

Provost's Corner

Bette S. Bergeron, Provost & VP for Academic Affairs

January 25, 2017

Greetings from the Provost's Office!

Welcome to Spring Semester 2017! I hope that you, and your students, have had a wonderful “break” and are ready for what promises to be an exciting new semester!

Be sure to let the Provost's Office know about upcoming events and initiatives to pass along to our Academic Affairs division. Spring semester always seems uniquely packed with student events, performances, and exhibitions—which makes it my favorite time of the academic year! I anticipate that our campus will also be fully engaged with finalizing our Strategic Plan, and aligning these goals with the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, to guide our work over the next five years. Your input will be invaluable—I invite you to participate, share, and support these critical planning processes!

New Faces/New Positions

Jackie Rush-- I am pleased to let you know Jackie Rush has agreed to temporarily provide support in the President's Office, replacing Diane Brown who retired in December. Jackie retired from the College about a decade ago, where her last assignment was secretary in the Politics department. Last spring, she worked for a temporary period of time in the Provost's Office. Jackie's email address is rushjd@potdam.edu.

Thank you, Jackie, for your willingness to come out of retirement to help us out!!

Campus Updates

Student Opinion Surveys- Changes to “Gender” Question. Beginning immediately, I am requesting that students be directed *not* to complete the question regarding gender on the end of semester student opinion surveys; this change has been noted on the instructions for the administration of the surveys. This change has been prompted by recent concerns from our students and faculty regarding the very rigid binary designation of “gender” on the surveys (i.e., the only options are “male” and “female”), which do not reflect our campus' values

regarding the importance of respecting the full range of an individual's gender identity. In addition, there are concerns with lack of anonymity of students in small classes, where the reporting of gender could signal the identity of the respondent. We are working with the survey vendor to eliminate this question entirely; however, it will take some time for this change to be reflected in the survey itself. Thank you for your understanding, and for your continued focus on our campus-wide vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion!

Scantrons. I am very pleased to share that “scantronning” has found a new home. As you are aware, this function was coordinated out of the Provost's Office on a temporary basis in the fall semester to ensure that this service would remain uninterrupted for faculty. Starting this spring semester, the scantron function for class exams and student course opinion surveys will be coordinated through PIAR (Potsdam Institute for Applied Research) and will continue to be financially supported through the Provost's Office. Nothing will change for end-of-semester course evaluations—these will be collected in the Provost's Office as usual and will be centrally distributed to PIAR. Class exams will need to be delivered directly to PIAR, located on the 4th floor of Van Housen Extension. How these are handled will be up to individual faculty members/departments/schools. For example, Schools might decide to centrally collect exams and walk them over at certain times in the week. The quickest way to get them processed, however, is for faculty to take them directly over to Van Housen. I want to thank everyone for your patience in this transition, and especially want to acknowledge Patty Stone for her willingness to add this responsibility onto an amazingly full plate and to Alex Gomez in the CCI for his expert guidance!

On a related note, the cost of processing exams is becoming a potential fiscal challenge due to the time taken to individually set up templates for processing. While scantron technology is appropriate for very large classes, we will want to begin to have a conversation regarding other methodologies and assessment strategies for small classes. If you are interested in leading or participating in dialogue and/or professional development around course assessment, please don't hesitate to let me know!

Upper-Division Transfer Credit. At the December Senate meeting, a change to the upper-division credit policy was approved to provide more flexibility for departments. The newly approved policy states that:

Courses taught at the upper-division level at the transfer institution will transfer as upper-division credit. In general, courses taught at the lower-division level at that transfer institution will transfer as lower-division credit. However, a lower division course may transfer as equivalent in course content to an upper-division SUNY Potsdam course. In this situation, the decision to grant upper-division credit for the course rests

with the corresponding academic department in consultation with Academic Transfer Services.

Moodle/Blackboard. In case you missed last December's Provost's Corner newsletter, I want to remind everyone about the recent decision regarding our Learning Management System (LMS). After careful consideration of both the concerns and benefits associated with a possible transition from Moodle to Blackboard, and extremely helpful feedback from across the faculty and staff in Academic Affairs, 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!

Upgrades to Kellas Hall. As noted in the December Provost's Corner, Kellas Hall is overdue for some substantial upgrades which will necessitate it being "offline" beginning with the summer 2017 semester. Kellas 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. Control of systems, including heating/cooling and lighting, will be significantly improved for both comfort and efficiency/economy. 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 am currently working with a subgroup of the Space Utilization Committee 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!

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

Looking for previous copies of the Provost's Corner?

All editions of the Provost's Corner, as well as additional resources for faculty and staff, can be found at:

<http://www.potsdam.edu/about/administration/provost/>

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 will be shared with our campus community soon! In order to be sure the report is comprehensive, there will be several opportunities this semester for you to share input. Please watch your Potsdam email for this information. Thanks in advance for your participation!

Library Update. The website of the campus Libraries has been updated, and includes a new faculty information portal, available at: <http://library.potsdam.edu/faculty>. This includes easy links to many of the Libraries' policies, and answers questions specific to faculty members' teaching and research experiences. Please let the Library faculty and staff know if you can think of other topics you would like to see covered on this page!

Registrar's Update. SUNY Potsdam's Electronic Check-In process for all registered students began on Monday, January 9th. Students are now asked whether or not they plan to attend for the Spring 2017 semester when they sign in to BearPAWS. The purpose of the Check-In is to confirm student attendance as well as to remind students of their financial responsibility and the proper procedures to take if they decide to leave the college. In addition, this process also frees up more class seats for students who will be attending. Please note that all students registered for a class need to check-in including those who are student teaching, participating in off-campus internships, studying abroad, taking an on-line course, participating in a Consortium agreement, or attending courses at a remote site such as Watertown. This process also includes staff members taking a SUNY Potsdam course.

The deadline for registered students to complete the Check-In process will be Friday, February 3rd. Registered students who have not checked in by the deadline will have an All-Services Hold placed on their records, which can only be removed by the office responsible for their student type.

If you have questions about the Electronic Check-In process, please contact one of the offices below:

Registrar's Office 267-2154 registrar@potsdam.edu

Graduate & Continuing Education 267-4722 gradcon@potsdam.edu

Student Success Center 267-2580 SSC@potsdam.edu

Coffee and Conversation

I am in the process of planning this semester's "Coffee and Conversations." The following topics have been suggested (all are scheduled from 8:30-9:30 in the Raymond 8th floor dining room):

- Thursday, February 16th- Campus Updates/Middle States PRR
- Thursday, March 16th- Academic Affairs Strategic Planning
- Thursday, April 13th- SSC Campus/New Advising Support
- Friday, May 5th: TBD

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



Around the System/State

New York's Excelsior Scholarship. Governor Cuomo's recent announcement regarding a proposed plan to provide New York's residents with a "tuition-free" college education at CUNY and SUNY institutions through the Excelsior Scholarship has garnered a lot of attention and discussion around the state (and the country). Under the proposed plan, tuition would be free at SUNY or CUNY for students from families making up to \$125,000 per year, as long as the students are enrolled full-time. The scholarship, which would be applied after TAP and any applicable federal grants, would be phased in over three years with an income threshold of up to \$100,000 annually in the fall 2017, to \$110,000 in 2018, and reaching \$125,000 in 2019. The Governor's Office estimates a cost of \$163 million annually at full implementation.

While the details of the proposed plan are still being developed, it is encouraging that the Governor has made public higher education his first priority of the New Year. This focus is definitely a win for SUNY and, more importantly, for the families of New York.

More information about this proposed plan, from many different perspectives, can be found at the following sites:

- TWC News: [Higher Education Leaders Discuss Cuomo's free Tuition Plan](#) (video)

- Buffalo News: [Another Voice: College students need more than just free tuition](#) (opinion)
- WRGB: [Lawmakers have questions ahead of Gov. Cuomo's budget reveal](#)
- The Daily Gazette: [Private colleges fault Cuomo's free tuition plan](#)
- Huffington Post: [Free college explained in a global context](#)
- Leader-Herald: [Swanger: Free tuition proposal bold](#)
- Yahoo Finance: [New York could enact one of the biggest-ever free college tuition programs](#)
- BBC: [New York to scrap tuition fees for middle class](#)
- The Atlantic: [The Gaps in New York's Free-College Plan](#)
- Washington Post: [Cuomo's free-tuition plan isn't progressive](#) (opinion)
- Buffalo News: [Letter: SUNY needs to make college more affordable](#)
- Daily News: [A college plan that just isn't that smart](#) (video)
- North Country Public Radio: [Chancellor: SUNY has capacity to handle more students under free tuition plan](#) (audio)
- WBFO: [Tuition-free plan well-received, but how will it be funded?](#) (audio)
- New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/07/nyregion/cuomo-tuition-plan-stands-to-help-students-make-the-last-mile.html>
- CBS News: [Could New York's free college tuition plan spread across the U.S.?](#) (Associated Press)
- Inside Higher Ed: [Be Wary of the Details](#)
- Bloomberg: [Could Free College Really Be This Cheap?](#)

SUNY Conversations in the Disciplines Grant. Provost Alex Cartwright has announced the release of Requests for Proposals for the *Conversations in the Disciplines* program (SUNY CID) for conversations to be held in 2017-18. This competitive grant program is designed to support campus efforts to bring together faculty within and outside of SUNY for the purposes of scholarly discourse—examining new trends, addressing changes and challenges, reviewing promising research findings, and more. The program guidelines have been posted on: www.suny.edu/provost/cid/. Proposals are due **April 7, 2017**. As in prior years, the University Faculty Senate's Committee on Programs and Awards will review and recommend proposals for consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact Assistant Provost Kristina Bendikas at: CID@suny.edu or by phone at: (518) 320-1429 with questions.

Next Scholars Program. The New York Academy of Sciences is looking for women mentees and mentors for an exciting initiative called the Next Scholars Program. Computer-science interested mentees in the program are matched with a specially-selected STEM mentor and given access to a virtual platform hosting immersive content that will help develop their 21st century skills – leadership, communication, and critical thinking. In addition, mentees can also take advantage of the career readiness module, live online engagements and webinars with

inspirational guest speakers, a community across the US, and relevant, important discussions surrounding different STEM topics. If you know of anyone who may be a good fit for this program, please direct them to www.NYAS.org/NEXT .

Excelsior Conservation Corps. For your students interested in the environmental sciences, the Excelsior Conservation Corps is currently recruiting for Year 2, which starts soon. This program will particularly benefit environmental science students/grads, but others may love the opportunity for a service year outside their career field. Under the vision of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, the Excelsior Conservation Corps (ECC) is a 10-month residential AmeriCorps program, run by the Student Conservation Association, designed to address the environmental and conservation needs of this state while providing leadership opportunities, employment training and college scholarships. There are 50 full-time service positions available with the program starting 30 January 2017. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Beth Tailleir, Program Administrator, NYS Office of National and Community Service, at Beth.Tailleir@ocfs.ny.gov .

Coming Due!

Chancellor's Award. The Employee Awards Committee is pleased to announce that we are now accepting nominations for the **2016-2017 Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service**. Nomination criteria, instructions to nominators, and a fillable nomination form are all available on the [Human Resources Awards website](#).

Please note the new policy change: In addition to the nomination letter, the committee requires two separate letters of reference from individuals either on or off campus who will speak to the candidate's abilities in support of the nomination criteria. These additional reference letters must be submitted by the nomination deadline.

The nomination deadline is **Monday, February 6, 2017**.



Mark Your Calendars!

Days of Reflection. I am very pleased to announce that plans are being finalized for our campus' upcoming "Days of Reflection." The goal of this two-day event is to support our

faculty, staff, and students in exploring new perspectives and becoming inspired to find new ways to discuss the very difficult issues surround racial equity and social justice. I encourage you to participate, contribute, and involve your students! The Days of Reflection are being facilitated by the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the event's Planning Committee. The first 25 attendees for each session will receive free Days of Reflection buttons which say "Reflect, Rethink, Reform," reflecting the mission of the Division of DEI "to become a model for diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, within both the region and the SUNY system."

For information on the Days of Reflection, and the draft schedule, visit their website:

<http://www.potsdam.edu/about/administration/diversity/dayofreflection>.

Inclusive Search Process Workshop. The Inclusive Search Process workshop scheduled for December 15th has been rescheduled for the Spring 2017 Semester. You are invited to attend one of the two sessions which will be offered on:

DATE: Friday, January 27, 2017

TIME: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

VENUE: Raymond Hall – Dining Room

DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 2017

TIME: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

VENUE: Raymond Hall – Dining Room

All are invited. Unit Managers/Supervisors and those who are currently part of a search committee are strongly encouraged to attend one of the sessions. Please email tiapobs@potsdam.edu with any questions.

Pia Barros. Feminist writer Pia Barros from Chile will be presenting a bilingual reading on Monday, February 13th, at 1:00 on the 8th floor of Raymond Hall. This speaker is sponsored by Modern Languages, Women's and Gender Studies, and the Center for Diversity.

WGS Brunch. The Women's and Gender Studies program is holding a brunch on Sunday, March 12th, from 11-1:00 in the Thatcher dining room. The event will be showcasing students and their work. Both scholarly as well as creative works, including creative writing and performances, are more than welcome! If you have students who would like to attend and share their work, or if you have any questions about attendance at the brunch, please contact Christine Doran (dorancm@potsdam.edu) as soon as possible.

Awards & Recognition

ACS Award for Research at an Undergraduate Institution. Dr. Maria Hepel, Distinguished SUNY Professor of Chemistry, has been honored by the American Chemical Society as the recipient of the ACS Award for Research at an Undergraduate Institution. The award will be presented later this spring at the ACS Annual Meeting. Dr. Hepel is recognized “for fostering and mentoring innovative undergraduate research in diverse fields of public concern related to human health, environmental monitoring and remediation, energy conversion, and nanotechnology.” Congratulations, Maria, on this well-deserved honor!

NAMM Support Music Award. Carol “Kickie” Britt, who will retire from her position of leadership in Crane’s Music Business program later in 2017, was honored by NAMM, the National Association of Music Merchants, at its annual trade show in Anaheim, California. NAMM CEO Joe Lamond presented Kickie with NAMM’s Support Music award, one that has been given to many artists, celebrities, industry leaders, and political leaders. The presentation occurred on Saturday, January 21 at the annual Music Business Roundtable which has been co-sponsored since 2010 by NAMM and The Crane School in memory of the late Crane alumnus, faculty member, and music industry legend Sandy Feldstein. This year’s Feldstein Roundtable was hosted by Joe Lamond and included two Crane alumni, Joe Testa of the Vic Firth company and Jay Blumenthal of the American Federation of Musicians. We are grateful for Kickie’s numerous contributions over the past 14 years in leading this nationally-recognized and growing program.

The “Bob.” The Bob, a competitive faculty award to support development and implementation of applied learning activities in the curriculum, was awarded to two faculty members in 2016-2017:

- **Dr. Timothy Messner**, Anthropology, was awarded \$3500 in support of his Experiential Archaeology course. The project includes a strongly integrated hands-on curriculum, a meaningful peer teaching component, and significant potential for ongoing implementation.
- **Dr. Heather Sullivan-Catlin**, Environmental Studies, was awarded \$4400 for the 2017-2018 year in support of redevelopment of her course *Sustainable Communities: The Ecovillage Experience*. Her plan includes an international multi-site study experience that will teach students appropriate skills and experiences to pursue sustainability-related careers.

Congratulations, Tim and Heather!

Potsdam's Global Experiences Internship Abroad Program. SUNY Potsdam has partnered with [Global Experiences](#) since August 2015 for the support and delivery of credit-bearing internships in either Dublin, London, Paris, Milan, Florence, Barcelona, Shanghai, Sydney, NYC or Washington, DC. We have recently been notified by GE that *of the SUNY student participants since our program collaboration began, 40% of students identify as being of a diverse background.* This is quite remarkable, given that other US partner schools are only in the 10-15% range.

Congratulations to the staff in the Center for Applied Learning and International Education, and all faculty/staff involved with our Study Abroad programs, for your continued focus and commitment to providing critical high impact practices—like Study Abroad—for our students!

Do you have ideas or news to include in the next Provost's Corner? Be sure to let me know! Just email me at bergerbs@potsdam.edu.