



THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education

Public Hearing

To

**Examine how Government, Educators, and Business
Leaders can be better partners**

**Testimony of
Interim Chancellor
Dr. John B. Clark**

Utica College

May 6, 2008

Good evening Chairman LaValle, Senators Griffo, Stavisky, and Valesky. First of all, I would like to thank you for your great support of The State University of New York, which is especially important in these difficult and challenging times. But it is indeed a pleasure to be with you today to examine how SUNY, government, and business can better partner to have a positive impact on economic development here in the Mohawk Valley and throughout our great state.

As you know SUNY is committed statewide in promoting the State's economy, and certainly sees economic development as essential to the services it provides the people of New York as well as its primary missions of education, research and healthcare.

**I am also pleased that many of our area SUNY presidents are with us tonight –
Dr. Neil Murphy – College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Dr. John Schwaller – Potsdam
Dr. Peter Spina – SUNYIT
Dr. Joe Kennedy – Canton
Dr. Ray Cross – Morrisville
Dr. Randy VanWagoner – Mohawk Valley Community College
Mr. Nicholas Laino – Herkimer Community College
and I look forward to their participation during our conversation this evening.**

I am also joined from System Administration by our Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, Dr. Dennis Golladay and Mr. James Campbell Director of Legislative Affairs.

The Mohawk Valley is served by SUNY (Cobleskill, Morrisville State College, SUNYIT, Fulton-Montgomery Community College, Herkimer County Community College and Mohawk Valley Community College). Institutions with a combined enrollment of 20,415 students and 2,975 employees on campuses that granted more than 3,407 degrees in the past year.

The combined budgets of the SUNY Mohawk Valley colleges total more than \$195.8 million of economic activity for this region.

In addition, these SUNY colleges are attracting significant research funding in computer and information science, online learning, semiconductor manufacturing technology, cyber security, information assurance, biotechnology, homeland defense, public safety, workforce development and other areas.

The Mohawk Valley is part of two larger regions - New York's Creative Core which includes 12 counties centered around Syracuse, and the 19-county, Albany-centered Tech Valley.

Key initiatives supporting the Creative Core's growth include:

- **Zoned sites and buildings with immediate development potential;**
- **Economic assistance packages and relocation incentives;**
- **Top-notch infrastructure, including high-speed telecommunications;**
- **Existing research and development for future technology transfer;**
- **Educational resources closely aligned with development opportunities.**

To this last point, I'd like to elaborate on some significant projects undertaken by our SUNY colleges that are promoting regional economic development in the Mohawk Valley.

Mohawk Valley EDGE (Economic Development Growth Enterprises Corporation) provides for economic development needs and business assistance in Oneida and Herkimer Counties.

A private, not-for-profit corporation, EDGE is an integral partner with the State University in our long-term effort to build public and private relationships to strengthen opportunities and open the door for new businesses and industries to locate and grow within the region.

Over the last decade, New York has made a statewide commitment to investing hundreds of millions of dollars to develop shovel-ready sites and state-of-the-art facilities for nanotechnology right here in Utica.

The Marcy NanoCenter, a 300-acre site on the campus of the State University of New York Institute of Technology (SUNY IT), is among those being promoted. Marcy NanoCenter is served by an abundant water supply, dual power sources and easy highway access, is properly zoned, and is virtually ready for new development. SUNY System is working with EDGE and SUNYIT to enter into a partnership to bring a viable company to the site.

SUNYIT is also home to a U.S. Department of Defense Reliability Information Analysis Center (RIAC), and the New York Nano-Bio-Molecular Information Technology Incubator (NYNBIT). Since its founding in 1966, SUNYIT has contributed to the success enjoyed by its more than 22,000 alumni. Through diverse institutional and governmental partnerships, it has become an important part of the local and regional economy.

As another example, in 2006, [Mohawk Valley Community College](#) opened an airframe and power plant mechanic training program next door to the Empire Aero Center's facility, to train the next generation of aviation personnel. The

facility's 2-1/4-mile runway and uncongested airspace will make it easy to move aircraft - and the people and products they carry - to and from the Mohawk Valley.

MVCC has trained hundreds of new workers in a variety of occupations and skill areas on behalf of the region's businesses and industries, through its successful Center for Community and Economic Development. The college also provides direct consulting assistance to businesses in the area.

Through the assistance of the SUNY Workforce Training Grants, MVCC has recently met the training needs of such area businesses as ConMed, Manth Brownell, Riverhawk, Rome Memorial, Sirius and Steel Treaters, training more than 400 workers.

SUNY is leading the way in the Mohawk Valley in preparing for these high impact programs for the region.

In conclusion, current budget issues aside and when our financial future is better, let me make one suggestion with the assistance of the Legislature, that can greatly assist SUNY in better serving the region.

A targeted program expansion of the monies earmarked for Community College Workforce Development contract training programs would significantly enhance business expansion and development opportunities.

With 30 community colleges competing for these funds, the cap is only \$100,000 per institution. As Vice Chancellor Golladay and our Community College Presidents present tonight can readily attest to, our Community colleges can have a greater impact to the business community than almost any other training provider.

In addition training dollars similar to those available to community colleges should also be made available to state-operated campuses in the area such as SUNYIT, ESF, Morrisville, Canton, Cobleskill and Potsdam.

Ongoing and continued efforts by SUNY to reach out to businesses and create networks that positively impact economic development, such as local opportunities emerging technologies/industries in green energy, brownfield remediation, nanotechnology, and other high-demand occupations, including consideration to expanding the Center of Excellence program to include the Utica/Rome area.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you here tonight about the positive effect SUNY institutions are having both statewide and here in the Mohawk Valley on economic development.

With state and legislative support, SUNY will continue to aggressively promote economic development in the regions in which our campuses are located.

Again thank you for your support of SUNY and the opportunity to speak tonight, thank you very much.