September 2016

I want to begin by thanking all of the students, faculty and staff who have joined us at the recent Community Check-In events sponsored by the Center for Diversity. During these troubling times for our nation, I deeply appreciate the capacity of the Potsdam community to come together to share our hopes, frustrations and fears, and to work to support each other—even as violence and the rhetoric of hate threaten to sow division. Recognizing the deep sense of alienation and despair that many may feel, due to continued injustice, racism, and violence, I still believe in the power of our collective will to work toward advancing social justice and change—and that begins by addressing issues and supporting each other, right here on campus and in our community.

Strategic Planning
I am grateful to all of those who were able to attend our first campus-wide strategic planning session on September 12. By working together and continuing the dialogue, we can move forward and continue to progress in our third century of excellence at SUNY Potsdam. We are collecting the responses from the conversations that took place and are now scheduling opportunities to share the proposed draft plan in regular small group meetings. There is also an opportunity for input through a series of questionnaires on the website, at potsdam.edu/about/administration/president/strategicplanning. Your voice in this process is vital and I invite everyone to participate.

Outlook Email and Calendaring
The transition to Outlook is a change that I fully believe will benefit us all in the long run, but which has certainly created some frustration. Following multiple outages of our former email program and issues with our calendaring system, I charged our Computing and Technology Services department with facilitating the changeover to Outlook to conclude by the beginning of this fall semester. With this charge, there was little time for our hardworking CTS staff to create training opportunities for every member of our campus community who possesses a Potsdam.edu email address. This group, remember, includes thousands of students, faculty and staff members, and even more alumni and emeriti. I am grateful for the hard work by the members of our CTS department in managing the transition to Outlook and answering the many, many questions and concerns that have come to them throughout the process. In addition, I wish to express my thanks to Alex Gomez, who, realizing the need for campus-wide training on the new system, took the initiative to schedule multiple blocks of time and invited everyone to Outlook training in the Center for Creative Instruction. I ask for your continued patience as we all become accustomed to the new system.

The Bear Shuttle
We are very pleased with the first few weeks of the new Bear Shuttle bus service provided to all SUNY Potsdam students free of charge. We heard from our students and their families that they needed a form of transportation for the downtown Potsdam area. The Bear Shuttle operates daily, and makes stops at public parking in downtown Potsdam, as well as at Walmart, Price Chopper, Save-A-Lot and the Collegiate Village.
In the first 10 days of the semester, more than 1,000 students took advantage of this new service. For more information and the departure times, go to the website at potsdam.edu/bearshuttle.

Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
I am pleased to announce the creation of a new Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at SUNY Potsdam, which will bring together many of our existing programs, and report to Chief Diversity Officer Bernadette Tiapo. The division brings together the Center for Diversity, the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP), the North Country Science and Technology Entry Program (NCSTEP), Title IX, Affirmative Action, the SUNY Northern Consortium Native American Initiative, and the Native American Teaching Initiative (NATI) under one umbrella. One of the major initiatives currently being overseen through this division is the completion of the strategic plan on diversity, equity, and inclusion, which Bernadette is currently working on with a broad-based task force.

Campaign Closing Celebration and Third Century Kick Off
The entire campus community is invited to help celebrate the success of our Take the Lead Campaign and the official kick off of our third century. Together, we raised $33.5 million. We have asked students and faculty to share with us just how much of an impact this generosity has made in their lives, during the closing celebration this Friday, September 30 at 3 p.m. in Snell Theater. We will gather for refreshments in the PAC Lobby immediately following their moving performance. There will also be contests and prizes for students and faculty in attendance, so we look forward to seeing you there.

The Healthy Plant Initiative
The Wagner Institute for Sustainability and Ecological Research (WISER) has interns ready to help you with your plants! The Healthy Plant Initiative is a student-run program designed to create healthier more attractive plants around campus. If you have plants in your office or department, you can request student interns to visit and consult on how to improve your plant’s health. They also offer watering, transplanting and pruning services for all plants on campus. To make a request, please email hpi@track.potsdam.edu.

LoKo Festival Proposals
The sixth annual Lougheed-Kofoed Festival of the Arts will take place this spring from April 28 to May 7, 2017. The LoKo Festival includes theatre, dance, vocal and instrumental performances, visual arts exhibitions, creative writing programs and guest artists. New proposals are now being accepted for those requesting $1,000 or less to fund an arts-related event for the festival this spring. The deadline to apply is Thursday, November 10. Faculty, staff and students are welcome to apply for funds. You can find the proposal form and funding parameters here.

There will be an informal LoKo gathering on Wednesday, October 5 at noon in the Raymond Hall eighth floor dining room. This is an opportunity to meet with faculty who plan to bring artists to campus in the spring, so you can find ways to potentially collaborate, arrange classroom visits or find ways to incorporate festival activities into
your curriculum. This gathering is also a chance to ask questions about the funding process. If you have questions, please contact festival coordinator Katie Deuel at deuelkj@potsdam.edu or ext.2102.

**Preparedness Days**
Our SUNY Potsdam Environmental Health and Safety Officer, Torey Russell, has been hard at work scheduling a series of campus-wide fire and safety preparedness demonstrations and exercises, to be held from October 3 to October 5. Included among the three-day schedule of events will be a mock residence hall room fire, fire extinguisher training, simulated smoke hallway tours and safety information booths with agency representatives from the Office of Fire Prevention and Control, Renewal House, the Potsdam Fire Department, Potsdam Rescue Squad, Campus Rescue, Citizens Preparedness Corp., and more.

In particular, I would like to draw your attention to two presentations of “After the Fire” by Shawn Simons and Alvaro Llanos. These young men were college students and victims of an arson fire in a residence hall on the Seton Hall campus in New Jersey in 2000. Following years of recovery and therapy, Shawn and Alvaro embarked on a national effort to advocate for fire prevention and safety, and to serve as the voice for many burn victims across the country. They will provide two presentations to the campus on Monday, October 3 at noon and again at 6 p.m., in the Barrington Student Union.

**Final Thoughts**
Finally, as we enjoy the first days of fall, it is a time to observe and reflect upon the changes taking place around us every day. The colorful changing of the foliage is followed all too soon by empty branches, starkly beautiful in their own way, prior to the hibernation season and the transformation that will occur in the months ahead. Such is the process of change. Together, we can work through and embrace all manner of change – big and small – and find ourselves transformed for the better as individuals and as a campus.