



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

River Journal: SUNY Westchester Community College Expands Program Proven to Improve Student Support, Retention and Completion



SUNY WCC President Belinda Miles, Assemblymembers

MaryJane Shimsky and Dana Levenberg, SUNY Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Transformational Initiatives Casey O'Brien, and representatives from the offices of Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assemblymember Amy Paulin and Senator Shelly Mayer join Viking ROADS students and their counselors on the SUNY WCC Valhalla campus to announce the expansion of the program. Photo credit: SUNY Westchester Community College

State and local lawmakers, students and SUNY officials today joined **SUNY Westchester Community College** leaders in highlighting the benefits and growth of Viking ROADS, which is based on the transformative CUNY ASAP model that has been widely demonstrated to increase student completion rates and narrow opportunity gaps. Also announced was the expansion of ASAP (Advancing Success in Associate Pathways) and ACE (Advancing Completion through Engagement) to 25 SUNY campuses statewide that opted in to the

ASAP/ACE program.

Viking ROADS (Resources for Obtaining Associate Degrees and Success) is an opportunity program that helps motivated students graduate with an Associate Degree in three years or less. It provides wraparound support to ensure student academic success, retention, and on-time graduation. An array of resources and services – including funding to help cover textbooks, transportation, and other costs of attendance, academic assistance, comprehensive personalized advisement, and career development activities – help eligible students overcome barriers that can prevent them from achieving their goals and obtaining a degree. The program has been proven to enable more students to persist and take more credits than they would have otherwise.

ASAP|ACE expanded to the SUNY system in Spring 2024, supported by an historic demonstration of state-level support championed by Governor Hochul in the \$75 million SUNY Transformation Fund and supplemented by private grants. In Fall 2024, SUNY ASAP|ACE will enroll 4,200 students. At SUNY WCC, this state-level funding combined with grants from the Robin Hood Foundation and other private donors has enabled enrollment in Viking ROADS to expand to more than 550 this year, up from 101 students in its initial cohort in 2018.

“SUNY Westchester Community College is proud of the role it has played in piloting this program in the SUNY system, and we are excited to be a part of the expansion of the ASAP/ACE model across 25 SUNY campuses,” said **Dr. Belinda S. Miles**, President of SUNY Westchester Community College. “Viking ROADS is a program that has been proven to increase student success, especially among those students who need that support. This is a truly transformative program, which will not only improve the futures of these students, but the families and communities that rely on their success.”

“Student success drives everything we do at SUNY, and we are committed to meeting students and their families where they are to ensure they thrive,” said **SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr.** “SUNY takes pride in scaling ASAP and ACE as proven models for student success across our campuses and we look forward to continuing to invest in the next generation of SUNY graduates at SUNY Westchester Community College and across the system.”

Participating students represent a wide range of backgrounds, interests, and experience, but all share a recognition in the importance of higher education and achieving a degree to achieve their personal and professional goals. See here for more information:

www.sunywcc.edu/viking-roads.

“As someone who deeply values education, I know how critical it is to ensure that every student has the resources and support they need to succeed,” said Senate Majority Leader **Andrea Stewart-Cousins**. “Last year the Senate secured an additional \$75 million for the SUNY Transformation Fund to enhance innovative programs and better meet 21st century demands of students and the workforce. Today we are celebrating that, through this investment, the Viking ROADS program will expand to reach more students, ensuring they not only start their educational journey but finish it with the credentials they need for success.”

“As a WCC fan, I am especially pleased that SUNY Westchester Community College has successfully expanded its Viking ROADS program with help from the historic SUNY Transformation Fund,” said State Senator Shelley B. Mayer. “I was pleased to support this critical funding in the State Budget. Programs such as Viking ROADS do great work helping students stay on track and accomplish their goals. I thank President Miles and the faculty and staff of SUNY WCC for their commitment to every student’s future.”

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