two, submit at least 12 funding proposals totaling \$500,000 in funding requests; and, achieve a funding yield rate of at least 38% (\$190,000).

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Position the Office for Advancement as an internal and external resource for the institution.*

**Goal 1:** Plan and execute increased events across the state (both alumni and community) by an identified percentage annually based on baseline, as well as on surveys of audiences (to be established in year one).

**Goal 2:** Seek opportunities to work with other departments, such as partnerships and sponsored programs, to maximize revenue through the work of the executive director of corporate and foundation relations. Establish baseline in year one and determine goals and annual percentage increase from that baseline in years two through five.

## Philanthropic Commitments

As of June 30, 2024, total philanthropic commitments were \$ 1,404,302—exceeding our initial goal of \$1,000,000. A baseline has been established at \$1,000,000, with a 2% annual increase.

|                              | Current Year FY24  |              | Prior Year FY23    |              | Five Year Average  |              |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
|                              | DOLLARS            | DONORS       | DOLLARS            | DONORS       | DOLLARS            | DONORS       |
| <b>Individuals</b>           | \$634,099          | 1,135        | \$528,206          | 1,417        | \$413,249          | 1,796        |
| <b>Organizations</b>         | \$412,902          | 45           | \$582,886          | 46           | \$477,266          | 53           |
| <b>Bequests</b>              | \$357,301          | 18           | \$312,201          | 35           | \$332,924          | 22           |
| <b>Sub Total</b>             | <b>\$1,404,302</b> |              | <b>\$1,423,293</b> |              | <b>\$1,223,439</b> |              |
| <b>Ehrmann Bequest</b>       |                    |              | \$1,687,561        | 1            |                    |              |
| <b>Total New Commitments</b> | <b>\$1,404,302</b> | <b>1,198</b> | <b>\$3,110,854</b> | <b>1,499</b> | <b>\$1,560,952</b> | <b>1,871</b> |

Data Source: Office of Advancement. Metrics based on fiscal year.

Go Higher for Empire (our Day of Giving) was held on March 21, 2024, with a goal of 250 donors in 24 hours; we were successful in raising \$121,586 through 285 donations.

A pilot crowdfunding campaign was conducted for biology and chemistry lab kits but raised only \$2,256 through 37 donations toward a \$10,000 goal. We plan to revise future goals to begin at a lower level (\$5,000 and under) and clarify expectations for participating faculty/program staff to increase engagement and promotional efforts to a wider network.

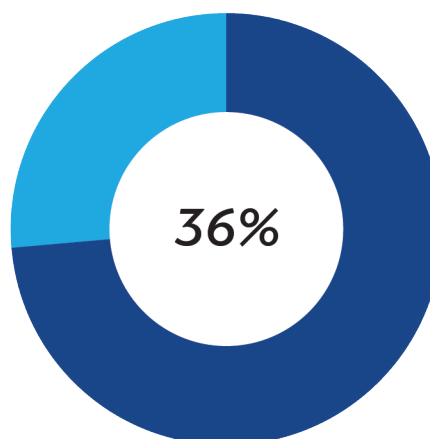


## Employee Giving

Employees responded positively to our Go Higher for Empire/Day of Giving with 134 employees making a gift that day; 48 (36%) of them were first-time donors to the university.

Student support is a driving force for employee gifts. Employee gifts to Go Higher for Empire landed in four areas: 48 gave to the Nettleton Scholarship; 24 to the student scholarship fund; 57 to the unrestricted annual fund; and 9 to the faculty excellence fund.

## Percentage of first-time donors

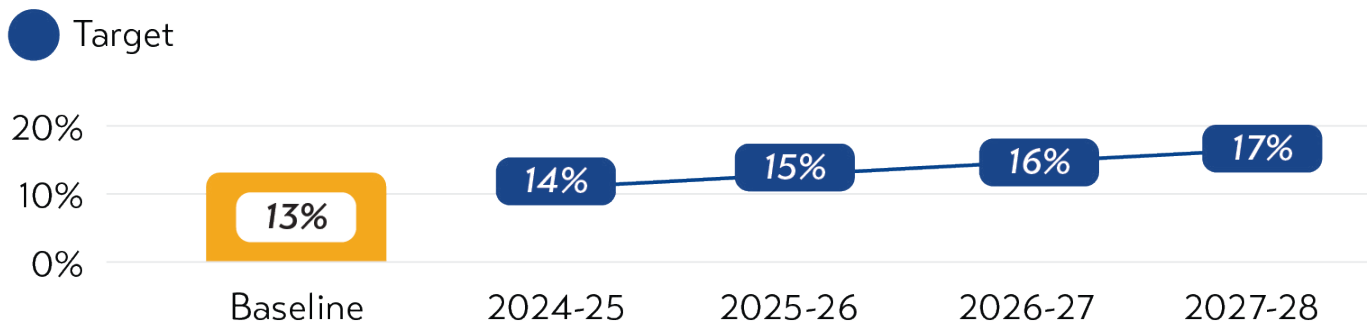


**134** employees made a gift during *Go Higher for Empire / Day of Giving*

**48** of those employees were first-time donors

A baseline employee giving rate has been established at 13% for 2023-24 (based on 148 employees who made gifts in the 2023-24 fiscal year and 1,1124 employees as of Fall 2023), with a target year-over-year increase of 1% in years two through five.

## Employee Giving Rate: Baseline vs. Overall Target



*Data Source: Office of Advancement – total employees making gifts per fiscal year. Total employee counts each fall, based on pay period 17 as reported to IPEDS annually.*

## Donor Loyalty and Retention

We rolled out a loyalty program, Empire True, which offers benefits to donors who give for three consecutive years. An initial mailing went out in June 2023 that had an 18% response rate. Our total donor count as of May 31, 2024, was 946. We completed a lost-donor analysis for the past five years, which showed that most single-gift donors gave in crisis situations, such as student emergency support during the pandemic. Using our FY2023-24 donor renewal rate of 51% as a baseline, we anticipate a 1% increase annually.

## Events

Most in-person alumni events this year served as tests for future planning. Alumni were surveyed in June 2024 to better understand their event preferences. The director of community engagement has been tasked with communicating more regularly with stakeholders across the university to increase attendance and build a greater sense of community.

Alumni engagement staff planned eight events and community engagement staff planned 14 events, totaling 22 online and in-person events in FY2023-24. We are evaluating whether counting the number of events, or participants, is the proper measure for this goal.

We also launched a program to raise SUNY Empire’s public profile by strategically attending and sponsoring more external events, increasing visibility for the president and other leadership. The Foundation supported 14 events (tickets or sponsorship) this fiscal year.

## Corporate and Foundation Relations (CFR)

Our executive director of corporate and foundation relations started in December 2023 and established a Corporate Relations Committee that is forging relationships with colleagues in Sponsored Projects, Partnerships, and Government Relations. Currently, the CFR annual average baseline is seven submitted proposals, an average of \$272,209 requested, and an average yield of dollars received of 36%. For year two, our goal is to submit 12 proposals, request \$500,000, and yield a rate of 38%.

Because CFR is a new program, goals for each subsequent year will be established based on the previous year’s performance. New CFR prospects have been identified, and the portfolio has grown from 35 to 75 institutional funders. Beyond the Corporate Relations Committee, the executive director is working with the deputy chief of staff for government relations and the vice president for advancement to drive presidential policy priorities. A baseline for partnership work will be established in FY2024/25.



# OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

## Summary of 2023-24 Activities

In 2023/2024, the Office of Communications set baselines for and began making progress on the strategic priorities detailed in the university's strategic plan. Efforts centered on initiatives to improve/enhance student satisfaction with and participation in our statewide commencement ceremonies; increase the visibility of academic and DEI efforts and stories; improve internal communications by increasing student and employee opt-in rates to our emergency alert system; and raise our public profile through wider geographic outreach, attaining placements in more prominent media/media outlets, increasing social media followers and engagement, and positioning the university president as a thought leader in public higher education. A number of goals have been revised to reflect the identification of baselines and plan-based targets, as well as for brevity and clarity.

### Highlights from 2023-24 included:

- Doubling our staff in 2023-2024, allowing us to expand our efforts
- Procuring critical media monitoring and placement tools and software
- Launching a new [SUNY Empire News](#) site with information to elevate faculty expertise and provide resources for media outlets
- Launching a formal media-training program for key university stakeholders
- Securing several high-profile podcast appearances, an op-ed placement, and a feature article to raise President Vollendorf's profile in the higher education industry

## Strategic Priority: Student Success

### OBJECTIVE 1

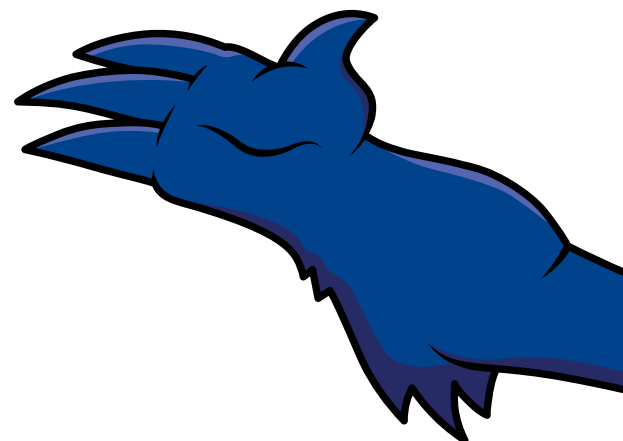
*Continually increase participation and satisfaction levels of students at our commencement ceremonies.*

**Goal 1:** Increase student satisfaction with commencement webpages by 2% each year by the conclusion of plan.

**Goal 2:** Increase student satisfaction with student line-up by 1.5% each year by the conclusion of plan.

**Goal 3:** Increase student satisfaction with the regalia ordering/purchasing/rental experience by 1.5% each year by the conclusion of plan.

**Goal 4:** Increase student participation levels proportional to enrollments each year by the conclusion of plan.



## Commencement Survey

In 2023-2024, the Office of Communications used the 2022-2023 post-commencement student survey as a baseline for progress. The survey was administered by the university's Office of Decision Support and was sent to all students who were eligible to take part in commencement that term, yielding a 23% response rate. We focused on the aspects of commencement with the lowest reported levels of satisfaction. This included the university's commencement webpages (81% satisfied), the student line-up process (75.5% satisfied), and the regalia ordering process (88.5% satisfied). In addition, we aimed to increase student participation proportional to enrollments at our four annual statewide commencement ceremonies year-over-year for the next five years.

We have begun work to improve student satisfaction with commencement.

For the first time ever, we mailed diploma covers and tassels to students who RSVP'd for a commencement ceremony but did not attend.

We are interviewing regalia vendors to find a company that better meets our students' needs in terms of quality, lead time, and customer service.

We are implementing a plan to use the Student Activity Fee to purchase regalia for commencement-eligible students, lessening their financial burden. This will take effect for our winter 2024 commencement ceremony.

### Student satisfaction with commencement website, line up and regalia ordering: 2022-23 Baseline vs. Overall Target

|                          | 2022-23<br>Baseline Data | Overall Target |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Commencement Webpages    | 81%                      | 85%            |
| Student Line-up          | 75%                      | 81%            |
| Regalia Ordering Process | 88%                      | 94%            |

Data Source: Decision Support. Annual Commencement Satisfaction Survey, June 2023.

Metrics based on responses indicating "satisfied" or "very satisfied".



# Strategic Priority: Academic and Inclusive Excellence

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Increase visibility of academic and DEI efforts to help internal and external stakeholders understand our commitment to academic and inclusive excellence across all aspects of the organization.*

**Goal 1:** Increase visibility of academic excellence related content by 10% annually from the 2023 baseline of 10 media hits per calendar year.

**Goal 2:** Promote a culture of recognition that celebrates outstanding academic achievements by students, faculty, staff, and alumni across diverse disciplines by securing a 10% increase in media hits on this content annually from the 2023 baseline of 15 media hits per calendar year.

## Media Placements

A review of our media placements over the past year helped us learn which strategies and messages resonate with our audiences and the media. Student awards and profiles get the most attention from media outlets, especially when we target the students' hometown media. Although events, new academic programs, and faculty awards and research are meaningful internally, they get little to no pickup externally. However, the media often seeks our expertise on newsworthy topics, such as the opioid crisis, nursing shortage, and school safety.

The language for goals 1 and 2 has been revised, given the determination of our baseline measures. Refer to [appendix](#) for original language.

Moving forward, our reporting measure will be based on the number of academic and DEI-related media hits for a calendar year (January 1 to December 31), captured through our media monitoring tool, Meltwater. Our baseline measures are 10 DEI-related media hits and 15 academic-achievement related media hits based on the 2023 calendar year.

We will use Meltwater to target and pitch DEI-focused media outlets and establish relationships with reporters and editors at these outlets.

# Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

## \*OBJECTIVE 1

*Improve internal communication to ensure that our internal audiences have consistent and reliable access to information.*

**Goal 1:** Develop a communication plan to increase Everbridge employee opt in from 33% to 65% and student opt in from 9% to 50% by year 5.

**Goal 2:** Facilitate regular cross-departmental "Storyteller" meetings to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing, aiming for a minimum of two joint projects or initiatives per month.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Align team performance programs with the strategic plan.*

**Goal 1:** Ensure that 100% of communications and events performance programs include measurable personal goals or objectives aligned with the strategic plan within one year.

*\*Objective 1 was revised for brevity. Goal 1 was revised to represent a broader, plan-based target rather than an annual target. Refer to [Appendix](#) for original language.*

## OBJECTIVE 3

*Assemble and maintain a group of media-savvy experts.*

**Goal 1:** Maintain the capacity of faculty, staff, and leadership to contribute to the strength and effectiveness of outreach efforts through at least one media training refresher each year.

*Goal 1 was modified and merged with Goal 2. See [Appendix](#) for original language.*

## Everbridge

The Office of Communications is responsible for many of the internal communications our university community receives. One opportunity for improvement within internal communications is increasing the number of employees and students

who opt in to text-message alerts from our Everbridge emergency alert system. These alerts include weather warnings, delayed openings/early closings, and network issues/outages.



We plan to identify communication channels and deploy messaging to determine barriers to opting in and to encourage opting in among employees and students. We will continuously refine our approach based on annual usage data and user feedback. The measure will be total number of employee and student opt ins versus total number of employees and students. We will pull usage data on December 30 of each calendar year.

## Storytellers Group

In 2023, the Office of Communications established a “Storytellers Group” — a cross-departmental group of individuals who meet monthly to share content ideas from their respective areas throughout the university and across our statewide footprint. Ideas generated are used by the Office of Communications and others responsible for content generation. Story ideas pitched and executed across various media will be tallied annually to assess progress in this area.

## Team Performance Programs

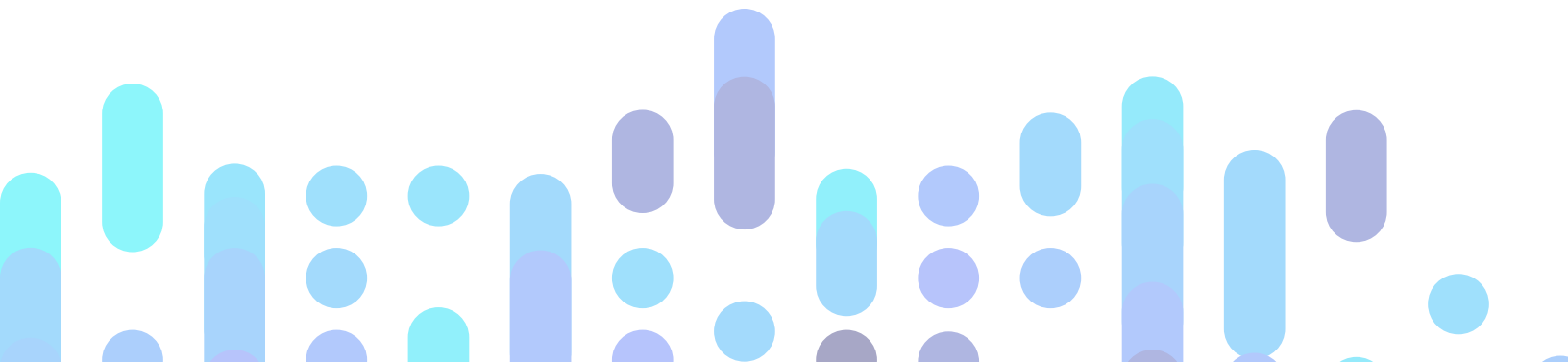
Directors within the Office of Communications have begun aligning team performance programs with the strategic plan and documenting that each program has measurable personal goals. At this time, 63% of our professional staff programs have measurable goals integrated, and work will continue as updated performance programs become due throughout the year and as new team members are added and/or promoted.

## Media Training

We are also focused on ensuring the university has a bench of informed, media-savvy experts. In 2023/2024, the Office of Communications organized formal training with a media professional for nearly 30 members of leadership, faculty, and staff. Eight individuals—all Cabinet members—received targeted, personalized training. Twenty more received an hour-long course on media dos and don'ts.

We used this formal training to create a media training roadshow to train individuals and groups across the university, including members of the Provost’s Council. We will continue deploying this training on an as-needed basis and as new leadership members join the university.

We will next focus on crisis communications training over the coming year. Going forward, our primary goal for this objective will be to increase faculty, staff, and leadership capacity to contribute to the strength and effectiveness of outreach efforts through annual media training opportunities.



# Strategic Priority: Raising Our Public Profile

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Increase awareness of Empire State University's brand.*

**Goal 1:** Expand reach into national markets by focusing content geographically and securing four news or op-ed placements or mentions per year in national higher-education publications.

**Goal 2:** Increase media mentions by 20% annually through the 2028 calendar year.

**Goal 3:** Obtain and promote a minimum of one student, faculty, or alumni profile per month (12/year) that tells our story in a unique or interesting way.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Increase Empire State University's organic social media followers and engagement.*

**Goal 1:** Increase organic social media engagement rates (likes, shares, comments, reposts) on our social channels by 10% annually through the 2028 calendar year.

**Goal 2:** Increase organic social media net follower growth on our primary social channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) by 10% through the 2028 calendar year.

*Goals 1 and 2 were revised for clarity. See [Appendix](#) for original language. As time goes on, we may further modify based on user preferences and engagement.*

## OBJECTIVE 3

*Establish President Vollendorf as a thought leader in public higher education.*

**Goal 1:** Increase the president's Instagram followers by 40% each year over the next five years and LinkedIn followers by 20% each year over the duration of the plan.

**Goal 2:** In concert with the offices of academic affairs, advancement, and government relations, secure four high-quality public speaking or broadcasting events for President Vollendorf per year (roughly one per quarter).

## Brand Awareness – National Markets

We are making progress in enhancing brand awareness, particularly in the podcast arena, while striving to improve the quality of our media placements. By closely monitoring the number of news and op-ed placements in national higher-education publications, we can demonstrate our brand's increasing presence and credibility in this sector. Insights gained from these placements help us identify media outlets that are responding positively to our initiatives, allowing us to allocate resources more effectively and refine our approach for a greater impact in national markets. With one op-ed placement achieved in 2023, we are setting an ambitious target of reaching 20 news or op-ed placements by the end of the 2028 calendar year.

## Media Mentions

We will use Meltwater media monitoring tools to track media mentions across media outlets at the end of each calendar year. With 3,000 media mentions during the 2023 calendar year as our baseline, Goal 2 was revised to increase media mentions by 20% annually through 2028.

## Social Media

To gauge our success in boosting organic social media engagement, we are monitoring the increase in engagement rates across our social channels compared to the prior period. Understanding our social media performance informs decisions on content, timing, and engagement strategies for improved outcomes.

The Office of Communications took a metrics snapshot of each of our social media channels at the beginning of the calendar year and will use that as a baseline against which to assess progress. Baseline engagement rates by channel were Facebook 54%, Instagram 1%, and LinkedIn 6%.

## Social Media Engagement by Channel: Baselines vs. Overall Target

| Social Media Platform | Baseline | Overall Target |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------|
| Facebook              | 54%      | 64%            |
| Instagram             | 1%       | 11%            |
| LinkedIn              | 6%       | 16%            |



Data Source: Office of Communications.

## Net Follower Growth

We have put the most effort into Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, as these are the social media channels with the most engagement and growth. We do see the need to cull some of our channels with no engagement (Threads, Pinterest) and allocate more resources to channels that engage younger students, such as TikTok. We know our content is attractive to followers on Instagram and LinkedIn, but our ability to expand our reach and influence on new social platforms is crucial for brand visibility, audience engagement, and growth with new and existing audience demographics. Understanding our follower growth will help us assess the impact of our social media efforts and adjust our strategies to attract and retain a larger audience.

We'll use insights gained from analyzing our organic social media follower growth to refine and optimize our social media strategies. We will identify which tactics and content types contribute most to follower acquisition and focus our efforts on those areas. We will also use this information to adapt our messaging and engagement strategies to attract and retain that a following.

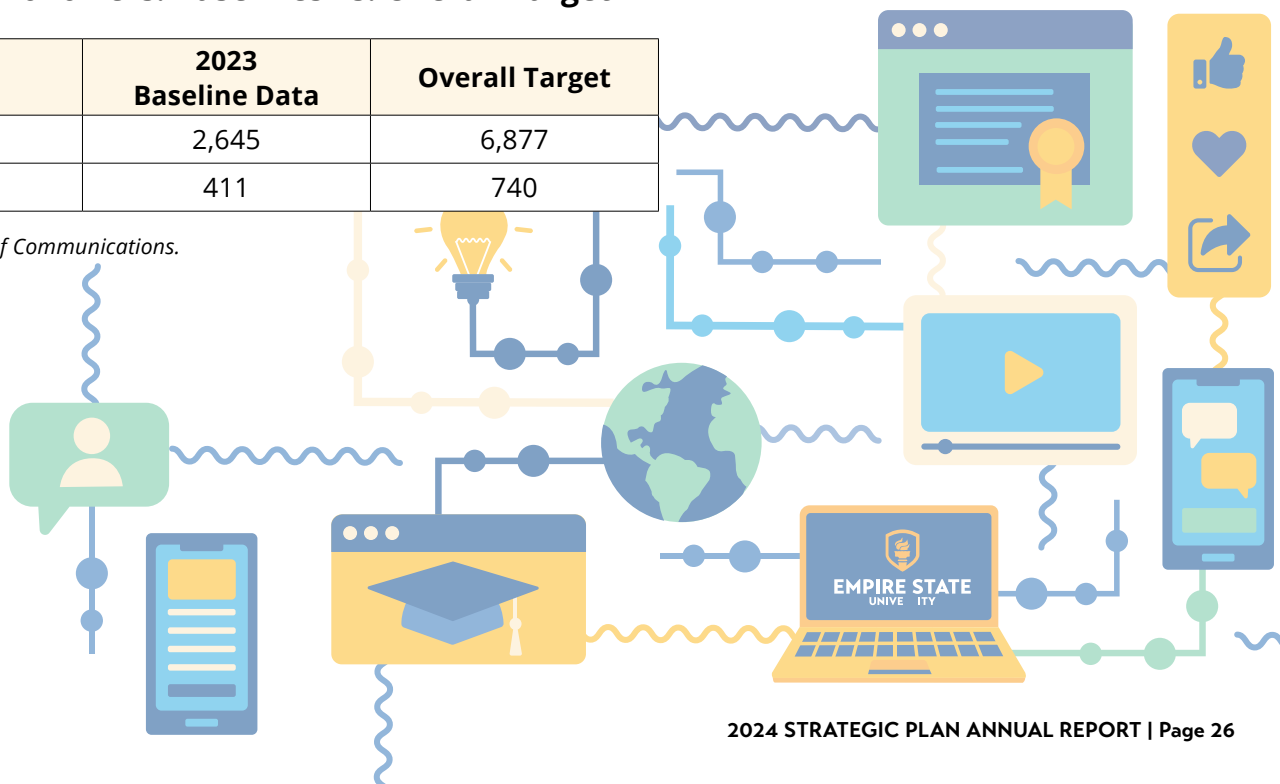
## President Vollendorf's Social Media Follower Growth

Monitoring follower growth on each platform annually through built-in social media analytics will help us track the president's influence as a higher education leader. An increasing follower count signifies heightened interest and engagement with her content, establishing increased credibility. Analyzing follower growth will guide us in positioning the president as a thought leader through tailored and consistent content based on her objectives, as well as audience interests. By adjusting engagement tactics and posting schedules based on peak engagement periods, we can enhance content impact and attract new followers, which may lead to new opportunities to raise the president's and institution's public profile. Continuous monitoring will ensure data-informed decisions.

## Social Media Followers: Baselines vs. Overall Target

| Social Media Platform | 2023 Baseline Data | Overall Target |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| LinkedIn              | 2,645              | 6,877          |
| Instagram             | 411                | 740            |

Data Source: Office of Communications.





# OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

## Summary of 2023-24 Activities

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) continues to help build an inclusive environment for students and employees. ODEI was instrumental in addressing key components of the Strategic Plan over the last year, with Assistant Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Xiomara Giordano joining SUNY Empire in October 2023.

### Highlights from 2023-24 included:

- Completing a listening tour of all SUNY Empire locations to understand community (faculty and staff) needs
- Establishing Open Hours for students to discuss their aspirations for DEI at the university
- Co-chairing the PRODiG Committee with the associate provost for faculty and academic excellence to create a comprehensive plan to support faculty diversity
- Solidifying the charter and plan for a bias incident reporting structure, developed a bias incident response webpage, and formed a bias incident response team
- Facilitating events and initiatives aligned with SUNY Empire's strategic priorities

## Strategic Priority: Student Success

### OBJECTIVE 1

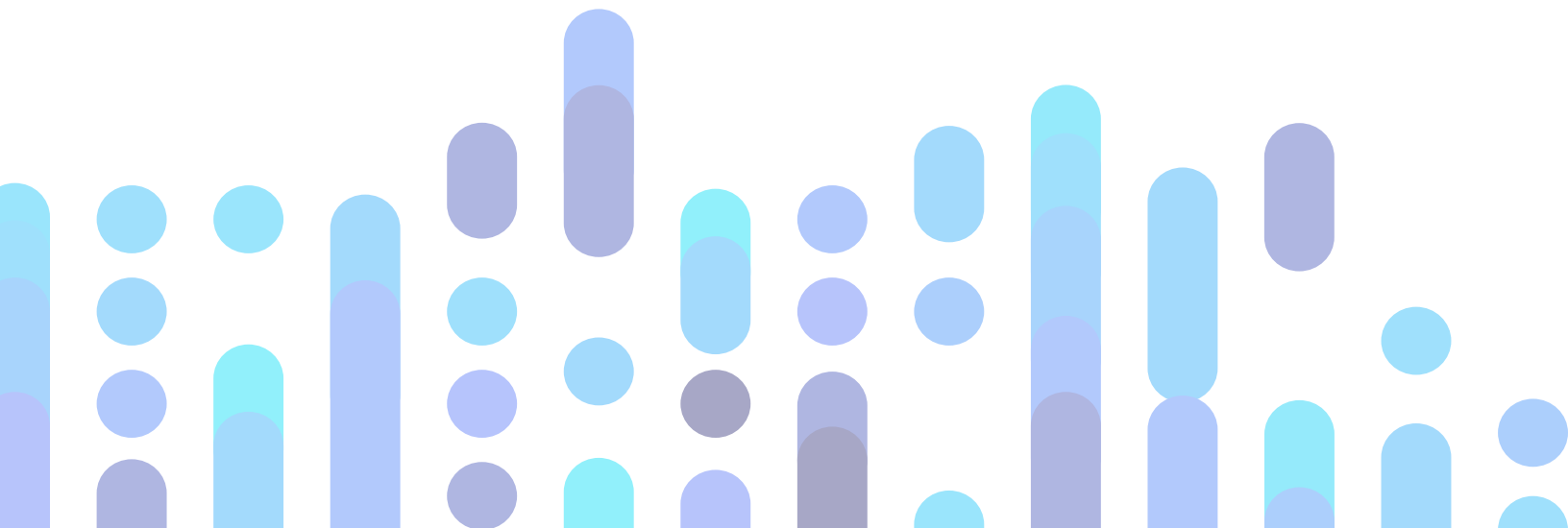
*Engage with Academic Affairs departmental and student service units to integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility principles across the university, enhancing student success through inclusive practices.*

**Goal 1:** Support Academic Affairs faculty and staff in efforts to reduce or eliminate equity gaps on student success metrics for underrepresented and/or historically underserved students by the percentages stated in [OAA Student Success, O3](#).

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Foster a sense of belonging and connection among diverse student populations.*

**Goal 1:** Support Academic Affairs in their efforts to improve the student experience ([OAA Student Success, O2](#)) and increase levels of student satisfaction with student services and inclusive engagement opportunities by 5% by the conclusion of the plan.



# Strategic Priority: Academic and Inclusive Excellence

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Support Academic Affairs' objective to expand and scale our approaches to effective, innovative, and inclusive teaching and online learning.*

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**Goal 1:** In collaboration with Academic Affairs, achieve 75% of courses that include the use of inclusive pedagogical practices by 2028. ([OAA Academic and Inclusive Excellence, O2G2](#)).

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Support Academic Affairs and Administration and Finance to further diversify the population of new faculty and staff within the university community through effective recruitment and retention strategies.*

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**Goal 1:** Support Administration and Finance in its goal to require compliance with meaningful implicit bias training for all faculty and staff that agree to serve on search committees so that 100% of search committee members complete training every two years. ([OAF Academic and Inclusive Excellence, O1G1](#)).

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**Goal 2:** In collaboration with OAA and Administration and Finance (Human Resources), increase the diversity of SUNY Empire's community of faculty and staff by 2% each year through 2027-28. ([OAF Academic and Inclusive Excellence, O1G2](#)).

# Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

## OBJECTIVE 1

*In collaboration with Academic Affairs, Human Resources, and other stakeholders, foster an environment that promotes mutual respect, advances clear communication, and engenders a culture of belonging, trust, and inclusivity.*

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**Goal 1:** Support OAA and broader university efforts to increase satisfaction based on aggregate satisfaction measures from the Empire State Workplace Climate Survey by at least 4% within the next two survey administration cycles. ([OAA Organizational Effectiveness, O1G1](#)).

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**Goal 2:** Support OAA and broader university efforts to reduce gaps in satisfaction between demographic subsets in each topic area of the SUNY Empire Workplace Climate Survey by 50% within the next two survey cycles. ([OAA Organizational Effectiveness, O1G2](#)).

# Strategic Priority: Raising Our Public Profile

## OBJECTIVE 1

*In collaboration with offices and groups across the university, support efforts to enhance institutional recognition through the infusion and demonstration of nationally recognized best practices.*

**Goal 1:** In collaboration with offices and groups across the university, increase participation in events on topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and belonging to infuse best practices into institutional culture and raise profile, with the goal of achieving a 15% participation by 2028.

**Goal 2:** Support the Office of Communications to promote a culture of recognition that celebrates outstanding academic achievements by students, faculty, staff, and alumni across diverse disciplines by securing five external media placements in the first year, 10% increase in each of the following years. ([OOC Academic and Inclusive Excellence, O1G2](#))

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Support SUNY Empire's burgeoning internship and career services efforts by promoting, in collaboration with Academic Affairs and the Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing, the university's innovative educational model to establish and nurture partnerships with organizations and businesses.*

**Goal 1:** Beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, support efforts across the institution to establish 3 or more new enrollment, internship, or career placement opportunities with NYS organizations and/or businesses annually. ([OAA Student Success O2G2](#); [OEMM Raising our Public Profile, O1G3](#))







# OFFICE OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

## Summary of 2023-24 Activities

The Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing (OEMM) furthered Elevate '28 by creating the university's first strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan. The SEM plan emphasizes enrollment goals outlined in the strategic plan while offering greater detail on achieving the enrollment goal of 20,000 students by 2028. Much of this year was spent staffing OEMM to meet strategic plan goals. We added positions on the marketing team to assist with creative and data management, 1Stop to increase call center staffing, and admissions to assist with recruitment of returning students. We see positive results from these strategic hires. All goals for this first year were met or exceeded, except for the increase in undergraduate conversion rates, FAFSA completion rates and the increase in transfer students from four-year SUNY institutions. The undergraduate conversion rate declined 1.8%, due in part to the influx of SUNY applications during SUNY's free application week. Next year will be a better gauge of how these applications impact our conversion rate as we will have two years of data. We expect an increase in transfer students from four-year SUNY institutions over the next year as the marketing campaign around degree completion completes a full cycle.

### Highlights from 2023-24 included:

- Hiring a new recruiting position focused on previously "stopped out" students
- Exceeding goals for non-degree student enrollment and undergraduate-graduate partnerships
- Finalizing the contract to build a new, state-of-the-art SUNY Empire website by fall 2025
- Increasing staffing at 1Stop Student Services to meet increased student inquiries
- Establishing the "SUNY's Leading Online University" brand to reinforce our reputation as a pioneer in the future of online higher education

## Strategic Priority: Student Success

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Increase number of completions from application to first enrollment, creating a positive student experience and connecting potential students to the institution.*

**Goal 1:** Increase conversion by 1% (application to first enrollment) annually through 2028.

**Goal 2:** Increase completion of FAFSA for incoming matriculated students who still have aid eligibility by 30% through 2028.

**Goal 3:** Increase conversion (application to first enrollment) for our military affiliated population by 5% annually through 2028.

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Develop enrollment and marketing model to increase degree completion across Empire State and SUNY, enabling learners to meet their academic, personal, and professional goals.*

**Goal 1:** Increase the number of Empire State University returning matriculated students by 2% each year through 2028.

**Goal 2:** Increase transfer enrollment from other 4-year SUNY institutions by 1% each year through 2028.

## Application-to-Enrollment Conversion

There was a slight modification to the objective/goals for Student Success, Objective 1. The measurement for this objective is the conversion rate from application to enrollment, not inquiry to enrollment. The 2023-24 conversion rate in our undergraduate programs was 40.5%, representing a slight decline relative to our baseline from 2022-23 (42.3%); however, graduate conversion rates increased by nearly 11 percentage points.

The Office of Graduate Admissions was integrated with the undergraduate admissions office last September, and several system changes may have contributed to this increase. The five-year goal for graduate application to enrollment conversion has already been met, so we will create a new goal. Military conversion rates were mixed, with a slight increase in the undergraduate rate and a slight decrease in the graduate rate. We are looking at several structural and process modifications for greater consistency and sustained growth.

### Conversion Rates by Student Subpopulation: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Application To Enrollment Conversion Rates | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|--|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Undergraduate                              | 42.3%            | 40.5%   | -1.8       | 47.3%          |
| Graduate                                   | 49.2%            | 60.1%   | +10.9      | 54.2%          |
| Military - Undergraduate                   | 52.8%            | 54.4%   | +1.6       | 57.8%          |
| Military - Graduate                        | 56.0%            | 55.7%   | -0.3       | 61.0%          |
| Nursing - Undergraduate                    | 56.9%            | 52.2%   | -4.7       | 61.9%          |
| Nursing - Graduate                         | 43.4%            | 36.3%   | -7.1       | 48.4%          |

Data Source: Banner. Conversion rates retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on academic year; the 2023-24 rate is current as of July 19, 2024.

## FASFA Completion

The baseline established for this goal is the FASFA completion rate for 2022-23, 50.6%. With the new FAFSA rolling out this past year under challenging circumstances, it was not an ideal year to measure FAFSA engagement. While there was a slight decline in FASFA completion rates, SUNY Empire saw a 17% year-over-year increase in the number of FASFAs received. The lower completion rate may be attributable to the confusion around the new FAFSA.

### FASFA Completion: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal                   | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|------------------------|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| FAFSA Completion Rates | 50.6%            | 49.9%   | -0.7       | 80.6%          |

Data Source: Banner. FASFA completion rates retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on Financial Aid year; the 2023-24 rate is current as of July 19, 2024.

## Re-enrollment: Returning Matriculated Students

In December, OEMM used strategic funding to hire a new recruiting position focused on previously “stopped out” students. The goal was to increase the returning undergraduate student headcount by 2% each year; this year, we increased our returning headcount by 12.4%, which we attribute in part to having dedicated staff recruiting this population for the first time.

### Returning Undergraduate Re-enrollment: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal                     | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Returning Undergraduates | 418              | 470     | 12.4%      | 462            |

Data Source: Banner. Headcount values retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on academic year; 2023-24 headcount is current as of July 19, 2024.

## Transfer Enrollment

The undergraduate transfer population from 4-year SUNY institutions did not increase from last year, but we saw our second largest enrollment from this group in the past five years. Our current degree completion campaign should increase this population over the next year.

### Undergraduate Transfer Enrollment from Other SUNY 4-Year Institutions: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal                    | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Undergraduate Transfers | 411              | 385     | -6.3%      | 432            |

Data Source: Banner. Headcount values retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on academic year; 2023-24 headcount is current as of July 19, 2024.

# Strategic Priority: Academic and Inclusive Excellence

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Support excellence in workforce development, expanding educational access and upward mobility through enrollment in SUNY Empire’s academic program offerings.*

**Goal 1:** Increase non-matriculated enrollments to meet continuing education needs by 30% above the 2022-23 baseline by 2028.

**Goal 2:** Increase enrollment through strategic external partnerships by 30% from the 2022-23 baseline over the duration of the plan by offering PLA/E in collaboration with OAA.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Expand community college partnerships to support SUNY Empire’s commitment to providing access, degree completion, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

**Goal 1:** Increase enrollment from community colleges across NYS and the country by 2% each year through 2028.

**Goal 2:** Increase new BIPOC student enrollments by 1% from community colleges across NYS and the country each year in coordination with opportunity programs and OVME.

## Non-Degree Student Enrollment

Enrollment for non-degree students shifted to 1Stop Student Services for initial contact, with the Partnerships Office then advising these students. We also enhanced the communication plan for this population by streamlining internal processes and providing more regular updates on the status of student prospects. The five-year goal for non-degree enrollments is 1,231; we have already met this goal with 1,231 undergraduate students this year. Final numbers for non-degree graduate enrollments are pending. This goal is being reassessed.

### Non-Degree Student Enrollment by Student Level: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal          | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|---------------|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Undergraduate | 1,115            | 1,231   | 10.4%      | 1,231          |
| Graduate*     | 1,077            | Pending | Pending    | 1,185          |

Data Source: Banner. Headcount values retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on academic year; 2023-24 headcount is current as of July 19, 2024. \*Graduate non-degree headcount is pending until August 30, 2024.

## Undergraduate-Graduate Partnerships

The original enrollment goal for undergraduate-graduate partnerships was 1,808 over five years, which we exceeded with 2,138 enrolled students. This was achieved by focusing primarily on enrollment-driven partnerships, including Northwell Health and Union Plus. This goal has been reassessed; we project a 30% increase over the life of this strategic plan.

### Partnership-Affiliated Enrollment by Student Level: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal          | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|---------------|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Undergraduate | 1,638            | 2,138   | 30.5%      | 2,130          |
| Graduate      | 360              | 402     | 11.7%      | 468            |

Data Source: Banner. Headcount values retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on academic year; 2023-24 headcount is current as of July 19, 2024.

## Community College Graduates

This past year, we intentionally focused on marketing to and recruiting community college graduates by geofencing targeted institutions across the state. Enrollment of community college graduates increased by 9.1% and we exceeded our 2023-24 goal of 781 students. This goal is being reassessed.

### Community College Transfers with Earned Associates: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal   | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|--|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Community College Transfers with earned associates | 766              | 836     | 9.1%       | 846            |

Data Source: Banner. Headcount values retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on academic year; 2023-24 headcount is current as of July 19, 2024.

## BIPOC Student Enrollment

With the increase in community college graduates, we experienced a corresponding 14.4% increase in our BIPOC headcount from community colleges. This goal is being reassessed.

## BIPOC Community College Transfers with Earned Associates: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

|  | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|--|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| BIPOC Community College Transfers with Earned Associates | 264              | 302     | 14.4%      | 277            |

Data Source: Banner. Headcount values retrieved from the Office of Decision Support. Metrics based on academic year; 2023-24 headcount is current as of July 19, 2024.

# Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Review and evaluate the Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing on a regular, timebound schedule to ensure operational alignment with our mission, vision, and values.*

**Goal 1:** Reduce number of abandoned calls to below the industry standard of 10% in 1Stop Student Services over the duration of the plan.

**Goal 2:** Increase traffic to the chatbot, Blue, by 20% over the duration of the plan, enhancing our self-service model.

**Goal 3:** Increase traffic to financial aid webpages and portal by 2% annually over the duration of the plan.

**Goal 4:** Implement structure and plan for staff succession, retention, and promotion by the end of 2024 in collaboration with human resources.

**Goal 5:** Implement the use of an incident management system to streamline student service resolutions between the 1Stop call center and 1Stop departments by the end of 2024.

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Streamline marketing operations, including project management, website development, and email and text communications that enhance support for enrollment initiatives.*

**Goal 1:** Assess and develop a structured plan to modify existing procedures for marketing project management, T4 website maintenance, and e-mail/text communication outreach for prospective and returning students by the end of 2023.

**Goal 2:** Starting January 2024, follow restructuring plan to set responsive deadlines for enrollment related projects, especially T4 website pages, digital advertising, and e-mail/text messaging campaigns.

**Goal 3:** Incorporate the revised marketing operations plan into the development of the University's new website as it is being built in the Omni content management system, integrating streamlined landing pages, targeted content, and student-prospect communications into the structure beginning fall 2023.

## Abandoned Calls

Call abandonment rates at the 1Stop call center were as high as 25% at points throughout the fall 2023 enrollment season. Several 1Stop employees were promoted into other departments, leaving 1Stop with reduced staffing. We hired new representatives to increase staffing in the fall and spring. As a result, the call abandonment rate dropped to 5% during the summer enrollment period.

## FAFSA

Students who engage with our Office of Financial Aid and complete a FAFSA have a greater propensity to enroll. We continue to enhance our financial aid website to help students understand their options and make informed decisions.

## Unique Visitors to Financial Aid Webpages: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal   | 2023 Baseline | 2024 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|--|---------------|------|------------|----------------|
| Unique Visitors to Financial Aid Webpages and Portal | 10,466        | TBD  | TBD        | 11,329         |

Data source: Google Analytics. Metric based on calendar year.

## Succession Planning

We are midway through the leadership and management training cohort program, which launched this year. The program is helping OEMM create a succession plan across all departments.

## Website

Due to delays in the state procurement process, selection of a website vendor was also delayed. A vendor, iFactory, has been retained and the discovery phase is underway.

# Strategic Priority: Raising Our Public Profile

### OBJECTIVE 1

*Strengthen Empire State University's brand as SUNY's Leading Online University in New York state and beyond.*

**Goal 1:** In year one, conduct a complete marketing assessment as part of strategic enrollment marketing planning and implement this marketing assessment over subsequent years.

**Goal 2:** Increase digital advertising impressions by 30% over the span of the strategic plan.

**Goal 3:** Raise profile through strategic partnerships across New York state and increase traffic to designated landing pages by 10% annually through 2028.

### OBJECTIVE 2

*Strengthen the Empire State University website to reflect SUNY Empire's role as the leading online public university in New York state and beyond.*

**Goal 1:** Optimize existing website to better serve student prospects in year one by reducing the bounce rate on most frequented pages to 25% or below.

**Goal 2:** Focus on search engine optimization strategies to increase unique visitor web traffic from search sites by 30% by 2028, relative to the 2022-23 baseline.

**Goal 3:** Launch a new website with a focus on student prospects by Summer 2025.

## SUNY's Leading Online University

Marketing has helped raise the university's public profile by establishing the "SUNY's Leading Online University" brand to reinforce our reputation as a pioneer in the future of online higher education. As part of this initiative, Chief Marketing Officer Doug Gruse evaluated past marketing plans and adjusted the university's advertising strategy and target demographics, switching to a year-round "always on" campaign with an emphasis on authentic storytelling and targeted audience delivery. To track messaging performance, Marketing established baseline metrics for digital advertising impressions, website traffic, and organic search, which will be reviewed annually by fiscal year. There was a 51% YoY increase between 2022-23 and 2023-24 in digital impressions. Given our recent commitment to increasing enrollment to 20,000 students by 2028, we have modified our goal to increase digital advertising impressions by an additional 30% over the life of this plan. We will use digital impressions from 2023-24 as our baseline.



### Estimated Digital Advertising Impressions: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal                                      | 2022-23     | 2023-24 Baseline | YoY Change | Initial Overall Target For | Revised Overall Target |
|---|-------------|------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Estimated Digital Advertising Impressions | 107,000,000 | 161,994,015      | +51%       | 118,000,000                | 210,000,000            |

Data source: Miller Advertising. Metric based on July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

### Strategic Partnerships

SUNY Empire is engaging public and private organizations to retain, recruit, and upskill their workforces. This includes receiving grants from the state to assist in training high-need positions. SUNY Empire's role in assisting employers across the state gives us an opportunity to raise our public profile. Engagement rates associated with partnership webpages increased, demonstrating interest in the programs. The goal is an increase of 10% over the span of this strategic plan.

### Engagement Rate: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Goal            | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|-----------------|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Engagement Rate | 41.6%            | 45.3%   | +3.7%      | 51.6%          |

Data source: Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing. Metric based on July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

### Website

Core website pages were redesigned and launched on April 1, 2024. We will review data from the end of the fiscal year to inform future planning. The marketing department retained SEO consulting company BrightEdge and is working to optimize university webpages. A report featuring metrics on bounce rates and web traffic is provided at the end of each fiscal year. In late spring, the university finalized a contract with a vendor to build a new, state-of-the-art website, and a committee of key stakeholders from across the university began planning the new site's projected launch in summer 2025.

In the meantime, OEMM has been optimizing the existing website to better serve student prospects by reducing the bounce rate on the most frequently visited pages to 25% or below.

## Bounce Rates on Most Frequented Webpages: Baseline, Year Over Year (YoY) Change, and Overall Target

| Webpage                                  | 2022-23 Baseline | 2023-24 | YoY Change | Overall Target |
|--|------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Homepage                                 | 31.6%            | 46.6%   | +15.0%     | 25% or less    |
| Undergraduate Page                       | 97.7%            | 25.0%   | -72.7%     | 25% or less    |
| Graduate Page                            | 87.3%            | 20.9%   | -66.4%     | 25% or less    |
| Veterans & Military Resource Center Page | 90.9%            | 70.7%   | -20.2%     | 25% or less    |
| Nursing Page                             | 83.9%            | 24.7%   | -59.2%     | 25% or less    |
| Tuition Page                             | 72.0%            | 63.3%   | -8.7%      | 25% or less    |

Data source: BrightEdge. Metric based on July 1 - June 30 fiscal year.

Concurrent with our commitment to enrollment growth articulated in the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, we will focus on search engine optimization strategies to increase unique visitor web traffic from search sites by 30% by 2028, using 2023-24 as the baseline.

## Web Traffic from Unique Visitors: Baseline, Initial Target, and Revised Overall Target

|                                  | 2023-24 Baseline | Initial Overall Target | Revised Overall Target |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Web Traffic from Unique Visitors | 7,147,328        | 7,736,498              | 9,291,526              |

Data source: BrightEdge. Metric based on July 1-June 30 fiscal year.





# OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

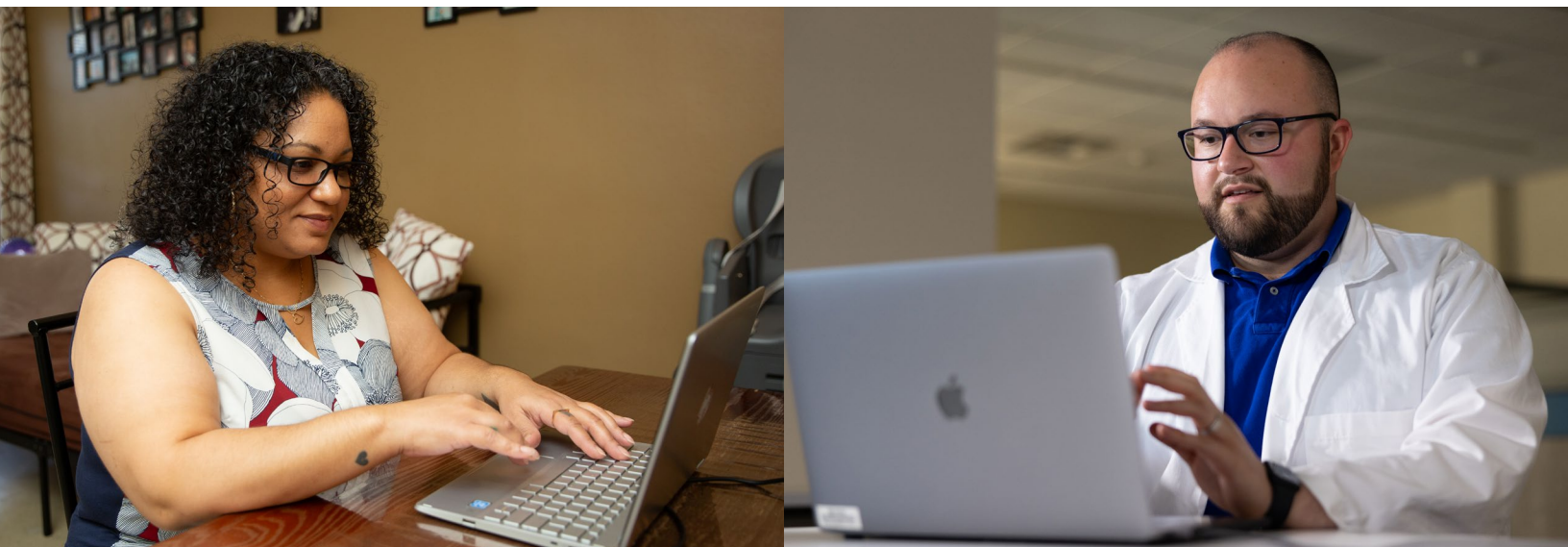
## Summary of 2023-24 Activities

The Office of Information Technology Services provides the technical infrastructure, software services, cybersecurity, and support that power SUNY Empire's teaching, learning, and administrative activities. ITS plays a role in more than 80% of the goals outlined in Elevate '28. The university hired Chief Information Officer Marty Gang in December 2023, and it hired Eric Grignon as deputy chief information officer in July 2024. Over the course of the year ITS implemented a cloud backup solution to ensure data redundancy and business continuity, and a Managed Extended Detection and Response (MXDR) security solution for the server environment. Our legacy information technology service management software, Service Now, was replaced by Team Dynamix, yielding both cost savings and process improvements. In addition, ITS coordinated with Ellucian and SICAS and the Financial Aid Office to ensure all functional updates required by Department of Education changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) were successfully implemented. Finally, ITS implemented the last step of the SUNY Empire name change on May 4, 2024, by updating the User Principal Name (UPN) from esc.edu to sunyempire.edu for all users and systems. The success of these projects is a result of a dedicated team effort, supported by every department within the university.

### Highlights from 2023-24 included:

- Creating a comprehensive project prioritization process that allows for technical and strategic scoring of all projects along with an accurate, tracked project status list. This directly addresses goals previously subsumed within the Office of Administration and Finance.
- Advancing the transition to a new, sole instance of D2L Brightspace for use by Empire State University only, which will be operational for the Fall 2024 term.
- Transitioning the Totally Independent Study (TIS), Just in Time (JIT), Educational Planning (EDPL), and Cross Registration Processes (CR) from a vendor-dependent system to an in-house product. This shift aligns to the needs of the university, is scalable, automated, and internally maintained.
- Enhancing compliance with federal regulation and audit expectations in areas pertaining to cybersecurity, assessment of system vulnerabilities and third-party vendor risk management.

In support of Elevate '28 and the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, ITS began work on creating a formal ITS Strategic Plan. As a foundation for the plan, ITS reviewed the existing strategic plans and met with the departments and divisions across the university to identify five objectives. ITS is currently working with representative constituents across the university to develop SMART Goals in support of each objective. Once the goals are established, ITS will develop tactics for each goal. A completed ITS Strategic Plan will be in place by September 1, 2024.



# Strategic Priority: Student Success

- Brightspace LMS transition to single tenant: Working with D2L, SUNY Empire created a new, sole instance of D2L Brightspace for use by Empire State University only. The single instance allows for revision of processes and data structures including new reporting options, integrated use of university email, finer control of security and operational roles, and immediate access to reporting data. We are also now able to make changes as needed to improve the user experience and configure systems. Brightspace will be operational for Fall Semester 2024.
- Totally Independent Study (TIS), Just in Time (JIT), Educational Planning (EDPL), and Cross Reg Process (CR) moved from vendor-dependent system to in-house product: Created a process that aligns to the needs of the college, is scalable, one Empire can support and control, and one that is automated and not reliant on a third party to repair or re-program. This process was implemented in February 2024.

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Enhance the digital learning environment and increase support for online education.*

Leverage technology to enrich the learning experience, enable flexible and personalized learning, and support online education as SUNY Empire's core delivery model.

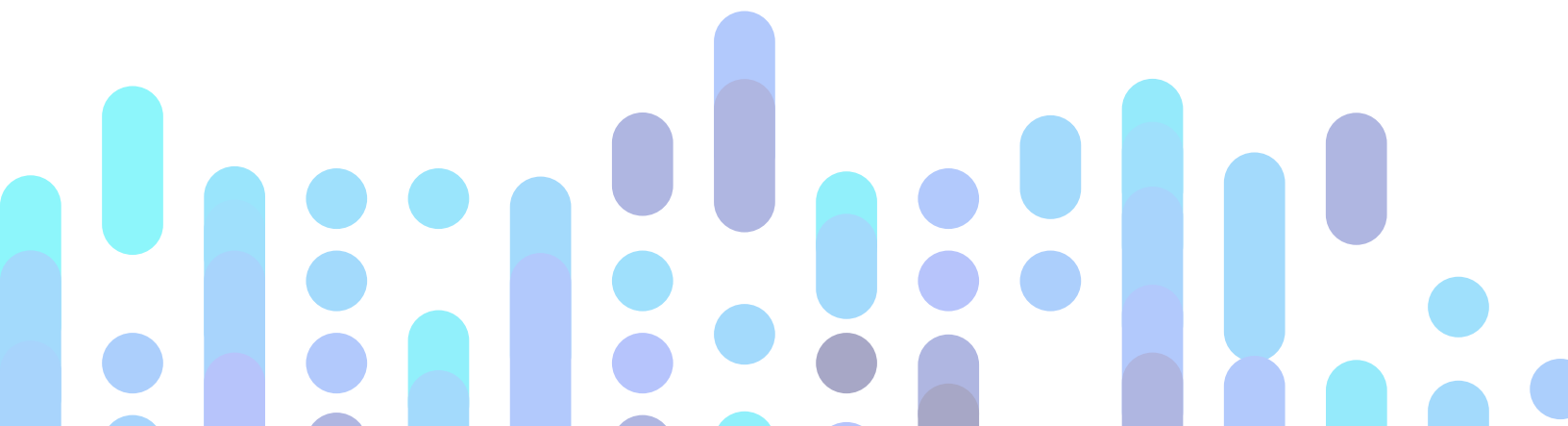
# Strategic Priority: Academic and Inclusive Excellence

- 2024-2025 Federal Financial Aid Technical Changes: Department of Education instituted significant changes in the 2024-2025 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). ITS coordinated with Ellucian and SICAS and the Financial Aid Office to ensure all functional updates were made to our systems and ensured SUNY Empire successfully imported all necessary data.

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Foster a culture of collaboration, innovation, and professional development within ITS and across the university.*

Ensure alignment of technology tools, systems, services, and training to provide the support needed to achieve this strategic priority.



# Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

- To comply with federal regulations and audit expectations, ITS worked with an external consultant and:
  - » Conducted two cybersecurity incident response exercises to test the Incident Response Plan and to provide all key participants with practical training and experience with how to handle and manage a cybersecurity incident
  - » Enhanced password policy to comply with current security standards, SUNY Empire updated its password policy to require a minimum of 14 characters
  - » Performed a system penetration and vulnerability test to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities
  - » Formalized a Written Information Security Program (WISP) that was updated to properly augment and support our current security posture
  - » Created a vendor risk management process to align with federal and state standards and audit requirements
- Cloud backup: Put a cloud backup solution in place to ensure data redundancy and protection in support of business continuity.
- Server MXDR: Successfully implemented Managed Extended Detection and Response (MXDR) security solution for the server environment.
- Assessed Vendor risk management: In compliance with federal standards and audit requirements a project focused on identifying and managing risks associated with third party vendors was completed. A formal review process and measurable standards were created.
- Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) software replaced. Service Now was replaced with Team Dynamix (TDX) providing a significant cost savings with process improvements.

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Accelerate the digital transformation and modernization of business processes and systems.*

Embrace digital transformation, improvement, and modernization of business processes and systems by leveraging the latest technologies, including cloud computing, artificial intelligence, automation, and analytics.

## OBJECTIVE 2

*Strengthen the IT security posture and resilience against cyber threats.*

Protect and ensure the integrity and accuracy of the university's data, systems, and services.

# Strategic Priority: Raising Our Public Profile

Empire State University Name Change: Implemented the last step in the Empire Name Change on May 4, 2024, by updating the User Principal Name (UPN) from esc.edu to sunyempire.edu for all users and systems. The success of this project was a result of a dedicated team effort and supported by every department within the university.

## OBJECTIVE 1

*Optimize IT service delivery and customer experience.*

This objective will help build and strengthen relationships with all constituencies. Excellent customer service is a high priority that affects SUNY Empire's reputation and influences the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff, and partners.

Empire State University

# ELEVATE '28

Strategic Plan Framework 2023-2028





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: STUDENT SUCCESS

### **Objective 1:**

Increase student success by reducing or eliminating barriers to enrollment, retention, and completion.

- Goal 1:** Increase the three-year average of first-to-second-term re-enrollment rates by three percentage points in five years.
- Goal 2:** Increase overall undergraduate and graduate graduation rates by three percentage points for matriculated students within five years.
- Goal 3:** Increase reenrollment rates of students who have been inactive for less than three years by three percentage points in five years.

### **Objective 2:**

Improve the student experience.

- Goal 1:** Increase and diversify opportunities for student engagement and university activities by an identified percentage annually, relative to the baseline metric.
- Goal 2:** Increase student satisfaction with student services and co-curricular engagement opportunities by designated percentage(s) on identified measure(s) of student satisfaction.
- Goal 3:** Achieve at least 90% of academic affairs units reaching at least 90% adherence to service standards in five years.

### **Objective 3:**

Reduce or eliminate equity gaps on student success metrics for underrepresented and/or historically underserved students.

- Goal 1:** Reduce the equity gaps in overall course completion rates for historically underserved student populations by three percentage points relative to the baseline metric in five years.
- Goal 2:** Reduce the equity gaps in first-to-second-term retention rates for historically underserved student populations by three percentage points relative to the baseline metric in five years.
- Goal 3:** Reduce the equity gaps in graduation rates for historically underserved student populations relative to the baseline metric by three percentage points in five years.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ACADEMIC AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

### **Objective 1:**

Strengthen the quality, breadth, and currency of degrees, certificates, and other learning opportunities to meet the needs of students, employers, and communities.

- Goal 1:** Increase the number of academic programs that align with high-need areas by 15 in five years.
- Goal 2:** Increase the number of programs that explicitly align program learning outcomes with external standards, requirements, expectations, and/or needs by the identified percentage relative to the baseline in five years.
- Goal 3:** Increase student satisfaction with academic offerings by the identified percentage relative to the baseline in five years.

**Objective 2:**

Expand and scale our approaches to effective, innovative, and inclusive teaching and online learning.

**Goal 1:** Ensure 100% of courses/course sections offered in the Learning Management System meet all course design standards in the established rubric in five years.

**Goal 2:** Achieve 75% of courses that include the use of inclusive pedagogical practices in five years.

**Goal 3:** Ensure at least 75% of line-based faculty and teaching professionals meet their annual professional development and pedagogical goals related to teaching and learning in five years.

**Objective 3:**

Promote the full range of possibilities for how and where students gain knowledge and provide avenues to evaluate and credential that learning.

**Goal 1:** Increase students' utilization of prior learning into their degree programs by the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric in five years.

**Goal 2:** Reduce the equity gaps in prior learning use by historically underserved students by the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric within five years.

**Goal 3:** Increase the number of students who engage in applied learning opportunities by the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric within five years.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

**Objective 1:**

Create a teaching and learning environment that fosters mutual respect, advances clear communication, and engenders a culture of belonging, trust, and inclusivity.

**Goal 1:** Increase OAA community satisfaction in each topic area of the SUNY Empire Workplace Climate Surveys by 4 percentage points or more (as applicable) within the next two survey cycles.

**Goal 2:** Reduce gaps in satisfaction between demographic groups among OAA community members in each topic area of the SUNY Empire Workplace Climate Surveys within the next two survey cycles.

**Goal 3:** Increase students' sense of belonging, trust, and inclusivity by the identified percentage on the selected measure in five years.

**Objective 2:**

Fully implement robust continuous improvement processes and effectiveness tracking across the division.

**Goal 1:** Achieve 100% of academic affairs' units completing annual continuous improvement processes/ reporting that includes closing the loop data in three years.

**Goal 2:** Reach 100% of academic affairs' units utilizing at least one data dashboard to track unit level key performance indicators in three years.

**Goal 3:** Ensure 100% of performance programs and annual plans include measurable goals or objectives aligned with the strategic plan within the next two years.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: RAISING OUR PUBLIC PROFILE

### **Objective 1:**

Position Empire State University as a SUNY leader in effective and innovative applied teaching and learning and student success.

**Goal 1:** Increase partnerships with external organizations that include opportunities for students to engage in applied learning with the partner organization by 20% relative to the baseline metric within five years.

**Goal 2:** Increase the number of grant- and contract-funded projects that support applied teaching and learning and student success activities the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric within five years.

**Goal 3:** Increase externally facing awards and presentations of Empire State University applied teaching and learning and student success activities by the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric within five years.

### **Objective 2:**

Become a SUNY leader in applied scholarship and creative activities.

**Goal 1:** Increase external/externally facing applied scholarship, publications, presentations, and creative activities by the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric within five years.

**Goal 2:** Increase grant and contract funding for applied research and creative activities by the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric within five years.

**Goal 3:** Increase external awards for scholarship and creative activities by Empire State University faculty, staff, and students by the identified percentage relative to the baseline metric within five years.

### **Objective 3:**

Establish and grow centers for distinction of SUNY, state, and national renown.

**Goal 1:** Double grants and contracts to centers of distinction relative to the baseline metric in five years.

**Goal 2:** Triple training and consulting engagements through centers of distinction relative to the baseline metric within five years.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: STUDENT SUCCESS

### **Objective 1:**

Develop a student-centered budgeting model and an ITS prioritization model that can be widely implemented and accurately assessed for perceived effectiveness throughout the campus structure.

- Goal 1:** In year one, create a budget rubric that prioritizes measurable student success, additional access, or inclusive opportunities for the student community by assigning a score as the request is evaluated, and then funding accordingly.
- Goal 2:** In year one, create an ITS project prioritization process and rubric in alignment with strategic priorities.
- Goal 3:** Beginning in year three and continuing through year five, assess the impact to the initiative metric by comparing the investment against increases in retention rates year over year to determine continuation of funding.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ACADEMIC AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

### **Objective 1:**

Develop a SUNY Empire talent management plan that identifies and supports the recruitment, development, and retention of a diverse employee base.

- Goal 1:** Require compliance with meaningful implicit bias training for all faculty and staff that agree to serve on search committees so that 100% of search committee members complete training every two years.
- Goal 2:** Implement ongoing advertising and recruitment possibilities to a wider audience and increase underrepresented faculty and staff recruitment by 2% each year for five years.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### **Objective 1:**

Create and maintain a service-oriented, compliant infrastructure within administration and finance and information technology services that is centered on strategic priorities in service to student, faculty, and staff success.

- Goal 1:** In year one, all operational units will create and communicate clear and accessible documentation to guide faculty and staff in relevant processes and procedures.
- Goal 2:** In year three, assess user satisfaction and establish a baseline to measure services throughout the division, inclusive of ITS. Increase overall user satisfaction by 10% (year over year). Utilize yearly surveys to assess effectiveness.
- Goal 3:** Annually review processes with working groups comprised of stakeholders across the university who can help guide improvements and future priorities.
- Goal 4:** In the first year, refine, communicate, and promote ITS project prioritization and the project management intranet dashboard with completion dates and timelines in alignment with strategic priorities.

**Objective 2:**

Strengthen the administrative foundation of the Empire State College Foundation (ESCF) with sound, compliant, and streamlined policies, processes, and reporting so the executive director and the board can focus on increasing their philanthropic engagement.

- Goal 1: In year three, implement a relevant account management software program that can appropriately identify and report on the various program funds, budgets, and accounts managed by the ESCF.
- Goal 2: In year two, develop and implement monthly reporting to all account holders 10 days after the end of each month.
- Goal 3: In year one, draft and implement sound policies and processes in accordance with SUNY policy 9600.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY: RAISING OUR PUBLIC PROFILE**

**Objective 1:**

Strengthen and elevate awareness of the university by highlighting and promoting its physical footprint across the state and suggesting where and how to align our presence with our priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

- Goal 1: In year one, develop a baseline requirement for a physical presence and assess current location agreements across the state to evaluate the need for that presence.
- Goal 2: Beginning in year one, develop relationships with community college facility colleagues across the state to create a catalogue of unused space at their locations. Assess where there might be mutual benefit for a SUNY Empire presence to be co-located among their student population.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: STUDENT SUCCESS

### **Objective 1:**

**Broaden alumni engagement to help students build connections to the institution and each other.**

**Goal 1:** Conduct an initial audit to establish a baseline of alumni engagement with departments across the university and create a collaborative group from those departments to strategize the most effective use of alumni to contribute to student success. Subsequent to the audit, expand alumni engagement to help students build connections to the institution and each other by an identified percentage annually, based on baseline.

**Goal 2:** In year one, work with the alumni board to clarify mission, priorities and short-term, measurable goals, as well as strategies for how best to achieve them. In years two through five, implement working groups focused on those short-term goals, and create mechanisms for goal tracking and membership review process.

### **Objective 2:**

**Grow support for university strategic priorities, with a focus on student success initiatives.**

**Goal 1:** Establish annual revenue goals for individual programs in year one. Revisit annually to determine if additional funds are needed and to gauge success and sustainability of funding for programs for students and donor perspectives.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ACADEMIC AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

### **Objective 1:**

**Build university-wide awareness of SUNY Empire philanthropic opportunities to empower academic/program faculty and staff to participate in and support academic and inclusive excellence initiatives.**

**Goal 1:** In year one, develop a leadership training program (cabinet, deans, and director levels) to build capacity for community and fundraising engagement that promotes SUNY Empire's academic and inclusive excellence. In years two through five, expand participation with a goal of training 100% of leadership by year five.

**Goal 2:** In year one, develop tools to educate faculty and program-level staff on seeking outside funding, and establish a schedule for presenting/engaging with each department on an annual basis in subsequent years, with a goal of at least one member of each department trained by year five.

### **Objective 2:**

**Engage the Office of Advancement as academic and inclusive excellence strategic goals are established by other divisions to support with funding opportunities.**

**Goal 1:** As early as possible in the strategic plan and priority development process, identify programs and initiatives with the best potential for collaboration and fundability; implement the collaboration in years two through five through pursuit of outside funding; increase requests to outside funders, as well as funding by identified percentage annually relative to the baseline metric.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### **Objective 1:**

Reinvigorate Foundation Board to increase contributions (time, talent, treasure) to institution.

- Goal 1:** In year one, work with the appropriate committee of the Foundation Board to holistically assess the current board. In years two through five, seek to add 5-7 new board members with skills and capacity that diversify the board membership and meet university needs.
- Goal 2:** Increase board giving by an identified percentage annually relative to the baseline metric. Baseline and annual goal percentage to be established in 2023.

### **Objective 2:**

Review and restructure Office for Advancement operations to maximize effectiveness and grow staff engagement with other departments.

- Goal 1:** Align performance programs, resources, and professional development opportunities with strategic priorities, including the establishment of metrics for all team members.
- Goal 2:** In year one, review data systems and ease of reporting on measurables, streamline processes, and implement appropriate software solutions to enable accurate, timely reporting on relevant data. In years two through five, implement a continuous improvement, evidence- and accountability-driven advancement operation.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: RAISING OUR PUBLIC PROFILE

### **Objective 1:**

Increase contributed revenue to support strategic goals established by other departments.

- Goal 1:** Establish revenue goal increase by an identified percentage annually relative to the baseline metric to be established in year one.
- Goal 2:** Grow donor retention rate by an identified percentage annually relative to the baseline metric to be established in year one.
- Goal 3:** Reinvigorate employee giving by an identified percentage annually relative to the baseline metric to be established in year one.
- Goal 4:** Build corporate and foundation relations program with an executive director to be hired in year one, and goals established for years two through five after a baseline is determined.

### **Objective 2:**

Position the Office for Advancement as an internal and external resource for the institution.

- Goal 1:** Plan and execute increased events across the state (both alumni and community) by an identified percentage annually based on baseline, as well as on surveys of audiences (to be established in year one).
- Goal 2:** Seek opportunities to work with other departments, such as partnerships and sponsored programs, to maximize revenue through the work of the executive director of corporate and foundation relations. Establish baseline in year one and determine goals and annual percentage increase from that baseline in years two through five.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: STUDENT SUCCESS

### **Objective 1:**

Continually increase participation and satisfaction levels of students at our commencement ceremonies.

**Goal 1:** Increase student satisfaction with commencement webpages by 2% each of the next five years.

**Goal 2:** Increase student satisfaction with student line-up by 1.5% each of the next five years.

**Goal 3:** Increase student satisfaction with the regalia ordering/purchasing/rental experience by 1.5% each of the next five years.

**Goal 4:** Increase student participation levels proportional to enrollments each year over five years.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ACADEMIC AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

### **Objective 1:**

Increase visibility of academic and DEI efforts to help internal and external stakeholders understand our commitment to academic and inclusive excellence across all aspects of the organization.

**Goal 1:** In year one, establish a baseline for quantity and placement of content that emphasizes our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with a goal of increasing quantity and placement of such content by 10% in each of the remaining four years.

**Goal 2:** Promote a culture of recognition that celebrates outstanding academic achievements by students, faculty, staff and alumni across diverse disciplines by securing five external media placements in the first year, with a 10% increase in each of the following years.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### **Objective 1:**

Improve internal communication to ensure that our internal audiences have consistent and reliable access to information in the normal course of business and in crisis situations.

**Goal 1:** Develop a communication plan to increase Everbridge employee opt in from 33% to 65% and student opt in from 9% to 50% within one year.

**Goal 2:** Facilitate regular cross-departmental "Storyteller Group" meetings to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing, aiming for a minimum of two joint projects or initiatives per month.

### **Objective 2:**

Align team performance programs with strategic plan.

**Goal 1:** Ensure that 100% of communications and events performance programs include measurable personal goals or objectives aligned with the strategic plan within one year.

### **Objective 3:**

Assemble and maintain a team of media-savvy experts.

**Goal 1:** Increase the capacity of faculty, staff, and leadership to contribute to the strength and effectiveness of outreach efforts through media-training opportunities.

**Goal 2:** Establish annual goals for re-training and expanding this team of experts.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY: RAISING OUR PUBLIC PROFILE**

**Objective 1:**

Increase Empire State University brand awareness.

- Goal 1:** Expand reach into national markets by focusing content geographically and securing four news or op-ed placements or mentions per year in national higher-education publications.
- Goal 2:** Increase positive media mentions by an identified percentage annually relative to the baseline metric, to be established in year one.
- Goal 3:** Obtain and promote a minimum of one student, faculty, or alumni profile per month (12/year) that tells our story in a unique or interesting way.

**Objective 2:**

Increase Empire State University organic social media followers and engagement.

- Goal 1:** Enhance organic social media engagement by increasing engagement (likes, shares, comments, reposts) on our social channels by 10% within year one, indicating improved audience interaction and brand visibility. Continue to increase by 10% in each of the remaining four years.
- Goal 2:** Increase organic social media net follower growth on our primary social channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram) by 15% within the first year. Increase by 10-15% in each of the remaining four years.

**Objective 3:**

Establish President Vollendorf as a thought leader in public higher education.

- Goal 1:** Increase the president's Instagram followers by 40% each year over the next five years and LinkedIn by 20% each year over the next five years.
- Goal 2:** In concert with the offices of academic affairs, advancement, and government relations, secure four high-quality public speaking or broadcasting events for President Vollendorf per year (roughly one per quarter).

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: STUDENT SUCCESS

### **Objective 1:**

Increase the number of completions from point of inquiry to first enrollment, creating a positive student experience and connecting potential students to the institution.

**Goal 1:** Increase conversion by 1% from inquiry to first enrollment annually for five years.

**Goal 2:** Increase completion of the FAFSA for incoming matriculated students who still have aid eligibility by 10% over five years.

**Goal 3:** Increase conversion from application to enrollment for our military-affiliated population by 5% over five years.

### **Objective 2:**

Develop an enrollment and marketing model to increase degree completion across SUNY Empire and SUNY, enabling learners to meet their academic, personal, and professional goals.

**Goal 1:** Increase the number of returning matriculated students by 2% each year for five years.

**Goal 2:** Increase transfer enrollment from other four-year SUNY institutions by 1% each year for five years.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ACADEMIC AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

### **Objective 1:**

Support excellence in workforce development, expanding educational access and upward mobility through enrollment in SUNY Empire's academic program offerings.

**Goal 1:** Increase non-matriculated enrollments to meet continuing education needs by 2% each year for five years.

**Goal 2:** Increase enrollment through strategic external partnerships by 2% each year for five years by offering PLA/E.

### **Objective 2:**

Expand community college partnerships to support SUNY Empire's commitment to providing access, degree completion, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Goal 1:** Increase enrollment from community colleges across NYS and the country by 2% each year for five years.

**Goal 2:** Increase new BIPOC student enrollments by 1% from community colleges across NYS and the country each year for five years.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

### **Objective 1:**

Review and evaluate the Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing on a regular, timebound schedule to ensure superior student and university service and alignment with our mission, vision, and values.

- Goal 1:** Reduce number of abandoned calls to below the industry standard of 10% in 1Stop Student Services within five years.
- Goal 2:** Increase traffic to the chatbot, Blue, by 20% over the next five years, enhancing our self-service model.
- Goal 3:** Increase traffic to our financial aid webpages and portal by 2% each year for five years.
- Goal 4:** Implement structure and plan for staff succession, retention, and promotion by the end of 2024.
- Goal 5:** Implement the use of an incident management system to streamline student service resolutions between the 1Stop call center and 1Stop departments by the end of 2024.

### **Objective 2:**

Streamline marketing operations, including project management, website development, and enrollment-driving email and text communications.

- Goal 1:** Assess and develop a structured plan to modify existing procedures for marketing project management, T4 website maintenance, and email/text communication outreach for prospective and returning students by the end of 2023.
- Goal 2:** Starting January 2024, follow restructuring plan to set responsive deadlines for enrollment-related projects, especially T4 website pages, digital advertising, and email/text messaging campaigns.
- Goal 3:** Incorporate the revised marketing operations plan into the development of the university's new website as it is being built in the Omni content management system, integrating streamlined landing pages, targeted content, and student-prospect communications into the structure beginning fall 2023.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY: RAISING OUR PUBLIC PROFILE**

### **Objective 1:**

Strengthen Empire State University's brand as SUNY's Leading Online University in New York state and beyond.

- Goal 1:** In year one, conduct a complete marketing assessment as part of strategic enrollment marketing planning and implement this marketing assessment over subsequent years.
- Goal 2:** Increase digital advertising impressions by 2% each year for five years.
- Goal 3:** Raise profile through strategic partnerships across New York state, and increase traffic to designated landing pages by 2% each year for five years.

### **Objective 2:**

Strengthen the Empire State University website to reflect SUNY Empire's role as the leading online public university in New York state and beyond.

- Goal 1:** Optimize our existing website to better serve student prospects in year one by reducing the bounce rate on most frequented pages to 25% or below.
- Goal 2:** Focus on search engine optimization strategies to increase unique visitor web traffic from search sites by 2% each year for five years.
- Goal 3:** Launch our new website with a focus on student prospects by Summer 2025.





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