

Members of the College supported the ALS Ice Water Bucket Challenge.

Joined by students and staff, I accepted and fulfilled an ALS Ice Water Bucket Challenge. Initiated as a fundraiser for ALS research, this event grew virally and became a national phenomenon. My participation began when I was challenged by Suffolk County Legislator Jay Schneiderman. Upon completion, I then challenged Suffolk County Legislator and Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory; Noel DiGerolamo, president of the Suffolk County Police Benevolent Association; John Durso, president of the Long Island Federation of Labor; and Dick O'Kane, head of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

In 2009, the College's student loan default rate was 16.4%. Today, I am pleased to share that through a concerted effort orchestrated by our Office of Central Financial Aid, our 2012 student loan default rate has been reduced to 9.1%. This dramatic improvement is the result of our implementation of a Loan Default Prevention Plan. Thanks to its implementation, the number of loans processed at the College has been decreasing, as the campus Financial Aid Offices encourage students to minimize borrowing. One-on-one counseling and offering other options, such as applying for scholarships, are just a few outreach approaches that the campus Financial Aid professional staff has incorporated to assist students with paying for school. In 2013-2014 only 13% of our total student enrollment received a student loan, and 71% of our 2014 graduates left the College debt free.



Research shows that the more actively engaged students are with college faculty, staff, other students, and with the subject matter being learned, the more likely they are to persist in their college studies and to achieve at higher levels. This spring, the College participated in the nationally-administered Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), which focuses on teaching, learning, and retention in community colleges. Questionnaire items included how students spend their time, the nature and quality of their interactions with faculty members and peers, what they have gained from their classes, and other aspects related to the full college experience. Aggregate responses are being analyzed to inform the College's ongoing efforts to examine its practices, improve programs and services, and to enhance the student experience here at the College. By measuring student engagement, we can identify ways to help more students succeed, persist and complete their studies.

In the spirit of promoting a safe and secure learning environment for the entire college community, I have endorsed a new student mental health support program which will be in place in time for the fall 2015 semester. This program will provide appropriate assessment, treatment and referral for students experiencing emotional or mental distress. By providing these services to our students, the College will be working to decrease the risk of student self-harm and suicide, and the possibility of harm to others.

25LIVE®

The Office of Special Events completed its implementation of 25Live software, meeting the college-wide demand for the ability to view, schedule and post events on a centralized calendar that reflects every event taking place in College facilities on all three campuses. Within one year, we went from purchase, to training, to full operation, and now this software allows us to effectively manage and coordinate support for activities that have been scheduled by both internal groups and the external community at large. We have also created a college-wide shared folder that provides the entire college community with access to tutorials and other event-related documents to make the 25Live process as simple to use as possible.

The College's Culinary Arts program students prepared about 140 dinners for long-term patients and home-bound seniors of the Dominican Sisters of Hampton