



JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

to the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees

MAY 25, 2016



As we close out the academic year, and as I near the completion of my first year as president at JSC, I am struck by how much we have to note and celebrate here, starting first and foremost with the accomplishments of our students.

As this report is written, we are preparing to celebrate more than 330 degree- and certificate-completers at our 149th Commencement on Saturday, May 14. Of the 328 degrees to be bestowed on undergraduate and graduate students from 15 states and nine countries (Bhutan, Canada, Congo, Japan, Nepal, Tanzania, Trinidad, the United Kingdom and the U.S.), the College will award 14 associate's degrees, 252 bachelor's degrees and 62 master's degrees. We also will award six certificates, in either small business management or nonprofit management, and four certificates of higher education to non-degree students in our College Steps program.

Senior Science Research Presentations | April 27, 2016



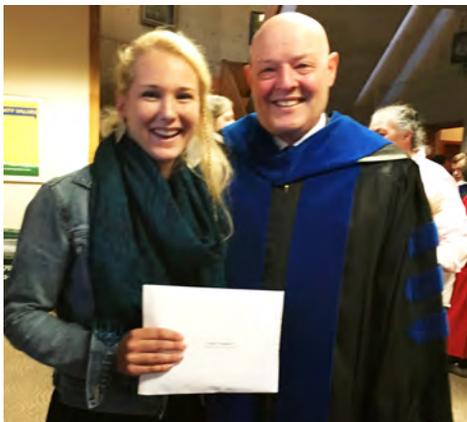
Our keynote speaker will be Mary Alice McKenzie, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Burlington, who served as general counsel for the Vermont State Colleges from 2001 to 2005 and practiced employment law at Paul Frank & Collins in Burlington prior to employment with the VSC. We also will hear from three members of the Class of 2016: **Nasser Abdel-Fatah** (B.S., Environmental Science), **Meghan Fay-McCaffrey** (B.A., Professional Studies) and **Ginger Irish** (M.F.A., Studio Arts).

SEEKING COPLAC DESIGNATION FOR JSC

As noted in previous reports, JSC has been pursuing membership in the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) in a quest to be designated as the state's sole COPLAC institution and, by association, Vermont's premier public liberal arts college.



Following the submission of our application in March, the organization's executive director, Dr. William Spellman, came to campus April 12 and spent a full day meeting with administrators, faculty, students and staff. A week later, we hosted Dr. Sanders Huguenin (provost and vice chancellor, University of Virginia at Wise) and Dr. Kathryn Foster (president, University of Maine-Farmington) for a day-long series of meetings with the same constituencies, as well as with members of the JSC Academic Quality Task Force and faculty governance leaders. The purpose of the visit by Drs. Foster and Huguenin, who serve on the COPLAC Nominating Committee, was to assess JSC's "fit" with COPLAC as well as the added value JSC could bring to the organization.



As noted in our application, our goal in pursuing COPLAC designation is to "delineate with clarity our niche within the landscape of Vermont and American higher education," and "accurately describe our current reality as well as inspire and ensure our future direction as Vermont's premier public liberal arts college." On a practical level, COPLAC membership opens doors to a variety of collaborations with like-minded institutions. JSC students would benefit from additional venues for showcasing their research work, JSC faculty could co-teach courses and co-lead study trips with other COPLAC faculty, and faculty and staff would have access to numerous opportunities for professional development.

In a world where the "real estate" of higher education is claimed by many different types of institutions, and in which the value of the liberal arts and sciences is regularly called

into question, we believe that being part of the COPLAC network would be extremely valuable in our recruitment, advocacy and academic-programming efforts.

The process of preparing our COPLAC application and subsequently responding to probing questions posed by Drs. Spellman, Foster and Huguenin during their visits has been invaluable, helping all of us at JSC better understand and define our common mission and identity. The experience appears to have been a positive one for our guests as well. These are some of the comments (paraphrased) made by Drs. Foster and Huguenin during their visit:

- We were surprised by how many people attended meetings throughout the day. This is a very busy time of year, yet people showed up and were eager to engage.
- There is a great “sense of place” and community here.
- JSC seems to be a strong fit with other COPLAC institutions. In other campus visits, faculty and staff typically have had a clear sense of what it means to be a liberal arts institution, while students have been less able to articulate that identity. At Johnson State College, however, students were able to provide multiple examples of engagement in high-impact practices that define the liberal arts.

The next step in this process takes place in late June, when President Collins will attend the COPLAC annual meeting. At that time the COPLAC Nominating Committee will present its recommendation regarding JSC to the full board. Once that vote is taken, we will have concluded our yearlong application process and hope to start a new chapter of JSC history as the Vermont member of COPLAC.

‘JSC ONLINE’ TO LAUNCH IN JUNE

This has been a year of rigorous evaluation and assessment of programs and operations across all departments and at all levels. One of the goals that emerged during this process was to grow enrollments of adult completers by taking our existing External Degree Program (EDP) in new directions – specifically to launch and brand “JSC Online” as a distinct bachelor’s degree-completion program separate from EDP, which will continue offering classes at CCV centers through the current “JSC in Your Community” model.

As part of this program, we are excited to add a fully online B.S. degree in Wellness & Alternative Medicine to our current offerings. In February, we applied to the New England Association of Schools & Colleges for approval to deliver our longstanding B.S. in Wellness & Alternative Medicine in a fully online format. We received approval to do so in late April. As a result, when JSC Online goes live, we will offer five degree programs nationwide:

- Wellness & Alternative Medicine (B.S.)
- Professional Studies (B.A.)
- Business (B.A.), accounting or management concentration
- Psychology (B.A.)
- Interdisciplinary Studies (B.A.)

Much work is taking place behind the scenes to prepare for the launch of this new product – website revisions, new financial aid and admissions procedures, new promotional and marketing materials, even new program codes in the Colleague database. We are grateful for the tireless work by staff in Admissions, Financial Aid, EDP, Marketing and the Registrar’s Office who have ensured that JSC Online will get off to a strong start.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NOTE

As our May 2016 [Supplement of Recent Activities & Accomplishments](#) illustrates, JSC students accomplish much great work on a daily basis. The following items from that supplement are singled out here for special mention:

- Environmental Science juniors **Shayna Bennett** of Belvidere and **Heather Murphy** of Morgan, along with first-year students **Shavonna Bent** of Randolph and **Katie Bora** of Johnson, had the honor of participating in the 20th annual “Posters on the Hill” event in Washington, D.C., in mid-April. This is a highly selective, two-day event sponsored by the National Council for Undergraduate Research, which accepted only 60 projects from more than 350 submissions. (JSC and Middlebury College represented Vermont.) Accompanied by their faculty mentor, Dr. **Elizabeth Dolci**, the students presented their winning submission “Bacterial Response to Human-Induced Stress at the Vermont Asbestos Group Mine.”
- Earlier in the semester, senior **Nasser Abdel-Fatah** of Randolph presented his research on Vermont climate change at two professional science conferences in New York: the 41st Annual Northeastern Storm Conference in Saratoga Springs, and the Northeastern Section of the Geological Society of America meeting in Albany. Nasser conducts his research with JSC Professor Tania Bacchus, Ph.D., as part of the “Research on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Lake Champlain Basin” project funded by Vermont EPSCoR.
- Fine arts junior **Lily Johnson** of Washington, D.C., has won the official “Joni Mitchell Poster Design Contest,” which will be used to promote the September 2016 “JoniFest” in British Columbia. Lily will receive a check in addition to the honor of having her design used to promote this event for the legendary singer.

NEW AT JSC: "SUMMER SHORTS"

This summer JSC is offering a new series of non-credit workshops called "Summer Shorts." The workshops, most of which take place on campus, will be taught by JSC faculty and staff.

Workshops begin May 31 and run through Aug. 6 and vary from several hours to several days in length. Representative options include Landscape Photography, Jewelry: Wearable Circles, Massive Paper Mache Mask-Making, Calculus without Calculations, Exploring Wellness & Alternative Medicine, Identifying Common Wildflowers in Vermont & New Hampshire, Introduction to Papermaking, Vermont History Tour through the Shelburne Museum, Creative Dance, and Horses & Healing.

To learn more, visit jsc.edu/SummerShorts.

A YEAR OF ENGAGED STUDENTS

This year more than 250 students and campus community members have contributed over 2,500 hours of service to the local, national and global community. This includes participants on alternative break trips to Nicaragua, Detroit and the Grand Canyon. One of the leaders of the Grand Canyon trip, senior **Rachele Funk**, was JSC's recipient of the Vermont Campus Compact Engaged Student Award.

The end of the school year has seen extensive programming associated with Pride Week, Earth Week, and a celebration of our Division III student-athletes. This year we had 195 student-athletes participate in our 15 varsity sports. Of those, 76 have GPAs of 3.0 or higher, 32 are at 3.5 or higher, and two hold a 4.0. Our student-athletes participated in numerous community service projects this year as well, providing kits to sexual assault survivors, hosting a Special Olympics basketball tournament and serving as mentors to local youths.

The "[It's On Us](#)" video produced by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) has been viewed nearly 7,000 times and has been used in numerous programs and trainings.

PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

More than 175 JSC students participated in internships this year, accounting for 848.5 credits and 47,368 hours of work.

Our spring Career Fair had 50 employers represented and was attended by 142 students and community members. Students and employers alike gave the event high ratings. Colleen MacKenna of Lamoille County Mental Health Services summed it up this way: "This was the best job fair in the whole state for us. We were able to line up 10 interviews."

At the annual "Dinner with the Boss" event, 12 JSC alums connected with 29 current students. Ninety-six percent of participants rated the event as "helpful" or "very helpful." Feedback indicated that the event was especially successful in helping students to gain more information about networking, develop confidence in their ability to present themselves, and inspiring them to pursue their goals.

THE CONTINUED APPEAL OF RESIDENTIAL LIVING

JSC continues to see a trend of more upper-class students choosing to live on campus in residence halls. As of April 20, 60 percent of returning residential students who signed a contract for the coming year were not required to live on campus.

WELLNESS CENTER OUTREACH

Wellness Center services continue to see high utilization rates. Through April 20, nearly 100 students this semester have received counseling services. Interim Director Kate McCarthy visited both first-year and senior seminars to provide information on services available at the Center. She also presented at the Wellness Lifestyle & Career Seminar on effective self-care. Staff members have done extensive tabling around campus and in association with campus events to build further awareness of services. An especially popular service this semester was the addition of weekly visits by a therapy dog that has attracted 50 student visitors since the program began in early February.



Please see our [Supplement of Recent Accomplishments by JSC Students, Faculty & Staff](#) for highlights of the many high-impact learning experiences that have taken place at Johnson State College this semester.