



# Running on Empty: The Rise and Fall of Southampton College, 1963-2005

*John A. Strong*

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**Running on Empty: The Rise and Fall of Southampton College, 1963-2005** John A. Strong  
*Explores how Southampton College went from “the jewel in the university crown” to an “albatross around the university neck.”*

Southampton College, the easternmost campus of Long Island University, opened with great promise in 1963 and closed in 2005 amidst great acrimony. Located in an idyllic environmental setting on the Atlantic shore of Long Island, it had a nationally recognized marine science program that produced an unprecedented number of Fulbright awards and an impressive number of alumni who went on to careers in prestigious universities and research centers. David Steinberg, the president of Long Island University since 1985, referred to Southampton as “the jewel in the university crown.” However, an accumulating yearly deficit led Steinberg and the Long Island Board of Trustees to view the campus as an “albatross around the university neck.” Based on extensive interviews of faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and staff, this book is both a celebration of a college beloved by those who were part of the campus community and a cautionary tale of an educational institution struggling to survive without a sufficient endowment.

“This is an exceptionally well-written narrative history of the Southampton branch of Long Island University.” — *Long Island History Journal*

“John A. Strong has written a brilliant book ... there’s nothing like an in-depth book by a good historian.” — *The Southampton Press*

“*Running on Empty* is that rare scholarly beast—the story of an institution that perished. This innovative study is an antidote to the numerous success stories that fill the history of higher education. Failures are usually academic orphans, as records disappear and participants scatter. Strong has overcome those obstacles to tell the story of a doomed college by using the archives of Long Island University’s other campuses and conducting numerous oral histories. This is an impressive and instructive feat.” — W. Bruce Leslie, coeditor of *SUNY at Sixty: The Promise of the State University of New York*

“An important narrative and analysis of the history of a small private, independent college, which failed to survive even though it was a branch of a large university. It is rare for a closed college to receive such thorough consideration. This book is based on extensive research in institutional archives enriched by numerous oral histories, as well as personal experiences and contacts. As a longtime faculty member, Strong is able to provide an insider’s viewpoint of this very special college.” — Natalie A. Naylor, Professor Emerita, Hofstra University

John A. Strong is Professor Emeritus at Long Island University. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Unkechaug Indians of Eastern Long Island: A History*.

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