In the last few weeks there have been new developments regarding the campus alliance between Canton and Potsdam. The central goal of the campus alliances is to reduce spending on administration so that it can be reinvested into academic programs and student services. Before I begin to outline the progress to date, let me reiterate what I have been reporting to all of our constituent groups: I do not anticipate that anyone will lose their job as we move forward with the strategic alliances. If we reduce positions it will occur through vacancies mainly at the supervisor, director, or vice presidential levels.

**Board Resolutions**

At their September meeting, the SUNY Board of Trustees endorsed a shared presidency for Cobleskill and Delhi, and for SUNYIT and Morrisville. With regard to Canton and Potsdam, the Trustees have asked that President Kennedy and I write a report to be presented by March 31, 2012. The report will make a recommendation with regard to the sharing of a presidency, based on the experience of the four other campuses and considering whatever progress has been made in sharing services between our two campuses. In this resolution the Trustees also mandated that we “work together promptly, diligently and cooperatively to explore and implement shared services where applicable.” Consequently, although we are asked to report on the larger issue of the shared Presidency in March, we are also called upon to move forward on the implementation of shared services.

**Discussions with Canton**

President Kennedy and I met in Canton in late September. This was our second meeting, and we are in frequent contact with one another via e-mail. As a result of conversations which are on-going among the Vice Presidents and Directors on both campuses, we believe that we can achieve collaboration between our respective HR and Purchasing offices. The Purchasing offices have already begun to work on the best way to integrate their operations. Our two HR departments soon will begin their conversations. We are also discussing how best to collaborate in Institutional Research and in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

**Chief Financial Officer**

Both campuses are served by Vice Presidents for Business Affairs (Administrative Services in Canton) who are retiring within the next year. As a result, with the approval of SUNY, President Kennedy and I have organized a search for a single Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the two campuses. We have appointed a joint committee, with five representatives from both campuses, to draft a job description. After completing the job description, this committee will become the search committee for the position. We hope that the committee can complete its work and we can be ready to appoint a new CFO by late April, about the same time that the Trustees will make their decision regarding the presidency for Potsdam and Canton.

**Other Areas of Discussion**

We are also looking at other offices on our two campuses which might collaborate. For example, President Kennedy and I have agreed to begin studying the possibility of creating a single cluster of offices relating to student administrative services. Because of the many different functions included here, and the important role which they play in the image and distinction of each campus, we will proceed with caution. President Kennedy has also suggested...
that we study the creation of an administrative services cluster, including HR and Purchasing. As those conversations develop, I will communicate about them in greater depth.

**Information Technology**

SUNY is offering to assist us in studying the IT requirements of each campus and the organizational structures we currently have in place. The IT director for the system and a team of others will be visiting the North Country in the next few weeks to study the IT systems on each campus and assist us as we look at how we might provide IT services on the two campuses. We are also inquiring about bringing in outside consultants to assist us in the crucial area of information technology.

**External Consultants**

We have hired the firm of The Education Alliance to serve as external consultants as we explore areas of greater collaboration. The senior partners of the firm are Drs. James Samels and James Martin who were contracted by the SUNY Chancellor in 2003 to examine the relationship between SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam.

**Image and Distinction of the Campuses**

The Chancellor has instructed us to respect and maintain the image and distinction of each campus. As a result, I believe that there are four broad areas which are off the table for consideration at this point. They are: Academics, Admissions, Advancement, and Athletics. These are the areas which are mostly closely identified with the traditions and history of each campus.

**Communication Plan**

In order to keep the campus informed about all aspects of the shared services program, working with the leadership of the Faculty Senate, we have developed a communication plan which consists of several mechanisms. I will meet with the Executive Committee of the Senate at their regular meetings to brief them on progress and to inquire as to the role which the Faculty Senate would like to play in each conversation and working group. For example, the Faculty Senate will be represented by Walt Conley on the CFO search committee. As well, I will share updates with the campus community to keep everyone informed about our progress. I am creating a special web page off of the President’s page where these messages will be stored. Beyond that I will also create a FAQ which I hope can address some of the common questions and misperceptions which people have about the alliances.

**Conclusion**

In all that we do regarding the campus alliance with Canton, it is important to stay focused on the goal of the project which is to reduce administrative costs in order to reinvest them directly in the student experience: academic programs and student services.