TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: WeiDong Zhu, Ph.D.
Provost/SVPAA

DATE: September 16, 2026

SUBJECT: Provost Report for September 18, 2026

1. Academic Planning Priorities for 2026-2027

Strategic planning – Institutional and Divisional Plan implementation and quarterly status check.
Academic Program Innovation – create pathways for academic innovation, provide pre-proposal program readiness evaluation; encourage new and notably revised undergraduate, graduate programs, and non-degree offerings (including certificate programs and non-credit baring training programs).
Program Vitality Review – launch comprehensive vitality review of existing undergraduate and graduate programs with expanded academic data analysis.
Process and Policy review – Comprehensive audit of academic policies and streamlined curricular review.
Artificial Intelligence – Encourage divisional policies and processes, and provide a university-wide training for faculty, staff and administrators; Explore and implement an ethical and responsible use of AI training for all the students. Built a multi-layered AI Strategy for the University of Scranton, including clear communication to the outside world about Scranton's position on AI.
Communication and Collaboration – Improve communication within the division of academic affairs and cross-division collaboration, and information sharing.
Ignatian Core Curriculum (ICC) – support of implementation of GE to ICC transition, and the assessment of GE and ICC, and the maintenance of new/revised attributes within GE/ICC. Refine the governance structures, and student transition resources for the ICC.
Inter-Institutional Relationship – Better organize/maintain inter-institutional collaborations (MOUs) and explore alternative revenue generating opportunities.

2. Strategic Planning

Following the launch of our 2030 Strategic Plan,, work has been underway across divisions and departments to further outline implementation priorities and steps to address the plan's goals and objectives, including the development of a plan for the division of Academic Affairs, and plans for each of the three Colleges and the Weinberg Memorial Library. We appreciate the work done by academic departments during the spring 2026 Annual Planning and Reporting cycle to examine how their own work will align with and support the strategic plan and other goal within their college, department, and discipline. Similar work is underway across administrative units. This year, the University Planning Committee will pursue additional implementation strategies and navigate assessment and progress monitoring milestones.

The MSCHE Self-Study will give particular attention to our strategic plan, notably examining connections between mission and goals (Standard 1), and the mechanics of our integrated planning process and its intersections with resource development and other activities (Standard 6). And, during the development of the Self-Study design, each standards-based working group developed a unique line of inquiry to examine an aspect of our mission and/or strategic plan that relates directly to their standard for additional analysis. The self-study process will be a valuable opportunity to meaningfully explore the progress and impact of planning across the University.

3. Middle States Accreditation: Self-Study

Since the end of the Spring semester, the Middle States Self-Study team has received word that the Study Design,, which outlines our approach to the self-study process, has been approved by MSCHE, and has finalized membership of its Steering Committee. The Committee consists of one faculty member and one staff/administrator for each of the seven MSCHE standards. These teams of two lead a Working Group comprised of 6-8 additional members of the University community, including one student for each standard.

Working Groups worked throughout the spring and early summer to develop the unique lines of inquiry for their standards and began planning for their various evidence gathering needs. That work culminated in a daylong August meeting in which members of the Steering Committee and Working Groups dug into expectations and advice for the work of this academic year, heard from Dr. Dan Cosacchi about the Mission Priority Examen and The Beloved Community plan, and reflected on their hopes for how they and the university could benefit from this process.

During this year, we will undertake research, inquiry, and analysis to gather evidence and exemplars detailing how we meet MSCHE standards. Working Groups will submit evidence-based summary reports by the end of this academic year. There will be many options for input and feedback, beginning with faculty, staff, and student fora planned for October. Members of the University community may send comments or questions about this process to study co-chairs Dr. Michael Jenkins and Dr. Sarah Kenehan. More information available at www.scranton.edu/selfstudy.

4. Educational Assessment

The Office of Educational Assessment team has been working with the various dean's offices to gather and review program assessment reporting gathered during the 2025-2026 academic year, and for general education. The OEA hosted an August Assessment Summit meeting that included the members of the Educational Assessment Advisory Committee and the Deans to review 2025-2026 assessment activities, and outline priorities for the year ahead. These include further supporting academic departments in program assessment and reporting, affirming program learning outcomes for all degree-granting programs, and identifying assessment exemplars and artifacts for our MCHE self-study; updating and collating other key documentation needed for the self-study; reviewing spring 2026 SWOT self-assessment of our assessment structures and processes; and identifying foundational assessment goals to inform the development of a

new assessment plan for the ICC, among others. Workshops and other events are being planned to support faculty in assessment work throughout the academic year.

As we look ahead toward the new ICC, we are wrapping up the assessment work for the current GE and want to have a strong story to tell for our MSCHE study. In August, faculty teaching GE courses with CA, CF, CH, CI, CL, S, D, and P attributes were contacted by Dr. Maria Squire with an invitation to share assessment artifacts as part of our GE assessment work. This assessment should not feel burdensome; faculty should be able to take an assignment already given in class and use it (or part of it) to assess whether students are gaining mastery towards one of the attributes' learning outcomes. If you are teaching a course with one or more of these attributes, please consider taking part. Contact Dr. Squire for additional information.

5. Academic Policy Updates

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the following policies were approved by the Provost following the review and recommendation from the PCAPC and FSAPC:

- Grade Forgiveness Policy
- Dean's List Policy
- Academic Renewal Policy

All policies are posted to the Academic and Research Policy page of the Provost's website. During this academic year, the PCAPC will be prioritizing review, and if necessary, updates, to other academic policies that are needed for our MSCHE self-study. This includes the proposed Regular and Substantive Interaction in Distance Education Policy, Student Identify Verification for Distance Education Policy, and policies for transfer of credit, among others.

6. 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 Brooke Leonard, Director of the ORSP.

7. Division Updates

New Faculty

Join me in welcoming 20 new faculty: 12 Assistant Professors, 4 Faculty Specialists and 2 Lecturers, 2 Visiting Assistant Professor. New faculty orientation sessions were scheduled for August 24th and August 26th. In addition, 36 Faculty Specialist contracts were renewed.

Name	Rank	Department
Charles Kulick	Assistant Professor	Mathematics
Kaitlyn Clarke	Assistant Professor	Health & Human Performance

Juliana Kazemi	Assistant Professor	Philosophy
Greg Campbell	Assistant Professor	Physics & Engineering
Sarah Livick-Moses	Assistant Professor	Theology
Jonathan Thai	Assistant Professor	Chemistry
David Sannino	Assistant Professor	Biology
Yuzo Yanagitsuru	Assistant Professor	Biology
Margaret Maurer	Assistant Professor	English
Collin Brice	Assistant Professor	Health & Human Performance
Erica Getts	Assistant Professor	Library
Carla Enriquez	Assistant Professor	Physical Therapy
Madison Conway	Faculty Specialist	Communication & Media
Samantha Kelly	Faculty Specialist	Education
Jonathan Kadjeski	Faculty Specialist	English
Emma Boyle	Faculty Specialist	Accounting
Michele Boland	Instructor	Nursing
Corey Posa	Instructor	Nursing
Yiling Zhou	Visiting Assistant Professor	Philosophy
Katherine McLeod	Visiting Assistant Professor	History

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 Monday, September 14th.

Faculty Development

Intersession Grants

A call for proposals for Intersession 2027 Grant went out September 1st. The deadline for full-time faculty interested in submitting a proposal is October 2, 2026. Proposals can be sent electronically to provost@scranton.edu or by campus mail to the Provost Office.

Sabbaticals

Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Academic Yr
Melissa Anyiwo	Steven Dougherty	Michael Azar
Robert Giambatista	Vincent Farallo	Joe Klobusicky
Daniel Haggerty	Christoher Fremaux	Virginia Picchietti
Christopher Hauser	Nathaniel Frissell	Lori Walton
JoyAnna Hopper	Taewan Kim	Patricia Wright
Jakub Jasinski	John Norcross	Murong Xu
Maria Johnson	Patrick Tully	
Joshua Reynolds	Jill Warker	

Robert Smith		
Kevin Wilkerson		

Cura Personalis Award for Excellence in First-Year Seminar Instruction is a new an annual award recognizing a faculty member whose First-Year Seminar instruction engages students intellectually, morally, civically, and personally. Nominations are evaluated against the three published learning outcomes of the First-Year Seminar and may be submitted by a colleague, a department chair, the program coordinator, or the faculty member directly. Nominations are due January 28, and the recipient, who receives a $500 stipend, will be recognized at the Annual Faculty Appreciation event in May. The award is intended as a means of making visible the formative work already taking place in first-year classrooms, where many students first encounter what a Jesuit education asks of them.

Graduate Academic Student Services

Graduate Student Orientations

In August, two virtual Teams orientations were offered for online graduate students, with 16 students in attendance, along with one face-to-face orientation for on-campus students, with 27 students in attendance. Additional orientations were held for individual departments, including Physical Therapy and Speech-Language Pathology.

Graduate Assistant Deans Meeting June 2026

A meeting was held with the deans to discuss the graduate assistant process and potential changes to offers and agreements for the 2027–2028 academic year. IPEDS definitions were also reviewed, and agreement was reached regarding how graduate assistant positions will be reported.

Graduate Assistant Orientation

In collaboration with the Bursar, Compliance, Human Resources, Financial Aid, and other areas, all graduate assistants—both new hires and rehires—are required to complete an orientation. Students complete required payroll forms and compliance training during this process and may not begin working until all required paperwork has been completed.

Graduate Assistant Allocation & Prioritization Meeting July 2026

Ongoing discussions have focused on the hiring, processing, offers, onboarding, and agreements for graduate assistants. A meeting was held with faculty who supervise graduate assistants to gather feedback on the current model and potential changes.

Feedback was generally supportive of the University's current Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) model, with a strong recommendation that GTA positions, particularly those essential to instruction, be protected during budget planning. GTAs were described as reliable, highly invested in their responsibilities, and valuable mentors and role models who directly contribute to undergraduate and graduate student success. Biology and other STEM disciplines were specifically identified as areas where GTAs are particularly critical to instructional operations. It was suggested that graduate assistant criteria should be reviewed on a three-year cycle to ensure continued alignment with institutional priorities and academic needs rather than historical allocations.

Several faculty members also recommended via email that during periods of budget constraint, graduate teaching assistantships should receive priority over positions primarily supporting administrative, marketing, or faculty research activities, unless research assistantships are supported through external grant funding. Requests for administrative and research assistantships should undergo a needs assessment similar to the University's zero-based budgeting approach.

Allocation decisions should consider:

- Whether the position is essential to maintaining student recruitment, Enrollment or instructional capacity.
- Whether data demonstrate that tuition remission or the assistantship is influencing enrollment decisions.
- Whether eliminating the position would create a need to hire a full-time employee at a greater overall cost.
- Whether the position directly supports academic and instructional needs rather than administrative convenience.

Faculty also suggested exploring alternative forms of compensation, including reduced-cost or free campus housing and potential combinations of GTA and Resident Assistant responsibilities. With possible changes in undergraduate housing demand, available residence hall capacity could potentially serve as a recruitment and compensation incentive.

Peer comparisons were viewed as useful in evaluating the competitiveness of graduate assistant compensation. While some STEM programs nationally provide full tuition remission and higher stipends, comparisons with similar institutions indicate that Scranton's current compensation is more competitive than initially anticipated.

Overall, faculty sentiment supports maintaining the current GTA program and prioritizing teaching assistantships when resources are limited. Future allocation decisions should be transparent, data-driven, regularly reviewed, and based on demonstrated institutional and academic need rather than historical allocations.

Graduate assistant updated job descriptions have been requested using the template supplied. Many departments have submitted job descriptions; submissions from several remaining departments are still outstanding.

Future Funding and Program Structure

The group discussed potential changes to tuition remission, stipends, GTA/GA compensation, and program structure in response to budget pressures and recruitment needs.

- Faculty recommended:
- Exploring Flex dollars or meal benefits to support student needs.
- Collecting admissions data to assess the impact of assistantships on enrollment decisions.
- Considering disciplinary differences, particularly in STEM, when evaluating compensation.
- Maintaining assistantships that are essential to instructional laboratories.

- Using peer-benchmarking data to inform compensation and allocation decisions.

Faculty also expressed concern regarding the impact of previous reductions in graduate assistant allocations and emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate support for programs that rely heavily on graduate assistants.

Graduate Assistant Application Timeline

Faculty generally supported keeping applications open year-round, while maintaining a priority deadline and allowing late applications. An earlier opening—around November 1 for the following academic year—would support admissions, accommodate vacancies, and provide flexibility for programs with unique admission cycles. Faculty would like to continue the automated notifications when applications open.

The above feedback and recommendations have been shared with the deans for consideration. The revised Graduate Assistant Agreement for 2027-2028 is currently under review by General Counsel and will be shared with faculty at a future Graduate Program Council meeting.

Center for Teaching Excellence

Still on LSC 5th Floor

Although our colleagues from the OSSS, have a new home on the second floor of Alumni Memorial Hall, the CTE is still on the fifth floor of the Loyola Science Center. You will still find the TechCons in LSC 589, Mon – Wed, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, Thursday and Friday from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. They are also available for evening hours 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Mon – Thurs, and Saturdays from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm via the Teams meeting link. The fall schedule is posted here.

Welcome to Our New LMS Support Specialist

In late May, Tyler Wilson joined the CTE as our new Learning Management System Support Specialist. Tyler brings a strong background in systems support, learning technology, and process improvement, including experience managing learning platforms and supporting LMS migrations. He has already proved to be an invaluable team member, supporting platform administration, assisting with course tools, and troubleshooting and resolving technical issues as they arise.

CTE Ticket Submission

If you have a Brightspace problem, you can submit a support ticket directly to the CTE team. This is part of the Royal IT Support system, but now Brightspace tickets are filtered directly to the CTE if you submit them here.

Workshops and Professional Development

The CTE has participated in several professional development opportunities preparing for the 2026 – 2027 academic year.

- In June, we welcomed the new DPT cohort by providing Ed Tech Tips during their orientation.
- In July, we hosted a workshop on setting up the gradebook in Brightspace

for a team of consultant instructional designers helping with the new Counseling Rehab online program development.

- In August, we helped to welcome twenty new faculty members and provided a Brightspace Survival course.
- It was also our pleasure to be part of the orientation program for the new SLPcohort in August, when we provided an overview of Ed Tech available at the UofS.
- At the Counseling department's request, we provided a Brightspace workshop for their new adjuncts in late August.
- In September, we will be presenting at the LCHS Dean's Conference on AI detection, the tool available at the U of S, and the limitations and considerations for using this tool.

If your college or department has a specific need that we can support, please let us know. Send any requests to cte@scranton.edu.

Course Evaluation Tool

It has been a busy summer for the CTE, as we have worked with our Explorance Blue partners and the U of S Information Technology team to implement our new course evaluation system. Dr. Jerry Muir has provided vital support, to help us to make sure that the new tool is closely aligned to the way we have been doing course evaluations at the U of S. Keep an eye out for workshops that will help with the transition to the new system, and the Course Evaluation website should be updated soon. You can also view Blue Instructor Support Materials here.

Tech Fix Tuesdays

Tech Fix Tuesdays will resume on October 22, 12:15 – 1:00 pm. Join us for Tech Fix Tuesdays, a relaxed, open Teams Meeting session where we troubleshoot, tweak, and upgrade your digital teaching materials with accessibility in mind, or address your Teams or ed tech tool questions. Join us using this Teams link.

Faculty Spotlights

Over the summer, the CTE was delighted with the opportunity to interview more than a dozen faculty members nominated for our new faculty spotlights series. The goal of this series is to highlight faculty who are using creative, evidence-informed, or transformative approaches to teaching that enhance student learning and engagement. It was inspiring to see the unique approaches that faculty are using to make their teaching effective. Seeing what others are doing can help us in our own teaching. Look for the first spotlight coming soon on the Faculty Spotlight website.

Upcoming Workshops

The priority for our early Fall 2026 workshops will be focused on supporting faculty with the transition to the new course evaluation system.

If we stay on track to implement the new course evaluation system for Fall 2026, the first group to set objectives and opt in will be our faculty teaching the H1 and N1 sub-terms. To support that group, we will be holding open office hours as follows.

Tuesday, September 28 from 12:15 pm – 1:00 pm. Join with this link.
Tuesday, October 6 from 12:15 pm – 1:00 pm. Join with this link.

If those times do not work for you, do not hesitate to schedule another time either on Mary Jane's booking link or by emailing: cte@scranton.edu.

Look for additional workshops on the new course evaluation system or future topics by joining the CTE Community on Viva Engage. Other plans for workshops after the course evaluation system is underway include: *The Journey, Not the GenAI: Designing Process-Centric Writing with Microsoft Assignments* and *Creating Accessible Digital Content: A Self-Paced Tutorial.*

Office of Global Education

Summer 2026 Study Abroad

- Four faculty-led study abroad courses went abroad in Summer 2026. These included:
  - T/RS 396 Christ, Resistance and Reconciliation in Germany led by Dr. Michael Azar (8 students)
  - KNES 296 Sport and Physical Culture in Ancient Greece led by Dr. Joan Grossman and Dr. Andrew Venezia (15 students)
  - S/CJ 295: Global Crime, Justice & Security – Argentina led by Dr. Michael Jenkins and Dr. Sinchul Bach (6 students).
- Twenty-one students studied abroad in the summer term on partner university programs hosted in Ireland (9 students); Spain (4); Denmark (3); Italy (2); Japan (2); and South Korea (1).

Fall 2026 Study Abroad

- In the Fall 2026 semester, we have eight students studying abroad on semester programs. The students' host university sites include Madrid (5 students); Barcelona (1); Cork (1); and Prague (1).
- The Annual Study Abroad Fair will be held on September 15th. 10 host universities will visit campus to meet with students at the fair taking place in the LSC 1st floor area.

Intersession 2027 Study Abroad

Thus far, Faculty-Led Study Abroad (FLSA) courses planned in Intersession 2027 include:

- Brazil - HAD 595: South American Health Systems led by Dr. Steven Szydlowski
- Ireland - NURS 496 Healthcare Systems and Nursing Practice Abroad led by Dr. Michele Boland and Dr. Kelly Filchner
- Ireland - BLDR 384 (special topic): Global Leadership: Ireland led by Stephen Whittaker and Ashley Stampone

- Dominican Republic - OT 480: Level I, Clinical III- Physical Rehabilitation led by Dr. Chandra Nealon
- France - PS 384: Migration & Citizenship in Europe led by Dr. Nate Henceroth and Dr. Gretchen Van Dyke
- Belize - OT 380: Level I, Clinical I – Pediatrics led by Dr. Stephanie DeNaples and Dr. Laura Zagacki

Fulbright

- Two undergraduate students are planning to submit applications for the 2027-28 Fulbright Awards. One for Study/Research in Biochemistry in Ireland; and one for a Master's degree in Wild Animal Biology in the UK. The deadline for Fulbright applications is October 7, 2026.

International Student & Scholar Services
OPT
We have a total of 200 students and scholars enrolled in Optional Practical Training.

- 56 Regular OPT (Post-Completion OPT)
  - 43 Approved
  - 13 Pending
- 144 STEM Extension OPT
  - 66 Approved
  - 78 Pending

International Students and Scholars
This Fall, we welcomed 8 new international students and scholars, which include 3 new graduate students (Nepal, Pakistan, and India); 1 new undergraduate student (Saudi Arabia); 2 new exchange students (Taiwan); 2 new Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants (Mexico and France); and 1 new Chinese Language Instructor (Taiwan).

51 international students who were enrolled at Scranton previously have returned to campus and are continuing their studies this Fall. They are from: Afghanistan (2); Bangladesh (1); China (1); Dominican Republic (2); El Salvador (1); India (30); Ireland (2); Mexico (1); Pakistan (2); Philippines (1); and Saudi Arabia (8).

Changing Rules for International Students
The Department of Homeland Security has proposed regulations that will affect international students. Rules are scheduled to come into effect in mid-September.

- **Fixed stay limits:** Replacing D/S with a fixed admission period
- **Shorter grace period:** Reducing the post-graduation grace period from 60 days down to 30 days.
- **Academic restrictions:** Limiting changes of major or school transfers

8. College and Library Updates

College of Arts and Science

CAS Dean's office finalized their strategic plan that is in direct alignment with the academic affairs and university strategic plan in June 2026. We welcomed 14 new full-time faculty and 3 language TA's at the start of a new academic year. We also have 4 new department chairs this year. The half-time animal caretaker position was converted to a full-time position to meet demand of animal research within Biology this summer.

Impact Reports were completed for BMCB (Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology) and Catholic Studies as well as program reviews for Theology & Religious Studies, Math and Mathematical Studies, Political Science/Public Policy and Service, Philosophy, and English and Theatre during by spring 2026.

The Dean and Assistant Dean for Operations are concluding several weeks of meeting with all departments and programs to go over their budgets for 26-27 post the year-long zero-based budgeting and field any questions that emerge.

Construction on the Gaudenzi Family Humanities Center (3rd Floor STT adjacent to History Department) is now complete and includes lounge space, 2 seminar rooms, and a larger classroom that doubles as event space. Artwork featuring Espirit artwork over the years and other artwork from the university collection is also being finalized and will be installed in the coming weeks. A formal gathering will occur later in the fall.

On Friday, September 11th, CAS launched a mentoring program where 25 undergraduate students were matched with CAS alumni at our in-person gathering. They will connect monthly throughout the academic year with their mentor. We hope to expand this program in the coming year for more students.

Faculty searches are underway for History, Translational Biology and Neuroscience this year.

CAS Forum for all faculty and staff was held on 9/14 in the afternoon to share work completed from January to August 2026 in the Dean's Office, including a report out as to the May CAS Dean's Office survey themes and next steps, and CAS Dean's Office plans for this coming academic year.

Partnerships continue to be made for students' internships in Criminal Justice at the county and state level, and Chemistry has forged a partnership with Gentex to allow for shared instrumentation use between the company and the department. Physics and Engineering is exploring a partnership with the Proctor and Gamble plant in Mehoopany, PA for our undergraduate engineering majors. This fall the Computing Science Advisory Board will meet on October 24th and the Engineering Advisory Board will meet on November 6, 2026.

Continued work on the ICC roll out will occur this fall through the CAS Curriculum Committee. The deadline to submit for all GRIDs for ICC conversion for programs is Nov. 6th

The Assessment Committee for CAS (ACCAS) has done an initial review for PLO's for all programs and has done a deeper review on a handful of programs. They will continue to work on PLO assessment in partnership with the new PLO submission template that was included in the annual reports and will also begin exploring how they will expand the role of this committee to support assessment for faculty efforts outside of PLO review.

CAS Dean's Office is hosting the AJCU CAS Deans' Network meeting on campus October 8-10, 2026.

The Leahy College of Health Sciences

First graduates from Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program (OTD)

The first nine graduates from the newly accredited OTD program walked across the stage to be hooded at the graduate commencement ceremony on May 24, 2026. In addition to a robust clinical education, the OTD program prepares students for leadership positions including program development, research and teaching. As part of their doctoral work, all OTD students must complete an off-site, 14-week Capstone Experience that furthers professional knowledge in one or more of the following eight areas: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education and theory development. All capstone projects are archived in the Weinberg Memorial Library.

Expansion of Nursing Education and Simulation Center (NESC)

This summer, a new five-bed Nursing Simulation Laboratory was created in MGH 325 to support the learning needs of our growing number of undergraduate nursing students. The newly converted classroom provides a realistic hospital-room environment where students can develop and practice essential clinical skills through hands on lab and simulation experiences. The laboratory is equipped with hospital beds, functional headwalls with suctioning capability, oxygen and air flowmeters, and a new nursing simulation manikin purchased through a donation by the Baker family. This lab will provide sophomore, junior and senior students with opportunities to strengthen their assessment, communication, clinical judgment, and patient care skills in a safe and controlled setting. This expanded simulation space represents an important investment in nursing education and enhances our capacity to provide high quality, experiential learning opportunities for our students. We were also fortunate to have a new adult simulation manikin, Sim Nurse Anne, a tetherless newborn simulator, and a pediatric simulator installed this summer through funding awarded by a Lackawanna County government grant. These high-fidelity simulators are designed to mimic realistic patient responses, providing students with opportunities for repeated practice in a safe and controlled environment. Through hands-on simulation experiences, students can build confidence and proficiency in essential nursing skills while developing critical thinking, problem solving, and clinical judgment abilities. These experiences will further enhance students' confidence and self-efficacy as they prepare to provide safe, effective, and patient centered care.

Medical Director Transition in the Edward R. Leahy Jr. Clinic for the Uninsured
The University of Scranton staff, faculty and administration are collaborating with Dean of the Geisinger College of Health Sciences, Dr. Julie Byerley, in the search to hire a new Medical Director for the Leahy Clinic. We want to thank Dr. Susan Russell, who has been the Medical Director in the Leahy Clinic since its reopening in partnership with Geisinger in 2022, for her significant contributions in getting the clinic up and running again after its closure during the Covid-19 pandemic.

25th Annual Conference on Disability
LCHS will be hosting the 25th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON DISABILITY on October 7th, 2026, in the DeNaples Center Ballroom. The title of this year's conference is *25 Years of Progress: Honoring the Legacy of Edward R. Leahy, Jr., Disability Inclusion and Careers, Transforming Barriers into Opportunities.* For this special anniversary year, we have invited back some of our most popular speakers from previous years to give us an update on their advocacy work for people with disabilities. Conference registration is free. For more information on speakers and sessions, visit Scranton.edu/disabilityconference.

The Council for Standards in Human Service Education Site Visit 9/23-9/25
The undergraduate Counseling and Human Services program is undergoing re-accreditation this year. The self-study was submitted in summer 2026, and the site visit team will be on campus 9/23-9/25.

The Weinberg Memorial Library

Library Services Desk Renovation: The renovated Library Services Desk is now operational and was available for the beginning of the fall semester. The new consolidated service model brings key public-facing Library services together at a single location and represents a significant improvement to the Library's first-floor user experience. Some finishing work remains, including permanent flooring that is scheduled to be installed during the December break. A dedication ceremony will be planned for the Spring 2027 semester.

Ignatian Core Digital Literacies Workshop: Seventeen faculty members participated in the Ignatian Core Digital Literacies Workshop. Librarians Donna Witek, Kate Cummings, Sylvia Orner, Ian O'Hara, and Sheli Pratt-McHugh helped plan and present the workshop in collaboration with the Ethics Across the Curriculum initiative. The program supported faculty as they consider the role of digital and information literacies within the new Ignatian Core.

Heritage Room Exhibition: The Library's fall exhibition in the Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room will be *From Hand Crafted to Industrial: Book Production in the 19th Century*. The exhibition examines the transition from handmade book production to increasingly industrial methods of printing and publishing during the nineteenth century.

Digital Collections: The Library continues its transition to TIND as the University's new digital collections platform, replacing ContentDM. The project will provide a modern

environment for preserving and providing access to digitized University, archival, and special collections materials.

Library Faculty Roles: Several Library faculty responsibilities and functional titles have been updated to better reflect emerging areas of specialization, including artificial intelligence, communications and outreach, STEM, and connections between the Library and IDEA Center. See here for updated titles: https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/directory/faculty.shtml

Library Advisory Committee: The Library Advisory Committee meets twice each semester to provide input and feedback regarding Library programs, services, resources, and activities. The Committee's meeting minutes and supporting documents are publicly available through the Library website. The Committee's 2026–27 meeting dates will be September 29 and November 24 from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm in WML 305. Previous meeting minutes are available at: https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/libadcomm/libadvminutes.shtml

Electronic Resources Assessment Subcommittee of the LAC: The Library continues to use the Electronic Resources Assessment Subcommittee of the Library Advisory Committee to provide an interdisciplinary faculty review of recurring electronic-resource expenditures. The subcommittee reviews usage, cost, curricular relevance, and other available evidence, including faculty survey feedback, before forwarding recommendations to the Dean of the Library.

- The Dean's decisions in response to the Fall 2025 ERA Subcommittee recommendations have been published for the University community. The decisions, recommendations, supporting reports, and other Library Advisory Committee materials may be reviewed at: https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/libadcomm/libadvdocs.shtml
- The Dean's March 4, 2026, decision memorandum is available directly at: https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/libadcomm/docs/4march2026-dean-of-the-library-decisions-regarding-erm-recommendations.pdf

Hope Horn Gallery

The Hope Horn Gallery has opened its 2026–27 exhibition season—Interior Freedom—with **"Joy in the Process: Selections from a Regional Collection,"** on view from **September 8 through October 9**. The exhibition highlights artists who have helped shape the arts community of Northeastern Pennsylvania and features works by John Willard Raught, Graydon Mayer, Hope Cumming Horn, Predrag Djordjevic, Louis Pontone, Cliff Prokop, William Tersteeg, Karl Neuroth, and others. A curator's lecture took place on September 11 in Brennan Hall.

The Gallery's second fall exhibition, **"Peter Hoffer: Reflections. Five Decades of Art,"** will run **October 19 through November 20**. Hoffer, professor emeritus at Marywood University, has worked as an artist and educator for more than five decades. The exhibition will feature paintings, watercolors, drawings, prints, and collages, with an

artist's lecture and reception scheduled for October 23. All Hope Horn Gallery exhibitions, lectures, and receptions are free and open to the public.

Schemel Forum

The Schemel Forum has begun its Fall 2026 season. All current University of Scranton students, faculty, and staff may register for Schemel Forum programs here: https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/schemel/index.shtml.

The fall schedule includes:

- **Evening Courses**
  - *M*A*S*H: Television, War, and American Culture*, Charlie Cino — Thursdays, September 10, 17, 24 and October 1, 8, and 15 at 6:00 p.m.
  - *Karl Marx's Das Kapital*, Andrew LaZella, Ph.D. — Mondays, October 19 and 26 and November 2, 9, 16, and 23 at 6:00 p.m.
- **World Affairs Luncheon Seminars**
  - Rev. James Martin, S.J., *Work in Progress: Confessions of a Busboy, Dishwasher, Caddy, Usher, Factory Worker, Bank Teller, Corporate Tool and Priest* — Friday, September 18 at 11:30 a.m.
  - Terence Keel, Ph.D., *The Coroner's Silence: Death Records and the Hidden Victims of Police Violence* — Wednesday, October 7 at 11:30 a.m.
  - Victor Goines, *Jazz: From the Streets and Clubs to the Schools and Concert Halls* — Friday, November 6 at 11:30 a.m.
  - Steven J. Scheinman, M.D., *Why Do We Have the Worst Health Care Outcomes? A Consideration of the Social Determinants of Health* — Monday, November 16 at 11:30 a.m.
- **University for a Day** — Saturday, September 19, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., featuring University faculty Will Cohen, Ph.D., Katherine Stefanelli, Ph.D., and David Mahalak, D.Eng., presenting respectively on John Courtney Murray and the contemporary New Right; stress, mindfulness and resilience; and alternative models for the College Football Playoffs.
- **Collaborative Programs**
  - Peace Ike, *The 3 Degrees of Why: Moving Beyond Positions to the Stories That Shape Us* — Tuesday, October 20 at 6:00 p.m., in collaboration with the Slattery Center for the Ignatian Humanities.
  - *The Freedom to Read: A Screening and Panel Discussion of The Librarians* — Thursday, November 12 at 6:00 p.m., featuring Susan Campbell Bartoletti, Kate Cummings, and Michele Legate, presented in partnership with the Friends of the Weinberg Memorial Library.
- **Invitation to Faculty to Submit Schemel Class Proposals**

- Faculty interested in developing a short course (six 75-minute sessions) for the Schemel Forum should send their idea directly to george.aulisio@scranton.edu. Proposals will be reviewed by the Schemel Forum Advisory Board as future programming is developed. Faculty from across disciplines are encouraged to propose topics that translate their scholarship and expertise into engaging programs for a broad University and community audience. The proposal need only be a brief, paragraph-length course description.

Conference on Confronting the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

The University will again host an International Interdisciplinary conference on Confronting the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. The conference will be held April 29—May 1, 2027. The call for proposals is now open. The conference welcomes individual papers, panels, and workshops. Other types of presentations may be proposed as well. Presentations must examine the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence. Proposals are due November 6, 2026, with notifications of acceptance scheduled for December 18.

University of Scranton faculty are specifically encouraged to submit proposals. The conference is intended not only to bring scholars and practitioners to Scranton from other institutions but also to showcase scholarship and intellectual engagement taking place within our own University community.

Conference information and the submission portal are available at:
https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/ai/

Call for Faculty Peer Reviewers

The conference is also seeking self-nominations from full-time faculty interested in serving as peer reviewers for conference submissions. Ten reviewers will be selected with attention to creating an interdisciplinary group representing a range of academic perspectives.

Selected reviewers will:

- Receive approximately $200 stipend (before taxes) for their work;
- Receive blinded conference abstracts around November 13;
- Complete their reviews by December 4;
- Be invited to attend the conference banquet at no additional charge; and
- Be recognized as peer reviewers on the conference website and in the printed conference program.

Faculty interested in serving as a reviewer will be invited to submit their names for consideration. The interdisciplinary nature of the conference makes participation from faculty across all three colleges particularly valuable.

CIC AI Ready Initiative

The University is participating in the Council of Independent Colleges' AI Ready initiative during the 2026–27 academic year through both its *Leading the Charge* institutional leadership program and its *Campus Essentials* programming.

The September Campus Essentials series, "AI in the Flow of Work," provides faculty and staff with opportunities to consider practical uses and implications of AI in higher education. The University will also participate in the year-long *Leading the Charge* program, which will culminate in development of an institutional AI action plan.

IDEA Center

The IDEA Center continues to expand opportunities for faculty to incorporate immersive and emerging technologies into teaching and learning.

Faculty have recently been invited to participate in a virtual-reality anatomy application pilot using the IDEA Center's Meta Quest headsets.

- Faculty can register to attend here: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/31TcBbjiNz?origin=lprLink
- The pilot will allow interested faculty to evaluate the technology's potential for anatomy, health sciences, and related instructional applications before decisions are made regarding broader implementation.

The IDEA Center continues to support faculty and student projects across disciplines, with particular emphasis on experiential learning, prototyping, emerging technology, media production, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

- Faculty interested in a potential collaboration or project utilizing the IDEA Center are encouraged to email Thomas.Bryan@Scranton.edu directly to discuss ideas.

Office of Student Support & Success

The OSSS has moved locations this summer from LSC to Alumni Memorial Hall, 2nd floor. Gaining over 2000 sq. ft., the OSSS has expanded the writing center, added a dedicated tutoring space, a neurodiverse 'hub' and additional private testing space for students with approved accommodation. The Learning Enrichment Specialist, Mary Ellen Pichiarello, retired from the university and our new hire, Melissa Del Rio, began training on August 17th, as the Academic Accommodation Specialist.

2025-26 Recap:
Tutoring: The OSSS employed around 200 peer tutors for the 2025-26 academic year.

Just over 8,500 individual tutoring sessions at all levels were accommodated. Fall of 2025, 4,890 tutoring sessions took place (5,120 in Fall 2024), and in Spring 2026, 3,673 tutoring sessions took place (3,961 in Spring 2025). There were nearly 900 visits to Drop-In Tutoring Labs this academic year for MATH, CHEM & BIO

Writing Center: In Fall 2025, 402 students came to the Writing Center for 884 consultations, while in Spring 2026, 228 students were assisted in the Writing Center in 557 consultations surpassing 1,400 sessions all year. A satellite center in the Reilly Learning Commons in the Library; it has offered walk-in consultations on weekday evenings during the last several academic years.

Disability Services: Approximately 590 students are actively registered with our office, 180 were incoming freshman in Fall 2025, a significant increase (16% to 20%) in year over year comparison for the university.

**So far for Fall 2026, the OSSS has received 127 new accommodation requests from incoming students (around 14% of the first-year class, so far).

Testing: 3,880 examinations were proctored by the OSSS during the 2025-26 academic year. An increase of 411 exams from 2023-24 totaled 3,391. 2,102 exams were proctored in Fall 2025 (up from 2,020 Fall 2024) with 591 during finals week. 1,779 in Spring 2026 (from 1,760 Spring 2024) with 482 during finals week.

Note-taking Services: In Fall of 2025, 225 note-takers were employed by the OSSS (205 in Fall 2024). 418 classes have note-takers and 197 students receive note-taking accommodation in one or more of their classes. In the Spring of 2026, 199 note-takers are employed by the OSSS (172 in Spring 2025). 372 classes have note-takers (364 in Spring 2025).

Our Disability Support Specialist, Rosemary Termini, meets with registered students on a regular basis holding 900 sessions throughout the year with an average of 35 meetings per week. Rosemary also continued a Disability Awareness Bingo night, co-hosted with the organization she advises, The Neurodiversity Inclusion Association, with over 130 students in attendance.

Academic Coaching: About 125 students both registered with disability services and students identified on Academic Probation worked on a weekly basis with 5 graduate assistants, holding 1,067 meetings to further their time management and study skills, with the goal of allowing them to become self-regulated learners.

In addition, the OSSS Manager held 20+ presentations for OSSS services at orientation for new incoming and transfer students, classroom invites, new faculty development, faculty senate, department meetings, community panels, tabling events and workshops. Matthew Smith was invited on 5 separate occasions to classrooms to review metacognition and study skills and collaborated with the DPT program to create curriculum support of weekly check ins to support the new cohort.

2027 Royden B. Davis, S.J., Distinguished Author Award

The Weinberg Memorial Library is pleased to announce that Andrew Krivák will receive the 2027 Royden B. Davis, S.J., Distinguished Author Award on Saturday, April 3, 2027.

Krivák is an acclaimed novelist and poet whose work has strong connections to the immigrant heritage and anthracite coal region of Northeastern Pennsylvania. A National Book Award finalist, he is the author of works including *The Sojourn*, *The Bear*, and his recent novel *Mule Boy*. The April 3 program will include a book signing and opportunity to meet the author, followed by the Distinguished Author reception, award presentation, dinner, and keynote address in the DeNaples Center.

Additional information regarding tickets and sponsorship opportunities is available through the Weinberg Memorial Library's Distinguished Author Award website at www.scranton.edu/authaward.