

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Michelle Maldonado, Ph.D.  
Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: December 2, 2022

RE: Provost Report

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## **Board of Trustees Update**

### **Retention Update**

#### **Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, and Accreditation Updates**

University-wide efforts to implement our 2020 Strategic Plan continue. Drawing from content submitted as part of the Spring/Summer 2022 Annual Planning and Reporting cycle and other sources, the Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness is preparing a fall 2022 Strategic Plan Progress update. The report will be published to the [www.scranton.edu/strategicplan](http://www.scranton.edu/strategicplan) web site, and will be reviewed by the University Planning Committee and President's cabinet to monitor the plan's holistic progression, and identify additional priorities, interventions, or support that may be needed to continue to move the plan forward. We look forward to sharing more detail with the Board this spring.

Current strategic foci include the implementation of the new Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion plan, including the development of a DEI plan assessment strategy; updates to the institutional environmental sustainability plan, including a framework for participation in the *Laudauto Si'* initiative; and streamlining of the strategic enrollment planning strategy to focus on non-traditional and transfer student initiatives. Discussions with the new Executive Director of the Slattery Center have identified opportunities to further our Humanities goals in the context of the Center's work and updated mission.

This fall progress update will include reflection key findings and performance metrics from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), completed by first year and senior students in spring 2022. The survey included a supplemental module on student's perceptions and experiences with diversity and inclusion, and a group of questions jointly administered by participating AJCU institutions regarding students' experiences with core elements of our mission. Analysis and reporting is being coordinated by the Institutional Assessment Committee, which is also considering future student and campus surveys to address planning, accreditation, and other evaluative needs.

In early December, member institutions will receive a final draft of updated Middle States' accreditation standards. This draft will be open for member vote in early spring 2023, and in place for institutions beginning their self-studies in the fall. Middle States has also made changes to a number of policies following updated accreditation-relevant federal regulations, addressing

topics including credit hour, distance education, and written arrangements with unaccredited entities. The Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness recently completed the University's annual review and updates to fulfill Title IV Consumer Information reporting requirements.

## **Faculty Development**

### ***Faculty Internal Research Funding***

The Faculty Research Committee awarded 11 Internal Grants to 16 faculty members.

Vincent R. Farallo	<i>The physiological cost of alkaloid sequestration in denodrobatid poison frogs</i>
Timothy Foley	<i>Purification of Redox-Responsive Metabolic Enzymes from Rabbit Brain</i>
Rachel Frissell Argyrios Varondies Amir Zamanian	<i>Dust Mitigation: Lunar Dust Mitigation of Photovoltaic (PV) Devices and Surfaces</i>
Gary Kwiecinski	<i>Data Analysis of Bat Species in Northeastern Pennsylvania</i>
Julie Nastasi	<i>The Occupational Lives of Individuals with Visual Impairment</i>
Susan Poulson	<i>Insanity: Murder and Madness in the Gilded Age</i>
Anne M. Royer	<i>Life history and floral color evolution in Mimulus ringens in the Northeastern United States</i>
Mojib Saei Riddhiman Medhi	<i>Examining the Nanoscale Interactions of Colloidal Particles in Spin-Coating Processes using Molecular Dynamics Simulation</i>
Jennifer Schwartz Lori Walton Renee Hakim	<i>Differences in Perceived Stress, Health Related Quality of Live (HRQoL) and Physical Health Symptoms Stratified by Trauma and Impact of Mediating/Moderating Factory of Physical Activity Levels for Bhutanese and Congolese Resettled Refugees Living in the USA</i>
Marc Allan Seid	<i>Altitudinal development differences in social insect learning</i>
Cristen Walker	<i>Prevalence of Undergraduate Student Test Anxiety: A Comparative Analysis</i>

### ***Sabbaticals***

The following sabbaticals have been approved

**Fall 2023**

Dr. Driver  
Dr. Gomaaa,  
Dr. Lesneski  
Prof. Oner (pre-tenure)  
Dr. Randich  
Dr. Seid  
Dr. Varonides

**Spring 2024**

Dr. Andersen  
Dr. Curiel  
Dr. Howey  
Dr. Sebastianelli  
Dr. Whittaker

**Academic Year 2023-2024**

Dr. Caporale  
Brigid Frein  
Dr. Goll  
Dr. Pinches  
Dr. Shapiro

**Intersession/Summer 2023**

Prof. Witek

**Graduate Academic and Student Services Update**

The Graduate Academic and Student Services area held information sessions for potential graduate students who are interested in a position as a graduate assistant in the 2023-2024 academic year. To date, 8 sessions were held via zoom, and approximately 85 total students attended the sessions. Applications are due February 1<sup>st</sup>.

New graduate students are being invited in January 2023 to attend an orientation to allow them to become familiar with the University and the services offered. They will then attend a college level orientation following the general one, and then be invited to the Graduate Student Social at 7:30 the same evening. Additional socials are being planned for graduate students for the spring 2023 semester.

**DEI Updates*****Multicultural Center Expansion***

Construction started on the new Multicultural Center to be located on first floor of the DeNaples Center. The Center's expansion will assist with the increased need for space for underrepresented students to gather and host events. The new Center will feature lounge space, a small study room, a flexible mediated conference/meeting room, and some staff offices. We look forward to its opening later this year.

***Council for Diversity and Inclusion***

The Council for Diversity and Inclusion will be working to assist the University with two DEI Strategic Plan objectives, specifically:

“Develop a statement of shared principles for diversity, equity, and inclusion for all members of our University community. As part of a planned review of University mission and institutional learning outcomes, consider how this commitment may be realized in these foundational statements.”

“Review the number, charges, and status of campus committees engaged in diversity, equity and inclusion work, identifying potential synergies and connection points. Invite each committee to share an annual report on its activities to appropriate constituents and leadership.”

The Council also continues to work with the Office of Equity and Diversity to research best practices for providing resources and support to address bias incidents.

### ***Academic Programs***

Many academic departments include DEI-related classes, modules, and learning programs to their agendas. Some highlights follow. The Education Department offers a series of courses that address work with students with disabilities, English language learners, and people of diverse cultural backgrounds. The STEM and the Education Department are teaming up to support future science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) high school teachers in high-need school districts. Dr. Gerard Dumancas, Associate Professor of Chemistry, received a \$1,158 million National Science Foundation-funded Noyce Scholars grant to assist with this effort.

Neuroscience added a module on Neuroscience of racism/bias in NEUR 111 Reading Science Literature, which is a required seminar taken in the spring semester of first year, and added historical data from various neuroscientists into their neuroscience courses. Biology's faculty include course topics such as the genetic control of skin color and the chromosomal bases for gender and gender identity into classes.

Criminal Justice and Sociology offer courses for students to better understand diversity. The *Race and Ethnic Relations* course recently added more online educational resources from underrepresented scholars, including women and people of color, and the intersections between the marginalized social groups. The Department also reviewed its curriculum for its coverage of racial justice issues.

### ***Black Studies Concentration***

The Black Studies Concentration is poised to be added to the Fall 2023 catalog. Drs. Melissa Anyiwo, Anthony Betancourt, and Nicole Hoskins are in the process of finalizing courses to propose to the curriculum committee.

### ***Thrive***

As a result of the commitment to improve the collegiate experiences and outcomes of first-generation students demonstrated through The University of Scranton's THRIVE program, led by Shannon Murphy-Fennie, Scranton was selected to join the national 2022-23 First-gen Forward cohort. The cohort is sponsored by The Center for First-Generation Student Success, which is an initiative of the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and The Suder Foundation.

Colleges selected to the First-gen Forward program receive professional development, community-building experiences, and have access to the research and other resources of the Center to further improve programming for first-generation college students.

## **ROCK**

The Cultural Centers sponsored the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Royals of Color Kickoff, an early arrival program for new students of color. ROCK provides an opportunity for students to come to campus the Thursday prior to first-year move in to connect with peers, upper-division mentors, and campus and local resources. This provided a foundation to support social network development, community-building, and campus and local-area connections. Twenty new students—up from nine last year—and eighteen upper-division students participated in the program and built lasting connections over the two-day event.

## **DEI Lunch and Learns**

The Office of Equity and Diversity is now in its fourth year of the DEI Lunch and Learn Series. This year, we will have guest speakers discuss such topics as “Inclusive Education for Individuals with Disabilities,” “Student Mental Health Awareness: Recognition and Response,” “Isms,” “Psychological Safety in Employment,” and “Indigenous History.”

## **Curriculum Approval**

### **New Course**

	<b>Date Posted</b>
ABA 574: Early Intervention for ASD	10/18/22
ABA 575: Positive Behavior Supports	10/18/22
BIOL 296: Tropical Terrestrial Ecology	10/17/22

### **Course Change**

PHIL 323: Natural Law – True Guide of Grave Error?	11/17/22
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### **New Program**

Counseling & Human Services and Applied Behavior Analysis, Accelerated BS/MS*	11/30/22
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### **Program Change**

Psychology Program	11/17/22
Criminal Justice, Sociology, and Criminology	11/17/22

*\*Pending Faculty Senate Approval*

## **Other Updates**

- The Speech Language Pathology CAA candidacy site visit on September 7 & 8 went extremely well, thanks to the expertise and hard work of Program Director Dr. Hope Baylow and a cast of supporting faculty and staff. We are currently accepting admissions applications for the first cohort of students for the MS in SLP, who will be admitted in Fall of 2023.
- The excellence of our Nursing Department has been recently confirmed by their accrediting bodies. The BS in Nursing, MS in Nursing, Post-graduate APRN Certificate Program and the Doctor of Nursing Practice were all granted reaccreditation for 10 years by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing (CCNE). The good news doesn't end there. Following a separate accreditation visit, the Council on Accreditation for Nurse Anesthesia (COA) has reaccredited the Nurse Anesthesia Program for 10 years. I am

tremendously proud of the Nursing Department Leadership, most notably the Department Chair Teresa Conte. She overcame many challenges, including a shortage of master's prepared faculty to adjunct for us and the passing of our beloved graduate program director and CCNE expert, Dr. Mary Jane Hanson. Our Nursing leadership and faculty continue to work diligently to create the best learning environment for our students.

- PCPS will resume a majority of our international travel courses and international service trips this Intersession and Summer terms after most have been on a hiatus due to the pandemic. Courses are on the master schedule for travel to Uganda (Nursing and Health Administration), Ireland (Nursing), Brazil (Health Administration), the Dominican Republic (Occupational Therapy) and Slovakia (Health Administration). PT has a faculty-led service trip planned to Guatemala.
- The search process is currently underway for the permanent PCPS Associate Dean to replace Dr. Victoria Castellanos, who assumed the role of Dean of PCPS in spring 2022. Applications are due January 13, 2023 for full consideration.
- The Friends of the Weinberg Memorial Library presented the Royden B. Davis, S.J., Distinguished Author Award to Pulitzer prize-winning author, Ayad Akhtar on November 18, 2022.
- The Library has moved to a new service model which utilizes the main service point—the Library Services Desk (formerly the Circulation Desk)—to refer all student and faculty inquiries to the appropriate person. The Research & Instruction Librarians have moved to an On-Call model to support the change in services and will provide one-on-one and small group consultations directly in their offices.
- The Library has secured access to Kanopy Base for the remainder of this academic year, which dramatically increases our streaming media offerings on the Kanopy streaming service.
- Prof. Sylvia Orner has been elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the Pennsylvania Library Association.
- The University of Scranton's 36<sup>th</sup> Henry George Lecture was held on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Parag Pathak, Ph.D. presented "Still Worth the Trip? Modern-Era Busing and other Lessons from Urban School Reform".
- The Math Department hosted Linda McGuire of Muhlenberg College, who presented "Collaborating for Change: Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Mathematics Departments."
- Business Leadership Program students have adopted a comprehensive set of projects involving branding, new revenue opportunities, and program replication for Homeboy Industries as part of their Business Leadership Consulting Theory and Practice course. Students will consult on a range of potential opportunities, including community and youth program outreach, grant and donor relation development and possible marketing and expansion of educational programming.
- ALLONE Charities has awarded a \$25,000 grant to the University to support free physical therapy services offered by DPT students to vulnerable population in the region. The grant will support the equipment and supplies, translation services and transportation needed for DPT students to conduct faculty-supervised physical therapy and health education clinics for the uninsured and underinsured member of our community.

- The University of Scranton and Le Moyne College have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish new academic relationships and engage in other collaborative programs. The MOU will allow us to collaborate in ways that leverage academic strengths, faculty expertise, resources and technology to enhance further the quality and breadth of programs offered to students. Under the agreement Scranton can enroll up to five qualified students for direct entry into Le Moyne's Physician's Assistant (PA) Program after graduation and Le Moyne can enroll up to five qualified students with a guaranteed seat in the DPT program at Scranton.