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President's Monthly Report to Campus February 2019

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Plymouth State University

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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back everyone for a new semester and a new year. I hope everyone had a great break with family and friends. Many thanks to all of the faculty and staff who worked over the break on a whole variety of items to meet our students’ needs.

- Cluster Structure—The Provost Council met just before the break and proposed three Cluster structure options. One was selected and will be presented by Academic Affairs to faculty and staff.
- One of the University Reinvention Initiatives (URI) proposals submitted by Robin DeRosa last year was for a faculty and staff learning laboratory. This submission (#85) is available at https://plymouthstate.sharepoint.com/sites/URI/SitePages/Home.aspx. With the award of the Davis Educational Foundation Grant and the emphasis on Cluster pedagogy in the coming years, we decided that we needed to fund this proposal, at least to the extent of available resources, starting this semester. Robin began discussions about this lab with her talk at the opening of January Jamboree, “What is Cluster Pedagogy?”
- From conversations with those in attendance at January Jamboree, the sessions were uplifting, exciting, and honest with lots of discussion.
- Our budget request to the state continues to be supported by the governor and has received a positive response so far from the legislators we have met with. I remain hopeful for its funding at some level this year.
- On January 11, we had a successful Legislators’ Brunch with many staying afterward to talk with us and assure us of their support. It was the most positive brunch we have had since I arrived at PSU.
- Applications for Admissions continue to be up significantly as are graduate enrollments. (Details follow below in the Recruitment and Enrollment section.)
- We attended a USNH Board of Trustees meeting at Keene State College last month that overlapped with part of the January Jamboree. The system revised down its margin to 0.5 percent as some USNH institutions fell below plan. The primary cause was in enrollment.
- PSU is meeting its financial plan (budget) this year, but the higher ed environment remains challenging.
- The new HHP/E home in the PE Center opened for spring classes after much last-minute work by faculty, staff, and building service workers. Stop in and visit if you get a chance. Thanks to all for getting things in place in time to hold classes.
- The Showcase of Student Research and Engagement will be held the last Wednesday of classes (before finals week) starting in fall 2019. This change will help ensure that
students have an engaged audience for their work. Additional details were shared in the provost’s Progress report of February 1.

- The preliminary results of the Communication Audit have been received and highlights are summarized in the following section. The report will be available shortly.
- This year is the last one in which we will have an entering class that has a higher discount rate than the one graduating. This ends the growing cumulative impacts from discounting that we have experienced in the last four years.
- The provost anticipates initiating an associate provost search in the coming weeks. Our current associate provost, Gail Mears, will overlap with her successor for a time. The new position would start July 1 and more information will be forthcoming.
- PSU’s Educational Theatre Collaborative (ETC) celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with *The Little Mermaid*, the most recent in a long series of outstanding productions in partnership with the town of Plymouth. Many thanks to Trish Lindberg, supporting staff, faculty, and the cast for another exceptional performance both on and behind the stage.
- Due to unexpected flooding, the Holderness campus was closed on Friday, January 25, and parking is being reconfigured with additional off-campus spaces and town roads being made available. We are discussing approaches to handle future flooding as this now seems to be an annual occurrence.
- The Super Bowl party in Prospect Hall went well with strong attendance. There were no reported issues on or off campus (except for a Town water main breaking).
- Congratulations to [Amanda Whitworth](mailto:Amanda Whitworth) for being honored as one of the NH Union Leader 2019 Class of 40 Under Forty!

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

The preliminary results of the internal communications audit conducted by our outside marketing agency, Brodeur Partners, have been received and will be distributed to campus in the coming week.

**Highlights of the focus groups and campus survey include:**

- A clarion call to streamline and simplify communications
- People are often confused by where to find information
- The PSU website continues to have shortcomings
- Face-to-face interactions are essential
- There are too many communications platforms used across campus

**Immediate recommendations include:**

- Streamlining existing communications (e.g. with a bulleted summary section at the beginning)
- Addressing the website shortcomings
- Investigating ways to simplify and reduce heavy reliance on e-mail
- Providing a place outside of e-mail for event announcements
• More use of respected, third-party sources for gathering information and moderating campus conversations
• Developing a true, real-time, “living” directory where people can get the information they need from the appropriate people
• Creating more frequent opportunities for face-to-face interactions

Office of Community Engagement joins Student Life as part of Academic Affairs
Jess Dutille and Casey Krafton have joined the Student Life Team and will be moving to the Hartman Union Building (HUB) in the coming semester. They will continue to facilitate high-impact learning experiences for students throughout the broader community in the Office of Community Impact. Please continue to reach out to Jess and Casey for assistance in the area of community engagement, including service learning projects, off campus FWS opportunities, service trips, and professional development tools and workshops for students.

Cluster Pedagogy will be the focus of 2019 Professional Development. As a reminder, Cluster curriculum encourages us to think broadly about the ways in which curricular offerings (courses, minors, majors) can engage students within and across Clusters and programs. This can include, for example, toolkit courses that all students can take, or a major with a core set of courses and then multiple options from different disciplines. Cluster Pedagogy is inter- or trans-disciplinary, engages students in investigating approaches to solving real world problems, emphasizes collaboration, is often project-based, is outward facing, and supports students in developing and applying their knowledge and skills (to include sharing work with external audiences). We continue to build a community of teacher-scholars focused on developing learning opportunities with the following pedagogical elements:

• Interdisciplinarity and integration: Students are challenged to understand and use various disciplinary perspectives and to integrate them to create new and unique projects and/or solutions.
• Project-based work that extends beyond the walls of the classroom.
• Student work is shared with an audience external to the course.

Accreditation Updates
We just received full accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) for our advanced programs until 2021. CAEP is developing its standards for advanced programs and we assume a review will happen in 2021.

PSU is applying for Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) accreditation. The self-study will be submitted this month with a site visit in March.

New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
Our interim report was submitted in August and accepted this fall. We were asked to provide an update on Educator Preparation and to speak to efforts to ensure our website information is current and accurate. There was a great deal of interest in our evolving Cluster pedagogy and
structure as well as our related assessment approach. NECHE is expecting full implementation when we have a site visit in 2023.

**Nursing**  
We received full 10-year accreditation for Nursing from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

**Physical Therapy**  
We are in candidate status with the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) with full review for accreditation this fall (it does not accredit until the first class is in its last year). We have candidate status with CAPTE for the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.

**Recruitment and Enrollment**

**Undergraduate Recruitment**  
How is admissions surviving the current national student recruitment storm (continued drop in high school students, increased pressures of financial aid discounting, shrinking international student market, and an unpredictable political climate)? Going into the start to the semester, spring enrollment deposits were running ahead of last year (see comparison below) and student enrollment will be confirmed at R+30. For fall, the December President’s Report detailed applications running 20 percent ahead of last year and the momentum has continued with applications running 26 percent ahead in mid-January (see comparison below), representing a continued positive student response to Integrated Clusters recruitment messaging combined with shifts made in student search strategy and communication outreach during last fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 2019</th>
<th>Spring 2018</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Deposits - Spring</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications - Fall</td>
<td>5820</td>
<td>4593</td>
</tr>
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Efforts to yield and enroll admitted students began in December and, along with multi-channeled communications, on-campus events will include the continuation of the Panther for a Day Student Shadow visit (running February 19 to April 4); an Open House on Saturday, February 23; and Accepted Students Day events on April 1, 15, 19, and 22.

In transfer recruitment, admissions moved forward with a block transfer effort with the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH). This agreement represents an initiative first explored and reported on in the April and September President’s reports. Strategy development efforts were communicated to the Gen Ed committee and that discussion was outlined in the President’s October report—“Conversations between CCSNH and PSU have focused on transfer students who are awarded an associate’s degree in liberal arts (awarded at all CCSNH schools) transferring in their completed course work as a block (to come in as our Gen Ed). Admissions discussed this idea with both the Gen Ed coordinator and the Gen Ed
Committee, who gave a general (but enthusiastic) endorsement to engage in presenting the idea to each CCSNH institution.” An agreement between CCSNH and Plymouth was developed and has been accepted, representing a type of collaboration that was a state and USNH system priority and setting up the campus to positively impact recruiting efforts from New Hampshire community colleges.

**Graduate Recruitment**

In graduate recruitment, registrations and enrollments finalized for fall are detailed below along with current total fiscal year counts. The fall count represents the highest term count since 2012, which was 1,672. Also, total fiscal year enrollments to date at mid-January are trending ahead of last year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grad Enrollments</th>
<th>FY 19</th>
<th>FY 18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall “Finalized”</td>
<td>1,671</td>
<td>1,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fiscal Year “To Date”</td>
<td>4,349</td>
<td>4,215</td>
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In response to concerns voiced by the Graduate Council to the Cabinet in May 2018 about grad recruitment, Admissions shifted an undergraduate recruitment position over to graduate recruitment and, after two searches, a new graduate-focused recruiter will be joining the team.

**Office of the Registrar**

In effort to better serve the campus community,

1. We will be engaging in a dedicated focus to audit Degree Works and identify and correct existing program errors. The staff hosted a Degree Works session during January Jamboree. Stay tuned for additional faculty sessions on Degree Works coming this semester! We would appreciate feedback and suggestions as we continue to improve upon the Degree Works experience for students and advisors.

2. Tonya LaBrosse and Jason Moran are engaged in discussions with I.T. to explore taking existing technology to turn on a Help Desk function that would conceptually allow a student, faculty, or staff member to submit a question/issue/concern, receive a response confirming the receipt of a submitted help ticket, and then receive a confirmation that a submitted ticket has been closed after the question/issue/concern has been addressed.

More information will be communicated on these two efforts as the semester unfolds.

**Student Success**

The Center for Student Success has had a busy winter so far. It successfully completed the Warning/Probation and Severance process, which was much more streamlined and cost effective than past years, now that it has implemented an electronic notification system. Thanks to everyone who helped make that go so smoothly! The success coaches have been busy ensuring that new admits for spring 2019 were prepared and registered to start the semester, and that returning first-year students were enrolled in the right classes as well. The coaches are starting bi-weekly study halls and family-style dinners this semester to help with academics and social connections. The center is looking forward to another great semester!
Retention and Persistence

**EAB Student Success Collaborative has been renamed EAB Navigate.** It’s the same existing tool with a more accurate name. On January 7–8, EAB provided additional training to the student success coaches. The tool is advisor-facing and will provide advisors with information to assist their advisees. Please take time to explore EAB Navigate (see direct link on the left-hand column of the my.plymouth Welcome page) to get a sense of the range of possibilities it offers to help PSU in the goal of student success. Then please get your department and/or discipline to ask your student success coach liaison for additional information and training.

We are excited to share and discuss information about a University Honors Program with all on campus over the next month. A task force headed by Marcia Schmidt Blaine and George Pettinico and including faculty, Residential Life, and Admissions is creating a new approach to a PSU-wide honors program.

The Retention and Persistence Working Group, working with Institutional Research, is creating a retention and persistence tracker that will allow everyone to see what initiatives we have underway to improve retention and thus persistence, who is leading the initiatives, what metrics they are tracking to understand the efficacy of the initiatives, a calendar to understand when things are happening, and more.

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

**University Advancement Development**

- The Morgridge Family Foundation has generously committed a $75,000 cash gift. Thank you to John Morgridge ’85 for his foundation's generosity toward his alma mater.
- Bob O’Neil ’80 has generously pledged a blended gift—cash and bequest intention—that includes a six-figure, unrestricted bequest intention. Mr. O’Neil retired after 25+ years of executive sales experience in the telecommunications industry.
- Joe St. Martin ’89, ’14P has generously pledged a five-figure gift to the Stadium and Turf Field Project. Joe played lacrosse for PSU and has had a very successful career, starting and running multiple businesses.
- We are happy to share that the volume of gifts and pledge intentions has increased by 27.5 percent to date in FY19 as compared to FY18, with approximately 2,000 gifts processed so far in FY19, compared to 1,450 at this time in FY18.
- On February 11, the University Advancement team will kick off a week-long campaign, “Love is in the air at Plymouth State.” Stories will be shared, so if you and your significant other currently attend, met at PSU, or have a fun love story, we want to know. Please tell us your story at go.plymouth.edu/sweethearts.

**Alumni Relations**

Alumni Relations has over 30 regional and affinity chapter events in 2019. As each event is finalized, it is posted to the 25Live Calendar and at Plymouth.edu/alumni/events.
and staff are always welcome to attend, and we are especially interested in bringing more students to networking events as part of their career and professional development. Getting updates from your former students? Having alumni serve as guest speakers in your classroom? We’d love to feature those updates in Plymouth Magazine and keep their record of service in PSU’s alumni database. We will assist you in making our alumni—your former students—feel welcome as they come back “home” to PSU. Send your updates and info to alumni@plymouth.edu.

Career Development
Career Development and Alumni Relations continue progressing through preparations for the full launch of PSUnite, the first-year mentoring program for fall 2019 incoming students. We are currently in a small-scale pilot, testing out the platform and user experience, and are preparing onboarding training materials and communicating mentorship content to current mentors. To learn more and follow PSUnite, click here. As always, we welcome faculty and staff to serve as first-year mentors. Please text PSUnite to 51555 to express interest or drop us a note at go.plymouth.edu/FollowPSUnite.

After a nationwide search, Career Development welcomes Katie Gaebel as associate director. Katie started in Holmes Alumni House on January 22.

Career Development is excited to share our slate of spring semester 2019 programming. Please visit here to learn more about our current offerings.

Lastly, if you are looking to hire a student for an hourly or work-study position for spring semester, please post your position on our centralized job board to support students who are searching for on-campus/off-campus opportunities.

Marketing Communications and Creative Services
Year two of our Admissions Base Camp kicked off at Waterville Valley Resort over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend. Admissions has a presence on the mountain during weekends through the end of March, offering on-site applications and decisions. In addition, 11 PSU student skiers and snowboarders are representing PSU on all local ski mountains throughout the 2019 season and talking to high school students and their parents about why they should choose Plymouth State.

Legislative Affairs
On January 11, PSU hosted a Legislative Brunch for newly elected or reelected New Hampshire legislators, federal staffers, and local elected and appointed officials. Provost Dorff described Integrated Clusters briefly and where we are in the transformation process. President Birx explained the new and expanding programs included in the PSU portion of the state budget request. Faculty from those programs attended the brunch and talked with legislators about their work, very effectively priming legislators to hear what we had to say. Marcia Schmidt Blaine closed by explaining the benefits higher education brings not only to the individuals who graduate but also to the state. At its most basic, Philip Trostel’s research shows that the reduction of spending on individuals after they gain a college degree is greater than public spending on college education. You can see more of his research here. Please contact Marcia if you would like to see the PowerPoint presentation Trostel created for New Hampshire.

The PASS Office Tutoring program, coordinated by Angie Ricciardi, received tutor requests from 507 students in fall 2018—an increase of 31 percent from fall 2017. Tutoring, which
includes subject-specific, study skills, open lab, individual, and group tutoring, totaled 1,230 hours for the semester.

PSU remains steadfast in its comprehensive structural redesign—academically and administratively—which is positioning the University for long-term sustainability. Through the diligent work across the campus, the FY19 financial projection looks good. PSU is on target to meet the budgeted 0.7 percent operating margin for recurring expenses, and total operating revenues are projected to meet our budgeted target. Net tuition and fees are projected slightly higher than budget due to a lower than anticipated discount rate and are helping to offset the unanticipated lower auxiliary revenues. (Note: Work is already underway on policy changes to improve auxiliary revenues for FY20.) Total Operating Expenses for recurring activities are also on point with the FY19 budget, however, there are some one-time spending shifts between expense categories.

Finally, I wanted to close with a picture from the article “Newfound student aims to spread positivity with senior project’ by Donna Rhodes in the Plymouth Record Enterprise of January 31, 2019. This enterprising Newfound Regional High School student Mackenzie Davis has set about encouraging everyone at her school. I think she’s right (see below)!

![Image of Mackenzie Davis with a message on a chalkboard]

Mackenzie Davis painted words of encouragement and positivity in bathrooms for her Senior Project and is shown here with one of her favorite messages.

Sincerely,

Don Birx
President