



JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

to the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees

DECEMBER 2, 2015



OVERVIEW

We have had a busy fall semester with many opportunities for students to participate in high-impact learning opportunities, including study trips to Montreal and surrounding states, field research in the biological and health sciences, internship presentations by current students, and presentations by guest speakers covering the full spectrum of academic and social life, including Vermont government officials, nationally recognized poets and novelists, environmental scientists and leading experts in law and politics.

We have hosted a number of events centered on our 2015 common book, *The Promise of a Pencil* by Alan Braun. The author himself spent a day with us on campus in October and delivered an inspiring talk about his journey from Wall Street broker to founder of the nonprofit organization Pencils of Promise, which he started with just \$25 and which has built more than 200 schools in developing countries throughout the world. Braun challenged our students to step outside their comfort zones in order to discover new passions, to be willing to take risks in order to realize their dreams, and to realize that the best rewards come from helping others.

JSC faculty, staff and students have logged many accomplishments since our May report to the Board. For an overview of highlights, please refer to our [Supplemental Report](#).



JSC TASK FORCES GEAR UP FOR WORK

In late September, we established seven task forces around pressing college priorities. Each task force will play an instrumental role in helping to ensure that Johnson State College thrives in an increasingly challenging environment by creating and, in partnership with the President's Council, implementing plans to advance the college. The seven task forces and their areas of focus are:

- **Academic Quality:** COPLAC, Curriculum Mapping
- **Diversity:** Enhancement and Support of Campus Diversity
- **Enrollment & Retention:** Development of a JSC SEM Plan, Four-Year Graduation Maps for Every Major
- **Fundraising:** New Revenue Streams, Aggressive Fundraising Benchmarks
- **Information Technology:** Upgrades Aligned with Academic Priorities
- **Institutional Effectiveness:** Data-Driven Decision Making, Accreditation, Institutional Dashboards
- **Integrated Marketing:** Institutional Branding, Message Cohesion, Promotional Materials, Enhanced Institutional Visibility



Faculty, staff, students and alumni were invited to join one of these task forces, with the understanding that these are working groups and that members must come prepared to roll up their sleeves to help their group reach key performance milestones. At a special Nov. 4 meeting of the President's Council attended by Chancellor Spaulding, task force chairs presented an overview of their work to date as well as future plans.

COLLABORATING WITH THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON VERMONT

JSC was approached in early September by the Center for Research on Vermont (CRV) to help in creating a bimonthly e-newsletter highlighting research about Vermont and taking place in Vermont. The goal is to highlight interesting work that can bring attention to and enhance

the quality of life in our state. We gathered information for the consulting writer about the research underway at JSC and put her in contact with the faculty involved. It was a worthwhile exercise not only because it led to JSC's being highlighted in [the first CRV e-newsletter](#), it also reminded us of the deep and meaningful research taking place here — most of it involving the significant participation of JSC undergraduates as research assistants, co-authors of papers and co-presenters at conferences. These include:

- **Psychology research on the development of infant humor;** faculty leader: Dr. Gina Mireault
- **Social psychology research on body image and weight-based stigma;** faculty leader: Dr. Leslie Johnson
- **Microbiology research on extremophiles and resilient microorganisms;** faculty leader: Dr. Elizabeth Dolci
- **Research on political and legal anthropology, libertarianism, human and civil rights, legal ethics and race;** faculty leader: Dr. Kaja Tretjak
- **Research on water quality** in Vermont streams and lakes; faculty leader: Dr. Robert Genter
- **Research on geological stability and landslides** in Jeffersonville, Vermont; faculty leader: Dr. Les Kanat
- **Research on meteorology, weather patterns and climate change;** faculty leader: Dr. Tania Bacchus
- **Research using geographic information systems (GIS) modeling to designate wildlife corridors** and recommend lands for state protection; faculty leader: Dr. Kevin Johnson

ENHANCEMENTS IN RESIDENCE LIFE BOOST ON-CAMPUS LIVING

The number of students choosing on-campus housing after satisfying their residential requirement has steadily increased in recent years. This group now represents 29 percent of our on-campus population, up from 19 percent five years ago. This year 55 percent of our returning residential students had already satisfied their housing obligation but chose to live in the halls. Additionally, following a successful pilot last spring, we have seven Early College students living in residence this year.

Enhanced programming and options in JSC residence halls undoubtedly play a role in the uptick of students living on campus. This year we added a gender-neutral floor, which has been very well-received, and launched the fourth year of our JUMP (Johnson Undergraduates Mentoring Peers) program, made possible by a grant overseen by VSAC.

This program supports office hours for student mentors in the residence halls. With recent confirmation of funding for JUMP, we will expand outreach programs in the halls on pertinent topics

such as alcohol and drug use, healthy relationships, and self-care, building on the success of ongoing educational events and activities such as our annual Alcohol Awareness Week in October.

CELEBRATING OUR VETERANS

“You Served Us, Now Let Us Serve You.” That was the theme of a special Veterans Day dinner and ceremony held Tuesday evening, Nov. 11, in the Stearns Performance Space. The event was a first for JSC and proved a tremendous success, drawing more than 50 area veterans and family members to campus for a delicious, plated dinner, served in style by SERVE student volunteers and provided free of charge thanks to the generous support of Sodexo.

Table centerpieces were created and donated by the Hyde Park Women's Auxiliary, and each veteran received a card of thanks



created by a second grade student at Hyde Park Elementary School. Veterans who attended represented the Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy and National Guard; some served as far back as WWII and had more than 20 years of service.

President Collins, Dean David Bergh and Hyde Park VFW Commander Tom Hemenway delivered brief remarks. The evening included music by JSC students and a candlelight ceremony led by Hyde Park VFW Chaplain Bob Ross in honor of service men and women killed and missing in action. It was a very moving and enjoyable event, and one we plan to continue and build on in the years ahead.

