

MONICA WHITE: SUNY Fredonia has a long history of collaboration with the regional business community. Today, we are pleased to welcome a representative of that community, Mr. Todd J. Trantum, an alumnus of the class of 1994. Mr. Trantum is currently President and CEO of the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier. He also serves as Executive Director of “Dream It Do It Western New York,” part of a national initiative designed to address the growing shortage of talented and skilled workers in the advanced manufacturing industry. Mr. Trantum.

TODD TRANUM: Chancellor Zimpher, Dr. Horvath, Trustees, Council Members, Faculty, Students and Distinguished Guests:

I’m pleased that you have chosen to include a representative of the business community to share this podium along with the more traditional constituencies usually included on such occasions, and I am honored personally to be the one invited to bring these greetings.

Today, I speak not only for the members of the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce, but for all of the businesses and industries throughout Western New York. We hold SUNY Fredonia in very high regard – and for a whole host of reasons.

One is the sheer economic impact that SUNY Fredonia has on our region. All together, it’s been recently calculated at over 370 million dollars per year.

Another thing we appreciate is the wonderful graduates that you produce every year. Our businesses look to your alumni when we need well-rounded, skilled, creative, and responsible employees with good communication skills.

Many of our businesses can trace their success directly to the contributions that your graduates have made.

Finally, we salute SUNY Fredonia for the historic leadership role it has played when it comes to promoting economic development in our corner of the world. Examples include everything from the creation, some 30 years ago, of one of the first Regional Chambers of Commerce in the state, to the more recent launch of the Technology Incubator in Dunkirk which has already generated over 60 jobs, and shows the promise to do much more.

Dr. Horvath, we know you are committed to engagement with the broader community – including the business community, and it did not escape our notice than within seven days of assuming office on July 1 that you had gone up and down Main Street, personally introducing yourself to each business owner and handing out your card.

I will also note that I really enjoyed the opportunity to have lunch with you recently here on campus and our discussion pertaining to the ways in which SUNY Fredonia and the business community can continue to work together.

President Horvath, on behalf of the entire business community of Western New York we congratulate you on your appointment and we welcome you into your new role with open arms. We look forward to working closely with you as we continue our tradition of cooperation and as we create new opportunities for even greater collaboration in the years ahead.