

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Tracy Stewart, Ph.D.
Interim Provost/SVPAA

DATE: September 10, 2025

SUBJECT: Provost Report for September 12, 2025

1. ACADEMIC PLANNING PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2026

Ignatian Core Curriculum – support of implementation
AI- Divisional policies, processes, and training
Culture: Communication and Collaboration
Process and Policy review
Strategic planning – Institutional and Divisional
Academic Program review
Innovative Academic Programs (new and notably revised)

2. Strategic Planning – Institutional Level

Through the summer months, the members of the representative University Planning Committee (UPC) have continued their hard work in drafting our next strategic plan. Drawing from extensive campus input gathered over the past two academic years, examination of internal opportunities and external trends and challenges facing higher education, and insights from our strategic enrollment and other institutional strategy activities, the new plan will outline concrete goals and action steps to guide us in the years ahead. A draft of the plan will be shared with the University community in the coming weeks, and there will be opportunities for campus discussion and input as the draft is refined throughout the fall. The UPC will also develop timetables of work and measurable outcomes to help us maintain and monitor ongoing progress. The final draft plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees in early December and launch during the spring 2026 semester.

3. Middle States Accreditation

This fall, the University will begin its Middle States Commission on Higher Education self-study accreditation review. This collaborative effort, which occurs every eight years, will be stewarded by a representative steering committee. The committee will be led by co-chairs from the faculty and administration. Dr. Mike Jenkins, professor and Chair, Criminal Justice, Criminology, and Sociology, and Dr. Sarah Kenahan, Executive Director of The Slattery Center for Ignatian Humanities, have graciously agreed to serve in these important roles. Mike and Sarah will be guided through the process by Kate Yerkes, Assistant Provost, and our Middle States accreditation officer (ALO). Kate has served as our ALO since 2014 and is also an experienced Middle States peer reviewer. During the current academic year this leadership team will establish the project structure, build the steering committee, and develop our Design for Self-Study, a document that will outline the structure and milestones for the work ahead. In 2026-2027, the Steering Committee and a variety of working groups will conduct research and analysis to prepare our comprehensive self-study report, a document that will describe how, and how well,

we meet each of Middle States' accreditation standards. After the self-study report is submitted in fall 2027, we will look forward to hosting a team of peer review evaluators in spring 2028. Questions about the self- study process can be shared with Mike, Sarah, or Kate.

Please look for more information about self- study, and our strategic planning process, in the weeks and months ahead.

4. Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Faculty, staff, and students are reminded that all research involving human subjects must follow the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and procedures.

Anyone wishing to conduct human subjects research must submit an application to the IRB and obtain approval before any research activities begin. Visit www.scranton.edu/irb to view IRB policy, guidance, timelines, and other resources. For questions related to IRB activities, contact Dr. Andrew Venezia, IRB Committee Chair, or Kate Yerkes, Acting IRB Administrator, while Brooke Leonard, Director of the ORSP, is on leave.

5. DIVISION UPDATES

New Faculty

Join me in welcoming 14 new faculty: 9 Assistant Professors, 4 Faculty Specialists and 1 Visiting Assistant Professor. New faculty orientation sessions were scheduled for August 19th, 22nd and September 5th. In addition, 36 Faculty Specialist contracts were renewed.

Name	Rank	Department
Nathan Henceroth	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Swathi Ragulan	Assistant Professor	Counseling & Human Services
Marlon Toro-Alvarez	Assistant Professor	Criminal Justice, Cybersecurity & Sociology
Samantha Scott	Faculty Specialist	Theology/Religious Studies
Sangita Saha	Assistant Professor	History
Beatriz Fontoura	Assistant Professor	Chemistry
Sara Chan Yun Yu	Assistant Professor	Philosophy
Jacob Zoromski	Visiting Assistant Professor	Mathematics
Albert Turano	Faculty Specialist	Operations and Analytics
Megan Ossont	Assistant Professor	Nursing
Seyed Navid Shahrouzi	Assistant Professor	Physics and Engineering
Corey Posa	Faculty Specialist	Nursing
Hyun Kim	Assistant Professor	Health and Human Performance
Carissa Pupo	Faculty Specialist	Nursing

Rank and Tenure

The timeline for applications for rank or tenure was distributed the first week of the semester and is available on the Provost's website. The deadline for faculty members to inform the provost's office of intention to apply is September 22nd and dossiers are due

on October 22nd. A public meeting designed to inform faculty of the rank and tenure policies and procedures is scheduled for Thursday, September 11th.

Faculty Development

Interession Grants

A call for proposals for Interession 2026 Grant went out August 26th. The deadline for full-time faculty interested in submitting a proposal is September 30, 2025. Proposals can be sent electronically to provost@scranton.edu or by campus mail to the Provost Office.

Sabbaticals

Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Academic Yr	Inter/Summer
Anthony Betancourt	Michael Friedman	Joseph Kraus	Kate Cummings
Ovidiu Cocieru	Christos Pargianas	Cara Krieg	Ian O'Hara
Satyajit Ghosh	Paul Sampson	Janice Voltzow	
Emily Hopkins	Maria Squire	Joseph Wilson	

Fulbright Scholars

We have four Fulbright foreign language teaching assistants taking courses and teaching their native languages:

- Marion Rousseau (France)
- Mohamed Saleh (Egypt)
- Eva Grohs (Germany)
- Agustina Santivanez (Argentina)

Additionally, we are pleased to have two Visiting Instructors:

- Chih-Yi Wu (Taiwan)
- Kazumasa Fujita (Japan)

Graduate Academic Student Services

Orientation

A virtual orientation was held for new online graduate students prior to the start of the fall 2025 semester which covered student services available to online students. There were 19 students in attendance.

An on-campus orientation was held for new on-campus graduate students which included details about services offered to our graduate students. There were 52 graduate students in attendance, with 12 presenters and 4 administrators.

Graduate Assistants

Currently there are 58 graduate assistants who have been *rehired* for either one or both semesters (depending on program) for the 2025-2026 academic year. We have hired 72 new graduate assistant for the academic year. Stipends range from \$1,100 to \$4,400 per semester with a tuition remission range of 20% to 80%. All have gone through orientation as well as Title IX training.

Applications for the 2026-2027 academic year will open in November.

Global Affairs

We have a total of 288 students and scholars enrolled in Optional Practical Training. We have 112 students and scholars enrolled in Fall 2025 including the 16 new students and scholars.

Students actively enrolled are from:

Afghanistan (2)	El Salvador (2)	Pakistan (2)
Argentina (1)	France (1)	Philippines (3)
Bangladesh (1)	Germany (1)	Saudi Arabia (9)
Canada (1)	India (81)	South Korea (1)
Dominican	Ireland (3)	Ukraine (1)
Republic (2)	Mexico (1)	Venezuela (1)
Egypt (1)	Nepal (1)	

Visiting Scholars/Professors:

Taiwan (1)
Japan (1)

Currently 176 are participating in Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) or STEM OPT extension.

- 110 Regular OPT (12 month)
 - 106 Approved
 - 4 Pending
- 63 STEM Extension OPT (24 months)
 - 24 Approved
 - 40 Pending

The Department of State's decision to pause all new visa appointments worldwide for a few weeks in May/June, while implementing a more intensive social media vetting process, created greater difficulty for students to secure visa appointments over the summer. The implementation of this policy continues to increase consulate backlog for visa issuance.

The administration in Washington, DC have now proposed a new rule to replace Duration of Status. This proposal is presently in the public commentary phase.

From NAFSA: "*In a nutshell*: DHS acknowledges the proposed rule will impose significant new costs, training needs, and advising challenges, estimating \$93.3 million in first-year institutional compliance costs alone. Institutions may also see enrollment declines if students view U.S. study as less flexible and more burdensome."
<https://www.nafsa.org/regulatory-information/trump-vance-administration-proposal-replace-duration-status>.

Center for Teaching Excellence

Mary Jane Murphy-Bowne was hired as our new Manager for the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). She will use her skills and past experiences to assist the faculty with instructional design and redesign and also provide workshops to enhance current courses.

A temporary hire, Cuong Nguyen, began in CTE as a Learning Management Specialist. He has been working with faculty and staff to troubleshoot Brightspace issues. He is currently working on ways in which we can streamline some of the current processes we have in CTE.

The Teaching Enhancement Grant application information will be sent to faculty mid-September with applications due mid-October. Grants are available for up to \$1,800 per applicant.

Office of Student Support and Success

Disability Services:

- We have received 120 requests for *academic* accommodation (around 13% of incoming first year students).
- Mr. Matt Smith along with Ms. Rivera and Dean Aulisio are looking for a new and permanent Neurodiverse space (The HUB) for students to decompress, quiet study space, eat, socialize and use for 2x/month neurodiverse Game Night.
- Five (5) Graduate Assistants are supporting our students registered for accommodations with their transition to college through priority academic coaching.

Tutoring:

- Tutoring services went 'live' Tuesday, September 3, 2025. To date 60+ tutors have been hired to tutor over 125 subjects.
- OSSS introduced the College Reading and Learning Association's International Tutor Training Program in the 2024-25 academic year, with 61 tutors and 13 writing center consultants achieving their certificates.
- Fourteen (14) Writing Center Consultants, new and returning, have been hired.

6. College and Library Updates

College of Arts and Science

- To ensure sufficient attention happens in support of both curriculum and assessment, the CASCAC will be broken into separate committees for curriculum and assessment. The Curriculum Committee expects to be incredibly busy as departments submit proposals in light of the roll out of the new GE. Calls are forthcoming to populate the assessment committee. Program reviews and impact reports under revised guidelines will be occurring in a variety of programs in the next year and a half to ensure all CAS programs have been reviewed within the named cycle.
- Zero-based budgeting is underway in CAS this fall with staff to be updated about specifics on 9/9, and department chairs briefed about this in recent meetings.

- CAS Dean's Office has reconfigured the composition of specific staff meetings to ensure greater attention to the fiscal health of CAS as well as to advance in issues related to student retention and advising.
- We discovered in the spring 2025 that course fees for students have remained static at the university since the late 1990's. CAS Department chairs are in the process of reviewing and solidifying any adjusted or added course fees to reflect needs for lab supplies, software or other equipment usage that will be reviewed by the cabinet, and pending their approval brought to a vote by the Board of Trustees during the Spring with the possibility of implementation in Fall 2026.
- The Royal Studio received a new modular stage during the summer to replace the decades old one that was in disrepair.
- Weiss Hall was dedicated on 9/3/25 and now houses two CAS social science departments and the Education active learning classroom Special thanks to Dr. Mike Jenkins for his phenomenal work as Project Liaison.
- Dr. Chris Haw of the Theology/Religious Studies department will receive the 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award from SCI Waymart on 9/10/25. Dr. Haw also received a PA CHEP (Pennsylvania Consortium for Higher Education in Prisons) grant for the Prison Education Program at Dallas SCI for \$21,932.
- Congratulations to faculty who have been awarded the following grants:
 - NASA: *Expanding Undergraduate Space Research at the University of Scranton*, Joe Klobusicky. Subaward through Penn State for \$31,956.
 - NSF Convergence Accelerator Track M: *All-Terrain Self-Assembling Robotic Conveyor System Inspired by Slime Mold Behaviors and Ant Assemblages*, Jason Graham. Subaward through NJIT for \$193,198.
 - NetVUE: *Ignation Core Capstone Workshop*. Teresa Grettano and Will Cohen. \$19,840.
- This summer, the Office of Health Professions became fully staffed with the addition of Dr. Nicole Ferentino as its Director.
- On July 14th, Dr. Dan Marenda began as the new CAS Associate Dean. After a successful career at Drexel University where he served as Department Head and Associate Dean of Research for CAS, he spent the last five years as a program director at the NSF. We are delighted to have him in the office and within CAS.
- Across three application cycles of 24-25, CAS issued 65 awards for a total amount of \$22,170 to undergraduate students across the full spectrum of CAS for their research supplies and/or conference travel.
- The NEH Black Studies grant concluded in Spring 2025 with the creation of a black studies classroom and window box adjacent to the classroom on St. Thomas Hall. We appreciate Dr. Melissa Anyiwo's work as PI of this grant.
- After the retirement of the department administrative assistant in World Language and Cultures, Rebecca Serafin (department administrative assistant for Education) will now also support the WLC department.

The Leahy College of Health Sciences

- The LCHS Dean's Office will provide \$200/event to facilitate community building and fellowship within LCHS faculty and staff. Events must be designed

to engage LCHS faculty and staff across the college. We encourage every department to sponsor at least one college-wide event.

- LCHS will be working through zero-based budgeting, which is a budgeting technique that allocates funding based on efficiency and necessity rather than budget history. The University will be transitioning to zero-based budgeting throughout this academic year, with LCHS the first unit in academic affairs to make the transition.
- LCHS will be submitting a proposal to the Finance Office for changes/updates to LCHS course fees/program fees
 - This initiative goes hand in hand with zero-based budgeting. We need to make sure that our programs are able to purchase the supplies and technology needed to ensure that our students are successful in the competency-based disciplines in the health sciences. We also need to be able to compete successfully for students in the healthcare education marketplace.
 - Fee proposals will focus on 1) consumable supplies; 2) clinical software that is licensed and purchased at the individual student level; and 3) medical equipment and uniforms that are purchased for/by each individual student.
 - Our goal is to get a draft of the proposal to Provost Stewart by October 31, 2025, followed by submission of the final proposal to the CFO
- LCHS will investigate potential new programs *that will attract additional undergraduate or graduate students* to the university
 - We will look to build on our current faculty expertise and departmental capacity. The focus will be on degree programs, as opposed to minors, concentrations and specializations.
- We will be working with Richard Walsh in the Provost's Office and with Enrollment Management to pull together preliminary market analyses for the programs our faculty are interested in exploring.

The Kania School of Management

- AACSB Accreditation visit this November.
- KSOM will begin to survey all the graduates of our Master's programs based on the learning goals of their program. We will also added additional questions on what they liked and did not like about the program etc.
- KSOM will reexamine our MBA learning goals.
- KSOM will reexamine our undergraduate learning goals.
- KSOM will examine our business core with respect to the changes in the new Undergraduate core curriculum.

The Weinberg Memorial Library

- ***Early Printed Book donated*** - University benefactor Edward R. Leahy '68 donated a copy of the edition princeps of *De Dignitate Sacerdotii* (Dialogue on the Dignity of the Priesthood) by St. Johannes Chrysostomus, Archbishop of Constantinople and Church Father. This volume, printed circa 1470, is the earliest printed book in our collection. This incunabulum is not only very rare, but it is

also printed by Ulrich Zell, the first printer in Cologne. Zell is a direct inheritor of Johann Gutenberg's training as Zell learned printing from Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer who had worked with Gutenberg. As such, this gift embodies the origins of print culture and the enduring legacy of scholarly thought, which has been a significant focus of the McHugh Family Special Collections. Its presence on our campus enriches our rare book collection and serves as a source of inspiration and discovery for students and scholars alike. The book will be displayed in the fall Heritage Room exhibit of medieval manuscripts and books.

- ***From Manuscript to Print: Medieval Manuscripts and Books in Weinberg Library*** - The Heritage Room will feature an exhibit of the medieval material in Special Collections. The Library has long held a collection of three complete manuscripts and seven books printed before 1500, traditionally called incunables from the Latin loosely translated as books from the cradle of printing. During the past 25 years, Special Collections has added a few dozen manuscript leaves and fragments as well as facsimiles of medieval manuscripts. This exhibit will showcase the oldest and rarest material owned by the Library. The exhibit will run through December 12. Please contact Special Collections Librarian, Prof. Michael Knies at Michael.Knies@Scranton.edu or (570) 941-6341 for more information.
- ***Paul Kanjorski Congressional Paper Collections*** - Weinberg Library recently acquired the congressional papers of Paul Kanjorski. Kanjorski, who was born in 1937 in Nanticoke, served as Representative for Pennsylvania's 11th congressional district from 1985 until 2011 as a Democrat. His major committee assignments included the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The collection includes approximately 180 boxes of material and is currently being processed. There will be an announcement when the Kanjorski Collection is open to researchers.
- ***Lloyd M. Kelchner Penmanship Collection*** - Weinberg Memorial Library's American penmanship and pen art collections have increased due to the donation of the Lloyd M. Kelchner Penmanship Collection from his granddaughter, Marie Hurbut. Kelchner (1862-1948) was an early associate of Charles Paxton Zaner, whose Zaner-Bloser Penmanship Collection forms the core of our handwriting collections. The Kelchner Collection features penmanship samples and many examples of artistic pen flourishing.
- ***Books & Brews Fundraiser*** - The Friends of the Weinberg Memorial Library are planning to host a fundraiser event, our 2nd annual Books and Brews, at Maiolatesi Winery, tentatively scheduled for October 23rd. Tickets will go on sale once the date is confirmed.
- ***Electronic Resources Subcommittee*** - The Library Advisory Committee will launch its Electronic Resources Subcommittee so that faculty can help review existing Electronic Resources (Databases, E-journals, etc.) and provide feedback to the Dean of the Library to help make informed decisions about renewals, cancellations, and reallocations.
- ***"Advancing the Mission" Online Exhibit*** - Featuring photographs, architectural drawings, maps, newspaper articles, and historical records from the University Archives, the exhibit explores how campus planning and construction have transformed the University and contributed to the advancement of its mission. The

exhibit is available here:

<https://digitalprojects.scranton.edu/s/advancingthemission/page/home>

- **New Electronic Resources** - The Library has secured access to HeinOnline, a comprehensive database that offers access to a rich collection of journals, government documents, and primary sources across disciplines such as history, political science, criminal justice, and more. It also includes **Fastcase Premium**, a powerful legal research tool that enables quick and intuitive searching of federal and state case law. Also, Dynamic Health: CDS and Skills, a resource tailored for nurses and other health professionals, this evidence-based resource provides training materials, patient education handouts, lab and test demonstrations, and skill-building exercises. Developed by the same expert team behind the CINAHL database, **Dynamic Health** is a valuable resource for students and faculty in the health sciences.
- **Open Access Publishing Agreements** - The Library has several read and publish agreements with various publishers that provide complimentary Open Access publishing rights to University of Scranton faculty. The agreements are currently with Cambridge University Press, American Chemical Society, Springer Nature, and the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). For more information visit: <https://guides.library.scranton.edu/OApublishing>
- **AI Institute Team**- A team of 9 faculty (Patrick Beldio, Deb Budash, Kate Cummings, Krisy Elrod, Jason Graham, Andrew LaZella, Jinqing Liu, Rich O'Hara, and Cyrus Olsen), along with Dean Aulisio, will attend a year-long institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum hosted by AAC&U. The team will be working on several AI-related deliverables for the campus community.
- The Schemel Forum Fall Brochure has been released. All programs this semester are free for University of Scranton students, staff, and faculty. The brochure is available at www.scranton.edu/schemelforum. Attendees are asked to register in advance and can do so from the website.
- The Schemel Forum will be launching an Advisory Board consisting of faculty, staff, and community members to help guide the Forum's work and planning. If you are interested in serving, please contact George Aulisio (george.aulisio@scranton.edu). The Advisory Board seeks faculty representation through the Senate.
- The Hope Horn Art Gallery has released its AY25–26 schedule, titled Vocation & Formation. Upcoming exhibits include:
 - Sampler: Fabric Installations by Kay Healy — September 2–October 10
 - The Anthracite Coal Industry of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1829–1959 — October 20–December 12
 - The Anthracite Coal Industry of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1933–1946 — February 2–March 13
 - Art Educators Make Art: PAEA Northeast Juried Exhibition — April 7–May 8
- The IDEA Center, directed by Tom Bryan, offers equipment including 3D printers, vinyl printers and cutters, a vinyl press, and laser engravers. It also features a high-end podcast room. Faculty and students interested in projects may contact Tom at thomas.bryan@scranton.edu or 570-941-4338.

- The IDEA Center will also launch an Advisory Board with faculty, staff, student, and community participation. If you are interested in serving, please contact George Aulisio (george.aulisio@scranton.edu). Faculty representation through the Senate is sought.