Shared services update

As the fall semester draws to a close, SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton are continuing to make great strides toward shared services offerings to streamline and bolster services on both campuses. The campus alliance work is advancing in several important areas.

Budget

With the onset of the new SUNY budget resource allocation model, both SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton have realized the benefit of updating the campus budgeting process. Both colleges are now searching for a shared executive director of budgets. This position will be responsible for assisting in the design and rollout of a standardized budget process, which would allow Potsdam and Canton to share knowledge and resources. The SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton budget offices are working closely together on a new budget policies and procedures manual. This is especially beneficial, in light of both campuses needing to learn the details of a new budget model. Both campus budgets will continue to remain independent, with no mingling of funds.

Payroll

The two colleges identified the payroll function as an area for possible cooperation in January 2012. It was quickly understood that there was a need for change to reduce redundancy, gain efficiency, integrate solutions, standardize processes and procedures where possible, and lower costs. To accomplish this, it was necessary to move from two separate transactional entities to a shared dynamic, innovative operation. The two campuses completed an analysis, designed a phased approach for integrated payroll and identified short-term needs, starting with student payroll. Full implementation of the payroll project will be complete in March 2013. This will result in the payroll function being processed completely as one unit for both campuses.

Human Resources

In addition to payroll, the area of human resources has made significant headway toward sharing services. Mary K. Dolan, who was formerly the director of human resources at SUNY Potsdam, has been named the assistant vice president for human resources for both SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton. Betty Connolly, the former director of human resources at SUNY Canton, has accepted a position there as the assistant vice president for administration.
A new human resources generalist search is underway to assist on the Canton campus. This will create a structure of three generalist roles that will focus on talent acquisition, workplace relations and practices and HR operations. The shared office is tackling tasks such as implementing an online applicant system that will be the same at both campuses. A cost savings is expected, as well as critical efficiencies.

**Environmental Health & Safety**

The Office of Environmental Health & Safety is also charging forward with the shared services initiative. Calvin Smith, the director at SUNY Potsdam, has accepted the position of director of environmental health and safety for both campuses. This means that his time and responsibilities will be split, and his salary will be shared. He reports to Vice President for Business Affairs and Administrative Services Natalie Higley.

SUNY Canton did not previously have an EH&S department on campus, and in order to expedite its formation, a private occupational health, safety and environmental consulting firm will conduct a compliance analysis of all campus programs. This third-party assessment process is a private sector model, one that Smith used to enhance and expand the existing EH&S department at SUNY Potsdam when he joined the campus six years ago. The Colden Corporation, which also led the Potsdam analysis, is conducting the Canton assessment. Smith’s team at Potsdam now includes one EH&S professional, two inspection/testing technicians, a fire inspection manager and one support staff member.

Following the third-party assessment, the analysis will be used as the compliance framework and guide for the new EH&S program at SUNY Canton. It will also serve as a tool during the selection process for a new EH&S professional who will be hired specifically to fill Canton’s needs. Additionally, the campus may hire inspection/testing technicians, depending on the results of the analysis. Colden Corp. anticipates that this analysis will be complete in Spring 2013.

**Sustainability**

In addition to the efforts in the area of environmental health and safety, both campuses are working together to make both campuses more “green.” SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton are currently seeking a joint sustainability coordinator, to oversee efforts to reduce the carbon footprint at both colleges. This will replace the part-time sustainability position that SUNY Potsdam used to have, and will add a part-time professional to work toward these important goals on the Canton campus.