

TO: Bruce Mattingly, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

FROM: Jerome O'Callaghan, Associate Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

DATE: August 2, 2017

RE: **Annual Report, 2016-17**

This year's annual report combines two approaches: part one is the traditional descriptive report of the year's activities, and part two is a summary that addresses the categories of academic excellence, well-being and transformative education.

-- -Part One- --

Each year the office of the Associate Dean has to address a wide variety of issues raised by students and faculty; most of them resolved to everyone's satisfaction. This year we continued that trend: we processed hundreds of withdrawals, course substitutions, graduation checklists, leaves of absence, permission to transfer forms, and change of grade forms. The typical week in this office includes student appointments covering many topics: internship permissions, study abroad permissions, probation status, fellowship opportunities, grade disputes, late registration requests, and attendance problems. In addition there are numerous committee meetings, "drop-in" appointments and various other opportunities for practicing our problem-solving skills.

The major time commitment in this office is devoted to meetings; committee meetings are inevitable and often have ancillary obligations. More important to the mission of the office is the commitment to student meetings. Looking at the Associate Dean's calendar we can roughly measure the number of students seen. From September 2016 to May 2017 we found the following data: over **300** probation appointments, 190 internship appointments and approximately 120 study abroad appointments. These numbers do not take into account drop-in meetings, urgent consultations, parent phone calls, advice via email, etc. Meeting with students, listening to their concerns and advising them on how best to proceed is the the most vital component of our work. For each student on probation I try to arrange 3 meetings per semester, this affords the best opportunity for good mentoring.

Everything in our office depends greatly on the dedication, skill and patience of Michele Lella. She is quick to help students in need, and assists them in finding the right policies, offices to visit, next steps, etc. She keeps a friendly disposition when talking to students and parents, and she is consistently careful in dealing with our critical letters at the end of the semester (suspensions, etc.). She handles stressful periods (and stressed out students) with great poise. Most importantly she keeps the Associate Dean on task. She has earned very positive performance evaluations.

The full plate of the Associate Dean's routine responsibilities includes:

- Addressing daily student appointments and telephone calls
- Maintaining student records for all Arts and Sciences undergraduates and graduate students
- Maintaining student records for all Pre-majors

- Meeting with students on academic probation to monitor progress
- Addressing parent issues, via email, telephone and sometimes in person
- Conducting *Alpha Delta* scholarship interviews and making recommendations
- Reviewing readmission applications and transcripts
- Disposition of various student requests: late add/drop, course withdrawals, leaves of absence, course overloads, CAPP/DegreeWorks questions and college withdrawals
- Disposition of faculty requests: course substitutions, change of grade
- Reviewing catalog pages for department and program descriptions
- Reviewing all A&S graduation checklists
- Review/approval of proposals for study abroad
- Review/approval of proposals for CPV 400 internships
- Review/approval of requests for time-conflict resolution
- Addressing graduate student concerns (e.g. extensions, probation status, thesis completion, etc.)
- Evaluating midterm estimates and sending warning letters
- Evaluating the applications of readmit students
- Reviewing records of students who left years ago without a degree and are potential readmits
- Evaluating final grades, determining probation contracts, academic suspensions and dismissals
- Preparing appeals materials for the Academic Standing Committee and completing communications related to appeals
- Reviewing the status of *Completing Elsewhere* students

Committee membership:

- Ex officio, Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee
- Ex officio, College Curriculum Review Committee
- Ex officio, Academic Standing Committee
- Ex officio, Graduate Faculty Executive Committee
- Ex officio, Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence Committee
- Academic Hall of Fame Committee (Chair)
- TEC
- Teacher Education Candidate Review Committee
- Honors Convocation Committee
- Title IX Committee
- Degreeworks Advisory Committee
- CURE Advisory Committee
- Academic Advising Committee
- Midsemester/Early Alert Committee
- Behavior Assessment Team

Other Regular Meetings:

- Associate Deans and Registrar's Group
- Arts and Sciences Chairs' Council

Other Responsibilities:

IDP majors -- There was more activity among IDP majors this year. I had 5 students actively working on their proposals: all are making progress and at least two are very close to graduation.

Graduate Students – I have been responsible for upholding college academic standards (a few probation letters and warnings each semester). I have also been active in warning students about the five-year

deadline. In addition I review our records to see which students have been absent for a significant amount of time and should be cataloged as “inactive” in Banner.

Conferences -- I attended two SUNY conferences in my role as a SUNY administrator: both were SUNY Deans meetings that I organized. The first was our fall meeting at Raquette Lake. (As the coordinator of the SUNY Deans group, I organized both the fall and the spring Deans meetings.) Thirteen campuses were represented in the fall meeting; we had guest speakers from Binghamton (on deans and budgeting), and from system (Chief Financial Officer and Teacher Education Fellow). Our spring meeting was held at Plattsburgh in June. I am happy to say that this meeting was well attended, and it featured good conversations with Chancellor Zimpher, and with Plattsburgh’s President Ettling. We had the pleasure of an excellent presentation on common problem pedagogy as well. It was also good to see new members join the group from Purchase and Delhi. Ten campuses were represented, which is in line with our norm for the last few years.

I also attended two conferences for academic reasons, presenting a paper at one of them. At the North East Academy of Legal Studies in Business annual meeting I co-presented a paper (“Courts, Trademarks and the ICANN Gold Rush: Top Level Domains Outside Free Speech”). I also attended the Business, Law & Society Conference, Mid-Atlantic Academy of Legal Studies in Business, at Salisbury, Maryland, in April.

Campus Communication -- Michele and I maintained frequent communication with advisors, parents, department chairs, faculty, staff, Health Services, Counseling, Registrar and other offices as required to solve student problems. I routinely publish the minutes of the A&S Curriculum Committee. On behalf of all three Associate Deans I have sent email reminders to the campus community regarding approaching deadlines -- on its face this is minor work but I believe that this kind of effective communication has saved us a lot of labor. I rely more and more on “*Communicate*” to send targeted messages to students and faculty.

Fellowships -- As the campus fellowship advisor, I worked with many good students to encourage them to develop applications regarding research or study abroad. This year, while several students discussed Fulbright proposals with me, only two proposals were developed. One of those was successful – XXX YYY will spend 2017-18 in Germany as an English Teaching Assistant. This is a great achievement and is the first Cortland ETA in Germany that I know of. I also assisted Gonda Gebhardt in a Gilman Fellowship presentation. I also visited an Honors Program class meeting to promote fellowship opportunities.

#### Academic Standing Data:

The data in Tables 1 and 2 below indicate how busy we have been with students who had trouble maintaining good academic standing. Over the last few years, I have examined this raw data in comparison to matching data from prior years. The second table below opens up the bigger picture, using the total A&S student population as a baseline. The percentage of students on probation in 2016-17 was close to the norm (lower than the 2014 record, and still comparable to the probation rate in 2010-11). The percentage of students dismissed/suspended has increased: the percentage of students suspended has reached 4.52% (vs 4.26% last year), while the dismissal rate of 0.57% is just shy of the record of 0.6% in 2011-12. The gradual climb in the volume of suspended students is an issue to watch in the future. It’s also worth noting that the number of students awarded *Deans List* recognition has again passed the 1,000 mark (approximately one third of the A&S student body). The other point to note from Table 2 is that the A&S undergraduate student population (including pre-majors) is above the 3,100 mark – making it 49.5% of the total undergraduate population. The combined value of the Schools of Education and Professional Studies is 3177 students (2016 data from OIR).

**Table I**  
**School of Arts and Sciences**  
**End of Year Statistics 2016-2017**

	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
ACADEMIC WARNING	15	17
ACADEMIC PROBATION (Contract)	111	52
ACADEMIC PROBATION (Continued)	2	5
<i>Subtotal-Probationary Action</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>57</i>
SUSPENSION -- Failed to meet contract	13	38
SUSPENSION -- Others (sem. GPA below 1.01 & cum. below 2.00)	56	34
<i>Subtotal-Suspensions</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>72</i>
ACADEMIC DISMISSAL (failed to meet contract)	9	9
<i>Subtotal Suspensions + Dismissals</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>81</i>
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC DISTRESS*</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>138</b>

\*The sum of students on probation or suspended/dismissed. Excludes students on warning.

**Table 2**  
**School of Arts and Sciences**  
**Seven-Year Trends in the Undergraduate Population 2010-2017**

	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11
A&S Students*	3115	3095	3088	3183	3136	2990	2871
Probation**	170	178	192	158	170	145	163
% Probation	5.45	5.75	6.21	4.96	5.42	4.85	5.68
Off probation	100	138	111	97	85	101	100
% Off Pro	3.21	4.45	3.59	3.05	2.71	3.38	3.48
Suspension	141	132	117	120	108	111	113
% Suspnsn	4.52	4.26	3.78	3.77	3.44	3.71	3.94
Dismissal	18	17	12	13	8	18	12
% Dismissal	0.57	0.54	0.39	0.41	0.26	0.6	0.42

\*Total A&S students – based on Annual Report Data. This number is based on fall enrollment and includes Pre-Majors; it also excludes any double-counting due to dual majors. A small number of Pre-majors are advised in A&S, but all their records are maintained here. Pre-major paperwork, issues, disputes etc. are handled by the Associate Dean of A&S.

\*\* Probation numbers combine fall and spring data. Likewise for suspensions and dismissals.

**Table 3**  
**School of Arts and Sciences**  
**Academic Status Changes**

	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
OFF PROBATION (Made contract)	35	65
READMITS	43	24
REINSTATES	8	11
CHANGE OF STATUS	0	0
DEAN'S LIST	1029	1019

## #2 Academic Excellence

### Data collection and analysis:

Each year the Associate Dean's report lists the data provided in Table I – comparisons from year to year are made in key categories to see if trends are apparent. Dismissals since 2009 have varied from a low of 8 to a high (this year) of 18. The number of students placed on probation has crept up from a low of 145 (2011-12) to 170 this school year. However the average over 7 years is 168. At the same time the data on *Dean's List* students shows a strong positive trend, from 711 in 2004 to a high of 1019 today. In the last year the number of students coming out of probation successfully has steadied to 100 (7 year average is 104). The data on suspensions are more central, and in the last seven years we have seen a predictable range of 110-135 students suspended per year. In 2016-17, there were 141 suspensions, the highest number for this period; in relative terms this is a 4.52% rate of suspension in the school. The Associate Dean commits a lot of time and energy to advising students on probation, with the goal of keeping this number low. It's not clear what factors account for the increase in suspensions this year.

### Service to the profession:

I have served as an active member and chair of the SUNY Deans of Arts and Sciences group – organizing and attending both meetings this year. Our meetings in 2016-17 (Raquette Lake and Plattsburgh) were both particularly successful. As this was my last year organizing this group, I was gratified by the many messages of thanks that I received from my colleagues.

### Other:

I was invited to participate in two academic panels this year. For one (U.K. May "Brexit" the European Union) I researched and reported on the particular implications of Brexit for Ireland and cross-border politics. For the second panel, a review of Andy Fitzgibbon's book, "Talking to Terrorists," I was one of four to present my analysis of the book's strengths and weaknesses. Both talks were well attended by a mix of faculty and students.

I co-presented a paper at the North East Academy of Legal Studies in Business annual meeting – our paper was titled, *Courts, Trademarks and the ICANN Gold Rush: Top Level Domains Outside Free Speech*. I also attended the Business, Law & Society Conference, (part of the Mid-Atlantic Academy of Legal Studies in Business) in Maryland this year.

To promote academic excellence on campus I interviewed 16 students for the *Alpha Delta* award, making detailed recommendations on each one. Likewise I have been very active in promoting national fellowships, assisting students in their applications etc.

I also serve on the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence Committee – playing a key role in the selection of 4 Cortland nominees.

## #3 Transformational Education Experiences

XXX YYY won the Fulbright Award and will spend 2017-18 in Germany as an English Teaching Assistant. I assisted her development of the application and organized the Fulbright interview. This is a great achievement and is the first Cortland ETA in Germany

that I know of. As a campus fellowship advisor I write each summer to a group of 100 to 150 students to encourage more fellowship applications. I have also met with a handful of students interested in specific applications.

As the main organizer of the Academic Hall of Fame event, I am responsible for building the logistics of the visit for our honoree each year. This year Mr. Robert McMahon was honored at the President's List reception; in addition he met informally with select students for lunch, and also participated in various classes as a guest lecturer. The opportunity to meet with a very successful alum is one that students really appreciate, and I hope it will create a strong positive memory about Cortland.

One of my roles as Associate Dean is to support and encourage students seeking transformational experiences. I do this in a number of ways. I approve all students seeking CPV, COM and ECO internships in the school, and I approve all study abroad proposals from the school. In many of my routine appointments with students I make a point to emphasize the enormous benefits of our study abroad opportunities.

I invited one of our successful alums, Erin Colgan, to come speak to pre-law students in the fall semester. Erin graduated from Cortland in 1998 and earned her JD in 2001. She has had an impressive legal career in the ensuing years. Her talk was well attended (at least 20 students), the presentation was dynamic, and I believe students gained a lot from the event.

#### **#4 Well-being**

As a member of the Behavioral Assessment Team I have collaborated with a number of colleagues from across campus on addressing issues related to problematic student behavior. Typically the desire of the committee is to find ways to help a student take control of his/her life before he/she becomes truly overwhelmed (i.e., at risk of being a danger to themselves or others). 2016-17 was a busy year for BAT, with close to 50 students making the BAT agenda. All of us on the committee are particularly sensitive to the needs of students who are in distress (emotional issues, diagnosed illnesses, medication issues, mental illness etc.) – while at the same time we recognize that the needs of the Cortland community (students, staff and faculty) are a very high priority. In doing our best to protect the community from students in a downward-spiral we contribute to the well-being of the campus.

#### **#6 Plans for next year**

I plan to continue to work with the Honors Program director, Frank Rossi, to promote scholarship applications among the Honors group. Any greater visibility for Honors students adds to our commitment to **academic excellence**.