March 25, 2015

Welcome to Spring
Whether it feels like it or not, it is spring and on March 25, SUNY Potsdam celebrated the College's 199th birthday by kicking off the final phase of Take the Lead: The Campaign for Potsdam. I am thrilled to announce that once again we have exceeded our goal, raising $28.3 million to date. The Third Century Challenge is the final phase and with the record-breaking momentum, we have an enhanced goal of $32 million by our bicentennial celebration. I want to thank all of you who have worked and continue to work tirelessly on the Campaign for Potsdam.

Looking to the Future Project for Strategic Planning
I have asked the Faculty Senate Goals and Planning Committee to assist the entire SUNY Potsdam community in our planning for the College's third century. The committee has been hard at work and has launched an online questionnaire as one way to collect ideas and feedback from members of the campus and community. We are encouraging all to express their ideas in creative ways, including short videos. Please take a moment to join the conversation and inform the College's strategic planning process.
http://www.potsdam.edu/about/administration/facultysenate/lookingforward/index.cfm

The Diversity of Diversity on Campus
I continue to be inspired by the diversity of the SUNY Potsdam community. As we work to ensure that all are fully embraced within our community, I am mindful of the complexity that comes as our community changes and grows. The Diversity in Action Coalition, the campus organization charged by me with leading our diversity efforts, has been hard at work assessing our campus climate and responding to the concerns raised by students in our winter forum on race. The DIAC, led by faculty member Dr. John Youngblood and student vice chair Jully Gomez, is actively working on a number of initiatives. I invite you to read the letter outlining their progress, including work toward developing training for faculty and staff, assessing the results of the Campus Climate survey, and developing additional programming. In addition, PACES is collecting student feedback on menu options in order to cater to a broader array of student tastes and has tested a number of new options in Lehman Hall. In order to accommodate growing student demand, a second group is making recommendations for enhancing the Center for Diversity. http://www.potsdam.edu/about/diversity/upload/lettertocampus.pdf

New Majors & Program Offerings
SUNY Potsdam has been approved to offer new baccalaureate programs in the vibrant and growing field of graphic design and media arts. The College's Department of Art will offer two tracks in the new graphic design and media arts major—one leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree, and another leading to the rigorous Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. The College has also been approved to offer a new bachelor's degree program in the emerging field of international studies, with a new interdisciplinary social science major that combines coursework from politics and economics, enriched with a history foundation. Finally, SUNY Potsdam has also entered into an articulation agreement with the Rockefeller College at the University at Albany, in support of creating a new joint BA/MPA degree program.
Healthy Plant Initiative Launched
The Healthy Plant Initiative is a student-run program designed to create healthier, more attractive plants around campus. Student interns from SUNY Potsdam's Department of Biology will help diagnose plant health and advise you on the best plan to save or improve your indoor plantings. If employees have plants in their office or department, they can request student interns to visit and consult on how to improve their plant's health by emailing hpi@track.potsdam.edu.

LoKoFest
I want to remind everyone of the upcoming Lougheed Kofoed Festival of the Arts, otherwise known as LoKoFest. The festival will kick off on April 24, with what I hope will be a very creative and inspiring inauguration celebration. Once again, we are so grateful to the generous support of Kathy and Don Lougheed in their support of our culture of creativity with what is shaping up to be an incredible line up of artists, scholars and musicians, including many alumni returning to exhibit their talents once again on our campus. Please check out the preliminary program at http://www.potsdam.edu/about/artscampus/artsfestival/.

Bears Athletics
I would like to congratulate the Bears Men's Hockey team in taking their season all the way to the SUNYAC quarterfinals, hosted at home. Well done! Spring sports are in full force, so please join me in the stands and support our Potsdam Bears whenever you can!

Potsdam Pointercounts Fourth in the Nation
Over the weekend, the Potsdam Pointercounts placed fourth in the national semi-finals for the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella, in Boston's Symphony Hall. The all-male singing group is the oldest student a cappella organization at SUNY Potsdam. The Counts reached fourth place out of more than 300 groups who competed in the Northeast region this year. We are so proud.

Although spring temperatures are slow to rise, I remain impressed by the tremendous warmth and hospitality of the Potsdam community and invigorated by the tremendous creative energy of our campus. I encourage you to get involved with our campus community and support our students in all of their efforts. Whether it is the Relay for Life, the second annual Gay Pride Parade, a performance of the Monkey King, or a women's softball game, please join me in embracing and supporting our diverse campus community.