Orange-Ulster BOCES & SUNY Orange Science Faculty Exchange Meeting:
Secondary and Post-Secondary Educators Collaborating to Promote Student Success in Science
December 1, 2010

Orange-Ulster BOCES and SUNY Orange hosted the first Science Faculty Exchange for secondary and postsecondary teachers and administrators. The goal is to promote student success in science. Teachers and administrators from Orange County high schools, OU BOCES, SUNY Orange and a Cornell Cooperative Extension representative attended the meeting held at OU BOCES.

High school faculty attendees discussed the fact that there are time constraints in high school science classes. For example, high school labs are often 45 minutes long as compared to college labs which can be two- to three- hours long, and this limits the kind of studies that can be undertaken by high schools students. Also noted was the fact that there is no technical writing in the Regents' curriculum and no emphasis on the skills required for reading highly technical writing.

Valley Central teachers reported on an innovative multi-year program. Students formulate hypotheses and conduct experiments and gather data, analyze it and present their results.

SUNY Orange faculty reported that inquiry based learning as opposed to lectures is increasingly emphasized in college-level science courses.

Other topics/suggestions discussed included:

- the importance of using guest speakers (either in person or through Skype) as a way of introducing students to actual scientists;
- some high-achieving high school students avoid difficult science courses such as physics because they are afraid of the effect on their GPA;
- the value of exposing students to the wide variety of careers that require scientific training;
- connecting with outside agencies/organizations such as Black Rock Forest Consortium and Orange County Water Authority;
- the possibility of getting students involved in local, scientifically oriented projects such as wildlife refuges; and
- future meetings to share ideas for science projects/lessons.