

Good morning and thank you, Ward, for inviting me to speak today. I enjoyed meeting many of you at the Chamber mixer event on campus last month, and appreciate this opportunity to speak about the strengthening connections between SUNY New Paltz and the Hudson Valley community. I will also share key financial and business challenges we face. But my focus will be on how we fulfill our core mission – educating the next generation of citizens to succeed in and contribute to a dramatically changing society and economy. I want to acknowledge members of our campus leadership team who are here today to get to know you better. I thank them for their leadership and the achievements that I will highlight today.

This quote from David Leonhardt of The New York Times reinforces the value of our work:

“
Education helps a society
leverage every other
investment it makes...
it appears to be the best single
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”
DAVID LEONHARDT
New York Times Magazine



Education helps a society leverage every other investment it makes ... it appears to be the best single bet that a society can make.

In other words, college is worth it! Despite lots of rhetoric we hear to the contrary, the individual and societal benefits of a college education are well documented and substantial.



The most important resource at any university is the quality of its people – professors, students, staff. But buildings and spaces also matter. Let me share some of our dramatic physical improvements in the last decade.



This is an aerial photo of campus – the village of New Paltz is on the left. Here's South Manheim Boulevard, also known as State Highway 32 South. This image dates to about 2011. I see it every day, and realize how rapidly it's become outdated.



This is that same photo, highlighting recent projects across campus. In recent years we've:



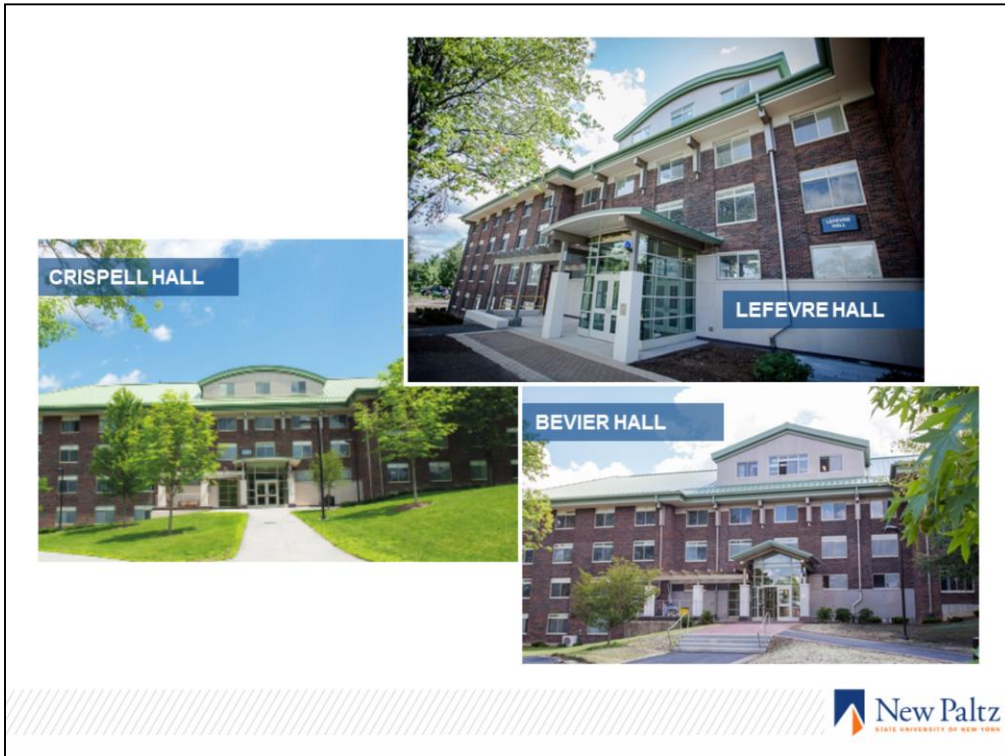
improved exterior concourses and walkways;



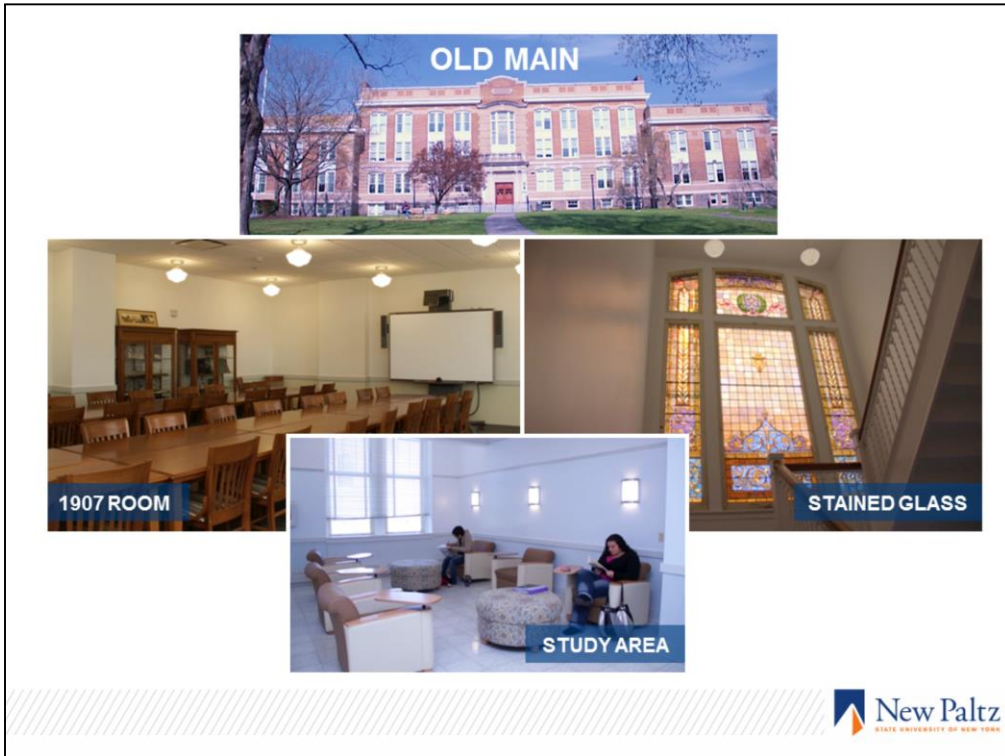
added the glass atrium to our student union building. This has become our most iconic campus building.



built a new residence hall that provides about 225 additional beds;



guttled and renovated three 1960s-era residence halls into modern living spaces;



renovated Old Main, the oldest building on campus;



updated athletic fields;



we renovated and expanded our speech-language and hearing center, which provides clinical space to support diagnostic and therapeutic services for children and adults with speech, language, or hearing difficulties.



added additional parking and a transportation hub on Route 32 ;



renovated Sojourner Truth Library into a modern learning and study space;



renovated the 1960s-era Wooster Hall to house academic departments and engineering labs, bring several previously scattered student services together, and provide dining in that part of campus;



built and opened Science Hall, a modern building that accommodates some of the growth in our science fields. It's the first new academic building on campus in 20 years, and it serves as a visually stunning gateway to campus;

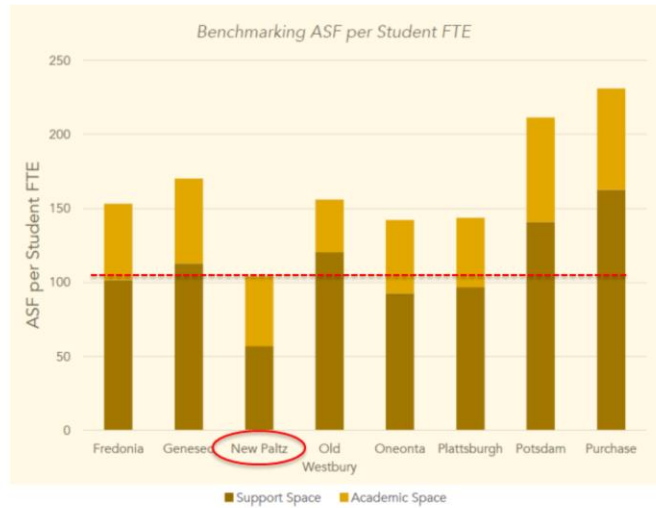
FUTURE ENGINEERING INNOVATION HUB



And we're currently building a new Engineering Innovation Hub to support our wildly popular mechanical engineering program and our expanding 3D printing initiative. This building received \$10 million in funding from Governor Cuomo through the highly competitive NY SUNY 2020 program. The purpose of that program is to support and expand academic programs that translate directly into economic development.

These improvements reflect the largest investment in our infrastructure since the 1960s and early 1970s, and we're excited about these changes.

SUNY BENCHMARKING



PERKINS EASTMAN SUNY NEW PALTZ FACILITIES MASTER PLAN UPDATE



Despite all this activity, we have a lot less space per student than other SUNY campuses in our sector -- both academic space and residence hall capacity. By SUNY standards, we should have at least six more buildings the size of our new Science Hall to support current programs. We keep advocating for more state capital funding to address the needs, just to support current enrollment levels.

Hasbrouck Complex Building Names



Five residence halls and a dining hall on our campus bear the names of the Huguenots who settled in New Paltz in 1678. Although it's been commonly thought that the names were chosen to recognize the many generations of Huguenot descendants in the Hudson Valley, official documents clarify that the names were assigned explicitly to recognize the original patentees – who all owned slaves. The link between the building names and this legacy of slavery is unquestionable. We undertook a year long process of education and dialogue involving students, faculty and staff, alumni, and members of the community, including representatives of Historic Huguenot Street.

The image shows the cover of a report titled "Hasbrouck Building Complex Renaming Dialogue Report and Recommendation" from New Paltz State University of New York. The cover features the university logo, an aerial photograph of the campus, and the text "Submitted May 1, 2018 By the Members of the Diversity and Inclusion Council". A red oval highlights the word "Recommendation" in the title, with a red arrow pointing to a list of three recommendations on the right side of the slide.

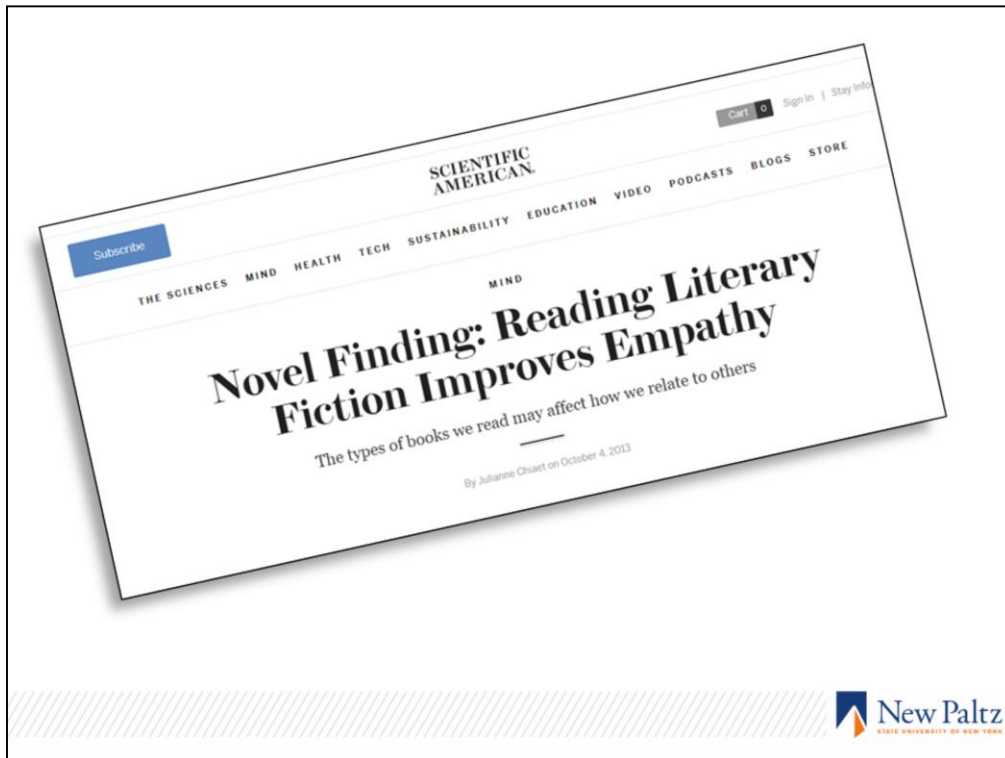
- Remove and replace building names
- Tell more fulsome history
- Recognize contributions of Huguenots and descendants in new ways

That process led to widely supported recommendations that the names be removed from these buildings where students live, eat and sleep, and that we find ways to tell our history more fully, including new ways to recognize the many positive contributions of the Huguenots and their descendants. The decision to change the names now rests with our College Council. Each SUNY campus has a College Council made up of community members appointed by the Governor and our elected Student Association president.

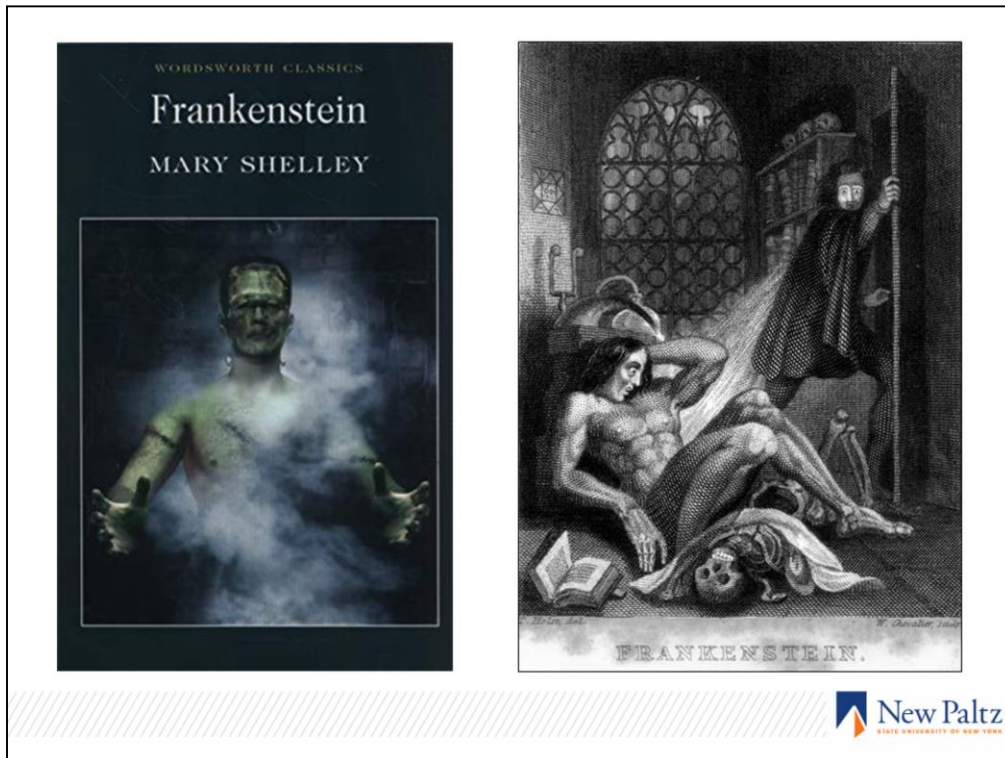


I want to move beyond buildings to address what happens IN those buildings. Our educational programs are unapologetically rooted in the values of a broad liberal education that develops writing, communication, and problem solving capacities along with abilities to work effectively with other people. Those capacities are important for all of our graduates, including those in majors like business and engineering. We couple that with essential skills to meet the needs and challenges of a 21st century real world. As we prepare students for a knowledge-driven society and economy, we try to help them – and their parents, elected officials, and members of the public - understand that we are trying to educate them not just for that first job but for that inevitable 6th or 7th job, some of which don't yet exist. I heard recently that a college degree may get you your first **job**, but it's your liberal education capabilities that will get you your first **promotion**.

Additionally, we are educating students not only for career and livelihood but also for life and democratic citizenship.



For example, Dr. Laura Barrett, dean of our College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – who is here today, wrote recently about studies that show that reading literary fiction increases empathy.



She used the example of the man-made creature in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, who reads widely because he has recognized that the key to entering the human world is through language and literature. Dean Barrett noted that Frankenstein is 200 years old this year, and the enduring themes of difference and bigotry, hubris and power sadly remain at the forefront of our daily lives – perhaps because we're not reading enough literature!



We are proud of the opportunities we provide for students to learn and grow outside the classroom, through campus employment, student governance, undergraduate research, leadership roles, participation in clubs and organizations, and involvement in intercollegiate athletics. Our Division III athletics teams had a record season this year; at New Paltz, we're very clear that they are scholars first and athletes second.

New Programs (examples only)

- Trauma and Disaster Mental Health
- Digital Media Prog. & Mgmt. • Digital Media Production
- Honors
- Digital Design and Fabrication
- 4+1 BS + MS Programs
- Accelerated MBA
- Business Analytics
- Biochemistry • Mechanical Engineering • Astronomy



We have added new programs to meet changing societal needs and student interest while sustaining traditional strengths in the humanities and social sciences, fine arts, and teacher education. Here are just a few examples of this evolution: we created a post-baccalaureate advanced certification in trauma and disaster mental health, realigned digital media programs, developed a thriving honors program that helps us attract top students, a new minor in digital design and fabrication, and 4+1 programs that lead to the completion of both a bachelor's and a master's degree in five years. Our School of Business created an accelerated MBA with numerous online and hybrid courses that is attracting lots of interest. The Business School launched an undergraduate Business Analytics major, the first in SUNY and only the second in New York.

We've added new programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics – STEM fields - through new majors like biochemistry, mechanical engineering, and astronomy. Our School of Science and Engineering grew from our smallest school to the second largest over the last 8 years, now serving more than 1,000 student-majors.



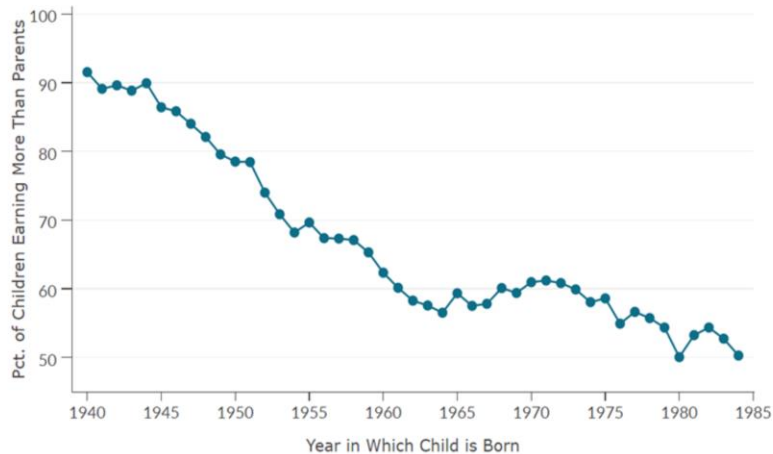
National rankings tell us how we are growing in reputation and profile. SUNY New Paltz was again named to Kiplinger’s Personal Finance ranking of “*100 Best Values in Public Colleges.*” We continue to be highly ranked among both public and private master’s universities by US News and World report. We keep showing up in new rankings like the “Colleges of Distinction” list and a ranking of the hardest schools in New York to get into.



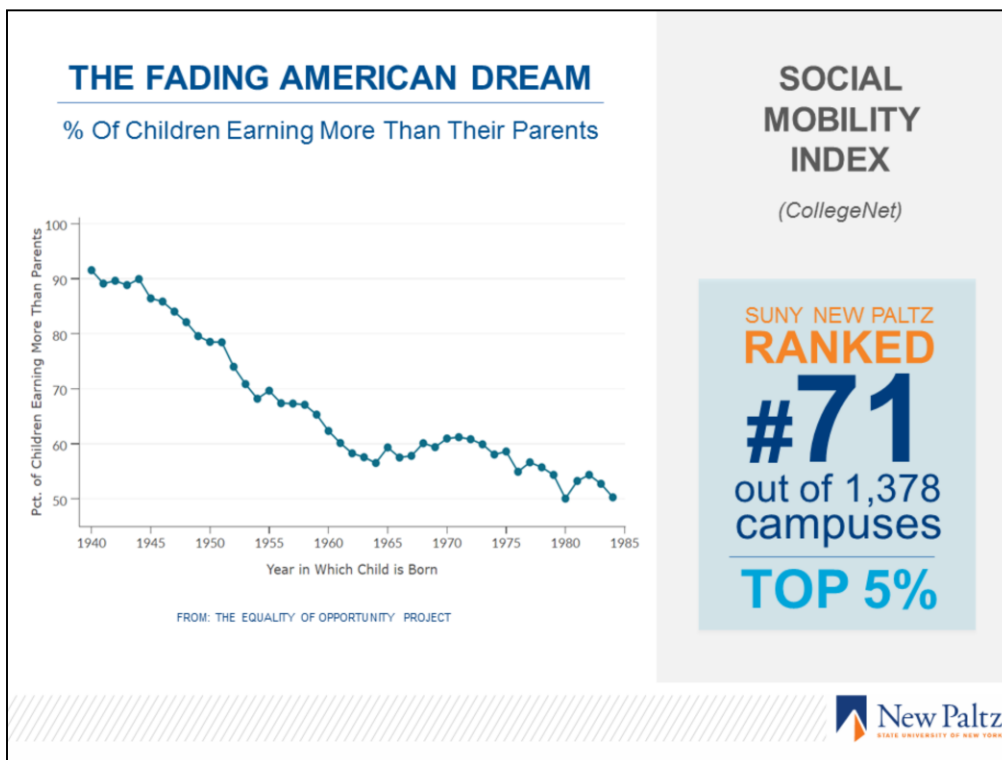
We developed our Office of Veteran and Military Services five years ago. Since then, we have been consistently included in rankings of Military Friendly Schools, and our enrollment of veteran and military students has grown from about 65 students to more than 400.

THE FADING AMERICAN DREAM

% Of Children Earning More Than Their Parents



A big issue in US higher education is how well colleges and universities foster upward socioeconomic mobility and provide affordable education to disadvantaged families – that is, what is our impact on reversing the ballooning economic disparity in America and helping people realize the American dream.

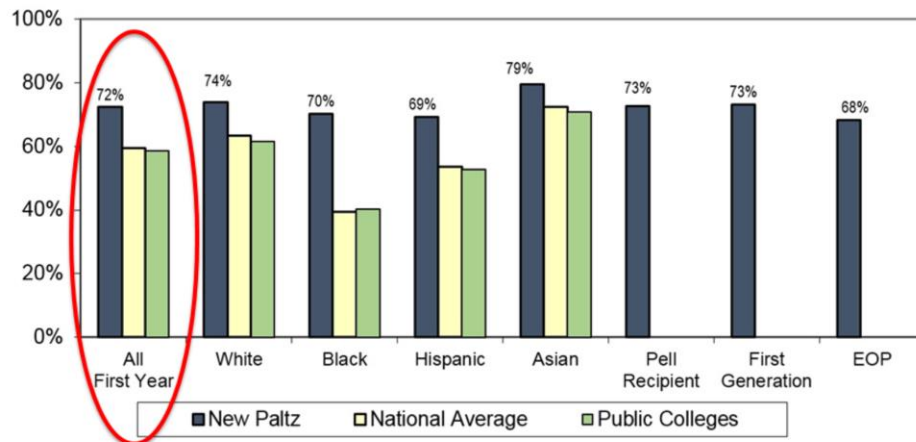


In a recent analysis that produced an index of such social mobility, New Paltz was ranked in the top 5% of nearly 1,400 colleges – reflecting our success in fulfilling our mission as a public university.



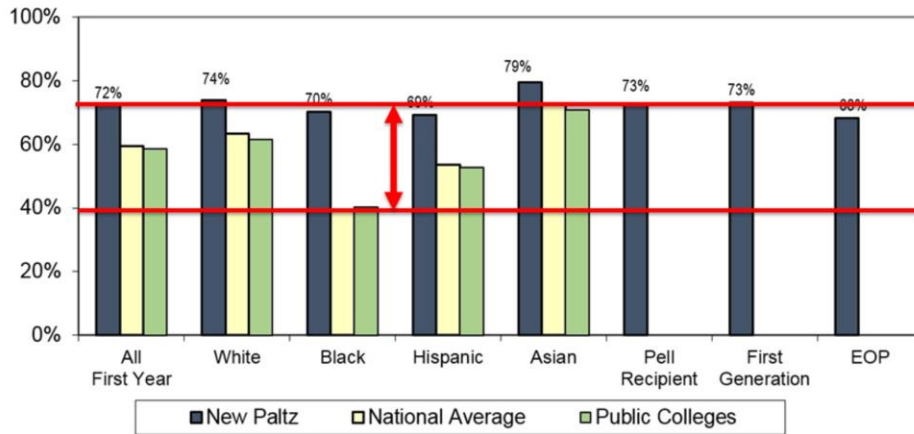
Students who attend college but don't graduate do not realize the social and economic benefits of a degree and are the most likely to default on education loans. So graduation rates matter.

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS BY CATEGORY



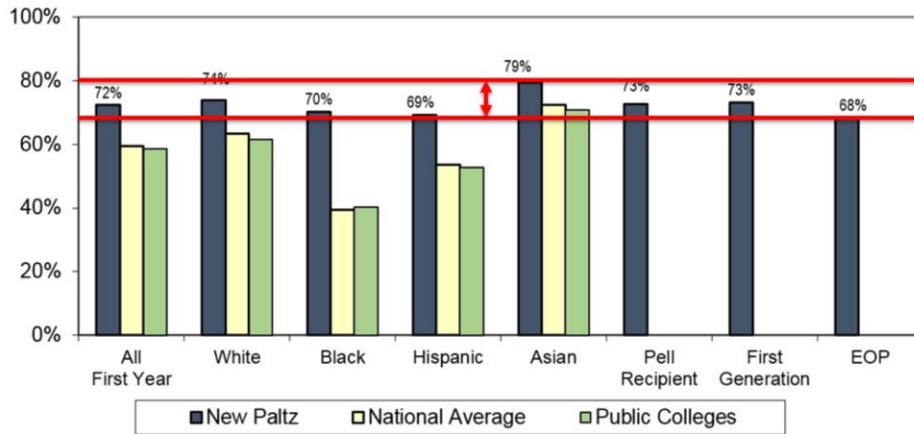
Our graduation rates are far above state and national averages. Indeed, we graduate students in FOUR years at the same rate as the national average six-year graduation rate.

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS BY CATEGORY



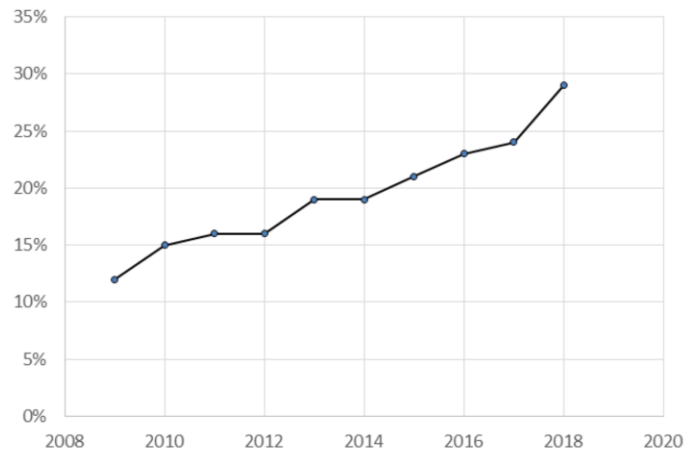
National averages show huge gaps in graduation rates by racial background and economic status.

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS BY CATEGORY



But at New Paltz, these gaps are small for underrepresented minority students, low-income and first-generation students, and students in our Educational Opportunity Program – EOP - which serves students who are both low income and face academic challenges, mostly because they attended poor, urban or rural schools.

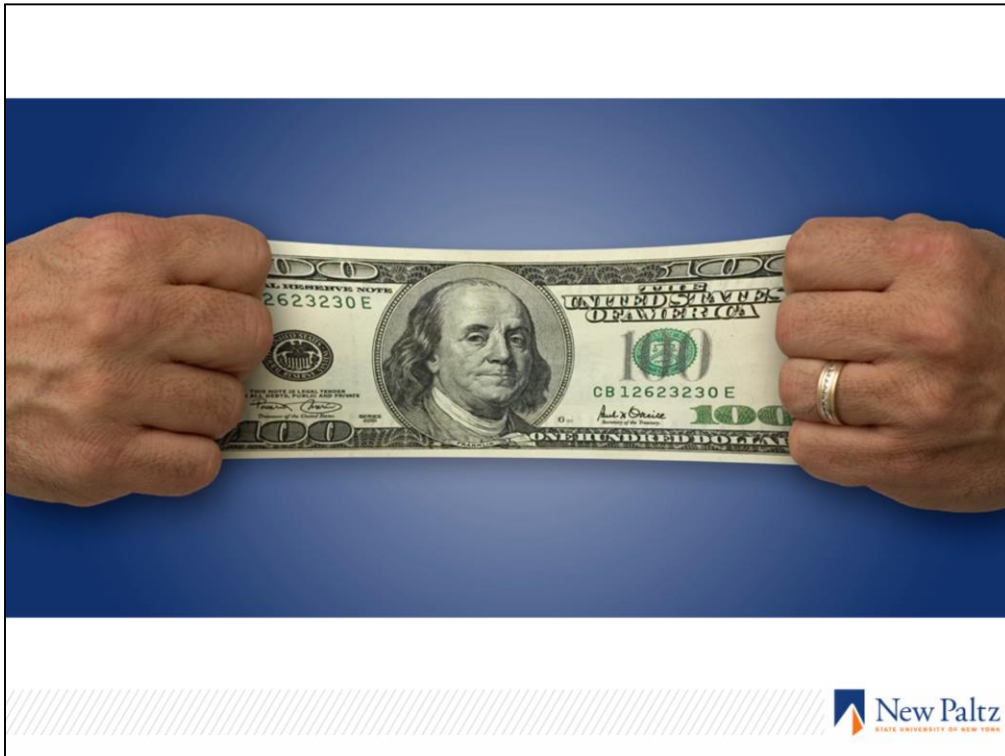
LATINX STUDENTS IN FIRST-YEAR CLASS (%)



The percentage of students from historically underrepresented groups in our incoming first-year class is now about 45%. We've seen particular growth in the number of Hispanic students studying at New Paltz.

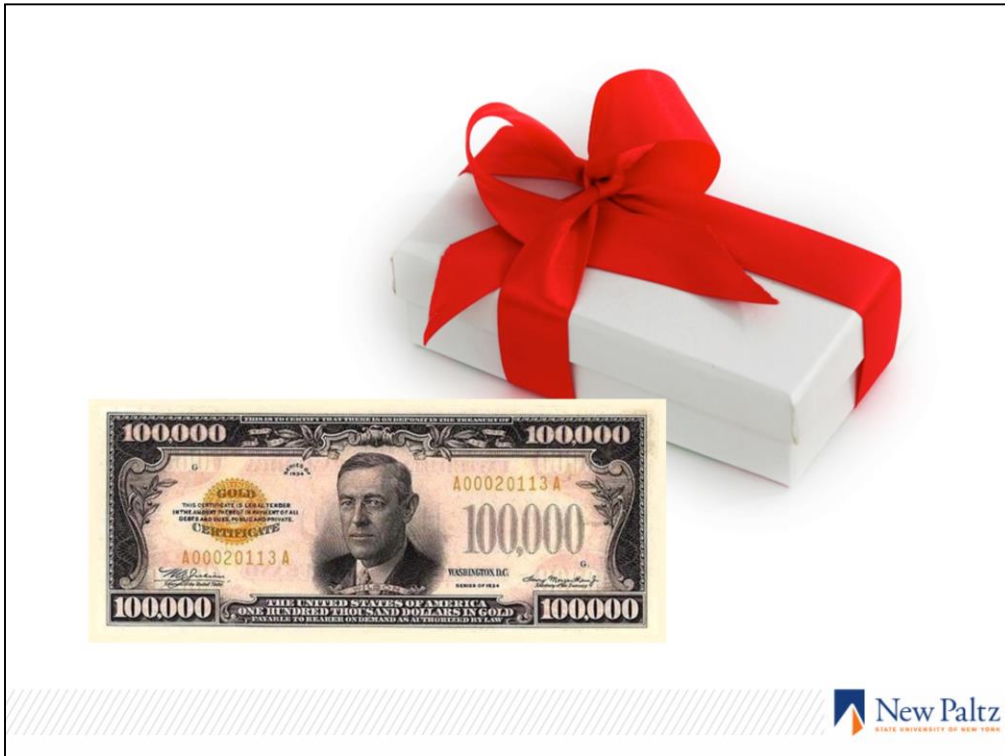


As our nation becomes more and more diverse, these are the students of the future that higher education must serve well, and New Paltz is well ahead of the curve.

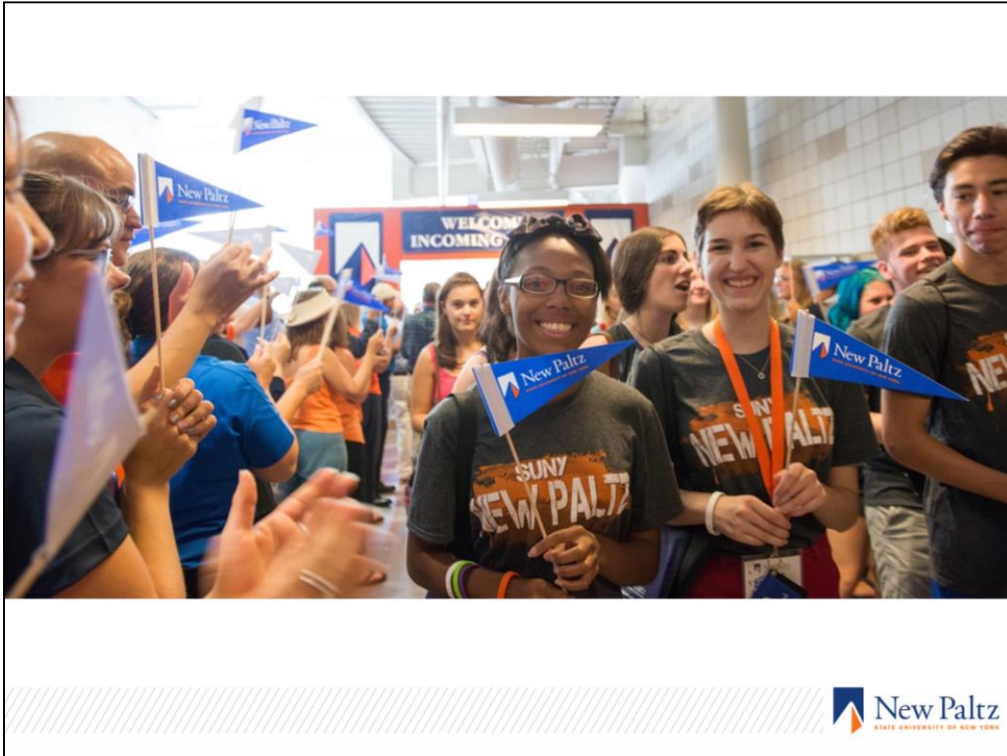


Like your businesses, our costs for virtually everything increase year by year. Our state taxpayer direct support to cover such costs this year is the same as it was in 2012-13. We've relied heavily on tuition increases to sustain our economy. Right now, 80 cents of every dollar we have to spend to support our academic mission comes from tuition, 20 cents from taxpayers. This is making even the modest cost of a SUNY education challenging for many families, and strains our financial picture.

A significant constraint for us is that tuition is set at the state level, and neither tuition or taxpayer support are adjusted to the relatively high cost of living in the Hudson Valley. An employee earning \$50,000 a year in Syracuse, Oswego, or Buffalo would need to be paid about \$70,000 to have the same standard of living in New Paltz – and we're not provided funding to make such adjustments.

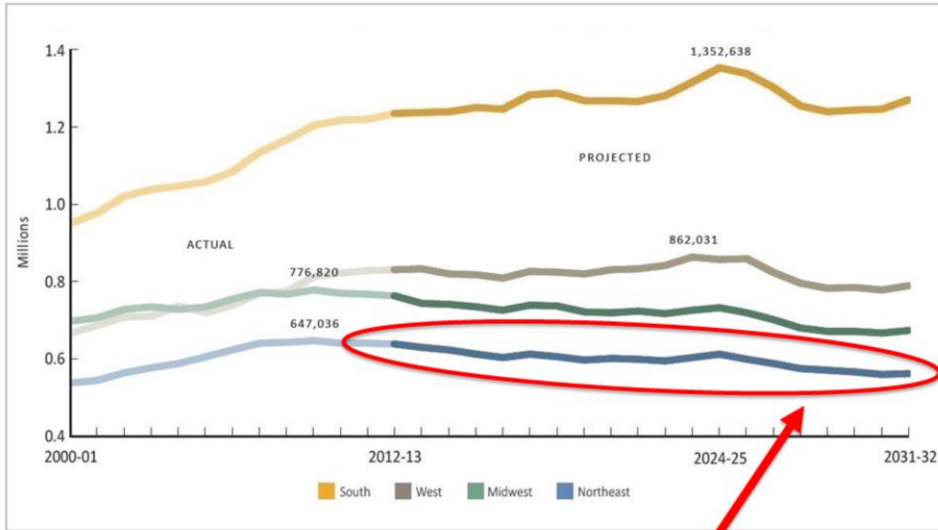


We are making headway – still with lots of room to grow– in diversifying our revenue streams, raising private funds for student support and to create a “margin of excellence” beyond what we can do with state funding and tuition. I would welcome a conversation with anyone about how you might support a scholarship program, our student crisis fund, or perhaps even establish a new fund to support our students and programs.

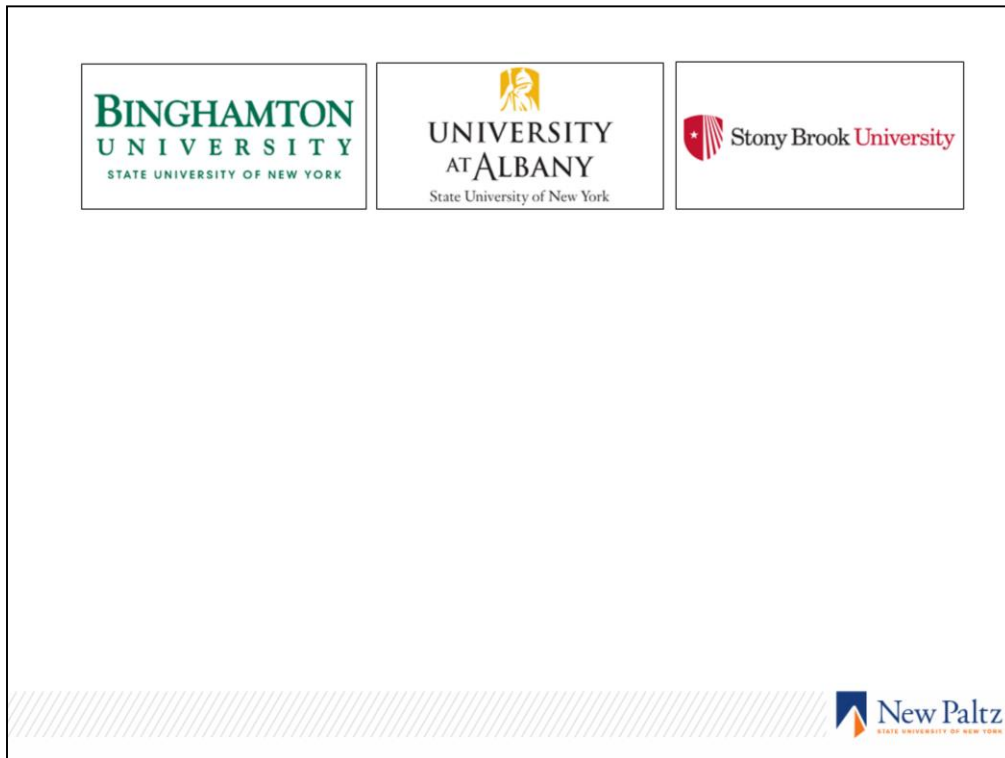


Our heavy financial dependence on tuition means that recruiting students and maintaining or growing enrollment is critical to our economy, much more than it was, say, a decade ago.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



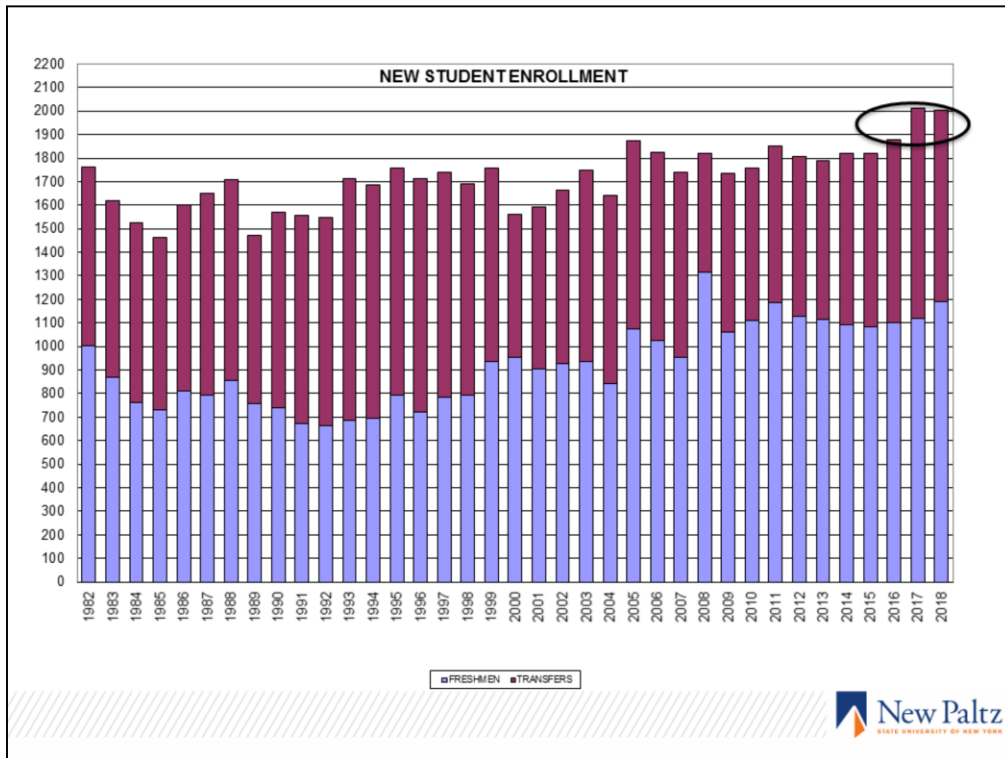
This is challenging in part because of declining numbers of high school graduates throughout most of New York and the Northeast.



We compete with other colleges and universities to recruit the number and caliber of students we need to sustain our economy and our programs. Because we offer an unusually broad and rich array of majors, we compete for students with the SUNY University Centers of Binghamton, Albany, Stony Brook, and even far-distant University of Buffalo.



But because of our modest size and reputation as a welcoming, friendly campus, we also compete with smaller SUNY campuses AND – increasingly – New York private colleges. Certainly, the improved physical environment that I've described – along with our established reputation for quality and our enviable location - are great assets in our competition for students.



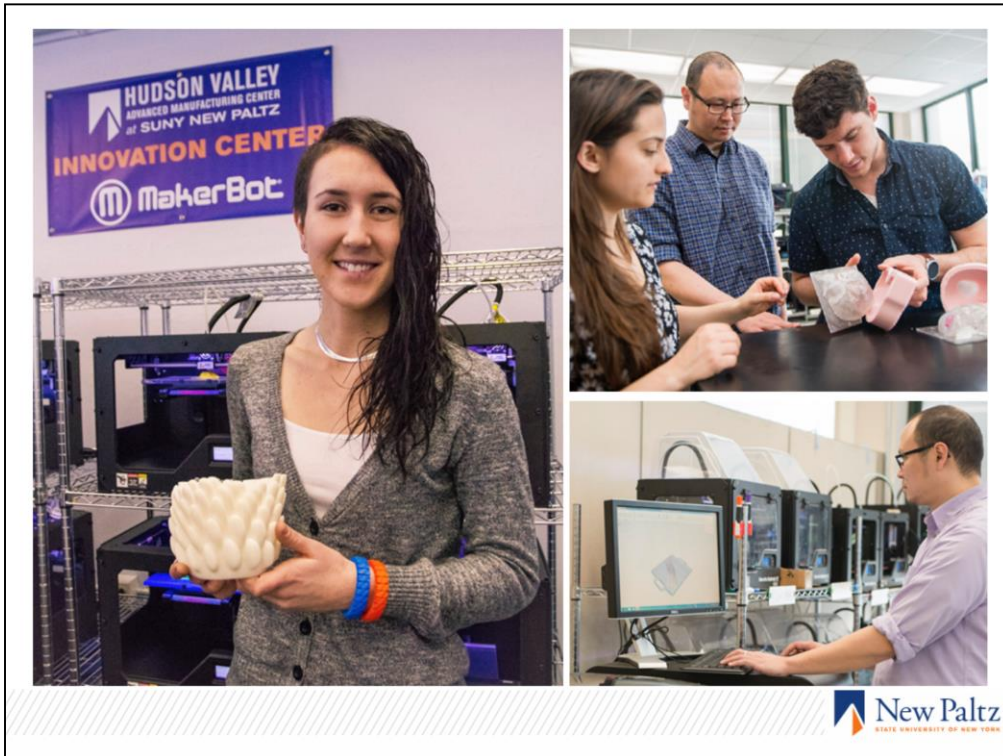
The three largest incoming classes in our institution’s history – first-year and transfer students together – have been the past three years, and that’s with NO relaxation of our admissions standards. That’s a clear indication that we are offering programs that students want, in an attractive environment. And we are serving increasing numbers of students from the Hudson Valley as people become more and more aware of the high-quality educational opportunities available so close to home. Our increasing graduation rates mean that we have to recruit more and more students just to sustain current enrollment.



A key priority in our strategic plan is to engage and support the region.



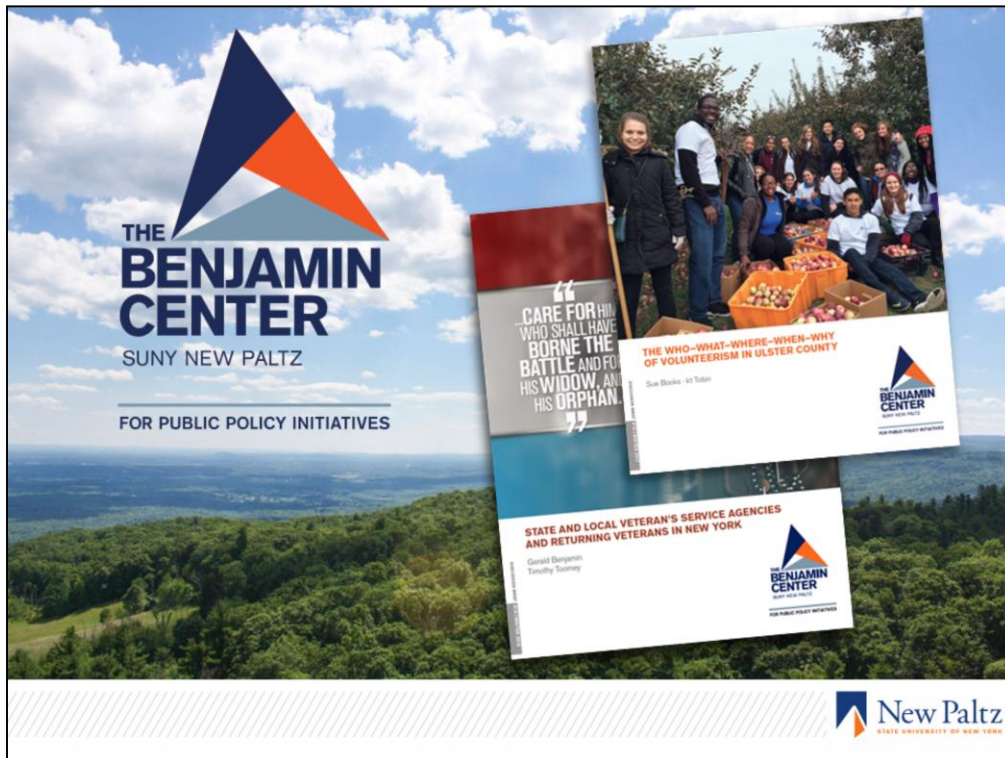
We are part of an outstanding higher education ecosystem in the Hudson Valley. About half of our graduates each year came to us as transfer students, most from Hudson Valley community colleges, especially Ulster, Dutchess, and Orange.



We contribute to the region in many ways beyond educating citizens, sometimes directly through benefits that our educational programs bring to businesses and organizations in the Hudson Valley. For example, an important way that universities connect regionally is through technology. Our Hudson Valley Advanced Manufacturing Center is home to our 3D printing initiative, where additive manufacturing brings art, engineering, design, and business together. We've now worked with and supported nearly 400 different businesses and entrepreneurs, and our students are developing knowledge and skills that position them well for the world of work – both through their coursework and the practical learning they experience working in the Center.



Our new mechanical engineering program responds to identified workforce needs in the Hudson Valley and is growing rapidly. These graduates are getting jobs, many in the Hudson Valley. Mechanical engineering across the country attracts more women than other engineering majors, and New Paltz is no different.



Our Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives conducts research on regional issues to inform public policy discussion and decision making --focused on improving governance and quality of life in the region. Every project includes at least one apprentice student researcher – another applied learning opportunity we create for our students.



Our Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art is a leading arts organization in the Hudson Valley, both because of its top-tier exhibitions and its collaborations with regional arts organizations. The Dorsky was one of only three New York college and university art museums included in a Huffington Post ranking of the best in the Northeast. The Dorsky and faculty and students in the School of Fine and Performing Arts elevate the profile of the arts in our regional quality of life.



Partnerships between the School of Business and the regional business community are growing.



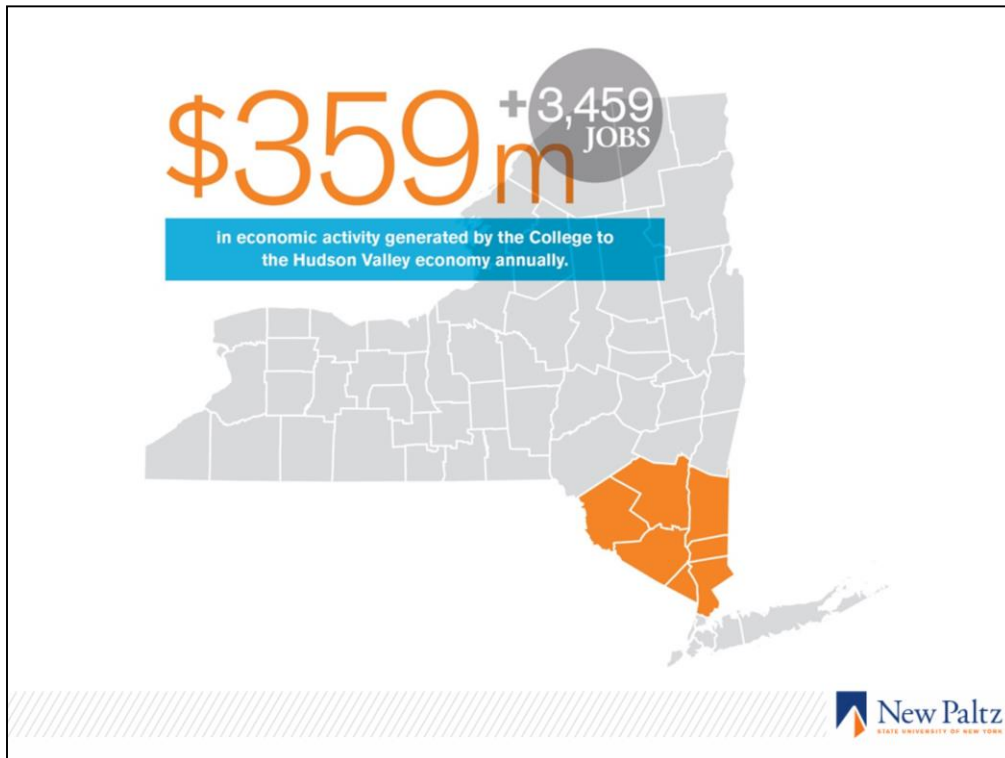
HUDSON VALLEY
VENTUREHUB
at **SUNY NEW PALTZ**



The School of Business, along with other organizations and sponsors, has established a new Hudson Valley Venture Hub that connects entrepreneurs with prospective investors and with potential employees, to strengthen the startup ecosystem of the Hudson Valley and benefit our educational mission in the process.



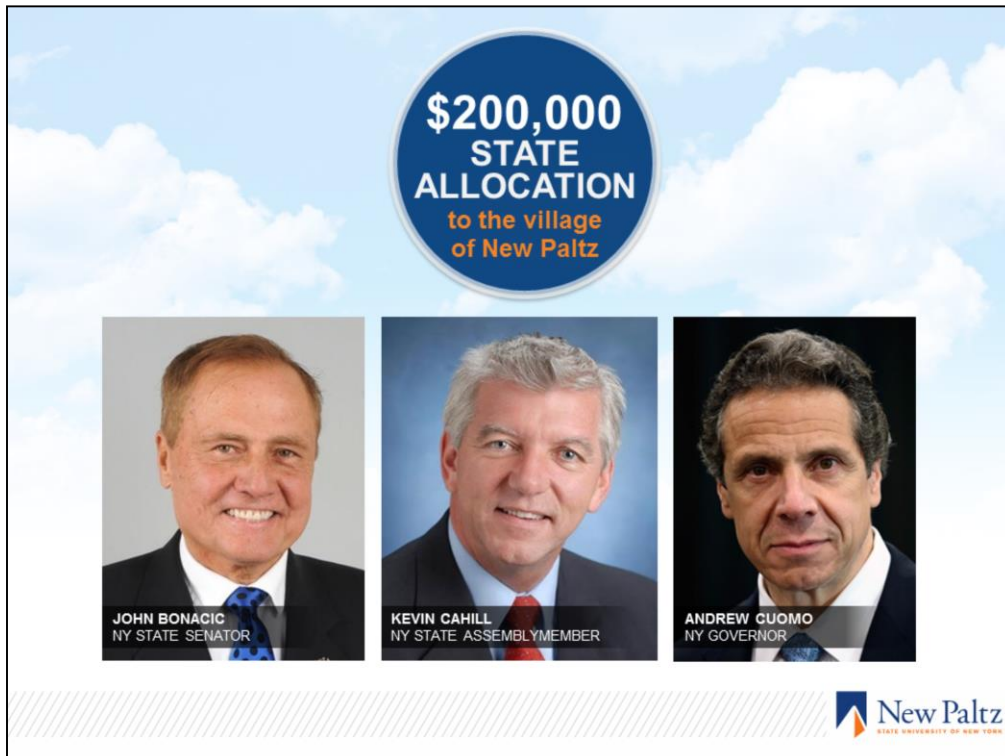
Our School of Education has built strong connections with the regional K through 12 community. We host the New York State Master Teacher Program, and many of the school principals and superintendents in the Hudson Valley are graduates of our educational administration certificate program.



An important benefit of our success is that SUNY New Paltz is a major economic engine in the region. We are the largest employer in Ulster County, and we generate about \$359 million in economic activity in the Hudson Valley and about \$415 million in New York State.



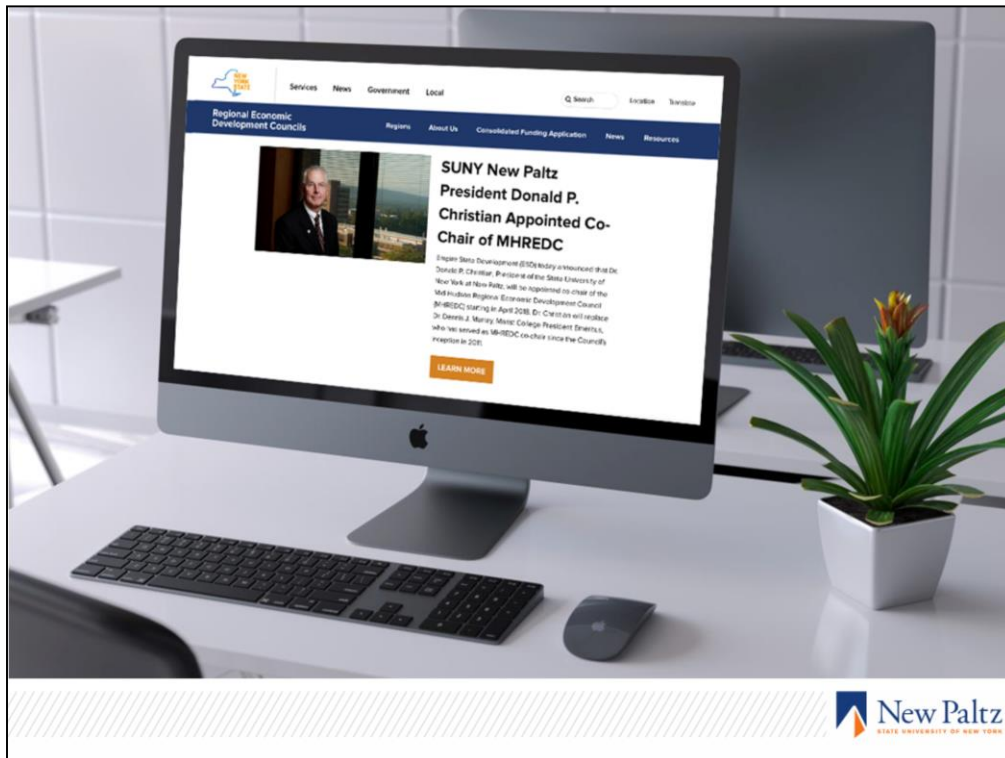
I hope you will pick up one of the reports of our economic impact on your table to learn more about that analysis. Those figures do not include the roughly \$4 million monetized value of the extensive volunteer contributions of our students, faculty, and staff. A recent study by the Rockefeller Institute of Government showed that every dollar spent on SUNY returns \$8.17 in economic benefit.



We recognize that the benefits of this economic activity do not necessarily generate tax revenue for the New Paltz community – our home. We supported the successful efforts of state leaders, including Senator John Bonacic and Assemblymember Kevin Cahill, to secure a \$200,000 state allocation to the Village of New Paltz to help pay for services like police and fire protection that also support the college.



This is on top of the in-kind support from the College that includes fuel for the fire department, the rescue squad, and the LOOP bus, as well as assistance that our University Police Department provides to the New Paltz Town Police through a longstanding mutual aid agreement.



I have been a member of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council for several years and became co-chair last year. We review and recommend proposals for major state economic development funding, including the Downtown Revitalization Initiative process that resulted in the selection of Kingston to receive a \$10 million award last year. Congratulations, Mayor Noble! I'm very excited about what that project will mean both for Kingston and for the region. Indeed, I leave this meeting in a few minutes to travel to Albany for this year's Regional Economic Development Council award announcement. Fingers crossed for the Hudson Valley!



In closing, through efforts like these we have worked to create a model PUBLIC university, both to enhance the learning experience of our students and to improve the quality of life in the Hudson Valley. We want to continue building and reinforcing this engagement as our defining ethos.

I thank you for your attention and continued support for the College, and I'll be happy now to respond to questions or comments you may have.