

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Delaware Supreme Court meets in Sussex County for the first time

On Tuesday, March 19, 2024, the Delaware Supreme Court held oral arguments in Sussex County for the first time in its history as part of an ongoing effort to increase outreach to the community and high school students in particular.

All five members of the state's highest court met at Delaware Technical Community College's Owens Campus in the Arts and Science Center. In the audience were high school students from the Academic Challenge Program, a partnership between Delaware Tech and the Sussex County school districts, as well as students from Delaware Tech's criminal justice, human services, and legal studies programs. The court heard arguments in two cases – one criminal and one civil – and afterward answered questions from the students.

"We were delighted to hold Supreme Court arguments for the first time in Sussex County. I hope we were able to show Delaware students how the court operates and answer a few of their questions," said Delaware Supreme Court Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr. "My hope is that this program inspired the students to consider a legal career to follow in our footsteps and to serve the citizens of Delaware." The Chief Justice also thanked Del Tech for agreeing to host the court.

"We are grateful that the Supreme Court came to our campus to allow our students the opportunity to witness such an important function of our democracy," said Delaware Tech President Mark Brainard.

The collaboration completes one of the recommendations from the Supreme Court-commissioned Strategic Plan on Improving Diversity in the Delaware Bench and Bar, which was released in January 2022. The recommendation was one of seven in the Strategic Plan's section on improving the court's visibility and outreach to pre-college students in the state. Other recommendations from this section have been tackled through a partnership with the Delaware Law-Related Education Center that is working with educators on creating and implementing a civics curriculum for Delaware public schools in grades K-12.

The Sussex County visit comes just weeks after the completion of another significant recommendation from the Strategic Plan – increasing the frequency of the administration of the Delaware Bar Exam from once to twice a year. Traditionally Delaware has only offered the exam once a year, in July. This year, however, for the first time an earlier administration of the Bar was held in February.

A full report to update the community on the progress of fulfilling recommendations in the 2022 report will be released in the coming weeks.