

President's Report
Academic and Professional Faculty Meeting
April 19, 2013

It gives me great pleasure to share with you a number of good news items in my April report. Clearly, these accomplishments are the culmination of much hard work and the stellar quality of our New Paltz community members. At a time of year when we're all feeling the pressures of wrapping up the academic year's work, it's great to highlight and celebrate notable achievements by our colleagues and our institution.

Sustainability – Princeton Review. We learned this week that New Paltz has been selected for inclusion in the 2013 edition of *The Princeton Review's Guide to 322 Green College*, the fourth time we have been recognized in the guide. This guide is available at www.princetonreview.com/green-guide and at the U. S. Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools (www.centerforgreenschools.org/greenguide). The 322 schools included in the guide had the highest values on "Green Rating" scores tallied for 806 institutions in 2012. In recognizing New Paltz as one of "the most environmentally responsible colleges in the U.S. and Canada," Princeton Review cited such accomplishments as our investment of capital into energy management initiatives, achievement of LEED Gold standard in the Crispell Hall renovation, the SUB Atrium as "the most environmentally friendly building on campus," our 50-kilowatt solar array, solar-powered solid waste containers, and recycling initiatives that have resulted in an "impressive" 50% waste-diversion rate.

Guggenheim Award – Kathy Goodell. I am pleased to share that Professor Kathy Goodell, head of the Painting & Drawing program in the Art Department, is the recipient of a prestigious 2013 Fellow Grant in the category of Creative/Fine Arts from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Professor Goodell was one of 175 scholars, artists, and scientists chosen for this honor from a group of nearly 3,000 applicants. For the past 89 years, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation has awarded fellowships annually to artists, scholars, and scientists in all fields. Guggenheim Fellows are appointed on the basis of impressive achievement in the past and exceptional promise for future accomplishment. Please join me in congratulating our own Professor Goodell on this impressive achievement. This is another proud example of the top-notch quality and caliber of faculty who work at New Paltz.

Chancellor's Awards. I am pleased to announce the following Chancellor's Award recipients, and ask that you join me in congratulating these colleagues for this recognition of their exceptional work and contributions:

- **Jeff Baker**, Senior Press Operator, Printing Services, Office of Communication and Marketing, *Excellence in Classified Service*
- **Richard Bodenschatz**, Assistant Director of Admissions, Department of Undergraduate Admission, *Excellence in Professional Service*
- **Hon Ho**, Professor, Department of Biology, *Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities*
- **Stacie Nunes**, Assistant Professor and Chair, Department of Physics and Astronomy, *Excellence in Faculty Service*

- **Bruce Sillner**, Dean of International Programs, *Excellence in Professional Service*
- **Stella Turk**, Instructor, Department of Communication Disorders, and Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, *Excellence in Professional Service*
- **Jack Wade**, Professor and Chair, Department of Theatre Arts, *Excellence in Teaching*

We will be recognizing these colleagues for their contributions and formally presenting these awards at this spring's undergraduate commencement.

Hugo is top SUNY mascot. As many of you already know, Hugo the Hawk, the SUNY New Paltz mascot, has won the [GenerationSUNY Mascot Madness](#) contest after a tense tournament. Claiming victory over 30 SUNY campuses that participated in the online competition, Hugo emerged as the winner after four rounds against the mascots of Purchase, Cortland, Maritime, and Stony Brook, respectively. Referred to as the "Cinderella story" on SUNY's blog, Hugo's triumph was a very happy ending and further testament to the specialness of the New Paltz community. I continue to be impressed by the overwhelming enthusiasm and participation of New Paltz students, alumni, faculty, staff, families, and friends, including local radio stations, who got involved and demonstrated their pride in our school. We promised a celebration of Hugo and we are planning to reveal the Mascot Madness trophy during the annual Rec It Out event outside the Athletic and Wellness Center on Wednesday, May 8, at 1:30 p.m. We ask supervisors to release staff for this celebratory event. All faculty, staff and students are invited to attend. More details will follow in an e-vite.

Budget Update. We have received little further detail on the state budget since the update Michele Halstead and I provided on April 2, but I will share information I spoke about in response to a question at last week's Academic Senate. It remains the case that budgets of state-operated campuses like New Paltz will almost certainly be taxed to help relieve the financial difficulties at Downstate Medical and its affiliated hospitals. As we wrote, it seems that salaries withheld through the Deficit Reduction Leave are one of the few potential sources available for this purpose (of course, the relevance of the Deficit Reduction Leave to UUP members is contingent on contract ratification). It remains unclear whether the state will repay SUNY and the campuses for such fund transfers before the salaries are due to be repaid. For that reason, this situation introduces further uncertainty in our budget planning for the next several years. There is no sign of movement on increasing state taxpayer support for SUNY, or of funding for our capital initiatives.

Nonetheless, we will determine our **priorities** for new budget allocation, but will wait to decide on the final **amount** to be allocated until next year's budget is clear. Cabinet is finalizing those priorities now, and we will share them in a **budget forum** on Wednesday, April 24, 10:00-11:30 AM, LC 100.

Strategic Plan. The Steering Committee has received valuable feedback on the draft strategic plan from faculty, staff and students by email and through a series of open forums and group meetings. These exchanges have focused on increasing understanding of the plan and the planning process, sharpening and improving the plan, and beginning to gather ideas for implementation. In the next several weeks, the committee will review input it has received and

consider further changes in the draft document before submitting it for my review. I will review the draft, discuss it with Cabinet, and hopefully approve the plan before the end of the semester.

In the coming weeks, I will form the Strategic Planning Council outlined in the plan and charge them to begin work during the summer to solicit and recommend specific administrative actions, and develop benchmarks and metrics to assess our progress. I want to be in a position to announce those 2013-14 initiatives in the August 2013 State of the College address so that we can begin working toward these goals immediately at the start of the fall semester. I recognize the challenge of building appropriate faculty consultation and involvement during summer. Thus, we will not attempt to make headway on initiatives that are primarily in the faculty domain until next fall. In the fall, we will add additional faculty to the Strategic Planning Council to guide and advise those elements of implementation of the plan, with the aim of having recommendations on further priorities established by the middle of the fall semester.

Title IX. I wrote to you last year about the audit of New Paltz and several other SUNY campuses by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education relative to Title IX policies and practices regarding sexual assault, sexual harassment, and hostile workplace issues. While our campus and SUNY have not yet received a final written report from OCR, during a telephone conversation several weeks ago involving representatives of New Paltz, SUNY legal counsel, and OCR, we learned that our policies and practices conform strongly to standards and expectations.

The SUNY-sponsored Affirmative Action Officers and Chief Diversity Officers conference was held this week in Albany. Tanhena Pacheco-Dunn, Executive Director for Compliance and Campus Climate and Title IX Coordinator, was invited to co-present with our system legal liaison (Andrea Stagg) on “a practitioner’s perspective on Title IX training and coordination.” Ms. Stagg will also be using many of our materials and procedures as examples of best practice. This invitation is wonderful validation of the hard and excellent work by our campus to develop policies and practices that support the letter, spirit and goals of Title IX. Tanhena, Dean of Students Linda Eaton, Student Affairs Associate Vice President Ray Schwarz, Vice President Dave Rooney, and Human Resources Director Dawn Blades have carried the primary responsibility for perfecting our policies and ensuring that they are readily available to members of our campus.

Chancellor Zimpher Visit to New Paltz. SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher will visit the campus on May 9, serving as keynote speaker for the School of Education/Department of Educational Administration annual recognition luncheon for Certificate of Advanced Study graduates. This event, which has been held at West Point the past several years, brings together our faculty and administrators, these graduates, and members of the regional K-12 education community, many of whom have served as mentors and supervisors for these graduates. The Chancellor will speak about “The SUNY Teacher Education Network” and other initiatives. The luncheon is by invitation only. Chairs of **all** departments involved in teacher education programs – within and beyond the School of Education – have been invited and are strongly encouraged to participate in this conversation.

Student Diversity. In my March report to the faculty, I provided data and assessment about recent suggestions that racial diversity among our students has been declining. An [opinion piece](#)

in last week's Oracle by Jacqueline Andrews (Assistant VP for Institutional Research and Planning), Lucy Walk (Senior Analyst, Institutional Research and Planning), and David Eaton (VP for Enrollment Management) offers further perspective on this issue. They wrote about changes in Federal reporting methodology and categories that complicate comparisons of student racial composition before and since 2009. They also share statistics on the outstanding first-to-second-year retention rates for students at New Paltz (92% for Black students, 87% for Hispanic/Latino and for White students).

VP Searches. Last week, the search committee for the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations interviewed a very strong group of semi-finalist candidates; I interviewed each candidate separately. The search committee has selected four finalist candidates and invited them to visit campus in the next several weeks. I hope that you will take advantage of opportunities to meet these candidates and offer your feedback for the committee's consideration.

The search consultant for the Vice President for Administration and Finance search will be visiting campus soon. We expect to schedule finalist campus interviews during late June.

Enrollment Update. Thank you to the many faculty, staff, and students who made our Accepted Student Open Houses on March 16 and April 13 so successful. We appreciate that you gave up part of your Saturday to support this effort so critical to our future. I greatly appreciate your enthusiasm in helping prospective students and their parents learn about all that New Paltz has to offer. May 1 is the National Candidate Response Date, so deposit activity will be very heavy until then.

Because we had two accepted student events this spring rather than the single, larger event we've held in the past, day-to-day comparisons between the two years have been of limited use until this week. Since last Saturday's open house and as of mid-week, the number of students (both first-time and transfer) paying deposits is slightly ahead of last year, and we are right where we want to be. The increase in transfer students who have paid deposits is largely accounted for by those who have also paid deposits to live in the residence hall (possible because of a small-scale experiment we undertook to gain direct evidence of housing demand by transfer students, despite the increased risk of tripling). To date, the percentage of enrolled students in the top selectivity group is higher than last year.

University of North Florida Administrative Team Visit. The leadership team from the University of North Florida visited New Paltz last month, at their request and as part of a regular practice of visiting other campuses to learn new approaches and models that might benefit their campus. Cabinet and other New Paltz administrators spent part of a day with their president, several vice presidents, chief of staff, and two trustees. They were particularly interested in learning about drivers of our increasing graduation rates, campus life and support for students from historically underrepresented groups, how we continue to keep the percent of classes with enrollments above 50 so low while sustaining our overall enrollments, and our philosophy and use of distance learning. After their visit, the president applauded how much they learned from us that may improve their practices – e.g., “the forty days and forty nights, the incoming freshman online café, your consistent focus on key issues.”

Rubin Museum. Earlier this week, Dean Michael Rosenberg, several Development Office staff, and I participated in a New Paltz alumni reception at the Rubin Museum in Manhattan. Alumni, mostly from the School of Education, joined us to learn about current happenings at SUNY New Paltz and about educational opportunities at the Rubin Museum. This event was part of a growing partnership between the campus and the Rubin Museum/Rubin Foundation, including an upcoming Dorsky Museum exhibition of Tibetan art, and is an example of the steps we are taking to more effectively engage our alumni.

IDMH Conference. We are expecting about 275 visitors to campus on Friday, April 19, for the Institute for Disaster Mental Health's 10th annual conference, organized by Director James Halpern and his staff. The topic of this year's conference is "*Radiological Readiness: Preparing for Dirty Bombs, Nuclear Disasters, and Other Radiation Emergencies.*" This conference will provide training and planning opportunities to strengthen our community's preparedness for catastrophic radiological events. This event is sponsored by the New York State of Emergency Management, Campus Auxiliary Services, and The Bookstore at New Paltz. Our new Congressman Chris Gibson will attend and will give brief remarks at the start of the conference. The recent events in Boston should remind us of the dangers our society faces, and of the need to be prepared both to avoid and respond to them. We are proud that the IDMH has emerged as a recognized leader in addressing these issues.

Commencement. Please mark your calendars for this year's commencement ceremonies on Friday, May 17, 6 p.m. (graduate) and Sunday, May 19, 10 a.m. (undergraduate). Strong faculty participation reinforces for our graduates, their parents and families, and other members of the public the scope and scale of the institution that deserves their support and the critical role of faculty in the educational experience of our students. Specific guidance on participation by faculty and staff is forthcoming.

Honorary Degree Recipient. As recently announced, on Sunday we will confer an honorary degree on New Paltz alumnus Maurice Hinchey ('68 English, '70 Education), who recently retired after a distinguished career in which he provided remarkable public service to citizens of the Hudson Valley, New York, and the United States for close to four decades. Congressman Hinchey completed 10 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and before that, 18 years in the New York State Assembly. A leading progressive in Congress, he fought for the middle class and the environment, serving on the House Appropriations Committee and the House Banking Committee, the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, the Subcommittee on Defense, and the bicameral Joint Economic Committee.

Congressman Hinchey's advocacy and support of SUNY New Paltz have burnished our reputation, bolstered our resources, and helped us to better serve our students, the region and the state. He secured funds for new environmental science laboratories and the solar car team; opposed legislation to cut the federal college aid program; and secured funds that brought 45 Hudson River School Paintings—treasures of our region's historic and artistic heritage—to our Dorsky Museum to benefit our students and the broader community. Congressman Hinchey has stayed involved with his alma mater, returning as a guest speaker, visiting classrooms, and providing internship and employment opportunities for New Paltz students and alumni.

Commencement Speaker. Lori DuBord, a '94 New Paltz alumna and long-time regional representative for Congressman Hinchey, will be the commencement speaker. Ms. DuBord began working in the Congressman's office as a student intern, and has served as his primary Hudson Valley representative, liaison to many organizations, and speech writer for 19 years. She is keenly aware of how much the Congressman has valued his New Paltz education, as she does hers, and will discuss those impacts on their lives and careers, reflecting on the broader value of public higher education. She will highlight Congressman Hinchey's many contributions to the region and the community, and his commitment to environmental causes. She hopes to inspire New Paltz graduates and honor the Congressman and his accomplishments by telling the story of how they have both devoted their lives to public service.

I look forward to seeing you at this week's meeting, and to responding to your questions and comments.

Sincerely,

Donald P. Christian
President