Plattsburgh Next Update  
Dec. 2, 2022  
Dear Campus Community,

I've appreciated the opportunity to visit with many of you over the past several weeks to share progress on Plattsburgh Next, particularly on details of our annual spending plan and the priority of enrollment.

From these conversations, many of you have expressed a desire for more steady, detailed updates as we grow and serve together. This is a good idea and this new Plattsburgh Next Update stems from that.

I plan to send this to you monthly. It will feature real time data and details on where we are with enrollment, the budget, the strategic plan and other news from campus. I will amplify that with continued in-person visits where able, with the overarching purpose of this communication being a baseline from which to talk, listen and adjust.

Thank you for your continued work as we focus on our students and our ultimate work of higher education at this great university. I am thankful for each of you and what we do as SUNY Plattsburgh.

Enrollment

No matter how we plan for the future, our ultimate destiny will be most directed by the number of students learning through our campus and in our classrooms. Recruiting and retaining students at regional public colleges in the northeast has never been more challenging, but we are adopting strategies and spending toward that which give us the best opportunity for success.

As we shared publicly yesterday, SUNY Plattsburgh has realized a record increase in applications to date for fall 2023 over the last two years, reflecting strong growth through the SUNY initiative that dropped the fee to apply. We have never seen this many applications for the following fall this early. The increase is 114 percent more than this point in either of the past two years — 4,968 apps vs. 2,323 and 2,330 the two prior years — and our trends are slightly above the system as a whole. The power of this is a high number of early applications provides the opportunity for more early acceptances and better opportunities to grow enrollment. Admissions has already begun releasing acceptances, about three weeks ahead of where we’d normally be.

Much of the $770,000 one-time money invested in us by SUNY for this year is dedicated to enrollment. This has been shared before and is also here. We have begun to spend this and procure items where process is necessary, ranging from Vermont-targeted mailings to targeted international recruitment.

This will be our ongoing focus. As has been expressed to me, we have "four years of first-year students." We all know many of our students, post-COVID, and their former high school classmates in the pipeline that will follow, often require more attention, coaching and services. We must provide that, and as federal HERFF funds — also one-time investments — are used, we will need to look to our own resources to amplify this work.

Budget

As we have discussed in recent campus meetings, flat annual appropriations from the state, no increases in tuition and fewer students lead to a revenue picture that is challenging. This is not new, as the full
state investment years are decades behind us. And we have made changes, as outlined in the summary we have taken through numerous conversations. Most directly have been questions about the near term, and that while we have $14.3 million in cash on hand, our current spending plan would use much of that this year. We know that historically we have not spent all that we allocate as expenses, but it is still a picture we must change.

There are two key changes from the slides we developed in November from our budget office. First, income related to this fall's higher than expected enrollment and income adds $732,000 to revenue. We can also conservatively set aside $2 million in positions we know can't be filled this year. That figure will likely end up being higher. Other planned spending can also generate savings. Accordingly, our planned shortfall is on track to use up about half of reserves and perhaps less.

As to next year’s planned permanent cuts outlined in the slides, with cabinet I have decided to spread these over the next three fiscal years (2023-2024 through 2025-2026). We will combine permanent and temporary savings, both to achieve the $5.2 million number next year and the overall reduction over that time. The details of these changes for 2023-2024 will be identified during the normal budget development process timeline. This begins now in partnership with you and ends in April or May.

Two important things to note: First, spreading over time allows us to use normal attrition and changes to blend our spending and people into the areas of highest need. Second, as we dig into our plans and compare that to historic, actual spending, we can more tightly align our plan to our needs.

**Strategic Plan**

Growing and sustaining enrollment is a pillar of our Plattsburgh Next plan. Strengthening student success, prioritizing equity and inclusion, and engaging our North Country region are as well. These are all truly tied together and we are making progress.

This week, we received approval from SUNY for strategic faculty lines from the state appropriation advanced by the legislature and Gov. Kathy Hochul. These were allocated to support SUNY’s commitment to excellence in teaching, innovative research and scholarship, and to increase diversity in our faculty ranks to ensure that SUNY is fully representative of the students and communities that we serve.

We will begin searches soon for positions in digital media production, teacher education, special education, social work, human development and family relations, data analytics/cybersecurity, and global supply chain management. These are critical growth areas that will allow us to advance in areas such as a master's degree in social work, something many across the region have asked for. Academic Affairs is also undertaking a more comprehensive examination of the marketability of our portfolio looking at areas of special opportunities to grow.

It has been asked, what does success look like? That is, if we follow through on Plattsburgh Next what will campus feel like, be like? My answer, in part, is a place that is vibrant, less stressful and forward-focused. Nothing in the recent past of higher ed has been easy. As we see Fortune 500 companies dispense with college degree requirements and neighbors talk about the cost of a diploma not being worth it, we may question our own worth.
Know this: What we do is needed now more than ever — an educated society able to adapt to change, think deeply and move forward collectively. What we do makes a difference and each one of you — no matter your role on campus — has a part to play in recruiting and retaining our students.

If you have not already, I encourage you to read the Self-Study Report prepared for our Middle States re-accreditation. You can link to it here. It is essential reading to understand where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. Their peer-reviewed stamp of approval this summer on our collective work was deeply gratifying and the result of what each of us does.

Other News

Finally, I want to link to some of the good news on campus. These stories are regularly produced and shared but not everyone sees them. They are below for your perusal.

Thank you again. And my best to each of you for a festive, restful holiday season.

Historic Increase in Applications  
Memory Cafe Offers Comfort  
Rockwell Kent and His Work  
Concerts at E. Glenn Giltz Auditorium  
Thank-ful Events  
Guiding Light for Special Education Major  
Social Justice Teach-In  
Arts and Crafts Show  
High School Students Exploring Our University  
Teacher Education Majors at Work

Alex Enyedi  
President