



The Impact of Philanthropy

2024



EMPIRE STATE
UNIVERSITY



A Launchpad for Student Success

Thanks to people like you, SUNY Empire students are achieving their dreams. Donors to the Empire State University Foundation help provide students with the resources they need to cross the finish line and complete their degrees. Your generosity is transforming their lives and impacting communities around the world.

Thank you for your support in 2024!

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A Message From The President

Lisa Vollendorf, Ph.D.

Student success is at the heart of everything we do at Empire State University. Our faculty, staff, and leadership are all laser-focused on helping every single student succeed.

We could not have the impact we do without the generosity of our donors. As you read this year's Impact Report, please remember that by supporting SUNY Empire, you create opportunities for students from all walks of life to achieve their dream of completing a college degree.

SUNY Empire plays a unique role in the education landscape. We are New York's only online public university, and we are proud to serve students of all ages, from 15 to 88 years old. As we continue to innovate in service to a growing student population, we are mindful of the role that philanthropy plays in elevating our mission to provide access to a high-quality, affordable, and flexible education.

In 2024, we celebrated our 100,000th graduate since the university's founding in 1971! It is a remarkable accomplishment and a testament to the community of support we have built. There are 100,000 stories behind this milestone. You will read a few of them in this year's report.

As more students learn about SUNY Empire's intentional and flexible approach to online learning, our enrollments continue to soar. We served 16,500 students last year and saw record enrollments in fall 2024. SUNY Empire is meeting the needs of people in New York and beyond, with further growth projected in the years to come.

Your support enables our faculty and staff to innovate in service to a changing world. We continue to add new academic programs, lean into pedagogical innovation, and meet workforce needs. Your philanthropy helps us



elevate the entire institution, from teaching and learning to providing targeted support for military, veteran, and other student populations.

Together we are delivering each day on the promise and transformative power of higher education for students, as well as their families and communities, while meeting the evolving needs of today's labor market—launching students on the path to lifelong personal growth and career development.

On behalf of our 100,000 alumni and our current and future students, thank you for your support!

In gratitude,

Lisa Vollendorf, Ph.D.

President



A Message from SUNY Empire Foundation Board Chairwoman

Marian Conway, Ph.D. '01, '04



Congratulations to us — all 100,000 of us — who were lucky enough to choose Empire State University! And thank you to all who have supported us, and continue to support us: alumni, staff, faculty, and our generous friends.

If you aren't aware, the SUNY Empire Foundation provides more than student scholarships. We also support faculty development, enhance academic programs, and assist students with funding for emergency basic needs. This year, it was eye-opening to see the amazing projects that staff and faculty submitted to the Foundation for our new Special Projects Fund. I was honored to learn about the projects and the possibilities they afforded. Every day at SUNY Empire we are moving forward, making positive changes for our students. Please be sure to check out the summary of the approved grants.

Also, in these pages are some of my favorite people, Keith Amparado and Hugh Hammett. Their devotion to the university over decades — all the way back to when papers

had to be done on typewriters — is extraordinary, giving their time and dollars to assist our students over the finish line!

Speaking of finish lines, I hope you'll take a look at some of the 10 students receiving scholarships from our new Finish Line Fund, all of whom are graduating this year.

The Foundation is grateful to the entire SUNY Empire family for their outstanding stewardship, helping us to make an impact on so many students.

Marian Conway, Ph.D. '01, '04

Chairwoman, Empire State University
Foundation Board of Directors



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Keith Amparado '88

President Emeritus Alumni Federation Board

The founding members of the Black Male Initiative (L-R) Lawrence Johnson '20, '23, David A. Fullard, Keith Amparado '88, and Jay Marshall '06, '08.

Empire State University wasn't Keith Amparado '88's first choice. Or his second. Or even his third. But after a long and winding road landed him at SUNY Empire in New York City, he's forged a special bond with the university.

Amparado's quest to find the right institution began at Brooklyn College, after he graduated high school at just 16. "I went there because it wasn't far from home, it was a good school, and the tuition was less than a private college," he says.

He encountered the same racial and ethnic tensions at Brooklyn College that he had experienced at his newly integrated high school in Brooklyn. After the college was temporarily shut down due to massive demonstrations against the Vietnam War, Keith told his parents he wasn't going back. His father got him a job at a bank, and his education was put on hold.

Eventually, he enrolled at Fordham University, but didn't like it and left after one semester. He found a program he did like at The College for

Human Services, now the Metropolitan College of New York, where he set out to become a social worker. In his third term, a professor who also taught at SUNY Empire convinced him to transfer. It turned out to be the best and right decision.

He credits his "spectacular mentor" Jane Dahlberg for much of his success at SUNY Empire. "I was 35 when I graduated in 1988, and my parents were happy to finally see me graduate," he says.



A MULTI-ETHNIC CLAN

Education was always important to Keith's parents, but school wasn't easy. Growing up in the 1960s in Brooklyn, Keith was in the first group of Black and Latino students who were bussed into his high school. Protesters picketed the students when the term began. "I was on the bus about four hours a day, going from one end of Brooklyn to the other," he says.

But the experience had its benefits. "I was exposed to a lot during the Civil Rights era, which made me comfortable in any situation," he says. "I was lucky to get that."

Keith also learned about the world from his family, a multi-ethnic clan with ancestry that includes Black, Caribbean, Native American, and Filipino heritage. Keith's father Arcadeo was descended from a Filipino immigrant on one side and former slaves from Virginia and the Carolinas on the other.

His mother Sadie Browne, the child of a Jewish schoolteacher born in Jamaica and a Black missionary worker from Georgia, was an actress in the groundbreaking American Negro Theatre. The medley of cultures and religions – Jewish, Catholic, Black Presbyterian and Anglican – enabled Keith to grow up with a strong sense of inclusiveness and tolerance.

A REINTRODUCTION TO SUNY EMPIRE

After graduating cum laude with his degree in business, management, and economics, Keith didn't give



much thought to SUNY Empire. He worked as a consultant and technical writer before settling into a career in information technology at New York University. When his mother passed away, he founded a passion project at NYU in her honor, the Alzheimer's Caregivers Group. He still serves as the group's volunteer facilitator.

In 2012, he was invited to join SUNY Empire's Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors by then Alumni Relations Director Maureen Winney. He became vice president and then president of the board and now serves as the president emeritus.

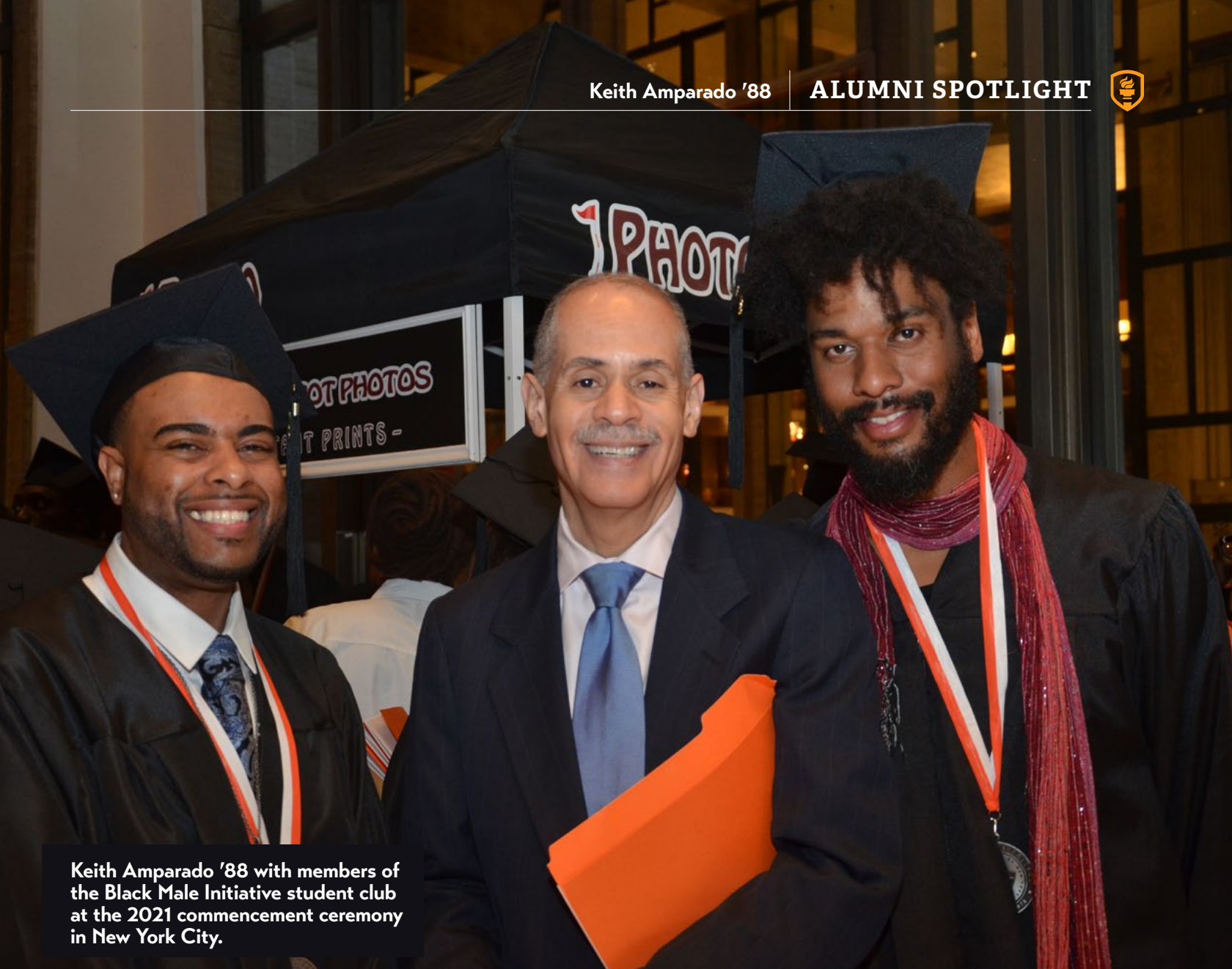
Maureen also introduced Keith to David Fullard, Ph.D. a faculty member and advisor to a new student club in New York City called the Black Male Initiative (BMI). The relationship was transformational, and the two immediately realized they had a lot in common. "The BMI program

was very exciting to me," Keith says. David and Keith became close friends and respected colleagues, and Keith has been a steadfast volunteer with the BMI ever since.

Keith became a founding donor to a scholarship for participants in the BMI, which is open to all students and provides academic coaching and mentorship. He also established a scholarship in honor of his parents, the Arcadeo and Sadie J. Browne Amparado "Force for Change" Scholarship for students in New York City pursuing a career in social work.

He followed that with the Shirley Chisholm Scholarship, in recognition of the congresswoman, civil rights pioneer, and political trailblazer who was a childhood neighbor and friend of the Amparados.

A few years later, he initiated the Dorothy Burnham Scholarship – in honor of her 107th birthday – after



Keith Amparado '88 with members of the Black Male Initiative student club at the 2021 commencement ceremony in New York City.

learning that Dorothy, a civil rights activist, scholar, and author, had taught at SUNY Empire while he was a student. The Burnhams and Amparados were also friends and neighbors.

BEST JOB EVER

Today, Keith is a member of the President's Club and a participant in the Boyer Legacy Society, which recognizes individuals with planned gift commitments. But his contributions

"This has given me more joy than any job I ever had."

to SUNY Empire go far beyond the financial. He has served on several institutional advisory committees and regularly attends commencement ceremonies and alumni events.

Keith has no intention of pulling

back from his volunteer work with SUNY Empire and the BMI and wears the title of Alumni Federation Board of Governors president emeritus with great pride. He continues to attend board meetings and provide guidance on alumni and student initiatives and enjoys his role on the BMI steering committee.

"It's the best job I ever had that I never got paid for," he says. "This has given me more joy than any job I ever had."



The Finish Line Fund

A CELEBRATION OF STUDENT SUCCESS

When it comes to great accomplishments, sports metaphors are often apt. The challenge of completing an educational degree can be as difficult as finishing a marathon or scaling a mountain, and few people do it alone.

This fall, several students received assistance from the Finish Line Fund, a scholarship created to support students in the final two terms of their undergraduate degree — those who are at the finish line of their academic goal. Each of the inaugural recipients in 2024-25 will graduate by the end of this year. Here are some of their stories.

Chrystal South '25

Hyde Park, NY | Major: Psychology

Chrystal has come a long way since a difficult childhood, culminating in homelessness and dropping out of high school the day she turned 16.

"At 21, I felt I had no other choice but to apply for public assistance," she says.

An employee at the Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services "saw something in me that at that time I couldn't see in myself," Chrystal says. "With the woman's help, Chrystal landed an entry-level clerical job that included assistance with higher education.

In 2019, after 10 years, she got her associate degree. She says the hardship she experienced will prepare her to help others, as she works toward a master's, then a doctorate. "The Finish Line scholarship is not just an investment in me," she says. "It's an investment into every single person I will empower to face life's adversities with grace, hope, and the promise of a better tomorrow. This scholarship is helping me take another step closer to the education I want and the future my family deserves."



Chrystal South and Ashly Snyder-Morales (see next page) received assistance through the generosity of Stewart's Shops and the Dake family.



Ashly Snyder-Morales '25

Dover Plains, NY | Major: Science, Mathematics and Technology
Concentration: Biology



After eight years of studying part-time while working full-time as a patient representative for a medical practice and raising her daughter, Ashly is finally completing her degree this spring.

Ashly was inspired by her mother, who supported three children alone. Ashly hopes she is providing the same example for her daughter. "It was when I had my daughter and was working two jobs that I realized I wanted to go back to school for my dream career," she says. "My daughter motivated me."

Getting her first scholarship now is a big source of support. "It will help me in the last semester I'm in, so I won't have to take out more loans and can focus more on my daughter," she says.

Ashly's hard work is paying off in more ways than one. She's on the cusp of achieving her next goal to enroll in a pediatric physician assistant program and has already inspired her daughter. "My daughter now wants to be a scientist because she sees and does the schoolwork with me," she says. "My hope in my future career is to do something I love, which is helping others and to be able to provide a better life and future for my child."



Michael Elefterakis '24

New York City | Major: Psychology

Ten years ago, Michael enrolled in college as a double major in psychology and dance. His education soon took a back seat to the offer of a lifetime. "I was 19 years old, and I ended up getting hired to work with a professional dance agency in Los Angeles," says the Brooklyn native. "My dance career was successful, and in the blink of an eye, that year turned into 10 years."

Along the way, Michael developed substance addiction. He sought help at a treatment facility. "In just four years of living clean and sober, I learned about the power of counseling and therapy," he says. "I enrolled back in school at SUNY Empire, determined to tap into my psychology background."

After graduating in December, Michael enrolled in a master's in counseling for mental health wellness at NYU to become a school guidance counselor. "Ultimately, I want to use my experience and my education to help others," he says.



Damion Lewis '25

Charlotte, NC | Major: Psychology

Damion works as a violence intervention specialist for a medical center, a job that resonates with him.

"I grew up in a house with a single mother who did not complete high school," he says. "I knew I wanted a college degree, but I also knew that working full time would give me the opportunity to provide for my family."

He earned an associate degree at Monroe Community College while working at the Villa of Hope in Rochester, NY. "I enjoyed every minute of helping at-risk youth and victims of violence," he says. "But if I wanted a more significant role in my career, I would need to further my education."

SUNY Empire allowed Damion to study while working full time, and the Finish Line Fund support came at the right time. "Without the scholarship, I would not have been able to finish my degree as planned," he says "Now, I can give back to my community and make sure another person has resources to follow their dreams as well."



Sabrina Rahim '25

Brooklyn, NY | Major: Business, Management, and Economics

Although she currently works as an assistant teacher in Crown Heights, NY, Sabrina's goal is to use her business degree to launch a career in banking.

"This scholarship will only push me further toward my degree and my dreams of having a successful career," she says. "I feel blessed to be awarded a scholarship to help fulfill my dream, and I will prove that I have what it takes to not only be a successful student but an outstanding bank manager."

Besides being a full-time student and teacher, Sabrina is the mother of two school-age children, making her journey a challenge.

"It wasn't easy for me to reach the finish line," she says. "I have taken several breaks in my education and had a lot of discouragement. I am so pleased to be on track to graduate. This scholarship helps me focus on school as my priority rather than on working as many hours as I can."

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

School of Nursing and Allied Health's Trajectory of Growth

In 2008, Empire State University's School of Nursing was a trailblazer, offering advanced nursing degrees to 42 registered nurses (RNs) seeking a higher degree. We graduated five students that first year. By the time New York state implemented the "BSN in 10" law in 2019, requiring all newly licensed RNs to complete a bachelor's degree within 10 years, we already had a well-established Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN) program.

The past year has seen continued growth in the program, through expanded funding, new scholarships, and strong enrollment across the department. Today, we enroll more than 1,000 students across all nursing programs, and we cheered 182 undergraduate and graduate nursing students across the graduation stage last year.

Dr. Bridget Nettleton Memorial Healthcare Scholarship

Dr. Bridget Nettleton took the helm of the School of Nursing in 2011. Under her leadership, the school flourished and rapidly expanded. By the time she retired in 2021, the school had grown to serve more than 1,000 students and added new

degrees in allied health.

In January 2024, Bridget passed away, leaving behind a legacy of service and academic leadership, a long line of devoted former students and colleagues, and a cadre of close friends and family who pledged to honor her memory. This group banded together to establish the Dr. Bridget Nettleton Memorial

Healthcare Scholarship as a tribute to her tremendous work on behalf of the field of nursing.

The Nettleton Scholarship's goal is to bridge the gap between healthcare and academia by supporting nursing education. It also seeks to build a pipeline for new nurses, promote nurse retention and advancement, and provide opportunities for diversity in nursing. The first Nettleton Scholars were named in fall 2024.



Dr. Bridget Nettleton



2024 program highlights include a \$100,000 grant from the **Dyson Foundation**, the establishment of the **Dr. Bridget Nettleton Memorial Healthcare Scholarship**, and high student enrollment in seven academic programs.



David '13, '17 and Susan '16 Theobald

Leading the charge to honor Bridget's legacy were alumni **David '13, '17 and Susan '16 Theobald**, co-owners of Davin Healthcare, a healthcare staffing company. The couple wanted to pay tribute to Dr. Nettleton's impact on them personally and professionally, and recognize her role in the field of nursing.

"She was not only a mentor to me but also a beacon of light for many others, offering guidance with kindness and compassion," David says. "Dr. Nettleton's dedication to nurturing talent and fostering excellence in the field serves as a shining example for us all."

Dyson Foundation Scholarship in Nursing

This past year, the university received a \$100,000 grant from the Dyson Foundation to fund scholarships for nursing students in the Mid-Hudson Valley. The Dyson Foundation scholarship program, first established in 2008, supports students across all undergraduate and graduate nursing programs.

Demand for nurses in the workforce is high, yet qualified students are being turned away from nursing schools due to a lack of nurse educators. The Dyson Scholarship addresses that need by supporting nurses and health educators living and working in the Mid-Hudson Valley – Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam and Ulster counties – as they pursue their degrees.

Nakesha Vines '20, a current Dyson Scholarship recipient and alumna of the BSN program, returned to SUNY Empire to pursue her Master's in Nursing Education. "This degree will allow me to experience opportunities for career and personal growth and assist others to meet their career and personal goals," Nakesha says.

Through the Dyson Scholarship program, residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley and surrounding communities will benefit from a skilled nursing workforce, and SUNY Empire will continue to produce nursing educators who can ensure that the community's healthcare needs are met in the future.



Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Report

Through the support of our alumni, employees, and friends, the Empire State University Foundation provides invaluable resources to students as they complete their degrees. We are grateful to you for making a gift to the foundation in fiscal year 2024. This report provides an overview of the financial health of the foundation and the impact of your commitment to the university and our students.



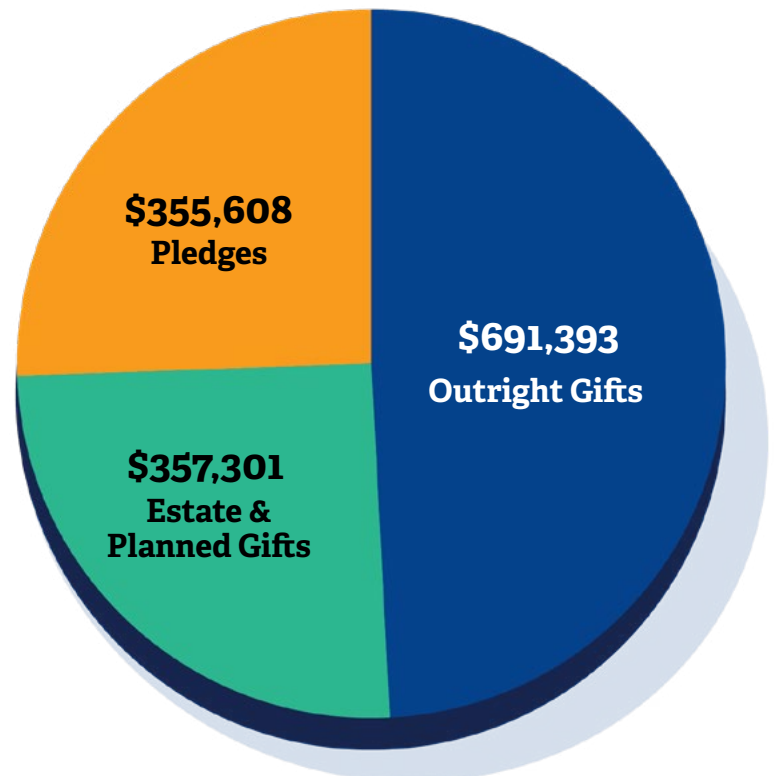
TOTAL FUNDS RAISED
\$1,404,302

Total Funds Raised

The total is comprised of gifts and pledges directed to the Fund for SUNY Empire; restricted support of individual scholarship funds and other dedicated accounts; estate and planned gift commitments; and corporate and foundation grants and matching gifts.

Of the **\$1,404,302** raised, \$618,673 (44%) was designated to endowment funds, and \$785,628 (56%) was current-use annual funds.

Reflects fundraising results for the 2024 fiscal year from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

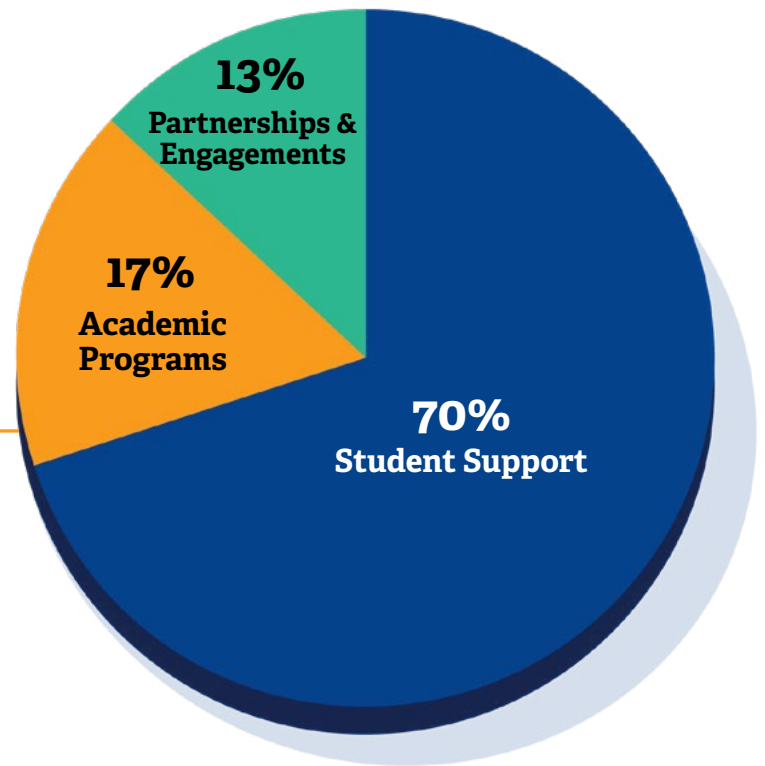




Foundation Allocations

The Foundation Board of Directors allocated \$1.8 million to various university programs and initiatives throughout the 2024-25 academic year, two-thirds of which is distributed directly to students.

TOTAL ALLOCATIONS
\$1,868,240



Students received **\$872,263** in scholarships and other grant support in the 2024 fiscal year.



The Fund for Empire State University

The most impactful way that people support the university is through The Fund for SUNY Empire. The Fund supports students, academic programs, and employee development across the university. In fiscal year 2024, individuals, corporations, and foundations made gifts to The Fund totaling **\$263,309**.

“GO HIGHER FOR EMPIRE” DAY OF GIVING CHALLENGE

On March 21, 2024, the Empire State University community came together in the name of a great cause – our students!

Alumni, employees, and friends supported The Fund for **SUNY Empire’s Day of Giving** — a day of fun and



community-building — to raise as much as possible in one day for our students.

David '13, '17 & Susan '16 Theobald kicked off the event with a \$50,000 match, with all proceeds going to the Dr. Bridget Nettleton Memorial Scholarship.

- 285 donors raised **\$121,586** with an average gift of \$142
- 101 donors contributed **\$86,131** for the Nettleton Scholarship
- 184 donors contributed **\$35,455** for The Fund for SUNY Empire

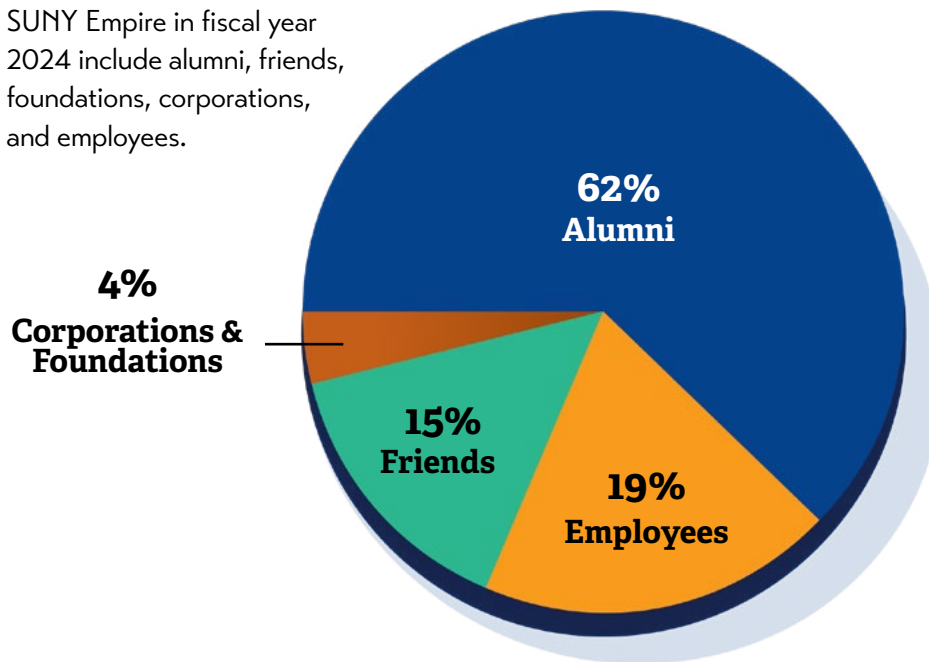


Are You Empire True?

In 2023, we launched a new giving society to recognize loyal supporters who give consistently to student scholarships, faculty support, academic programming, and more. Individuals who make an annual gift for three consecutive years are automatically included. To maintain membership, simply make a gift every year to show that you are Empire True!

Total Number of Donors to the Foundation by Category

Donors who contributed to SUNY Empire in fiscal year 2024 include alumni, friends, foundations, corporations, and employees.



Student Support includes donor-funded scholarships, institutional funds for scholarships and other financial aid, and a Student Emergency Fund for unforeseen expenses. It also covers more than a half-dozen Opportunity Programs aimed at closing equity gaps for students.

Academic Programs support provides professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, enhances faculty research and scholarship, and recognizes excellence in academia.

Partnerships & Engagement supports student recruitment and partnership initiatives with community colleges, labor organizations, and corporations. It also helps finance alumni engagement activities, fundraising outreach, diversity initiatives, and community events.

Doubling Her Impact Through a Matching Gift

Thousands of companies match the charitable donations made by their employees, including Verizon, where **Linda Wilk '93, '96** works. Please visit our matching gift page (www.sunyempire.edu/matching) to see if your company will match your next gift and to access the forms, guidelines, and instructions that you need to complete your submission.

"Making a gift to Empire State University is very convenient, and the corporate match makes it even more rewarding. My employer makes the gift matching process easy and straightforward. I am proud to support

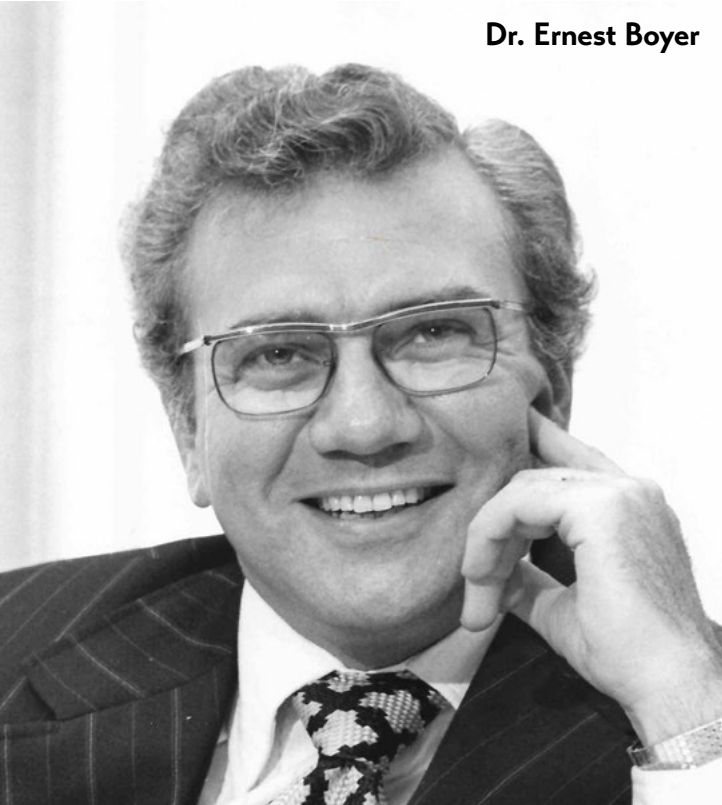
"Knowing that my gift is doubled inspires me to continue to give."

the university that gave me the tools for a successful second career. Knowing that my gift is doubled inspires me to continue to give. It is wonderful to see how my contributions can make a difference for students. Giving helps me feel connected to the next generation and the future of our university."

— Linda Wilk '93, '96



Dr. Ernest Boyer



Members of The Boyer Legacy Society

Anonymous
 Norris G. Adams '82
 Wallace Altes
 Marcy A. Alves '16, '17
 Keith D. Amparado '88
 Marlea C. Andolora '14, '16, '21
 Lin S. Applegarth '10, '15
 David Asch '83
 Allen Bailey '19, '23, '24
 Joann Bailey
 Ute Elisabeth Barber '93
 Sharon E. Baum '07
 Juliene Bell-Smith '20
 Juanita Belmar '17, '19
 Nancy Bennett '18
 Adrienne D. Berg '11
 Matthew Steven Berge '21, '23, '24
 Anne R. Bertholf
 Susanna Bezold '98
 Henriette Bleck '16, '24
 Deborah J. Bobb '21
 Winston A. Bobb
 Deborah Botch '86
 Wenona Bradley Williams '23
 Felicia Brightman-Smartt '17
 Patricia Brozinsky
 Susan K. Butler '06
 Lisa M. Capone '96
 Bobbi Jo Carter '18
 Sara Elizabeth and Matthew Christ '21
 Willie A. Cornelius '13
 John '94 and Jane Corrou
 Maureen C. Del Giacco '86, '95
 Dennis R. De Long
 Joseph Demma '21
 Yanelys Diaz '16
 Tyrone M. Dixon '01
 Pamela Jean Doran '21, '23
 Nancy J. Dorau '18
 Sandra Bauhan DuBois '78†

The Boyer Legacy Society is named in honor of **Dr. Ernest Boyer**, the former Chancellor of the State University of New York, and his wife Kay Boyer '78. The Boyer Legacy Society recognizes and acknowledges those individuals who have named Empire State University in their will or as the beneficiary of a trust or other planned gift.

Membership represents an outstanding commitment to the university and helps ensure that SUNY Empire maintains its leadership in higher education for adult students who seek better jobs and careers, and richer intellectual lives.

LEARN MORE AT: sunyempire.edu/plangifts



Aaron Dudley '23
 Karin C. VonKay '79 and
 David C. Duggan
 Joyce E. Elliott and Cynthia M. Swadba
 Kimberley Mae English '15, '17
 Carol J. Evans '77
 Astrid Ewing '82
 Ronald D. Falciano '09, '23
 Debra M. Federation '21 and
 Brendan J. Komala
 Dunia Pamela and
 Claudio Fernandez '13
 Catherine M. Ferraro '98
 Linza Ford '91
 Erika E. Fosmire '07, '10
 Patricia M. Fralick '01, '12, '14
 Mark '78 and Marjorie Fuhrmann
 Celene Garcia '02
 Bailey M. and Elaine Geeslin
 Margaret R. Gibson '85
 Alison D. Gilbert '92
 Sidney Gluck '79
 Angelica Godette '13
 Doris Goldberg
 Emma Gomez '79, '81
 Leon Goretsky
 Mark Granfors-Hunt '01
 James William and Mary Elizabeth Hall
 Hugh B. Hammett
 Merodie A. Hancock
 Jacqueline Christine Hannon '15, '18
 MaryAnn Hannon '09
 Jessica A. Harrington '12
 Maggie Hasslacher '11, '13, '16
 Stephen Hasslacher
 Philip Hilden '82
 Susan T. Hollis
 Dwight Hakeem Hopkins '22
 Michael C. Hubbard '75
 Joanne R. Hvisdas '92, '93
 Scott Jefferson '07
 Donald Lee Johnson '98
 Timothy Antoine Johnson '24
 Tina Marie Jones '17, '21

Davida Delores Kilgore '05
 Judith (Suzy) Kline '86
 Susan A. Koch '01
 Michael Robert Lamb '15, '18
 Celifa A. Landy '22, '23
 Deborah and Don Lansing
 Corine Lawrence '85
 Paulette L. Lawrence '16
 John C. Lockhart '14
 Kimmarie Lynch '12
 Margaret Madigan '20
 Janet Lorri Manning '21, '24
 Addie R. Marrow '11
 Nancy E. Massicci '09
 James A. Matte '76
 David '10 and Joy Mazzetti
 Margaret McAloon
 Terrence McCafferty '80, '03
 Jennifer Ann McCallum '21
 Ingrid O. McCauley†
 Shana D. McIntosh '10
 Caleah K. McMillan '18
 Marjorie Meinhardt '77
 Stephen Keep Mills '89
 Angelina Monell '08
 Joe Moore and Beth Chiquoine
 Mary Murphy '18
 Jessica Marie Naioti '12
 Mele Nelson '07
 Mitchell S. Nesler
 Kaytlyn Rose Nevelizer '20
 Michael P. Nugent '13
 Athina Pantidou '10
 William H. Parker '86
 Jeffrey Pascal '90, '92
 Lisa Patterson '18
 Rohan S. Patterson '06
 Kathleen Pepin '94
 Sandra M. Perez '17
 Christian A. Perricone '18
 Kenneth S. Porter-Hutton '01, '13
 Shahtisha L. Powell '16, '17
 Amanda Marie Purdy-Roberts '23
 Alexander J. Radcliffe

Tamara M. Radcliffe '14, '18
 James R. Rahm '06
 Anthony Riccardi
 Deanna L. Riddick '03, '05
 Marie D. Rivas '16
 John M. Robortella '01
 Margaret W. Rubin-Finn '91
 Ladonna K. Sanders '20
 Christine M. Scrimme '04
 Helese J. Smauldon '18
 Anne '89 and John Sonne
 Marian N. Steinberg '75
 Bernadette T. Stengel '88
 Bernard H. Stern†
 Lisa L. Sunday '16
 Carol S. Tan '90 and Michael M.H. Tan
 Ralph Thelusma '16, '18
 Rachel S. Thibodeaux '96
 Rebecca A. Tipa '03, '16
 Monte I. Trammer '08
 Charles P. Trudel '79, '95
 Susan H. Turben '72, H'05† and
 John F. Turben
 Ann Turner '86
 Jennifer L. VanEgas '16
 Sharon Villines
 Carey A. Wainwright '00
 Felicia Helene Walker '11
 George Lamont Warren '18, '24
 James Weatherstone '12
 Susan Marie Weber
 Merrick Anthony and
 Susan Rasheedah Wesley '17
 Karen West '84, '95
 Sharen L. Whitley Privette '21
 Gareth Williams '07
 Lillie M. Williams '97, '98
 Eldon R. Williamson '94
 Judith Willis '02, '04
 Cedric T. Winn '08
 Gloria Jean Wright '79
 David Yamada '99
 Cynthia Zaentz '89

† Deceased in fiscal year 2024



Boyer Legacy Society Member Profile: Hugh B. Hammett, Ph.D.

A rare few have been witness to the full evolution of Empire State University, from its infancy in the 1970's to the explosive growth of the early 2000's. **Hugh Hammett** is one of those few. From joining the institution as a faculty member in 1978, to his retirement as a vice president in 2014, and his active participation in events and initiatives today, Hugh has seen the university change in ways its founders could scarcely have imagined.

Hugh took a leap and joined SUNY Empire as a history professor and associate dean of the Rochester location in 1978. "I had previously worked at three traditional colleges and universities and wanted to try something new and different," he says.

"New and different" was indeed what he found, with the institution's focus on individualized student mentoring in a close-knit communal model. He praised the university's transition from the "labor intensive, boutique model" into one that is now "an online powerhouse" that will serve greater numbers of students and enhance the mission of SUNY itself.

During his time at the university, Hugh moved through the administrative ranks and ultimately served as vice president for external affairs, with a focus on alumni relations and fundraising. "SUNY Empire was an evolving, dynamic institution, reinventing itself all the time," he says. "It was one of the most interesting institutions in higher education – it was fun and rewarding to work here, all 36 years!"

Hugh is both proud to have participated in that transition, and excited to see its future evolution. He continues to support The Fund for SUNY Empire, along with various other projects and initiatives, even after retirement. The university remains important to him for what it represents to the students.

"I was able to see firsthand that it gave a chance to adults



who may not have had the opportunity to attend college at the traditional age," he says. "The SUNY Empire experience gave our graduates new knowledge, but also the skills to be lifelong learners and better-informed citizens."

In order to ensure that his support for the university continues beyond his lifetime, Hugh and his partner Dan Christopher have included SUNY Empire in their estate plans as members of the Boyer Legacy Society. Hugh takes a thoughtful, measured approach to planning for their future philanthropy.

"An estate plan is not only about an orderly and good ending," he says. "It's also an opportunity to spell out the values that you cherished during your lifetime."

For Hugh and Dan, their estate plan includes family members, higher education (including SUNY Empire), a regional animal welfare organization, a national environmental organization, and a national human rights organization in their estate plans.

"That's what our lives have been about," he says. "If that's all people ever know about us, that's enough."



The President's Club

The President's Club recognizes our most generous alumni and friends who make gifts totaling \$500 or more throughout the year. Members of the President's Club share the university's vision and demonstrate their dedication and commitment through their leadership support.

The Empire True Community

Individuals who have donated for three or more consecutive years or participate in monthly giving are recognized as members of the Empire True community. Members of the President's Club who are also members of Empire True are denoted by the ♦ symbol in the list below.



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◆ *President's Club members who are also members of the Empire True loyalty society with consecutive contributions of 3+ years.*

† Deceased





Faculty Initiatives & Special Projects

The Empire State University Foundation allocated more than \$325,000 to faculty research, scholarly recognition, and other special projects throughout the year. Highlights of some activities funded in 2024 are below.

Susan H. Turben Chair in Mentoring

Named in honor of the late Susan Turben '72, H'05, the Turben Chair was established by Susan and her husband Jack to promote excellence in mentoring and recognize the student/mentor relationship. The 2024-25 Turben Chair was awarded to **Sue Epstein, Ph.D.**, faculty chair of the department of management and human resource management in the School of Business. She has spent her career researching how work, life, and education shape jobs and careers. Her work as the Turben Chair revolves around non-linear career paths.

Susan H. Turben Award for Excellence in Scholarship

Susan and Jack Turben also created the Turben Award for Excellence in Scholarship to honor a faculty member for distinguished scholarly activity that is widely recognized and significantly enhances the academic reputation of the university. **Sabrina Fuchs-Abrams, Ph.D.**, professor of English in the School for Graduate Studies, received this year's Turben Award for her role in developing the advanced graduate certificate in American studies and the advanced certificate in women's and gender studies.



President Vollendorf with Sue Epstein, recipient of the Susan H. Turben Chair in Mentoring.

Arthur Imperatore Community Forum Fellowship

The Arthur Imperatore Community Forum Fellowship funds a year-long community-related research or artistic activity. The 2024-25 Imperatore Fellow is **Debra Kram-Fernandez, Ph.D.** Her research this year will focus on the history of the Women's Therapy Center Institute in New York City and its role as a model of social justice advocacy among women.



James William and Mary Elizabeth Hall Award for Innovation

Founding president of SUNY Empire James Hall and his wife Liz established the Hall Award for Innovation to recognize faculty or staff who lead unique and impactful projects that promote the mission of the university. **Joshua Boardman**, director of student engagement, is the current recipient of the Hall Award. Boardman introduced Mental Health First Aid and has trained over 200 faculty, staff, and students to respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse. He also helped secure grants to address emergency needs for students struggling financially.

Scholars Across the University

Scholars Across the University allows faculty to share their work via online forums and in-person gatherings. The 2023-24 Scholars Across the University, **Rodlyn Hines, Ph.D.** and **Julie Parato, Ph.D.**, did a total of 12 presentations and concluded their project at the end of the Spring 2024 Term.

Hines' research focused on immigrant groups, specifically African immigrants, and different aspects of African culture



as it applies to living in the U.S.

Parato's work explored specific aspects of cellular and molecular neuroscience. She analyzed disease-related cellular alterations in Alzheimer's disease, along with synaptic changes during adolescent development.

In 2024-25, three mentors have been selected to present their research – **Alexandra Rush, Ph.D.**, **Cailyn Green, Ph.D.**, and **Bernadet DeJonge, Ph.D.**

Rush's research focuses on intergenerational trauma across cultures, which stems from her own familial connections to political refugees from Poland. Her research involves the processes that transmit trauma, resilience, and post-traumatic growth. DeJonge and Green are doing a joint project to develop and share a textbook on diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.



Karis Jones (second row, center in white blouse) with students, faculty, and staff at the Dungeons & Dragons exhibit at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, NY.

Special Project Grant Funding

A new initiative that grew out of the priorities of the Strategic Plan, the Special Project Fund offers one-time funding for creative university projects that support any of the four strategic plan priorities – Student Success, Academic & Inclusive Excellence, Organizational Effectiveness, and Raising Our Public Profile. Initial funding went to several projects:

- **Karis Jones, Ph.D.**, presented work related to a new exhibit at The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, NY on the fantasy role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons. Jones and a colleague from SUNY Cortland presented on accessibility supports for D&D in libraries and schools and created a professional development program that demonstrates the socioemotional learning and literacy skills that often come with role playing.
- **Karen LaBarge** is working on an initiative to increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff through the SUNY Center for Professional Development.
- **Matt Quinn** of the Veteran and Military Resource Center (VMRC) is hosting community events for our veteran and military students. This project includes partnerships with veteran organizations and increased use of the VMRC in Saratoga Springs as a resource for veteran, active duty, guard, and reserve families in the community.
- **Betty Wilde-Biasiny, Ph.D.**, along with several colleagues, is producing Open Educational Resources to make digital media accessible for a digital painting course. Their work will allow learners of all levels, ages, and abilities to access and create digital content.
- **Lisa Unangst, Ph.D.** is hosting “Empire Education Networking Nights” for alumni and students in the School of Education. These activities build student-alumni connections and promote the value of SUNY Empire’s undergraduate and graduate education degrees.



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