



# SUNY COBLESKILL AG & TECH

ANNUAL REPORT  
2024-2025



# Welcome to SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech

## A Year of Growth and Impact

Reflecting on another transformative year at SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech, I am reminded that our greatest strength lies in the students and mentors who breathe life into our mission each day. This report tells the story of a community rooted in its mission, and devoted to shaping a more sustainable and equitable future through the integration of agriculture and technology as engines of innovation, education, and regional vitality. The underlying ethos is the same throughout: we are here to advance humanity's knowledge, maturation, and success.

The past year has reinforced what we have always known: that education extends far beyond the classroom. Our students have engaged in hands-on learning that prepares them for lives of purpose and impact. From the Conservation Club's remarkable effort planting 720 trees in Puerto Rico to our Dairy Judging Team's international competition at Scotland's Royal Highland Show, our students are taking their education into the world and bringing the world back to campus.

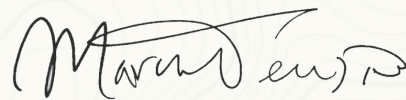
This year has also been marked by our deepened commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Our Emerging Scholars Program is just one success story, turning the tide for some students who need just a bit of support to thrive in the college setting. As you will see in this report, when they succeed, we succeed in our mission and vision. It reminds us that excellence and inclusivity are inseparable.

We continue to stand as an anchor for rural economic development, recognizing that the vitality of our region is directly linked to our own success. Our efforts in workforce development, our support of emerging entrepreneurs, and our continued expansion of accessible credentialing programs come from a shared understanding that

education must evolve alongside society and be just as agile in solving the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The achievements documented in this report are the result of extraordinary dedication from our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and partners. Through them, Cobleskill Ag & Tech continues to gain prominence on the national and world stage. Learning about and impacting our natural world are not merely aspirations for us. They are our daily practice.

Thank you for your continued support as we write the next chapter of our story.



Dr. Marion Terenzio  
President



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# Our Mission, Vision, & Values

## Mission

SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech sets the standard for applied education that extends theory into practice. We cultivate our students to positively affect the cultural, economic, natural and technological forces in their lives.

In pursuit of our mission we strive to honor our history, teach by doing, forge pathways for success, think globally and across disciplines, cultivate sustainability, embrace and support our community, and promote personal growth.

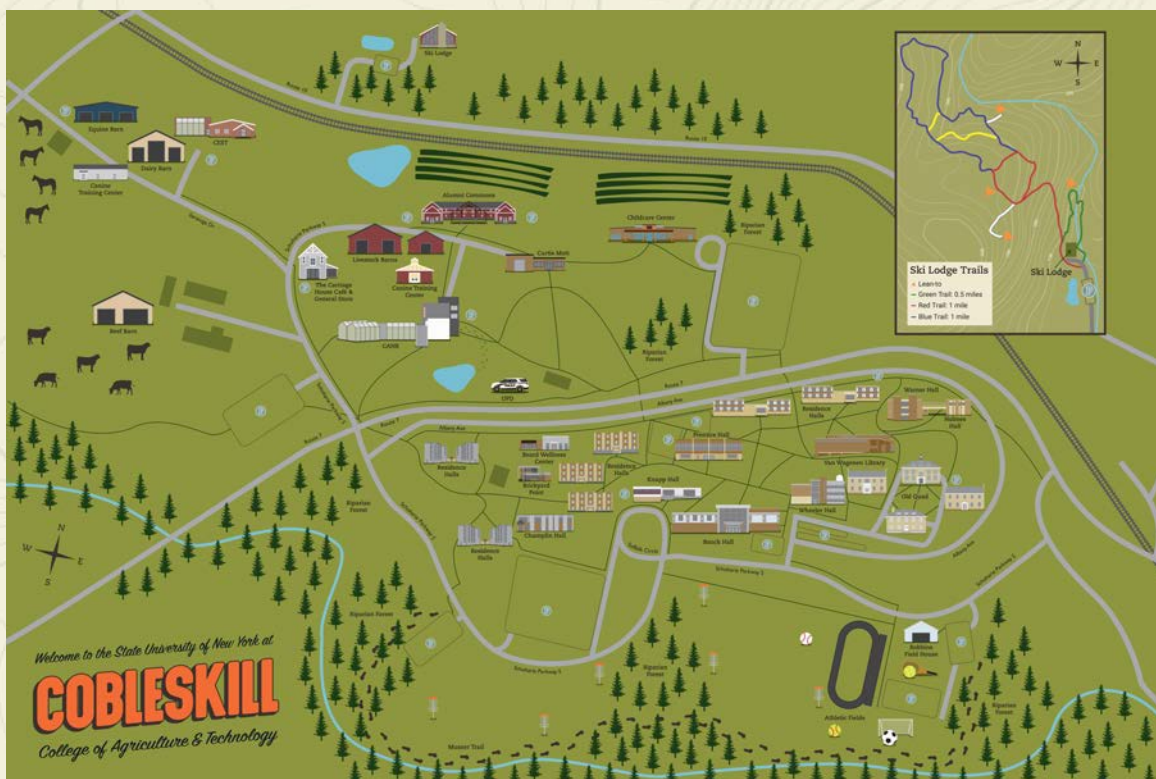
## Vision

As the premier educational institution of agriculture and technology, SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech calls all learners to grow, to sustain and to renew the world and its citizens.

We continue to be guided by our founding vision: "Education is the hope of the world...If our young people are to grow quality in their lives they must learn to direct their own thinking, their own wanting, and their own doing." (1921 College Catalog)

## Values

SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech is a campus community characterized by empathy, inclusivity, respect, personal growth, integrity, and a collaborative spirit fostering well-being and sustainable practices. We recognize and celebrate student, faculty and staff achievements. We take pride in our campus and encourage collaboration with our surrounding communities.



# Leaning into Our Distinction

## **SUNY Cobleskill Emphasizes Mission in Rebranding to SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech**

Student-Designed Logo and Community-Driven Process Reinforce College's 'Learning in Action' Approach

For more than a century, SUNY Cobleskill has been a home for hands-on education where students discover their purpose through immersive learning. In Fall 2025, the College is taking a decisive step in articulating that mission more clearly by rebranding to SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech, emphasizing its renowned programming in the fields of agriculture and technology. The rebranding includes a refreshed visual identity, messaging grounded in extensive campus community input, and a new logo designed by current students.

"This rebrand represents more than a visual refresh. It is a bold repositioning and declaration of who we are and who we've always been, a public regional higher education institution serving the public good," said Dr. Marion Terenzio, President of SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech. "We are intentionally leaning into our long-standing distinction which continues to set our course and distinguishes our mission within the higher education landscape: a 'learning in action' approach reinforced through an interdisciplinary perspective, critical thinking, and practical hands-on learning.

"At a time when the world needs innovative solutions to feed a growing population and address environmental challenges, our students are directly addressing the future as they learn on a living, working campus, conduct undergraduate research, and develop the technical and critical thinking expertise that employers and society demand. This rebrand illuminates our mission and amplifies the power of what has always made this place special: an educational approach where learning is not passive but dynamic and immediately applicable to future careers," said Dr. Terenzio.

The rebrand emerged from research and engagement with and among the campus community through an internal Branding Committee. The SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech branding began to take shape through brand discovery exercises and conversations, leveraging decades of lived experience of our faculty and staff members making up the committee. Noted brand consultant, Colin Connor was brought in to add invaluable expertise, helping to direct focus groups with constituencies across campus, analyzing the findings and messaging for bias, and honing our articulated brand principles.

Through this work, the College developed its new brand pillars: purpose-built programming that prepares students for careers from day one, hands-on learning in field-based and laboratory settings, and a close-knit community that fosters a deep sense of belonging on our 900-acre campus. These pillars support the brand promise of offering students a dynamic educational experience and immersive approach that prepares them for a professional life that is both rewarding to them and beneficial to the world.

SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech is proud of its cost-effective, community approach to this rebrand and that student voices were central to bringing this vision to life. The College's in-house marketing and communications team, with decades of combined experience, led the creative direction and brand implementation project. The new logo was designed by graphic design student Saro Karageozian (Albany, NY), a student assistant in the College's Marketing Office, with contributions from students Jacob Galvin (Esperance, NY), Mickey Polsinelli (Schenectady, NY), and Tristen Wcislo (Sharon Springs, NY).

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# Leaning into Our Distinction

The refreshed visual identity honors the College's affinity for the surrounding rolling hills of Schoharie County, while introducing shades of green alongside the "Cobleskill orange," colors representing growth, sustainability, and the outdoor laboratories that fill our campus with life.

"My main focus with this logo was to present the rolling hills in a modern and clean fashion," said Karageozian. "I believe the rolling hills of Cobleskill are some of the most unique environmental features here. You see them every day when walking or driving to class. The design is simple and minimalist, evoking the hills and growth of a landscape in bloom, but also leaving room for interpretation on the viewer's part."



# A Sacred Connection with Mother Earth

SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech marked its 107th Commencement in May, officially conferring degrees upon more than 400 graduates of the Class of 2025. Graduates represented more than 50 baccalaureate and associate degree programs across agriculture and technology disciplines.

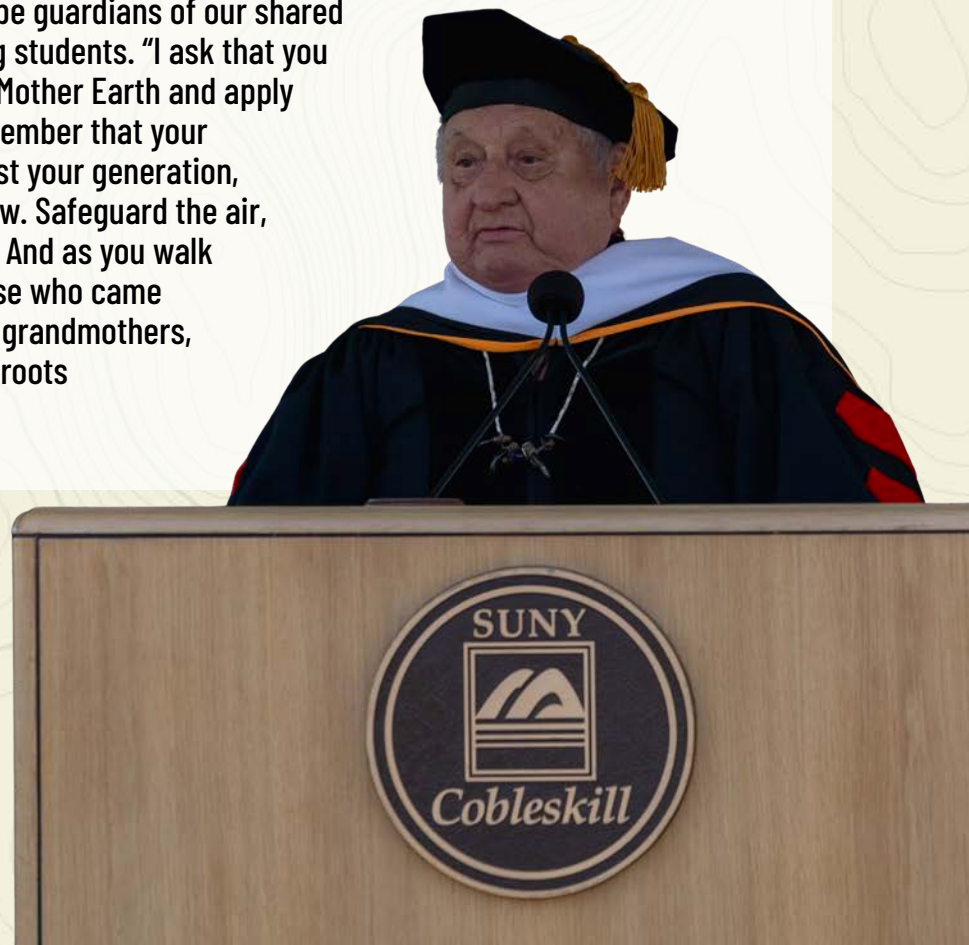
President Marion Terenzio celebrated graduates as embodiments of the College's "Learning by Doing" philosophy and living testimonies to the institution's motto that "education is the hope of the world."

"You've mastered your learning by becoming agents of your educational journey and creating your own sovereignty of achievements," said President Terenzio, highlighting graduates' accomplishments ranging from research presentations to athletic championships. "Your greatest tool today is your capacity to step into real situations needing real solutions. Continue to practice your learning by doing and challenging both the status quo and yourself as you move forward into your future careers."

In addition to celebrating student's academic achievements, the College also awarded an honorary SUNY Doctorate of Humane Letters to keynote speaker Thomas Sakokweniokwas Porter.

Mr. Porter, a Bear Clan Elder from the Mohawk Nation, founded the Kanatsiohareke community in New York's Mohawk Valley. He has dedicated his life to preserving Indigenous culture, co-founding the Akwesasne Freedom School and the White Roots of Peace, a group of Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) representatives that traveled across North America, sharing native teachings and encouraging Indigenous communities to reconnect with their traditions. As Tehanakarine sub-chief (1971-1992), he provided spiritual and political leadership for his people. In 1993, he established Kanatsiohareke as a sanctuary for traditional Mohawk values, emphasizing language as essential to cultural preservation.

**"Your learning has prepared you to be guardians of our shared home," Mr. Porter said to graduating students. "I ask that you maintain a sacred connection with Mother Earth and apply your knowledge to protect her. Remember that your decisions today must benefit not just your generation, but the seven generations that follow. Safeguard the air, water, and soil that sustains all life. And as you walk this path, never forget to honor those who came before you – your mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and grandfathers – for they are the roots from which your strength grows."**



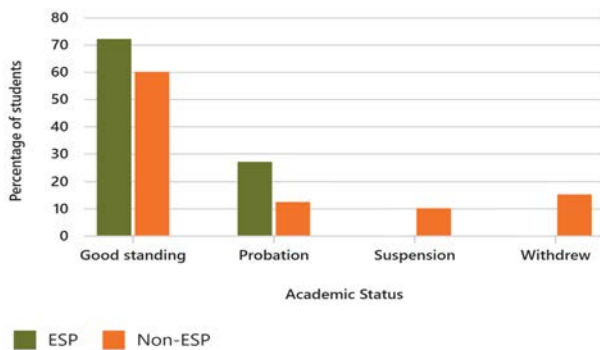
# Emerging Scholars

The College's Emerging Scholars Program (ESP) is an initiative that fundamentally changes the trajectory of at-risk students during their critical first year. Rather than simply preventing academic failure, the program has created a supportive ecosystem that promotes success and belonging among participants with academic programming in the summer ahead of their first full semester on campus, acclimating them to the rigor and expectations of college life.

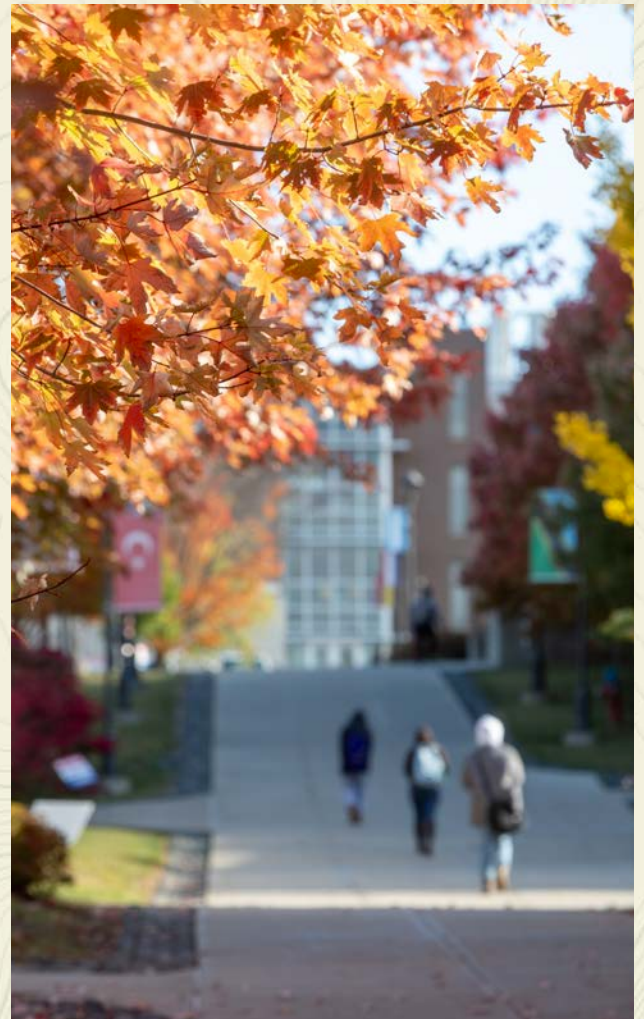
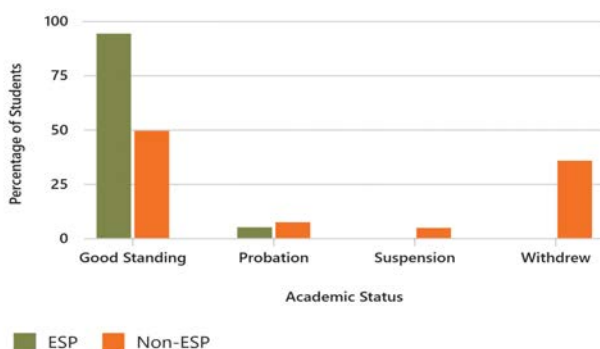
ESP participants started stronger than their non-ESP peers, with 72% in good standing during Fall 2024 and demonstrated improvement throughout the year, culminating in 93% achieving good standing by Spring 2025. ESP students also maintained a significantly higher average GPA of 2.9 compared to 2.45 for their non-participating peers.

The most compelling proof of the program's impact lies not in numbers alone, but in the organic mentorship culture it has fostered. Half of the inaugural 2024-2025 cohort has voluntarily stepped forward to guide the next generation of Emerging Scholars, creating a cycle of peer support and encouragement.

Fall 2024 Academic Standing



Spring 2025 Academic Standing



# Campus Highlights

## Our Academics

### Partnering with SUNY Oneonta on Fisheries 4+1

Marking Earth Day 2025, SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech and SUNY Oneonta announced a collaborative agreement providing qualified Cobleskill Ag & Tech students the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in Fisheries Science while simultaneously taking classes during their senior year at the SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station to complete their master's degree in Lake Management – accelerating dual degree completion in five years, rather than six.



### NYS DEC and College Construct Artificial Reefs in Otsego Lake

In Dec. 2024, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced the completion of three new artificial spawning reefs in Otsego Lake, installed with the help of SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech faculty and staff. The artificial reefs create new, clean spawning habitat for lake whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*), a native coldwater species once abundant in Otsego Lake. Lake whitefish thrived in Otsego Lake well into the 1980s, sustaining lake trout and other native fish species before a series of biological and environmental factors severely decreased populations.



### Addressing the Rural Nursing Shortage

The College formed a groundbreaking partnership with Maria College and Bassett Healthcare Network to address nursing shortages in rural upstate New York. The College is providing crucial support infrastructure for Maria College's expanded 16-month weekend Practical Nurse Certificate Program, which launched in the Cobleskill area in 2025. SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech now offers residential housing and daycare services to nursing students, removing significant barriers to nursing education access in rural communities.



### PATH, Intl. Reaccreditation for Therapeutic Horsemanship

The Therapeutic Horsemanship program earned Premier Accredited Center status from PATH, Intl., joining only 250 out of 760+ member centers with this designation. To earn accreditation, the academic program passed rigorous evaluations on horse management, safety, instruction quality, and administrative practices across nearly 200 industry standards. This recognition coincides with the program's 30th anniversary, having served the community since 1995 while training students as certified therapeutic riding instructors.

### Student Teams Reach State Finals in the 2025 New York Business Plan Competition

Student entrepreneurs excelled at the 2025 New York Business Plan Competition, with two teams advancing from regionals to state finals. Team Melley (Emely Taveras and Lillian Kearby) placed second in Health & Wellbeing regionally and reached the Live Pitch finals at the state-wide conference, competing against 350 participants from 65 colleges statewide. Their venture develops accessible women's healthcare solutions. Team Next Food Station (Sebastian Zilempe, Rayner Tena, and Time Bemmes) secured second place in Food & AgTech, revolutionizing food supply chains through IoT technology. Both teams participate in the College's Steps for Success Entrepreneurship Program.

### Animal Science Students Construct Cow Skeleton

In a unique educational project, six students constructed a fully articulated cow skeleton from a donated cow, preserving both bones and much of the soft tissue. This anatomical model will serve as a valuable teaching tool for future students in Animal Science programs. Students involved in the project were Timothy Blesy, Jiles Coble, Alex Empet, Ethan Miller, Amelia Moyer, and Lucy Pitoniak.



### Student Researchers Represent at SURC

Twenty-eight students traveled to Binghamton University in April 2025 to present their research findings at the SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference (SURC). The College's researchers comprised more than ten percent of the 250 presentations at the SUNY system-wide academic gathering. Additional Cobleskill Ag & Tech researchers presented their work at the College's on-campus Student Learning Showcase.

## Far Flung

### Students Shine at National Collegiate Landscape Competition in Colorado

Landscape and Plant Science students represented at the 49th Annual National Collegiate Landscape Competition in Fort Collins, Colorado. Nearly 800 students from 50+ colleges participated in hands-on events spanning design installation, business management, equipment operation, and plant sciences. Competing here since the 1980s, the College is one of only nine NALP-accredited Bachelor's programs in the U.S. and Canada.



### Conservation Club Plants 720 Trees in Puerto Rico

Members of the Conservation Club traveled to Puerto Rico for Spring Break to plant 720 trees (*Pterocarpus officinalis*) over two days with Ecoculture's Global Reforestation Network. They survived the heat and humidity by drinking a gallon of water by noon each day! Their efforts were rewarded with a visit to Vieques National Wildlife Refuge bioluminescent bay and beaches, complete with wild horses, and a day in El Yunque National Forest, the only tropical rainforest in our national forest system.



### NAMA Team Represents at National Agri-Marketing Competition for Eleventh Year

Our National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) Team competed in Kansas City, Mo. in April 2025 with an innovative project idea in agriculture. Presenting a franchise model, this year's team developed a sustainable, healthier ice cream line. Utilizing citrus byproducts there was an emphasis on reducing waste along with promoting local New York State products. The competition and networking opportunities allow students to grow academically and professionally. This ten-month academic commitment allows students to apply classroom knowledge in marketing strategy, financial analysis, and professional presentation.

### Dairy Judging Team Goes International

The Dairy Judging Team competed at Scotland's prestigious Royal Highland Show in Edinburgh, attracting 190,000 visitors and featuring 4,500 head of livestock. Team members Luke Enyart, Allison Gabel, Elizabeth Schieferstine, and Libby Sutton faced intense competition, judging Holstein, Jersey, and Ayrshire cattle with just five minutes per class. Enyart and Schieferstine placed third overall, while Gabel and Sutton finished fifth. Beyond competition, the team explored Scottish landmarks including St. Andrews Links, Stirling Castle, and Edinburgh's National Museum.

Their journey continued in Ireland, where they studied grass-based dairy systems and earned second place as a team at the Charleville Agricultural Show. Cultural experiences included the Ring of Kerry and Blarney Castle. Coach Carrie Edsall emphasized how this international experience provided real-world learning, exposing students to diverse agricultural practices while proving they can compete globally.



### D'Onofrio Selected for Elite Military Dining Team

Kevin D'Onofrio, Executive Director of Cobleskill Auxiliary Services, completed a three-country tour as part of the prestigious United States Air Force Hennessy Travel Award program. Alongside industry experts and Air Force personnel, he evaluated food service operations at four military bases in Turkey, Italy, and Germany over 20 days. The Hennessy program recognizes excellence in military food service management, and D'Onofrio was tasked with assessing kitchen operations, dining services, and personnel readiness while sharing industry knowledge and advice for advancement with airmen.



### Ducks Unlimited Chapter Wins National Recognitions

Our Student Chapter of Ducks Unlimited received prestigious national honors at the organization's 12th Annual Collegiate Leadership Summit in Memphis, Tenn., earning both the Silver All-American Collegiate Chapter designation and the Grand Slam Award. The chapter raised over \$53,296 at their 10th Annual Outdoorsman's Night Out event in November 2024, qualifying for Silver All-American status (awarded to chapters raising \$50,000-\$74,999 annually). The Grand Slam Award recognizes chapters showing increased revenue, attendance, and volunteers compared to the previous year.

Founded in 2012 as New York State's first collegiate Ducks Unlimited chapter, the group continues making significant conservation impacts while providing valuable leadership development opportunities for students.



### Achievers

#### Corey Cherizard Receives Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for Student Excellence

Senior Corey Cherizard was honored with a 2025 Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for Student Excellence, one of only 50 SUNY Educational Opportunity Program students to be awarded this year. The award recognizes outstanding EOP students for academic merit and perseverance. Cherizard graduated in May 2025 with a Bachelor's in Agricultural Equipment Technology, having earned an Associate degree in Diesel Technology in 2023. EOP has served over 85,000 students since 1967, supporting disadvantaged and first-generation college students.



### Two Seniors Honored with 2025 Chancellor's Awards for Student Excellence

Seniors John Christopher and Cristian Gilces were the campus recipients of 2025 Chancellor's Awards for Student Excellence, SUNY's highest student honor recognizing academic excellence and leadership. Christopher graduated with a 4.00 GPA in Fisheries and Aquaculture, earned President's List honors every semester, also serving as a Teaching Assistant and American Fisheries Society chapter president. Gilces served as Student Government Association president and treasurer, MANRRS president advocating for underrepresented students in agriculture, and the Village of Cobleskill's first Student-Community Engagement Liaison. Both demonstrate exceptional leadership in academics, student advocacy, and community service. Christopher and Gilces were among 193 students system-wide who were honored with the award, representing .48% of SUNY's entire student population.



### Associate Professor Kimberly Tarvis '07 Earns the NACTA Educator Award

Animal Science Associate Professor Kimberly Tarvis received a 2025 North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) Educator Award, recognizing excellence in agricultural higher education. Tarvis emphasizes connecting with students from diverse backgrounds, drawing from her own experiences growing up between rural and urban environments. She was named Outstanding Faculty Mentor of the Year in 2023 and 2024, co-advises the Dairy Cattle Club, and coaches the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge Team, which placed second overall last year. She's the fifth SUNY Cobleskill faculty member to receive this honor since 1979.



### Professor Amy Dechen Quinn Chosen for AASCU's Department Chair Leadership Institute

Professor Amy Dechen Quinn, co-chair of Fisheries, Wildlife, Environmental and Plant Science, was selected as one of 32 higher education professionals for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' Department Chair Leadership Institute. She attended two days of training in Washington, D.C., and programs throughout the Spring 2025 semester, learning about academic leadership, student success, and effective communication. The program addresses professional development needs for department chairs, which is considered one of the most challenging campus positions.



## John Behrens Named NYS EMS Educator of Excellence

Jonathan Behrens, Deputy Director of our Paramedic Program, was named a 2024 New York State EMS Educator of Excellence by the Adirondack-Appalachian Regional EMS Council. The award recognizes his outstanding impact on pre-hospital services through exceptional teaching and administration. Since coming to Cobleskill Ag & Tech in 2002, Behrens has influenced over 1,000 students across various educational roles. He serves on state and regional EMS committees while continuing to practice as a paramedic for the Town of Colonie, bringing real-world experience to his teaching of the highest-level emergency medical providers.



## Brent Lehman '04 Voted by Students as Outstanding Mentor of the Year

Fish Hatchery Manager Brent Lehman was named Outstanding Mentor of the Year for the 2024-2025 academic year, as voted by students. Students praised him as a compassionate listener, advisor, and an inspirational role model who provides exceptional guidance on academic and extracurricular projects, showing genuine belief in each student's success throughout their Cobleskill Ag & Tech journey. The Fisheries, Wildlife, Environmental and Plant Sciences department was recognized as a whole for its faculty's mentorship of students, as evidenced through the student voting process.



## Sponsored Programs

### \$423K Grant to Plant Over 5,300 Trees on Campus

The College was awarded \$423,092 to expand its campus forest restoration project, enabling the planting of over 5,300 trees across five acres. Funding is through Governor Hochul's \$15 million in Community Reforestation grants supporting New York's goal to plant 25 million trees by 2033. Since 2021, students have planted more than 4,600 trees around Cobleskill Creek, focusing on native species that improve water quality, reduce erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. The project serves as a "living lab" for sustainability research and includes climate-adapted species. The College aims to plant 10,000 trees on campus by 2032.

### \$400K NSF Grant to Expand Biotechnology Partnerships

Cobleskill Ag & Tech secured \$400,000 from the National Science Foundation's EPIIC program (Enabling Partnerships to Increase Innovation Capacity). The funding will support the College's efforts to develop stronger partnerships with the biotechnology industry, expanding research opportunities and workforce development programming.



### \$1.3M Department of Defense Grant for Waste-to-Energy Gasifier Technology

\$1.3 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Defense is going toward the research and development of a small-scale waste-to-energy gasification project involving Assistant Professor David Waage's patented inclined rotary gasifier technology. The initiative involves collaboration with multiple sub-awardee agencies to develop an innovative gasification system that converts waste materials into usable energy.

## Appointments

### **Laura Gross '95 Named Vice President of Finance and Operations**

Laura Gross '95 was appointed Vice President for Finance and Operations as of July 2025. An employee of the College since 2010, she previously served as Director of Business Affairs and Controller. Gross also has over 20 years of SUNY system experience, including eight years with SUNY System Administration. She now oversees Business and Fiscal Affairs, Facilities Management, IT, and Sustainability divisions. Outside of her professional experience, Gross is an accomplished martial artist with multiple national championships in Taekwondo.



### **Inaugural Dean of Agriculture and Academics, Dr. Sophie Ano, Appointed**

As the College's first Dean of Agriculture and Academics, Dr. Sophie Ano oversees the campus farm operations, agricultural labs, and instructional staff managing budgets, developing curriculum, and building industry partnerships. Dr. Ano previously worked at the College from 2014-2022 in various roles including department chair and presiding officer of the faculty. The role aims to better integrate hands-on farm operations with classroom learning to advance the College's experiential education mission.



## Around Campus

### **College Graduates Second Class of Project SEARCH Interns**

SUNY Cobleskill graduated its second cohort of Project SEARCH interns in May 2025, celebrating five participants who completed the job experience program: Bradley Bateman, Brandon Benton, Jared Burt, Fred Hanford, and Nathan Kuehnle. The program, a partnership with ARC Lexington, helps individuals with developmental differences secure competitive employment through internships in campus departments like dining services, athletics, library, and custodial operations. The College became a host site in 2023-24 and hosted the program again this academic year. The program demonstrates strong national success rates in bridging education and employment gaps.



### **Share Shop Opens**

The Share Shop is a community space for students, faculty, and staff to exchange gently used items. This initiative positively contributes to SUNY Cobleskill's environmental impact, and the wellbeing and needs of the campus community. Items in usable, good condition, are donated by the campus community when they are no longer needed or wanted, and are made available for anyone in the campus community to "shop" for. All items in the Share Shop are free to anyone in the campus community who wants them and can use them.



# Empire State Service Corps

## Students Take Campus Service Roles with SUNY's Empire State Service Corps

Eighteen students became the first campus representatives of the Empire State Service Corps, a new SUNY program providing paid service positions for students. Students worked 300 hours each in the job areas of Sustainability, Anti-Hate and Bias Prevention, K-12 Tutoring, Peer Mental Health, Civic Engagement, and SNAP Benefits Outreach. The program is continuing on campus in the 2025-26 academic year.

Announced by Governor Kathy Hochul in May 2024, the Empire State Service Corps aims to increase civic and public service opportunities for students by creating paid service positions for more than 500 students across the SUNY system. The program is funded by a \$2.75 million expansion of community service endeavors.



### In Their Own Words: Why is service important to you?

#### Karlee Bishop (K-12 Tutoring)

"Service is important to me because it provides a sense of purpose and fulfillment by helping others and positively impacting them. It fosters connections, empathy, and personal growth, allowing you to better understand yourself and the world. Service also aligns with many spiritual and moral values, offering a way to contribute to causes you care about."

#### Cristian Gilces (K-12 Tutoring)

"Service is important to me because it is always greater than me. I do it because service work is my passion. I prioritize being an intentional leader which means serving my community in any capacity possible."

#### Charlotte Lezama (Anti-Hate, Bias & Discrimination Prevention)

"This program teaches you that community thrives on kindness, respect, and the power of lifting each other. True belonging comes when we celebrate diversity and build equity together."

#### Fiony Liao (SNAP and Basic Needs Outreach)

"I have always loved giving back to the community. Especially the community that I benefit from as a college student. I'm looking for new opportunities to help other people within the communities I benefit from, which can also benefit other students who are in need of these services."

#### Khalil Lewis (Sustainability)

"It is important to reside in a strong community. Every strong community has leaders who raise other leaders to keep the community strong and running. I think service is important to provide support to fellow community members."

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**Jocelyn Mack (Sustainability)**

"In the summer of 2023, I was a part of the Youth Conservation Corps with the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. It introduced different ways to connect nature and civilization to inform ways to preserve and conserve. When you perform service, you don't only impact your own life positively, but other citizens and the environment as well."

**Katherine Mohan (Sustainability)**

"Being in service to others was a big part of my life growing up, and, still, in my adult life, I choose to serve and help where I can. I value giving back to my peers and community as a way to be there for a community that has been there for me. I also strongly believe it's important to serve our planet because if we don't, who will? Being a steward for our environment is a way in which I can be a voice for our planet and where I feel I can make an impact."

**Christopher Parlato (Peer Mental Health)**

"I have always been a volunteer with my local Knights of Columbus, local special needs classes, and with the Best Buddies Program at school."

**Brienne Basford (Sustainability)**

"Sustainability is vital to our society. I am eager to be involved in both learning and activities that support sustainability programs on campus."

**Adrienne Carter (Sustainability)**

"Service is important because it allows you to do something and make something better of a problem that you know is happening. It also makes you a better person and gives you more experience with real-world issues."

**Suzzy Kotoku (Anti-Hate and Bias Prevention)**

"I get to be involved in my community and create a positive impact."

**Ceilia McFarland (Anti-Hate and Bias Prevention)**

"Service is important to me because it's a way to create meaningful connections, contribute to something greater than myself, and grow as a person."

**Deborah Oyede (Civic Engagement)**

"It's important, as a community, to help each other and provide each other with needed resources. It helps grow the community socially and physically, provides a solid support system, and makes it more comfortable for people to ask for help."

**Mekhai Woodson (Anti-Hate and Bias Prevention)**

"When you serve the community, you are serving yourself and vice versa. The interconnected nature of human life makes community service vital for people."



# Strategic Plan Highlights

## 1.1 Determining and implementing a contemporary institutional structure for forward-thinking presentation of ourselves to internal and external audiences

- This year marked an important step forward in strengthening our financial and operational infrastructure. The former Office of Business Affairs has been renamed the Office of Business & Fiscal Affairs, reflecting an enhanced focus on fiscal stewardship and organizational efficiency. A new linear structure was introduced to support clearer communication and streamlined decision-making, led by an Executive Director for Business & Fiscal Affairs.
- To further strengthen the Business & Fiscal Affairs team, realignment of positions were established, including a Fund Accountant and an Assistant Director, expanding the department's capacity to manage resources effectively. In addition, the Research Foundation Assistant Director of Sponsored Programs now operates under the Business & Fiscal Affairs umbrella, fostering greater alignment between fiscal management and sponsored program administration. These strategic changes position the division to better support the campus mission through improved financial accountability, collaboration, and service excellence.
- Facilities Management is currently directing a \$60 million Capital Plan, ranging from critical maintenance and infrastructure to strategic priority projects like: renovation of the Home Economics building to house the Agribusiness Research and Workforce Innovation Hub, modernization of the Dairy Complex, including installation of robotic milking system, and partnering with NYPA on electrical efficiency improvements
- The College introduced the Learning Commons in the Library, creating a one-stop hub where students can access all academic support services in a single, convenient location.
- The College established the AI Learning Committee, headed by Dr. Grace Begany, where faculty and staff collaborate to explore the evolution of artificial intelligence and its impact on academia.

## 1.2 Developing an institution-wide branding campaign and narrative which reflects the vision, mission, and values

- The College's Marketing and Communications teams continued to build upon our key themes and pillars defined during our brand research to build out paid and organic promotions and advertising across a variety of media targeted specifically to our audiences.
- As the new branding, along with our new logo, continues to roll out across a multitude of channels, the Marketing and Communications teams are working to update all materials for all programs and departments with the updated branding.
- In addition to our organic promotion across social media, the Marketing and Communications teams engaged in a number of paid organic ads for varying programs from Plant Science and Environmental Management to Agricultural Business and Biotech with an impressive reach. The audience consisted of traditional students with noted interest in agriculture, related business, and biotech in New York State, along with parents. The microsite that supported the campaign saw nearly 20,000 visitors over a four-week run.
- In Spring 2025, marketing continued with Connective Television (CTV), with commercials airing across premium digital channels, with the goal of creating awareness around the SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech brand. In addition to New York State, the campaign targeted specific cities in Vermont and Connecticut. The completion rate on the video was over 99%, equating to 657,855 views. Overall, viewers were exposed to the commercial nearly seven times in order to build that lasting impression, meeting our campaign goals.
- TikTok followers increased by 65.3% (878), Instagram followers increased by 23.6% (1580), and Facebook followers increased by 5.2% (948). New social media campaigns are driving engagement, including weekly reel segments The Weekly Question and Major Mystery, and previously proven segments including Internship Stories, and sharing in-depth hands-on class experiences.

# Strategic Plan Highlights

## 2. Maximizing learner access, progression, and success

- The Agricultural Engineering Technology program earned accreditation through the AED Foundation, the non-profit foundation for the Heavy Equipment industry.

"The real strength in this program lies with its people, meaning the instructors, support staff, advisory members, and administration. Students recognize this - enrollment remains strong because of the shared commitment to excellence that defines SUNY Cobleskill. This is absolutely one of the top programs in the nation."- Gary Wenter, AED Evaluation Team Leader

- The Fisheries, Wildlife, Environmental and Plant Sciences (FWEPS) department finished a three-year, \$40,000 project with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation focused on freshwater mussel conservation, surveying, and propagation.
- FWEPS has renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for the period of 2025-2029, which provides maximum funding of \$1.3 million over the five-year term to offer paid internships with DEC to students enrolled in the Wildlife Management program.
- FWEPS faculty established an endowment from the Cobleskill Fish and Game Club for fish stocking at the Cobleskill Reservoir.
- Nine students travelled to the National Meeting of The Wildlife Society in Baltimore. Cobleskill Ag & Tech's student team finished fourth in the nationally ranked annual Quiz Bowl Competition.
- The College created the position of Learning Education and Development Specialist to support neurodivergent students in developing effective techniques and strategies for academic success.
- To help alleviate the financial burden of high textbook costs, the Library allocated a portion of its budget to purchase required course materials for students to access through the Course Reserves service, with 44 library-owned reserve titles being used 250 times during 2024-25.
- The Office of Student Leadership recorded 94% of students who participated in onboarding, through Orientation and Welcome Weekend, persisted through week three of the Fall 2024 semester.
- The Office of Student Leadership recorded a significant increase in understanding of campus policies and support resources through pre- and post-Orientation surveys.
- The Office of Student Leadership formalized a Co-Curricular Transcript on the Coby Engage platform. Coby Engage is a student organization platform where students can discover opportunities, find and attend campus events, join student clubs and organizations, and showcase their involvement.
- The Office of Residential Life reported 65% of full-time students opted to live on-campus.
- The Office of Residential Life fully implemented Housing Cloud, a new housing software that will allow for more housing freedom, and transparency for students, and create more efficiencies for the department.
- Information Technology Services (ITS) expanded EAB Navigate student success data feeds to improve identification of student cohorts such as commuters, athletes, and ASAPACE participants.
- ITS enhanced the Brightspace ecosystem through improved attendance, enrollment synchronization, and academic onboarding workflows.
- ITS launched key Single Sign-On and identity access upgrades to streamline access to academic systems and reduce authentication friction.
- The Beard Wellness Center now has five counseling staff who have completed intensive EMDR training. EMDR, or eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, is a therapy that helps people heal from emotional distress caused by trauma.
- The Beard Wellness Center now has seven staff certified as Mental Health First Aid instructors. These staff will be leading ten campus-wide training sessions to build community resilience.
- The Beard Wellness Center has enhanced counseling access through a new partnership with BetterMynd, a telecounseling platform. BetterMynd provides students with expanded availability, including evenings, weekends, and school breaks, along with a diverse range of providers and specialized care options.
- The Beard Wellness Center increased outreach to the campus by hosting faculty and staff flu clinics, distributing wellness care packages in residence halls and the campus food pantry, and launching a Positivity Campaign to promote strategies for well-being and joy.

## Strategic Plan Highlights

- The Beard Wellness Center expanded campus-wide substance use prevention by continuing Narcan training for students and employees, while partnering with St. Peter's Health Partners to enhance nicotine screening and cessation services, including certifying a staff member as a Tobacco Treatment Specialist.
- The Beard Wellness Center improved depression and anxiety screenings at every medical visit, updated exam rooms and equipment to enhance the patient experience, and introduced nurse uniforms to reinforce professionalism in care.
- The Beard Wellness Center partnered with a nutritionist to expand opportunities for students to learn about healthy eating.
- The Office of Student Conduct increased campus awareness and utilization of the Student of Concern reporting process that has resulted in early intervention and dissemination of resources to support students by the CARE and BAT teams. CARE is the Concern, Assessment, Response, and Evaluation team. BAT is the Behavioral Assessment Team.
- The Office of Student Conduct documented a significant reduction in Faculty-Student Conduct Board hearings, and an increase in cases resolved through Conduct Review meetings with Director of Student Conduct or Residential Directors.
- Jill Basile '06, Director of the Office of Student Conduct, delivered faculty and staff trainings, titled "Recognizing, Reporting, and Supporting Student Concerns," to build shared capacity across campus.
- The Office of Student Conduct saw an increase of over 500% from the previous year of student of concern reports. This rise reflects growing awareness among faculty, staff, and peers in identifying and reporting students who may be struggling academically, emotionally, or behaviorally.
- The Office of Student Conduct reframed messaging through trainings and workshops to emphasize education, responsibility, and support over punishment. The office maintained a recidivism rate below 30%, showing effective outcomes of educational sanctions.
- The Office of Student Conduct recorded 33% survey participation post-conduct meeting, providing useful student feedback regarding the conduct process.
- The Office of Veterans Affairs worked with Institutional Research and Admissions to enhance tracking of all Military Affiliated students, enhancing communication with students, and family members (dependents) who indicated military-affiliated status on their application. This significantly enhances our ability to conduct outreach and connect students with services, such as our Veteran Resource Center.
- The Office of Veterans Affairs increased the Student Veteran Resource Center (SVRC) student staff from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, this peer-to-peer leadership position is essential to success in the Veteran Resource Center, as they provide direct support to all Military-Affiliated students that utilize the space.
- The Office of Student Leadership, through its annual yard sale, raised \$2,519 for the "Champion for Sustainability" Endowed Scholarship.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services enhanced the student dining experience through the addition of a fresh herb and lettuce growing cabinet in Champlin Dining Hall, and a self-serve spice station with 25 dry spices and over ten liquid sauces.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services acquired management of The Carriage House and Taste NY retail space. The Carriage House has expanded hours, improved menu selections and continues to provide employment opportunities for students.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services enhanced the student experience in the Campus Store by relocating the checkout area to improve efficiency and increase student engagement.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services added two new deli stations in its Farm Fresh Cafe, with made-to-order sandwich and salad menus and expanded fresh, customizable dining options.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services enhanced the student dining experience with a revamped menu emphasizing fresh produce and locally sourced products at its Twisted Whiskers Cafe.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services is now offering campus milk at all retail dining locations, with recorded consumption of 3,650 pints and 383 gallons of campus milk.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services entered a partnership with Performance Food Group (PFG) as a primary vendor of products for all of its units.
- Expanded DEI-focused student worker programs, supporting professional development and inclusive employment pipeline efforts across IT services.

## Strategic Plan Highlights

### 3. Creating greater opportunities for diversity, inclusion, and belonging

- Residential Life documented employment of a diverse student staff that includes strong representation of minority students. In fact, the percentage of Resident Assistants from protected classes exceeds the overall campus representation rates for these groups. When students see themselves reflected in positions of authority, they feel more welcome and are more willing to engage with campus resources.
- The College's Chief Diversity Officer facilitated a campus-wide climate survey September 23 through October 25, 2024, administered by survey provider Viewfinder and financially sponsored by SUNY.
- DEIB & Title VI programming was delivered to the incoming class of first-year students as part of Foundation for College Success (FFCS) seminar curriculum.
- The campus celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with an assortment of educational and entertaining campus-wide opportunities that culminated in a performance by Alex Torres and His Latin Orchestra.
- The campus offered programming and awareness opportunities during Native American Heritage Month while publicizing our new Land Acknowledgement statement and raising the Haudenosaunee Confederacy flag next to the campus' U.S. and state flags indefinitely.
- The College offered a series of events for MLK Day and Black History Month including: "Movies with Meaning and Discussion," a common read and discussion of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community," and a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Dinner. All programs and events were guided in terms of content and subject matter around what we have coined as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Pillars of Promise: Unity, Social Justice, World Peace, Civil Discourse, and Service.
- The Chief Diversity Officer offered and assigned a series of DEIB in higher education-focused training modules to all campus community members.
- The Office of Student Leadership reported record-breaking engagement across campus events in both the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters, including the First 50 Days Initiative, encouraging new, incoming students to connect with campus resources, surrounding community, and the northeast region. Through campus club and organization sponsored social events, hands-on activities, tabling events with local community businesses, bus trips, and American Red Cross blood drives, student participation continued to exceed expectations.
- The Beard Wellness Center, in partnership with our campus Unity Center, implemented Listening Inspires New Knowledge (LINK), a peer support specialist program, to strengthen student connection, belonging, and access to resources.
- The annual Women in Wildlife Campfire Cookout was held in October, the longest running event of its kind aimed at increasing diversity in the Wildlife Management profession. The Wildlife Society student chapter at Cobleskill Ag & Tech initiated its first annual cookout in 2003 to help support and mentor women in wildlife professions.
- The Office of Residential Life, working collaboratively with University Police and Athletics, coordinated the 9th Annual Tiger Color Run/Walk fundraising event for autism awareness. The funds raised support the programming and supportive measures for neurodiverse individuals through Arc Lexington, a non-profit organization that supports individuals with autism. The event hosted over 200 participants and raised over \$1,600.
- The Van Wagenen Library introduced monthly crafting events designed to help students manage stress, exercise their creativity, and foster a sense of community and connection.



# Strategic Plan Highlights

## 4.1 Achieving fiscal and operational sustainability

- Graduates of the Watershed Management course researched and built water control structures that are now installed at the campus' Ski Lodge research forest. The group worked with the Agricultural Engineering department and the Office of Facilities Management to create a new entrance road to the research forest.
- The Campus Compost Project diverted 2,250 lbs. of food scraps from going to landfill in the 2024-2025 academic year. The finished compost is being used by Plant Science classes for soil testing and in the greenhouse to amend soil in potted plants.
- The Share Shop collected over 1,900 used items for donation during the 2024-2025 academic year, preventing nearly 3,000 lbs. of usable items from going to landfill, and putting them back in the hands of people who can use them.
- The Office of Sustainability was awarded a \$2,500 grant from the New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling to fund equipment for a project called the "Repair and Re-Love Hub" which provides tools that students can use to repair personal items and workshops to teach them how to do the repairs.
- Over 1,275 trees were planted on the SUNY Cobleskill campus in the 2024-2025 academic year, bringing the grand total of trees planted so far to 4,600.
- Over ten tons of milk and 200 lbs. of cheese products were processed in our campus Dairy Processing Center. Our milk is ranked second in the county for production (ranked by DHI= Dairy Herd Improvement index).
- 36,837 lbs. of product from 174 animals were produced in our Meat and Fisheries Processing Center.
- Our corn silage sample was a finalist in the World Analysis Forage Superbowl, ultimately finishing seventh.
- Campus-wide network modernization continued with the replacement of critical distribution switches and targeted upgrades to aging infrastructure, improving reliability and reducing downtime risk.
- ITS launched a Teams Calling & Communications Modernization project, leveraging external funding to reduce long-term telephony costs and improve service resiliency and emergency responsiveness.

- ITS developed and began executing the Technology Renewal Plan, addressing Wi-Fi, security, network closets, and classroom/commons technology needs campus-wide.
- ITS continued development of the Campus Hardware & Software Cyclic Replacement Model, supporting sustainable budgeting and modernization planning.
- ITS automated account lifecycle workflows for faculty, staff, and students – including account creation, license management, and reactivation – reducing manual processing and improving turnaround times.
- Duplicate and inaccurate housing and Human Resources records were cleaned across systems, improving reporting accuracy and operational consistency.
- ITS conducted security audits in TeamDynamix and began alignment of distributed security models across Banner, BDMS, and ARGOS softwares.
- ITS Increased on-campus printing and production, reducing outsourcing costs.

## 4.2 Being a great place to work

- After a strong response, 18 faculty members were given the opportunity to register for the Effective Teaching Certification offered through the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE), sponsored by SUNY. Faculty from across campus are collaborating and implementing newly learned strategies every day.
- Facilities Management is utilizing more creative approaches to workweeks and shifts, which reduces overtime while increasing service levels. The shift arrangements are a quality of life improvement for staff.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services improved the employee experience by appointing a General Manager of Retail Dining to oversee all three CAS retail units, and a dedicated supervisor to support daily operations.
- Cobleskill Auxiliary Services improved the employee experience with renovations to the Twisted Whiskers' Cafe prep area, and office space.

## Strategic Plan Highlights

### 5.1 Fostering effective partnerships that will have an impact on economic and human capacity within and beyond our local community

- FWEPS faculty were invited to speak at the Wetlands Forum, the New York Aquatic Connectivity Working Group, Work in the Woods (SUNY Oneonta), Cornell Biological Field Station, and the Upper Delaware River Rendezvous.
- Early Childhood Studies faculty co-hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Conference with community partners on campus. Over 60 community agency professionals, students, and faculty attended.
- James D'Amico, Director of Student Leadership and Orientation, presented at APCAs 2025 National Campus Activities Planning Conference. APCA is the Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities, an organization that hosts regional and national conferences. D'Amico delivered an educational session to advisors titled "Orientation: Best Practices and How to Engage Your Students!"
- D'Amico presented "Best Practices & How to Engage Your Students During Transitions and Beyond!" at the NODA 2025 Transition Symposium. NODA is the National Orientation Directors Association, an Association for Orientation Transition Retention in Higher Education.
- Michael Wacksman '95, Associate Director of Student Leadership, served on the NODA Educational Program Review Committee.

- D'Amico presented at the Fall 2024 SUNY SA, SUNY-wide leadership conference. SUNY SA is the Student Assembly, the official organization by which SUNY students can participate in university-wide governance.

### 5.2 Creating global citizens

- The Office of Residential Life delivered 1,194 programs to facilitate learning in strategic areas following the Division of Student Development O.R.A.N.G.E. curricular model. Based on the "Curricular Approach" method, this is strategic educational model designed to intentionally address our students' specific needs. Each letter in the acronym (Openness, Responsible, Achieve, Navigate, Global, Engage) represents a key growth area that prepares students to become global citizens.
- SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech was recognized as a 2024 ALL IN Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting.
- The Center for Career Development coordinated five major-specific job fairs, hosting them in academic spaces to connect students with relevant employers in their fields of study.
- As part of a strategic reorganization in August 2024, oversight of credit-bearing internships and study abroad programs was transitioned to the Center for Career Development.



# The Institute for Rural Vitality

## Overview

The Institute for Rural Vitality at SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech (IRV) has a clear mission to engage the substantial resources of the College in collaboration with regional partners to enhance community and economic vitality in rural New York.

Through its three distinct centers and shared use spaces, the Institute addresses the region's most pressing issues to develop and enact sustainable solutions. Cobleskill Ag & Tech students and faculty are at the fore of community partnerships and coalitions, adding their expertise to that of their partners to support economic development initiatives.

The IRV is committed to empowering rural communities and fostering economic growth to create a vibrant and sustainable economy in rural New York. Visit [www.cobleskill.edu/institute](http://www.cobleskill.edu/institute).

## Empire State Development EMPOWERS Grant Award

The Institute for Rural Vitality received \$1.6 million from Empire State Development's Mohawk Valley Empowers Program to expand technical training across the region. With this funding, the Institute launched a suite of subsidized Agribusiness Microcredentials which are short, stackable credentials offering hands-on, industry-aligned training. The program serves as both a pathway into the industry and a route for career advancement, while also providing workforce development resources for businesses. This helps to strengthen New York's rural and technical workforce by lowering barriers to entry and advancement.

## Microcredentials & Workforce Development

The Institute continues to lead in microcredential innovation, having successfully developed and launched nine new microcredentials with an impressive annual enrollment of over 1200 students and a remarkable 99% completion rate. Reinforcing its position as a statewide leader in this space, the IRV also developed a new workforce development training this year by partnering with National Grid to deliver a highly successful Backhoe Essentials training. Through this initiative, 154 employees received specialized instruction in safety, operation, and transportation of backhoe equipment, further demonstrating SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech's commitment to practical, industry-aligned education.



An entrepreneur presents at the IRV's Business Plan Competition

## Value-Added Product Development

The Institute was honored to be named the official Mohawk Valley Entrepreneurship Assistance Center (EAC) by Empire State Development. With support from this designation and \$1 million in funding through the three-year Mohawk Valley Empowers Grant, the IRV successfully developed 40 new value-added products this past year, while its incubator services contributed to an additional eight innovative offerings. These bring the total number of products the IRV has helped entrepreneurs develop to 142. The grant supports a one-year, cohort-based Value-Added Product Development Program that provides entrepreneurs with recipe development, tasting and testing, business planning, financial advisement, and networking opportunities, including participation in the Empire State Entrepreneurship Expo in the spring, advancing regional entrepreneurship and economic growth.

## Northeast Regional Technical Training Center

The program has trained over 700 technicians through applied four-day training sessions and increased capacity to 28 sessions per year by optimizing facility use. Through Green Workforce Development Grant funding and SUNY Transformation Funds, the program developed and launched industry-leading Applied Heavy Electric Vehicle Training. The Green Workforce Development Grant of \$350,000 also enabled collaboration with SUNY Delhi to create a microcredential focused on National Electrical Codes and EV Charging, while development is underway for additional training courses in Fuel and Emissions Systems and Welding.

# The Institute for Rural Vitality

## Agribusiness Microcredentials Subsidized through the Empowers Grant

- Advanced Beekeeping
- Advanced Electrical
- Advanced Fiber Sorting, Classing
- Advanced Hydraulics
- Applied Air Brakes
- Applied Electric Vehicle in Heavy Equipment
- Applied Electrical
- Applied Hydraulics
- Applied Motor Vehicle Air Conditioning
- Basic Air Brakes
- Basic Beekeeping
- Basic Diesel Aftertreatment
- Basic Diesel Engines
- Basic Electric Vehicle in Heavy Equipment
- Basic Electrical
- Basic Fiber Sorting and Classing
- Basic Fuel and Air Systems
- Basic Hydraulics
- Basic Motor Vehicle Air Conditioning
- Best Practices in Dairy Animal Care
- Dairy Processing
- GMP in Dairy Processing
- HACCP in Dairy Processing
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)
- Intro to Dairy Processing
- Intro to Dairy Processing and Pasteurization
- Maple Syrup Production
- Meat Processing and Food Safety
- Milk & Milk Quality
- SOP in Dairy Processing
- Value Product Development

## The 3rd Annual Empire State Entrepreneur Expo

The 3rd Annual Empire State Entrepreneur Expo (ESEE) at the Institute for Rural Vitality was a great success. The event grew this year to feature 33 local businesses and many products for nearly 200 attendees to taste, try and buy. The IRV's own Dr. Scott Ferguson emceed the event, offering patrons an opportunity to explore the diverse array of products—ranging from health and beauty items to fine local spirits. He shared his first impressions and tastings of food and beverage offerings suitable for every course, meal, and time of day, while introducing the entrepreneurs behind these creations. Attendees who were tasting and trying were asked to cast ballots for their favorite offerings, the votes were tallied, and the IRV awarded the outstanding entrepreneur of each product category.



# The Institute for Rural Vitality

## Entrepreneurship Assistance Center

In the past year, the Institute for Rural Vitality assisted 125 businesses and entrepreneurs, bringing its total impact to 827 since inception. The Institute helped businesses secure over \$753,000 in financing and grant opportunities, worked with over 100 new businesses, and supported increased sales of more than \$2 million through targeted assistance and technical support.

The IRV led two new cohorts of the Business Development Bootcamp, a free, six-week program that helps aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs turn ideas into viable business plans through structured guidance on business planning, financial readiness, marketing strategy, and funding access.

Building on this model, the IRV introduced Steps for Success, a new program that integrates entrepreneurial support directly into SUNY Cobleskill's academic experience by blending the Bootcamp framework with required coursework and one-on-one mentorship, equipping students to graduate with turnkey business plans and clear paths toward launching their ventures.

All Business Development Bootcamp graduates are eligible to compete in the Business Plan Competition in April for up to \$15,000 in prize money, reinforcing the Institute's mission to strengthen rural economies through education, innovation, and enterprise development.

## Regional Economic Development

In addition to its entrepreneurial initiatives, the IRV successfully engaged in economic development last year through the Go Micro program, the Governor's Economic Development Empowers Challenge, submitting applications for \$3,775,784 of economic grants, and being awarded three grants worth \$2,699,989. The IRV also continued its work facilitating the involvement of the College and CAS with Empire State Greenhouses. Furthermore, the IRV played a pivotal role in helping participants obtain \$294,502 in grant awards.

Lastly, the IRV has been actively engaged in the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council's application for the Governor's ACHIEVE \$50M competition.



# Measuring the Institute's Impact

**827**

Farm and Food  
Businesses Served

**\$753K**

Financing Secured  
by Participants in  
Past 12 Months

**142**

New Products  
Developed or Piloted

**22**

Beginning Farmers Entered  
Local/Regional Food Production

**\$2,000,000+**

Participant Revenue  
Increase in Past 12 Months

**59**

Jobs Maintained or Created  
and **4** New Careers Created

**76**

Unique Business Plans and **60**  
Unique Marketing Plans Developed

**4**

Customized Trainings

**3**

Workforce Development  
Grants

**96%**

Credential Completion Rate

## Microcredential Offerings

**69**

Microcredentials, 4<sup>th</sup> in SUNY

**+327%**

Increase from Spring 2021  
to Spring 2024

## Microcredential Enrollments

**2505**

Total Enrollments

**+178%**

Increase from Spring 2021  
to Spring 2024

INSTITUTE  
FOR  
RURAL  
VITALITY

# Foundation Report

## Building Momentum in a Record Year

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I share the remarkable achievements of the SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech Foundation during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, alumni, and community partners, we reached a historic milestone: \$3.325 million raised – our fourth consecutive year of record-breaking fundraising.

This extraordinary momentum is only possible through the deep connection our community shares with Cobleskill Ag & Tech's mission. Each gift represents a belief in our students, our unique applied learning model, and the bright future we are building together.

This year brought several highlights that do well to show the strength of our Coby community. Our annual Golf Tournament achieved unprecedented success, generating \$115,000 in net proceeds to support student-athlete scholarships and programs. A transformative \$600,000 planned gift was established, ensuring future generations of students will benefit from the foresight and generosity of today's donors.

We celebrated the creation of eleven new endowments, each one a lasting legacy that will provide scholarship and resource support in perpetuity for Cobleskill Ag & Tech students.

In an outpouring of alumni engagement, every new, first-year student in Fall 2024 received a handwritten welcome note from an alum. More than 800 personalized notes offering encouragement and connection were sent. This simple yet profound gesture demonstrates the village approach that defines our community.

To strengthen our development efforts and build on our momentum, we welcomed a new Associate Director of Annual Giving, Stewardship and Research, providing augmented structure and focus for key initiatives.

As we look ahead, I am inspired by what we can accomplish together. The combined vision of our leadership, dedication of our volunteers, expertise of our faculty and staff, and tenacity of our students create an unstoppable force for positive change.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your generosity is building a foundation for thriving tomorrows, and together, we are making an incredible future possible for every Cobleskill Ag & Tech student.

With deep appreciation and Coby pride,



John J. Zacharek  
Vice President for Development  
Executive Director of the SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech Foundation



# Financial Summary

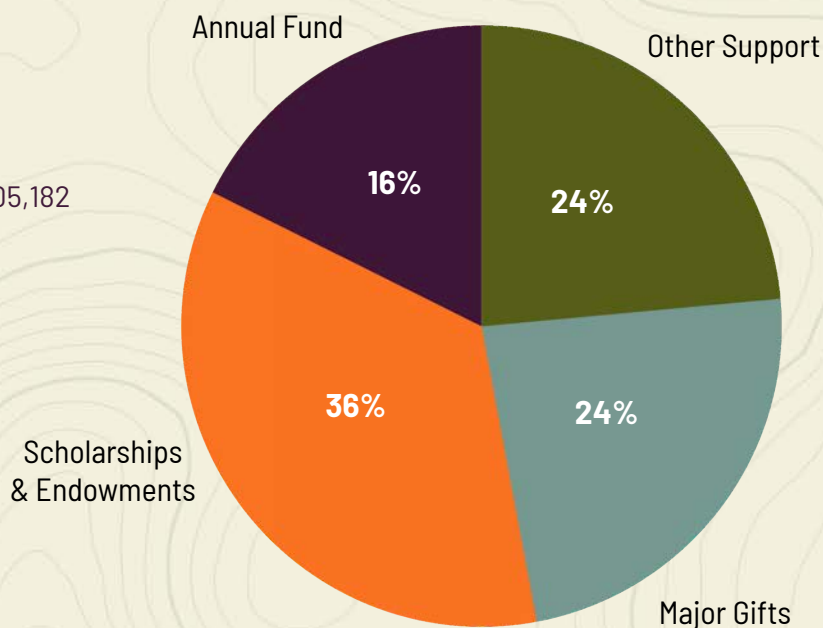
**Annual Fund:** \$539,117

**Scholarships & Endowments:** \$1,186,572

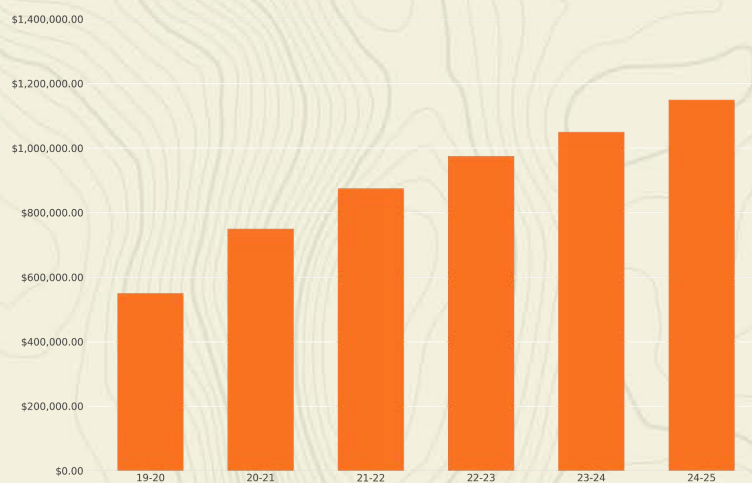
**Major Gifts:** \$794,884

**Other Giving (planned gifts, in-kind, etc.):** \$805,182

**Foundation Total: \$3,325,756**



## Support for Student Success



*The SUNY Cobleskill College Foundation is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation established in 1969 to develop additional resources to enable the college to provide quality educational experiences for its students. Scholarship funds constitute the largest single use of the assets of the Foundation, while resources also support applied learning opportunities and unique academic enrichment programs.*

*The Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors representing many diverse constituencies. Individuals from all professions, business, industry, civic and social organizations, and college alumni serve without compensation to assist the college in its mission to provide the highest quality of academic service.*

# Featured Corporate Partners

## **\$500,000 KeyBank Foundation Grant Launches Key2Employment Program**

A \$500,000 grant from the KeyBank Foundation helped launch the Key2Employment program, assisting individuals with neurodiversity to gain fulfilling, meaningful employment and careers, and helping to bridge the gap between the unique needs of learners and the demands of the job market. The program provides valuable skills training, work experience, and job placement assistance to young adults, increasing their employability and enhancing their quality of life. It also serves as a valuable resource for businesses and potential employers seeking to hire individuals with neurodiversity.

The funding has enabled the development of three specialized career tracks, with focus areas identified in Web Design and Coding, Business Management, and Animal Care Assistant.

These career areas are in high demand among employers, growing faster than the average compared to other job sectors, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This can lead to viable job placement prospects once a participant completes their enrolled job-ready training program.

Each career track provides program participants with job-ready technical skills, soft skills, and social skills over 12 months, resulting in participants being strong candidates for employment placement in their respective career track.

By year three of the program, the goal is to train, graduate, and secure job placement for 90 program participants (30 from each career track), demonstrating a "proof of concept" and providing evidence that this program model is successful, sustainable, and ready for expansion. The ultimate goal is for this program to become a model that others across the nation will emulate.



## **Thompson & Johnson Equipment Co. Establishes \$150,000 Scholarship Endowment**

A \$150,000 gift from Thompson & Johnson Equipment Co., Inc. (T&J) will go toward scholarships for students enrolled in SUNY Cobleskill's equipment-related programs. The gift will establish the endowed Thompson & Johnson Equipment Co. Scholarship at SUNY Cobleskill, which will help support and develop students interested in becoming technicians and service professionals in the materials handling industry. The fund will help build a consistent pipeline of new talent entering the workforce. T&J's generous gift will support, at minimum, two student scholarships each year.

T&J is a family-owned company that has been providing new and used materials handling equipment and forklift solutions to customers throughout the Northeast since 1954. The company is headquartered in East Syracuse, NY, and has additional locations throughout the state in Binghamton, Elmira, and a brand new facility in Schenectady.



## Lifetime Giving Society

(Individuals giving \$50,000 or more)

William & Susan Dake  
Arthur & Shirley Di Salvo  
Lois Golda  
Douglas S. Hammond  
Gerald & Nancy Hisert  
Marion "Jet" Jackson  
Nicholas J. Juried\*  
Kathleen N. King  
Charles\* & Kay Merrill  
Guy Garrett\* & Professor Emerita Anne C. Myers  
Richard A. Norton  
Perry D. Odak  
Harold\* & Josephine Ottman\*  
Marilyn Pointer  
Gerald E. Schopinsky  
Lee & Lisa Sickler  
Marion A. Terenzio & Patricia O'Connor  
John & Jennifer Zacharek

*\*Deceased*

## Heritage Society

(SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech is part of their estate plan)

Ann Marie Behling  
Denise S. Bukovan  
Valerie J. Casper  
Hazel Crosby  
Arthur and Shirley Di Salvo  
Russell Gay  
Joan T. Goodbody  
Carmen Greenwood  
Susan Jagendorf Sobierajski  
Gerald M. Mager  
Gerald Manning  
Joseph McCarthy  
Denise L. Megiel-Rollo  
Charles A. Moran  
Michael J. Murphy  
Francis S. Myers  
Glenn and Linda Osterhout  
Julie Palmatier  
Thomas Rehberg  
Rick D. Rudd and Donna Westfall-Rudd  
Drue Sanders  
Tracey L. Steadwell  
Kyle and Ann Tuttle

## Ambassador Society

(\$10,000 and up)

A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation  
Alta Equipment Company  
John and Michelle Brust  
The Columbus Foundation  
Core & Main  
Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation  
Dairy, LLC  
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.  
William and Susan Dake  
Delaware Engineering  
Fenimore Asset Management, Inc.  
Scott and Carrie Ferguson  
Peter J. Geiskopf  
Charles and Wendy Gilman  
Stephen A. Harris  
Gerald and Nancy Hisert  
KeyBank Foundation  
LaBella Associates PC  
The Merrill Family Foundation  
Milton CAT  
Michael O'Connor and Heather Malone Alexander  
PATH International  
Marilyn Pointer  
Thomas and Dusty Putnam  
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## Rolling Hills Society

(\$250 to \$499)

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# Athletic Highlights

## Overview

The 2024–2025 academic year marked a period of significant growth, achievement, and momentum for the SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech Fighting Tigers Athletics Program. As an affiliate member of the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) in track & field and cross country, and a core member of the North Atlantic Conference (NAC), Cobleskill Ag & Tech continued to raise its competitive profile while prioritizing student-athlete development, academic excellence, and community engagement.

This year featured standout team and individual performances, highlighted by national recognition in women's basketball, postseason competition in baseball and softball, and continued progress toward full SUNYAC membership in 2026–2027 — a milestone that will enhance competitive opportunities and institutional visibility alongside fellow future members SUNY Delhi and Alfred State.

## Team Highlights

### Women's Basketball

The Fighting Tigers women's basketball team delivered a historic season, finishing 24–5 overall and 11–2 in NAC play, building upon the program's tradition of conference dominance. The team ranked among the top NCAA Division III programs nationally in scoring offense, defensive efficiency, and overall team efficiency.

Signature victories — including decisive 79–49 and 83–46 wins over Lesley University — showcased Cobleskill's depth, balanced scoring, and senior leadership. The team's success positioned it for a deep NAC Tournament run and strengthened its candidacy for an NCAA Division III Regional berth.



## Athletic Highlights

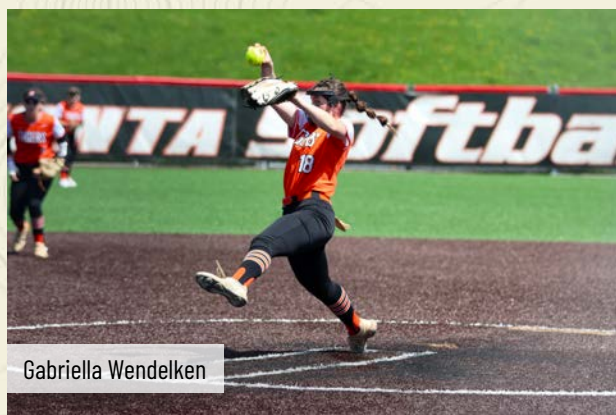
### Softball

The Fighting Tigers softball program achieved one of its most decorated seasons in program history. Ranked #1 in the NAC West Division Preseason Poll, Cobleskill posted a winning percentage above .600 and competed strongly against regional opponents including Union College (NY) and Johnson State.

The season culminated in record-breaking postseason honors, with seven Fighting Tigers named to the NAC First Team All-Conference, the most in program history. Cobleskill swept major conference awards, demonstrating the program's strength and depth:

- Gabriella Wendelken – NAC Rookie of the Year
- Mackenzie Wendelken – NAC Senior Scholar-Athlete of the Year and First Team All-Conference
- Aliyah Neeser – First Team All-Conference (37 RBIs, .358 AVG)
- Five additional Cobleskill student-athletes – First Team All-Conference (program-record seven total)
- Multiple Fighting Tigers earned NAC Player of the Week honors throughout the season

This unprecedented recognition reflects Cobleskill's emergence as a championship-caliber softball program within the NAC. The team's achievements were celebrated at the annual Coby's Athletic Awards Ceremony in May 2025.



### Baseball

Following a 2024 NAC West Division regular-season title (18-23 overall), the baseball team continued its upward trajectory in 2025 with significant growth on the mound and at the plate. Highlights included series splits against Lesley University – featuring a thrilling 6-5 win and dominant performances in rescheduled games (15-0 and 9-4). The team's balanced season reflected a strategic focus on player development and preparation for elevated SUNYAC competition.



## Athletic Highlights

### Individual Awards and Honors

Cobleskill student-athletes earned significant recognition across the NAC and beyond, including All-Conference selections, Player of the Year honors, Scholar-Athlete awards, and sportsmanship distinctions.

#### Women's Basketball

- Logan Thayne – NAC Player of the Year and First Team All-Conference (492 points, 327 rebounds, 50 blocks)
- Antonia May – First Team All-Conference
- Taylor Meacham – Senior Scholar-Athlete of the Year (3.78 GPA), Third Team All-Conference
- Cara Walker – Second Team All-Conference
- Amber MacNeil – Sportsmanship Team



Meacham



May

#### Softball

- Gabriella Wendelken – NAC Rookie of the Year
- Mackenzie Wendelken – NAC Senior Scholar-Athlete of the Year and First Team All-Conference
- Aliyah Neeser – First Team All-Conference
- Five additional Fighting Tigers – First Team All-Conference (program-record seven total)
- Multiple NAC Player of the Week awards throughout the season



Mackenzie Wendelken

#### Baseball

- Dylan Schwam – First Team All-Conference (Pitcher)
- Korin Laurilla – First Team All-Conference (Catcher)
- Zach Ducorsky – Second Team All-Conference (Outfielder)
- Jeffrey Gutierrez – Second Team All-Conference (Shortstop)
- Trevor Grieb – Sportsmanship Team

#### Additional Highlights

- Women's Soccer: First Team All-Conference – Jessica Carney and Kayleigh Bryant
- Men's Lacrosse: First Team All-Conference – Albert Sippio
- Women's Volleyball: First Team All-Conference – Emma Hinze



Carney

#### Academic Excellence

SUNY Cobleskill student-athletes continued to excel academically, with 49 student-athletes named to the NAC Fall All-Academic Teams. In addition, 17 student-athletes were inducted into the Chi Alpha Sigma National College Athlete Honor Society on April 8, 2025, recognizing their achievement of a minimum 3.4 GPA over four semesters and varsity letterwinner status. These honors underscore the department's commitment to the NCAA Division III philosophy of integrating athletics with the educational mission of the College.



# Facts & Figures

**Total Undergraduate Enrollment:** 1,824  
**Total Degree-Seeking Students:** 1,810  
**Associate Degree Students:** 355  
**Bachelor's Degree Students:** 1418  
**Certificate Students:** 37  
**Student/Faculty Ratio:** 16:1  
**Average Class Size:** 22

## Cost

### 2025-2026 In-State:

**Tuition:** \$7,070

**Fees:** \$1,698

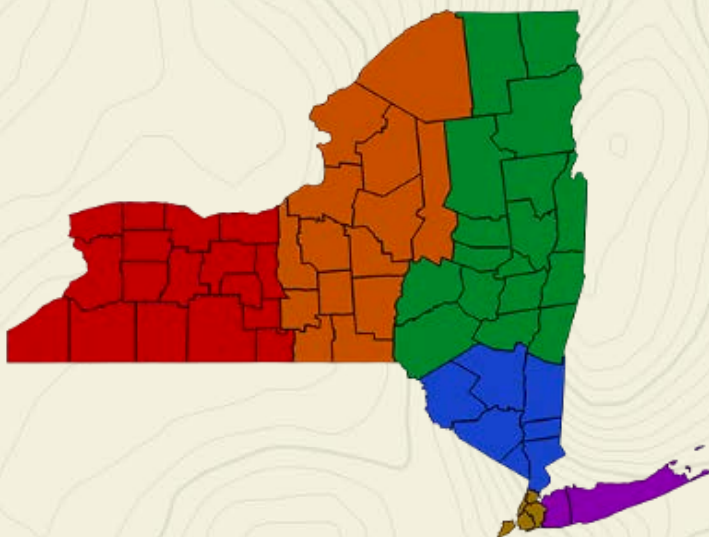
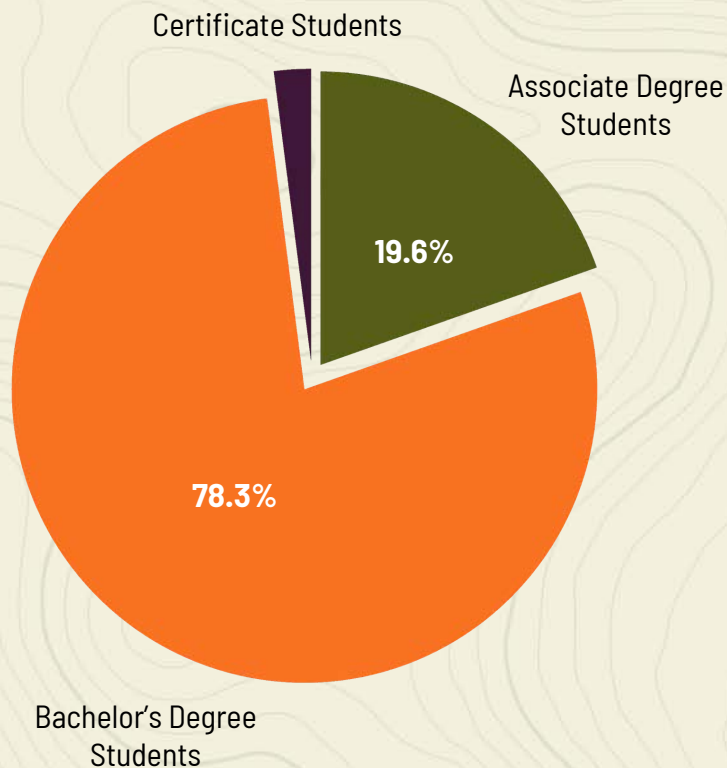
**Room and Board:** \$17,032

### 2025-2026 Out-of-State:

**Tuition (Bachelor's degree):** \$17,400

**Fees:** \$1,698

**Room and Board:** \$17,032



## Geographic Origins

### New York State

**Percent of Total Students from New York State:** 89%

**Percent of In-State Students from each region:**

**Capital Region:** 44%

**New York City:** 14%

**Hudson Valley:** 16%

**Central Region:** 12%

**Western Region:** 9%

**Long Island:** 6%

**States Represented:** 26

**Foreign Countries Represented:** 3