

Through a united effort designed to bolster the future of education, both high schools and post-secondary institutions are forging pathways that prepare students for college-level work while also enhancing their chances for academic success in high school and beyond.

Through its newly created Office of Educational Partnerships, SUNY Orange has sharpened the focus of its outreach efforts in Orange County and beyond. Under the guidance of **Rosana Reyes-Rosello**, director of educational partnerships, the College offers college-level classes in the area's high schools, saving students time and money. Also, SUNY Orange operates programs that address the academic needs of young at-risk students.

In addition, the College this spring created a collaborative partnership between high school teachers and SUNY Orange faculty members. The College will unveil Camp College, an academic-centered summer enrichment program this summer. Reyes-Rosello has also concentrated the College's efforts toward improving its existing transfer articulation agreements, while also initiating talks aimed at formulating new articulations and maintaining the diverse offerings available at the College's three satellite locations.

In short, if the College has an existing relationship or partnership, Reyes-Rosello, in concert with her program coordinators (**Ramona Burton**,

Center for Youth Development; **John Hoffman**, Tech Prep Program; and **Cindy Simpson**, Community College in the High School), is eyeing ways to improve it, while at the same time exploring a myriad of untapped avenues through which SUNY Orange can pursue innovative new collaborations.

It's easy to see why **Dr. Catherine Chew**, vice president for academic affairs, hails Reyes-Rosello's hiring and the formation of the Office of Educational Partnerships as among the most important moves the College has undertaken recently. Although many of the programs now under the purview of the Office of Educational Partnerships had been in existence, with some dating back a decade or more, their oversight was not integrated across campus.

By uniting programs such as the Tech Prep Program, the Center for Youth Development (Liberty Partnership Program), Community College in the High School (CCHS) and College Experience Program (CEP) beneath one umbrella, the College can assure greater efficiency and avoid duplication of effort by staff members.

"I can't think of a position on campus that is more important to our mission and outreach efforts than this one. We had so many initiatives going on, but very little coordination. Rosana has been able to pull all of the pieces together and the talent and vision she is bringing to the office is impressive," Chew says. "She reaches out to all parts of Orange County and all levels of education. She has been such a wonderful ambassador on our behalf, particularly with BOCES and the school districts in the county."

Local educators have already seen the impact of Reyes-Rosello's efforts, which have invigorated the College's relationships, elevated the College's profile in the community and excited high school administrators who see that SUNY Orange is establishing new trends in education through partnerships and collaboration.

"Instead of SUNY Orange being simply a college in our community, the College is now being seen as the educational leader of our county," says **John Bell**, assistant superintendent of the Port Jervis School District. "The College is trying so hard to build bridges around the county. It's really exciting and it makes perfect sense for us all to work together."

"At the high school level, we can no longer set our sights on graduation at grade 12," says **Sean Michel**, assistant superintendent for instruction and curriculum at Minisink Valley School

Partners in Educ

A close-up portrait of a woman with short, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a light blue, textured cardigan with floral embroidery over a white top. She has a multi-strand necklace of blue and white beads and small hoop earrings. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a bookshelf.

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Director Rosana Reyes-Rosello is the face of SUNY Orange's new Office of Educational Partnerships. She and her staff are eyeing ways to improve the College's community relationships through innovation and collaboration.

District. "We have to work with the College to make sure our students graduate (from college) with an advanced degree. Working hand-in-hand with SUNY Orange is a great opportunity for us to break down those barriers (that once existed between high schools and post-secondary institutions) and begin unifying our approach to education across all levels."

One outcome of that new unified approach is the Collaborative Faculty Partnership, a project involving SUNY Orange's Center for Teaching and Learning, the Orange/Ulster BOCES curriculum committee and the Office of Educational Partnerships. The program matches College faculty with colleagues from the county's high schools. The goal is to increase students' academic performance at both levels while also aligning the curriculum and academic expectations at the high school and collegiate levels. For example, a thorough grasp of college entrance exams such as the Placement Assessment would benefit high school teachers while college faculty might be helped by a stronger comprehension of how high schools must prepare students for the state's Regents exams.

"We want to improve teaching and assessment strategies at all levels. We recognize that there is expertise at the high school level that college faculty can benefit from, and vice versa," Reyes-Rosello says.

"Through this partnership, we can tighten the communication so that everyone has a better understanding of the expectations of high school and college faculty. It needs to be a two-way street so that our kids are not caught in the middle," says **Dr. Mary Ann Wilson**, assistant superintendent of instruction and curriculum for Orange/Ulster BOCES. She provides

the analogy that students are allowed to use calculators during high school math tests, but are prohibited from using them on college exams.

"Often times, students are prepared one way in high school but they find that the expectations are not the same in college," Wilson explains. "We are working to see what we can do, as a group, to be clearer about everyone's expectations and what projects we can undertake to promote student success."

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For SUNY Orange, the term "student" is broader now than perhaps it has ever been, encompassing not just "traditional" college students or high school students, but also middle school children as well as adults who are taking courses for either credit or personal enrichment.

"Our focus now starts at the sixth grade, through the Center for Youth Development, and extends to our graduates who leave us and move on to a partner institution," Reyes-Rosello explains. For many educators, it has become increasingly

apparent that it is never too early to start exposing students to the wide variety of academic and employment opportunities at their disposal.

By collaborating with local school districts, community-based organizations, businesses and government agencies, the College's Center for Youth Development (including the Liberty Partnership Program) creates and implements a comprehensive array of pre-collegiate programs that prepare youths in grades 6-12 for successful transition into post-secondary education and entry-level careers. The Liberty Partnership Program has been such a success in Newburgh that it has recently branched out to Middletown and plans are under way for the program to be offered in Port Jervis this fall.

"We jumped at the chance to bring the Liberty Partnership Program to Port Jervis," Bell says. "We have a lot of at-risk kids in our district. We battle issues with graduation and dropout rates. This will allow us to find those kids that might be at risk, train them and give them a chance to succeed. Hopefully we can pull it off and acquire the grant."

By contrast, for those high school students who do not intend to enroll in college, SUNY Orange's Tech Prep Program is a way for them to gain an advantage in an increasingly competitive and technological society by stressing those criteria that will enhance their employability. It is a collaborative effort by college, high school and industry personnel that includes field trips to high-tech business and industry, features aligned curriculum and academic expectations, and provides industry mentors for the secondary school.

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There are other new ventures on the horizon as well, including Camp College, a three-week program that will bring sixth, seventh- and eighth-grade students to the Middletown and Newburgh campuses for academic enrichment workshops that will include classes in the morning and afternoon. Planned sessions include Eco-Avenger; Kung Fu Kids; Crime Scene Investigation (CSI); Digital Photography/Recording Studio; Food, Fun and Fitness; and So You Think You Can Dance?

Input from Burton; Hoffman; **David Kohn** and **Dorene Iacovino**, of the Continuing and Professional Education division; and **Sharon Ahearne**, from the movement sciences department, was critical to the formation of Camp College.

Reyes-Rosello is also collaborating with BOCES and the Newburgh school district on grant proposals that will create a Model Transition Program for disabled high school students pursuing a post-secondary education.

"It is commonly known that disabled students are expected to get their high school diploma. But they become stalled in a situation where they don't move on, they don't



become employed or continue their education," she explains. "Many times they find themselves here two or three years after high school graduation, looking for an opportunity to pursue a college degree. We want to help the school districts assist their students so they may transition more quickly and easily."

With more than 80 percent

not only in terms of SUNY Orange but also in the community. We want to create partnerships that will ultimately

help the economic and academic success of the students in the county," Reyes-Rosello explains. "So many people in the community have been receptive to exchanging ideas and working with us to find ways to serve our wide range of constituencies. There are so many possibilities out there and we are only just scratching the surface."



SUNY Orange

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