Message from the Dean

As the fall 2008 semester comes to a close and we begin the holiday season of “joy” and “thanksgiving,” I cannot help but reflect on the many “invisible leaders” of the season. From our passionate Panuska College of Professional Studies students to our faculty, staff and community partners, I extend my prayers and gratitude. You certainly play essential roles that greatly enhance the academic learning and environments of PCPS.

Highlights of the fall academic semester centered on fulfillment of our Jesuit and Catholic tradition as the “helping professions,” not only by learning about justice, but by doing justice. Our 7th Annual Northeastern U.S. Conference on disABILITY gave 180 attendees the chance to learn professionally and personally about improving the quality of life for veterans with disabilities. Our Service learning projects enhanced our academic programs, such as our work in the Leahy Community Health and Family Center, the Blessing of the Books Project, our support of Hope for Haiti, the Floating Hospital and Project Guadalajara, and a lecture by Father Matthew Ruhl, S.J. PCPS is the heart of the University; our concern for the poor drives our research, our curricula and our collaboration.

My sincerest appreciation to our alumni, faculty, students, and to all of you who have contributed to our intellectual walk in faith and justice. I can promise you that we are about to embark on a very exciting and rewarding 2009.

For now, reflect on the journey of 2008 and have a very blessed holiday season.

Best Wishes,

Debra Pellegrino

Dr. Debra Pellegrino

This Nativity scene is located in McGurrin Hall, The University of Scranton.
University Students Set Sail with The Floating Hospital

On Saturday, September 20, 2008, students from The University of Scranton joined with staff from The Floating Hospital at Pier 40 in Manhattan to help the organization set sail to provide a fun, healthy day for 350 underprivileged children and families. Students in the Exercise Science and Community Health Education (CHE) majors, led by CHE Program Director Dr. Debra Fetherman and Dean of the Panuska College of Professional Studies Dr. Debra Pellegrino, supervised arts and crafts activities on the play time deck. Activities included a separate pirates’ treasure cove dedicated to dental education and hygiene. Additional University of Scranton participants included: Lab Director of the Department of Exercise Science and Sport Cheryl Denkosky; Assistant Dean Dr. Carol Ann Radle; and 12 wonderful students from The University of Scranton.

The Floating Hospital, founded in 1866, is New York City’s oldest pediatric charity clinic for the city’s neediest. Although the hospital no longer provides medical services on its ship, it makes an annual pilgrimage on the sea around Manhattan to remind staff and partners alike of the hospital’s historic mission, which began as an effort to provide fresh air and a day of health to child labors. Its mission is to serve lives through its staff and in outreach efforts, like the one under way with The University of Scranton, which hope to touch today’s future educators and link them to community service.

Through events such as the Healthy Kids Cruise, the hospital seeks to strengthen its relationship with the University and provide valuable internships for University students seeking careers in service to others. The hospital’s President and General Counsel Sean T. Granahan, Esq., is a 1987 University graduate and a member of the Panuska College of Professional Studies Board of Visitors.

Students from The University of Scranton help the children create their own personalized sun visor.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4bB6pKnH-I

YouTube footage of the September 20, 2008 Healthy Kids Cruise can be found at:

The Edward R. Leahey, Jr. Endowment was founded in 1995 by Edward and Patricia Leahey to honor the life and memory of their son, Edward R. Leahey, Jr., whose personal disabilities were attended to with compassion and skill by many health professionals over the course of his life. The Leahey Endowment provides financial resources to support theoretical and applied research, faculty development, and support for programs that advance the cause of disabled persons who need long-term assistance. The endowment supports the work of persons practicing in physical and occupational therapy, nursing science and related health-care areas, with particular interest in individuals and groups that approach their practice as scholars, teachers and practitioners.

Primary recipients are University of Scranton faculty from the Panuska College of Professional Studies, consisting of the Departments of Counseling and Human Services, Education, Exercise Science and Sport, Health Administration and Human Resources, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy.

Each fall the Endowment publishes a Call for Proposals to identify candidates for next year’s grant awards. Awards are granted in May for the following year. The selection committee is comprised of members of the University’s allied health faculty and the dean of the Panuska College of Professional Studies.

The Endowment was established and is supported, in part, by the Leahey family and is enriched annually by gifts from corporations and individuals who wish to support the work of the Edward R. Leahey, Jr. Endowment.

I write this in late October and I am already nearly one month behind the Dean’s prescribed deadline of October 1 to get this piece on “Giving” into the December issue. But I am glad I procrastinated because it gave me the opportunity to observe the epochal changes that have taken place during the past two months in the world’s financial markets. These generational events have taken business news out of section D in our newspapers and put it firmly on the front page above the fold. We have seen the world’s equity, currency and credit markets vacillate freeze, plunge, rebound only to plunge again, freeze again and move intraday with such dizzying velocity in different directions that both sages and seers have abandoned predictions to the talking heads of CNBC. As the saying goes, “Those who know aren’t talking, and those who are talking don’t know.”

Times like these — and thankfully they are rare — provide some of the only occasions when friends talk to one another about their investments. In ordinary times, for many, personal investments are held closer than a secret of the heart. For others, such discussions are deemed too declassé. But in the past two months, I’ve never had so many people talk to me about investment-related matters. Maybe such discussions are examples of “misery loves company,” or maybe of the belief that there is somehow strength in numbers, or perhaps it is just the recognition that “I am not alone” makes one feel a little bit better. Whatever, I hear the stories every day that this friend is 40 percent down, this one 30, and the occasional very brilliant one, only 10 percent down. But, to paraphrase the worn out political mantra, very few of us are better off than we were three or four months ago.

Just this week I was reading a book about Wall Street. That’s the place that used to be home to our nation’s great investment banks, before most of them declared bankruptcy, were taken over, or became commercial banks. The book, A Week in Wall Street, by One Who Knows, contains the following passage:

“…there is existing, at the present time, a demoralized condition of principle, feeling, and practice, pervading the country through-out, in regard to pecuniary transactions and engagements, deserving a severe castigation, will not be abridged by any one. The proper correction of public morals is public opinion; but so long as public opinion is indifferent to the innovations that have grown up, and so long as pecuniary credit, and the poise of honor, trust and profit, are so frequently accorded to the most successful in their negotiations or their intrigues, without regard to the principles, or practices, that have placed there them where they are — so long may we expect nothing but the increase of those mischiefs, of which so many now complain.”

Although the paragraph provides a pretty good description of today’s markets, the book was published in 1841 to describe the causes of Great Panic of 1837 and the bank failures and frozen credit markets that still lingered four years later, principally because the government refused to intervene in “private markets.” I guess the general point is that history repeats itself and, ultimately, markets, with the proper nudges, are resilient.

So, friends who are down 40 percent or 20 percent, hopefully — and predictably, if history is a guide — will see things improve over time. We will sacrifice here, trim there, work a little longer, take a different type of vacation, shelf a favorite hobby for a while, ultimately, markets, with the proper nudges, will improve.

My greater concern, however, is for those whose economic scoreboards always show that they are down 100 percent, or even 120 percent, and more. They are what we delicately refer to as the “under-served,” the working poor, the disabled, the homeless. Their market concerns are not of the world financial type, but rather of the price of ground beef and cereal at the corner store. They are the people that the Edward R. Leahey, Jr. Endowment and Free Clinic for the Uninsured exist to serve. Most of us recently have seen our nest eggs diminish, but thanks to our health insurance and other resources, we can still get medical care and prescriptions for our families. That is not the case for those served by the Clinic. The primary medical care, prescriptions, therapy and counseling the Clinic and the Leahey Community Health and Family Center provide are a key source of wholesomeness for our communities.

Those of you who know me understand that “pollyanna-ish” would never be an adjective that anyone would use to describe me. I am not so giddy as to believe that we are going to solve all of the world’s health-care problems with one small clinic in Scranton. Pennsylvania when our town does become the center of the political universe every four years. Charles Dickens wrote his essay on “houselessness” in the 1860’s and it is a condition that is decisively still among us, just as I’m sure that we will be talking about the prospect of “universal healthcare” decades from now. But neither can we permit the ubiquity of deprivation to paralyze our capacity to help our neediest residents and raise their spirits.

Dickens also wrote — often — of this Christmas Carol as “a time of all, others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices.” This year, it also provides us with a Call for Proposals to identify candidates for next year’s grant awards. Awards are granted in May for the following year. The selection committee is comprised of members of the University’s allied health faculty and the dean of the Panuska College of Professional Studies.

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Veterans’ Issues Explored at Conference

Approximately 180 people attended the University’s 7th Annual Northeastern U.S. Conference on disABILITY. “Veterans, Vocations and Values: Rehabilitation Rallies for Results” was the theme of the conference, held Oct. 8th and 9th in the Patrick & Margaret DeNaples Center on campus.

In his opening remarks at the Conference, University President Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., noted how St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, would be proud of the work of those who seek to develop programs and services for persons with disabilities, particularly those who have served our country.

“Ignatius would applaud the work that you do today. Ignatius would applaud the mobilization of resources to get things done,” said Fr. Pilarz.

Patricia Leahy and her husband, Edward R. Leahy ’68, served as Honorary Co-Chairs of the conference. They recognized the significant contributions of veterans. “Our veterans have served our country and we want to recognize you for your sacrifice and your service,” Mrs. Leahy said.

The conference included presentations by four keynote speakers, including Richard Pimentel, a Vietnam War veteran whose life story is captured in the movie Music Within. Pimentel recalled a quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes that had a lasting impact on his life. “Most people go to their graves with their music still inside them,” Pimentel said. “There’s music inside all of us.” Some, said Pimentel, find their music; others find the instrument to play that music; still others discover the venue or the audience. “But we will not go to our graves with our music inside of us,” said Pimentel, who is a nationally renowned expert on disability management, job recruitment, job retention and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The conference also included keynote addresses by David S. MacPherson, M.D., MPH, chief medical officer, VISN 4; Juan J. DeRojas, M.D., a veteran of the War Against Terror and the Gulf War, and a board-certified general surgeon with an extensive military record; and Ryan Kules, retired U.S. Army Captain and program manager for the Wounded Warrior Project.

Two awards were presented at the Conference luncheon. Hon. David Wenzel ’69, Vietnam War veteran and former Mayor of Scranton, received the Leahy Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation Leadership, and Josie Cordaro, who has written and delivered a poem every year at the University’s Disability Conference, received a Leahy Award for Excellence in Community Service. The Leahy Awards are given annually to individuals who exemplify excellence in leadership and advocacy for persons with disabilities.

A Welcome Home Town Meeting, open to the public free of charge, was held on Oct. 8th and included a panel discussion moderated by Ralph Pacinelli, D.Ed., CRC, LPC, retired regional commissioner for the United States Department of Education and a Leahy Faculty Fellow at the University. CVS/pharmacy was a diamond sponsor of the Conference. Additional sponsors were The Office of Equity and Diversity of The University of Scranton, Andrew Brown’s Drug Store, Inc., Lockheed Martin, American Homecare Supply, Inc., Advanced Imaging Specialists, Old Forge Bank, LandMark Healthcare Strategies, Wilkes-Barre Imaging Center and the Center for Professional Training and Development of The University of Scranton.
Leahy Community Health and Family Center: Operations Update

By: Julia Macedo, VISTA Volunteer

The Leahy Community Health and Family Center’s Clinic reaching its first year of operation, this is an exciting time to reflect upon how much the entire center has expanded. The center continues to touch the lives of the underserved in Lackawanna County and, as it grows, its crucial programs help more and more people in a variety of ways. New programs are beginning while existing programs grow. A successful walk-in clinic, behavioral therapy, physical therapy services and nutritional counseling continue to make the community stronger and healthier. Additionally, the Peacemakers program, facilitated by Sister Ann Perrin and Professor Gerianne Barber, completed a successful session in the fall semester. Another session is scheduled for the spring due to the overwhelming interest from the community.

New programs have been developed in response to community needs. The Leahy Center staff, Andrea Mantione, Director, and Sister Ann Perrin and Professor Gerianne Barber, continue to make the community stronger and healthier through their efforts. The Leahy Center staff, Andrea Mantione, Director, and Sister Ann Perrin and Professor Gerianne Barber, continue to make the community stronger and healthier through their efforts.

September to facilitate the Freedom from Smoking class. In October, the first class began for staff and students, with free Nicotine Replacement Therapy, support for quitters and medical evaluation by a Mt. Sinai physician. The Leahy Center staff, Andrea Mantione, Director, and Sister Ann Perrin and Professor Gerianne Barber, continue to make the community stronger and healthier through their efforts.

Community clothes closet are always greatly appreciated. The Leahy Center staff, Andrea Mantione, Director, and Sister Ann Perrin and Professor Gerianne Barber, continue to make the community stronger and healthier through their efforts. The Leahy Center staff, Andrea Mantione, Director, and Sister Ann Perrin and Professor Gerianne Barber, continue to make the community stronger and healthier through their efforts.
The 2nd Annual “Blessing of the Books” Project
by Debra Pellegrino, Ed.D.

Fall 2008 marks the 2nd Annual Blessing of the Books Project hosted by the University’s Panuska College of Professional Studies. We are pleased to report that 1,780 children’s books were collected last fall during the project’s inaugural year. These books were delivered during the months that followed, and the recipients were many: children we met during international mission trips to Indonesia, Tibet, Guadalajara and Haiti; children who receive care through The Floating Hospital in New York City; children of South Dakota’s Native American Indian Reservation; and the children served in beautiful downtown Scranton. All of these books were provided to promote the joy of reading. Children need to see that everyone loves to read and that reading leads the way to becoming an educated member of society.

Last year, our students spent time “blessing the books” they donated by writing inside the book jacket why they wanted to share this book as one of their favorite books. For example, The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein had this “blessing” inside the front cover: “Love is the small things that we do for our neighbors. The book, The Giving Tree, always made me think about the 'little' things my nana did for me each day when I was growing up in Pennsylvania.”

The 2nd Annual Blessing of the Books Project will soon come to a close with University President Rev. Father Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., blessing the books on December 1, 2008, at 3:00 p.m. in McGurrin Hall. Donations of children’s literature will continue through the first week of December. Collection boxes are located in McGurrin Hall, the Weinberg Memorial Library, and the Exercise Science Department area of the Long Center. If you would like to personalize your gift, there are special labels available for that purpose. Questions or requests for labels may be directed to Margaret Henry, Student Coordinator for the project; her e-mail address is henrym6@scranton.edu.

www.scranton.edu/leahyendowment

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