

A year like no other.

SUNY Cortland President's 2019-20 Annual Report





A year like none other

By Erik J. Bitterbaum, President, SUNY Cortland

This has been a year like no other. As a community, we faced the deadliest pandemic in a century, the worst economic crisis since The Great Depression and a national reckoning over centuries of systemic racism. These watershed events continue to challenge us all with no clear end in sight.

But, as the legendary football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “It’s not whether you get knocked down, it’s whether you get up.”

I don’t know how many times each of us has had to brush ourselves off and struggle to our feet during the last six months, but I do know that SUNY Cortland – as a community of students, families, faculty, staff and SUNY sister campuses – is standing tall. We remain Red Dragon Strong.

I will share that, long before the pandemic forced us to quickly shift all of our activity to a remote model in March, this had already been an exceptional year.

In September, SUNY Cortland was nationally recognized for the progress it has made in diversity, equity and inclusion as it has evolved from a campus that was 95 percent white two decades ago into a university in which a quarter of all enrollees are students of color. *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education, gave Cortland the **Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award**. The university was lauded for programs and initiatives undertaken to embrace racial and ethnic diversity, gender identity and sexual orientation, faith and spiritual differences, and campus community members with disabilities.

The year was also exceptional for the health and safety of our students. The University Police Department recorded its **lowest rate of on-campus crimes** in 43 years during 2019. And Safewise.com named Cortland **the safest college town in New York and one of the safest in the United States**.

Last year we also learned that our economics faculty is a positive national outlier. More than half of the tenured or tenure-track faculty in **Cortland’s Economics Department are women**, a significant departure from the norm in a typically male-dominated field.

And in November, SUNY Cortland made athletic history. The 2019 Cortaca Jug game, our annual football contest against Ithaca College, was played at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., home of the NFL’s New York Giants and Jets. The game **set a record for attendance** at a Division III sporting event, attracting thousands of students and alumni from across the country.

At the time, we couldn’t imagine that impressive gatherings like that would soon become one of the most dangerous things people could do.

When COVID-19 cases soared in New York and SUNY Cortland made the difficult decision to shift to remote learning this spring, our community responded with creativity and dedication. In a matter of days, our faculty moved all courses online and our staff began innovating to keep providing services from their homes. Together, they developed some truly remarkable ways of connecting and engaging with students virtually.

Our students met the challenge as well, quickly adjusting to new circumstances and the loss of activities that defined the college experience for many of them. The Class of 2020 deserves special mention. Because of the pandemic, they had to finish their college careers remotely, forgoing traditions like Spring Fling and Senior Send-off. An on-campus Commencement, a benchmark life event for many students and families, was postponed until 2021, with their success celebrated virtually in a week-long series of online events and recognitions in May 2020. Not since the Red Dragon Class of 1970, when anti-Vietnam War demonstrations rocked the nation and the campus, has a group of SUNY Cortland seniors persevered through such disruption to earn their degrees.

Now, at the start of a new academic year marked by physical distancing and face coverings, we are prepared to face yet another set of unprecedented challenges. The only predictions I can make with certainty about 2020–2021 is that, if we get knocked down, we will not be down for long.



A year like no other

SUNY Cortland stands out for academics, athletics and affordability. Red Dragons dig deeper, reach higher and achieve more. The proof is in the 2019-2020 numbers.

Strong outcomes

- 97 percent of graduates are employed or pursuing a postgraduate degree within 12 months of Commencement
- 85 percent of graduates work in New York state

Unlimited opportunity

- 67 majors representing arts and sciences, education and professional studies
- 39 graduate programs
- 50+ study abroad options on six continents
- 7 pre-professional programs, including physical therapy, medicine and law

Athletic excellence

- An NCAA Division III powerhouse
 - SUNY Cortland has won NCAA Division III team titles in nine different sports — the second-highest total nationally
 - 106 individual national titles
 - 25 team national championships

Ambitious vision

- More than \$300 million in new construction since 2011
- 100 percent use of renewable electricity

Campus profile: 2019-20

- 16:1 student-to-faculty ratio
- 6,834 students
 - 6,295 undergraduate
 - 539 graduate

Diverse student body

- 76 percent white
- 24 percent non-white

STRONG OUTCOMES

97%



of graduates employed or pursuing a postgraduate degree

MAJORS FOR EVERY INTEREST

67

academic majors



from biomedical sciences to business economics

ATHLETICS POWERHOUSE

25

NCAA Division III national team championships



the second highest total nationally

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

\$300+ Million

in new construction and facility upgrades

since 2011



A



6,900
students



Notable Recognition 2019-20

Overall Best Value

Money

Prospective students and their families often have simple goals when it comes to picking a college. They want a school that offers an affordable, quality education that leads to positive career outcomes. *Money.com* recently ranked **SUNY Cortland No. 107 in the nation** on its annual “Best Colleges for your Money 2020” study, once again placing it among the top 5% of U.S. colleges and universities.



The Princeton Review

SUNY Cortland students love many things about their university, including their quality of life and safety on campus, the accessibility of faculty and Cortland's dedication to sustainability. So it's no surprise SUNY Cortland was named to **The Princeton Review's 2021 list** of the “Best College Region by Region,” which looked at factors including academics, financial aid, quality of life and how committed colleges are to sustainability.

Sustainability

STARS Gold

SUNY Cortland has once again been recognized as one of the most sustainable campuses in the nation, **earning an elite gold designation** for being green that places it among the top 3 percent of all higher education institutions in the nation. Cortland's gold rating was recertified after meeting toughened standards under STARS — short for Sustainability, Tracking and Assessment Rating System — an international program created to help post-secondary campuses set and meet sustainability goals.

Sierra Club

Cortland was listed No. 69 overall on the Sierra Club's “**Cool Schools 2019 Ranking**.” The Sierra Club evaluates colleges based on sustainability-focused courses, ecofriendly cafeteria provisions and carbon-neutral land and energy policies. It looks at all four-year, degree-granting undergraduate colleges and universities as well as two-year community colleges in the U.S. and Canada.



Program-specific praise

Online master's in sport management

Cortland's **online M.S. in sport management** was ranked the top such program in the Northeast by Intelligent.com.

Best colleges for communication majors

The Communication and Media Studies Department was recognized **as the No. 3 department in New York state** by Zippa.com. The department was highlighted for its excellent career preparation by CollegeFactual.com, which named it No. 20 in the nation for “Best Communication and Media Studies Colleges for the Money.”

Coaching master's among nation's best

Cortland's graduate program in coaching was named No. 5 in the nation by TheBestSchools.org.

Transfer student support

For the third consecutive year, SUNY Cortland was the only public university in New York state named to **an international honor society's Transfer Honor Roll**.



Our Mission

SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service.

Our Vision

SUNY Cortland will be a college of opportunity, from which students graduate with the knowledge, integrity, skills and compassion to excel as leaders, citizens, scholars, teachers and champions of excellence. Prospective students and employees will choose SUNY Cortland in response to its nationally recognized academic programs, innovation and experiential learning, and the rich intellectual, social and athletic life on the campus. SUNY Cortland will be a center for intellectual, cultural and economic growth, distinguished by successful partnerships with organizations, schools, agencies and businesses throughout the region, the nation and the world.

Our Values

Student Focus

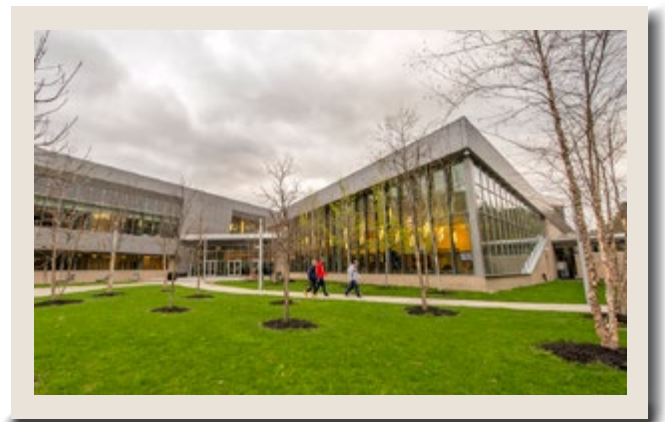
All decisions, plans and actions revolve around students' academic, personal, social and cultural development and wellness.

Integrity

Dedication to honesty, hard work, high personal and professional standards, and respect for people, perspectives, and the environment.

Intellectual Life

Commitment to inquiry, academic rigor, creativity, lifelong learning and contribution to discipline, profession, and the greater good.



Our Priorities

Academic Excellence

We will cultivate academic programs that provide students with the best opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and dispositions). This means ensuring that we have relevant and engaging curriculum, effective and innovative delivery methods, appropriate facilities and a culture of continual improvement. We will foster the highest levels of student and faculty engagement and support faculty contributions to their disciplines, the college and communities locally and globally.

Transformational Education

We will provide intentionally designed and highly effective educational opportunities that challenge how students see themselves and the world in profound new ways. Transformational education involves all of the opportunities that expose students to new environments, cultures, perspectives and knowledge. It also challenges them to reflect, acknowledge their self-efficacy, and continually expand their understanding and skills to be more engaged agents in their lives and their communities.

Well-being

We will advocate for personal and community well-being through our academic disciplines and our campus programming and facilities. We actively promote the physical, emotional, cultural and social well-being of our students and employees, determine areas of greatest need, and respond with policies and programs that recognize the well-being of each individual is critical to our strength as a whole. This includes striving to be a campus community that enacts values of inclusivity, collaboration, respect, and care where contributions to the community are recognized and we hold ourselves accountable for supporting a positive campus climate.

Maximization of Resources

We will sustain resources and carefully align our decision-making and allocation process with the mission-based functions of the college and our strategic vision for the campus. Maximizing resources includes being fiscally responsible, thinking about efficiency while maintaining excellence, and communicating clearly about resource allocation. It also means focusing on sustainability and ensuring that the campus maintains a dedication to responsible use of natural resources and consideration of our impact on our environment.

Institutional Objectives

The Institutional Objectives are focused, intentional changes with measurable outcomes derived from our four strategic priorities. They were established during the 2017-18 year to complement the ongoing mission-critical work of the campus and are in addition to objectives within operational plans. These 11 indicators are measures that will be used to assess progress over the next five years. As we measure progress toward these objectives, we anticipate that new initiatives will emerge and new indicators will inform our progress.



1. Enhance the assessment of student learning and development and utilize evidence to strengthen programs.
2. Improve student achievement in written and oral communication
3. Increase persistence and degree completion for first-year, transfer and underrepresented student.
4. Promote faculty engagement in the life of the college and in faculty members' respective disciplines.
5. Increase the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty.
6. Expand the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing the quality of experiences.
7. Strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility and accountability.
8. Increase institutional financial support to students through scholarship fundraising.
9. Increase revenue to campus from non-tuition sources.
10. Enhance the quality of spaces and facilities for academic programs and the overall student experience.
11. Increase the environmental sustainability of the campus and community.

2019-20: The year in review

Academic Excellence

Student achievement

Senior early childhood/childhood education major **Kathleen Altamirano** was SUNY Cortland's first recipient of the Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) Student Excellence. The award recognizes students who exhibit academic success, perseverance and leadership qualities.



SUNY Cortland senior **Alyson Nilsen** recently was chosen for one of only two prestigious undergraduate scholarships presented this year by New York state's higher education labor union, United University Professions (UUP).

Four education students presented on the topic of how children with incarcerated family members can be negatively impacted by how their situation is portrayed in literature at the 2019 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

Senior biology major **Melissa Moran** worked 12-hour days on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic as a medical assistant at Walk-In Medical Urgent Care in New City, N.Y. following the start of distance learning in mid-March.

Four students — Asha Goldberg, Alyson Nilsen, Kiley Stoj and Breanna Washington — were recognized with the State University of New York **Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence**.

Faculty Achievement

Steven Broyles and Donna Videto were appointed to the rank of Distinguished Faculty by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Brian Barrett received the **Chancellor's Award for Scholarship and Creative Activities** for his work on the sociology of curriculum knowledge.

Teacher Education

SUNY Cortland made it easier for teachers to earn a master's degree by introducing a **new fully online graduate program in literacy education**. The program leads to two teaching certifications in a discipline that applies to all subjects.

Career Preparation

Thanks to a grant from the Parkinson Voice Project, students and faculty in SUNY Cortland's Communication Disorders and Sciences Department **will work with Parkinson's disease patients** from the local community to develop a therapy program that allows them to speak confidently and with intent.

Zippia.com ranked Cortland No. 5 in the nation on its list of the **"Best Public Colleges in Each State for Getting a Job in 2020."**

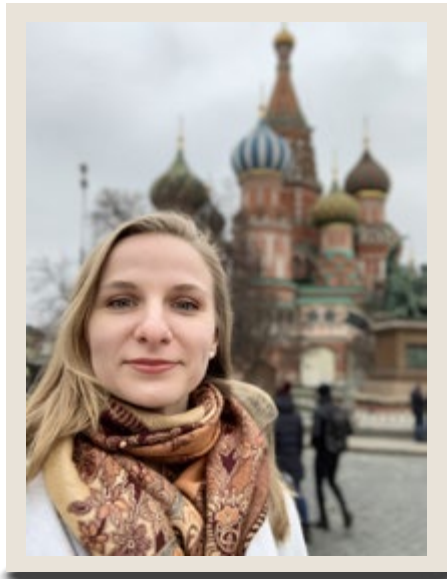
Academic Enrichment

The theme of the **Cultural and Intellectual Climate Committee** for 2019-20 was "debt." The yearlong program hosted 13 events including panel discussions, exhibitions and films. The series' keynote speaker was Stephanie Kelton, a professor of public policy and economics at Stony Brook University who served as chief economist on the U.S. Senate Budget Committee in 2015 and as a senior economic advisor to Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign.

Transformational Education

Applied learning

SUNY Cortland will offer an **undergraduate degree in media production** starting in Fall 2020 — a major addition for students interested in careers related to television, film, radio or the digital arts.



SUNY Cortland students in the **Cortland Writers Association**, who meet weekly to exercise their writing skills critically engage one another's work, traveled to Seven Valleys New Tech Academy in Cortland, where they divided high school students into small groups and gave them a brief creative writing assignment.

When students in a **forensic psychology course** needed to find students who could serve as mock interview subjects, they found willing and talented actors in SUNY Cortland's Performing Arts Department.

International Education

A six-week summer course, **International Perspectives in Poverty**, is one way SUNY Cortland is expanding its study abroad offerings online in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Liza Kotar M '19 moved to Moscow, Russia in January to teach psychology classes in English to master's-level university students and begin her research on individual resilience. She will use a **Fulbright Research Award** to investigate how Russia is responding to COVID-19.



Civic Engagement

SUNY Cortland's Institute for Civic Engagement has created a unique, SUNY-wide online scholarly journal that will allow academics from all 64 SUNY Campuses to share innovative and pragmatic applied learning strategies. *The Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement, JoSE*, pronounced JOE-zee, will publish twice annually in January and June.

SUNY Cortland Senior **Ryann Hudson** gained valuable hands-on experience with the logistics and coordination that goes into a national political campaign as an intern for former Vice President Joe Biden during the 2020 Iowa Caucus.

Student Research

Kiley Stoj, a senior anthropology and biology dual major, has received funding from a **Fulbright-Nehru Student Research** grant to conduct a study on the usage of plants in the ancient Indian style of Ayurvedic medicine.

The fourth **SUNY Cortland Alumni-Undergraduate Research Science Symposium** allowed current students to share their research with Cortland graduates who have gone on to have successful careers in scientific research.

The annual student research fair, **Transformations**, moved online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Performing Arts

The university launched a **bachelor of fine arts (B.F.A.) degree program** in musical theatre starting in Fall 2020, a major addition for students who aspire to perform professionally after graduation.

The Performing Arts Department did four major productions during the 2019-20 academic year. They were:

- **"The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time"**
- **"Head Over Heels"**
- **"Holiday Inn"** (canceled due to COVID-19)
- **"Lysistrata"**

Actor and director William Fichtner **screened his film "Cold Brook"** in October. It was partially shot on campus in 2017.



Well-Being

Diversity

SUNY Cortland was recognized by the **Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award** by *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. The university was lauded for its programs and initiatives undertaken to embrace racial and ethnic diversity, gender identity and sexual orientation, faith and spiritual differences, and campus community members with disabilities.

More than half of the tenured or tenure-track faculty in **Cortland's Economics Department are women**, a vast departure from a typically male-dominated field.





SUNY Cortland senior Alliyah Dookie received the first-ever **SUNY Cortland NAACP Award**, an honor that was inspired by the NAACP Image Awards for outstanding achievements by people of color in the arts.

The university hosted its second **TransAction conference**, to focus on the needs and experiences of transgender and genderqueer college students.

The Beloved Community Narratives Project sought to visually explore the many individual differences among campus community members through artistic posters.

An anti-racism website was launched in June 2020 to help spread information and resources to students, faculty and staff.

Health and Wellness

The Partnership for a Healthier America recognized Cortland as one of the healthiest campuses in the nation, as it was one of just 32 colleges and universities from across the country to receive the organization's highest honor.

A new club, **Female Force**, enforces a judgement free zone that is inclusive for all who want to start weightlifting or learn more about how they can get stronger.

Safety

The University Police Department recorded its **lowest rate of on-campus crimes** in 43 years during 2019.

Safewise.com named Cortland **the safest college town in New York**, affirming the university's commitment to student safety.

Athletics and Fitness

The 2019 Cortaca Jug game was played at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ., home of the NFL's New York Giants and Jets. The game **set a record for attendance** at a Division III sporting event.

SUNY Cortland junior women's gymnast **Emma Schulz** was selected as a 2019-20 Division III Women's At-Large First Team Academic All-American by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) for a second consecutive year.



Maximize Resources

Environmental sustainability

The Sierra Club recognized SUNY Cortland on its annual "**Cool Schools 2019 Ranking**." Cortland was ranked No. 69, the only SUNY comprehensive college to land in the top 100.

Financial sustainability

SUNY Cortland's largest student residence is starting the new year with a **\$30 million renovation** aimed at making the Casey and Smith Tower complex more modern, comfortable and energy efficient.

A Student Emergency Fund was created to help students facing education-threatening financial setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, more than \$130,000 has been awarded to students in need.

