August 2017

It is hard to believe that August is already upon us. Although summer has been filled with lots of rain, I hope you have been able to enjoy some time outside. There has been much activity on campus, including orientation sessions for our incoming students, a highly successful alumni reunion weekend and summer camps. A number of construction projects are ongoing including much-needed upgrades to Kellas Hall, and in just a few weeks we will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for our new SUNY Potsdam Child Care Center building!

I look forward to welcoming everyone back on Thursday, August 24, at 9:00 a.m. during our opening meeting in the Proscenium Theater in the Performing Arts Center (PAC). We have many new faces on campus, and I hope you will join me in giving our new colleagues a warm Potsdam welcome.

Reunion Weekend

I would like to thank the team who organized another extraordinary Reunion Weekend and the volunteers who served in a variety of capacities from driving golf carts to ensuring our oldest alumni were able to get to their sessions. I would also like to thank our hard working staff in physical plant, who made the campus look so beautiful, and our amazing PACES staff who made sure our returning alumni were well fed. Together, our alumni and friends raised $1,994,228! I am extremely grateful for their generous support, allowing us to further enhance the student experience. The highlight of reunion weekend for me is meeting our amazing alumni and friends, and being able to listen to their stories of their own student experiences. So much has changed on our campus, and yet the warmth of the Potsdam community continues through generations.

Interim Chief Financial Officer

John Homburger has joined us from a long career at SUNY Plattsburgh, where he recently retired as Chief Financial Officer. We are delighted to have John on our campus in this interim role as he brings tremendous knowledge at both the campus level and the SUNY System level. I would like to thank Mary Dolan, Interim Vice President for Administration, for working closely with John and also for leading the search for a permanent Chief Financial Officer. The search for our permanent chief financial officer will begin in the fall.

Organizational Changes

Over the summer, there have been several changes regarding campus departmental structures and personnel. These realignments are designed to ensure that we are putting a focus on recruitment and retention while trying to be as efficient as we can be with the resources that we have. Several major changes that I would like to share include:

- Interdisciplinary/Exploratory Program – This newly established unit will help incoming students who have not yet declared a major explore their options and receive support in one centralized location under the leadership of Matt LaVine. Over the next academic
year, Provost Bette Bergeron will work with faculty on the further development of the unit.

- **Division of Graduate & Continuing Education** – A reorganization of programs and personnel is ongoing to help the division focus on graduate recruitment and retention. For example, the Early College Programs have been moved to the Center for School Partnerships and Teacher Certification, which will create a centralized location for K-12 partnerships. The Graduate & Continuing Education team is working very closely with the Center for Applied Learning on new initiatives, including international programs.

- **Career Services** – The Office of Career Services is in the process of being integrated into the Center for Applied Learning, joined in a centralized suite of offices in the Crumb library.

- **Athletics** – In order to respond to the increased student demand for intramural and club sports offerings, reorganization of programs and personnel is underway under the leadership of Bill Mitchell. We are very excited to be able to enhance this critical aspect of the student experience.

- **College Communications** – The Office of College Communications now reports directly to the President’s Office, no longer falling under the Division of Advancement, reflecting the office’s role in serving the whole campus.

We are currently in process of updating our organizational charts, and they will be available at the start of the academic year. The next issue of the Provost’s Newsletter will discuss many of these changes in more detail. Copies of the Provost’s Newsletter can be found [here](#).

I continue to be impressed by the many innovative ideas shared by our faculty and staff to help us serve our students better and use our resources more efficiently. We have developed a [website](#) for anyone who would like to share their ideas on how to increase efficiencies on campus. I encourage you to share your ideas on how we can improve.

**North Country Community College Partnership**

Recently I sent an email announcing a new partnership with North Country Community College launching in Fall 2018. The SUNY Potsdam/North Country Community College Collaborative will allow NCCC to host classes on the Potsdam campus, and those students will be able to reside in our dorms and take advantage of our campus life opportunities while here. Once those students have completed their associate degree, they will be eligible to apply for transfer admission to SUNY Potsdam to pursue their baccalaureate studies.

SUNY Potsdam faculty and staff are invited to find out more by reading our Frequently Asked Questions [website](#). There is also an opportunity to provide feedback as we work out the logistics.

**The Chronicle of Higher Education**

If you are not already aware, the campus has a university-wide license to The Chronicle of Higher Education. If you do not already have an account, simply subscribe on their [website](#) and you will have access while on the campus network.
Performance Improvement Funding

In March, SUNY Potsdam submitted proposals to SUNY System Administration for performance improvement funding. I am excited to share that we have received resources to support our work in developing efficiencies, recruiting new students, and improving our retention. We have also been invited to continue to the next round in two important proposals: our Diversity Ambassadors and Mentors proposal and our Micro-Credential Initiative. The funds we receive include the following:

- Bridge Funding – We received $560,000 to add classroom technology throughout all classrooms over a three-year period, $157,000 to fund equipment for our new programs in GIS and Graphic Design, and $150,000 to fund a redesign of our website. We are very excited that these investments in our infrastructure will help improve the quality of our teaching spaces.
- Diversity Ambassadors and Mentors – Development of a peer-to-peer training and mentoring program.
- Micro-Credentialing Initiative – Development a leadership program to enhance student learning through co-curricular and curricular offerings.

SUNY Cross Registration Policy

SUNY just shared a Board of Trustees resolution regarding the cross registration policy and a system-wide Financial Aid Consortium Agreement. For example, a student who is enrolled at SUNY Potsdam but wants to take a course at another SUNY campus can use the credits from both campuses for financial aid purposes. Together, these two policies will assist our students in ensuring they can complete their degree in a timely manner and receive the maximum amount of financial aid to which they are entitled. Further details can be found on SUNY’s [website](http://www.suny.edu).

As a new class joins our SUNY Potsdam community, I continue to reflect on how the President’s Office interacts with the faculty and staff who help to make SUNY Potsdam such a wonderful place. I would ask that you take a moment to fill out an anonymous survey to help me see how we can make changes to better support and acknowledge the work that you do.

Again, I look forward to personally welcoming you back at our opening meeting later this month!