



Dear Colleagues,

Although I've not sent a letter since Commencement, as we begin the new fiscal year and officially mark the transition from the past to the next academic year, there are a number of exciting changes to share with you.

**Today marks the founding of Fredonia's College of Visual and Performing Arts,** which brings together in a distinct division the School of Music, Department of Theatre and Dance, and Department of Visual Arts and New Media, and the Rockefeller Arts Center.

For this letter, I will focus on new people and new roles beginning this month. On July 15, my letter will provide updates on construction, the College Lodge, START-UP NY, and other topics.

I hope that wherever you are this summer—on campus, traveling, or working on projects at home—you are finding ways not only to be productive but to enjoy being outdoors and spending time with family and friends. The pace and light of summer are different, whether you're here in Western New York or traveling, and the long days should give us more time to relax—not just extra hours to work!

With best wishes,

*Nigeria S. Stovatt*



### **Dr. Terry Brown Begins as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs**

Before moving to Fredonia in June, Dr. Brown spent 24 years in the University of Wisconsin system, including serving as Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and—in the University of Wisconsin's System Administration—serving in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs to lead integrated academic, budget, and facilities planning.

As Provost, Terry now oversees the Academic Affairs division, which has an annual budget of approximately \$30 million and roughly 370 faculty and staff (full-time equivalent). She is responsible for the curricula and staffing of academic departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Education, School of Business, and new College of Visual and Performing Arts, which is founded today. In addition, she oversees Reed Library, Information Technology Services, Graduate Studies and Research, Lifelong Learning and Special Programs, International Education, the Learning Center, and the Registrar's Office.

Terry is especially well versed in many areas important to Fredonia: international partnerships, accreditation, assessment, recruitment, retention, diversity, and shared governance. Dr. Brown holds bachelor and master's degrees in English from Virginia Tech University, and earned her doctorate, also in English, from the University of Florida. She has 20 publications to her credit, has given dozens of presentations at conferences in the U.S. and abroad, and has secured funding through more than 20 grants. Her office is on the eighth floor of Maytum Hall. Welcome, Terry!

### **Dr. Kevin Kearns Begins as Vice President for Engagement and Economic Development**

For the past year, Kevin has served ably as the Interim Provost. Instead of returning today to his previous role, he begins today as Vice President for Engagement and Economic Development. As I explained more fully in conversations with the Cabinet and with University Senate leadership, there is a critical need for leadership in these areas, given the START-UP NY initiative that was approved by the state Assembly and Senate in June. Fredonia has new responsibilities that have been a "side" role for Kevin and deserve his full attention--without pulling the Provost away from the central and important missions of Academic Affairs. The Governor and the Chancellor have called for SUNY campuses to be working in close partnership with their communities in terms of both engagement/service and economic development. This is already reflected in our strategic plan and in the work Kevin has been leading on our application for the Carnegie engaged campus classification. His oversight of the Incubator is, frankly, the reason for that initiative to be so successful. He is well connected in the community, with government leaders at the local, regional, and national levels, and he understands well the complex business and political landscapes of the region. Work on START-UP NY begins with a conference call this afternoon, so I am very glad to have Kevin on board.

Leaders from the FACE Center and other groups proposed a structure that asked for the hiring of a senior administrator to coordinate and oversee the units that focus on community engagement, but although I saw the value in this, I did not want to hire a new senior administrator. Changing Kevin's responsibilities and title—and not hiring a replacement for his former roles—gives needed attention to this critical area of our mission, which goes across divisions. Kevin and Terry will be leading many conversations about how to align offices and responsibilities as this new division takes shape. Kevin's office, along with the Graduate Studies staff and the Center for Regional Advancement, has moved to the seventh floor of Maytum Hall. Thank you, Kevin, for your leadership as Interim Provost and your enthusiasm for leading important work in engagement and economic development!

### **Dr. Ralph Blasting Begins as Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts**

Today is Ralph's first day in the historic role of Founding Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. He has moved to Fredonia from Siena College (Albany, NY), where he has served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts since 2004. Previously he was a faculty member and chair in the Department of Theatre Arts at Towson University (Baltimore). He earned a B.F.A. in scenic design/technical theatre from Wayne State University (Michigan), an M.A. in theatre history from the University of Michigan, and a doctorate in Drama Studies from the University of Toronto.

In his years in Albany, Ralph had oversight of nearly 100 faculty and 1,300 students within 11 departments, added new tenure-track positions, established new academic programs and cultural partnerships, and built new facilities. I am excited to see the new ideas and leadership he can bring to strengthen and celebrate an already impressive component of SUNY Fredonia. Welcome, Ralph?

### **Dr. William Boerner Will Begin as Chief Diversity Officer on July 17**

On July 17, Fredonia will welcome Chief Diversity Officer William Boerner to lead the newly formed Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. As we have just seen following last week's Supreme Court decision in the case of "Fisher v. University of Texas," diversity initiatives are an important element of any well-rounded campus. The court recognized "the benefits of a student body diversity that encompasses a broad array of qualifications and characteristics of which racial or ethnic origin is but a single though important element." Bill will be focusing not only on issues of compliance with federal and state policies of non-discrimination (the *equity* part of his office's name) but also fostering discussions of the intellectual and social understandings of diversity around the world and encouraging practices of inclusion among students, faculty, and staff.

Bill joins SUNY Fredonia after serving at Morehead State University (Kentucky), where he has been the Assistant Director of Housing and Residence Education since 2011. Prior to that, he served at Mount Holyoke College (Massachusetts) as Associate Director and, subsequently, Director of Residential Life. He earned his doctorate in Educational Leadership from Johnson and Wales University (Rhode Island), a Master of Arts in Education from the University of Connecticut, and a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science from Keene State College (New Hampshire). Bill's office is on the first floor of Fenton Hall, adjacent to the President's Office. Welcome, Bill!

### **Dr. John Kijinski Continues Leadership of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

With the formation of the new college led by Dean Blasting, the former "supercollege" of Arts and Sciences has a new structure and a new name. Now the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, this division includes the 15 departments that are at the center of the liberal education program and the foundation of the professional studies in business, education, and the arts: Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Communication, Communication Disorders and Sciences, Computer and Information Sciences, English, Geosciences, History, Mathematical Sciences, Modern Languages and Literature, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology/Anthropology/Social Work/Criminal Justice, and Interdisciplinary Studies. Dr. John Kijinski, who has led the former College of Arts and Humanities and then the College of Arts and Sciences, will now lead the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and play a key role in ensuring that Fredonia's identity as a public liberal arts university continues to be at the forefront of who we are and what we do. Thank you, John, for your strong leadership and your commitment to the liberal arts and sciences.

### **In the Next Letter**

These are some topics I expect to address in the July 15 letter:

- Construction projects
- College Lodge
- Orientation
- START-UP NY

I would also be glad to respond to issues you raise. Please send your ideas, questions, and comments to me at [president.office@fredonia.edu](mailto:president.office@fredonia.edu).