

---

March 19, 2026

**Monroe University Recognized with “Pathway Builder Award”  
at 2026 New York State College Access Conference**

**Bronx, NY** -- Monroe University proudly announced that it was presented last week with the Pathway Builder Award at the 2026 New York State College Access Conference (NYSCAC), sponsored by the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC).

Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) is New York State’s student financial aid agency. Its annual Pathway Builder Award honors colleges and community organizations that expand access to higher education for underserved and underrepresented students. Monroe’s inclusion among this year’s honorees underscores its strong commitment to reducing financial barriers through increased FAFSA completion, hands-on support for families navigating financial aid, and clear, practical guidance that helps students confidently plan for the cost of college.

“We’re honored to receive this recognition, which reflects the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and community partners, who strive every day to support students and help make a college education more affordable and attainable,” said Marc Jerome, President of Monroe University.

This recognition at the 2026 NYSCAC conference highlights the meaningful impact Monroe University is making through its financial aid work. Recognizing that affordability is a major barrier to higher education for many students, especially those in underserved communities, the University has prioritized innovative institutional aid programs that reduce the financial burden for students.

One of the standout programs is the Presidential Partnership Program, an innovative scholarship initiative launched in 2016 that has provided nearly \$60 million in institutional aid to more than 4,000 students. Through this program, the majority of local recipients have been able to attend Monroe with little to no out-of-pocket costs, earning their undergraduate degree with little to no student loan debt.

Monroe takes a comprehensive approach to financial aid by integrating financial literacy into students’ educational experiences through seminars, one-on-one advising, and specialized resources that cover budgeting, responsible borrowing, and navigating FAFSA and financial aid

systems, led by its Student Financial Services team, which also provides personalized guidance to students and families throughout the FAFSA and TAP application process.

Since 2017, the institution has worked to boost FAFSA completion rates by hosting bilingual, hands-on workshops at local high schools and offering open FAFSA assistance events that serve as a vital community resource, raising awareness of financial aid opportunities. Extending beyond campus, Monroe provides free college preparation workshops and application support to all community members, regardless of their intended college, reflecting its commitment to expanding access to higher education.

“We believe that college access is not just about opening the doors to our University but about opening doors for entire communities,” added President Jerome. “By meeting students and families where they are – academically, financially, and linguistically – we help empower them to take charge of their futures.”

## **ABOUT MONROE UNIVERSITY**

Founded in 1933, Monroe University is a recognized leader in urban and international education. The University is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, especially among first-generation students, and for the national recognition it receives for its strong impact on graduates’ social mobility.

Monroe educates 10,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s degree programs from New York campuses in the Bronx and New Rochelle, as well as in the Caribbean nation of Saint Lucia. Students may also pursue degree programs through Monroe Online. Programs are offered through Schools of Allied Health Professions, Business and Accounting, Criminal and Social Justice, Education, Hospitality Management, Information Technology, and Nursing, as well as through its King Graduate School. Liberal arts and continuing education programs are also available. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroeu.edu>.