NOW MORE THAN EVER, COMMUNITY COLLEGES MATTER

By Roger A. Ramsammy, Ph.D., President, Hudson Valley Community College

Last fall, Hudson Valley Community College marked the tenth anniversary of President Barack Obama’s visit to campus in 2009 and, while we are a forward-looking institution, it’s important to reiterate the message the president delivered a decade ago.

During his visit, President Obama stated that community colleges are the starting point for higher education for nearly half of those who seek an undergraduate degree across the country. He noted how community colleges are deeply tied to the workforce retraining and economic development of their regions. Community colleges, he said simply, make stronger communities.

Hudson Valley and all the State University of New York’s community colleges bring unique academic offerings to the regions in which they serve, and taken as a system, we’re a strong, community-based network that provides affordable, accessible higher education to nearly 200,000 students.

As many in the K-12 community know, we also are working hard to align ourselves more closely with our regional school districts, through P-TECH programs, our College in the High School partnerships, online offerings and other collaborative dual enrollment initiatives. Plus, we are working to boost on-campus offerings for our pipeline partners by creating opportunities for high school students to study here and get a taste of college life while still in high school. In many ways, our success is tied to your success at the K-12 level.

Here at Hudson Valley, we now have three unique P-TECH partnerships that are engaging students in fields as diverse as cybersecurity, biotechnology, clean energy management and mechatronics. Last fall, our College in the High School courses reached more than 2,000 students at about 30 different upstate school districts, from the Catskills to the southern Adirondacks.

But, yet, with all of this success and collaboration, there’s still a feeling from those of us in the community college sector that...