

# SUNY Cortland Institute for Civic Engagement News

## The Institute is focusing on democratic engagement

September 2022

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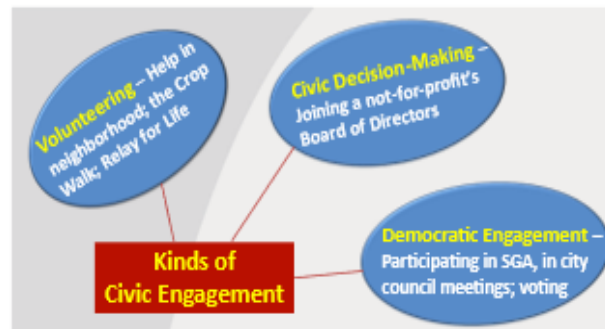
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The Institute for Civic Engagement is now focusing on *democratic* engagement. For us, “democratic engagement” refers to interactions with government, such as

- Actively learning about links between current events and voting
- Voting
- Engaging in mutually beneficial collaborations with government officials in which students learn by doing.



The Town/Gown Committee meeting, August 18, 2022

This focus crystallized through

- The continuing low rate of students’ voter registration and voter turnout rates.  
For example, although our 2020 student voting rate increased almost 25% from 2016, it rose to only 59.1%. Fewer than three in five of our students voted in the 2020 General Election.
- Encouragement from programs such as the All In College Democracy Challenge, which recently awarded SUNY Cortland its **Highly Established Action Plan Seal**.

Our action plan’s goals include

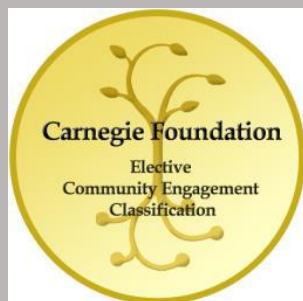
- 90% student voter registration and voter turnout rates by November 2024.
- Incorporating civic readiness and the exploration of current events in at least four academic courses by fall 2024.
- Two recently-launched *Seals of Civic Readiness* projects. Central to these projects are Secondary History majors, who – in an applied learning approach – would
  - Help high school students earn their **NYS Seal of Civic Readiness**. The Cortland Expanded Central School District is

- Co-create, with Professor Jared McBrady (Coordinator, Secondary Education, History), a SUNY Cortland Seal (or micro-credential) of Civic Readiness for our students.

- The Town/Gown Project Committee. Its 12 members include Mayor Steve, three City Council members, and two Action Team interns. The committee works to strengthen relationships between the greater Cortland community and SUNY Cortland students.
- A Freedom of Speech Team
  - Its members include Lorraine Lopez-Janove, AnnaMaria Cirrincione, Cyrenius Fitzjohn, Kevin Pristash, Professor Eric Edlund, and John Suarez.
  - The team is partnering with colleagues at SUNY Plattsburgh, SUNY Nassau, and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education on a two-year series of events, beginning with a *Constitution Day* event. (Refer to *Coming Events* for details.)

The Institute will continue to conduct or participate in other projects, including

- Action Team internships
- Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners
- The *SUNY Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement*



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**Sponsors**

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l to r: Armani Ortiz, Sean Campbell, Nia Vega

**Action Team Interns, fall 2022**

The Institute’s fall 2022 Action Team interns:

- Armani Ortiz (Business Economics), partners with the Town/Gown Committee, focusing on student support for small businesses in Cortland.
- Sean Campbell (Sociology, with Criminology minor), partners with the Town/Gown Committee, focusing on students’ healthy relationships with law enforcement.
- Nia Vega (Sociology) will conduct her internship at the New Tech Academy, where students use project-based learning.



**SUNY Cortland Cupboard**

It happens: A student without a meal plan has to choose between rent and food.

There’s help: The SUNY Cortland Cupboard, in the basement of the Interfaith Center, 7 Calvert Street.

Monday through Friday, 10am to 4pm. Students who cannot visit during those hours can schedule an appointment by emailing [cortland.cupboard@cortland.edu](mailto:cortland.cupboard@cortland.edu).

The SUNY Cortland Cupboard offers SUNY Cortland students non-perishable foods and personal hygiene items at no cost. No application is required.

Fall 2022’s *Fridge Filled Fridays* are September 9, October 7, November 4, and December 2. Compliments of Cortland Auxiliary Services.

Each student needs their SUNY Cortland ID card to swipe in. This process protects students’ identities.

With thanks to the Cortland Foundation and to those who have donated time and food.

**Coming Events**

Thursday, September 8, noon to 1pm in Old Main’s Colloquium. Sandwich Seminar: ***Getting Cortland County more democratically engaged.***

Mayor Scott Steve, County Legislator Doug Bentley, League of Women Voters/Cortland County President Sheila Cohen, and Institute for Civic Engagement director John Suarez. This event is free and open to the public.

Thursday, September 15, 11am-12:30pm. MassBay Community College’s *Constitution Day* event: ***A Panel on the Right to Privacy in 2022.*** WebEx password: *Constitution123!*

Professor Heidi Getchell-Bastien, Dr. Jeanie Tietjen, Lisa MacDonald, Professor Deborah O’Dowd. Includes a Q&A session.

MassBay is a partner in the September 20 Constitution Day event.

Tuesday, September 20, 10am to 3pm. Constitution Day: ***Your Vote and the First Amendment.***

**Each of this event’s three main activities has its own registration link.**

- Keynote. [Allen Groves](#), Senior Vice President and Chief Student Experience Officer, Syracuse University. 10am-11:15am. Registration link for [Keynote](#).
- [Video](#) and “Talk-Back.” Students and local elected officials across party lines discuss money in politics. 11:15-12:30pm, with optional virtual Lunch Reflection from 12:30 to 1:00. Registration link for [video](#) and [Talk-Back](#).
- [Moderated](#) Deliberative Dialogue: small-group deliberations, then large group debrief. 1:00 pm-2:15 pm. Registration link for the [Deliberative Dialogue](#)
- Student Voter Registration Assistance from 2:30 - 3:00, virtual and in-person.

We are looking forward to interactions between students from SUNY Cortland, SUNY Plattsburgh, SUNY Nasau, and MassBay Community College.

Thursday, October 6, 8am to 9am in Park Center’s Hall of Fame Room. Community Roundtable: ***Getting Cortland County more democratically engaged.*** This event is free and open to the public.