



I am excited and honored to begin this week as President of SUNY Fredonia. Transitions in leadership can be challenging for campuses, but Dr. Dennis Hefner, the Cabinet, the University Senate, Academic Affairs, and I have had several months to prepare for this change for Fredonia. Because I know Fredonia well and recently co-led our strategic planning process, I am glad to be jumping with both feet into the work ahead, and I've appreciated the warm welcome that so many of you have offered.

In this first President's Letter, I am sharing some updates on our progress in several areas. In the hopes of establishing a tradition of regular communication, my office plans to post such a letter every two weeks, on Tuesdays. I welcome your responses and suggestions!

Nigeria S. Stovatt



Welcome to Kevin Kearns, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

On July 1, Kevin Kearns began in his new role as Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. He has served as the Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research since 2007, and he also holds faculty rank as a Professor in the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences. Kevin will be overseeing the division of Academic Affairs during an important time, as the Power of Fredonia plan and baccalaureate goals are implemented and discussions continue on revision of general education. Some of his former responsibilities continue: he will continue to oversee the Business Technology Incubator, Sponsored Programs, and Graduate Studies. The FACE Center and OSCAR will now report to Melinda Karnes, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Academic Support, and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment will now report to the President. I am grateful to Kevin for his willingness to assume this role and to join the Cabinet in its planning retreat and meetings since May. He also attended the June meeting of the SUNY Chief Academic Officers Organization in Syracuse. He is now available in 119 Reed Library (673-3335), and Pam Fabritius is ably assisting him and the division, as she has with a number of academic vice presidents.

Visits to Partner Institutions in Japan

In June, Dr. Hefner and I visited several partner universities in Japan as a way of continuing the good relationships that Fredonia has established for decades. These institutions include Niigata University, Niigata University of Pharmacy and Applied Life Sciences, Aichi University of Education, Aichi Prefectural University, and Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music. We also met with Fredonia alumni in a special reception in Tokyo and heard these students' stories of their Fredonia memories and experiences. I look forward to future collaborations with our partner institutions and welcoming more students from Japan in the years ahead.

Cabinet Retreat

The new Cabinet held a planning and discussion retreat at the College Lodge on Wednesday, June 27. Participants were Vice Presidents David Herman and David Tiffany, Interim Vice President Karen

Porpiglia and Interim Provost Kevin Kearns. We discussed a book we had read in preparation for our work together, *Start with Why*, by Simon Sinek. This book offered us provocative ideas as we approach the tasks of refining the mission statement, recruiting students, and implementing the baccalaureate goals and Power of Fredonia strategic plan. I am often skeptical when business/management texts are applied to higher education, for much of what we value in a university—shared governance, cultivation of ideas instead of development of a product, and increasing social and intellectual capital instead of profits—seems unrelated to the advice offered in such books. But Sinek’s core argument can easily be applied to a complex organization such as SUNY Fredonia, and his admonition to “start with why” instead of how or what gave us plenty to think about as we approach the important work of several initiatives. An important task as we consider recruitment of students, faculty, and staff is considering why we are here and how Fredonia differs from many other available choices. I expect that answering that question, “Why do we do what we do?” will be central to much of our shared work over the next years. The retreat agenda also included discussions of plans for the upcoming academic, budget, facilities, hiring, and student recruitment year.

Orientation for New First-Year and Transfer Students

Each year, SUNY Fredonia offers outstanding programs to assist new students and their families as they prepare to enter college in the fall, and this summer continues this valued tradition. A one-day session for transfer students was held on June 21, and we are in the midst of 5 two-day sessions for first-year students (June 25-26 and 28-29; July 5-6, 9-10, and 12-13). These sessions, organized under the leadership of Michael Lemieux (Director of Campus Life) and Amy Leclair (Coordinator of Academic Advising), feature presentations by faculty and staff in Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Administration, and Faculty Student Association. Academic advisors meet individually with students as they work with their pre-loaded fall schedules, and parents and students have many opportunities to ask questions and experience the hospitality for which Fredonia is known. Many parents who have participated in such orientations at other colleges and universities remark that they are impressed not only with the organization and wealth of information they receive at Fredonia but also with the genuine helpfulness and kindness of those they meet. From Financial Aid and Admissions to academic advisors, Residence Life, Career Development, and the Registrar, we can all be proud of the way people from across campus collaborate to help students succeed right from the start.

Admittedly, parents and students are nervous about the uncertainty of the changes ahead in their lives and the ways that incoming students will respond to the challenges they will face. However, one parent, after being here for just two days, handed me a quotation that she thought embodied Fredonia’s approach to learning and student growth: “Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.” This quotation by Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf education, did seem an appropriate reflection of the deep learning, sense of responsibility, and connection that we all work to foster in Fredonia students. I was proud that the people of Fredonia had been able to convey this kind of shared purpose in such a short time.

Thanks to the University Senate Executive Committee

As soon as Commencement ended, the University Senate Executive Committee began an ambitious schedule of meetings to work on planning for the upcoming year. Members of the Executive Committee for 2012-2013 are Chair Rob Deemer (Music Composition), Vice Chair Bruce Simon (English), Secretary Sandra Liggins (English), Governance Officer Andrew Cullison (Philosophy), and University Senator Reneta Barneva (Computer and Information Sciences). This group is thoughtfully approaching shared governance through discussions with me and other senior leaders on campus and by considering possible changes in Senate meetings and committee structures. This Committee has also worked well to

nominate people for the search committees noted below and to propose an interesting new approach to coordinating campus initiatives—an approach that includes full participation of the Senate through careful use of collaborative technologies. I provide more details about this in the section called Campus Initiatives Roundtable, but first I'd like to thank the Senate Executive Committee for its hard work—even in the summer!—and its leadership and creative ideas for moving the university forward during a time of significant change.

Search: Vice President for Finance and Administration

The members of the search committee for the Vice President for Finance and Administration have been meeting to develop a position description and advertisement. Led by David Tiffany, Vice President for University Advancement, this group of faculty, staff, and students will begin reviewing applications on July 23, with the expectation of completing campus interviews in this key role during the fall. The University Senate Executive Committee sought nominations and worked with me to finalize the committee membership, as outlined in the Senate bylaws. The position is currently advertised on the Human Resources website, with an anticipated start date by January 3, 2013. This position was vacated when Tracy Bennett retired in November 2010; Karen Porpiglia has been generously serving as Interim Vice President for Administration since that time and has been effectively leading Fredonia through a very busy time of construction and maintenance, audits/compliance issues at state and federal levels, and challenging financial circumstances. As an interim appointee, Karen Porpiglia is welcome to apply for the permanent position. The new title for this role reflects that this vice president provides oversight for two major areas—finance/budgets and administrative aspects of facilities, human resources, business operations, and auxiliaries. On some campuses, there are two separate vice presidents, so this title makes clear to applicants the scope of responsibilities.

Search: Chief Diversity Officer

The University Senate, Affirmative Action Committee, Cabinet, and Academic VP Council have been working with me to redefine the position that had formerly been titled as Director of Affirmative Action. Taking this position from half-time to full-time and focusing on diversity instead of Affirmative Action, these groups are considering the ways that campus goals for diversity and cross-cultural communication and enrichment might be realized. The Social Identities Renga also provided me with useful suggestions for refining this position and hiring the best candidate. The Senate Executive Committee has nominated faculty, staff, and students for the search committee, and we are finalizing the list and confirming interest and availability. The goal is to advertise this position in July in the hope of bringing someone on board by early fall semester. In the meantime, Sandra Liggins continues to serve as the Interim Director of Affirmative Action. Many thanks, Sandra, and members of all of these groups for your thoughtful considerations of the best ways to promote a diverse culture of community, based on respecting and learning from one another.

Search: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Another committee that the Senate Executive Committee is working to populate is the search committee for the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Senate has received nominations and is working with me to finalize committee membership. This committee will begin its work at the beginning of the fall semester, in the hope of attracting a deep pool of qualified applicants and interviewing before the winter break. As an interim appointee, Kevin Kearns is welcome to apply for the permanent position. The new Provost is expected to start on July 1, 2013, but the hope is that the selection of the Provost will be early enough to allow the successful candidate to assist in selecting the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts when interviews for that position are held in early spring semester.

Campus Initiatives Roundtable

The University Senate has proposed an interesting structure for ensuring that we all work together, even in light of the number of initiatives we'll undertake over the next year. Their idea—which the Cabinet and I find very useful and innovative—is to establish a Campus Initiatives Roundtable that meets on a regular basis to inform one another and the campus about progress on simultaneous and potentially overlapping areas. The proposed Roundtable will consist of the chairs of the Strategic Planning Implementation Task Force, the General Education Revision Subcommittee, the Baccalaureate Goals Implementation Task Force, and the Mission Statement Revision Team. The plan is to have these chairs meet monthly with the University Senate Chair and the Cabinet. The Senate Executive Committee and I have been working on populating these groups, based on recommendations from Senators and volunteers who have expressed an interest in serving. What the Cabinet and I liked about this proposal is that it works in close relationship to our existing governance structure, but it does not load significant new work onto established committees with continuing tasks. In addition, this Roundtable will ensure that we don't duplicate efforts or—worse yet—move in opposite or confusing directions. I am grateful to the Senate Executive Committee for suggesting this and for working out details of possible representatives. I look forward to trying this out in 2012-2013 and thank those of you who have let the Senate Executive Committee know of your interest in serving.

Results of the Survey on Presidential Transitions

I'm grateful to the 180 faculty, staff, and administrators who responded to my survey on presidential transitions. I've shared the results (without names attached) with the Cabinet, and we will be discussing soon whether and how we might continue such campus traditions as the all-campus meeting, the beginning-of-the-year party, student cabinet, faculty cabinet, and Second Friday meetings. A number of you also offered advice and ideas on other topics as I start in this new role, and I value your thoughtfulness and candor. I'll be sharing the decisions about these topics in the next letter.

Presidential Inauguration

In case you missed the save-the-date message that was recently sent out electronically to the campus, the formal presidential inauguration activities have been scheduled for the week of September 16-22, with the ceremony of investiture on Friday, September 21, at 2:00 PM in King Concert Hall. A creative and hard-working team, led by Jefferson Westwood and assisted by Denise Szalkowski, has established a website to inform the campus and the public about inauguration traditions in academe and Fredonia's plans for this formal transition of leadership. The events will celebrate the four areas of the Power of Fredonia plan, and all faculty, staff, students, community members, and College Council members are welcome to participate. I am grateful to this team for their efforts in planning a week of events that highlight SUNY Fredonia and its values and aspirations.

In the Next Letter

I'll continue to send such letters with information about ongoing efforts, responses to arising state and national issues, and answers to questions you send my way. These are some topics I expect to address in the July 17 letter:

- *Institutional Research and the Cabinet*
- *Assessment Workshop Follow-Up*
- *Update from Meeting of the AASCU Summer Council of Presidents*
- *Center for Multicultural Affairs*
- *Summer Construction Updates*

Please send your ideas and comments to me at horvath@fredonia.edu.