

# NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

March S. Gallagher, Esq.  
Comptroller



Charles Dinstuhl, CPA  
Deputy Comptroller

For release: Immediately  
Contact Dafne DeJesus 845-331-8774

## Over 1,000 Ulster County Students Pursue Community College Outside of Ulster County Each Year

*Kingston, NY (October 21, 2024)* – Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher released the Ulster County Community College Chargeback Report today.

As high school graduating classes have declined 9.2% over the last decade SUNY Ulster has seen declining enrollment of 16.5% over the same period. The College has addressed declining enrollment with a new strategic plan and efforts to attract non-traditional students and this has resulted in a larger class size for the last two years.

The report showed that Ulster County expended \$3.9 million in 2023 for out of county community college tuition for 1093 Ulster County students. Although SUNY Ulster receives chargeback revenues for non-resident student attendance, chargeback expenditures exceed chargeback revenues by approximately \$2.5 million annually between both SUNY Ulster and Ulster County.

A review of resident students leaving Ulster County for community college indicates that geographic proximity to other community colleges may be the primary driver in community college choice. Nearby community colleges with the largest enrollment from Ulster County include SUNY Dutchess with 365, SUNY Orange with 221, Hudson Valley Community College with 136 and Columbia-Greene with 130 Ulster County students. The Towns of Shawangunk, Lloyd and Saugerties have the largest number of students leaving the county for community college with 189, 143, and 135 respectively.

“While Ulster County students must have the option of pursuing the best education that meets their needs, SUNY Ulster continues to be a high-quality education at a great value for Ulster County students,” said Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher. “We must identify and pursue ways to encourage Ulster County students to obtain their community college degree within Ulster County. The new satellite campus at iPark is the type of forward-thinking approach needed to ensure top quality education for our residents.”

The Comptroller’s Office last reviewed community college chargebacks in 2012 and recommended the inclusion of a survey of students leaving the county for community college. The current review found that the survey results were not being saved or shared with SUNY Ulster, therefore, the original recommendation is reiterated. Additionally, we recommend that the County review transportation options and financial incentives to encourage in-county enrollment. The report applauded the decision to create a new satellite campus at iPark which may encourage more in-county enrollment and decrease the cost burden of college chargebacks.

In addition, the report recommended enhancing the backup documentation for chargeback revenues in the County’s financial system and that recordkeeping could be improved.

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