Greetings from the Provost’s Office!

It’s hard to believe that the end of the fall semester is already here! With my first full semester at SUNY Potsdam behind me, I want to take this opportunity thank you for making me feel so welcome. I am certainly looking forward to many more semesters of productive and collaborative work as we finalize and implement our goals for Academic Affairs!

I also want to again thank those of you who have provided feedback regarding this newsletter. Please keep sharing your thoughts and ideas on how I can best communicate with you and across Academic Affairs—your insight is invaluable!

Have a wonderful winter break… and I’ll see you “next year”!

New Faces/New Positions

Center for Applied Learning. For spring 2017, the Center welcomes Megan Burke as the new Applied Learning Advisor. Megan is a Clarkson alumna, with experience working for TAUNY, the St. Lawrence International Film Festival, and as a graduate assistant in the Center for Applied Learning. Megan’s primary responsibility will be advising students on all facets of applied learning at SUNY Potsdam, so she will be visiting all of our campus departments to learn more about your programs. Megan can be reached at burkem@potsdam.edu. Please welcome her!

Campus Updates

Moodle/Blackboard. I want to thank everyone for their input on our recent campus-wide discussion regarding the decision whether or not to transition from Moodle to Blackboard; I especially want to acknowledge those of you who took the time to provide feedback via the “Coffee and Conversation” and/or the online poll. After careful consideration of both the concerns and benefits associated with a possible transition, the campus leadership has made the decision to remain with Moodle for at least the next two academic years. This will allow us
time to fully assess our recent transition to the off-site host for Moodle, and to carefully examine the costs of time and labor that a transition and appropriate training would entail. Although the benefit of accessing SUNY’s HelpDesk would have been substantial if we were a Blackboard campus, and was for me the most compelling reason to consider the transition, the timing for such a transition just isn’t optimal. As we move forward, I am hoping that we can more effectively tap into the system-wide Moodle community in order to identify avenues for cross-institutional support and resources for our faculty, staff, and students. Please let me know if you have any questions—and thank you again for your insightful input!

**Department of Environmental Studies.** As of January 2017, the newly formed Department of Environmental Studies will be officially instated! The Department will offer an Environmental Studies Major, an Environmental Studies Minor, and an Environmental Science Minor (with the latter managed jointly with the Geology and Biology Departments), and will be chaired by Dr. Heather Sullivan-Catlin. Currently, there are approximately 80 majors and minors enrolled in Environmental Studies. We are confident that interest in this exciting programmatic area will grow, and will fill a very unique niche for our region and state!

**Upgrades to Kellas Hall.** As many of you are already aware, Kellas Hall is overdue for some substantial upgrades which will necessitate it being “offline” beginning with the summer 2017 semester. Kallas is scheduled to reopen for the start of the fall 2018 semester. The primary purpose of the renovation is to upgrade an aging and inefficient HVAC system. Because the upgrading of HVAC, in particular, will be so disruptive (all ceilings must be torn out to replace ducts, etc.) the campus is presented with the opportunity to replace/upgrade a vast quantity of problematic architectural elements. For example, improvements will also be made to acoustics, especially in the lecture halls, and lecture halls will have electrical outlets added throughout the seating area for students’ use during class. Control of systems, including heating/cooling and lighting, will be significantly improved for both comfort and efficiency/economy. Also notable will be needed enhancements to seating in the Commons including the addition of a lounge area for students at the north end of the building. In addition, the downstairs bathrooms will be completely renovated and the entire building will be equipped with a fire suppression system. Finally, the building is due for and will receive a new roof with improved thermal insulation. While these upgrades are critical, concerns with relocating classes and offices for the duration of the construction are certainly being noted. I will be working directly with the Space Utilization Committee, Facilities, and CTS to ensure that spaces are identified for classes during this period. I realize ahead of time that these changes will be an inconvenience, and I appreciate your flexibility and understanding as we complete these very critical upgrades in one of our most utilized buildings!
Council of Chairs and Academic Program Directors. I am very pleased to announce the reinstatement of the Council of Chairs and Academic Program Directors, which is under the leadership of Tom Baker (tri-chair, A&S), Lonel Woods (tri-chair, Crane), Joe Timmerman (tri-chair, SOEPS), and Caroline Downing (Secretary). The goals of the Council are twofold: 1.) to provide a forum for teaching faculty to share information, solve problems, inform academic decision-making, and propose new academic initiatives; and 2.) advise and dialogue with the Provost regarding campus-wide academic concerns and initiatives. The Council’s leadership is in the process of planning its upcoming spring meetings. I want to thank the leadership team for volunteering their time for this important service, and I look forward to supporting the work of the Council over the coming semesters.

Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE). The Council of Chairs and Program Directors is facilitating an important opportunity for our campus, a survey of faculty job satisfaction. This survey research is part of a national program called the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE), which has been operating from the Harvard Graduate School of Education since 2003. Participation will entail completing a 25-minute, web-based survey; your unique link to the survey will be emailed to you directly from COACHE.

While there are many surveys that faculty are asked to complete, this one was designed entirely to determine current job satisfaction compared to faculty at peer institutions. Your views are especially important to us as we strive to attract and retain the best and brightest scholars and teachers, increase the satisfaction of all faculty, and identify areas across Academic Affairs in which we can improve. The survey is completely confidential and will be handled through the COACHE project team at Harvard. Your privacy will be maintained in all published and written data, and your identity will be carefully protected in all information, including the summary analysis, that COACHE will share with our campus.

The Council of Chairs and Academic Program Directors and I welcome this opportunity to learn from an independent, research-driven, comparative study. I want to thank Jill Pearson, Judy Singh, Caroline Downing, Tom Baker, Joe Timmerman, and Lonel Woods for their leadership in this critical initiative. I also want to thank all of you in advance for your participation in this survey.
**Periodic Review Report.** Our campus is required to submit a Periodic Review Report (PRR) to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in June 2017. The PRR includes a summary of our progress on the recommendations from our 2012 Self-Study and External Review Report as well as verification of our continued compliance with accreditation standards. The draft PRR report will be shared with our campus community in January. In order to be sure the report is comprehensive, there will be several opportunities early in the spring semester for you to share input. Please watch your Potsdam email in January for this information. Thanks in advance for your participation!

**Arts Integration.** We had a small but enthusiastic group who braved the cold and attended the “Coffee and Conversation” on December 15th to brainstorm ideas around the issue of arts integration. We focused on two specific issues—innovative ways to increase cross-disciplinary experiences for our students and faculty, and ideas for addressing coordination of facilities and programming across Crane, the PAC, and CPS. As a result of the meeting, I’ll be working with the Deans early in the spring semester to put together two ad hoc groups to continue these creative conversations. Let me know if you are interested!

**Strategic Planning.** Feedback continued to be gathered on the campus’ strategic planning document over the fall semester both in individual area meetings and on the web. As a result, the Strategic Planning Committee (comprised of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and expanded President’s Council) has created what is hoped will be a final draft vision document for review and input from the entire campus community. This document is posted on the strategic planning website under the title, “Vision for Our Best in 2021,” ([http://www.potsdam.edu/about/administration/president/strategicplanning](http://www.potsdam.edu/about/administration/president/strategicplanning)) and is meant to serve as a guiding strategic vision. You are invited to review this document and the feedback received on previous drafts, and send any comments to rourkecm@potsdam.edu. Once this vision document is finalized, implementation teams will be identified and begin work on developing specific, measurable goals and timetables. In addition, an all-campus forum will be held at the beginning of the spring semester. I strongly encourage each of you to participate in the forum as we put our campus-wide strategic plan into action.

Because it’s important that the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan aligns with the goals and priorities of the campus, I continue to refine the draft Academic plan which will be ready to share across our Division as soon as the campus-wide Vision document has been vetted. I anticipate that we’ll hold a “Coffee and Conversation” early in the spring semester to begin to critically examine this plan, and ensure that it aligns both with the overall goals of the campus as well as our collaborative priorities across Academic Affairs.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan Task Force is pleased to release the final draft of the DEI Strategic Plan to the campus. The document can be found at the following link: https://www.potsdam.edu/diversity/strategicplan. As indicated in previous communications, this is a living document that will be adjusted as the need arises. The campus community is encouraged to specifically take a look at the last two columns in the plan—partners and timelines—and let members of the DEI Task Force know if there are any missing departments/units or if any adjustments need to be made for specific strategies. You are also encouraged to start executing the suggested/recommended strategies for the goals/objectives pertaining to your specific area(s). Congratulations to all faculty, staff, and students who participated in the creation of this strategic plan!

Law Enforcement Training Institute. I am pleased to announce the creation of the SUNY Potsdam Law Enforcement Training Institute, directed by Sonny Duquette and University Police Chief Tim Ashley. Under the auspices of the Institute, 24 students are already enrolled for our inaugural Police Academy, beginning with Spring semester 2017. The Academy will grant the students 12 credits of applied learning experience in a curriculum approved by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and augmented by the expertise of our SUNY Potsdam Criminal Justice faculty. The Academy will be taught out of Maxcy Hall and across campus for various experiential parts of the curriculum. Questions about the Academy can be directed to Sonny Duquette at duquetar@potsdam.edu or Toby White at whitetj@potsdam.edu.

College Libraries Update. In spring 2017 the Libraries will be implementing a Life Topics collection of books -- popular titles on sensitive topics (as well as books on coping with college and life) that students might find helpful, but might not be comfortable asking for help in person. Topics identified so far include: pregnancy, sex, rape, GLBTQ+, depression, anxiety and stress management, suicide, race, bias/discrimination, religion, alcohol and drug use, relationships, anger management, eating disorders, freedom of speech, social media, finances, and more. If members of the campus community have suggestions about books or topics, please contact Marianne Hebert at hebertm@potsdam.edu who is coordinating the collection.

The Libraries have received a $10,000 grant from the Northern New York Library Network to purchase technology for a makerspace/innovation lab in Crumb Library. The Libraries will begin construction in the lobby of Crumb over Winterim 2017 to house this new space, and will begin developing programming with the new technology in the spring semester. If you are interested in joining in the innovation lab’s planning process, please reach out to Jenica Rogers at rogersjp@potsdam.edu.
The Libraries will be sponsoring and promoting a series of displays and events centered on the freedoms espoused in the Bill of Rights throughout Spring 2017. Freedom of expression, assembly, and the press as well as our rights to privacy will all be explored. Areas of focus will include why these rights matter, what the practical implications are, and how students can engage with the concepts. If you would like to join us in planning the Freedom Series, please reach out to Jessica Ramey at rameyjm@potsdam.edu.

On January 15, the Libraries will switch to a new version of its website. While this will be an improvement for everyone, it will require that any faculty member who has assignments using particular web pages or screen shots will need to change those assignments and images. If you have any questions about the transition, please contact Carol Franck, franckcr@potsdam.edu.

**Registrar’s Update.** The application for undergraduate degrees has been moved to an online form: [http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/Registrar/graduation/undergraddegreeapp](http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/Registrar/graduation/undergraddegreeapp). This change reflects the Registrar’s ongoing commitment to improving the office’s practices with a focus on efficiency and productivity. Added to the system are “force complete” fields which require students to submit their contact information. The Registrar’s Office worked with Alumni Relations to allow access to the completed applications in an effort to better collect contact information to more effectively allow the institution to follow up with our graduates. As of Fall 2016, Virtual EMS is being used to book space on the SUNY Potsdam campus, including spaces for meetings, events, study sessions, guest speakers, student organization events, etc. Visit [www.potsdam.edu/request](http://www.potsdam.edu/request) to learn more or to make a request!

**Institutional Review Board Updates.** The role of SUNY Potsdam’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to develop and implement procedures for the protection of human subjects in research. Integral to its responsibilities, the IRB has developed policies and procedures for the conduct of research involving human subjects with the following goals: to protect the rights, wellbeing, and personal privacy of individuals; to assure a favorable climate for the conduct of scientific inquiry; and to protect the interests of SUNY Potsdam and its faculty, staff, students and other persons acting under its auspices. SUNY Potsdam policy on requirements for IRB review states that all campus research with human subjects must be reviewed by the campus IRB. That policy can be found on the IRB website ([http://www.potsdam.edu/faculty/research/rsps/irb](http://www.potsdam.edu/faculty/research/rsps/irb)). It is the investigator’s responsibility to contact and work with the IRB office to determine how to best proceed with projects (faculty, staff and/or student led and including classroom projects) they think (a) might not be research or (b) might be exempt from IRB review. Those determinations come from a review of project details that come in the form of submitted protocols. Faculty can contact the IRB Chair, Kelly Bonnar, at bonnarkk@potsdam.edu, or x2688/3188 for more information.
**Coffee and Conversation**

I am in the process of planning next semester’s “Coffee and Conversations.” The following topics have been suggested:

- Middle States PRR
- Academic Affairs Strategic Planning
- SSC Campus/New Advising Support
- COACHE Survey

What topics are of interest to you?? Please email your suggestions to me at bergerbs@potsdam.edu.

**Coming Due!**

**Innovation Competition.** The Economic Fusion planning committee, in conjunction with Career Planning and the Center for Applied Learning, is pleased to offer a $300 stipend to the first 12 faculty members who agree to add a required assignment and event to their spring 2017 syllabus. The theme for 2017 is Sustainability, broadly defined. “Sustainability implies responsible and proactive decision-making and innovation that minimizes negative impact and maintains balance between ecological resilience, economic prosperity, political justice and cultural vibrancy to ensure a desirable planet for all species now and in the future.”


If you would like to see a sample assignment or discuss the details of this project, please call or email Jenica Rogers at x3328 or rogersjp@potsdam.edu.

**Facult-TE Awards.** Facult-TE Award funding is now available for the 2016-17 Academic Year. The complete award criteria and guidelines for application can be found at http://www.potsdam.edu/faculty/CCI/faculte. With the late start to this year’s funding cycle, applications may be submitted for projects that have happened prior to December 31st (projects happening after 12-31-16 must be submitted as normal). Please note, you will not be eligible for expense reimbursement if you did not complete the appropriate campus travel requisition paperwork prior to your trip. Please contact the CCI (x4820, cci@potsdam.edu) if you have any questions.
**Mark Your Calendars!**

**Learning and Research Fair.** The 2017 Learning and Research Fair will be held **Wednesday, April 12, 2017, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** in the Barrington Student Union. Our campus excels in high impact practices including undergraduate student research. Since its inception over 22 years ago, the Learning and Research Fair has been a wonderful opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to share their research, teaching/learning innovations, creative efforts, and scholarly achievements. The Learning & Research Fair 2017 Registration Form is posted under “Learning and Research Fair” on the Research and Sponsored Programs Office Home Page: [https://www.potsdam.edu/faculty/research/rspo/fair](https://www.potsdam.edu/faculty/research/rspo/fair). I strongly encourage your participation, and continued support of this invaluable event!

Student presenters at the Fair will be able to compete for awards administered by the Center for Applied Learning’s Center for Student Research. Further information about those awards will be forthcoming in the early spring semester. Please direct questions about the awards to Annie Butterfield at ext. 2507 or butterla@potsdam.edu.

**Day of Reflection.** Please save **Monday, February 13 and Tuesday, February 14** from 3pm to 8pm for our Spring 2017 Days of Reflection: Education for Racial Equity and Justice, sponsored by the SUNY Potsdam Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Day of Reflection offers lectures, workshops, and performances which engage SUNY Potsdam students, faculty, and staff in learning about and discussing racial equity and justice. As we all come from a wide range of backgrounds, we can benefit from greater understanding of issues of racial equity and justice. As President Esterberg suggested in her closing remarks after the first Day of Reflection, the hope is that we can continue to gain a richer understanding of our community and work toward creating and sustaining an environment that honors the intrinsic worth of each and every individual. For more information, please email Dr. Jennifer Mitchell, mitchejk@potsdam.edu.

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**Awards & Recognition**

**SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor.** Congratulations to **Dr. Laura Person**, Professor of Mathematics, who has been named as a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor by the SUNY Board of Trustees! As described by SUNY’s Chancellor, the **Distinguished Teaching Professorship** recognizes and honors mastery of teaching. Candidates must consistently
demonstrate superior mastery of teaching; outstanding service to students; and commitment to their ongoing intellectual growth, scholarship and professional growth, and adherence to rigorous academic standards and requirements. It is clearly evident that Dr. Person has met and exceeded these high qualifications. Having taught over 20 different undergraduate and graduate courses, and served as a mentor for new faculty, she has proven herself a skilled and outstanding professor. Her numerous awards include the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, Favorite Professor of the Mathematics Department, and the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. Dr. Person has published two well-used textbooks, Write Your Own Proofs in Set Theory and Discrete Mathematics (co-author Amy Babich) and Topology Notes. Her exceptional teaching has been recognized by colleagues across the country through multiple honors from the Mathematical Association of America. The Seaway Section invited her to present the distinguished Randolph Lecture and presented her with the Clarence F. Stephens Distinguished Teaching Award – intended to honor someone with documented exceptional teaching effectiveness whose influence has extended beyond the institution. I am very proud to have Dr. Person as a member of SUNY Potsdam’s faculty!

**Rising Stars.** I would like to extend my congratulations to the following individuals, who have been recognized as this year’s SUNY Potsdam “Rising Stars“:

- Sean Partridge- Student Success Center
- Josh LaFave- Graduate and Continuing Studies
- Lisa Stewart- School of Education and Professional Studies
- Erica Kaiser- Admissions

**Educator of the Year.** Dr. Susan Stebbins, Professor of Anthropology, was recently honored with the 2016 Educator of the Year Award by the Native American Indian Association of New York. This Award is presented to an individual who has shown a commitment to the education of Native American students, and who has contributed to the overall knowledge of Native peoples of our state. Congratulations, Susan, on this prestigious and well-deserved honor!

**NASM Member.** Dean Michael Sitton has recently been named as a member of the National Association of Schools of Music Commission on Accreditation. Congratulations, Michael, on this important leadership role!

**Academic Transcript Honor.** Holly Chambers, Senior Assistant Librarian, has been awarded the Academic Transcript of the Quarter honor by one of the College Libraries’ online reference services. The Ask Us 24/7 Advisory Board commented:
“Holly was very thorough, friendly and professional. She clarified what information the student was looking for and took the student step by step in accessing articles from the Library’s databases. Holly also provided tips on narrowing the search by putting in the proper Subject terms and provided useful links. She also provided contact information for the student if he/she had any more questions.”

Congratulations, Holly!