




Office of the President  
136 Clinton Point Drive, Plattsburgh, New York 12901  
P: 518.562.4100 F: 518.561.4890

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members of the Clinton Community College Family

**FROM:** John Kowal  
President 

**DATE:** January 10, 2024

**RE:** Planning for the Future of Clinton Community College

Dear Members of the Clinton Community College Family,

The dawning of a new year brings us an opportunity to both celebrate our collective strengths and set our sights on the future. Each new year brings with it a sense of renewal and possibility, a chance to both build on our past experiences and chart a course for the years ahead. At Clinton Community College, each year adds to a storied legacy and offers the opportunity to add new chapters to a history rich with achievement and progress.

Reflecting on our journey offers a chance to recognize both the challenges we've faced and the issues we've inherited, including enrollment declines over the past five years. While this trend is daunting, it also opens doors to innovative thinking and adaptation. It's during times of change, and often thanks to struggle, that our full potential shines through. We have witnessed remarkable achievements through these times, and notched achievements that stand as a testament to the resilience, dedication, and spirit of innovation that define our community.

As we look ahead, our immediate focus is on preparing a crucial report for our accrediting agency, Middle States, due on January 16th. This is more than just a routine procedural task; it is a vital assessment of our commitment to maintaining and improving the high-quality education that has long been the hallmark of our college. Recent feedback from Middle States highlighted the challenges we've faced over the past decade, which have only intensified over the past 18 months. Resource constraints have impacted our educational standards, and our response to these challenges will define our path forward.

Our team has worked hard to develop a strategic plan focused on boosting enrollment, but it's become clear that while our initial plan was ambitious and thoughtful, it would not be sufficient to bring in the resources necessary to sustain the educational quality we expect, and students and the community have the right to demand. Through the process of presenting this plan to both SUNY and the county, it became clear that this direction lacks needed support.

We must face this reality, pivot, and push forward with clarity and transparency.

It is time for a new direction. That direction must ensure our important academic programs and workforce development for our students can continue, grow and thrive. The direction must also have the support of our resources, our accreditor, our system and our county.

Accordingly, this month we will begin the crucial work which will include:

1. Planning for the relocation of our campus operations to a new, less costly location. Our county-owned buildings are expensive to maintain. This approach aims to reallocate resources toward educational excellence by investing in our faculty and our students. We view SUNY Plattsburgh as a natural ally in this endeavor and intend to engage them and the SUNY system in developing the logistics of the campus relocation.
2. Developing a comprehensive shared services agreement with SUNY Plattsburgh. With any shift of location comes the potential to share other costs and student services. Additionally, new services and options would be available to our students that we have not been able to afford for many years, such as housing and diverse meal options.

Our commitment to doing what is right for our students is unwavering. We will inform Middle States in our January report of this strategic pivot, seeking to minimize the risk of probation or the termination of our accreditation. We will begin the planning of this transformational, bold and innovative change in earnest to sustain our college and mission and to meet the needs of our students in the years ahead. The development of the shared services agreement and shift of operations will occur over time and in a well-informed and transparent manner. While the details have not yet been formulated, it's critical to understand that students will not see any disruption to their program at CCC and no programs will be eliminated as a result of the new direction.

We are committed to ensuring that every step we take is thoughtful, inclusive, and geared toward strengthening our institution for future generations. By working closely with you as well as with our students, alumni, and community members and our key partners at the county and state level, we will develop a sustainable strategy that enriches the educational experience we offer. Together, we will navigate these changes with a spirit of unity and a focus on securing a vibrant future for our college.

The recent announcement by the College of St. Rose of its closing, as well as program changes at SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Fredonia, provide stark reminders of the realities facing higher education today. We are determined to chart a course that secures a sustainable and vibrant future for Clinton Community College. We are fortunate to have a strong and stable partner, SUNY Plattsburgh, located nearby.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your unwavering commitment and support. It is only through our collective efforts that we will navigate these challenging waters and emerge stronger.

Together, let us embrace this period of transformation with courage and conviction, forging a path that honors our rich legacy and propels us toward a future filled with promise.

**A forum for faculty and staff will be held today, January 10, at 1:00 PM in the Stafford Theatre. Your attendance will be greatly appreciated.**