



JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

to the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees

DECEMBER 11, 2014



A FOCUS ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

As our student population grows increasingly diverse, Student life staff members have focused on offering programming that celebrates as strengths the variety of backgrounds, lifestyles and experiences of our campus population.

In November, the Athletics Department used NCAA grant funding to bring nationally recognized speaker Dr. Jenny Withycombe to campus for a series of interactive workshops “Power and Potential of Diversity and Inclusion.” A Sunday evening session for students attracted 60 participants, while the following day 56 staff and faculty members attended a session specifically designed for them.



Following on the heels of Withycombe’s visit was the College’s semi-annual “Ally Training,” sponsored by the JSC Pride Alliance and our Office of Student Activities. Multiple sessions were offered for students, faculty and staff by Dana Kaplan, director of education at Outright Vermont in Burlington.

Earlier this semester, the departments of Residence Life, Athletics, Student Activities, and First-Year Experience sponsored a visit by activist Robyn Ochs, author of *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*,” who spoke about current issues faced by the LGBT community. [An interview in *Basement Medicine* can be found here.](#)



In addition, we have expanded programming related to the experience of veterans, as we anticipate continued growth of this student demographic. As part of our “Community Cinema” series in partnership with Vermont PBS, the College sponsored a screening of “Women in War” ([Basement Medicine review here](#)), Fifty-five campus community members attended the screening and the discussion, facilitated by women in service, that followed.

A week later, a standing-room-only crowd heard from wounded veteran Sgt. Taylor Urruela, who is profiled in the PBS series “Coming Home” ([interview in *Basement Medicine* here](#)). The program focused on the challenges faced by veterans upon their return from service.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NOTE

[A supplement to this report noting recent accomplishments by JSC faculty, staff, students and alumni](#) is posted on our website and available for PDF download here. We encourage you to read these highlights of our community’s accomplishments since our last report to the board.



THE JSC POOL LIVES ON

We were pleased to announce just before Thanksgiving break that the indoor pool at Johnson State College will continue operating into the foreseeable future. We are grateful that we have been approved for a long-term loan from the VSC’s Green Revolving Fund to replace the pool’s existing, malfunctioning dehumidification and heating unit with a new, energy-efficient system at a cost of about \$265,000.

Closing the pool had been discussed as an option for helping to address budget concerns. An outpouring of feedback from the local and campus community confirmed the importance of the pool as an educational, recreational and therapeutic resource for area schools and nearby residents as well as the JSC community. The ability to secure this grant to continue the pool's operation has been greeted with great excitement and relief. It was celebrated at a well-attended pool open house on Saturday, Nov. 15, which garnered front-page coverage in the Morrisville-based *News & Citizen*.

The pool will be offline until the new part is installed and operational, which we anticipate to be by early February.

A FOCUS ON ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

We are undertaking a full review of our admissions and enrollment protocols with the help of a consultant affiliated with the American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers. This includes an examination of our communications, recruitment materials and schedule, and three onsite visits by the consultant, the first of which concluded Nov. 20. There is a growing appreciation for the fact that student recruitment is a college-wide responsibility, with multiple steps along the way and essential roles for staff, faculty and administrators to play.

While improving and upgrading service to prospective students and their families is always a work in progress, it is clear that we have broad participation from staff and faculty at Johnson State College in connecting with students exploring our college. As well, our systematic review of how we apply financial aid and scholarships appears to be serving us well.

PRESIDENT'S ROUNDTABLE

Each semester, President Murphy hosts a "President's Roundtable" — a dinner meeting with area business people, educators, legislators, and community leaders — to share some aspect of current activities under way at JSC. The goal is to help roundtable members become more familiar with our varied and relevant college work and to hear their perspectives on ways to extend that work and add to local knowledge. At our fall meeting, three JSC faculty members presented on their research in biology and education, focusing on how they involve students as research assistants, why we consider such work a high form of education, and what we are learning. This is one of many ways we work to instill an appreciation for our role as a true citizen of Lamoille County who is invested in its future.

A COLLABORATION ON ASPIRATION

We are working with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation and others on an initiative to raise aspirations of area high school students to consider college in their near future. Lamoille County high school seniors whose parents did not complete college report the lowest intention of going directly to college after graduating high school. It is our belief that collaborative efforts across K-16 lines can help affect aspiration.

SOLAR INSTALLATION COMPLETED

Installation of a one-acre, 150 kWh solar array near the main entrance, just up the hill from the former "upper pond," was completed in October, with connection to Johnson Water & Light scheduled to take place by the end of the calendar year.

A COMBINED ADVISING & REGISTRAR OFFICE

We are in the process of combining the Advising & Registrar offices in a single location in Dewey Hall — a plan that has been in the works for about a year. The idea of merging services follows a model in place at many colleges that expands the work of a registrar's office beyond that of stewarding official college academic records, to partnering with Advising staff to help students navigate successful completion of their degrees.

Registrar Doug Eastman and Director of Advising Sara Kinerson proposed the collaboration after considering the many ways in which student records, before they become completed documents, are evolving plans that need regular attention; and that students, in moving toward program completion, rely on advising from their faculty advisors and our Advising center.

Combining the two functional areas of Registrar services and Advising has meant much moving about of staff. JSC-ers have been gracious about the relocations and open to having new neighbors and different views of campus.

JSC HOSTS 7TH HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP GREENING SUMMIT

In mid-November, 11 teams of students from a 17 Vermont and New York high schools submitted detailed proposals to implement environmental projects at their schools, then competed to secure the funds to turn their dreams into reality, at our 7th annual High School Greening Summit.

The Summit is cosponsored by Senator Bernie Sanders, who dedicated one of his staffers to serve as a judge. In a

video address to the students, Sanders praised the youth for presenting ideas that will “percolate throughout your communities and make our entire state more energy-efficient and more sustainable.”

Proposals ran the gamut, from hand dryers and motion-sensor faucets in restrooms to composting stations, greenhouses and gardens, plants and trees, environmentally-friendly cleaning products, biodegradable utensils and green roofs. Teams received feedback on their written proposals from Frances Huessy, senior technical writer with Burlington-based



Vermont Energy Investment Corporation.

At the end of the day, each team walked away with a prize ranging from \$250 to \$2,000,

made possible in part by a generous grant from the Canaday Family Charitable Trust, which seeks to fund innovative Vermont programs that “improve the lives of children and families, promote environmental education and conservation, and preserve the environment.” As a result, all teams will be able to implement at least a portion of their proposals at their respective schools over the coming year.

