**Campus Alliance Update – November 1, 2011**

In the course of the last month, we have made steady progress in developing areas of collaboration with SUNY Canton, in keeping with the mandate from the SUNY Board of Trustees. We now have two joint searches underway, several offices are discussing ways to collaborate or to integrate their operations, and President Kennedy and I have secured a consultant to assist us in studying the options for the future of the campus alliance.

**Firm Hired to Assist with Study for SUNY**

At its September 20 meeting, the SUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution calling on SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton to continue to work together to implement shared services, with the goal of reducing administrative costs to reinvest that money into academic programs and student services. President Kennedy and I have also been asked to provide a report to the Board in March, with recommendations regarding the shared services alliance and the issue of a single presidency. In order to assist us in our investigation and in the preparation of this report, the two campuses have contracted with Dr. James Samels of The Education Alliance. Dr. Samels is very familiar with both SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton, having been engaged on two previous occasions to make recommendations about shared services and strategic directions for the campuses. President Kennedy and I have each had private meetings and telephone calls with Dr. Samels, and we have also participated in conference calls including representatives of the SUNY central administration. In November, Dr. Samels will be meeting with Vice Presidents of the two campuses, and possibly scheduling visits to campus. He will also allow us to place our activities in a larger national context, since he is the leading scholar of campus mergers and alliances.

**Campuses Work Together on Two Joint Searches**

President Kennedy and I have appointed a search committee to assist in the selection of a new single Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Business Affairs for the two campuses. The committee has drafted a job description and the advertisement for the position will be appearing shortly. Because of the potential uncertainty with regard to a single presidency, we have agreed that if the campus alliance ultimately does not occur, the person selected in the search will become the Vice President for Business Affairs at Potsdam. The members of the search committee from SUNY Potsdam are: Peter Brouwer, Walt Conley (faculty representative), Eric Duchscherer, Rick Miller (chair), Dan Scott (student representative) and Anastasia Thomas. We hope to have candidates visiting campus in March so that a final selection can be made in April 2012.

In Academic Affairs, we are also cooperating with SUNY Canton in hiring a Veterans/Military Coordinator. This person will provide invaluable assistance to our military veterans who seek to pursue degree programs at the two colleges. The process whereby a veteran pursues a degree program can often be daunting, because of the rules and regulations both from the military and also the confusion inherent in applying credits from several institutions for a degree. The new advisor will work with veterans to cut through some of this red tape.
Offices Discuss Collaboration, Integration

After consulting with the Vice Presidents, President Kennedy and I have decided to move forward in working to integrate the operations of our Payroll and Accounts Payable functions. These two offices are leading discussions right now to find ways to provide the best level of service to both campuses. Human Resources has also been identified as an important function in which the two campuses can collaborate. The offices of Institutional Research have also begun analyzing how they function on each campus such as in the reports they both routinely provide, and how they might collaborate in the future. Other offices engaged in collaborative discussions with their Canton counterparts include Research and Sponsored Programs, as well as the Libraries, especially with regards to cataloguing. The Education Opportunity Program offices are also exploring the possibility of creating a joint summer program.

Because Information Technology is central to so many things that we achieve campus-wide, President Kennedy and I have invited a team from SUNY to take a look at how we handle IT on the two campuses and to make suggestions as to how we might better collaborate, as well as to see if there are services external to the two campuses which might assist us in moving forward. That group will be on campus in early November.

Conclusion

In this important study and collaboration process, I welcome input from the SUNY Potsdam community. I continue to work with College leadership on the President’s Council and Faculty Senate as SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton move forward with the initiative. Faculty, staff and students are always welcome to attend open office hours to speak with me about this or any other issue.