Gabriel Blair Coleman

From: Michele G. Wheatley, Vice Chancellor and Provost <provost@syr.edu>
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To: Gabriel Blair Coleman
Subject: Academic Strategic Plan Implementation Update

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST

Monday, December 19, 2016

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

As we head into the winter holidays, I want to thank each one of you for all your hard work this semester—in the classroom, in the research labs and in supporting our students. It has been very busy but—I hope you will agree—also very rewarding, and I am so glad to be a part of such a vibrant campus community.

A major part of our institutional focus this fall was on implementing the Academic Strategic Plan, and I want to take a few moments now to update you on our collective progress in that regard. The draft Academic Strategic Plan, completed in June 2015, contained a tremendous amount of material and ideas—more than we could possibly implement all at one time. Prior to my arrival last May, more than 130 faculty, staff and students began sorting through the plan's key goals and objectives and developing a range of possible priorities. I assumed oversight of the implementation effort shortly after I arrived here in May, and many of you have continued to be involved as well.

Part of my task in moving the implementation phase forward was to help identify and advance key priorities that emerged from both the discovery and the preliminary implementation phases. Toward that end, I conducted a "listening tour" throughout the summer and fall, and I consulted with the Chancellor and the University's leadership team to focus our initial attention on priorities tied to each of the plan's six overarching themes:

- **Research and Discovery:** Elevating the Office of Research and the position of vice president for research to enhance our strength and reputation relating to research activity as well as recruitment and professional development of master's, professional and doctoral students
- **The Student Experience:** Integrating/unifying advising, retention and other student support services; implementing the proposed Syracuse 4+4 core academic competencies for all undergraduate students
- **Internationalization:** Appointing and launching a permanent Internationalization Council
- **Veterans and Military-Connected Communities:** Developing streamlined enrollment processes for veteran students that can be expanded to better serve all nontraditional students
- **Innovation:** Creating an "innovation hub" and developing an experts and innovators channel
- **One University:** Creating a talent institute for professional development of faculty and staff

I'm delighted to report that planning and progress have occurred in each of the areas described above, in concert with others on the University's leadership team. For example, we have appointed an Internationalization Council, co-chaired by Provost Faculty Fellow for Internationalization Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Associate Provost for International Education Margaret Himley. The council, which includes student, faculty and staff representatives from across the schools and colleges, began meeting last month. Soon after the first of the year, we will announce the launch of a national search for a new vice president for research. We also have developed a proposed set of core academic competencies that will help ensure that every undergraduate student leaves Syracuse with the creative and analytical skills needed to adapt and thrive in today's workplace and world.

In addition, academic deans from all the schools and colleges are busily engaged in their own strategic planning process to complement and align with the Universitywide effort. Progress also has been made on other aspects of Fast Forward—the Campus Framework and Operational Excellence—to better support an outstanding student experience. They include enhancements to learning spaces, physical landscape improvements to facilitate interactivity, measures to make all areas of the campus more accessible for all students and policies to better focus resources on strategic priorities. These and other related efforts all intersect with and support the overarching goals of the Academic Strategic Plan and our institutional commitment to prioritize students in all we do.

I am excited about what we have accomplished so far and look forward to our continued progress in moving the Academic Strategic Plan even further along in the months ahead.

In addition to these efforts, we have carried on with other important business relating to the Provost's Office and Academic Affairs, including:

• launching self-study teams for the Middle States reaccreditation process, with a first draft self-study report to be posted for campus review next spring;
• initiating dean searches for the Whitman School and Hendricks Chapel;
• implementing short-term recommendations of the Chancellor's Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup, such as free tutoring options for Syracuse University students, event support for CART/ASL and central funding for faculty and staff disability accommodations;
• in partnership with the University Senate, appointing a faculty salary review committee and approving revisions to the Faculty Manual and Academic Integrity Policy;
• introducing across all schools and colleges the Orange SUccess online advising system, an initiative that also ties into the Academic Strategic Plan's goal of enhancing student support and retention services; and
• appointing new staff to academic affairs, including Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Jeff Stanton, and naming two new Provost's Faculty Fellows—Rochelle Ford, professor and chair of public relations at the Newhouse School, who is focusing on the Middle States reaccreditation effort; and Ping Zhang, professor of information studies at the iSchool, focusing on faculty development.

As you can see, it has been an incredibly busy semester, and there is so much more to do. For me personally, these first six months at Syracuse have been both energizing and thoroughly rewarding. I have so many of you to thank for that.

I look forward to making even more progress in the spring semester and to having the opportunity to meet and work with more of you on these and other academic initiatives. Each one of you plays a vital role in helping to advance our institutional mission, and I am so appreciative for all you do for the University and for our students. I wish you and your families all the best for a joyous holiday season and a restful and well-deserved winter break.

Sincerely,

Michele G. Wheatly
Vice Chancellor and Provost