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President's Monthly Report to Campus April 2018

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Dear Colleagues,

I hope many of you had a chance to find some time to decompress during Spring Break as we push forward during these final weeks focused on the academic year. There is a lot going on and the last few monthly reports have included a picture of what Plymouth State might ultimately look like organizationally. Those reports were meant to give everyone some perspective—to shine a light, so to speak. With that done we will focus on our path forward together built around our overarching objectives, considering in every aspect of what we do to achieve our shared, but flexible, vision: (1) Movement to a flatter, integrated, Cluster-based organizational structure and implementation of the Four Tools, (2) Retention and Persistence, (3) Sustainability/Thriving financially, academically, and reputationally, (4) Recruitment and Enrollment, and (5) Equipping our students to lead and thrive in the twenty-first century global economy. As a follow up to last month’s report, the changes to the academic calendar have been completed and can be found here.

One special note of thanks to all of you because the loss we were projecting for this year has declined to the point where we are hopeful that we can come in just a little below break-even (albeit still in negative territory). This is due largely to one-time personnel and supplies/services savings in addition to a slightly lower financial aid discount than planned. As such, we are planning to give salary increases/bonuses to staff, and potentially to faculty (depending on Board approval and other issues). The salary adjustment will comprise one part base pay increase and one part one-time merit/bonus increase.

Movement to a flatter, integrated Cluster-based organizational structure and implementation of the Four Tools

Provost Council Representative
A forum was held with faculty on March 9 following the release of an outline for the Provost Council representative process. We appreciated the frank discussions, realizing that what we become as a university requires input and ideas from all of us. With that input and shared discussion provided at the forum, a simplified process was outlined, which requested that each of the Clusters identify a Provost Council representative by April 1 (several clusters had already done so at the time of writing this report). As recently shared by e-mail to faculty, if a Cluster has a team leader this person would serve as the representative to the Provost Council as part of their Cluster leadership responsibilities. If a Cluster does not have a team leader, it was asked to elect a representative to the Provost Council. These representatives will support the strategic directions of the University by:
• Representing their Cluster to the Provost Council.
• Informing the provost and council of their Cluster’s initiatives and directions, as well as keeping the Cluster apprised of initiatives and strategic directions discussed in the council.
• Providing Cluster-specific and campus-wide perspectives on URI proposals under consideration by the provost.
• Working with the provost to coordinate the academic Cluster and strategy and implementation across campus.
• Attending bi-weekly meetings (two hours) beginning in mid-April.
• Serving through winter 2019.

The Provost Council will also include representatives from Finance and Transition Leadership Team (TLT), etc.

University Reinvention Initiatives (URI) Ideas, as detailed in the URI process documentation, were requested by March 30 and can be found here. Some really great ideas have been put forward. The next phase of the URI process begins with a review by the deans to identify viable proposals for development and/or action and implementation. Following this review and feedback, cross-Cluster representatives, Cluster and program leaders, faculty, and staff will engage in the next phase of planning: refining proposals, developing curricular initiatives and proposals, identifying additional cross-Cluster and co-curricular opportunities, and prioritizing action steps. The deans will be in communication with the curriculum committee regarding upcoming curricular initiatives and ideas. This will happen during the late spring and summer semesters with some work continuing through AY19. Led by the provost, members of the administration will continue to work collaboratively with Clusters and programs as they go through this phase of the process. The full process outline and timeline can be found here.

DegreeWorks is a comprehensive academic advising and degree audit solution that helps all students and their advisors successfully navigate curriculum requirements. It provides academic planning tools and real-time information to guide students through complex degree requirements. Over the past several months, the Registrar’s Office and Information Technology Services have been working diligently to implement this solution for our graduate students. The 2014-2015 catalog has been successfully launched in DegreeWorks. Our goal is to have the catalogs for subsequent years through 2017-2018 completed by April. Overall, feedback from students has been positive. We look forward to offering this service to all graduate students in the near future.

Recruitment and Enrollment

In Undergraduate Recruitment, going into the final week in March, the number of first-year deposits was 357 compared to 396 in 2017, 355 in 2016, and 357 in 2015. Note that while last year’s cohort was experiencing a year-to-year increase in deposits, that cohort included a higher percentage of students who had not filed a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and therefore had not
benefited from knowing their expected cost upon making their deposit. This observation may have been an early predictor of higher summer melt that did unfold for the fall 2017 class. The month of April is a crucial time for our yield efforts with Accepted Students Day events running on April 6, April 16, April 20, and April 27. **In-state Recruitment**’s dedicated efforts are focused on a number of initiatives, some of which include working to develop a PSU hosted local “Central NH” high school counselor association/organization; further partnering with CCSNH institutions to develop a block transfer and reverse transfer pathways, beginning with Lakes Region Community College. In addition, initial partnership conversations began with FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) now that PSU offers Electromechanical Technology and Robotics, and to help FIRST expand to the North Country region. USNH Trustee Bob Baines met with both the Holmes Center for School Partnerships and Educator Preparation and Enrollment Management to continue discussions on STEAM AHEAD NH, with PSU planning to host an event and workshop in the fall that will bring high school and middle school students from Manchester West High School and White Mountains Regional High School to campus. Furthermore, Marcia Schmidt Blaine connected Enrollment Management with a contact at the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire to explore opportunities that link to the 140,000 adults in NH who have some college but no degree. **Out-of-State Recruitment** is exploring a block transfer initiative, beginning with discussions with Northern Essex Community College in Massachusetts. **International Recruitment** reports that PSU will be officially signing a 2+2 Dual Bachelor’s Degrees Program with Zhengzhou University (ZZU) in China and hosting a delegation from Xinyang Normal University in April. **In Graduate Recruitment**, comparing spring semester year-to-date (at the end of March), applications were 162 compared to 105 and spring registrations were 1,787 compared to 1,231. In an effort to create more awareness of our graduate programs to our undergraduate students, Grad Admissions hosted an event for sophomores and juniors on March 28 to let them know that eligible seniors are able to take up to two graduate-level courses in their senior year at no extra charge. In April, Admissions will be meeting with the Delta Zeta sorority to discuss graduate programs at PSU.

**Retention and Persistence**

The Retention and Persistence Working Group’s efforts to engage campus in its efforts continue. Teams have been reaching across campus and meeting to discuss and ultimately implement retention and persistence efforts. We shared information with campus on February 22 and our efforts are focused on making those efforts a reality as soon as possible. We hope you noted the many collaborative cross-campus efforts. We will be sharing ideas on easily-implemented faculty strategies that focus on face-to-face communication soon. As always, please feel free to share ideas with anyone in the working group.

Part of our retention efforts revolve around reinventing residential life to include incoming students grouped by FYS, a scholars residence hall, ending the moratorium on Greek life, enhanced support for clubs and social events, Cambridge-style organization of residence halls, and the redesign of Smith Hall to facilitate student interaction (hopefully opening in the fall).
The Chronicle of Higher Education did a major story on Plymouth and the changes we are going through (congratulations to Professor Elliot Gruner and PSU student Bradley Rucker, whose photos headline the story.) If you have difficulties accessing the article online please contact MCCS for assistance.

**Sustainability/Thriving financially, academically, and reputationally**

PSU programs and research are now more deeply embedded in the national discussion on education. On March 1, Congresswoman Kuster visited the Center for Young Children and Families to look at its work on STEM education for young children. After spending time with the children, she met with students who spoke passionately and very effectively about their work. Aides for both Senators Shaheen and Hassan met with the TRIO team in the last week of March to discuss not only the importance of funding this vital and very successful program but also to highlight what TRIO actually does. Many thanks to Mary Cornish, Pat Cantor, Patti May, and everyone on the staff at TRIO and CYCF.

**In University Advancement**, Development recognized nearly $1 million in lifetime giving from the late Carleton Parish ’71, including his newly realized planned gift, Panther Park (the PSU baseball field), which will be permanently named the Sharon and Carleton Parish ’71 Field in their honor; the field dedication will be Sunday, May 6. Meghan Lang ’17 increased her cash and pledge gift to $30,000 for student scholarships for leaders in MAPS, Compass, and Statement student organizations. The Tom James Company made a $30,000 cash gift to the Zachary P. Frank ’14 Memorial Scholarship. The Professional Sales Leadership program secured $10,000 corporate sponsorships from both Affordable Interior Systems and DHL Express. Donor meetings with alumni and friends show strong support for the three current strategic fundraising priorities: stadium and turf field; strength and conditioning open lab; and student scholarships. Ava Tyler ’14,’17G has been selected, after a national search, as the director of annual giving.

**Marketing, Communications and Creative Services (MCCS)** continued to focus on the guerrilla marketing campaign on NH ski mountains throughout March, including Waterville Valley Basecamp and student-led marketing teams at Loon and Cannon mountains. Working closely with Residential Life and PSU Dining Services, MCCS created and installed branded art throughout Prospect Dining Hall, using aspects of our “See Further Up Here” campaign. On March 28, MCCS worked with PSU faculty Chen Wu and Roxana Wright to release the results of their “NH Foreign Direct Investment” report to regional media and guests. Working with the USNH procurement office, a Request for Proposal was released to launch the search for an integrated marketing agency to assist with marketing, branding, and enrollment for the next three years. University Advancement is happy to report that Marlin Collingwood has been selected, after a national search, as director of MCCS.

**Equipping our students to lead and thrive in the twenty-first century global economy**
**Student Success Coaches** began six-week grade outreach response efforts to first-year students in preparation for fall course registration. **The Financial Aid team** has been dedicated to getting our financial aid packages to new recruited students and importing returning student financial aid information, and are beginning to send out financial aid packages to returning students. The Summer Bridge Planning group is now communicating/working with the faculty task force on creating an experimental pass/no-pass course called Introduction to the Cluster Experience.

**Alumni Relations and Career Development** are working on a spring pilot project in collaboration with four First-Year Seminar (FYS) faculty members, connecting alumni volunteers with first-year students. Early feedback has led to planning for a multi-track alumni volunteer program to assist with student success, with planning underway for summer to aid with Admission efforts.

Chris Lee, representing the TRIO Program for the PASS Office, attended the Council of Opportunity in Education’s 38th Annual Policy Seminar in Washington, DC, from March 12-16. While gaining a greater understanding of the federal legislative process he was able to establish and cultivate his relationship with members of Congress and key congressional staff. PSU TRIO alum Vanesa Urango also attended in order to share her story, demonstrate the importance of TRIO programs in higher education, and network with fellow TRIO alumni.

Reminder, please save the date—Monday, May 7, from 3:30–5 p.m., for the next Town Hall meeting in Merrill Place: Looking to the Future and Celebrating our Successes.

Sincerely,

![Signature]

Don Birx
President