



JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

to the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees

MAY 21, 2015



As we wrap up the academic year, and as I move toward completing my tenure as president, I am struck by how much we have so much to note and celebrate at JSC, starting first and foremost with the accomplishments of our students.

As this report is written, we are preparing to celebrate more than 400 undergraduate and graduate students who will earn their degrees Saturday, May 16, at our 148th Commencement Ceremony. We will be presenting an honorary doctorate of humane letters to our keynote speaker, Camille Holmes, director of leadership and racial equity for the National Legal Aid & Defender Association in Washington, D.C., and hearing from three members of the Class of 2015: **Dalton Gomez** (B.S., Environmental Science with teaching endorsement); **Lindsay Haley** (B.A., Professional Studies, External Degree Program) and **Kyle Reardon** (M.A., Special Education).



Camille Holmes



Many of our graduates have impressive plans — including acceptance directly into the *doctorate* physical therapy program at UVM, teaching high school chemistry and physics, taking on new work in New Zealand, graduate work in engineering and more.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NOTE

As our [May 2015 Supplement of Activities & Accomplishments](#) illustrates, much rich work is accomplished daily at Johnson State College. The following items from that supplement are singled out here for special mention:



- Sophomore **Heather Murphy**, junior **Shayna Bennett** and graduating senior **Erika English** won an “Outstanding Undergraduate Poster” award at the Geological Society of America Northeastern Section meeting in March. Only nine students — the top 5% of 192



L-R: Erika English, Heather Murphy and Shayna Bennett

undergraduate poster presentations — were selected by 46 judges for an award. JSC bested the presentation from Middlebury College, the only other Vermont institution to receive an award. The faculty advisor for the group effort (for which Heather served as lead author) was Dr. **Liz Dolci**. The students’ poster was titled “Bacterial Adaptation to an Anthropogenically Altered, Serpentine-Rich Aquatic Environment.” Heather and Shayna are START science scholars — recipients of major scholarships from JSC funded by the National Science Foundation.



- Juniors **Steven Lamonde** and **Shayna Bennett** have been inducted into Sigma Xi, the prestigious scientific research society for undergraduates who show promise by the research conducted early in their careers. Einstein, Crick and Watson, and our own Liz Dolci and Les Kanat have been members of this elite group.



- Graduating senior **Daniel Hill** is one of 240 college students nationwide selected to travel to NASA's Johnson Space Center as part of the five-week NASA College Aerospace Scholars project (NCAS). While at NASA, students interact with NASA engineers and establish fictional companies that develop and test a prototype Mars rover, establish a company infrastructure, manage a budget and develop communications plans.
- The Johnson State College **Chamber Singers**, under the direction of **Bethany Plissey** and accompanied by **Tim Saeed** of our Department of Fine & Performing Arts recently completed their spring tour and have performed at numerous campus events since. One of the venues on the tour was a church community in Massachusetts, whose minister wrote us this note: "Last night the church I serve had the pleasure of hosting a concert with the Johnson State College Chamber Singers. What a delight!! They are such great ambassadors for your school, and their director, Bethany, was outstanding not only in pulling a great sound and musicianship from her choir but also in how she treated and honored their personhood."
- Sophomore men's lacrosse goalkeeper **Jay Palmisano**, an art education major, concluded the 2014-15 season ranked No. 2 nationally in NCAA Division III for saves per game and No. 11 in goals-against average. His outstanding performance this year also earned him a spot on the North Atlantic Conference's second team all-conference squad.



PREVENTION & OUTREACH SHOWS CONTINUED VALUE

The 2014-15 school year marks the second year we have required all first-year students to complete the online "AlcoholEdu" and "Haven" modules. These educational programs, supported by grant funding through a partnership with the Healthy Lamoille Valley Coalition, focus on preventing problematic behaviors associated with excessive alcohol and drug use and sexual misconduct. Most important, they provide incoming students with knowledge and tools to succeed in college, and we believe they are a contributing factor in our improved first- to second-

year retention rates. Data from our most recent report show the following:

- Student knowledge of the risks associated with alcohol use increased 24% after course completion.
- 39% of students changed their drinking behavior after completing the course.
- 87% of students reported that the course prepared them to make responsible decisions about their own drinking decisions.
- 88% of students report that AlcoholEdu prepared them to help someone who may have alcohol poisoning.

We are extremely gratified to see that the attention we have devoted to the issue of substance abuse, as well as sexual misconduct, is having a positive effect.

CELEBRATING OUR 'EARLY COLLEGE' & 'THINK COLLEGE' COMPLETERS

Thursday evening, May 7, we hosted a dinner and recognition ceremony for our first class of "Early College" students and their families. Each of the 19 students received a certificate in recognition of their accomplishments at JSC and the dedication it took to complete their final year of high school by taking college courses at Johnson State College. We were pleased to have Chancellor Spaulding join us for the event.



The previous afternoon, we presented certificates to the four students who are completing our "Think College" program this year. Launched at JSC in 2011, Think College is a two-year program that provides 18- to 26-year-old students with intellectual disabilities an opportunity to earn a Certificate of Higher Education from JSC. The first year of the program focuses on academics as well as social, vocational and independent-living skills. The second year continues the focus on coursework and independent-living skills and adds an internship tied to vocational goals. We are grateful to the faculty, staff and students who make this rewarding program possible. Those who complete this program take great pride in their college experience, knowing that they have achieved something they may have never imagined.

