

CAMPUS

THE ELMIRA COLLEGE MAGAZINE

FALL 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES

- 2 Building a Campus Culture
- 4 Style Meets Strategy
- 6 Twain’s Moment
- 12 From College to Career

INSIDE ATHLETICS

- 8 Conference Eligibility, NFL Support
Spur Women’s Flag Football Growth
- 8 Future Olympian: Zoey Lints ‘27 Sets Sights
on Medal Podium
- 9 2025 Athletics Hall of Fame

ALUMNI FILES

- 10 Scenes From Reunion 2025
- 14 Upcoming Events
- 15 Alumni Benefits
- 17 In Memoriam

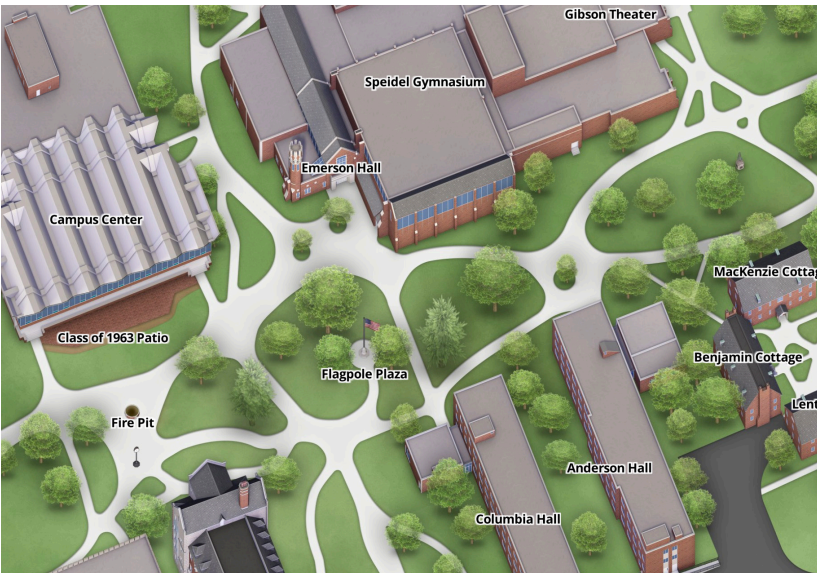
Front cover image: The Class of 2029 prepares for their Fall Welcome Candlelight in front of Cowles Hall.

Exploring Campus in New Ways

New online map brings interactive experience to life for prospective students, campus visitors

This fall, EC rolled out a brand-new interactive campus map — a dynamic, web-based tool that lets you explore every corner of the campus. You can zoom in to find buildings, view custom tours, and search for specific locations. The map gives prospective students a first look at campus, helps first-year students learning their way around, aids guest speakers or lecturers planning a visit, and assists faculty members explaining where their offices are located. It’s a multipurpose tool that will continue to be updated and grow as EC does.

Check it out: map.elmira.edu



An overhead view of EC’s main campus on the new interactive map.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcoming new students and their families to campus is one of my favorite things to do as president. There’s nothing quite like move-in day, and this year was no exception. The College welcomed 288 new students to campus this fall, our second-largest entering class in a decade. The resulting nine percent increase in full-time enrollment, on top of last year’s surge of 18 percent, marks the College’s highest student headcount in six years.

This growth reflects more than recruitment success — it’s a sign of progress in helping students persist and thrive. Our first-year retention rate rose from 72 to 75 percent, evidence of the strong partnerships forming across campus to support student success and advance the priorities outlined in the College’s Strategic Plan.

Momentum is building in every corner of campus. From classrooms to residence halls to athletic fields, faculty and staff are reimagining how students learn and engage. In this issue of Campus Magazine, you’ll read about the collaborative efforts among the Center for Academic and Professional Excellence, Campus Life, and Athletics that are strengthening our sense of community and connection and helping more students stay on the path to graduation. The Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Business School, which is approaching its fifth anniversary, continues to grow and innovate, with a new experiential learning center planned to open after the first of the year.

Elmira’s distinct blend of academic excellence and experiential learning also shines through our Center for Mark Twain Studies, a distinguished resource for Twain scholars and enthusiasts alike. A resurgence of interest in Twain — sparked in part by Ron Chernow’s new biography — has brought fresh attention to our historic connection to the author. Renovations to Twain’s iconic study, which sits on our campus, combined with a refreshed exhibit in the Gannett-Tripp Library and a new virtual tour of Twain sites throughout the City of Elmira are helping to ensure that this legacy continues to inspire generations of scholars and visitors.

We have also seen remarkable growth in alumni engagement and philanthropy. In the past year, the College raised more than \$6.1 million, including more than \$2.3 million in budget-relieving gifts — surpassing our goal by \$600,000. Notably, during Elmira Everlasting this past April, alumni contributed \$235,000 in a single day, a powerful demonstration of their commitment and generosity.

Our progress is reflected in national recognition as well. Elmira College ranked #6 among regional institutions in the latest U.S. News & World Report Best College Rankings, #3 in Best Value Schools, and #2 in Top Performers on Social Mobility. The College was also recognized by *The Princeton Review* as one of the nation’s best undergraduate colleges, a distinction that places Elmira in the top 15% of more than 2,400 four-year institutions nationwide.

Janna and I are continuing to connect with alumni and friends, with plans to travel to Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York City. Looking ahead, the College is concluding a feasibility study in preparation for a comprehensive campaign. Results of interviews and surveys conducted with alumni over the summer will be presented to the Board of Trustees this fall. With sustained investment in key areas, we will build on our growth and ensure Elmira’s vitality for generations to come.

As I prepare to conclude my tenure as president after nine years of service, I am deeply grateful for the support and partnership of the Elmira College faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni community. Your steadfast commitment has been a source of strength and encouragement throughout my presidency. Together, we have strengthened Elmira College’s foundation and reaffirmed its mission. I am confident that the College’s best days are yet to come.

Be It Ever So!

Charles W. Lindsay, PhD
Elmira College President



Building a Campus Culture

Retention Efforts Are Creating a Stronger EC Community

There's a growing energy on the Elmira College campus. Students fill the walkways, laughing and talking between classes. Events feel bigger, louder, and buzz with potential.

"I have noticed a lot of positive momentum in the way students are talking about campus events," shared Dr. Jacqueline Sironen, EC Dean of Students. "I hear them talking about future projects, events, and ideas that make them super excited, and I love seeing and hearing it."

The increased energy throughout the campus is partially the result of the recent enrollment successes. There are simply more students.

But that isn't the whole story. As enrollment speeds ahead, several offices are working together to enhance the student experience. Academic Affairs, Residence Life, Campus Life, and Athletics have been tapping into the greater campus community to ensure students know they are safe, supported, and able to have fun.

These efforts tie into each of the three strategies in the College's Strategic Plan: enhancing strength and stability, fostering innovation, and ensuring an inclusive and supportive environment.

"We increased retention by 3% over the last academic year," said Dr. Stephanie Johnson, Center for Academic and Professional Excellence (CAPE) & Dean of Retention. "It's the right direction, but there's lots of room to grow."

Johnson collected data to inform the cross-campus approach, including frequent pulse surveys with students.

"We're learning there's a need for increased belonging," said Johnson.



As Director of CAPE and Dean of Retention, Dr. Stephanie Johnson works collaboratively with departments across campus to support students and increase the College's retention rate.



In response, teams across campus have jumped in with initiatives, while senior leaders are asking every employee to contribute ideas and engage in the effort.

For example, if any employee sees a student faltering, they can trigger an alert. The earlier the better. Through the alert system, students are connected with academic and mental health supports like tutoring, mentoring, and counseling.

Building on the College's First Year Seminar program, which all first-year and transfer students must take, has led to several opportunities. Since new students are the most likely to drop out, it's essential to help them successfully adjust to college life.

Data uncovered that despite the faculty frequently mentioning CAPE and its many advantages, fewer students were tapping into its services. Now, in the first weeks of the year, each First Year Seminar course tours the Gannett-Tripp Library, home to the CAPE offices and its many services.

"Our CAPE utilization is up considerably," beamed Johnson.

Peer mentoring emerged as another valuable tool to help shy first-year students acclimate. Upperclass students are now assigned to each FYS course. They invite their classmates to campus activities, reminiscent of the Big Buddy program many alumni from earlier years remember fondly.

"I think a common struggle for students is that fear of going to an event alone, which will oftentimes leave them missing out on a potentially really fun experience."

Dr. Jacqueline Sironen
Dean of Students

Left: Students visit the Center for Academic and Professional Excellence to learn about the many services offered, including Career Services.

Below: The Lawnsays Intramural program, named in honor of President Chuck Lindsay, include a variety of lawn games that are popular with students, like corn hole and bucket ball.



While the mentors are working to get students to the events, Campus Life and Athletics have partnered to enhance them.

For example, they're expanding on the popular Lawnsays Intramural program, which Savannah Terry, EC Flag Football Coach, coordinates. Thinking beyond typical intramural activities offers diversity for the students. And Campus Life is joining in. As competitors stuffed themselves in the Lawnsays hot dog-eating competition, Campus Life invited onlookers to make s'mores in the new fire pit in front of the Campus Center.

"We've been trying to engage more non-athletes on campus," shared Terry. Among the less "sporty" activities are the lawn games like cornhole and an UNO game night.

Athletics and Campus Life also joined forces to help improve attendance at on-campus athletic competitions. This year, clubs are sponsoring a Code Purple for each athletic team, and Campus Life is making sure there are plenty of giveaways to pump up the crowds.

While there are plenty more initiatives underway, the team isn't always looking for big changes.

"The pieces are all here," said Johnson. "While not everything will work, with tweaking, we can reach our goal, and that's what keeps us and our students here."

Style Meets Strategy

Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Business School tailors experience for future fashion business leaders

It's been nearly five years since the announced launch of the Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Business School (THFBS) at Elmira College. As the program celebrates milestones — it's also charting an ambitious path forward, highlighting recent graduates and introducing new hands-on innovations that bring the business of fashion to life.

Developed in partnership with Elmira native and global fashion icon Tommy Hilfiger and his family, the program provides a unique, insider's understanding of how the fashion world truly operates, bridging creativity with commerce and preparing the next generation of fashion business leaders.

"There are tremendous opportunities in the fashion industry for people who work on the business side," shared Tommy Hilfiger. "Many talented designers graduate with creative skills but without a foundation in business. This program fills that gap."

Under the leadership of Dr. Alison Wolfe, Professor of Marketing and Management, Business and Economics Chair, and Director of the THFBS, students begin with a strong foundation in business fundamentals and then gain additional knowledge on how to market and merchandise fashion products.



"Getting retail exposure early is important. It really helped me understand the business at a young age. This project gives students a first-hand look at what retailing is all about and opens the door to future leadership roles, whether in finance, operations, or creative management."

- Tommy Hilfiger

These innovations and the program's continued emphasis on introducing students to the many people and roles that make up the industry are already paying dividends for EC graduates.

Emily Guardado '25 was in the first cohort of students to graduate in the accelerated three-year THFBS degree program. She is now working as a Merchandising Leader at American Eagle in Winchester, Virginia. She loved the many experiences and hands-on learning she received in EC's THFBS program, which impacted her career path.

Her current role is a first step toward her career goal. She wants to become a visual merchandiser, a role she discovered as a student during one of the trips she took to New York City.

"We went on this trip to New York City, and we got to meet someone who worked for the visual department for Aerie and American Eagle," she explained. "We got to see how they do visual branding during a tour. When I was hired for my current position, I remembered going on that tour and how I would like to work for American Eagle or Aerie because of that experience."

Guardado's knowledge of the fashion industry, the language and terms used by professionals, and her experiences helped her stand out in interviews and throughout her training.

"I caught on quickly because of my knowledge about merchandising," she shared. "It has made it easier to get accustomed to my new role."

And just as Guardado and other graduates step out to find their place in fashion, the THFBS program will continue to innovate and prepare EC students eager to make their mark on the global fashion industry — where style truly meets strategy.

To get real-world knowledge, they often step out of the classroom, traveling to New York City for up-close looks at one of the industry's largest fashion hubs. While there, they visit fashion industry professionals, tour warehouses, and sit side-by-side with SUNY Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) graduate-level students during special lectures. During one trip, a few students even got a behind-the-scenes view of a New York Fashion Week runway show, thanks in large part to the Hilfiger family's involvement with the program.

Throughout their studies, students also engage directly with members of the Hilfiger family — including Tommy, Andy, Betsy, and Ginny — through campus visits and panels. These sessions offer candid conversations about entrepreneurship, innovation, and the realities of working in fashion today.

"It's important to expose students to the real world of fashion," explained Tommy Hilfiger. "The more touch points we create, the more chances they have to see and experience the business firsthand."

And that sentiment is behind the latest innovation planned for the THFBS program.

With creative direction and guidance from the Hilfiger family, students will transform an office in the Campus Center into an experiential learning center — complete with window displays, merchandising setups, and product storytelling.

This new space will serve as a living classroom, turning theory into practice as students apply business strategies, marketing concepts, and merchandising skills in real time. It will also act as a dynamic hub for promoting the THFBS program and hosting student-led initiatives.

"It's going to be wonderful," exclaimed Betsy Hilfiger, adding that her family will supply mannequins, racks, hangers, and more, all of the supplies that would be needed to set up a storefront.

David Lee '26 is among the THFBS students involved in planning the space on the first floor of the Campus Center. He envisions a place to promote the THFBS to current and future EC students.

"It's a good opportunity to show off the program to others," he explained. At the same time, the space offers "creative opportunities to collaborate with different groups on campus."

The new space will officially open with a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring the Hilfiger family and participating students.



Top left: While in New York City, Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Business School students visit The Met to tour a fashion exhibit. Bottom left: Students visit and talk with Andy Hilfiger at his NYC office. Below: THFBS students engage with Ginny Hilfiger during a campus visit.



Students in the Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Business School, with creative direction and guidance from the Hilfiger family, will transform an empty space in the Campus Center into an experiential learning center.





Twain's Moment

Mark Twain's enduring connection to Elmira continues to draw readers, performers, and scholars from around the world

From lectures to landmarks, Elmira College continues to bring Twain's world to life.

As one of America's most famous authors, Mark Twain, the popular pen name used by Samuel Clemens, remains a fixture in our American story. Part of this story took place in Elmira, where Twain met his wife, Olivia "Livy" Langdon Clemens, who was an EC alumna. Twain, Livy, and their children visited with Livy's family at her sister's home, Quarry Farm. It was during those visits, as Twain overlooked the Chemung Valley, that he wrote many of his most famous works.

"Some of the Langdons' descendants had close connections with Elmira College, and it is because of them that Quarry Farm and the Mark Twain Study came into EC's care," explained Dr. Joseph Lemak, Director of the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies (CMTS). "Their foresight endowed Quarry Farm as a place for scholarly work to continue. A place to investigate Twain's works and uncover new ways of thinking about his impact and legacy."

Recently, Twain's Elmira connections drew increased national attention, thanks to two well-known Twain aficionados.

Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Ron Chernow recently launched his latest book, "Mark Twain." Chernow wrapped up his Mark Twain book tour in the College's Gibson Theatre.

Attendees, including students, faculty, alumni, and community members, packed Gibson Theatre to hear Chernow describe how the Langdons influenced Twain, particularly Livy. According to Chernow, Twain relied on Livy to improve his manners and make him fit for "polite society."

A week after Chernow's visit, Emmy-winning actor Richard Thomas, known for his role as "John-Boy" on "The Waltons," performed "Mark Twain Tonight!" at the Clemens Center.

While here, Thomas made certain to tour Quarry Farm and Twain's famous octagonal study, excited to stand in Twain's footsteps and absorb the history and character of the historical landmarks.

The Mark Twain statue on EC's campus sits between Harris and Watson Halls, overlooking Carnegie Lawn and The Puddle.



While in Elmira for his performance of "Mark Twain Tonight," actor Richard Thomas (r) enjoyed a tour of Mark Twain's Study, located on EC's campus.

Chernow and Thomas are among the better-known names attracted to the area because of its significance to Twain, but CMTS continually hosts academics to study and speak on all things Twain-related.

Among the biggest of those events is the upcoming 2026 quadrennial conference, which draws more than a hundred Twain scholars from around the world to the region.

"This event signifies a level of prestige for CMTS among Twain scholars," remarked Lemak. "While here, attendees get to live where Twain lived, be in the spaces he frequented, and really get a sense of the effect the summers he spent here had on him as a writer."

But while CMTS fosters academic pursuits, it isn't the only focus. CMTS is also helping to spotlight the many Twain landmarks in Elmira, facilitating a new way to tour the region.

CMTS, with support from a Chemung County Room Tax grant, will use EC's recently launched interactive map as a platform for a new virtual tour of Twain sites located throughout the City of Elmira. Whether a "Twainiac" is visiting in person or viewing from afar, they'll easily navigate among the local Twain attractions. The virtual map will include photos, video, and historical information.

Part of the grant money went to new signage to guide foot traffic for those making an in-person trek, particularly The Mark Twain Exhibit. It was recently moved from Cowles Hall to the second floor of the Gannett-Tripp Library. Other tour stops on EC's campus include The Mark Twain Study and statues of Twain and Livy, while off-campus sites will include the Langdon and Clemens burial sites at Woodlawn Cemetery and the Chemung Valley History Museum.

"Mark Twain never went away. And just like poets and authors such as Homer and William Shakespeare, Mark Twain will be read 200, 300, 500 years from now," said Lemak. "He's a great author who will simply stand the test of time."

As Twain's words live on, EC will continue to champion the author and those who study and celebrate him.

As interest in Twain surges, the Center for Mark Twain Studies continues to enhance and preserve Quarry Farm and the Mark Twain Study.

Quarry Farm Recent Enhancements

- A new fire suppression system
- Full upgrade to the electrical system
- Added workspace and some modern amenities for visiting scholars
- *Coming Soon:* A new roof for the barn

Mark Twain Study Recent Enhancements

- Restored windows
- *Coming Soon:* Following a paint analysis, the exterior will be painted gray and sand-blasted using techniques available when the study was built 151 years ago. The interior will receive a coat of amber shellac.



"These projects are important because they preserve Quarry Farm and The Study for future generations. What's more, we have documented our process and posted all of our information online, so that we can become a model to other historical preservation projects."

- Dr. Joseph Lemak

Conference Eligibility, NFL Support Spur Women's Flag Football Growth

"Ever since we announced that we would enter our flag football program into the Empire 8 League, the campus has been buzzing," exclaimed Savannah Terry, Elmira College Flag Football Coach. "We saw great interest last spring, and even more now that we have been elevated to varsity status. With our first recruiting class in and more to follow, we should be one of the larger teams on campus in the next couple of years."

The team's roster currently sports 18, but Terry expects that to grow before the season begins in the spring.

The buzz about flag extends well beyond Elmira College. The Empire 8 will officially sponsor women's flag football as a championship sport for the 2025-26 season in collaboration with the National Football League (NFL) and RCX Sports, the official operator of NFL Flag.

Regionally, the Buffalo Bills, New York Giants, and New York Jets of the NFL are also pushing the growth of collegiate women's flag through funding, equipment donations, and partnerships with organizations like the Empire 8 and the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA). This has fueled the creation of new teams, pilot programs, and championship structures, creating a clear path for athletes from high school to college.



Future Olympian

Zoey Lints '27 Sets Sights on Medal Podium

According to Elmira College student Zoey Lints '27, she has two personalities. Off the wrestling mat, she's friendly and quick to smile. On the mat, she's "mean."

Her more on-the-mat persona has distinguished the Biochemistry and Biology major in wrestling competitions, twice earning her All-American honors.

Born into a wrestling family, she got her start watching her dad coach her older brothers. However, while her brothers did well and one set win records at their school, Lints struggled. With so few female wrestlers where she grew up in upstate New York, she always competed against males. While it helped her become a more aggressive player, she rarely won her matches.

But that started to change when she was a junior in high school, and there was more female competition. That's when the wins began piling up.

When she arrived at EC, she started setting records. Now Lints and her brother tease each other about who is better.

Whether on or off the mat, Lints is always confident and driven. She plans to wrestle in the Olympics and she has no doubt that she'll achieve her goal.

"I'm going to be doing this until I can't walk," she declared. "I won't stop until I win the Olympics, and even then, I won't stop."

2025 ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME OCTOBER 5, 2025



Carol Richards Gilbert '76 (Swimming) - One of the most accomplished swimmers in EC's history, Gilbert's time of 2:13.8 in the 200M Freestyle (1974) remains one of the program's top marks. She also held records in the 100M and 200M Individual Medley, 50M and 100M Breaststroke, 100M Backstroke, and 200M Freestyle. Alongside teammate Linda Sherman '74, Gilbert helped rewrite nearly every record in EC swimming history. The 1972-73 team, coached by John Marshall, finished with a 12-1-1 record and placed fourth at the State Relays hosted by Cornell University. That standout team featured Richards, Sherman, Tish Orr '76, Jean Wyatt '74, and Faith Lamprey '74. In 1976, Gilbert was awarded the Lowman Award in recognition of her positive impact on the Athletics and Recreational programs.



The 1997-98 Women's Basketball Team, coached by Jim Scheible (1992-99), was the first of two straight teams to make the NCAA Tournament. That year, the Soaring Eagles were named EAA Co-Champions and made it to the NCAA Sweet 16, finishing with a 22-7 record. Elmira started the NCAA Tournament with a road win over Oneonta in the First Round and then secured another road victory against Binghamton in the Second Round. The season ended in the Sweet 16 against William Paterson in Glassboro, New Jersey. The Soaring Eagles were led offensively by Rachel Brown '00 and Janna Cunningham '99. The 1997-98 team was defensively strong, recording a total of 362 steals during the season. The 1997-98 women's basketball team holds school records for the most games in a season with 22 and the highest winning percentage at .759.



Accepting on behalf of Ellen Gibbs Matson are (L to R): Julie Gibbs Heuer, Michael Gibbs, Mary Carole Starke, and Becky Shaw.

Michael Vellutato '14 - Men's Volleyball - Vellutato played a pivotal role in launching EC men's volleyball into national prominence during his four-year career, which culminated in his being named the Elmira Male Athlete of the Year in 2014. A dynamic setter, Vellutato remains the program's all-time leader in assists (4,953) and is the only player in program history to record more than 1,400 assists in a single season, a feat he accomplished in 2012. A four-time All-UVC selection and 2014 AVCA First-Team All-American, Vellutato helped guide the Soaring Eagles to national rankings and earned UVC Player of the Year honors as a senior. That season, Elmira reached No. 10 in the final AVCA national poll. He amassed 541 digs, 241 total blocks, 166 kills, and 96 aces in just over 100 matches (105) at EC.



Victoria MacNeil Kuehner '08 (Women's Golf) - A standout performer for the women's golf program, holder of several records, and Elmira College's Female Athlete of the Year in 2008. She owns the single-season scoring average vs. par record (+10.10, 2007-08) and recorded the top three, four of the top-six, and seven of the top-12 lowest rounds in program history, including a 75 (+4) in the second round of the 2007 Williams Fall Classic. Kuehner also delivered the second-lowest round in program history with a 76 (+4) during the final round of the 2008 NCAA Division III Championship. She finished tied for 29th overall with scores of 84, 82, 78, and 76, showing steady improvement throughout the tournament. Kuehner holds every individual Elmira single-season record in women's golf that includes previously mentioned Score Average vs. Par (10.10), as well as National Ranking (29.00), Tourney Wins (3), and Finish Percentage (87.6%). All were achieved in 2007-08.



Ellen Gibbs Matson (Women's Basketball/Women's Volleyball Coach) - Awarded posthumously. Matson led by example, providing stellar guidance and personal connections that enriched everyone she encountered. These characteristics led to the establishment of the Ellen Gibbs Matson Athletic Award. During her nine-year tenure, she led as head coach of the women's volleyball team (1979-87), five years at the helm of the women's basketball program (1979-84), Director of Intramurals, and as a PE instructor. As the volleyball coach, she amassed 136 wins, the second-most victories in program history. As the basketball coach, she guided the Soaring Eagles to back-to-back winning seasons during the 1981-82 and 1982-83 campaigns.

Reunion 2025

2025 Reunion Annual Meeting
Several annual awards were presented during the Annual Meeting at this year's Reunion, which was held September 18-21.



Rick Kozan '95, EC Alumni Board president, presented Julianne "Julie" Deegan Baumann MS '75 (left) with the 2025 Distinguished Service Award and Patricia "Pat" Dudas Thompson '75, MS '88 (right) with the 2025 Distinguished Achievement Award.



Jennifer Congelli Ingold '95 was recognized as the 2025 Bette A. Mammone '78 Memorial Academy recipient by Rick Kozan '95, president of the EC Alumni Board.



President Lindsay presented The Most Spirited Class Award to Sam Hamad '75. The award is presented annually to the reunioneing class that shows the most school spirit, as demonstrated in a variety of ways.



This year's Reunion 2025 Class Parade honored those with Class Years ending in 0 and 5.



The EC Chem Club tied for first place in the Alumni Board Club Prizes during Octagon Fair.



Jean Ryan '11, member of the EC Alumni Board, helped run the cake wheel table during Reunion and Octagon Fair Weekend.



Alumni Association Board members Josh Poupore '02 (center) and Jack Hurley '71 (top right) volunteered at the Association's Tailgate



EC Associate Professor of Art Chris Longwell spoke with EC families during Octagon Fair.



The Student Alumni Council tied for first place in the Alumni Board Club Prizes during Octagon Fair.

Bench Dedication Honors EC Men's Soccer, Alumni



President Chuck Lindsay dedicated the bench as "a lasting tribute to those teammates who are no longer with us." The bench "stands as a reminder of their contributions to the team, their love of the game, and the friendships they forged here at Elmira."



The "Stronger Together" bench was dedicated to the Elmira College Soccer Family, by EC Soccer alumni on September 20, 2025. Two small plaques honor Andrew Burke '84 and Albert Valentine '83.



Front row (l to r): Ken Barbary '81, Scott Dow '80, Glen Lombardi '80, Ross Shepherd '81, Rob Barsamian '82, Omar Hallow '81, Jeff Ference '80, Phil Ware '82
Back row (l to r): Scott Sherman '86, Evan Crocker '87, Ed Witt '84, Bob Caron '84, JP Thomas '85, John Halstead '84, Peter Jovanovic '84, Peter Salvatore '80

From College to Career

What do you get when you pair an Elmira College alum with a current student? Support.

Three Alumni Mentor - Mentee pairs share their experience in the **Under Wing Mentoring Program**. Their stories remind us that Elmira connections don't end at graduation — they're just beginning.



Christopher Shelanskey '08
Director, Dispatch and Work Support at National Grid

I first met Riley at a networking event for the Alumni Board and students. He stood out immediately with a quiet intensity in how he used his time, asking thoughtful questions and clearly trying to reshape his approach to life after college. As we spent more time talking, it became clear that he was deeply committed to building a future for himself. He wasn't just looking for advice — he was looking for connection, for insight, for a way to navigate the uncertainty of post-college life. I could see how intentional he was, and that made me want to show up even more for him. In a full-circle moment, he was hired into my organization as an assistant supervisor, two levels below me.

It's been incredible to watch Riley's journey unfold. When done right, the student drives the interaction — they know what they need, and you simply guide them with feedback and lessons from your own experience. It's not about having all the answers. It's about helping them build their strategy for life after EC. And trust me — it's worth it.



Riley Spencer '25
Associate Supervisor of Dispatch, National Grid

I was definitely a little nervous about meeting Chris, but we developed a strong relationship. He helped me in more ways than he could ever imagine. He took time out of his busy workday to help me with structuring my resume and giving tips on how to stand out in an interview. Chris saw my intention to better myself professionally, and he saw a potential opportunity for me within his department at National Grid.

As I went through the interview process, he was always there to help out and ease my nerves. He invited me up for a day to shadow various employees within the department.

Chris is now my boss's boss, and I see him every day. I thank him frequently for believing in me and seeing the potential I know I had. Outside of work, he's a great support system, helping me move to a new city away from my family. I can confidently say that the Under Wing program and my mentor made a positive impact on my life and helped me jumpstart my professional career.



Dick Richardson '74
CEO, Let's Think Smart

Given our age gap, I wasn't sure how much I could offer Emily. But when we first met, she arrived wearing a suit. "I'm meeting with a CEO," she said. I don't usually think of myself that way, but I admired her preparation. It was a great first impression. We discussed what we want our relationship to be and decided to blend mentorship with collegial friendship. Emily was very authentic, and I felt invited into her life. I was honored.

If I made one misstep along the way, it was when I came across a job posting at EC that I thought would be a perfect fit for her. I enthusiastically reached out to people on her behalf. The only problem was, I'm not her. She wasn't interested in that particular role. I meant well, but I overstepped. Thankfully, Emily handled it with grace. I was reminded that good mentoring is about guidance, not direction.

I truly hope we stay connected for the long term. I care about what happens in her life and am excited to watch her career unfold. The experience was so positive that I'm doing it again. I know some may wonder if they have enough to offer as a mentor. I encourage you to try it. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is simply show up and do something good.



Emily Lenzen '25
Management Trainee, Enterprise Rent-A-Car

I was initially excited about connecting with my mentor because EC may seem small, but the alumni network is huge. I was excited to get professional expertise. When I heard Dick was my mentor, I thought, he's a big name.

The best part about having a mentor was having someone to talk to. This was someone I could lean into. He's someone with experience and knowledge. It was great. I didn't have to worry about being heard. And he opened up and shared about himself and his book. It was different talking to him because he came with an outside view. I took it with a grain of salt at first, but then I applied some of the solutions with my family, like how I can't change anybody else. I can only change myself.

We have the kind of relationship where you may not hear from someone for years, but you can pick up the phone and start right back where you left off.

Are you willing to mentor a student?

Join the Under Wing Mentoring Program and help prepare a student for (or even find) their future career path. To participate, contact the Office of Alumni Engagement at (607) 735-1855 or alumni@elmira.edu.



Chad Thorley '02
National Security Advisor, U.S. Senate; EC Board of Trustees

I've mentored numerous times, even before it was a program. I'm happy to help students because there were times I wished I had spoken to more alumni as a student. When I first met Sam, I thought he was impressive. He has his head on his shoulders and takes advice to heart. He's well-balanced and interested in off-campus activities, like his volunteer position. His ability to juggle all that means he'll be off to the races when he takes the next step.

Together, we exchanged ideas about what might work post-EC and how to filter things out and make a plan. Sam let me know he's going to the military, and that's one of the avenues we discussed. He recently wrote me a really nice email, telling me how he appreciated all of the time I spent with him and that he'll let me know how it goes in his new role.

As alumni, we've got more life experience and that's helpful. There isn't a template, but we know where some of the pitfalls are and where some successful avenues might be. Mentoring means you're giving back to Elmira College. Elmira's success is our success as well.



Samuel Cunha '26, Business Administration Major

When I found out who my mentor was, I had a sense of excitement. I realized I was going to be connected with someone who is already where I want to be. That meant a lot to me because he has first-hand knowledge and advice.

We instantly connected. We had a Zoom call scheduled for 30-45 minutes, but it went on for hours. We didn't want to stop, but it was his only day off. He helped me think about the degree I should get and recommended I join more clubs. He explained how that shows future employers that I can handle the weight of operating at a high level. And when I share an accomplishment and he responds with excitement — that's great.

It is terrifying to go out and apply for jobs. But when you can have someone who's spent time getting to know you and they can vouch for you, it really gives you a leg up. It means everything to me that he's willing to say, "You can use me as a reference."

Upcoming Events

From regional alumni-hosted events to student events, there are a lot of opportunities to engage with the EC community. Here are just a few we don't want you to miss in 2026. Details about these and other events are online at elmira.edu/events or in the Alumni Link eNewsletter. We hope to see you at an event soon!

January 16 - Alumni Gathering: Soaring Eagles Men's Ice Hockey vs Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, Connecticut

January 30-31 - Athletics Alumni Weekend, EC Campus

February 7 - Alumni Gathering: Soaring Eagles Men's Ice Hockey vs Utica University in Utica, New York

February 7 - EC Alumni Event, Southern California

February 22 - EC Alumni Presidential Event, Southern Florida

March 18 - Climate Teach-In, EC Campus

March 20-22 - EC Theatre's Winter Musical: Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, EC Campus

March 28 - Annual Elmira College Dance Marathon, EC Campus

April 22 - Elmira Everlasting

May 17 - Commencement

April (dates TBD):

- Cornell Club Presidential Event in New York City
- Alumni Mixer in New York City
- Presidential Event in Palm City, Florida
- Spring Alumni Event in Massachusetts



SOARING FORWARD CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

TOTAL:
\$51,614.92

We're grateful to everyone who donated to this year's Soaring Forward Campaign. Every dollar contributed helps our EC athletics teams enhance their programs and help student-athletes immerse themselves in everything our campus has to offer.



ELMIRA COLLEGE ALUMNI BENEFITS



TO OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES AND EC'S
WORLDWIDE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NETWORK



AT THE
COLLEGE STORE
ONLINE AND IN-STORE

GANNETT-TRIPP LIBRARY ACCESS

As a researcher or guest, including borrowing books and accessing available databases.

ACCOMODATIONS AT THE ALUMNI HOUSE

BASED ON AVAILABILITY



- ONLINE COURSES
- NON-CREDIT COURSES
- CERTIFICATES
- FACILITY RENTALS FOR THOSE WITH AN EC DEGREE



AUDITING OF COURSES FOR SENIORS

- Based on available space
- Application fees are waived
- Fees associated with the course are responsibility of the auditor



SOARING EAGLES ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB

OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN THE BOOSTER CLUB FOR BENEFITS RELATED TO SOARING EAGLES ATHLETICS TEAMS/EVENTS



Now Accepting Submissions

Winter 2026 Edition of Class Notes

Deadline **January 7, 2026**

Images welcome, but space is limited. Please do not exceed 200 words. We reserve the right to edit submitted Class Notes.

Scan the QR code to submit your Class Notes or email them to alumni@elmira.edu.



ELMIRA EVERLASTING

SAVE THE DATE

Our annual 24-hour giving challenge will be on

April 22, 2026.

Help support future generations of Soaring Eagles with your generous contributions.



BE IT EVER SO

ALUMNI BOARD

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Current and former Alumni Board Members on campus during Reunion 2025.

Stay In Touch Year-Round With

ALUMNI LINK

Scan here to update your records and receive
the monthly email newsletter



IN MEMORIAM

As of October 29, 2025

Listed by primary Class Year, then alphabetically within each Class Year.

Jane Kahn Moses '45 3/28/2025	Gail Cooper O'Leary '63 12/6/2024	Kathleen Schelberg Berman '72 1/16/2025	Albert Valentine '83 4/21/2025
Eleanor Steele '47 12/15/2024	Kathie Simpson Reiter '63 2/10/2025	Ruth Hanneman Hull MS '72 6/17/2025	William Lamb '85 10/13/2025
Dorothy Wright Merrill '48 8/16/2025	Annette Kaysa Wyszkowski '63 8/3/2025	Joseph Michalko '72 3/1/2025	Patrick Richardson '85 12/16/2024
Helen Bostelmann Kidess '49 4/30/2025	Linda Landers Burke '64 7/31/2025	Mary Pazahanick MS '72 2/13/2025	Nancy McKenna MEd '86 1/26/2025
Ann Garvey Logan '49 12/7/2024	Nancy Hartman Dickson '64 1/19/2025	William Templar '72 11/28/2024	Margaret Lane Peary '86 11/18/2024
Nai Chang Smith '49 3/30/2025	Kamlesh Kumari-Lobo '64 4/3/2025	Gail Petersen Bell '73 5/19/2025	Michael Holmes '87 12/10/2024
Gracia Gaynor Winget '49 1/18/2025	Sidney Mann MS Ed '64 3/30/2025	Patricia Arnold Donahue MS '73 3/27/2025	Connie Tubbs '87 1/6/2025
	Linda Steinberg Shapiro '64 1/6/2025	Charles Utz MS '73 3/5/2025	Daniel Reynolds '88 1/31/2025
	Ann Collins '65 7/7/2025	Charles Erle '74 11/10/2024	Marie Gallo Colucci MS '89 1/29/2025
	Sandra Messick Drechsel '65 5/26/2025	John Tompkins MS '74 2/27/2025	
	Frederick Hunt MS '66 2/20/2025	Barbara Flowers Maestas '75 2/27/2025	Sandra Hall MEd '90 1/25/2025
	Mary Carroll Marden '66 12/27/2024	Joan Iverson Fraser MS '76 2/4/2025	Melinda Vondracek '90 2/5/2025
	Hersh Rozen MS '66 3/20/2025	Gladys Beebe MS '77 12/8/2024	Jeffrey Stockton '91 3/25/2025
	Barbara Lyon Rogge '67 12/21/2024	Jim Goodwin '77, MS '83 4/20/2025	Mark Luft '92 3/15/2025
	Patricia Petelchuk Lutz '68 5/19/2025	Thelma Hilfiger MS '77 1/23/2025	Raymond Morales '92 12/1/2024
	David Morgan '68 1/17/2025	David Keller '77 4/15/2025	Stephen Fenson MEd '95 11/27/2024
	Cynthia Doty Stirling '68 7/14/2025	Marcia Miller '77 7/25/2025	Scott Holmes '95 7/11/2025
	C. Anne Wallace Barsano '69 6/7/2025	Patricia Kellogg Crane, MS '78 8/26/2025	Emily Aransky '96 9/20/2025
	Carol Wharton Hull MS '69 9/4/2025	Carol Dieffenderfer MS '78 8/9/2025	Carol Howard MS Ed '97 7/4/2025
		Mary Henneberger Antoniow '79 3/28/2025	David O'Hearn '00 7/29/2025
		Mary Carnicelli MEd '79 7/20/2025	Rosalie Davy McCartney MEd '03 1/17/2025
		Phyllis King MEd '79 1/14/2025	Alan O'Brien '03 10/7/2025
		Jacqueline McCall '79 7/29/2025	
		V. Truscott MS '79 11/1/2024	Roger Lathrop MS '11 1/23/2025
			Michaela Marrone-Brewer '17 8/14/2025
Nancy Oster Heydt '60 4/29/2025	Doris Burley MS '70 12/7/2024	Patricia Kush MEd '81 6/12/2025	
Harry Hillman, MS '63 8/19/2025	Newell Butler MS '70 12/12/2024	Steven Leclerc '81 3/5/2025	
Nancy Lauckner '63 7/30/2025	Florence Epstein Leibin '70 9/28/2025	Rocky Criss '82 8/9/2025	
	Barbara Smith Spitzer '70 9/2025		
	Nora Welch Trimm '70 1/9/2025		
	Cathy Nelson Bordinger '71 5/16/2025		
	Joseph O'Brien MS '71 8/8/2025		
	Joan Rennells Baker '72 10/14/2025		



Elmira College
One Park Place
Elmira, New York 14901
www.elmira.edu

WELCOME BACK TO EC!

ATHLETICS ALUMNI WEEKEND

January 30-31, 2026

REUNION

TBA 2026



ALL CLASSES WELCOME!

Reunion 2026 will celebrate
anniversary classes ending in 1 and 6.

