$2.3 million from the College Fund Balance Reserve; and included a request for a 5% increase in the County contribution, which translated to $1,988,438. The County Executive responded by recommending a 2.51% increase in the County contribution, which translated to $1 million. As directed by the Board of Trustees and me as President, the College's administration worked diligently to advocate for the remaining $988,438 in support from the County on behalf of our students. Eventually, a compromise was reached when the County agreed to contribute $500,000 to the College's capital budget to be allocated toward purchasing new technology equipment for students. To address the revenue shortfall, the Board of Trustees authorized a $500,000 reduction in its total operating budget request, as well as the use of additional reserve funds of $488,438.

The College's 2015-2016 operating budget also includes funding for positions to address accreditation requirements: needs in Criminal Justice and Health Information Technology; Technology and Networking Support for Information Technology; custodial needs for the additional space provided at the William J. Lindsay Life Sciences Building and clerical support for the Culinary Arts Facility. It also enables us to hire staff responsible for program planning and community outreach in anticipation of the opening of our Health and Wellness facility on the Eastern Campus.

It is important to note that the guidelines from our accrediting body, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, recommend that institutions have available 10% to 15% of the operating budget available in reserves. With this latest budget's use of the fund balance, our reserves will stand at approximately 8%.

As President, working with the Board of Trustees and the leadership from our collective bargaining units, I continue to advocate for the implementation of a multi-year plan for sustainable sponsor contributions. I believe such a plan would meet the objective of keeping tuition affordable at Suffolk County Community College and enabling students and their parents the ability to plan ahead for the cost of tuition.

Through a six-month long concerted effort that began in January, which was bolstered by the expertise and passion of our faculty, students and administrators, we gave exceptional effort to advocating our elected officials in a manner that would ensure that Suffolk County Community College had the resources necessary to continue providing outstanding educational opportunities within a comfortable and safe teaching and learning environment. I thank the entire college community for its cooperation and assistance in this endeavor.

New Buildings and Improvements to Infrastructure

Renovations at the Riverhead Building were completed on schedule and the building was available for classes on the first day of the fall 2014 semester. This was a major achievement, given the extensive work that was performed in the building.

In September, the College hosted a site visit for the County Legislature's Education and Information Technology Committee. The visit enabled the Committee's members to view the intersection near the South Coleman Road entrance to the Ammerman Campus, where we had requested traffic mitigation efforts in the form of a traffic circle. The $450,000 capital appropriating resolution for the project had been tabled by that committee. College administrators and students went on to advocate before the members of the Committee to include this capital funding. I am happy to report that design and construction funding has now been appropriated. Our next step is to issue an RFP for design services, which will be followed by construction next summer.



The William J. Lindsay Building opened for spring semester classes.



Hundreds of guests and members of Legislator Lindsay's family attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Our students will benefit from state-of-the-art labs and new equipment.