

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D.  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: August 21, 2020

SUBJECT: Academic Affairs Report for August 2020

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### **1. Welcome Back**

I want to start by welcoming everyone back to the 2020-2021 academic year. This is certainly an unusual way to start the year (and that is putting it mildly). Fr. Pilarz and I are so appreciative of all of your efforts to continue an excellent University of Scranton education while at the same time being flexible and creative as we seek to stay safe and healthy. As you know, considerable time, energy and thought have gone into the decision to adjust the academic calendar and to return to campus. Rather than reviewing all of the details that have been communicated over the summer and in this first week of classes, I point you to the resources that are available on our Royals Safe Together website, which also includes most of the communication that has been sent to the university community: <https://www.scranton.edu/royals-safe-together/index.shtml>.

We will continue to update you regularly as we progress through the semester.

I do want to remind everyone that both students and employees are required to use the University's wellness self-screening application daily if they are coming to campus. The app can be accessed through the My.Scranton portal, the Scranton Mobile app or directly at <https://www.scranton.edu/WellnessScreening>. The app includes a series of simple questions regarding symptoms as recommended by the PA Department of Health. When symptoms are reported through the screening, the application will automatically notify the appropriate department for students or employees and provide additional instruction by email.

### **2. Welcome CAS Dean**

Please join me in welcoming Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado, Ph.D., who started as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences on July 1. Since 2014 she has served as Assistant Provost of Undergraduate Education at the University of Miami, where she also served since 2016 as the Executive Director of the Office of Academic Enhancement, and as a professor of religious studies.

Dean. Maldonado's leadership experience in working with academic deans, faculty, students and professional advisors, complemented by her dedication and care of historically underrepresented and first-generation college students, will make her a

great asset at Scranton. Additionally, her education and career display a deep appreciation for the Catholic and Jesuit mission that is central to our work together.

### **3. Strategic Plan Update**

Amidst all of the short-term preparations for a fall semester opening amidst the COVID-19 spread, we continue the important long-term planning that is necessary through our strategic plan. The University Planning Committee (UPC) and President's Cabinet particularly worked throughout the summer to continue to seek and incorporate feedback from constituencies to refine the strategic planning draft, which continues to remain available in the my.scranton portal, News tab, University planning channel. The UPC will be meeting shortly to finalize this draft, and discuss implementation of the plan, which requires Board of Trustees approval. We hope to present the final draft to the Board on September 25.

### **4. Faculty Hiring**

Please join me in welcoming to the University 26 new faculty: one Professor, 23 Assistant Professors, one Faculty Specialist and one Visiting Assistant Professor. A virtual new faculty orientation session was held on August 11<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the CTLE. For a list of new faculty see Attachment 1.

In addition, 36 faculty specialists' contracts were renewed.

### **5. Fulbright Scholars and Visiting Faculty**

We are excited to have 5 Fulbright foreign language teaching assistants taking courses and teaching their native languages:

- Mr. Belal Elkurd: Palestine
- Ms. Cecilia Nuñez: Uruguay
- Ms. Rebekka Stein: Germany
- Ms. Chama Laassassy: Canada

We welcome back two former Fulbright teaching assistants, now Teaching Graduate Assistants:

- Minori Koga from Japan
- Khdiga AboBakr from Egypt

We also welcoming back Hsiang Ling Wang from Taiwan, faculty member, through our arrangement with the Taiwan Ministry of Education.

## 6. Faculty Development

### Provost Enhancement Awards

9 Faculty were awarded Provost Enhancement Awards last year.

### Faculty Grants

During the 2019-2020 academic year the following grants were awarded to our faculty:

7 Intersession Grants, 8 Summer Grants, and 4 Clavius Grants were awarded to 12 faculty members. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs awarded 11 President's Fellowships for Summer Research in 2020.

### Faculty Travel

Faculty travel funds supported 125 faculty traveling to 156 conferences in 2019-2020.

### Sabbaticals

#### **Fall**

Mary Jane DiMattio  
Debra Fetherman  
Fr. John Levko  
Cyrus Olsen  
Abhijit Roy  
Ann Royer (Pre-Tenure)

#### **Summer/Intersession**

Frank Conserette

#### **Spring**

Fr. Timothy Cadigan  
Arthur Catino  
Jones DeRitter  
Marian Farrell  
Marlene Morgan  
Hong Nguyen  
Carole Slotterback  
Jennifer Vasquez  
Patricia Wright  
Aiala Levy (Pre-Tenure)

#### **Academic Year**

Michael Azar  
Jason Grahm  
Susan Mendez

## 7. Curriculog

In the spring semester I committed to providing an update to Faculty Senate on the motion put forward by the Shared Governance Committee to consider purchasing a curriculum management system such as CURRICULOG in order to facilitate the curriculum review process and catalog changes. Last week I spoke with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee about this and we will continue to assess this possibility in light of the current financial constraints of the university.

## 8. Rankings

It is a tradition for the Provost to report our institutional rankings each year. For the 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, The Princeton Review included Scranton among the nation's "Best 386 Colleges" in its annual guidebook that published Aug. 18. In addition, The Princeton Review ranked Scranton for the sixth consecutive year among the nation's "Best Campus Food" (No. 7) and "Best Science Lab Facilities" (No. 8). The Princeton Review also ranked Scranton at No. 15 in the nation for "Most Religious Students."

The 2020 edition of the guidebook includes detailed profiles of each of "The Best 386 Colleges." Scranton's profile stated that students "like the fact that they are required to take courses in the 'humanities, philosophy, and theology irrespective of [their] major.' In turn, this ensures that students receive a well- rounded education." Students also touted Scranton's strong science programs and high acceptance rates to medical schools. Student's also praised the faculty saying "they're just so engaging and really know how to present the material in such a way that it's interesting for us as students."

In addition to The Princeton Review, *U.S. News* has ranked Scranton among the top 10 "Best Regional Universities in the North" for 26 consecutive years, placing the University No. 6 in its 2020 edition of the "Best Colleges" guidebook. *U.S. News* also ranked Scranton No. 5 in its category in a listing, based on peer assessment recommendations, of the nation's "Most Innovative Schools," which recognizes colleges that are making "innovative improvements in terms of curriculum, faculty, students, campus life, technology or facilities." In addition, *U.S. News* ranked Scranton No. 12 in its category in its "Best Undergraduate Teaching" listing of the top colleges in the nation expressing "a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching."

Niche.com ranked Scranton No. 18 among the 2020 Best Catholic Colleges in America, which is a ranking based on key statistics and student reviews using data from the U.S. Department of Education. According to their website, "top-ranked Catholic colleges are leading academic institutions that offer students an education and college experience rooted in Catholic traditions and faith."

College Factual ranked Scranton No. 22 in its 2020 list of "Best Colleges Affiliated as Roman Catholic Nationwide." The national ranking is based their analysis of retention and graduation rates, student loan default rates, overall average post- graduation earnings based on PayScale and College Scorecard data, among other data. Scranton ranked No. 3 "Best Colleges Affiliated as Roman Catholic in Pennsylvania."

College Choice ranked Scranton No. 23 among just 75 "Best Catholic Colleges and Universities" in the nation. The ranking was based on their analysis of the college's reputation, net cost, financial aid and average graduate salary, which used publicly available data from websites of the schools, the National Center for Educational Statistics, *U.S. News and World Report*, and Payscale.com.

In April of 2020, College Consensus ranked Scranton No. 37 among the "Best Catholic Colleges and Universities" in America. For the ranking, College Consensus calculated an "average rating score" for colleges based on national guidebook rankings, which

include *U.S. News and World Report*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal* and others. College Consensus also calculated an “overall score” for colleges based on student reviews posted on multiple sites, including Niche.com. The schools were ranked based on a “consensus ranking” that combined both these scores.

### 9. Intersession Grant Proposals

A call for proposals for Intersession 2021 Grants went out. The deadline for full-time faculty interested in submitting a proposal for an Intersession Grant is September 25<sup>th</sup>.

### 10. Curriculum Deadlines:

In order to provide reviewing bodies sufficient time to review and approve curriculum proposals for inclusion in the 2021-2022 undergraduate and graduate catalogs registration materials, please adhere to the following deadlines. Please plan accordingly to ensure that your dean’s office has time to review the proposal in advance of the Curriculum Committee deadlines. Submissions received after deadlines will be considered for the subsequent term or academic year.

#### CCC Deadlines

All proposals must be submitted to the CCC Chair (chair\_ccc@scranton.edu) by the dates indicated below:

- Courses requesting GE attribute(s) for first offerings in Intersession/Spring 2021      September 14, 2020
- Courses requesting GE attributes(s) for first offerings in Summer/Fall 2021      February 8, 2021

#### FSCC Deadlines

All proposals must be posted to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Board by the dates indicated below:

- Deadline to post new program (and new courses associated with that program)      December 7, 2020
- Deadline to post program changes      February 8, 2021
- Deadline to post new courses      February 8, 2021
- Deadline to post course changes      February 19, 2021
- Deadline to post small editorial changes      March 22, 2021
- Deadline for catalog curricular contributors to send changes to their dean      March 22, 2021

### 11. Other Updates

- Congratulations to Dr. Mary Jane Hanson who was recently honored to become a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN). This distinguished honor recognizes her as a leader in the profession of nursing. In October she will be inducted into an elite group of approximately 2,400 nurses in the United States. Our Nursing Department is fortunate to have two faculty members, Dr. Margarete Zalon and now Dr. Mary Jane Hanson, to receive this prestigious honor.

- The Koshers Capones: A History of Chicago's Jewish Gangsters," by University of Scranton English and Theatre Professor Joe Kraus, Ph.D., was awarded the 2019 bronze Indie Award in the category of history (adult non-fiction). The award recognizes the best books published in 2019 from small, indie, and university presses, as well by self-published authors.
- Stacy Smulowitz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Communication and Media at The University of Scranton, was named executive director for the Eastern Communication Association, the oldest professional communication association in the United States.
- For the second year in a row, the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) recognized the University of Scranton's student chapter as one of just five Outstanding Student Chapters in the nation for the 2019-2020 academic year. The IMA's Award of Excellence is presented to the top student chapters that qualified for Gold Status. Officers of the University's IMA student chapter for 2019-2020 were: Ngoc Nguyen of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, president; Rosemary Wolf of Little Neck, New York, vice president; Grace Gallagher of Dalton, secretary; and Sarin Baldante of Sayville, New York, treasurer. Ashely Stampone a Faculty Specialist in the Accounting Department serves as faculty advisor.
- Daniel J. Gaydon, was one of two University of Scranton Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) candidates and professors of accounting, who were awarded prestigious Institute of Management Accountants' Lybrand medals for 2020. The article "SEC Whistleblower Program Continues to Expand," co-authored by DBA candidate Gaydon and Douglas M. Boyle, D.B.A., Chair of the Accounting Department at Scranton, was awarded the 2020 Lybrand Silver Medal. The 2020 Lybrand Bronze Medal was awarded for the article "Goodwill Accounting: The Matter of Serial Non-Impairment," co-authored by DBA candidate Marcus Burke, Dr. Boyle, and Daniel P. Mahoney, Ph.D., Professor of Accounting at Scranton.

**New Faculty 2020-2021**

Mehmet Bastug	Assistant Professor	Sociology, Criminal Justice & Criminology
Hope Baylow	Assistant Professor	Health and Human Performance
Jeh-Hyun Cho	Assistant Professor	Accounting
Roxana Curiel	Assistant Professor	World Languages and Cultures
Ashley Driver	Assistant Professor	Biology
Vincent Farallo	Assistant Professor	Biology
Christopher Fremaux	Assistant Professor	Philosophy
Spencer Galen	Assistant Professor	Biology
Madeline Gangnes	Assistant Professor	English & Theatre
Emily Gerstle	Assistant Professor	Health and Human Performance
Christopher Hauser	Assistant Professor	Philosophy
JoyAnna Hopper	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Joseph Klobusicky	Assistant Professor	Mathematics
Sylvia Orner	Assistant Professor	Library
Amelia Randich	Assistant Professor	Biology
Joshua Reynolds	Assistant Professor	Psychology
Paul Sampson	Assistant Professor	History
Matthew Shea	Assistant Professor	Philosophy
Jason Shrive	Faculty Specialist	Sociology, Criminal Justice & Criminology
Brian Snee	Assistant Professor	Communications and Media
Ziqian Song	Assistant Professor	Operations & Information Management
Cristen Walker	Assistant Professor	Nursing
Lori Walton	Professor	Physical Therapy
Murong Xu	Assistant Professor	Mathematics
Amir Zamanian	Assistant Professor	Physics and Engineering
Iheoma Nwachukwu	Visiting Assistant Professor	English & Theatre