Provost's Corner

Bette S. Bergeron, Provost & Senior VP for Academic Affairs   *October 20, 2020*

Commitment to Academic Freedom

Recent events, punctuated by the national backlash emerging as a result of the September Executive Order issued by the White House, have reaffirmed the importance of active advocacy for our academic freedoms and commitments to inclusive teaching and learning. As noted in President Esterberg's memo to the campus community on October 9th, "SUNY Potsdam is deeply committed to our core values of diversity, equity and inclusion, and to providing an environment where all members of our community are treated with dignity and respect. As a public institution of higher education, our most profound commitment is to provide an environment where freedom of speech can flourish, and where all members of our campus community can learn. Our own [Potsdam Pledge](#) commits us to being an open community: uncompromisingly protecting freedom of thought, belief and expression."

The October memo further states that, "believing that open conversations and frank dialogue about racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of social injustice are important tools to creating equitable opportunities for all, we are therefore **profoundly disappointed** with the [Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping](#) issued by the White House. This order could have concerning impacts on free speech and academic freedom—impacts that would only be magnified for staff, faculty and students already marginalized by race and gender discrimination. We believe that engaged scholarship, addressing historical truths that account for the disparate treatment of American citizens, helps make us better citizens of a more productive and fair society. Difficult conversations about deeply rooted inequalities are necessary to heal the rifts in our civic life and bring us together."

Campuses across the SUNY system, in close consultation with the Offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and SUNY Administration, are currently working together to determine which programming offered on campuses are subject to this Executive Order. Current guidance indicates that academic programming, such as coursework and initiatives that include [Days of Reflection](#), as well as student-led programming including Black Solidarity Day, are allowable and will therefore continue. Until we are provided with additional guidance from SUNY, the campus is pausing a few programs that are clearly labeled as training and that, if provided using federal funds to federal employees, would likely fall under the order.

SUNY Administration is also in the process of finalizing a public statement regarding the Executive Order, which will be endorsed by entities across our campus including the Office of the President and the Division of Academic Affairs. This statement notes in part that the EO's "prohibition on discussion of 'divisive concepts' is in direct contravention of The State University of New York's goals, our academic freedom, and our constitutional rights to free speech and expression. Indeed, it is our job as a university system to raise difficult issues, ask tough questions, and move along on an arc that 'bends toward justice,'" and that SUNY objects to the EO "as a vast, unwarranted, illegitimate overreach."

The Executive Order and its potential ramifications have strengthened our resolve to protect academic freedom on our campus. Academic Freedom is an intractable foundation of the academic enterprise. As stated by the SUNY Board of Trustees, "*It is the policy of the University to maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, teaching and research. In the exercise of this freedom faculty members may, without limitation, discuss their own subject in the classroom; they may not, however, claim as their right the privilege of discussing in their classroom controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. The principle of academic freedom shall be accompanied by a corresponding principle of responsibility*" (https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/boardoftrustees/SUNY-BOT-Policies-Jan2019.pdf). SUNY Potsdam embraces this policy, specifically in regard to recognizing faculty members' full freedom of inquiry, teaching, and research, including the right to imbed controversial issues into their scholarly and creative endeavors, and as part of their teaching specific to their discipline. Academic freedom is fundamental to the rights of faculty in pursuing their academic work.

As a reflection of these principles of academic freedom, SUNY Potsdam's administration pledges to support an academic environment through which faculty members and their students can pursue topics appropriate to their disciplines, even when these topics and issues are controversial, without fear of discrimination or retribution. We reject any attempt, including from social, political, or governmental policy or pressure, to undermine the rights and principles integral to academic freedom. The administration also acknowledges the disparate impact on persons of color and those in our LGBTQ+ community from systemic injustices and bias, and pledges to continue to work across the campus and SUNY system to ensure that the academic freedom and academic voice of all constituents is protected, valued, and supported.

Campus Updates

Black Solidarity Day. President Esterberg has announced the campus' recognition of *Black Solidarity Day* within our academic calendar. Since its inception in 1969, on a national level Black Solidarity Day has highlighted racial inequality and the contributions of Black Americans, as participants focus activities directly related to racial justice in lieu of attending school/work. Traditionally held on the first Monday of November before Election Day, Black Solidarity Day 2020 will fall on **Monday, November 2nd** this year. I join President Esterberg in recognizing the efforts of our Student Government Association and Faculty Senate for their support and advocacy for this important day.

On Black Solidarity Day, faculty have been asked not to schedule tests, quizzes, or graded material in order to facilitate the participation by the entire campus community. Students are asked to notify their professors whether they will be present in class ahead of time in compliance with our attendance policies.

In honor of Black Solidarity Day 2020, the Black Student Alliance (BSA) is already hard at work planning a number of virtual events and initiatives. We will continue to update the campus on these events and other opportunities to get involved. In addition, the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley will be sponsoring programming throughout the academic year.

Days of Reflection. SUNY Potsdam's fall [Days of Reflection](#) is currently underway, offering a variety of sessions on important topics including immigration to the U.S., women's suffrage, climate change, dialogue in anti-racism, facilitating dialogue, opportunities and limits of dialogue, voting, and black and indigenous human rights. I am deeply grateful to the many faculty and staff who will present sessions, and for everyone involved in the planning of this important campus-wide event.

One of this fall's guest speakers is Dr. Lorenzo Boyd, a national expert in diversity in law enforcement and de-escalation theory. He will present on **Thursday, October 22** at 5:00pm, on "Policing post-George Floyd: How did we get here, and where next?" with a focus on the necessity of protests for positive social change.

I want to extend my thanks to the Days of Reflection Committee for their exceptional service to our students and campus community: *Ariel Adams* (Student Life), *Rachel Bayliss* (Residence Life), *Libbie Freed* (History), *Cliff Harcum* (DEI), *Matt LaVine* (Interdisciplinary Studies), *Jennifer Mitchell*

(English & Communication), *Michael Popovic* (Politics, International Studies), *Sheryl Scales* (SOEPS), and *Sabena Thomas* (SOEPS).

Expectations for Renewal Documentation: COVID's Impact. As it still remains uncertain how long before we are on the other side of the current global pandemic, it is evident that COVID-19 continues to significantly impact our lives both personally and professionally. While SUNY Potsdam has so far been very successful in keeping cases to a minimum, due in large part to the incredible efforts of our students, faculty, and staff, the long-term stresses caused by the pandemic on our teaching and on our students' academic experiences cannot be overstated.

Several faculty members have expressed specific concerns related to expectations for course evaluations and documentation for renewal and/or discretionary requests given the continued extraordinary circumstances we are under this fall semester (and likely to extend through the spring). While the campus does not require any specific type of student opinion survey, one option that is now available to all faculty members is the use of EvaluationKit, which is an electronic form of course survey (more information on EvaluationKit is provided in this Newsletter). If you are unfamiliar with the use of this tool, you can find additional information on the [Tech Tools](#) site or contact the CCI staff at cci@potsdam.edu. As was the case in the Spring, 2020 semester, however, please be reassured that it is *your reflection on your teaching practices*—and not the tool itself—that is most important. For example, it would be appropriate to include a narrative describing what types of modalities you tried this semester and what you have learned from this process, what improvements you plan to make in subsequent semesters, what you have applied to your instruction from professional development opportunities/training, and your future goals for continued reflection and improvement.

It is also recognized that research and creative activities continue to be impacted by challenges posed by both the pandemic and fiscal barriers. In some disciplines, there are expanded opportunities to present and attend conferences free (or at a greatly reduced cost) in a virtual environment, and to participate in virtual performances or exhibits. These activities are valued, and should be included in any documentation. However, it is also understood that these virtual opportunities are not available in all disciplinary areas, and some faculty members' scholarly work is dependent on sitework which at the current time may not be possible. Therefore, it is important for faculty members to consult with their chairs and deans on appropriate alternatives, if warranted. Please know that the administration will support these alternatives as appropriate to your disciplinary area and your unique challenges. Again, a descriptive narrative outlining individuals' challenges, possible alternatives, and future goals related to scholarly and creative endeavors is important to include in any documentation.

Finally, while access to Zoom and Teams has increased our ability to virtually attend meetings and participate in campus-wide service, it is also recognized that the amount of time in these meetings has substantially increased. We would ask senior faculty and chairs to be especially mindful of their junior faculty colleagues, and work with them to identify only those service activities that are most critical to the individual faculty member's professional progress and goals.

While it has been said often—these are indeed unprecedented times. We recognize the stress and challenges that are a result of many current factors, including the pandemic, racial injustices, and economic fragility. Therefore, it is also recognized that expectations for documentation in the renewal and discretionary processes must be reconsidered. Faculty are encouraged to continue to work with their chairs and deans to clearly identify alternatives for documentation that are appropriate to the discipline, and to focus on reflection and lessons learned during this "new normal."

Course Modalities: Spring, 2021. As the Spring, 2021 semester rapidly approaches, we recognize that faculty are seeking clarification regarding the degree of flexibility that will be granted in terms of instructional modality. While guidance may change due to SUNY and/or state requirements, it is our current expectation that faculty will have flexibility in their modality once again this coming spring (e.g., determining if their courses will be taught face-to-face, virtually, online, or a hybrid). It is very important, however, that *faculty members communicate with their chairs as soon as possible regarding their desired modality*, so that the schedule can be updated. Spring advising has begun, therefore it's critical that students have this data in order to make their decisions about whether or not they will physically return to campus.

As a reminder, we are coding course scheduling options in the following ways:
- **F2F/Hybrid**—any course with some face-to-face components; must follow all campus safety protocols. This is our schedule type 1, not online option.
- **Virtual**—fully remote instruction; may have synchronous virtual meetings. This is our new schedule type 7, due to the pandemic. If you are teaching an asynchronous virtual course, please indicate this by excluding meeting times.
- **Online**—OSCQR approved courses with trained instructors; may have synchronous and/or asynchronous components. Again, if you are teaching an asynchronous online course, please indicate this by excluding meeting times.

In the fall, faculty were expected to support face-to-face and virtual students simultaneously in all courses. However, based on feedback received from both faculty and students, this

universal expectation will no longer be in place for the Spring, 2021 semester. Students who elect to be fully remote will be advised not to enroll in face-to-face courses, unless the course is the only section available for a degree requirement. This will reduce the frequency with which faculty must try to support students in different modalities simultaneously (unless the faculty member chooses this alternative model as their preferred modality). Admittedly, there may still be times when students must be away from classes due to quarantine, isolation, or other health considerations. Therefore, for Spring, 2021—as it has always been for illness/emergencies, and now also for students who are remote but must take a face-to-face class for timely degree completion—faculty members would be expected to work with those individual students to provide accommodations and/or alternatives as appropriate to the course and the specific situation.

Regardless of a faculty member's chosen modality, it will be important for faculty to communicate their expectations with students before the semester begins, if possible, and to also include clear guidance within the course syllabi.

We will continue to monitor any updated guidance or mandates from the state or SUNY, but remain optimistic that the flexibilities allowed in the fall will be extended to the spring semester.

Advising for Spring, 2021. Spring advising is upon us, and it is important to remind your students to check their holds in BearPAWS and resolve them in order to register on time in November. Students leave campus for remote learning immediately following the registration window, so it is essential that they get advised and registered before heading out for Thanksgiving break!

Students with holds should still meet with their advisors before November 20th. Once the semester ends, it will be extremely difficult to be advised and registered. In addition, classes may be cancelled over the semester break due to low enrollment if students wait too long to register.

As you work with your advisees, it is also important to discuss with them which course modality best aligns with their learning style. *It will be especially important to emphasize with students the importance of choosing their preferred modality ahead of time (to "pick and stick")*, as there might not be the ability to switch back and forth between F2F and remote learning in the spring semester. For students who may be new to virtual/online learning or our learning platform, Moodle, they can be directed to the following resources:
- [Learning Remotely Resource Site](#)

- For frequently asked questions on how to use Moodle, go to Student FAQ's
- For information on our campus' tutoring services, direct students to: https://www.potsdam.edu/academics/resources/tutoring.

Advisor Support Now Available in Teams. All faculty and staff advisors have been added to the new Advising Hub in MS Teams. With two General Education programs to manage and constant COVID-related impacts, the hope is to keep everyone up-to-date as you head into the Spring, 2021 advising period. The Teams page will include regular updates; links to essential resources; instructions on how to get the most out of BearPAWS, BearDeN, and Navigate; and a forum for posting your burning advising questions.

You are encouraged to visit this site often and consider enabling notifications from the team when new information is added. If you have questions about the Advising Hub, please reach out to *Kristin Jordan* (jordankm@potsdam.edu).

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Grading System: Changes for the Fall, 2020 Semester.   The Faculty Senate has recommended, and President Esterberg has approved, changes to the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading System for the current (fall) semester. This policy continues the "Low Pass" or P grading option, which was adopted for the Spring, 2020 semester, through Fall, 2020. The change allows students to avoid the negative impact of a low grade during this challenging semester and to potentially earn additional credits toward their degree and/or General Education requirements. Please see the FAQS online to further understand the potential impact of the S/P/U grade option in effect for all S/U elections this semester.

Most departments have limits on the number of credits (if any) that can be counted for major and minor requirements if taken S/U. Please check with your department if you have any questions about the policy. Courses taken S/U in the Fall, 2020 semester do not count toward the 14-credit hour maximum for undergraduate students. Undergraduate students are advised to consult with their advisor and/or the Student Success Center to confirm that the S/U option is allowed and will not negatively impact time to degree completion. Graduate students should contact the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education. *Please note*: Undergraduate students in need of advising help can contact the Academic Advising and Support Office at: advising@potsdam.edu or (315) 267-3266.

The deadline to withdraw and S/U courses for the Fall semester has been extended to the last day of classes, **Friday December 11**, at 11:59pm.

Withdrawal from Classes. Undergraduate students who need to withdraw from a course due to issues relating to the pandemic or other emergency may be eligible for an emergency withdrawal (W*). If approved, an emergency withdrawal will be noted on the permanent record as "W*" and will not be considered as part of the 14-credit hour maximum. Graduate students should contact their advisor or the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education if they need to withdraw from a course. All students should consult with One Stop to ensure that any withdrawal(s) will not negatively impact their financial aid eligibility.

Progress Reports. I want to extend my thanks to all of the instructors who participated in the Fall, 2020 Progress Report Campaign. For the fourth semester in a row, we have beaten our previous record for participation. This year, for the first time, we topped 70%!

Not surprisingly given the current situation, the campus also saw an increase in the percentage marked at risk this term (18% vs an historic average of 15%). In all, 1,251 students were flagged through the process this semester. Outreach to those students has begun, and we encourage advisors to discuss progress reports with their advisees as they meet with them over the coming weeks. The P grade and extended S/U/P and Withdrawal deadlines provide students with a wider range of options for addressing academic challenges this fall.

Please remember that if things change in your courses, faculty can submit Progress Reports **any time** during the semester, not just during weeks 5-6. To do so, just follow these instructions:

1. Log into **Navigate** (http://potsdam.campus.eab.com)
2. On your home screen, click the little black triangle next to the **Staff Home** header at the top of the screen and select **Professor Home**
3. There will be a listing of your current term classes at the top of that page
4. Each has a link to **Progress Reports**
5. Click that link and follow the same process you would use for the campaign

Questions? Contact the SSC (ssc@potsdam.edu) for help.

Unpaid Bills: Supporting our Students. Due to a variety of factors, not the least of which is the impact of the global pandemic on students' financial wellbeing, a much larger proportion of students have not yet paid the balance on their college bills as compared with previous years. Students with balances are not able to register for the spring semester, which has the potential to impede their timely progress towards graduation and can have additional and serious financial consequences. The Faculty Senate has recommended the following actions that faculty and staff can implement to support our students through this difficult time:

- In class or otherwise, simply ask students if they have looked at their bills. There have been a large number of emails that students have not yet opened. Sometimes students just need a gentle reminder to regularly check their campus emails.
- During advising, ask students if they need help with obstacles like completing forms. Sometimes just starting the conversation helps them realize the problem is solvable. If they have specific problems that are beyond the scope of academic advising, direct them to Financial Aid or One Stop.
    - **Email**: onestop@potsdam.edu
    - **Phone**: (315) 267-2943
    - "Walk-In" Support **Available weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**
- Consider contributing to the *Pay It Forward fund*, which could provide critical assistance for those students with small balances. If you would like to help a student to stay in school this way, please go to www.potsdam.edu/give and designate your gift for the Pay it Forward fund.
- Often, we find that unpaid bills are directly related to the current crisis. Mental health issues for students are at near critical levels here and across the state. SGA is devoting this year to mental health issues. SUNY has put many new resources in place. Please share these links with our students:
    - https://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/wellness/counseling-center
    - https://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/wellness/counseling-center/coping-covid-19-pandemic/counseling-center-faqs

You can also visit the Bear Care website for additional information and resources.

Online Academic Coaches. *Online Academic Coaches* have been identified to provide technical support for our faculty as you build out online content for your courses. Coaches, who are each assigned to a department, are "on call" to answer faculty members' questions on getting accessible content into Moodle, in order to assist faculty in preparing online content.

Provided below are the faculty members who have volunteered to be Online Coaches, listed with the department that they are supporting (please note that this is a tentative list; some assignments may change):
- *Marta Albert*: Advanced Studies in Education
- *Kelly Bonnar*: Chemistry
- *Ray Bowdish*: Biology
- *David Bugg*: Sociology & Criminal Justice
- *Karen Caldwell*: Theater & Dance
- *Lauren Diamond-Brown*: English & Communication

- *Libbie Freed*: History
- *Jim Fryer*: Modern Languages
- *Greg Gardner*: Business Administration
- *Savita Hanspal*: Art, Philosophy
- *Tanya Hewitt*: WAYS
- *Jason Howald*: Mathematics
- *Faris Kahn*: Anthropology, Politics
- *Ashley Keenan*: Public Health & Human Performance
- *Brian Ladd*: Computer Science, Physics
- *Tracy Lipke-Perry*: Crane
- *Derek Maus*: English & Communication, Interdisciplinary Studies
- *Peter McCoy*: Crane
- *Adam Pearson*: Geology
- *Jessica Rogers*: Environmental Studies
- *Doug Rubio*: Crane
- *Sarah Solley*: Elementary Education
- *Joanne Stiles*: Secondary Education
- *Arlene Stillwell*: Psychology

A huge "thank you" to all the Academic Online Coaches for volunteering their services and support!

CCI – Support. The CCI is a popular place and many of you are reaching out for assistance. To improve response time, the CCI will now use Request Tracker (RT) for support requests. Please send all your requests directly to cci@potsdam.edu. These requests will immediately go to RT and a ticket will be created. Both CTS and CCI staff will be able to see and respond to tickets quickly and, when necessary, escalate requests to tier 2 support staff. Please know that support emails sent directly to CCI staff will be forwarded to cci@potsdam.edu in order to track and increase response time. Although the CCI staff is always happy to meet with faculty for one-on-one consultations, given the high demand for assistance we ask that you first utilize the [Tech Tools](#) and [How Do I…](#) websites and contact your area's Academic Coach.

CCI – Accessibility Training. As part of the SUNY EIT initiative, this academic year the CCI is offering a series of trainings on accessibility. The CCI realizes that reaching full accessibility compliance, by campus offices and by each individual, will take many purposeful steps. If you missed the first session, please watch the [First Steps toward meeting EIT Accessibility](#) presentation. The primary focus for the session was on the basics needed to create accessible content in Word and PowerPoint. For more accessibility training opportunities and resources,

visit the [How do I adhere to ADA guidelines and laws?](#) webpage. As always, visit the [CCI Website](#) for upcoming events, training, and resources and contact cci@potsdam.edu to request training sessions for your area or department.

CCI – Q&A Brown Bag Sessions. As part of the efforts by the CCI staff in further educating our campus community in many areas, including Moodle, Zoom, Knowmia/Relay, Teams, O365, and Outlook, you are invited to join the CCI staff for weekly *Friday Brown Bag Lunch Sessions*, which will be held in Teams. To sign up for a session, please fill out this [MS Form](#) and submit your questions **at least one day prior to the session date** (you will then be invited to the session in Teams). CCI staff will do their best to get through all submitted session questions.

- **Session Dates**:
  - Friday, October 23, 12:00-1:00
  - Friday October 30, 12:30-1:30
  - Friday, November 6, 1:00-2:00

CCI – Course Evaluations. Our campus uses *EvaluationKit (EK)*, an online platform designed to facilitate gathering students' opinions of faculty instruction. EK online surveys replace Scantron course evaluations and contain standard campus-wide survey questions. At semester's end, surveys are **automatically** created for your students using Moodle courses and they will be prompted to complete them when they log in to Moodle (email notifications are also sent). Students will have access to the EK survey a week before the end of the course. Faculty will be able to add additional questions the week before the survey is activated (optional questions are not required). Please find training tutorials on the [Tech Tools](#) website and contact cci@potsdam.edu for additional support.

Important:
- If your course ends before the end of the semester, please contact coursesurveys@potsdam.edu to request an EK survey. The request should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the end of the course. Please provide the course name, CRN, and the course end-date.
- If a standard campus-wide EK survey is not needed for your course, please email coursesurveys@potsdam.edu two weeks prior to the end of your course and request that the course be excluded.
- Although Moodle courses are automatically created for all campus courses, please contact the CCI if you don't have a Moodle shell for your course.

SPECIAL NOTE: Zoom Integration with Knowmia. When a user selects the "Cloud recording" option in Zoom, the following happens:

- The video is recorded to the Zoom Cloud
- A copy is sent to the user's *Zoom* folder in Knowmia
- Zoom sends an email notification (**IGNORE this email and don't use the **Zoom-Cloud** link)
- Knowmia sends an email notification with a link (check your *Clutter* folder)

The campus is in the process of eliminating the Zoom notification to avoid confusion. On October 13th, CTS turned on the feature that auto-deletes a Zoom recording after it has been on the Zoom Cloud for seven days. Please use the following steps to transfer your pre-integration Zoom Cloud recordings to Knowmia:

- Download the video from Zoom Cloud
- (Optional) Download the SRT file (closed captioning)
- Upload the video to Knowmia
- Generate auto-captions OR upload the SRT file
- Share the Knowmia video link in Moodle (using the *External Link* tool)

Please see Knowmia on the [Tech Tools](#) website for tutorials and resources. Note: Although OneDrive is a storage option, it currently does not have captioning. MS Stream has captioning, but Microsoft is transitioning video storage to OneDrive by the end of the year. The future of MS Stream is unclear. ***Please also note that it is uncertain whether the campus will be able to continue its contract with Knowmia after the Spring, 2021 semester.*** The CCI is currently working on identifying solutions to ensure that faculty continue to have access to video capture capabilities.

CCI – Introducing "Flow" Approvals. Using *Power Automate* and other O365 tools, paper processes (like forms and approvals) can now be converted into a completely digital, automated format. Many campus offices and departments are starting to use *Flows* and you may soon receive an *Approval* email requiring you to take action. Please watch [Introducing Flow Approvals using Power Automate](#) for info on how to process an Approval.

If your office or department needs to automate a process, please contact cci@potsdam.edu for assistance. CCI staff will set up a project timeline if automating the process is determined to be feasible. Also, the CCI is starting Flow training for campus staff that are willing to learn Flow basics. Staff would be trained to modify existing CCI templates and trained to deploy them to automate processes in their department/area. Although Flow is not hard, it does require focus and attention to detail. If you are interested in supporting the campus by becoming a Flow Apprentice, please contact the CCI.

Academic Affairs Strategic Plan. The AY 2020/21 Academic Affairs Strategic Plan has been updated on the [Plans and Goals](#) site. As with past Strategic Plans, this is intended as a "work in progress" that will be updated through the academic year. New this year is a specific alignment to our campus' four Middle States priorities (Strategic Enrollment Management, Creativity, Inclusive Excellence, and Strategic Decision Making). If you have questions about the Strategic Plan, or input on its goals and action steps, please don't hesitate to contact me directly (bergerbs@potsdam.edu).

Update on Campus Finances. The Interim Vice President for Business Affairs, *Keith Kaplan*, held a town hall last month for faculty and staff on campus finances. Faculty and staff can access additional information at: [https://sunypotsdam.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/AllEmployeesSharePointSite/EdT8naJfVKxJreTU768u JRIB4nazK7QCpJ0uFtKWdeXFgA?e=yGfVGM.](https://sunypotsdam.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/AllEmployeesSharePointSite/EdT8naJfVKxJreTU768uJRIB4nazK7QCpJ0uFtKWdeXFgA?e=yGfVGM.)

Virtual Learning: Support for School-Aged Children. *Julie Johnson* and *Sarah Solley* from the School of Education and Professional Studies have developed a program to engage our pre-service teacher education candidates with the school-aged children of our Potsdam employees. Julie and Sarah recognize the toll that virtual learning has on parents and children, and are actively gathering and developing resources to support our Potsdam family and community. You are invited to complete a *brief* survey to provide insight into the supports needed by **October 23, 2020.** The link to the survey can be found at: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6Caribb_Ik-bl4JqQEsZAmzmNy4HsEVJhOi7rw8b18NUN1Y3SlA1SDFRMFpOMEdVSlQyWTJRSUo1OC4u.

Instructional Resources. The following (free) resources may be helpful as you continue to navigate the unprecedented challenges—and opportunities—of this most unique semester.

The College Libraries have developed a research guide on ***Anti-Racism and Trauma Informed Teaching***: https://library.potsdam.edu/TraumaInformedTeaching   This guide is a compilation of bibliographies and information resources supplied by many colleagues.

Gena Nelson (College Counseling) has provided the following article related to the impact of COVID on mental health: https://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/wellness/counseling-center/mental-health-during-covid.

A current article addressing issues related to Black trauma can be accessed at: https://www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/black-exhaustion-mental-health.

The following article addresses the correlation between diversity training and the social environment: https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/minds-business/changing-social-environments.html.

The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) is sponsoring a free virtual discussion on inclusive online teaching on **Thursday, October 22nd, at 4:00pm.** Entitled *Examining and Mitigating Implicit Bias*, the webinar will feature faculty who will discuss processes for reflecting on our own implicit biases, as well as strategies for mitigating the impact of implicit bias in our teaching practice. More information on this webinar, as well as additional resources and toolkits related to inclusive online teaching, can be found on the ACUE website.

EDUCAUSE has released its 2020 Student Technology Report: Supporting the Whole Student, which presents results from its 2020 research on students' experiences with information technology, which included 16,162 undergraduate students from 71 US institutions. It also provides concrete next steps for institutions to take in response to those findings.

Potsdam Pathways

Potsdam Pathways: Advising Guidance. The Potsdam Pathways faculty have created *Quick Tips* for advisors. Included in the helpful hints are the following suggestions:
- It is highly recommended that first year students take WAYS 101, WAYS 102 & WAYS 103 in their first year of study, so please make WAYS registration a priority for your advisee.
- If there is a possibility that your advisee will not be successful with their Fall, 2020 WAYS seminar(s) or COMP 100, they should definitely repeat those classes in the Spring, 2021 semester. Pathways staff will be monitoring student success once Fall, 2020 final grades are posted in December and will reach out to those directly impacted by failing grades.
- Some of **Ways of Thinking** courses have **Ways of Beginning** as pre-requisites. WAYS 101 is a pre-requisite for TF. WAYS 102 is a pre-requisite for TH.
- No **Ways of Thinking** or **Ways of Connecting** course will carry more than one designator. So, if a course has TH, then it will not also have TM or TA or CL or CG. The only exception is for CM and CT. These designators, **Communication Clearly in the**

Major (CM) and **Connecting Theory to Practice Through Applied Learning** (CT), have been designed to intersect nicely, especially in senior seminars/capstone courses.

- Bachelor of Music students will not start the roll-out of Pathways until Fall, 2021.
- BearDeN is set up to show general education requirements based on catalog term. Thus, if you have a non-first-year student who does a "what-if" and gets a list of Pathways requirements, check the catalog term and reset it to something prior to Fall, 2020.
- **Connecting Through Language Other Than English** (CL): Beginning in Fall, 2020, regardless of which Gen Ed program the student is in, the language requirement can be completed by taking a single course carrying CL.
- **Fall, 2020 and Spring, 2021 transfer students are entering under the previous general education program.**
- Transfer students beginning in Fall, 2021 with less than 24 credits, will need to take all WAYS courses unless they are transferring in an approved substitution.
- Transfer students with 24 or more credits but no associate degree, can transfer certain courses in place of WAYS 101, 102, 103 or will take Potsdam substitutions for those courses not yet completed (e.g. COMP 201 in place of WAYS 102).
- Students transferring with an AA or AS degree have satisfied general education requirements.

The Potsdam Pathways General Education Program webpage is currently being updated. The page for new students, in particular, has lots of helpful information: (https://www.potsdam.edu/academics/programs-study/potsdam-pathways-general-education/information-new-students). If you have any questions, you are encouraged to reach out to *Christine Doran*, Interim Director, at dorancm@potsdam.edu.

Middle States Updates

Middle States Re-accreditation. As our Middle States Working Groups continue their hard work this semester, the campus community is invited to review the *Self-Study Design* on the [MSCHE Accreditation Processes website](). This document will guide the next steps in our re-accreditation process. (With thanks to *Carrie Bates* for writing this document!)

Please mark your calendars for the Middle States Self-Study Preparation visit on **Friday, October 23, 2020**. Dr. Paul Starkey, our Middle States Vice President Liaison, will be visiting the campus virtually to learn more about the current status of SUNY Potsdam, discuss our institutional priorities, and assist with our preparations for the self-study and peer review. An open session for faculty, staff, and students will be held from 2:30pm-3:30pm (watch your campus email for the Zoom link for this meeting). During this session, Paul will explain the accreditation process, including the role each of us plays in the process, and will answer any questions you might have.

As a reminder, retaining our accreditation with Middle States is critical to our campus operations. Among other things, it ensures that credits can transfer to other institutions, students' degrees are recognized, and that federal financial aid is available to students. Wide campus participation is critical to this process, and I look forward to your involvement and input.

If you have any questions about the Self-Study or the working groups, please contact our Middle States Co-chairs *Julie Dold* (doldjm@potsdam.edu) and/or *Gordon Plague* (plaguegr@potsdam.edu).

Around SUNY and the State

State Guidance: Spring Instructional Modality. In New York State, programs at Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) are required to be registered in the distance education format if 50% or more of the program can be completed through distance education. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the NYS Education Department (NYSED) allowed colleges and universities to exceed the 50% distance education threshold for the Spring, Summer and Fall 2020 semesters; permitting institutions to offer distance education courses in programs without triggering the need to register those programs in the distance education format, even if the 50% threshold would be reached.

NYSED is now extending the distance education flexibility described above to include the Spring, 2021 semester. This extension permits institutions to continue to offer distance education courses in programs, during the Spring, 2021 semester, without triggering the need to register the programs in the distance education format, even if the 50% threshold will be reached. *Please Note: The campus is still awaiting final guidance from Middle States regarding its required documentation for the Spring, 2021 semester.*

Since this flexibility is scheduled to end at the end of the Spring, 2021 semester, institutions should begin to do a thorough review of each program now to determine the appropriate delivery mode(s) for each program. Institutions should then request the addition of the distance education format to those programs that, beginning after the Spring, 2021 semester, will be able to be completed 50% or more through distance education. NYSED is finalizing an expedited application to add the distance education format to registered programs and will let institutions know when the form has been posted on the Department's website. Updated information can be found on SUNY's Academic Continuity Q&A website.

Mental Health Services. In response to a nationwide uptick in mental health and wellness needs among college students due to the impact of COVID-19, SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras has announced a comprehensive plan to expand access to mental health services to every student at SUNY's 64 campuses.

As part of this new plan, SUNY is partnering with Thriving Campus to provide every student from SUNY's colleges and universities with access to a network of more than 6,000 licensed mental health service providers. The mobile-friendly app, already utilized at two SUNY campuses, breaks down a number of crucial, often overlooked barriers that students frequently encounter in the process of reaching out for help. By streamlining and simplifying what can be a stressful and overwhelming process, and building synergy with local mental health providers, more students will be seamlessly connected with the specific help they need, when they need it.

SUNY will also expand a peer-to-peer assistance hotline operated by the University at Albany to all students across the entire SUNY system. Students do not need to be in crisis to use this hotline. It's a stigma-free, secure line for connecting about emotional, social, and other life issues.

To accompany this expansion of services, Chancellor Malatras also launched **#ReachOutSUNY**, a public awareness campaign designed to shatter the stigma associated with mental health struggles and asking for help, while educating students about available services. The campaign will also encourage more faculty, staff, and students to take the free online crisis training program Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) that teaches individuals how to recognize someone who may be in emotional distress or having suicidal thoughts, and how to appropriately engage and connect that person to resources that can help. Anyone can practice QPR in any setting, and it is appropriate in all relationships. QPR does not require clinical training, only a willingness to listen, care, and help. Members of the SUNY community may register by going to http://www.qprtraining.com/setup.php and entering "SUNY" as the organizational code.

SUNY DEI Virtual Forum. All SUNY staff are invited to participate in the *SUNY Virtual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Discussion Forum.* The goal of the program is to give SUNY staff an opportunity to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion issues in higher education in a supportive environment to help them create the inclusive mindset they need to learn the competencies necessary to serve a diverse population of students and others on their campus.

The programs will take place in Workplace (https://sunyedu.workplace.com/) over five weeks (October 15th through November 20th). All you need to sign in to Workplace is your campus ID and password. The program will feature a mix of asynchronous (not in real time) online discussions in Workplace as well as webinars in Zoom. Those who sign up will be added to the Workplace group but are not obligated to participate.

Use the following form to sign up: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DRMX5MH. If you have any questions, contact *Chris Price*, Academic Programs Manager, SUNY Center for Professional Development (chris.price@suny.edu).

Prepare Innovation and Internship Program. Teams of students and faculty across SUNY campuses producing life-saving personal protective equipment (PPE) and other innovative solutions to COVID-19 through student applied learning and research experience can now apply for grant funding from the SUNY Prepare Innovation and Internship Program. Initially announced late August by Chancellor Malatras with $100,000 in seed funding, the program will provide up to $10,000 for students and faculty working with innovative technology to improve the design and accelerate the production of PPE. The program is designed to provide real life, hands-on applied learning experiences for students, which involves them in the creation of pandemic related solutions.

SUNY teams of faculty and staff may submit proposals. The resulting projects will focus on exploring and creating solutions, including but not limited to: novel and alternative PPE; creative devices, technologies, or designs to reduce the use of high-touch areas; environmentally sustainable sanitization; and arts, messages, and technologies for effective implementation of social distancing, mask wearing, and hand sanitizing. Non-technological solutions for behavioral interventions and deployable strategies for raising awareness of public health protective measures are encouraged.

Submissions are due to SUNY's Provost Office by **November 15** through an online form here, with the first grants being awarded on December 15, 2020.

Mark Your Calendar

SUNY Potsdam TEDx. SUNY Potsdam will host its second TEDx event, welcoming virtual audiences for a day of *Identifying Moments*, on **Saturday, November 14ᵗʰ** from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Tickets are now available for the online event, at http://www.tedxsunypotsdam.com/. All tickets are $5, and can be purchased at www.tedxsunypotsdam.com.

TEDx is an organization which provides a platform for "Ideas Worth Spreading" by supporting locally run events where speakers give talks which are then posted online to a worldwide audience. This year the event will take place virtually with a live host and pre-recorded talks, and a question and answer session with speakers. Featuring nine SUNY Potsdam students and faculty, plus a guest speaker from New York City, the talks will all reflect on this year's theme, "Identifying Moments"—offering the opportunity to reflect on how identity is shaped by circumstance, or about the characteristics of compelling moments themselves.

This year's featured speaker is *Mino Lora*, cofounder and executive director of People's Theatre Project, a social justice arts organization that creates ensemble-based theatre with and for immigrant communities to develop the next generation of diverse, socially-engaged artists and leaders. Lora's talk is titled "Joy is Resistance." The slate of campus speakers includes:

- **Jim Fryer**, associate professor of psychology, whose research focuses on motivation and personality
- **Jessica Hurlbut '19,** graduate student childhood education, "How to Win at the Race Called Life"
- **Karen Kus**, assistant director for career services, Lougheed Center for Applied Learning, "Career Trajectory: Claiming Your Identity"
- **Kathleen Mahoney**, professor of graphic, video and game design, Department of Art, "Anei Au: New Zealand's Māori Art, a Window for Examining Our Own Cultural Identity"
- **Jess Melendez '22**, early childhood/childhood education major with a specialization in English, "Diverse Children's Literature"
- **Joseph Pease '21**, theatre major, "Virtual/Actual Reality: A Study on Video Games and the Human Psyche"
- **Jordan Quiles '20**, recent theatre and dance graduate, "Out of the Box"
- **Mei Shen**, assistant professor of special education, "Helping Struggling Learners Succeed in Writing"
- **Janet Sussman**, associate professor of costume design and history, "Moving Towards a Post-Gendered World"

The event is being hosted by SUNY Potsdam's Arts Management Program and Department of Theatre and Dance. A group of 11 SUNY Potsdam Arts Management and Crane Institute of Music Business and Entrepreneurship student interns comprise the administrative team for the event. They are advised by the co-founder of TEDxSUNYPotsdam, *Joshua Vink* (Theatre & Dance).

Navigate Conference. EAB will hold its annual *Navigate Connected Conference* on **December 8-10** in an online format. Potsdam can enroll up to 12 participants in the event that focuses on case studies, best practices, and academic research into student success. For more information, [click here for the agenda](#).

We would like to increase the school and departmental use of the analytics functionality of the platform. If you or your department would like to learn more about Navigate and how it can support informed decision-making, student success, and retention in your programs, please contact *Sean Partridge* (partrisc@potsdam.edu) to be part of the Potsdam team at Connected 2020. **Please respond by October 30.**

Empowering Students for Academic Success: Free Webinar. A free virtual professional development webinar is being offered entitled *Empower Students for Academic Success: Teaching Students Study Skills Informed by the Science of Learning*, to be held on **Friday, November 6, 2020, from 8:30 am until 3:30 pm**. There is no registration fee or other charges to participants.

This conference will be of particular interest to staff of teaching and learning centers, faculty development programs, student learning assistance programs, student academic success programs, etc. It will also be of interest to faculty who want to assist their students in using study strategies that will improve their learning, retention, and transfer of academic material.

Registration is required and is now open. If you plan to participate in the webinar, to ensure your spot, please register now by clicking [here](#). You can also copy and paste this URL into your browser: [https://www.unh.edu/cetl/empower-students-academic-success-teaching-students-study-skills-informed-science-learning-0.](https://www.unh.edu/cetl/empower-students-academic-success-teaching-students-study-skills-informed-science-learning-0)

Virtual Seminar: Stress and Resilience. The Partners 4 Substance Use Prevention Coalition is pleased to offer a two-part virtual seminar series**:** *From ACEs to Assets: The Impact of Stress on Education and the Power of Resilience.*
- **Part I: Tuesday, November 3rd 9am – 10am**

Part I will establish common understanding of the interrelation of stress and learning. Participants will explore ways in which stress, adversity, and trauma impact brains, bodies, and behaviors; improving the ability to recognize signs of difficulty.
Register Here for Part I

- **Part II: Thursday, November 12th 9am – 10am**
  Part II will introduce meaningful avenues to respond to stress, adversity, and trauma within a Multi-tiered System of Support. A practice approach to resilience development will be presented including strategies to improve individual and systemic practice change. Emphasis will be placed on direct actions that caring adults may take to minimize risk and promote positive outcomes for all students/children.
  Register Here for Part II

The training is **free** and **open to the public**. Anyone who cares for children is encouraged to attend.

Coming Due

FACT² Excellence Awards. Nominations for the FACT² (Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology) Excellence Awards are open and will be accepted through **December 6th, 2020.** There are three award categories, each offered across two sectors, community colleges and state-operated/statutory campuses: the FACT² *Excellence in Instruction* awards, *Excellence in Instructional Support* awards, and *Excellence in Administrative Leadership* awards. These system-wide honors recognize consistently noteworthy achievement and encourage the ongoing pursuit of excellence in the area of instructional technology, which is particularly relevant this year given the tremendous work done to support the transition to remote/online instruction.

The FACT² awards underscore SUNY's commitment to the use of technology to support access to excellent education, advance the boundaries of knowledge, and to serve the public good. This awards program allows SUNY to publicly share its pride in the accomplishments and personal dedication of its Instructional Faculty, Technology Support Professionals and Administrative Leaders. Awardees will be recognized at CIT (Conference on Instructional Technologies) 2021.

Click here for detailed information on each award and to submit your nomination. Feel free to contact the FACT² Awards Chair, *Janet Nepkie* at: Janet.Nepkie@oneonta.edu, with any questions. Again, the deadline for nominations is **December 6, 2020.**

In Case You Missed It

SUNY Resources. SUNY has provided a variety of resource sites to support faculty, staff, and students specifically related to online/remote teaching and learning:

- **Remote Instruction Website** – one place to aggregate resources and services for campus leaders, faculty/staff, students. Visit http://online.suny.edu/covid19 or contact erin.maney@suny.edu.

- **Help Desk** – expansion Tier 1 and Tier 2 tech support to all campuses for students and faculty for online tools and technology. Visit https://online.suny.edu/help/ or contact mike.walker@suny.edu.

- **Professional Development Webinars and Training** – upcoming webinars and training sessions along with the library of past recordings for faculty and staff on remote instruction topics, including instructional design, assessment strategies, accessibility, virtual/remote labs, supporting students online, technical training, and leadership. Visit https://online.suny.edu/covid19/faculty-staff/webinars-recordings/ or contact jamie.heron@suny.edu.

- **Open Digital Content and Adaptive Learning** – openly licensed digital content and support for adaptive learning strategies available through SUNY OER Services. Visit http://oer.suny.edu or contact michael.daly@suny.edu.

- **Communities of Practice** – 15 different discipline-specific faculty *Communities of Practice* utilizing the platform Workplace, which connect faculty across SUNY and promote access to remote instruction resources available in each discipline. Visit https://online.suny.edu/covid19/faculty-staff/faculty-staff-resources/workplace-groups/ or contact chris.price@suny.edu and alexandra.pickett@suny.edu.

- **SUNY, State and Federal Guidance** – information, resources, and guidance on Academic Continuity, Remote Instruction, and Online Learning from the SUNY Provost's Office, NYS Education Department, US Department of Education and Middle States. Visit https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/app/covid-19/ or contact david.cantaffa@suny.edu.

- **General comments/questions about support for online or remote instruction** – For questions/feedback related to services contact kim.Scalzo@suny.edu.

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.