

SUNY ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SUNY ERIE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH







Position Overview

SUNY Erie Community College (SUNY Erie) is extending the search for a President to advance the institution's proud tradition of excellence in academics, student life, and community service.

SUNY Erie is part of the State University of New York (SUNY), the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States, and more than 95 percent of all New Yorkers live within 30 miles of any one of SUNY's 64 colleges and universities. Across the system, SUNY has four academic health centers, five hospitals, four medical schools, two dental schools, the state's only college of optometry, and manages one U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratory. In total, SUNY serves about 1.3 million students in credit-bearing courses and programs, continuing education, and community outreach programs. SUNY oversees nearly a quarter of academic research in New York. Research expenditures system-wide were more than \$1.0 billion in fiscal year 2020, including significant contributions from students and faculty. There are more than three million SUNY alumni worldwide, and one in three New Yorkers with a college degree is a SUNY alum.

The President will advance the mission of SUNY Erie to meet the needs of a diverse student body and contribute to regional economic vitality by providing high-quality, flexible, affordable and accessible educational programs committed to student success. The President of SUNY Erie, as the chief executive officer reporting to the college trustees, is responsible for providing general educational leadership and for promoting the educational effectiveness of the institution in all its aspects. The President is the administrative leader of the college and works collegially with the college trustees and SUNY trustees in implementing policies, procedures, budgets, and ensuring that the institution's strategic plan is achieved through the college's programs, services, and activities. The chosen President will implement the vision of the institution to serve as an innovative learning resource by striving for universal access to lifelong learning, catalyzing economic and cultural development, and supporting a diverse and mobile student body.

The ideal candidate brings high energy, broad vision, solid executive level communications skills, demonstrated business acumen and credibility, and is a proven negotiator and politically savvy while being apolitical. The winning executive leader will work to develop, communicate, persuade, inspire and implement a robust plan and timeline on behalf of a beloved institution widely recognized for its value to the population it serves, to the community as a whole, and to the SUNY System.

The new president will be invited to assume their duties in January 2022.



Our Mission

SUNY Erie meets the needs of a diverse student body and contributes to regional economic vitality by providing high-quality, flexible, affordable and accessible educational programs committed to student success.

About SUNY Erie

SUNY Erie is celebrating its 75th year in 2021. For more than seven decades, the college has grown from a small two-year technical institute to a three-campus college serving nearly 10,000 students.

SUNY Erie ranks among the largest colleges in the region and has undergone significant changes in recent years as it has moved to serve its constituents with the addition of state-of-the-art facilities, professionally accredited programs, and an outstanding teaching faculty.

With more than 90 degree and certificate programs, the college's three campuses provide an accessible, affordable education and an accommodating academic environment for Western New York high school students, working adults and veterans.

SUNY Erie grants two-year Associate in Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in Applied Science degrees in the areas of Business and Public Service, Health Sciences, Liberal Arts, and Engineering and Technologies. The college's 28 certificate programs focus on the skills required for direct entry into the workforce. SUNY Erie is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Online offerings allow students to customize college to fit their busy schedule through SUNY Erie's Distance Learning Program. SUNY Erie's workforce training provides customized non-credit professional development training to local businesses, individual community residents, and local government employees. SUNY Erie's career-focused education is consistently recognized by local and national entities, and its more than 300 partnerships help match SUNY Erie students with sustainable career opportunities.

Mission

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Vision

SUNY Erie will serve as an innovative learning resource by striving for universal access to lifelong learning, catalyzing economic and cultural development, and supporting a diverse and mobile student body.





Strategic Plan: *SUNY Erie Excels*

SUNY Erie Excels is a comprehensive strategic plan for transforming SUNY Erie consisting of five major pillars: Access, Completion, Engagement, Operations and Success. Each pillar consists of focus areas that contain goals and initiatives; each initiative is part of a five-year timeline for the full implementation of SUNY Erie Excels.

Access

Providing Erie County with high-quality educational services in multiple modalities and locations while being fully representative of all segments of the diverse population of the county.

- Key Targets: 3% Annual Online Growth Rate; 18% Faculty Diversity Rate.
- Initiatives: Accessibility, Cost, Curriculum, Distance Learning, Employee Diversity, Intake, Non-Credit/High School, Recruitment.

Completion

The fulfillment of students' considered goals as they advance through the institution. For some students, completion means getting a degree. For others it means acquiring a specific skill. The college's responsibility is a joint one, however, as students must engage with SUNY Erie in the shared pursuit of the fulfillment of those goals.

- Key Targets: 62% First-Time/Full-Time Retention Rate; 2,300 Degrees Awarded Annually.
- Initiatives: Communication, Completion, Data, Distance Learning Success, Intake, Support.

Engagement

The interaction with our region, communities, and neighbors both inside and outside SUNY Erie's walls. SUNY Erie's relationship to its community and surrounding neighborhoods is essential to its identity. As SUNY Erie seeks to serve the people of Erie County, the institution must find ways to engage the workforce and industry partners while also engaging in philanthropy, service learning, internships, and building a collegial working environment.

- Key Targets: 1 START-UP NY Firm Each Year; Increase to \$1.5 Million in Annual Funds Raised.
- Initiatives: Civic Engagement, College Climate, Staff and Student Engagement, Philanthropy, Staff and Faculty Development, Workforce Development.

Operations

The effectiveness and efficiency of the SUNY Erie physical plant, finances, and technology. SUNY Erie seeks to be an effective and an efficient institution with responsible finances, updated facilities, and a culture of continuous improvement.

- Key Targets: Establish Facilities Master Plan; Maintain Low Administrative Overhead.
- Initiatives: Administrative Processes, Facilities, Finance, Quality Control, Technology.

Success

The capacity of our students to achieve their post-SUNY Erie goals, whether these goals are in the area of continuing education, direct entry into the workforce, successful skills training, or personal growth.

- Key Targets: Achieve 57% SUNY Success Rate; Integrate Transfer Counseling during Intake.
- Initiatives: Workforce Applied Learning, Financial Literacy, Multicultural Experiences, Successful Transfer, Success/Job Linkage.

SUNY Erie Excels is the product of eighteen months of collaborative deliberation by the Board of Trustees, the Office of the President, the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee, the Strategic Plan Working Group, the College Senate, five task forces, 30 work groups, and over 100 work group members that constituted the SUNY Erie Excels team. Members of all of SUNY Erie's bargaining units were involved in the development of SUNY Erie Excels. The final draft of the plan was approved by the College Senate and SUNY Erie Board of Trustees in June of 2016.





Pictured from top to bottom:

Historic City Campus "Post Office" Building, North Campus STEM Building, South Campus Courtyard/Student Center

Our Campuses

SUNY Erie features three campuses within Erie County.

SUNY Erie's City Campus is comprised of three buildings in the heart of downtown Buffalo including the Old Post Office building featuring a towering spire visible throughout downtown.

The North Campus sits strategically on the corner of Main and Youngs Streets in Williamsville. The North Campus is the oldest of the three campuses and spans approximately 120 acres and nine buildings. The North Campus welcomed the addition of the Center for Nanotechnology Studies and the Center for STEM Studies in recent years.

Located in Orchard Park providing central access to Southtowns residents, the self-contained design of the South Campus offers buildings connected by bridges surrounding a center courtyard.

Points of Pride

- SUNY Erie maintains a 17 to 1 student-to-faculty ratio and boasts 66 current and former faculty who have earned the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence.
- Academics offers more than 90 associate degree and certificate programs in the areas of Business and Public Service, Health Sciences, Liberal Arts, and Engineering and Technologies. The college also offers seven associate degree and one certificate program completely online, and more than 240 courses online.
- Comprehensive transfer agreements with leading colleges and universities, including the University at Buffalo, Canisius College and Syracuse University allow for seamless transfer for SUNY Erie graduates.
- The college has 17 varsity sports that compete in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and boasts 130 Region III Championships and 55 NJCAA Championships. The SUNY Erie men's basketball team won its third straight Region 3 Championship on March 1, 2020 and qualified for the National Junior College Athletic Association's Championship Tournament in Danville, IL.
- SUNY Erie has hundreds of partnerships with area businesses like Delaware North, Moog Inc. and M&T Bank.
- SUNY Erie's Culinary department in cooperation with the University at Buffalo Confucius Institute welcomed Certified Master Chinese Chefs Ye Yuanlin and Yu Yongbin during the Fall, 2019 semester. Chefs Ye and Yu demonstrated traditional Chinese cuisine, followed by an afternoon lecture and forum to discuss the differences in the cuisine from their individual provinces. The Culinary students tasted traditional food, practiced knife skills, and assisted with food preparation.
- The City Campus Student Government Association encouraged students to do random acts of kindness both on and off campus during Random Acts of Kindness Week, February 10-14, 2019. Acts of kindness carried out by students included taking out the trash for their neighbor, shoveling a sidewalk, picking up groceries for friends and passing out candy to fellow students. The main event of the week was a Stand for Kindness event. Students, faculty and staff gathered in the atrium to lock arms in a circle to show solidarity against bullying.

- SUNY Erie's City and North Campus Nursing programs achieved perfect pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) for the first and second quarters of 2020. The 100% pass rate at each campus is higher than the passing rates for both the state and the nation. Approximately 86.3% of nursing students passed the NCLEX-RN exam in New York, while almost 86% passed nationwide. The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), which is the College's nursing accrediting body, requires an 80% pass rate for the programs to maintain their accreditation.



- SUNY Erie welcomed Retired Naval Captain Bruce Johnson for a special presentation celebrating his role in the 1969 Apollo 11 moon landing in the fall of 2020. Splashdown: The Recovery detailed Captain Johnson's first-hand account of the recovery mission of Apollo 11's command module Columbia once it splashed down in the central Pacific Ocean. A naval aviator and the co-pilot of the Apollo 11 recovery helicopter, Captain Johnson shared the triumph of ensuring astronauts Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin completed their momentous voyage.



- Two CNC Machining students from SUNY Erie placed in the 2019 Mastercam Wildest Parts Competition. Mastercam, an industry leader in Computer Numerical Control (CNC) software since 1983, challenges high school and college students, as well as professionals to create an original item using Mastercam software while letting their imagination go wild in this annual competition.

- From food and toy drives to service learning, a spirit of service is woven throughout the college experience, and the faculty, staff and students at SUNY Erie find ways to give back to the community. In the spirit of volunteerism in 2019, SUNY Erie staff along with a group of students from the Men of Merit program helped to prepare a Thanksgiving meal at the Matt Urban Hope Center in Buffalo. To wrap up our Season of Giving, SUNY Erie faculty & staff held a holiday gift gathering celebration to support our students through the holiday season. Admittance to the event was either a donation to our campus food pantries or a new, unwrapped toy to enable our students to provide gifts for the children in their families.
- The SUNY Erie Office of Equity & Diversity places strong importance on expanding the boundaries of inclusion at the college. Along that vein, the SUNY Erie Diversity Academy was formed to strengthen our resolve to make SUNY Erie a more welcoming space for everyone. Initially, during the Spring of 2019, a group of faculty and staff participated in five discussion sessions focused on barriers to equality, whether perceived or real. The group discussions examined discrimination, power relationships and values that shape our lived experiences. Talking about social inequalities can be difficult and stressful however, equality can only happen when we identify the barriers and actively work toward change. The Academy enabled the campus community to advance in our delivery of racial and equitable performance.



- SUNY Erie hosted a one-day conference titled “Retention & Success of Students of Color in Higher Education” on Friday, February 28, 2020 at City Campus. The conference brought together stakeholders from all walks of life to discuss the challenges faced by students of color in higher education impacting their ability to persist and graduate. Themes discussed included retention of underserved and disadvantaged students, mentoring and its effects on student achievement, school engagement and belongingness and their impact on student success, social and community engagement mindset for student success and more. Columnist, author and journalist Roland S. Martin provided the keynote address.



Challenges and Opportunities

Student Recruitment

Long before COVID-19, higher education has been in a state of disruption. That tumult has been acute in New York, where there has been a significant decline in the number of high school seniors. This decrease has made SUNY Erie's region, where there are 37 institutions of higher learning, extremely competitive. Over the past year, beyond the terrible human toll the nation has experienced with COVID-19, the pandemic has exacerbated the enrollment challenges faced by community colleges in general and SUNY Erie in particular.

The next president must quickly focus on a comprehensive, collaborative assessment of this enrollment challenge and craft a shared vision and action plan for increasing matriculants. That visioning process should consider innovative marketing techniques, new programs and delivery systems and partnerships with educational entities as well as business and industry.

Notwithstanding the region's demographic challenges, Buffalo is home to large enterprises in healthcare, technology and manufacturing that are ripe for new or enhanced partnerships that could stimulate student recruitment in traditional academic as well as workforce programs. SUNY Erie's partnership with the Northland Workforce Training Center provides one such example. Graduation rates in Buffalo schools have also risen in recent years, presenting additional recruitment opportunities, though poorer areas of the region still produce fewer graduates than desired.



Student Success and Completion

In order to achieve enrollment success, the new president must pair the recruitment focus with a relentless emphasis on student success and completion. In partnership with their new colleagues, the next president must lead a quantitative and qualitative examination of the reasons why student do or do not succeed and develop solutions to enhance progression toward completion. Equity gaps in achievement will merit specific attention. The College must reflect a reinvigorated student centric ethos, where learners are challenged and nurtured to realize their dreams

In recruitment and student success, the president will find colleagues ready to strengthen SUNY Erie's performance.

COVID-19

Nearly every college in America has been severely affected by the pandemic, and SUNY Erie is no exception. Though vaccine development provides a hopeful sign, it is certain that the virus will continue to be an important issue for the College in the months ahead. The new president must be a skilled crisis manager and will have the opportunity to use those skills to effectively balance health and educational considerations, well informed by medical experts.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Beyond any equity gaps identified in the student success/completion review, diversity, equity and inclusion is a top priority at SUNY Erie. The new chief executive will have the chance to work with colleagues to develop a focused strategy for recruiting more diverse students, faculty and staff. In addition, there are areas of the metropolitan area where disadvantaged citizens do not have many opportunities for socio-economic mobility. These locations present options for the College to partner with helping entities to improve the lives of the residents.



Western New York

Any college president must have a keen understanding and embrace of the region served by the college they lead. This is true of Western New York. If the new president does not hail from SUNY Erie's region, they will find colleagues and partners ready to assist them in gaining a quick appreciation for the region's rich history and ways of doing business and public policy. The next president will be served by seizing these opportunities to become knowledgeable about SUNY Erie's surrounding area.

Finances

The aforementioned enrollment difficulties have made financial management a challenge. Yet, under the able leadership of Interim President Reuter, a college CFO and through the infusion of COVID-related stimulus money, the financial picture is improving. The next president will have the chance to build on the bold leadership of Interim President Reuter and continue SUNY Erie's path toward greater financial strength. As finances improve, there will be an opportunity to examine crucial issues such as salaries, benefits, professional development, program investment, technology, and deferred maintenance. SUNY Erie and the new president must expect progress to be a measured pace.

Culture and Motivation

Not surprisingly, the challenges of recent years have had an effect on the ambience at SUNY Erie. While SUNY Erie is blessed with many dedicated faculty and staff, there is an opportunity for a new and exciting era where this community of learners can realize a renewed sense of pride in the way they change lives that will catalyze their sense of purpose. A rejuvenated sense of momentum is not solely the responsibility of the new president, but that person should play an inspirational role in simultaneously respecting the past and articulating a new and dynamic course for SUNY Erie that will motivate others to follow.

Union Relationship

SUNY Erie is preparing to negotiate new bargaining agreements. The next president will have union experience or be a very quick study as the institution seeks a new agreement that will balance all relevant factors and serve stakeholders well.

Accreditation

SUNY Erie is preparing for its next Middle States visit in 2021-22. Preparations are going well, but the president will be expected to be well informed about these efforts and pose crucial questions about the self-study. If the new president has a strong accreditation background, that will be an advantage.

Funding

SUNY Erie's foundation has recently hired a capable foundation executive director, as it seeks to strengthen its fundraising performance. This new partner for the president is an important first step in increasing the dollars raised by the Foundation. In addition, the county, a major source of funding for SUNY Erie, is anxious to work with the new president, a critical partnership. Finally, the president will have the chance to build relationships with the legislature that help yield more public investment when the economic difficulties of the pandemic subside.

The Mission

SUNY Erie has its challenges for sure. Yet it is fortunate to have an able Board and many faculty and staff who transform lives and enable students to envision futures they could never imagine. These new colleagues are an invaluable resource and will be great partners for the next President of SUNY Erie.

Leadership Attributes

Visionary Leadership

The next President will join SUNY Erie in a time of dramatic change, enrollment challenges, and ambiguity. The ideal leader should be a futuristic thinker who can inspire collective efforts of all stakeholders to create change. In order for the College to increase enrollment, innovation is needed in the years ahead for program change, curricular innovation, and new modes of instruction. Leading in this time of change will require that the President articulate and advance the College's vision, brand, and strategy with energy, passion, and decisiveness. The ability to engage the faculty, students, staff, administration, and alumni in charting an ambitious path forward will be required.



Transformational Servant Leader

The President is seen as a supportive and strong mentor for faculty and staff who displays the highest integrity and courage in behavior and decision making. The ideal candidate will advance a spirit of excellence and demonstrate sound judgment and a well-informed and positive attitude when advising colleagues on everything from enrollment trends and admissions campaigns, academic programs, assessment measures, technology infrastructure, and interdisciplinary approaches. Strong supervisory and management skills are seen as essential, including the ability to make tough decisions and create and lead productive and effective teams. The President must foster an environment in which openness and communication are mutually valued, and their actions demonstrate a deep commitment to advancing trust as a strategic priority. The next President of SUNY Erie should represent the epitome of servant leadership, one who commands respect and engenders the trust of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the broader SUNY Erie community of stakeholders.

Astute Financial Management

The President should understand the institution's funding model and be capable of careful financial planning, building budgets, and allocating limited resources in ways that are fair and transparent and that reflect clear priorities. Successfully managing complex organizational operations, an aging physical plant, substantial experience in fiscal management with proven ability to manage resources wisely, and the ability to propose solutions to ensure the financial stability and continued attractiveness of the SUNY Erie educational opportunity will be a marker of success. The President must stay abreast of trends in higher education and industry and the increasingly competitive educational marketplace to help inform the work and financial health of the College.

Shared Governance and Collaborative Leadership

The next President of SUNY Erie should embrace the opportunity to collaborate with a creative and dedicated faculty in building to propel the College forward into a brighter next chapter in its history. Students form close relationships with faculty mentors who encourage students to learn about their strengths, interests, and passions. The ideal candidate should demonstrate an understanding of shared governance, the learning environment, and the challenges and opportunities to effectively support faculty, staff, and students.

Political Acumen and Civic Engagement

SUNY Erie seeks a president who understands the financial and educational system in New York. The ideal candidate will embrace the complexities of the Western New York region and the importance of cultivating mutually beneficial relationships with the College and local, regional, and state economies. The ability to apply critical thinking and emotional intelligence in the political domain is vitally important. The ideal candidate must lead with diplomacy and the ability to navigate politically sensitive issues; understand the power structures, motivations, influences at play in the municipal decision-making process as well as the implications of these decisions at policymaking and public levels. The President must demonstrate the capacity for proactive and strategic stakeholder engagement and alignment and use environmental strategic thinking and scanning to envision synergies around SUNY and New York legislative priorities. The President should be visible, collaborative, demonstrate the ability to look at issues from the perspective of elected officials, anticipate the public reaction, and use effective communication to influence decision-making to advance the strategic priorities to move SUNY Erie forward. Moreover, they should envision and anticipate potential synergies between local SUNY Erie initiatives and SUNY priorities.





Exceptional Communicator

SUNY Erie seeks a president who is an engaged, approachable communicator, committed to open, transparent leadership. The ideal leader will have the ability to communicate effectively across multiple constituencies with a leadership style that is creative and entrepreneurial, eager to tackle significant challenges. The ideal candidate is a skilled and strategic decision-maker with a track record of facilitating conversations and managing diverse perspectives and opinions; who understands the process of building support and consensus around ideas and courses of action; who listens carefully, honors transparency, respects different viewpoints, and decides with care and consideration.

Strategic Collaborator and Community-Builder

The next SUNY Erie president will be an experienced change agent, able to navigate internal and external stakeholders and advance a mutually beneficial unified vision to move SUNY Erie and community partner priorities forward. With a deep understanding and experience in a collective bargaining environment, the next President should have the ability to assess opportunities, promote and lead innovative and entrepreneurial planning and problem-solving, leveraging College, local community, and state resources. The next President must possess a collaborative, consensus-building leadership style and be open to thoughtful and appropriate innovation. The ideal candidate must demonstrate experience in managing institutional change complexities and the interpersonal skills to make decisions and attain consensus thoughtfully and purposefully.

Partnership development

The next SUNY Erie president should be a skilled relationship builder with the Western New York region and beyond, have a talent for and established results in partnership development, fundraising, and an enthusiastic advocate for students, and ready to energetically lead SUNY Erie to its next level of excellence. A deep level of understanding of the challenges and opportunities currently facing higher education, particularly community colleges, and the ability to strategically prioritize resources to guide and elevate the College's branding and marketing in the current climate is critical.

Student-Centered Leader

At SUNY Erie, our students are at the heart of everything the College does. The President must lead by example to guide policies and practices that enhance the quality of student life while also connecting academic learning to the student experience. The ideal candidate is a community-builder who sees the education, safety, growth, and well-being of students as the utmost priority. The President should demonstrate an understanding of current industry data forecasting skills and experiences students will need to be successful and advance the development of academic programs, faculty and staff professional development and, development services, for student success. The next President should possess a deep understanding of the needs of the student body and promote a sense of community on campus. They should authentically be engaged with students, faculty, and staff.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The next President should demonstrate a successful record of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), who, by experience, understands the changing environment and evolving expectations that are impacting faculty, staff, and students uniquely across a multi-campus college. The ideal candidate must be a tactical thinker, data-driven, and able to lead the College to visualize and implement dynamic priorities aimed at measurable D,E,&I outcomes to eliminate racial and gender inequities experienced by marginalized members in the college community.

Other Qualities:

- Earned doctorate or terminal degree preferred.
- Progressively responsible executive-level experience and demonstrated record of success.



Nominations And Applications

For full consideration, applications should be received by **September 24, 2021**. The application must include a cover letter, current resume, and contact information for five current professional references should be sent to: SUNYEriePrescc@agbsearch.com

For further information and instructions to applicants, please review the prospectus available above.

All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in strictest confidence; references will not be contacted without the applicant's expressed permission. Inquiries, and nominations should be sent to: SUNYEriePrescc@agbsearch.com or directed to:

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SUNY Erie Community College is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

For a detailed statement of its practices see: <https://www.ecc.edu/equity-diversity/>

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