

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: David Marx, Ph.D.
Acting Provost/Senior VPAA

DATE: September 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Provost Report for September 13, 2024

ACADEMIC PLANNING PRIORITIES 2024-2025

Academic Program Development and Innovation Space Programming and Partnerships

A focus on the implementation of those new programs which emerged from the environmental scan, including those with a change in modality. Continued emphasis on Weiss Hall, especially the development of programming within the Innovation Space and its staffing, with an increased focus on non-traditional learning, partnerships, and innovative programs.

- Program Development
- Weiss Hall
- Innovation Space

Graduate Education and Targeted Undergraduate Populations

Continued focus on online graduate education, the First Year Experience/transfer students, articulation agreements, and continued work on current student retention initiatives.

- Online Graduate Education: Collegis Transition
- Articulation agreements and pathways
- Continued work of FYE taskforce and review of retention structure with collaboration with Student Life and Enrollment Management

Thematic Initiatives

Continue our university's commitment to *Laudato Si'* as an expression of our Catholic and Jesuit educational mission. Two other key initiatives remain Ethics Across the Curriculum and an emphasis on Artificial Intelligence within higher education.

- Laudato Si' Action Plan
- Ethics Across the Curriculum
- Artificial Intelligence: Faculty Development

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Continue supporting the implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan in collaboration with the Council on Diversity and Inclusion, as well as distinctive initiatives within our Schools/Colleges and the Library.

- DEI: Latinx student population

- Administrator onboarding project
- Revise faculty mentor program

Community: Shared Governance, Transparency, and Reconciliation

Continue to collaborate with deans to foster a stronger culture of shared governance at the University. Create a transparent and collaborative process for the creation of the Strategic Plan.

- Drop-in Hours with the Provost and monthly Provost communications
- Strategic Planning Process
- Monthly breakfasts with the faculty: President and Provost

Strategic Planning

Work has continued to steward the development of our next University-wide strategic plan. In addition to reaffirmation and discussion of the fundamental linkages between our strategic planning and our Catholic, Jesuit mission by the University Planning Committee (UPC), discussions with each of the three Senates, a survey of faculty and staff, additional faculty input during a Faculty Forum in late May, and the July survey of the Board of Trustees have yielded important suggestions and ideas about potential future strategic directions. Twenty-two members of the Board responded to this survey, a response rate of 79%. We thank Board members for their robust participation.

During the spring and summer, the Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness has worked to compile and analyze this feedback to identify emerging potential directions for the new plan in preparation for a deep-dive discussion at a joint President’s Cabinet and University Planning Committee (UPC) retreat in August. Although this retreat was postponed in light of the recent transition in the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs position, which chairs the UPC, work continues in the Planning office to prepare materials for UPC discussion, recommendations, and campus review this fall, as we consider our next steps in institutional planning.

Division Updates

New Faculty

Join me in welcoming 22 new faculty: 16 Assistant Professors, 1 Instructor, 4 Faculty Specialists, and 1 Visiting Assistant Professor. A new faculty orientation session was held on August 19th in conjunction with the Center for Teaching Excellence. In addition, 34 Faculty Specialists contracts were renewed.

Name	Rank	Department
Michael Catalano	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Kristina Dorkoski	Faculty Specialist	Physical Therapy
Anna Grippi	Faculty Specialist	Nursing
Megan Heeder	Assistant Professor	Theology/Religious Studies
Anna Jaskiewicz	Assistant Professor	Economics, Finance & International Business
Julieann Kane	Instructor	Nursing

Elyse Kay	Faculty Specialist	Occupational Therapy
Margaret Lakomy	Visiting Assistant Professor	Chemistry
Courtney Lancia	Faculty Specialist	Occupational Therapy
Chi Hou Lei	Assistant Professor	Physics & Engineering
Jinqing Liu	Assistant Professor	Education
David Mahalak	Assistant Professor	Operations & Analytics
Ehsan Mahyari	Assistant Professor	Operations & Analytics
William Miller	Assistant Professor	Health Administration & Human Resources
Hiva Samadian	Assistant Professor	Computer Science
Mary Tabit	Assistant Professor	Psychology
Paul Tierney	Assistant Professor	Counseling & Human Services
Jennifer Whittaker	Assistant Professor	Occupational Therapy
Mehmet Ali Yetim	Assistant Professor	Management, Marketing & Entrepreneurship
Xinyu Zhou	Assistant Professor	Management, Marketing & Entrepreneurship
Aaron Ziegler	Assistant Professor	Health & Human Performance

Fulbright Scholars

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

- Rym Ben Rehouma, Tunisia
- Fabian Bizcocho, Spain
- Emma Leclercq, France
- Ch-yi Wu, Taiwan
- Oliwia Doroszko, Germany

Additionally, we are pleased to have a Visiting Instructor from Japan, Erii Unuma.

Graduate Academic & Student Services

- On August 21st an online **New Graduate Student Orientation** was held via Teams for the following programs:
 - Applied Behavior Analysis,
 - Speech-Language Pathology,
 - Cybercrime Investigation and Security,
 - Family Nurse Practitioner

There were 15 attendees

- On August 22nd we held a **New Graduate Student Orientation** for
 - Accounting,
 - Business Administration,

- Business Analytics,
- Chemistry,
- Counseling,
- Finance,
- Software Engineering

We had 78 graduate students attend and 19 staff/administrators. Staff presented about their areas and how they serve the students.

- We currently have 134 graduate students who are serving as graduate assistants across the University.
- We are in the process of migrating online courses from Risepoint to Brightspace. We are expecting to have our online programs launched through Brightspace starting in spring 2025.

Center for Teaching Excellence

The Center for Teaching Excellence is currently providing technical assistance and instructional design guidance to Collegis personnel, HAD instructors and Lisa LoBasso during the conversion of roughly 100 courses from Wiley's OPM to our inhouse Brightspace learning management system. We are also providing the same to Nursing and Counseling instructors, Collegis and Lisa LoBasso in their effort to develop new online programs and courses in those domains.

The CTE and IT personnel attended Brightspace training sessions over the summer on the following topics: Quick Evaluation Tool, Using Course Tools from the Org Level, Creator Plus and an administrator refresh.

The CTE will also be holding workshops in mid-September to get faculty up to speed on Brightspace and online learning theory. We will highlight the following topics and tools individually:

Incoming first-year students currently have an 85.78% completion rate for Academic Integrity Tutorial. As part of our comprehensive academic integrity program, the University of Scranton requires each student to complete the Academic Integrity Tutorial. The tutorial helps students:

- Be able to avoid plagiarism in paper writing and test taking.
- Learn why academic integrity is important.
- Learn how to work in groups and share materials ethically.
- Learn what actions constitute violations of the Academic Code of Honesty at The University of Scranton.

We will follow up with additional emails urging students to complete the tutorial.

Office of Student Support & Success

Total	Spring 2023	Spring 2024
Tutoring Sessions	5,515	4,497
Drop-in Tutoring		473
Incoming First Year Requesting Accommodations	140	90
Students Receiving Accommodations	291	429
Exams Administered	1,497	1,591
Writing Center Tutoring Sessions	819	918
Success Sessions (academic coaching)		754

Other Statistics (Spring 2024):

- 221 Tutors are employed by OSSS (200 Spring 2023).
- 194 Note-takers are employed by OSSS.
- 318 classes have note-takers.
- 97 students receive note-taking accommodations.

Sabbaticals

The Faculty Research Committee approved 17 sabbaticals this year.

- Fall 2024 – 7, one is a pre-tenure sabbatical,
- Spring 2025 - 6 sabbaticals
- Academic Year – 4 sabbaticals

Prison Education Program

The University of Scranton’s Prison Education Program, which began in the fall of 2021 at Dallas State Correctional Institution, received a total of \$80,000 from the Sunshine Lady Foundation to the support the program for two years. The program will receive \$40,000 each year.

The University held a graduation ceremony for the first cohort of 9 students who earned their associate degrees in December 2023 at Dallas-SCI. The second cohort of 14 students are expected to complete the requirements for an associate’s degree in December of 2024.

Christopher Haw, Ph.D., associate professor of theology and religious studies, serves as program director of the University’s Prison Education Program.

Fall 2024 International Students

Total Student and Scholars for Fall 2024: 213

Total New Students and Scholars Fall Enrollment: 53

New Degree Seeking students (F1): 38 students

- Graduate: 35 students

- Countries: India (30) Philippines (1), Saudi Arabia (3), Taiwan (1)
- Undergraduate: 3 students
 - Countries: Mexico (1), Dominican Republic (1), Ireland (1)

New Exchange Students (J1): 8 students

- *Undergraduate:* 8 students
 - *Countries:* Taiwan (3), Spain (2), S. Korea (2), Mexico (1)
 - *Partner Institutions:* National Taiwan University (1), Fu Jen Catholic University (2), Universidad Pontificia de Comillas (1), Sogang University (2), Universidad Loyola Seville (1), Universidad Pontificia De Comillas (1), Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla (1)

New Exchange Scholars (J1): 7 scholars

Research Scholar (1) arrived September from the Turkey working with Dr. Sean Brennan
 Visiting Professors (2) Taiwan Ministry of Education and Alex Foundation (Japan)
 Fulbright Scholars (4) from Tunisia, France, Spain, Germany

Total Returning Student and Scholars

Degree Seeking: 160 Students

- Graduate: 153
 - Doctorate: 2
 - Countries: Saudi Arabia (2)
 - Master's: 151
 - Countries: Canada (1), Cayman Islands (1), China (1), Ethiopia (1), Ghana (2), India (137), Pakistan (1), Kenya (1), Philippines (2), South Korea (1), Saudi Arabia (1), The Bahamas (1), Vietnam (1),
- Undergraduate: 7 students
 - Countries: China (1), Dominican Republic (1), Ireland (2), Nepal (1), Ukraine (1), Vietnam (1)

Other things of note:

79 currently participating in Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) (as of April 4, graduating students are still within their application window)

62 Regular OPT (12 month)

- 55 Approved
- 6 Pending
- 2 Requested

16 STEM Extension OPT (24 months)

- 6 Approved
- 10 Pending
- 1 Requested

College & Faculty Updates

- Congratulations to the members of the **Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering Programs** recently reaccredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) through 2030. This is well-earned recognition for these programs.
- The College of Arts and Science has received the **Noone Research Endowment** honoring Dr. Leonard N. Wolf. This fund will support pre-health students' undergraduate research (with a priority on pre-medical students) and be awarded through two existing sources of undergraduate research funding: CAS Student Research Fund and the Stem Magis Research Fund.
- Important work in support of the University Diversity Strategic Plan occurred through DEI trainings for hiring within STEM, as well as the addition and revision of courses in support of DEI-themed topics (e.g., Latinx Literature v. Psychology of Racism).
- Innovation continues to occur in the curriculum with revisions of existing programs (e.g., environmental science, Theology, SJLA). The **GE Review Committee** has continued its important work and created a draft proposal that hopes to go before the Faculty Senate this Fall 2024.
- Dr. Janice Voltzow with Drs. Christie Karpiak and Declan Mulhall for successfully completing the **S-STEM grant** this past summer. The results affirmed how transformative it was to the students. I understand having seen an S-STEM grant at my previous institution how involved those programs are and therefore the workload involved on the part of these faculty. We are so grateful to them for their efforts in bringing this project to a successful close.
- Dr. Ashley Driver (as PI with Drs. Brague, Son, and Seid are co-PIs) for securing an **NSF-MRI grant** to replace our outdated and aging confocal microscope.
- Dr. Chris Haw for securing a grant that will contribute to ongoing support for the Dallas Prison Education Program from the **Sunshine Lady Foundation**.
- Ashley L. Stampone, assistant professor in the Accounting Department, was selected as one of just 25 educators/academic members worldwide to serve on the **Institute of Management Accountants' (IMA) Committee of Academic Relations** for a two-year term. She was also elected to serve as vice president on the **Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants' (PICPA) Board of Directors** for a one-year term and will serve as the PICPA board representative on the Board of Directors for the Pennsylvania CPA Foundation.
- Michael Jenkins, Ph.D. '06, professor and chair of The University of Scranton's Department of Criminal Justice, Cybersecurity and Sociology, received the **Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences 2024 Police Section Outstanding Service**. The annual award honors an individual who has provided significant service to the Police Section of the academy.
- Assistant Professor of Philosophy Christopher Fremaux, Ph.D., has earned the University of Scranton's **2024 Gannon Award for Teaching**, just four years after arriving on campus. Dr. Fremaux was selected to receive the outstanding teacher of the year award by the University's chapter of Alpha Sigma Nu, the national honor society for students in Jesuit colleges and universities.

- The Leahy College of Health Sciences will host the **23rd Annual U.S. Conference on disABILITY** October 9, 2024, in the DeNaples Center. This year's conference is focused on *Access, Advocacy, & Employment In The Age Of Artificial Intelligence*. It is free to all participants, but pre-registration is required. To register and get more information on the program and speakers visit Scranton.edu/disabilityconference. Drs. Rebecca Dalgin and Lori Bruch from the Counseling and Human Services Department are co-hosting the conference, along with Ed and Patricia Leahy.
- **The Counseling and Behavioral Health Clinic** in the Edward R. Leahy Jr. Clinic for the Uninsured will resume providing counseling services following a long hiatus initiated by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. With the support of a \$50,000 grant by the Highmark Foundation, new furniture and electronics were purchased for the ACCE Executive Hub building on Mulberry Street and graduate students will begin offering counseling services under the supervision of Counselor Training Center Director Geriann Barber and another part-time licensed counselor.
- The University of Scranton's speech-language pathology master's degree program offered an eight-week **Summer Academy for Speech and Language Enrichment at the Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (SSDHHC)** as part of the first clinical rotation for the graduate students. The unique learning opportunities offered through the Summer Academy were developed by the program's director Hope E. Baylow, DA, SLP, associate professor and director of the University's Communication Sciences and Disorders Program, and Tara Carito, MS, SLP, the University's clinical education coordinator for speech-language pathology program.

Dr. Hope Baylow, explained, "The Summer Academy for Speech and Language Enrichment is an immersive program designed to provide hands-on experience and advanced training in working with children with communication disorders, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing. This academy offers a unique opportunity for SLP students to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings under the guidance of experienced clinicians while making a meaningful impact on the lives of children with diverse communication needs. Through interactive sessions, collaborative projects, and direct clinical practice, participants gain valuable skills and insights that prepare them for their future roles as compassionate and effective speech-language pathologists." The Summer Academy also allowed the graduate students to experience different modalities of communication: verbal, American Sign Language (ASL) and Augmented Alternative Communication Devices (AAC). The University's 63-credit speech-language pathology graduate program is offered in a blended learning environment that combines synchronous remote academic coursework with experiential learning. More than 75 percent of the program is conducted remotely. The first year of courses was offered in an online format, so the summer academy externship experience was also the first time the cohort was together in person. The Summer Academy was supported, in part, by The Edward R. Leahy Jr. Endowment.

- **Go Baby Go** is a program that provides modified, ride-on toy cars to young children with mobility challenges. The project began with Professor Stephanie DeNaples, a faculty specialist in the OT Department, developing a plan to create a Go Baby Go chapter at the University of Scranton. Early mobility provides children the opportunity to move, explore and interact with their environment, which develops physical strength, cognitive

growth, social skills, and emotional well-being. This sets a strong foundation for their future development and overall health. Children who are unable to do so independently miss out on these opportunities during a crucial period of development. With the generous support of The Edward R. Leahy Jr. Endowment, the students of the Occupational Therapy (OT) and Mechanical Engineering (ME) Departments established the first University of Scranton Go Baby Go chapter during spring semester 2024 and provided customized and fun solutions for children with mobility limitations within the greater Scranton community. This year 10 adapted ride-on toys were provided to local children through this program.

Students worked on the ride-on cars weekly. Modifications included making the cars hand powered, by means of electronic buttons or accelerator bars (for children who lack the lower body control to push a floor pedal), adding postural supports for children who have difficulty sitting upright or with head control, and adding safety measures such as remote controls for caregivers and ‘kill switches’ to shut off power completely. The OT students applied their knowledge of body mechanics, movement patterns, sensory processing, and adaptive design while the ME students utilized their understanding of electrical wiring, circuitry, gearing, and 3-D printing. Lastly, and equally important, the students personalized each of the cars by adding stickers, superhero decals and anything else meaningful to each individual child. The project culminated on May 5, 2024, at University of Scranton Go Baby Go Reveal Day. The new “drivers” received their adapted cars and test drove them around a racetrack in front of a cheering crowd. The students, professors, and families enjoyed an afternoon together celebrating the results of their thoughtful work and compassionate intent. In true Ignatian spirit, the University of Scranton students and faculty continue to embody *Cura Personalis* by bringing joy, connection and wellness, in a unique way, to children of the Scranton community.

- **The Friends of the Weinberg Memorial Library will present the Royden B. Davis, S.J., Distinguished Author Award** on November 16th, 2024, to Brandy Schillace, Ph.D. Dr. Schillace is an accomplished medical historian and novelist. Her most recent novel *The Framed Women of Ardemore House*, has received significant attention partly because it features an autistic leading character. Christopher Banks 86’, President/CEO of the Autism Society of America, will serve as Toastmaster and Emcee for the evening. The event is the largest fundraising venture of the Friends of the Weinberg Memorial Library and tickets and sponsorships are currently being sold and solicited. See www.scranton.edu/author for more information.
- **Gems of Flourishing from The Zaner-Bloser Penmanship Collection** will be the autumn Heritage Room exhibit. Flourishing is the act of adding sweeping, decorative strokes to penmanship. However, many professional penmen went beyond adding decorative strokes to lettering and created flourished artworks. Since writing prior to the 19th century was usually done with a bird feather quill, penmen paid tribute to their flying equipment suppliers by drawing birds. The exhibit will feature birds flourished by some of the greatest 19th and early 20th century penmen and calligraphers as well as other animals and designs. The exhibit will run from August 28 until December 13. Please contact Special Collections at 570-941-6341 or Michael.Knies@Scranton.edu for more information.

- **Hope Horn Art Gallery's** fall exhibit schedule features two shows:

The Lackawanna River and Watershed: History and Environment

Presented in cooperation with the Lackawanna River Conservation Association as the first of a two-part exhibition series, this curated show explores the historical and environmental context of the Lackawanna River through comparative maps, photographs, and artifacts from local collections. It is sponsored in part by the Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area in Partnership with the National Park Service, and the *Ellacuría* Initiative at the University of Scranton. Thomas Matchko, University of Scranton Class of 2025, serves as curatorial assistant.

- September 3 through October 11, 2024
- Special Events: Friday, September 6, 2024
- Gallery Lecture at Pearn Auditorium, Brennan 228, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- Public Reception at Hope Horn Gallery, Hyland 405, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Hudson River and Delaware Valley: Selections from the Paul Biedlingmaier Jr. Collection

Inspired by family ties to watersheds of the Hudson, Delaware, Lehigh, and Lackawanna Rivers, the Biedlingmaier brothers have collected art related to these regions for over forty years. As the first of a two-part exhibition series, this show highlights nineteenth-century works by artists of the Hudson River School from the collection of Paul Biedlingmaier Jr., University of Scranton Class of 1976.

- October 21 through November 22, 2024
- Special Events: Friday, October 25, 2024
- Gallery Lecture at Pearn Auditorium, Brennan 228, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- Public Reception at Hope Horn Gallery, Hyland 405, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.