



## YEAR FIVE REPORT: Toward a Splendid College Strategic Plan 2016-2026



1. At NVCC, students achieve their goals.
2. NVCC faculty and staff make a difference—at the college, in the community, in their fields of study, and in the lives of students.
3. NVCC programs meet and beat academic and industry standards.
4. NVCC is an engine of change within Waterbury, Danbury, and the broader community.
5. NVCC is an effective, performance-based institution.

# COMMUNITY REPORT

JUNE 2021

This year will forever be known as “the year of COVID,” a year in which “social distancing,” “quarantine,” and “virtual learning” became part of our daily vocabulary, as did “unprecedented,” “innovate,” and “you’re muted!”

It was a year that changed the ways we learn, work, and communicate. Faculty, staff, and students quickly shifted their teaching, advising, and learning to an online modality, and in so doing demonstrated not only their resilience and persistence, but also their flexibility and creativity! At NVCC, the limits imposed by a virtual world became an opportunity for innovation, and with the support of our technical wizards in IT, Educational Technology, and our Digital Arts & Technology program, an abundance of student activities and performances kept the true spirit of NVCC alive.

To strengthen communication and maintain transparency, our leadership team held eight Virtual Town Halls, which have been so productive that we will continue holding them.

It was also a year in which the combination of COVID and increased violence against members of our diverse communities brought into sharp relief the gross inequities, injustices, and systemic racism in our society. NVCC has for many years focused on diversity and equity, but this year sparked greater urgency for us to take concrete action. Through informative, thought-provoking events, our Social Justice Series, the Center for Racial Dialogue and Communal Transformation, and the Faculty Senate’s newly formed IDEAL Committee remind us that we all have a place at the table to listen, ask questions, disagree, and perhaps experience some “aha!” moments. They emphasize that the more we learn and know, the more powerful our voices can be! We continue to strengthen our efforts to close the equity achievement gap at the college and ensure an inclusive environment where all feel like they belong.

As you peruse this year’s Community Report, remember that while this is a substantial list of events and achievements, it includes only the highlights of a year that emphasizes how ideas, innovation, and progress do not happen in isolation. The most effective teams bring together minds from diverse backgrounds, cultures, races, genders, and ages who bring with them different values, different questions, and different perspectives; together we create a community that embraces and leverages our minds and work toward a greater good for our students.

The year of Covid has transformed us, and our students have shown us, more than ever, how brave, how tenacious, and how passionate they are about learning. They continue to offer us and to be the reason for us to have hope.

I am grateful for our NVCC community and our shared commitment to working together, to helping our students reach their goals, and to moving forward with enthusiasm for possibilities.



Lisa Dresdner, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Naugatuck Valley Community College  
Waterbury and Danbury Campuses

## STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

Academic Year 20-21 proved to be a challenging year! Despite the pandemic, online classes, virtual technology, masks and social distance mandates, our students prevailed. At Honors Night on May 25, NVCC awarded 243 scholarships and awards supported by the NVCC Foundation. Commencement was held on campus this year and on May 26 and 27, NVCC awarded more than 850 degrees and certificates to students.



NVCC's 2021 graduates also include 11 Danbury High School students who have earned two NVCC degrees and 16 certificates among them through Danbury Early College Opportunity (DECO). Ten of these students will also graduate from high school next month.

The National Student Nurses Association annual conference was held virtually this April. Three students successfully wrote a resolution in support of designating NVCC student nurses as essential workers, which was adopted by the House of Delegates and will help steer the work of the organization over the next year. Two NVCC students had an abstract accepted for the Poster Session in support of the resolution and helped communicate the components of the resolution which aided in its swift adoption.



Students in the Radiologic Technology program competed in a Kahoots review session with the Connecticut Society of Radiologic Technologists and a Kettering review session for their ARRT board exam and also participated in Pathology IPE projects with PTA students.

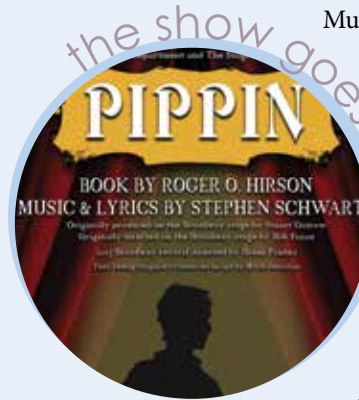
The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program started a new Interprofessional Education Experience with the UCONN Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students. This program is designed to improve understanding of the role of the PTA and DPT, the appropriate delegation to and supervision of the PTA, and the importance of communication.

100% of the Respiratory Care class of 2020 achieved the Registered Respiratory Therapist credential—the highest level of credentialing in the profession. Graduates who achieve this credential must take and pass two national examinations.

NVCC Community and Economic Development graduated 40 CNA students from Naugatuck and Watertown High Schools and 45 from other CNA programs. Woodland High School was added as a new CNA program this year.



## STAYING CONNECTED AND SUPPORTED



Musical Theater cast and crew members came together to present a dynamic, fully staged performance of the musical, *PIPPIN*. Recordings were later aired via showtix4u.com, with audience members including people as far away as Germany! Collaboration between the Digital Arts, Music, and Theater programs continue to be amazing, whether live and in-person, or virtual!

Music collaborated with Digital Arts Technology (DAT) to prepare six studio multitrack recordings, including: Non-stop (*Hamilton*), Light (*Next to Normal*), In the Beginning (*Children of Eden*), Magic to Do (*PIPPIN*), Morning Glow (*PIPPIN*) and Summer of '69 (*Bryan Adams*).

The DAT Club dedicated countless hours to preparing for and running live stream events that happened during the fall and spring semesters. The tech team was indispensable!

Chorale presented their semester showcase on May 8, primarily featuring works by Handel, but also featuring the premiere of a new work, "Psalm 21," composed for the NVCC Chorale by Professor Gil Harel. This show was broadcast via YouTube live.

On April 21, a collaborative virtual literary event was held by the English and Drama Departments. The Shakespeare Birthday tribute had a thematic focus on "Shakespeare and Love." Professors Sasha Bratt, Jeannie Evans-Boniecki, and Lou Lombard organized the presentation with students from all classes reading Shakespearean sonnets and performing dramatic reenactments based on the playwright's varying perspectives of love.

NVCC Hospitality students returned to campus for the fall semester and continued their tradition of offering lunches and take-home food to NVCC faculty and staff one day a week. In May, the students prepared a thank you feast for all those who supported their offerings throughout the year.



The Business Division organized a virtual open house to allow students to meet with faculty, staff, and administrators. The purpose was to offer the opportunity to learn more about all the programs available and for real time advising via TEAMS.

Student Activities offered many virtual events where students picked up supply kits and logged on to a virtual platform for free lessons. Virtual Cooking Lessons offered by Naugatuck Event Management, broadcast live by the Digital Arts Club, and guided by club advisors Professors Karen Rotella and Ray Leite; and Virtual Paint Nights hosted by Professor Amanda Lebel, Art Club Advisor were among our most popular events.

## ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

The NVCC Nursing Class of 2022 held two Food Drives this year, obtaining over 100 items for the NVCC Food Pantry in the fall, and over 30 personal care and cleaning products for a Danbury food pantry in the spring. Additionally, they held a Dress Down Day and raised funds for an Autism awareness support program. The group is also sponsoring a bone marrow donor drive which will feature a guest speaker from the Be the Match Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

Three Accounting majors participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program in concert with the CT Association for Human Services. They earned certification via 15 to 20 hours of additional training through the IRS and aided in FAFSA Super Saturday events as well.



Early Childhood Education (ECE) club members put together 32 literacy baskets to distribute to disadvantaged toddlers and preschoolers in NVCC's service area. Students used their own money to purchase baskets, finger puppets, a set of markers, pads, and basket filler, and then they purchased books with ECE club funds that had been raised by members pre-pandemic.

The NVCC Student Food Pantry received a grant from the United Way of Greater Waterbury and the Connecticut Community Foundation to purchase food for the home delivery program and for a new initiative called "Students Serving Students: Eliminating Campus Hunger." Under Professor Rotella's supervision, hospitality students helped to prepare 700 meals of macaroni & cheese, chili, and chicken with rice and beans in reheatable containers. The food pantry distributed the meals weekly to students at both the Danbury and Waterbury campuses.

The 4th Annual and 1st virtual NVCC Food Pantry Run was held on March 28 and raised over \$3,700 in support of the pantry.

The NVCC Business Division and the Business Department at Central Connecticut State University held a shared Virtual Information Session to all students from NVCC interested in pursuing a bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, Marketing, Management and Management Information Systems.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Center for Racial Dialogue and Communal Transformation adopted the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge from October 5 through November 2. The Challenge was developed many years ago to "advance deeper understanding of the intersections of race, power, privilege, supremacy and oppression." Featuring a national curriculum designed to foster an understanding of systemic racism, the challenge was open to anyone who wanted to undertake it.

The Social Justice Series hosted several events ranging from voting rights and responsibilities and the gender wage gap to the history of redlining and the disparate impacts of COVID-19 on communities of color.

## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

The Center for Teaching hosted nearly 20 events this year focused on educational equity, online pedagogy, and self-care. Topics ranged from Open Educational Resources, resilience, and rubrics, to examining our syllabus through an equity lens, enhancing student engagement through online discussion boards, and gender identity and gender pronouns.

NVCC's Faculty Senate established an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Academic Leadership (IDEAL) Committee to support diversity and equity goals by evaluating the academic needs of all students, identifying challenges faculty and academic support professionals face in meeting those needs, researching pedagogical solutions to these challenges, and assisting faculty and staff as they adopt these solutions. Through these efforts, the IDEAL Committee embraces the extraordinary benefits of our diverse community and cultivates a welcoming and inclusive academic experience for all NVCC students, faculty, and staff.

The NViSION Program and NVCC hosted the Annual Diversity in STEM Seminar in October 2020 and welcomed T.J. Pruitt from the Alabama Power Company who spoke to students about professional experiences utilizing engineering and computer science, his philanthropic efforts to inspire the next generation of STEM students, and the adversities he has overcome to become a well-respected STEM professional.

The NViSION Program hosted a second Diversity in STEM Seminar in the Spring Semester. Acting Section Chief for the Chemical Section of the Sector Engagement Division of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within the Department of Homeland Security, Nohemi Zerbi, spoke to students about her career path, other professional experiences, and the adversities she has overcome to become a well-respected STEM professional.

In February 2021, NVCC, in collaboration with the NVCC Foundation, hosted a college-wide, virtual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion workshop led by Amer F. Ahmed, Ed.D. to build on NVCC's efforts to work together toward inclusive and equitable practices.

NVCC presented the International Center for the Arts Festival in April 2021, focusing on the theme CROSSING BORDERS: RECONNECTION. Acclaimed poets Vincent Toro and Steve Parlato (NVCC Professor of English) shared their newest poems during two well-attended virtual events.



Other events included a Bookmaking Workshop hosted by Arts Chair Amanda Lebel; The Human Library event, the musical *PIPPIN*, and a collection of artistic artifacts, videos, paintings, writings, dance, music, theater, film, and humor entitled *The Connection Collection*.

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

NVCC was the grateful recipient of funding that came from State and Federal grants (CARES Act) that is intended to offset the additional costs to the College due to COVID-19. Many purchases were necessary to keep people on campus safe and to ensure that we could continue to provide students with the education they sought. Tracking the spending to ensure accurate reporting and compliance with grant criteria was done with aplomb by the Finance and Accounting office.

The EET program received a grant from the National Fluid Power Association (NFPA) that funded the purchase of a hydraulics trainer. New hydraulic lab experiences using the trainer have been developed for our EET268 Control Systems course. Students now graduate with an exposure to industrial hydraulic applications and knowledge of hydraulic components and circuits.

The Connecticut Open Educational Resources (OER) Coordinating Council awarded Professor Amy Lenoce a grant to create OER materials for the American Film course in June 2020 and successful implementation of the grant was achieved in August 2020. The Council also awarded Assistant Professor Alan Teitleman and Professor Lenoce a grant to implement OER materials for all the Public Speaking classes in April 2021. Implementation is set for August 2021.

NVCC Community and Economic Development (CED) was funded and is partnering with LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) on the Financial Opportunity Center grant focused on creating wealth and empowering low-income families through training, employment, and financial coaching. In addition, CED gained an additional \$10,000 from United Way for the Financial Opportunity Center.

## STEM SUCCESS

In December 2020, Professor Zerbi and the NVCC STEM Club invited ASML engineers, managers, and personnel from their human resources department to discuss with STEM students various engineering careers, job opportunities, and internship opportunities in the field and at ASML.

On February 18, the STEM Division put on a virtual open house to highlight the diverse course offerings of the STEM Division. Students learned about the exciting programs and careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics as well as a variety of discussion topics by our faculty on their past research in the STEM Fields.

The STEM Club and the NViSION Scholars Program teamed up under the direction

of Professor Marian Zerbi to host the First Annual NVCC STEM Fair. Students demonstrated 18 family-friendly STEM experiments. Participants were provided with materials to replicate experiments at home along with the virtual demonstrations.



On April 12, NVCC hosted its Annual Women in Science Seminar Series in a virtual format. Three of the four presenters began their academic careers at community colleges, and two are NVCC graduates. Charria Campbell, Director of Multicultural Affairs at Tennessee Tech University, Ursula Mobilio, Assistant Professor of Nursing at NVCC, Mari-jean Morelli, Senior Case Manager at Alexion Pharmaceuticals, and Dr. Rochelle Nelson, Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and Geology at Queensborough Community College and research scientist, shared their personal experiences as women in the science field with NVCC students and guests.

The Horticulture program put together its annual (socially distanced) plant sale of spring bedding plants for the staff, faculty, and community. The plants and planters sold were lovingly grown by a fabulous cohort of Horticulture students as part of Professor Tuccio's Greenhouse Management class.

## COLLEGE PREPARATION

In spring 2021, high school students in Upward Bound at three Waterbury high schools participated in a STEM club. Students learned about valuable critical thinking skills and the mechanics and physics of rockets. The club met bi-weekly and culminated in an in-person rocket demonstration with students.

Upward Bound students also participated in a virtual program called Senior Series to enhance their knowledge of college readiness. The program included a virtual workshop called "Educational Opportunity Program (E.O.P.," that was designed to improve students' awareness of the benefits of participating in an E.O.P./Summer Bridge program at a postsecondary institution.

The Upward Bound Program at Crosby High School offered a variety of virtual services to meet students' academic and social-emotional needs, including opportunities to discuss and engage in fun and thought-provoking activities while in a communal space. Monthly Writers' Studio workshops that supported students in their reading comprehension and essay writing skills connected Crosby teachers with the program's tutors, and offered intensive academic interventions to further assist at-risk students to meet academic goals. Students worked together to create an Upward Bound Literary Magazine, where they used their creativity and self-expression to share with their peers.

In April, Upward Bound provided four Virtual SAT Bootcamp sessions for its students in preparation for in-person SATs. Thirty-eight students attended the Mastery Prep SAT Virtual Bootcamp and participants' reviews were outstanding!

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is in its second year, now serving 1,500 8th grade students across ten schools in Waterbury. GEAR UP staff have developed fantastic educational and social opportunities for summer programming and to support students' upcoming transition to high school. GEAR UP staff, the Waterbury Public Schools, and NVCC look forward to offering creative and innovative programming for students in the cohort for the next five years with an additional post-secondary transition component.



## COLLEGE ACCOLADES

Lisa Dresdner, Ph.D., was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC)

by the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education effective June 4, 2021. Dr. Dresdner joined NVCC in 2015 as Associate Dean of Liberal Arts/Behavioral and Social Sciences and in 2018 was selected to serve as Dean of Academic Affairs. She launched the International Center for the Arts in 2017, helped to write two of the college's four Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence grants, and has led initiatives to strengthen retention and close the equity achievement gap.



Robert Piazza, part-time lecturer of English at NVCC, has been named the inaugural poet laureate for the town of Litchfield and will serve a three-year term. He has had poetry published in 12 national and international magazines and is a member of the Connecticut Poetry Society.

Michael Schwartz, Academic Associate in STEM and NVCC alumnus, was the lead author of the cover story, "Exceeding expectations," for the May 2021 edition of Nursery Management magazine. The article discusses the American Rose Trials for Sustainability, an independent, non-profit, two-year scientific, multi-site, regional plant trial, evaluating the newest roses coming to market under low-input conditions. Adam Szantyr, Educational Assistant in the Marketing Department and NVCC alumnus, took the magazine cover photo of Michael.



In fall 2020, Rob Sheftel, Director of Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and Aimee Tiu-Wu, Associate Director of the ACE published an article in a special issue of the peer-reviewed journal, *The Learning Assistance Review: Responding to COVID-19*.

Elma Solomon, NVCC Professor of Accounting, was awarded the 2021 Educational Excellence and Distinguished Service Award in recognition of her generous service to students and advocacy for equity and inclusion.

Kathy Taylor, J.D., NVCC Professor of Legal Studies, received the United Way Organized Labor Community Service Award at the United Way of Greater Waterbury's 34th Annual Celebration and Awards in April 2021, in recognition of the effect she has on students and her ability to leverage education to benefit the community.



The Bellwether College Consortium named NVCC's Allied Health and Nursing Program a top 10 Bellwether Award Finalist in the category of Instructional Programs & Services. One of 30 community colleges among three categories, NVCC competed for the award at the 2021 *Virtual Community College Futures Assembly* in January 2021. Led by Monica Pirota, Professor of Nursing, faculty from the Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, and Radiologic Technology disciplines presented on "Inter-professional Simulation Education for Allied Health and Nursing Programs." Inter-professional education (IPE) focuses on collaboration, communication, and teamwork among programs to connect student learning and improve healthcare outcomes.

The NVCC Library was nominated for an IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service by Congresswoman Jahana Hayes (CT-05).

## SCHOLARS & SCHOLARSHIPS

NVCC will welcome a fifth Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, Dr. Stacey Sacks, during the 2021-22 Academic Year. Dr. Sacks is a comedian, writer, producer, and director of short films, and leading performer in television appearances. In addition to teaching theater at NVCC, she will collaborate with Capital and Tunxis Community Colleges, community organizations, and theater-related groups.



The NVCC Foundation awarded a total of 243 scholarships to NVCC students in AY20-21, totaling \$122,953.

The NViSION Program funded 24 STEM students with scholarships totaling \$75,206 over the 2020-2021 academic year. Included in this amount is \$18,000 in extra COVID relief scholarship funding.

The Linde Skills Pipeline Workforce Development Program at NVCC Danbury provides full scholarships to support tuition and fees of students in the accelerated one-year advanced manufacturing technology curriculum, as well as textbooks and materials for all courses, funding to support fees for certification tests, technical equipment, and a special celebration for program graduates. Linde has donated \$325,000 to the NVCC Foundation to date in support of this program.

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D., NVCC President Emerita, established the Cocco De Filippis Family Endowed Scholarship to support students from all disciplines who are enrolled in the college, regardless of financial aid and immigration status. Funded by a \$10,000 endowment, the scholarship will award approximately \$500 annually to a student with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and demonstrates significant community or college service.

In memory of NVCC alumni William and Mary Carew, the Carew family established a \$20,000 endowment to fund an annual scholarship with a preference given to a working parent whose demographic is under-represented in college completions.

## HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED

The Library, IT, Accounting/Inventory Control, and other administrative staff worked together to procure, process, and loan several hundred laptops, Chromebooks, and hotspots to students throughout the 20-21 academic year. Over 500 new computers, purchased through the CARES Act, were tagged and inventoried. Computers were loaned to employees, students, and Upward Bound participants. The devices, which were loaned to students for the entire semester, were borrowed over 700 times. Students expressed gratitude for the ability to borrow the devices and stated that the devices enabled them to successfully complete their classes.



NVCC Librarians curated a Human Library event as part of the 2021 International Center of the Arts Festival. Students, faculty, and staff were invited to participate as “books” and “readers.” The books told their personal stories to the readers in a safe and open-minded conversation.

The ACE transitioned from in-person tutoring to online live and asynchronous tutoring during the pandemic.



The ACE also offered academic coaching and developed Tech

Time to support students who need a better understanding of the various technological modalities and to assist them with technology needs.

Modified Supplemental Instruction (mSI) continues to be offered to students in developmental Math and English courses.

Training and support have been provided to all faculty and students as we made the switch to Live/Remote Online Component (LRON.)

The Promoting Academically Successful Students (PASS) program introduced a new initiative called the Success Series to showcase individual stories of success. Speakers ranged from faculty members to administrators and former students, all of whom discussed the struggles of working, going to college, and managing life, while highlighting how they overcame adversity and rose to the challenge.

The Male Encouragement Network (M.E.N.) participated in a system-wide showcase in April 2021, highlighting the program.

The NVCC Women's Center and M.E.N. co-sponsored a college-wide workshop event, “Spring Clean Your LinkedIn,” designed to help students dust off their profiles and give them a sparkly clean polish. This workshop empowered our emerging student leaders to create dynamic LinkedIn profiles.

## OUR ALUMNI

In May 2021, NVCC hosted its third annual alumni speakers' panel featuring Brian K. Burrier, MSN, RN, CNOR, Clinical Nurse Educator at Waterbury Hospital; Jennifer DeWitt, LADC, LMFT, CAC, CPS, Prevention Coordinator at the City of Waterbury Department of Public Health; James S. Orsillo, MS, CPA, retired banking executive and NVCC adjunct professor; and Heather Torres, MBA, Student Data Administrator for Torrington Public Schools.

The NVCC Alumni Association “You Changed My Life” award annually recognizes a faculty member who has gone above and beyond in the classroom and the NVCC Community. The 2021 Award recognized Lisa Anderson, Professor of Nursing, who received the most nominations from survey participants who highlighted her support, advocacy, and inspiration. The award is funded by the NVCC Foundation through an alumni-created endowment.

## ADVANCING OUR COLLEGE

The Bursar's Office transitioned students from paper bills to e-bills only. Students now receive monthly emails informing them to check the e-statement. This improved communication has been effective and beneficial as students are more aware of their balance and NVCC has seen an increase in payment of tuition and a reduction in accounts going to collections.

NVCC expects to open a new Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center on the downtown campus of Western CT State University, in Fall 2021. The state-of-the-art facility, under construction as of June 2021, will provide classroom and hands-on training for students enrolled in the Advanced Manufacturing Machine Technology program. The facility will open to an evening cohort at first, and later expand to offer courses during the day.

The renovation to the boiler room was completed and is expected to significantly reduce NVCC's carbon footprint, while providing reliable heating and cooling to the Waterbury campus facilities. This project was successful due to a superb team of experts who were dedicated to the completion and deserve accolades for their outstanding efforts on the project!

The network fiber optic backbone was recently replaced across campus, improving connectivity, and making the internet and all other network services far more reliable for the campus.

In April 2021, Governor Ned Lamont held a press conference at NVCC to announce key initiatives as to how Connecticut should invest the federal COVID-19 recovery aid it is receiving from the American Rescue Plan Act.

