

Update

Alumni Newsletter *from*
Mitchell S. Nesler, Ph.D.



Fall 2018

www.esc.edu/Alumni

Over the last several months, I have been making my way around the state conducting a listening tour of the college. I visited nearly all of our locations, and I am proud to report that the Empire pride, passion and enthusiasm I hope you recall from your time with us is alive and well.

It will, perhaps, come as no surprise that SUNY Empire was once again ranked #1 in overall satisfaction across SUNY's state-operated colleges and universities, according to the 2018 SUNY Student Opinion Survey. We have earned this ranking each year the survey has been conducted since 1994, which was the first year we participated. We could not be more pleased to continue receiving this favorable feedback from students.

Since my last column, I also have had the opportunity to meet with SUNY Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson on several occasions. She first visited us in Saratoga Springs in August. The visit gave us an opportunity to highlight the college's ongoing leadership in areas such as online learning, educating nontraditional students, prior learning assessment and more, and to provide an update on our strategic plan. Engagement such as this with SUNY system leadership is critical, because, as you know, SUNY Empire's student demographics and funding model are unlike that of the majority of SUNY campuses. It is clear Chancellor Johnson has a firm grasp on what makes SUNY Empire unique and successful.

In setting an ambitious agenda for the SUNY system at her inauguration in September, Chancellor Johnson remarked on the importance of access to an affordable, innovative and individualized education, including "on-demand education," the right mix of online and on-site learning and serving nontraditional students, all of which are among the core strengths of SUNY Empire.

While the college is positioned to lead in many areas, I want to draw special attention to the recent 10-year anniversary of our RN to B.S.N. program, which we celebrated in July, along with several other alumni events in Saratoga Springs, including the 24th annual Day at the Races – one of our most successful yet in terms of attendance.



*Mitchell S. Nesler, Ph.D.
Officer in Charge*

The nursing anniversary came just months after Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed groundbreaking legislation into law that will ensure New York's nursing workforce is the best in the nation. Once the bill, known as "B.S.N. in 10," goes into effect in 2019, all newly licensed registered nurses will be required to complete a bachelor's degree in nursing within 10 years – putting successful degree programs like SUNY Empire's in peak demand.

Registered nurses comprise the largest health-care-provider group in the United States, with more than 3.1 million registered nationwide, almost four times the number of physicians. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects nursing is growing more quickly than any occupation. We are proud to play a leadership role in educating the nursing workforce of tomorrow as demand reaches an all-time high.

As you can see, it is an exciting and pivotal time for SUNY Empire State College. We so appreciate your continued engagement and support.

2018 Alumni Award Recipients

In its second year, the Alumni Awards Program recognized three exemplary alumni who have made a lasting impact on society and Empire State College through outstanding professional, philanthropic or volunteer accomplishments. We honored them at the annual joint meeting of the Foundation and Alumni Student Federation boards.

The Emerging Leader Award recipient is a two-time alumna of The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, **Erin Sullivan '04, '13**. Erin, who earned both her Bachelor of Science in Labor Studies and a Master of Arts in Labor Policy, is the shop steward for Local 3 IBEW in New York City. In her role, she has received the Life Saving Award, IBEW's highest honor, and has been appointed International Women's Committee Representative, all while developing the Local 3 Mentoring Program, pairing 2,500 apprentices with mentors since 2011.

The Community Impact Award recognizes demonstrated inspirational leadership by providing exceptional service in the community and beyond. This year's recipient, **Emad Rahim '02, '03**, is the founder of the Project Management Center of Excellence at Bellevue University. Rahim also is

a traveling educator and motivational speaker, impacting communities around the globe on his journey from a child born in a concentration camp, through poverty, to the success he's found in higher education and community service.

The Distinguished Leader Award recognizes transformational philanthropy, leadership and service to Empire State College. This year's recipient is **John Corrou '94**, a retired sales representative with Franklin International and a veteran of the U.S. Army Reserve. John, along with his wife, Jane, established The Corrou Family Scholarship, which aids single parents furthering their education. He has been an active member of the college's Foundation and Federation boards, and chairs the program committee of the Foundation board. He also has chaired the Empire State College Annual Fund and was a member of the college's Presidential Search Committee in 2013.

Call for nominations for 2019 will be going out shortly. I also am very proud to announce a new alumni award honoring our veterans and military. For information on this and all the awards, please go to www.esc.edu/alumni.

Events

10th Anniversary of the School of Nursing and Allied Health

This past summer, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our nursing program with an alumni, student and faculty reunion in Saratoga Springs. The program has close to 1,000 alumni and enrolls more than 600 students. Alumni speakers were **David Theobald '13, '17** and **Jennifer Pettis '12, '17**.

Faces of Labor Exhibit

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies gathered their alumni, students, faculty and staff for one of the nicest events in the history of the program. "Faces of Labor" is a portrait exhibit of 18 current Van Arsdale students representing IBEW, UA Plumbers and the United Federation of Teachers. We also were pleased to welcome those union leaders who have supported the more than 9,000 alumni of that program. We are grateful and look forward to continuing all our union partnerships.

Hispanic Heritage Celebration

In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, the college gathered alumni and students for an art exhibit and reception. "Many Voices" featured the artwork of alumni and students and was curated by **Raul Manzano '05**. Executive Vice President Joe Garcia served as keynote speaker and also unveiled the new Hispanic testimonial video. Artists included **Patricia Cazorla '17**, **Natural Langdon '17**, **Raul Manzano '05** and students **Carmen Velez** and **George A. Velez**.

Annual Alumni Student Dinner in the Hudson Valley

The Culinary Institute of America was the venue for the 14th annual dinner. **Michael Weiss '92**, professor of wine studies at the CIA, was our instructor that evening, walking us through various wine and food pairings with an elegant and informative style.

Second Annual International Alumni Event in Dubai

Did you know that the college has close to 6,000 graduates from our International Education program? Thanks to our Middle East Alumni Committee, we held our second annual event in Dubai, featuring an alumni career panel, along with faculty members, Bidhan Chandra, Julie Gedro and Jeannine Mercer. Alumni members of the panel included **Charles Saliba '98**, **Rosine Labaki '01**, **Tarek Abou Zeinab '02** and **Gerard Mounayer '10**.

Around the State

We did so many other events around the state this past summer and fall in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Binghamton, Canandaigua, Lake Placid, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Utica, Ithaca, Watertown, Fort Drum, Batavia, Plattsburgh, at our Adirondack Residency, for our veterans and military, as well as in the Capital region. A spring event is planned on Long Island. Please consider coming to any of these events, and, of course, we'd love to hear your suggestions. You can see the entire calendar at www.esc.edu/alumni.

Alumni Profile – Joe Mancino '80, 'H06

At 22, in 1960, SUNY Empire State College alumnus **Joseph Mancino '80** was working at the Roslyn Savings Bank on Long Island. He'd taken some courses at Nassau Community College, but yearned for more advanced education, he says, "because I knew I needed it to get ahead." So Joe attended both the American Institute of Banking and Graduate School of Savings Banking for specialized coursework in finance, economics and bank operations. He graduated from both, but found himself still wondering, "Where do I go from here?" All his local options

were colleges that required regular, in-person attendance. That couldn't work for him, as he worked full time and supported a wife and two young children. Then, a colleague suggested Empire State College, a name unfamiliar to Joe.

"Where's that?" he wanted to know.

Soon, he found himself traveling the short distance to Old Westbury to talk about his academic needs and aspirations. There, he learned he could meet with a mentor every two weeks and work independently from home at night and on weekends. Moreover, after evaluating his prior coursework and experience, SUNY Empire awarded Joe a substantial number of credits toward his undergraduate degree in Business, Management and Economics. "It was the best thing I ever did," he says of his decision to enroll at ESC. "Right after that, I started moving up the ladder a little faster than I had anticipated."

The bank was paying for him to attend college, and he would borrow the branch typewriter at night and on weekends to bring home, where his wife – a former secretary – typed up his assignments. "She deserves half the credit for everything I achieved," he says. He remembers working two to three hours at night after coming home from a full day at the bank, with a break only in August, when he put down his books and refreshed himself with other activities.

Things mostly went smoothly, although, in 1978, he was run over by a golf cart, which shredded his ankle, and ended up in the hospital for an extended stay. His

wife gathered up his "college stuff" and Joe wrote a paper from bed.

"I took literature, history and even astronomy," he recalls. "I kept saying my main goal was to understand how a bank works, but I have no regrets about the liberal arts courses. I fit it all in with a shoehorn," Joe says today, looking back at how he integrated his work and academic commitments.

Meanwhile, Joe rocketed at Roslyn Bancorp, Inc. to positions as executive vice president, chairman and, finally, president and chief executive officer. Despite the heavy professional load, his volunteer work also flourished. Among other commitments, Joe has served as director for the Community Bankers Association of New York State and SBLI USA Mutual Life Insurance Company. He has been a trustee of Long Island University and a member of the Nassau-Suffolk Advisory Board of Helen Keller Services for the Blind-Long Island Division. He also has served as a member of the Thrift Institutions Advisory Panel to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the board of directors and treasurer of the Interfaith Nutrition Network on Long Island and on the board of trustees of the T.R. Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He says his primary charitable interests are organizations that support children, homeless individuals and veterans. In addition, he will have funded more than 70 scholarships for SUNY Empire students with financial need through the Joseph L. Mancino Family scholarship by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, and annually



Joe Mancino '80, 'H06, and Laurel Anne Mancino

Photo provided

shores up a named endowment for the college. He also sits on the board of Winthrop Hospital. Looking back at his years of philanthropy, advocacy and civic volunteerism, he notes he has raised millions, "for the right reasons. If I take something on, I want it to work."

He was surprised in 2006, when the college awarded him an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters for his support, commitment and generosity. His children and grandchildren attended the ceremony, where he got another surprise, when he was asked to address the graduating class. "I had nothing prepared, so I spoke from the heart," he recalls. "I told them not to sit idly by and complain. Vote, get involved, make things better."

"I'm busier now than when I worked for the bank," says Joe, who retired in 2005. "When I was a CEO, I had a staff to bring the bank from five locations to 39, and from 900 million dollars in assets to 10.5 billion.

"Empire State College was the catalyst for me to move up in the bank and, by giving scholarships to those with financial need, I want to emphasize how important education is. When I went to school, I needed help. My father drove a truck and my mother was a factory worker. They couldn't have afforded for me to go to college. I want to do for students what was done for me, because I can and it's the right thing to do. 'There but for the grace of God go I.' It's been a great ride."



The Fund for Empire State College has a successful history when presented with challenges. From our first 24-hour Giving Challenge in 2014 to the Road to 400 Challenge in 2017, the excitement and generosity from 2,212 SUNY Empire alumni, friends and employees has been incredible. Our four challenges raised \$422,934 for student scholarships, academic programming and faculty excellence. We love our supporters, our challengers and the exhilaration of Challenge Day, but this year, we are taking a break from all of

that to focus on what the challenges were all about. This year, we are focused on sharing the stories of your impact and how the support of 2,212 SUNY Empire proud make a difference in the lives of Empire State College students.

Just because we are not hosting a challenge this year doesn't mean that the work is done. We can still come together to make a difference at ESC. Please consider making a gift today at www.esc.edu/SupportESC, or by using the enclosed envelope.

Your Gifts at Work: Student Snapshot – Katharina Basta '18

Your gifts support our students in a variety of ways, most visibly through scholarship funding. During 2018-2019, the Empire State College Foundation will distribute nearly 600 scholarships to students across the college, with an average award of \$1,500 per student. The vast majority of scholarship recipients hail from New York state, with the largest percentage (27 percent) enrolled in Community and Human Services, followed closely by Business, Management and Economics, and the School of Nursing and Allied Health.

The numbers help provide an overall view of student trends, areas of need for future funding, and the success of our scholarship program in impacting students' degree completion. But the numbers only tell part of the story. Our students are dedicated individuals with remarkable stories to tell.

Stories like **Katharina Basta's**, a recipient of the Alumni Student Federation Scholarship. Katharina, a graduate student from Carthage, N.Y., recently completed a bachelor's degree in Science, Mathematics and Technology and is pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching. Her goal is to teach high-school biology in her rural community in northern New York. In between work, school and family commitments, this summer, she joined SUNY Empire students and faculty

on a two-week service trip to Puerto Rico to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

"I learned that I am capable of so much more than most people would expect," she said. "Puerto Rico was an opportunity for action and a way to feel empowered and to help aid some of the people who had been struck by disaster."

Katharina is making an impact on the world around her, and through your generosity, you are making an impact on her academic journey as well.



Katharina Basta '18 in Puerto Rico