Aug. 26, 2020

Dear Students,

Earlier today, I issued interim suspensions to 43 students who allegedly violated our health, safety and other policies over the weekend by participating in a large gathering at a beach in the city. A public release informing our community of this is copied below.

This is a reminder of how important it is to follow the Cardinal Pledge and the other health and safety rules we have put into place for your benefit -- wearing a mask, socially distancing and avoiding large social gatherings and parties.

I know most of you are following this and I am proud of you. This is demonstrated by the superb move-in process that brought you back to the city and residence halls. I am also pleased that local shopping centers and big box stores I have visited are very complimentary of you.

It is for you — who want to be here, who need to be here — as well as our full campus and North Country community that we will simply not tolerate violations.

We mean what we say. University Police's COVID violation hotline is 518-564-5555, or 5555 on campus. Use it to report.

Today's suspension action is also a message: Take your responsibility seriously. Hundreds of faculty and staff worked countless hours over the summer to prepare for the fall semester. You, your parents and your fellow students have invested precious resources to get here. Our neighboring community is invested in our success and dependent on our contribution to ensure safety for everyone.

We won’t get a second chance. Do the right thing now and show others how it is done. I am confident that together the fall semester can be our finest hour.

Dr. Alexander Enyedi
President

PUBLIC RELEASE //////////////

SUNY Plattsburgh President Alex Enyedi issued interim suspension letters to 43 students Wednesday, actions taken to enforce alleged violations of campus health, safety and other policies.

The on-campus students are required to leave their residence halls rooms and will not be permitted on campus until further notice. They may not physically attend class or go to campus facilities, among other restrictions.

"Campus and the wider Plattsburgh community's health and safety is our highest priority," Enyedi said. "Actions have consequences and this demonstrates we mean what we say."
"Most students are following our health and safety rules, directions that are integral to our restart. This is demonstrated by the superb move-in process that brought students back to the city and residence halls. I am also proud that local shopping centers and big box stores I have visited with are very complimentary of our students' adherence to face masking and social distancing,” he said.

The students receiving interim suspensions gathered at Sailor's Beach, a closed park in the City of Plattsburgh, on Friday, Aug. 21. Members of Plattsburgh City Police and SUNY Plattsburgh University Police observed students not in compliance with social distancing requirements and very few, if any, of the students present were wearing face coverings.

An interim suspension can be imposed by the president to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the community, if a student poses an ongoing threat of disruption of, or interference with, campus operations and for other reasons. A separate campus judicial process will determine the future status of these students.

In its campus restart plan, the college detailed that its Student Code of Conduct will be utilized for those who violate campus rules, including off-campus students and student organizations. This encompasses suspected violations of college COVID-19 policies and state limitations on gatherings. Violations of the guidelines result in a referrals to student conduct to consider suspension or dismissal, which is the case here.

"It is for our students -- who want to be here, who need to be here -- and our full campus and North Country communities that we will simply not tolerate violations. All members of the campus community are expected to abide by our policies and should anticipate the college actively enforcing them."

In restarting fall classes, the college is driven by guiding principles of safety, student access to higher education, efficiency, and a focus on our student-centered mission. SUNY Plattsburgh is following CDC, New York Forward, Clinton County Department of Health and other applicable reopening guidelines in our planning process. Details are online at plattsburgh.edu/covid-19.

A robust education approach is coupled with active enforcement. Among the highest priorities to ensure student, faculty and staff safety and to minimize the spread of COVID-19 are community wide participation in our social distancing and face covering policy and enforcement of the policy.

All on-campus students sign an addendum to their housing contract that clearly outlines required behavior. Student conduct policies are also a vital component to ensuring the safety and health of our campus community. Individual responsibility, accountability and enforcement of social distancing and public health laws are essential to everyone’s health, safety and educational opportunity.

A violation reporting hotline is available at 518-564-5555, or 5555 on campus.