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# President's Monthly Report to Campus November 2018

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# PRESIDENT'S MONTHLY REPORT TO CAMPUS

November 2018

Dear Colleagues,

As the leaves fall and the air becomes crisp, opportunities seem to increase for our students to interact with our community. I spent time on Halloween night on Main Street in Plymouth watching Professor Annette Holba's Senior Seminar class befriending hundreds of community members. The class planned and executed a fantastic PSU presence at the community Halloween celebration, and their interactions made me, and should make us all, very proud.

I have been reflecting on our Town Hall and listening sessions and have begun organizing and grouping comments and suggestions into approaches to move PSU forward. Our integrated marketing agency will conduct an internal communications audit beginning next week, to include interviews, focus groups, and campus-wide surveys. Results and recommendations will be presented to campus in January. Several other good ideas that came from our campus conversations will be implemented in the coming weeks and months, including scheduled monthly social opportunities and a detailed, interactive campus organizational chart.

First-generation, income eligible, and/or students with disabilities were the focus of a celebration of TRIO on Friday, November 2. United States Senators Shaheen and Hassan joined us as we celebrated the Grand Opening of the new TRIO offices. Senate staffers from both offices visited the PSU TRIO program in the past and have learned from it. Both Senators strongly support and advocate for TRIO funding and for appropriate spending of the allocated money. They helped lead the fight to put the money back into the omnibus spending bill when there was a threat to cut TRIO funding. In fact, Congress ended up increasing funding by 6%. PSU's TRIO program is particularly successful: in 2017-2018, PSU's TRIO had an 88% persistence rate from year to year; 81% graduate in six years; and - most importantly - 97% of participants were in good academic standing. Congratulations to Patti May and all the TRIO staff and students. For those of you who missed the Minors Fair on October 18, it was well attended and well represented with minors across campus. Many thanks to all the faculty and staff who participated and Patrick May and Kelsey Donnelly for organizing it.

Governor Sununu has made an official announcement of his support for our state budget request proposal, and the University System of New Hampshire (USNH) proposal. We will be presenting this to the House Appropriations Committee on November 16. Provost Robin Dorff and I have been meeting with some of the Cluster leaders regarding structural considerations, and Academic Affairs is continuing to approve proposals put forward in the University Reinvention Initiative (URI) process. The emphasis on curricular innovation is at the heart of our transformation, and we want to encourage that effort. Meanwhile, Robin and Cluster leaders work on processes and structure, realizing there will be differences across clusters but common elements as well. Recently, we hosted the quarterly USNH trustees meeting and both students and faculty gave presentations on everything from new program concepts to Integrated Capstones (INCAP), to the impact of Cluster courses on student learning and interest. The biggest concerns for the trustees revolved around sustainability in the face of declining demographics and limited additional funding sources. Fortunately, PSU has been bucking the trends so far.

The new Center for Research and Innovation (CRI) was formed this year integrating the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), Center for the Environment (CFE), and components of the Center for Business and Community Partnerships (CBCP) into one center. It is off to a great start, posting a perfect record of 15 grant awards for 15 proposal submissions for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2019. Directed by Dr. Joseph Boyer, the CRI is the University's new hub for strategically important, interdisciplinary research and scholarship by students, faculty, and their external partners. A total of \$2.3 million has been awarded, including over \$1 million for the University's Health and Human Enrichment Cluster. Highlights include a \$400,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to continue combating substance and opioid use disorders.

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

**Pedagogy and Curriculum Development**—PSU recently applied to the Davis Educational Foundation (DEF) for funding to support innovative pedagogy and curriculum development as part of the Integrated Clusters initiative. DEF staff and board members will visit campus on November 12 to hear more about our proposed Cluster Pedagogy Certification Program, which will provide professional development opportunities for faculty members interested in opening the educational experience and breaking through a variety of boundaries. In particular, Cluster pedagogy includes interdisciplinarity and integration, project-based work that extends beyond the walls of the classroom, and the sharing of student work with external audiences. The certification program will support faculty to teach using these principles.

### **Recruitment and Enrollment**

**Enrollment Management**—Following the start of the fall semester, the Registrar's Office joined the Enrollment Management division, where Enrollment Management now has a dual report to both the President's Office and Academic Affairs (detailed in the university organization chart posted [here](#)). Support has been provided to assist the Registrar's Office to strategically timeline their numerous projects. Enrollment Management (Jason Moran) has been responding to requests from undergraduate and graduate faculty to review University Reinvention Initiative (URI) proposals and academic program adjustments (*creation, deletion, or revision*) to assess student interest and demand in our recruitment and enrollment landscape. Enrollment Management will continue to respond to these requests from faculty given the difficult demographic headwinds forecasted over the next decade, which will impact student enrollment across the state and New England region.

**New First-Year and Transfer**—The new first-year admissions team continues to remain engaged with recruitment travel. Daily Campus Visits have been running for prospective students, and the last fall Open House event is scheduled for Monday, November 12. Admissions thanks all who have, and plan to, participate at new student recruitment events, and who have provided feedback and suggestions on types of programming to offer for prospective students and their parents/advocates. Combined student registration for the first two fall Open House events came in at 16 percent ahead of last year. Admissions is partnering with Athletics to host a Prospective Student Athlete Open House event on Saturday,

December 1, and more details will be forthcoming as planning unfolds. Applications for fall 2019 are coming in and admissions decisions are already being made and sent to applicants.

The transfer team has welcomed two great new team members. Karen Johnson will be the primary recruiter for all transfer students who do not claim N.H. as their state of residence. Jennifer Mahoney, a graduate assistant, will be working in transfer student advising. Extensive recruitment travel throughout New England has been ongoing since mid-September and will be wrapping up in mid-November. Travel this year has focused on meeting students individually to give them a personalized pathway to PSU and developing greater connections with community college advisors. Finally, Melissa Ulery has been hard at work developing new and updated articulation agreements with our N.H. community colleges, furthering our commitment to working with our valuable partners in the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH).

**Graduate**—At the end of October, registrations and enrollments for the fall semester were 1,650, which is an increase of 166 over last year and the highest number for fall registrations since 2014. Spring registration for graduate students opened on October 29. After a shift in the application deadlines, Admissions reports an increase of approximately 25 applications. Admissions is observing increased interest in undergraduate students inquiring to take graduate classes during their senior year, along with strong interest in the MBA program, which is rolling out an in-person cohort that will begin in summer 2019 to allow students to complete the program by spring 2020.

**Registrar**—The first round of fall grades was due October 29, with subsequent rounds to be provided approximately weekly thereafter. It is crucial for grades to be submitted by due dates or all other processing—up to and including awarding students' degrees can become delayed. The team is also preparing for the many proposals due to the Curriculum Committee this month. Due to the volume, it will take time to work through all of the changes and additions but the team assures that they will communicate when new courses (including experimental) have been completed. Furthermore, the first phase of the CourseLeaf product (web-based catalog) is expected to be implemented within the next month, followed by a campus-wide announcement of its launch.

**Student Success**—The Center for Student Success has been hosting either one-to-one or group advising sessions with first-year students to prepare for spring course registration. They are checking in on six-week grades with students to discuss academic progress and, if needed, to develop back-on-track strategies that utilize support offerings. They learn about each student's first-year transition at mid-semester to best support their holistic development, review spring 2019 draft schedules, and distribute registration PINs. The degree completion advisors have been meeting with undeclared sophomore students to assist them in selecting spring 2019 classes and to encourage declaration of their major. Marissa Lischinsky's efforts to provide user support and training with the Student Success Collaborative (SSC) have led to increased interest and engagement among faculty. This progress update was great news as the purpose of utilizing the student-focused management system is to provide a collaborative coordinated care network to support our students. Recently, Marissa was recruited and accepted the position of associate director of student engagement (transition and retention) at her alma mater. Her last day at PSU will be Friday, November 9. We have since hired Jordan Rosenberg '17, current assistant director of the annual fund, to begin as a student success coach on Tuesday, November 6. Jordan has

been training with Marissa and the rest of the team over the past few weeks and is ready to support and advise the students who are currently assigned to Marissa. Marissa will be missed and Enrollment Management is proud of all that she has given to the PSU community. We wish her the best as her career in higher education progresses. Karla Chierichetti was recently welcomed as the new program support assistant and the team is excited to have her join them.

### **Retention and Persistence**

We continue to further integrate classroom learning and residential life with a goal of increasing avenues for scholarship and community, while decreasing off-campus drinking and partying for which we have been known in the past. Although driven in part by finances, the heart of the matter rests in our four year graduation rate of 44%. Students (with 64 credits or more) who are well on a trajectory to graduate in 4 years can live off campus. This new off-campus housing policy announced last week is an important step in this process of building an on-campus learning community and increasing retention and graduation rates as well. I copied you on an e-mail sent last Thursday to students, which provided additional background about how we came to this decision and what it means for our community as a whole.

To date, we have changed the trajectory of the retention curve toward the positive with a 1% increase in retention between the 2016 and 2017 first year classes. Fall 2016 first year (FY) students who returned in Fall 2017: 67.7%; Fall 2017 FY students who returned in Fall 2018: 69.4%. The Retention and Persistence Working Group is considering ways to make retention and persistence initiatives available to all through an organizational chart outlining them.

Please remember that you, personally, make a difference in student retention and persistence. Whatever you can do to keep a student engaged in PSU academics and social life, please do so to help students discover their purpose in pursuing higher education.

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

Students received an explanation from both the president and the student senate president about how and where to vote, explaining that “whether you choose to vote absentee in your home town or to vote in person in Plymouth, we strongly encourage you to exercise your right to vote this November. Election Day is Nov. 6.” Student Senate is also working with Marcia Schmidt Blaine to create a campaign for N.H. students to write letters to their legislators to explain the value of higher education in their lives—in general, and at PSU specifically.

Finance and Administration is still tracking our operating budget but it must be remembered that it represents a \$3.2 million deficit. This is due to four years of discounting compounding across all our undergraduate classes. That is part of the reason that graduation retention rates are so important. We all need to focus on this as a top priority moving forward. Moreover, a 44% graduation rate leaves too many students who drop out with debt and without a degree.

## University Advancement

### Development Report

Please mark your calendars for Plymouth State's Day of Giving on Tuesday, November 27: Giving Tuesday—a global day of philanthropy. We are working hand-in-hand with athletic teams, student clubs, and student organizations to raise \$50,000 to support their top priorities, and student scholarships. Join us in kicking off the day at 8 a.m. in the Fireplace Lounge with a performance by Mixed Emotions, our women's a capella group. To learn more and support students [here](#).

In collaboration with our colleagues in Athletics, University Advancement has secured gifts totaling \$1,807,701 for the Stadium and Turf Field Project. The amount left to raise to complete the project is \$192,299.

The Annual Giving team has raised over \$65,000 more compared to this time last year.

Ten new members were inducted into the Holmes Heritage Society, PSU's legacy society for individuals who have included PSU in their estate plans, including John Scheinman who, with his wife Susan, founded the Plymouth Opportunity Scholarship; and Paul Hackenberry, the spouse of Vice President Paula Lee Hobson, who made his hybrid gift—cash, pledge, and bequest intention—to the Stadium and Turf Field Project.

### Marketing Communications and Creative Services (MCCS)

MCCS continues to work closely with the recruitment and admissions team in developing and implementing new and creative ways to reach prospective undergraduate and graduate students and their families in our target markets, including our first-ever advertising on Spotify and YouTube. In October, we unveiled a new acceptance packet that will be delivered to accepted students, which includes a social media element for them to share with family and friends.

Over 600 high school students spent Friday and Saturday, October 12 and 13 at PSU, competing in the first-ever Governor's Cup Robotics Competition. Over 100 PSU students, faculty, and staff volunteered during the event, which was attended by Governor Sununu, inventor Dean Kamen, and other state leaders. The event garnered media coverage in news outlets across the country.

### "Free College Tuition Up for Grabs at Robotics Competition" (PSU)

Associated Press: 10/13/18—Up to 50 New Hampshire high school seniors could earn a free semester of college this weekend as part of a spinoff of the FIRST Robotics Competition.

Also seen in 36 outlets including: *U.S. News & World Report*, *Caledonian Record*, and *Connecticut Post*

### Press

PSU continues to be featured in media outlets locally, statewide, and nationally. Highlights of October's media covered include:

### (NH) "Fanning the Flames of Inspiration" (PSU)

*Business NH Magazine*: 10/19/18—Realizing that not all great entrepreneurs emerge from business programs, three of the state's largest universities and colleges are running entrepreneur centers. The idea is to engage students regardless of major and provide them with tools, work spaces, and guidance to move an idea from concept to reality.

### (NH) "Counselors from All Over Give NH Schools the Once-Over" (PSU, Ryan Patten)

*New Hampshire Union Leader* 10/13/18—New Hampshire is well known for its politics and its fall foliage, but it often gets overlooked by out-of-state students looking to pick a college. "If they think East Coast,

they're only thinking Boston or New York," said Eileen Restrepo, who advises students in the Kent, Wash., area. "There's a whole lot out there more than that."

### **"Feel Nostalgic with the Fam at Dorm-Style Hotels" (PSU)**

*Wherever Family: 10/14/18*—Not quite hostels, dorm room accommodations gain steam in the ever-changing hotel trend landscape. Whether they're in universities where affordable hotel space is at a premium and open during summers or just a design movement for those up for sharing the joys of travel (and a bathroom) with some new besties, there are a few more options in terms of where to stay and how.

MCCS Internal Communications is working closely with the President's Office to begin a total review of our various internal communications channels. With input from the campus forums held in October, a full internal communications audit will begin in November involving campus constituencies.

### **Alumni Relations**

Homecoming & Family Celebration and Reunion Weekend 2018 was a huge success with over 5,000 alumni, students, parents, faculty, and staff in attendance. Tailgating included over 160 cars full of Panther Pride.

Our Upper Valley Alumni Chapter will host its first-ever fundraiser on November 30 in support of PSU's Student Support Foundation—a student organization that funds student emergency grants and the Food Pantry. These alumni care deeply about supporting those Plymouth State students most in need of emergency assistance and are dedicating their time, energy, and philanthropic contributions to this worthy cause.

The PSU Business Fall Alumni and Student Gathering held on October 30 was sponsored by the student organizations Enactus, Marketing Association of Plymouth State (MAPS), Delta Mu Delta, and the Panther Business Club alumni chapter. This event connected students with successful alumni where PSU also recognized the accomplishments of alumni John Tucker '87 and Ryan Chadwick '00 at the awards ceremony.

Alumni are leading the Women's Leadership Summit in hosting an event this winter at the AMC's Joe Dodge Lodge in Pinkham Notch, March 15–17. This event plans to engage students and alumni, strengthen the network, and build support for its newly created scholarship. Participants will engage in a weekend of AMC guided snowshoeing, skiing, and hiking adventures in the heart of the White Mountains.

### **Career Development**

Career Development and Alumni Relations are moving forward in the configuration, beta testing, securing of mentors, and longer-term launch of PSUnite, our online mentoring platform to engage alumni, Plymouth State friends, and students. PSUnite will meet the charge from President Bix that every incoming first-year student (approximately 1,200 students) be paired with a mentor in fall 2019. We welcome faculty and staff to serve as mentors. If you're interested, text PSUnite to 51555 to complete a brief interest form.

Career Development, Alumni Relations, and Residential Life hosted three pilot alumni career exploration panels in student involvement, outdoor careers, and public service careers in residence halls in support of the First-Year Residential Experience. Over a dozen alumni from a variety of fields returned to campus to share stories of how they found success during and after college.

Our Fall Opportunity Fair will take place on Wednesday, November 7, from noon-3 p.m. in the HUB Courtroom, and 60+ employer and graduate school programs will be represented. Our concluding program for the fall will be LaunchPad, which focuses on professional preparation and workplace readiness for our students.

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PSU hosted Dr. Sonja Ardoin in a joint USNH/CCSNH professional development event as part of the statewide Purpose First initiative. Ardoin shared her research on the challenges rural, first-generation, and/or working-class students face in their transition to and through college and what our campus can do to be not just student focused but also 'student ready'. She also helped us begin to break down the stereotypes many have of rural students. Her talk was followed by a panel of New Hampshire specialists. All provided us with theoretical and practical ideas for recruitment and retention of rural students.

Please join us in celebrating First-Generation College Students this Thursday, November 8. Stop by the TRIO/PASS office, wear a 'Support F1rst Gen' pin, and learn how you can support First-Generation college students. #CelebrateFirstGen will connect our celebration with the nationwide one.

PSU athletic teams are hosting "Salute the Troops" events on Friday-Saturday, November 9-10, as part of Veterans Day weekend. Each team will honor veterans in their own unique ways. For example, the Swimming and Diving team will wear camouflage bathing caps and the basketball team will sport camo socks. In addition, veterans will serve as honorary captains for each team, items will be collected for the Bridge House (homeless shelter and veterans support), and special guests from veterans homes have been invited. I encourage you to attend these events in support of our veterans and service members.

Please remember that the Benefits Open Enrollment runs through Friday, November 9. For benefits-eligible employees, this is your annual chance to review your benefits and elect coverage for you and your family for calendar year 2019. This year, like last year, enrollment is active, which means you must enroll if you want medical coverage for 2019. If you don't enroll for medical coverage during Benefits Open Enrollment you will not have medical coverage for 2019, so please enroll by logging into myBenefits.USHN.edu.

Sincerely,



Don Birx  
President