Sept. 20, 2020

Colleagues,

I’m writing with some important information about our Spring 2021 Academic schedule.

President Enyedi’s Cabinet and I have been focused on this topic for some time, wanting to make sure we are doing everything possible to maintain the health and safety of our campus as we also ensure that we meet our educational obligations to all students.

While we understand the value of a spring break in an ordinary academic semester, we will not be scheduling a spring break during the upcoming semester. There is too much health risk in having students leave and then return to our campus from other locations. We have also considered recommendations from Dr. Kathleen Camelo, Director of our Student Health and Counseling Center, as to how the spring semester will potentially interface with the winter flu season along with the quarantining and isolation complexities for returning students that must be managed by campus staff. In addition, the college may require greatly expanded pool testing, possibly of all students, as we resume classes in January. Consequently, we need to ensure our planning can accommodate any increased robust testing activity.

The following details of the Spring 2021 academic calendar have now been finalized:

- Classes will begin, as originally scheduled, on Monday, January 25, 2021.
- The first *two* weeks of the semester will be delivered remotely -- fully online -- to ALL students. This will permit for a phased return of our students to campus with a better managed transition to full density on campus.
- It is desirable to reduce on-campus density of faculty and staff, during the beginning of the semester, as well. Thus, non-essential staff will also be permitted to work remotely during the first two weeks of the semester.
- International students and other students requiring a period of quarantine will return to campus and complete their two weeks of quarantining during these first two remote weeks of instruction.
- Students with internet access issues and/or housing/food scarcity challenges will be permitted to communicate these details to Campus Housing & Community Living and request support during the first two weeks of the semester.
- The majority of returning residential students will be given scheduled times for their return to campus, beginning on Friday, February 5th and continuing through that weekend.
- Because spring break will be eliminated, final exam week will begin on May 1st and end on May 7th.
Commencement is tentatively scheduled for May 8, 2021. The decision to celebrate an in-person commencement ceremony will be contingent on ensuring the health and safety of the campus and surrounding community. The number of active COVID-19 cases, at that time, as well as guidance from the Clinton County Department of Health, SUNY system and New York State will be considered.

Stepping back from thoughts of the spring semester, I do want to share a few words relative to how very important it is that our community continue to support all of our campus safety practices in response to the pandemic: social distancing, wearing face masks, and meeting our own responsibilities for cleaning our teaching/work spaces for the benefit of all. It may be tempting as the days and weeks go by to relax around these crucial health practices, but I hope that there is deep understanding that we really can not relax in this manner.

All of our planning related to this academic year, both fall and spring semesters, is rooted in the daily commitment our faculty and staff are making towards the full realization of the Plattsburgh Experience: providing a rich and challenging learning experience with as much course-based and co-curricular interaction as possible for all of our students as they pursue their personal and educational goals. I thank each of you for being part of this ongoing effort.

Sincerely,

Anne Herzog, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs