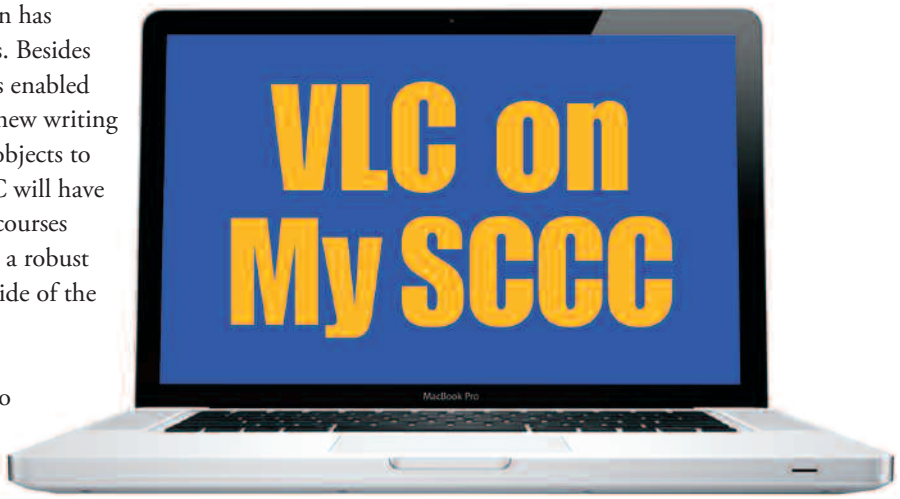
This five-year grant from the U. S. Department of Education has greatly benefitted Suffolk students during the past 4 ½ years. Besides streamlining the enrollment and admissions processes, it has enabled the College to improve accessibility to advising, added two new writing centers, and created a library of faculty-developed learning objects to a Virtual Learning Commons (VLC). By fall 2015, the VLC will have increased online academic support from zero courses to 30 courses being supported online. Suffolk now provides students with a robust resource of online support for learning both inside and outside of the classroom for the most common courses students take.



Faculty members have taken advantage of the opportunity to learn new technology contributing to the further development of the VLC. Suffolk students are now able to receive extra help even when they can't get to campus. Instructors can link desired VLC pages to their online course sites in Blackboard to provide seamless extra help. Faculty have shared that they use the VLC to: find approaches to common teaching issues, discover how their colleagues are teaching the same topics, and spend more time on critical thinking and analysis in class.

Other online highlights include featuring success stories from Suffolk alumni and members of the community to assist students in determining the right education to attain their career goals; spotlighting professors in order to help students connect with our faculty, increasing the likelihood of degree completion; featuring select learning objects that help students more confidently access the wealth of resources at the College. Tracking shows thousands of visits to the learning areas each month—by students, faculty, staff and administrators.



The grant project has also made it possible for the College to better serve students with disabilities. As an example, to help vision-impaired students online learning access to screen-reading software and voice-output calculators occurred this year.

Looking back over the grant period, we have seen the following improvements to advising:

- The College created three Academic Advising and Mentoring Centers where faculty members interact with students. Thousands of students seek help at the centers every semester and are able to access the support they need to successfully complete their courses.
- Counselors and instructional faculty developed curriculum and materials for advising, and received professional development in holistic advising.
- Instructional faculty went on to create a guide for advising and devised principles for a Mid-term Academic Alert process that lets students know about any academic performance issues in a timely way.

SEIS replaced the College's paper application with a more complete, convenient, and modern web-based online application system. This included the implementation of an e-transcript system so that applicants no longer need to mail paper copies and College staff no longer needs to enter transcripts into the system by hand. Electronic scanners on each campus further eliminated the reliance on paper documents. The project also installed SARS grid for automated scheduling and planning, and sponsored a major upgrade of the College's portal to the Luminis IV system. SEIS also provided the Suffolk Community College Foundation with $150,000 in