



A new academic year is underway, after all of the preparations and anticipation this summer! It's great to have everyone back and to begin the rhythms of a new year together. Thank you to all who attended the All-Campus Meeting on August 24 and to Vice Presidents Porpiglia, Kearns, Herman, and Tiffany for their remarks and introductions of new faculty and staff in their divisions. I was also glad for Rob Deemer's welcome and Jefferson Westwood's overview of activities related to Inauguration Week next month.

Many people were on hand to welcome new international students, first-year students, and transfer students when they arrived in the past week. In addition to the great assistance provided by move-in crews (volunteers from athletic teams and student organizations), students were welcomed by Resident Assistants, Residence Directors and many other staff and faculty at the final New Student Orientation, Freshman Convocation, and international student orientation. In the photo above, I caught some of these new students as they were leaving Convocation on Sunday afternoon. They were enthusiastic about the music offered by MiKyung Kim, Eric Wilbon, and Some Like It Hot, as well as the keynote speaker, Angela Ray. Much of the focus of Convocation is not only on welcome but on beginning one's collegiate career with an eye on the world after graduation. Thank you to Monica White for organizing this event and to all who participated.

This focus on learning and responsibility resonates well with the tone and content of the Sixth Teaching and Learning Conference held on August 20. Keynote speaker Terry Doyle from Ferris State University offered insights and research about how students learn and how faculty and staff can create learning-centered environments that help students succeed. I heard a number of faculty say that they are hoping he'll return for further workshops, and Dr. Doyle mentioned to me that he was impressed with the dedication and expertise of the Fredonia faculty with whom he interacted. Congratulations to Dawn Eckenrode and the Professional Development Center staff and Board on this successful event!

Last night, the University Senate sponsored a mixer for members of this year's Senate to get to know one another and to learn more about the roles of the officers and committees. It was a new venture that I hope will become a tradition, as it established connections for working together in the busy year ahead.

With best wishes,

*Nigeria S. Howard*



### **Celebrate Fredonia on August 31!**

I hope to see you and your spouse/partner and family at the beginning-of-the-year celebration at the President's House (rain location: fieldhouse in Steele Hall). Quite a few current and *emeritus* faculty and staff are planning to attend, including a number of children who will accompany their parents during the family hour. As a reminder, children are welcome for special activities from 5:00 – 6:30, and then we'll

transition to an adult party beginning at 7:00. The menu will feature local/regional food and drinks, with an emphasis on sustainability as well as celebrating Fredonia. Wear your Fredonia gear—or any casual clothing—and come have a fun evening with colleagues. My husband, Brooke, and I look forward to seeing you there!

### **Preliminary Enrollment Data**

Yesterday, on the first day of class, SUNY Fredonia had 5,545 students enrolled—5,268 undergraduates and 277 graduates. This total represents a 3.5% decrease in headcount compared to first-day totals last fall semester. Congratulations to Chris Dearth and the rest of the Admissions team on recruiting this class of first-year and transfer students in a challenging time. Dan Tramuta and the Financial Aid Office have provided considerable assistance, as they have helped many families figure out how to pay for college. Kudos to academic departments and other offices who play important roles in Open Houses and other recruitment events. Given the large size of this year's senior class at Fredonia and the shrinking high school population of Western New York, we know there is work ahead as we prepare to recruit next fall's class. There are many opportunities for a quality, well-rounded education here: we need to share that with prospective students and families and help students find their way here.

### **SUNY Capital Campaign Planning Workshop**

On August 21, David Tiffany (Vice President for Advancement) and I traveled to Albany for a SUNY workshop on capital campaigns. This event was part of the system-wide effort to promote external fundraising across SUNY campuses, and it included presidents and vice presidents for advancement from across the state. Fredonia was featured in a presentation by Dave Tiffany, who provided insights and advice based on the completion of our Doors to Success campaign, which exceeded its \$15 million by more than \$1.7 million. It was good to see the spotlight shining on the effective work of the Advancement team and so many across campus who assisted in reaching this goal.

### **AASCU & APLU's Commitment to the Future**

SUNY Fredonia, along with other SUNY institutions, has signed the Commitment to the Future statement from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU). This joint statement commits to “accessible, affordable and quality public higher education for all students.” Among the goals of increasing the number of baccalaureate degrees *across all institutions* by 2025, the statement includes ensuring educational quality, upholding principles of access/success/diversity, working closely with P-12 systems and community colleges, and supporting economic growth in the region. STEM fields are a special emphasis of this commitment. Chancellor Zimpher has emphasized that several collaborations across SUNY are particularly important related to this commitment: connecting the transfer dots, opening the door to online education, and turning access into completion.

### **In the Interest of Health and Cleaner Air**

As I mentioned in my remarks at the All-Campus Meeting, the SUNY Board of Trustees has approved a policy to ban the use of tobacco products anywhere on SUNY campuses by January 1, 2014. This academic year, we'll have opportunities to talk about how we'll do this and how we can support one another in promoting health.

Another consideration for us right now and in the future is the use of fragrance—in personal products, cologne, sprays, cleaning products, and “air fresheners.” Although these products are not banned, our own sense of community should urge us to consider the effects of using fragrance, particularly in the closed-air environments of classrooms, residence halls, locker rooms, and rehearsal/performance

spaces. The health risks for some people are considerable. The New York State Department of Health defines asthma as “a serious public health problem in New York and the nation,” affecting about 370,000 children and more than 1.1 million adults in New York State and causing an average of 300+ deaths each year. According to Betty Bridges in her presentation to the EPA in 2003, an Institute of Medicine review on the impact of indoor air pollutants on asthma determined that “fragrance was placed in the same category as tobacco smoke and formaldehyde in triggering asthma in adults and school age children”(<http://www.fpinva.org/text/1a5d908-114.html>).

What does this mean for Fredonia? Knowing the risks of such environmental hazards, janitorial staff are already using products without fragrance whenever possible on campus, while still complying with regulations about cleaning in commercial/public places. In addition, many faculty and staff who work with students or colleagues whose asthma attacks, migraines, or allergy symptoms are triggered by fragrance have cooperated by not using cologne or scented body products, sprays, or air fresheners. Let’s be respectful and helpful to one another by trying to avoid these products in the workplace.

### **President’s Book Dialogue: Tuesday, October 2**

Two years ago, a number of people enjoyed the Red Balloon Book Dialogues, chances to hear summaries of recent books and then engage in discussion about the implications for our work here. I would like to continue that successful program this year by introducing two President’s Book Dialogues each semester. We’ll start on Tuesday, October 2 (12:00 – 1:30, Williams Center S-204A-B) with a discussion of Simon Sinek’s *Start with Why*. The Cabinet members read this book in preparation for our retreat this summer, and although the book is not about higher education, it offers provocative ideas about considering our mission and purpose. All faculty, staff, students, emeriti, and community members are welcome.

### **Updates on Searches**

Interviews are continuing this week for the Director of the Center for Multicultural Affairs, and the search committee for the Vice President for Finance and Administration, chaired by David Tiffany, is completing telephone interviews to narrow its list of candidates. The search committee for the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, chaired by David Herman and Adrienne McCormick, will have its first meeting this Friday, August 31.

### **Visits with Directors and Offices**

I have continued to meet with leaders from across campus to learn more about their areas and to hear their ideas of the challenges and joys of their work. I will continue my comments about some of these visits in my next letter.

### **In the Next Letter**

These are some topics I expect to address in the September 11 letter:

- Update from SUNY Council of Presidents’ Meeting
- Reports from more visits with Directors across campus
- Updates on searches

Please send your ideas, questions, and comments to me at [president.office@fredonia.edu](mailto:president.office@fredonia.edu).