



Higher Education Challenged

Robert Prezant, Provost

Having just returned from the NECHE conference in Boston, I was struck by the many sessions that, regardless of the primary theme, held an underlying current of enhanced concern for the state of higher education. Even Scott Jaschik (of Inside Higher Ed fame), who annually offers his “Top 10 Issues in Higher Education” with a hint of optimism, openly bemoaned his deeper worries ranging from the serious impact on college campuses of the Israel-Hamas war to the growing effrontery of some politicians who are inserting themselves ever more deeply into our classrooms and campuses. The temperature of what should be civil and honest conversation seems to often boil over as passions flare, careful thinking subsides, and we fail to appreciate other perspectives.

In this issue of SCAN we proudly showcase the remarkable work of our faculty, staff and students. The recent FYRE event allowed our first-year students to display the deep thinking, inquisitiveness, and in some cases exceptional passion that they bring to us. Part of our job as faculty, staff and administrators is to nurture these qualities, to ensure tomorrow’s scholars have perspective, that they understand the value of recognizing there is always another “side”. In these complex times we see the importance of being able to hold multiple truths simultaneously and pursue honest and reflective discussions. We in higher education must model these traits. If we don’t, I worry where our still impressionable students will learn how to manage the political, social, and environmental challenges we face today and going forward. The recent congressional testimonies by “ivy school” leaders demonstrate the depth of polarization nationally and the lack of preparedness of higher education to deal with the most sensitive, political, and divisive issues. The hearings themselves, and now the proposed investigations, expose the schism created when politics, through higher education’s own inability to figure out how to respond to contentious national and global issues, inserts itself into the academy.

Southern should be proud of how we’ve tried to navigate difficult issues over the years, never perfect but always with an effort to respect all players and not be lured into those verbal traps that stem from biased and all too often false information.

Higher education needs to remain framed within honest conversations that retain respect, understanding, and concern for all humanity. These tenets should define how we seek to educate (in and out of the classroom), define who we are as an institution, and reflect who we seek to be individually and in sight of our students.

During this holiday season I know the many national and global challenges weigh heavily upon us and carry over into our professional and private lives. These difficult times are cyclic and, unfortunately, will not end as things “calm”. With that, I’m proud to be immersed within our Southern community, an institution that seeks to hold social justice and respect as a core values within our own microcosm – please share these values widely for it is these that this season is all about. Wishing all of you a peaceful, joyous, healthy, and happy holiday and (soon to be) new year.

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Academic Affairs' Major Mysteries



Who in Academic Affairs received a degree in a field that equips them with a deep understanding of financial management, resource allocation, and data-driven decision making? Did you know that one of our staff members had the pleasure of taking courses with current faculty members Leon Brin, Maria Diamantis, Joseph Fields, and Jooyoun Hong? These clues and more were featured in Academic Affairs' contribution to the week of welcome. Coupled with mood music and snacks, students were given clues to match each staff member with their respective major/college degree. **Dominik Aspin** and **Christa Lehr** were the only two students to identify all ten matches and received Barnes and Noble gift cards for their achievement.

Grateful by the Plateful: Academic Support Breakfast

On a beautiful day in October, support staff who oversee academic departments and divisions gathered in the newly opened School of Business building. They came together with staff from Academic Affairs for a celebratory breakfast. The Provost personally thanked everyone in attendance for their continued efforts, as our secretaries and admin keep SCSU afloat. Beyond the delicious breakfast and pleasant ambiance, the annual gathering holds a deeper significance - it serves as an important reminder to the staff that their contributions are noticed and celebrated.



Selfie break with Joann Quinde, Cyndi Gabris, Jackie Isabella, & Priscilla DiPadova



1st row from left: Robert Prezant, Maryanne Boyen, Priscilla DiPadova, Mary Woodruff, Joann Quinde, Amanda Ward, Melissa Jensen, Nicole DeWitt, Linda Robinson, Kate Willette, Cheryl Rich, Amanda Lowe, Lydia Vega, Kay Opalenik. 2nd row from left: Karyn Watts, Shante Nichols, Cheryl Padilla, Rosa Clough, Helen Keegan, Debi Tkacs, Sarah Backus, Rosemarie Hummel, Cyndi Gabris, Beatrice Torres. 3rd row from left: Jackie Isabella, Jackie DeFrancesco-McGrath, Becky Griffin, Dawn Grimes, Stephanie Ortiz, Teneka Mills

Welcome to the Administrative Wing



We welcomed **Dr. Dwayne Smith** as our interim President at the beginning of the summer. We look forward to the new heights Owls will soar under his leadership. To see all of the wonderful things Dr. Smith has already been up to, visit <https://www.southernct.edu/president/news>



Leanne Pedroso joins the Academic Affairs team as our newest student worker. Actively involved in many campus communities, Leanne was also recently elected to the Student Government Association. Leanne is majoring in Computer Science with a concentration in Cybersecurity and has quickly proven she is an asset to the Academic Affairs office.



George Morgan started in November as Dr. Smith's presidential assistant. He is professional, approachable, and shows sincere interest in getting to know his colleagues at SCSU. We are grateful for his expertise in the President's office and anticipate many opportunities to collaborate.

Celebration of Excellence

Linda Robinson, Coordinator of Academic Resources

Southern takes great pride in recognizing its faculty for their exemplary achievements in the areas of teaching, research, advising, service, grants, and social justice. A beautiful ceremony took place on Friday, October 6th in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom to do just that.

The event was kicked off with a welcome by Dr. Dwayne Smith followed by the presentation of awards lead by Dr. Robert Prezant. Our first award was for the prestigious CSU Professor, awarded to Dr. David Pettigrew of Philosophy. Dr. Rai Kathuria, System Provost of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, gave the proclamation, and Dr. Bruce Kalk also provided some personal congratulatory remarks in honor of Dr. Pettigrew.



Dr. Perouse Harvey accepts her Social Justice Community Award from Dr. Tyree

The following were all the awards and recipients who were recognized at the 2023 ceremony:

- CSU Professor, **Dr. David Pettigrew** of Philosophy
- Social Justice Community Award–Outstanding Faculty, **Dr. Ebony Perouse-Harvey** of Special Education
- Board of Regents Teaching Award, **Dr. Sarah Roe** of History
- Board of Regents Adjunct Teaching Award, **Prof. Renee Harlow** of the Honors College
- Board of Regents Research Award, **Dr. Dana Casetti** of Physics
- Faculty Scholar Award, Co-Awardees: **Dr. Amanda Bertana** of Sociology and **Dr. Andrew Richmond** of English
- Joan Finn Faculty Research Fellowships, **Dr. Svenja Gusewski** and **Dr. Julian Smith** of Communication Disorders
- Mid-Level Faculty Research Fellowship, **Dr. Yulei Pang** of Mathematics
- Senior-Level Faculty Research Fellowship, **Dr. Michael Rogers** of Anthropology
- Robert Jirsa Service Award, **Prof. Cindy Simoneau** of Journalism
- Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award, **Dr. Anuli Njoku** of Public Health
- J. Philip Smith Award for Outstanding Teaching (F/T), **Dr. Andrew Richmond** of English
- J. Philip Smith Award for Outstanding Teaching (P/T), **Prof. Preethi Varghese-Joseph** of the Center for Pre-Professional Programs

The beautiful slides that were presented for each faculty awardee were ones that each member created themselves illustrating the work for which they were recognized. The presenters in most cases were the faculty members' department chairs or key individuals overseeing their award selection.

The event was a truly joyous occasion which allowed time for enjoying a tasty mediterranean luncheon prepared by Sodexo and camaraderie among colleagues and friends. We are all so incredibly proud of these very talented faculty members at SCSU!

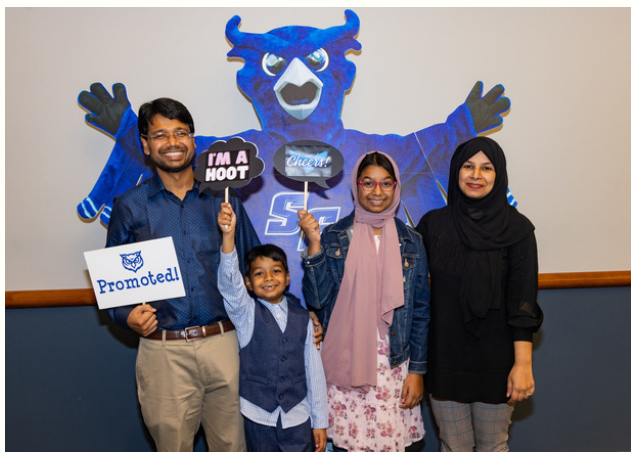


Pictured from left: Provost Prezant, CSU Provost Rai Kathuria, CSU Professor David Pettigrew, Dean Bruce Kalk



Pictured from left: Provost Prezant, Prof. Preethi Varghese-Joseph, Chair Larry Brancazio

31 Faculty Recognized at Promotion & Tenure Reception



MD S. Hossain and family pose with Otis the Owl

Under the watchful eyes of Otis the Owl, faculty and staff gathered in the ballroom on the evening of Nov. 6th to celebrate faculty members who received promotion and/or tenure for the 23-24 academic year. Guests and honorees were greeted by a beautiful display of baked goods and coffee, only slightly upstaged by an array of framed biosketches. These commemorative biosketches are a new, and already beloved, addition to the promotion and tenure event. The creation of the gallery was a team effort. What started as an idea from the Provost in an Academic Affairs meeting became reality thanks to the submission of the thoughtful write-ups from colleagues, updated portraits from university photographer Isabel Chenoweth, and clever design by MaryPat Caputo and Marylou Conley in ICM.

With no formal program, guests were encouraged to mingle, browse the gallery, have a sweet treat, and strike a pose with Otis at the photo booth. Provost Prezant spoke and emphasized the importance of faculty in a time when higher education is undervalued. Dr. Smith followed with a toast, sharing his appreciation of the hard work and dedication of the Southern community. Congratulations to all our promoted and tenured faculty (below) and thank you to all who helped make this reception a success.

Sahar Al Seesi (CSC): Tenure, **Charles E. Baraw** (ENG): Promoted to Full Professor, **Ericka C. Barnes** (CHE): Promoted to Full Professor, **Kristen M. Borgognone** (NUR): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Kristi V. Maynard** (NUR): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Jeremy N. Chandler** (ART): Promoted to Full Professor, **Rex Gilliland** (PHI): Promoted to Full Professor, **Seungmin Han** (MGT/IB): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Chelsea C. Harry** (PHIL): Promoted to Full Professor, **MD S. Hossain** (CSC): Promoted to Full Professor, **Dushmantha H. Jayawickreme** (EGMS): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Angela M. Lopez-Velasquez** (SPE): Promoted to Full Professor, **Tarah Loy-Ashe** (HLS): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Venezia H. Michalsen** (SOC): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Joseph P. Milone** (RTSM): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Dina L. Moore** (PSY): Promoted to Full Professor, **Mina Park** (BIS): Promoted to Full Professor, **Mark A. Pisano** (BIS): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Thomas A. Radice** (HIS): Promoted to Full Professor, **Regine E. Randall** (EDU): Promoted to Full Professor, **Loida Reyes** (SWK): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Andrew M. Richmond** (ENG): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Dana L. Rogers** (CMS): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Katarzyna Toskin** (BIS): Tenure, **Antoinette V. Towle** (NUR): Promoted to Full Professor, **Christopher V. Trombly** (EDD): Tenure, **Lauren T. Tucker** (SPE): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenure, **Junhong Wang** (MKT): Tenure, **Miaowei Weng** (MKT): Promoted to Full Professor, **Hao Wu** (CSC): Promoted to Associate Professor



At left: One of 31 commemorative biosketches on display
At right: A sparkling cheers among faculty

Moving Gayly Forward: LGBTQ+ Leaders in Higher Education

Jackie Isabella, Administrative Operations Assistant

Thanks to the sponsorship of DEI, I was able to attend the 2023 LGBTQ+ Leaders in Higher Education Conference held here at SCSU mid-October. Jonathan Rossings's (Gonzaga Univ.) *Setting the Stage: Playful and Improvisational Leadership* was a stellar opening. Jonathan skillfully and playfully led us through community building activities that were authentic, creative, and fun. It truly did set the stage and left me with helpful tools to easily connect with folx for the duration of the conference. I plan on using similar strategies for upcoming sessions within the Administrative Enrichment Series to strengthen our growing bonds.



Remington College staff get a personalized tour of the beautiful grounds at SCSU. Pictured from left: Kristopher Caram, Sarah Campbell, Juan Silva-Soto, Jackie Isabella, Joshua Bowers, Brandon Shedron, and Heather Hensell

All the sessions I attended were thought-provoking. I enjoyed the passionate discussions about how LGBTQ+ identities help drive positive change in institutions.

During *LGBTQ Identity as an Asset to Transform Your Institution*, I asked "How can we create authentic spaces for students, faculty, and staff when universities are so driven by capitalism and the bottom line is always funding?" With students of all backgrounds plagued with debt and hardship, the focus on enrollment can be overwhelming. This question went unanswered, but it was clear I was not alone in feeling this way as a sea of heads bobbed in agreement.

The most rewarding outcome for me is the relationships I was able to form during the three-day conference. With these newfound connections, I have already begun exchanging ideas with Higher Ed leaders from across the U.S. to make the work I do here at Southern even better.

Undergraduate Open House

After many months of thoughtful planning with the Admissions Events Committee, the Undergraduate Open House was a great success! The event saw an approximate 60% show rate, with 435 students and a total of 1300 guests attending. The Academic Fair was bustling from 10:15 through 12:00 and featured a myriad of creative displays and friendly faces. One attendee wrote "We have been on several campus visits and found yours to be top notch. The academic fair was something that no other college provided. I loved how the campus center was clearly devoted to the Open House." Thank you to everyone who volunteered their Saturday to greet prospective students!



Pictured from left: Jackie Isabella with Otis the Owl, Larry Nye with a theatrical display, Michael Schindel representing International Education



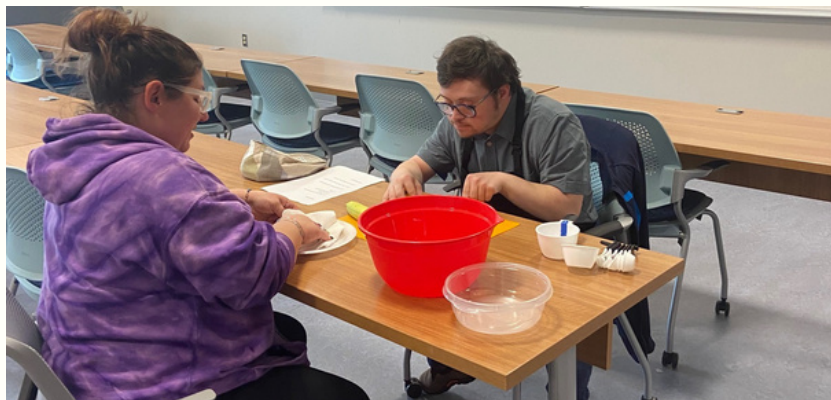
What's Cooking at HHS?

Maryjo Archambault, RTSM Associate Professor, Coordinator of Recreational Therapy Programs

Recreation Therapy senior, Anna Cenzalli, created a cooking group for individuals with developmental disabilities this semester as part of an independent study. The program, Cooking at College, is a nine week program that began the last week of September and is running until the week before Thanksgiving. Throughout the semester, participants learned a variety of cooking skills as well as kitchen safety in the new Culinary room in the Health and Human Service Building. Participants made grocery lists and figured out the budget for several of the recipes. Pancakes, banana peanut butter muffins, pizza and seven-layer taco dip with homemade tortillas were a few of the menu items.

According to Anna, the objective of Cooking at College was to teach participants the steps and skills to create a variety of recipes at home. Graduate assistant, Dacie McCloud, and several undergraduate students in therapeutic recreation volunteered throughout the program.

If you're interested in learning more about recreation therapy or are aware of participants who could benefit from our programming, please reach out to MaryJo Archambault, coordinator for both the graduate and undergraduate recreation therapy programs: archambaulm2@southernct.edu



Top: students oversee participants in the kitchen Bottom: Marissa Colafati demonstrates

Anna Cenzalli lends a hand

Hats off to...



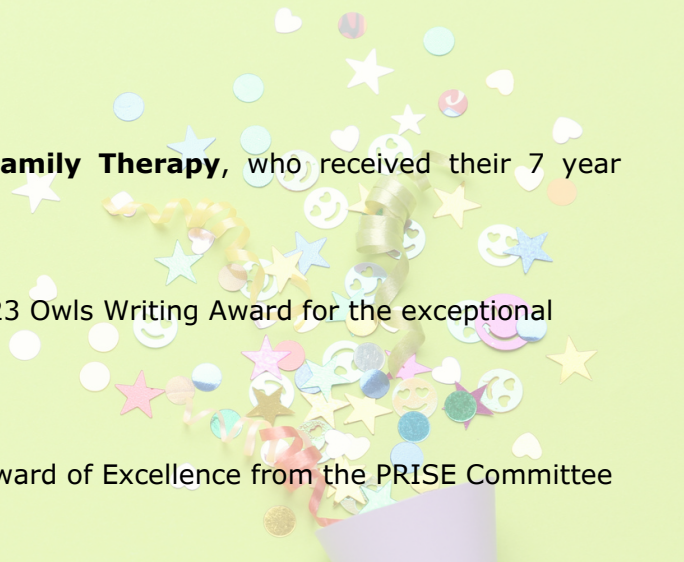
The Department of Marriage and Family Therapy, who received their 7 year COAMFTE Accreditation



N'zyia Patterson, who received the 2023 Owls Writing Award for the exceptional essay titled "Perspective"



Jackie Isabella, who received a Staff Award of Excellence from the PRISE Committee



Owl Skills Development Reflection

Aaron Lapham, Student Worker and Marketing Major



As a student worker in the Office of Academic Affairs, I was provided the opportunity to pilot the OCPD (Office of Career and Professional Development) Owl skills Development modules. My fellow student workers and I considered this a unique chance to provide our input, as we knew this program would be shared with the next generation of Southern students. Throughout the fall semester, I completed the modules at my own pace, whenever I had downtime in the office. I can honestly say I gained a great bit of knowledge.

Opening the classroom, what grabbed my attention was the clean interface. I have firsthand experience and there is nothing worse than an unorganized Blackboard classroom. The OCPD did an excellent job of breaking down all the information into 8 separate modules. The modules strike the right balance of being information dense while not overwhelming the student. When you first click into one of the eight modules you're promptly met with a clear objective and the assignments to be completed. The due dates are also clearly seen under the grades tab, making staying on track easy. Another distinguishing characteristic is that each module has an additional resources tab, enabling the student to use the resources they find relevant.

The program tells a cohesive story. In Module 1 you start with exploring potential majors, and by module 8 you feel ready to interview for a full-time position or internship. The modules feature short quizzes and informative resources such as videos, presentations, and articles. What is impactful is that you get actual feedback from Career professionals. You'll submit and receive a breakdown on your resume, E-mail communications, and LinkedIn profile.

The course does more than just prepare you for a career but offers a holistic program that will set you up for success outside of it. There is extensive training on subjects such as mental health, personal finance, and leadership. And that is just to name a few! The program encourages you to step outside of your comfort zone. Do not worry, there is training on how to network and meet new people.

I would highly recommend that the Owl success program become a part of the curriculum here at Southern. Between course work and extracurriculars, students often push career development aside. By awarding students' credits, I believe the student body would be more confident and prepared to enter the ever-changing workforce. I encourage future students to ask questions, participate and interact with this program fully, as I believe it will put them on a path towards success.

For more information about the Owl Skills Development program visit <https://inside.southernct.edu/careers/faculty-staff>

Early College Applicant Yield

Of the 637 courses taken by Early College students this fall, only about half are taken by high school seniors. The most common question related to the accelerated growth in our Early College program is, "how many of those students come to Southern?" The chart below was first developed this past spring, when 94% of EC high school seniors submitted an application to Southern. We anticipate seeing a spike in this year's numbers closer to January 1st.

	Eligible Seniors	Application Submitted	Accepted	Deposited
Fall 2023	311	291	269	63
Fall 2024*	329	237	51	TBD

*These numbers are being generated weekly until May 1, campus notification day

Women and Gender Studies Showed Up at NWSA 2023!

Tricia Lin, WGS Chairperson

The Women's & Gender Studies at SCSU and affiliated faculty and students had a robust showup and attendance at the 2023 National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference, held in Baltimore, Maryland, last month: November 26-29, with a total of (nearly) 2,000 people in attendance. There were altogether 22 of us: graduate students (in WGS, SOC, MFT, etc.), alumnae, faculty (full- and part-time), and staff. This is, in our memory, the largest group/delegation from WGS and SCSU attending the NWSA conference! Some of us were part of the organizing of the conference. Many presented at the conference. (Please see the list below.) All of us had a fantastic time connected and reconnected with one another—and expanded our connections nationally. We returned with a lot of high energy, fabulous notes, and great ideas for our future participation at an NWSA.

Presenters from SCSU include: **Cindy Cardozo** (Staff of DEI/SCSU WGS MA '24) "Redefining Ourselves: Feminist Resistance through Collaborative Autoethnography," presented with **Le'Asia Gaskin**, and **Sierra Nastasi**; **Dr. Siobhan Carter-David** (Professor of History/WGS): speaker at "Feminist Theories of Embodiment and Adornment"; **Dr. Marian Evans** (Professor of Public Health) and **Dr. Brandon Hutchinson** (Associate Professor of English) "Spaces to Heal for BIPOC Women in Academia: Providing the Table and Seats", "Rest Up' Cause Healing is Our Birthright. A Circle for BIPOC Women; **Dr. Sobeira Latorre** (Professor of Spanish/World Languages & Literatures) "Banned! Latina/x YA Authors Transgressing Curricular Boundaries"; **Dr. Yi-Chun Tricia Lin** (Chair/Professor, WGS; NWSA 2023 Conference Co-chair; Past President of NWSA):Co-organizer/co-moderator, Plenary "Bodies, Borders & Bridges: Transnational Feminist Solidarities", Speaker as NWSA Past President, Women of Color Leadership Project Pre-Conference, Moderator, "A North American Asian Feminist Pedagogical Workshop: Re-Sisters Re-Seeding Growing, and Embodying Joy", Presenter, "Feminist and Queer Critiques of Multiple Empires: A Conversation", Advisory Member, NWSA Governing Council (Board) Meeting ; **Maura Jo Lynch** (Professor of WGS) speaker at "Inclusive Language and Visual Representation: Beyond Feminist Essentialism in Childbirth Education and Gestational Care"; **Luciana McClure** (WGS '22; Adjunct Faculty of Arts Administration and WGS), "Keep it Nasty: A History of the Collective Nasty Women Connecticut"; **Ellen Petersen** (WGS '22), "Women in Science: The Struggle for Equality and the Search for Social Justice"

Leyana Thurston (WGS '22, MFT '26) shares "My experience at the NWSA 2023 conference was enlightening. I was especially moved by the Black female panelist that discussed their experiences with regards to intra-racism. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Kimberly Crenshaw, among others spoke very candidly about demanding respect for black women within the black community. I appreciated when they discussed the traumas that they have endured at the hands of some black men, and that they were often accused by the black community, of tarnishing the reputation of the black male. I also appreciated when the black female hip hop panelist discussed the maltreatment that they received as black women within the hip hop music industry. I especially loved that the hip hop artists that I idolized when I was growing up, such as Monie Love and several other artists, were present.



Pictured from left: Danielle Campbell, Cindy Cardozo, Sierra Nastasi, Yi-Chun Tricia Lin, Le'Asia Gaskin, Kelly Curtis, Mike Sanger, Madi Day

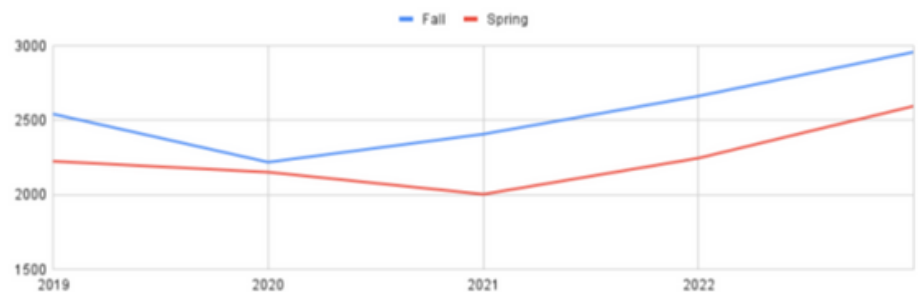
Monie Love has always been a hip hop artist that projected positivity and black female empowerment through her artistry. I felt like a kid again when I was in her presence, looking up too and admiring someone who encouraged me to both demand and command respect as a young black woman. I appreciated such openness and honesty from these black women, because oftentimes, abuse within the black community towards black women often is overlooked and dismissed. These powerful black women gave me a sense of hope, validation and reassurance that I am not alone with regards to bringing about awareness within the black community about the emotional, physical and sexual violence against black women."

Academic Program Planning: A Fall 2023 Approach with an Eye on Our Enrollment Future

Robert Prezant, Provost

Southern Connecticut State University has strong processes to review and evaluate our many degree programs, albeit only a handful of departments are reviewed annually. In light of the looming serious budget deficit, the Board of Regents (BOR) decided that a different type of analysis, one based heavily on enrollment metrics over time, was called for. Thus, in June 2023 the BOR for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (System) passed a resolution that sought to have all academic departments at all of the CSCU institutions, including Southern Connecticut State University, undertake a process to better understand all of our curricular programs with an emphasis on recruitment, retention, persistence, graduation rates, and class fills over time. Southern picked up the gauntlet of this charge and with a very short timeline and under the auspices and directions of their individual deans, each academic department, led by their chairs, undertook the “academic program planning” (APP) process.

This process explored each of our degree-granting programs, examining issues associated with what might be perceived as under-enrolled programs, assessed specific enrollment trajectories and trends within programs, and considered approaches where greater efficiencies and enhanced enrollments might be found.



The results of this process were approximately 700 pages of insightful information, replete with relevant assessments, based on best available data that included years’ worth of enrollment information. The massive report from the departments and the deans offered insight into trends within individual department majors and allowed each College/School or Department to offer and consider efforts and plans for enhanced enrollment practices and optimization of goals, the latter mostly associated with our most recent strategic plans. The APP final document included a comprehensive list of enrollment strategies determined during our lengthy strategic planning process and emerging from our several planning working groups. This APP process, in fact, gave departments a chance to align their own internal histories and plans with that recently created university strategic plan.

The department analyses and reviews that looked at historic trends, were essential to best understand current enrollment status and to help consider best future practices where enrollment challenges were found. Departments were able to contemplate program revisions, current practices that focus on recruitment and retention, and examine possible hurdles that inhibited student progress. The APP also offered external readers an opportunity to better understand the many successes, creative practices, and challenges inherent to Southern and higher education today. Together with our even deeper periodic department reviews (StAR), the hope is we are all better prepared to look forward to breaking through many inhibitory practices and bring new approaches and programs to the forefront as needed.

As Southern now comes together to enact the enrollment growth proposed in our newest strategic plan, the APP can in many ways act as a guideline, a guideline that offers broad collective options as well as more focused disciplinary options to successfully reach our 10,000-student goal. The APP offers areas where we can find greater efficiency but also areas where enhanced investment might reap stronger returns. Our Department Chairs and faculty are to be congratulated for the amazing speed at which this undertook this enterprise that got us to this launching pad. We are just at the start of this enterprise but if we follow our own APP-induced approaches and plans alongside the deep knowledge we hold from our regular departmental reviews, our new enrollment goals remain fully in reach and our strategic planning aspirations can be fulfilled.

