

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Teaching Faculty

**FROM:** Stella Deen, Interim Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

**DATE:** August 15, 2015

**SUBJECT:** New-Student Profile & Faculty Role in Student Success

Welcome to the 2015-16 academic year! I look forward to working with you throughout the coming year to provide our students with exceptional educational programs and services.

New Paltz continues to be a first-choice option for talented new students. For the 26<sup>th</sup> consecutive year we had more applications than any other SUNY University College. Our incoming class includes 1,100 first-year students and 700 new transfer students, somewhat above our target for fall 2015 matriculation.

Further, we maintain our standing as one of the most diverse campuses in SUNY, with 38% of first-year students and 28% of new transfer students from traditionally underrepresented groups. This is both numerically and proportionately the most diverse group of new students to ever enter this institution – by a significant margin. Although just over 93% of our student body are New Yorkers, our students also hail from Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, and Rhode Island.

Approximately 500 international students contribute to the diversity of our campus, including about 150 new students who will call New Paltz home this year. Among the 23 countries they represent are Antigua, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, France, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Nepal, and Zambia.

Policies that provide critical support for student learning, retention, and timely graduation are highlighted below. As we begin a new academic year, I encourage you to review these policies, which will help us reach our shared goal of graduating superbly educated students who will be proud New Paltz alumni.

### **I. Faculty availability and faculty-student interaction**

- A. Academic year obligation:** Faculty are responsible for College service from Convocation in the fall term through Commencement and assignment of student grades at the end of the spring term. While you are not expected to be on campus throughout the intersession, you are obligated to be available for service to the College during this period.

- B. Campus presence:** Faculty availability plays a significant role in student success, retention, and graduation. All full-time faculty are expected to maintain a significant on-campus presence during the academic year, i.e., to be on campus at least four weekdays per week. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the appropriate dean.
- C. Office hours:** Full-time faculty members are required to hold at least four office hours a week while the semester is in session. Part-time faculty teaching classes other than studios, individual instruction, or laboratory courses, are required to hold office hours equal to at least one hour per week per class taught. Schedule office hours at times that will be convenient to students, some of whom may need encouragement to seek your assistance.
- D. Campus communications:** Please check campus e-mail and phone messages regularly. Students and colleagues will appreciate it.
- II. Course syllabi:** Each student must be given a written syllabus (distributed electronically, preferably, to conserve paper resources) at the beginning of the semester. If revisions become necessary, they must be provided in writing and circulated to all students in the class, either in person, via Blackboard, or by email. Syllabus requirements are posted at [www.newpaltz.edu/acadaff](http://www.newpaltz.edu/acadaff).
- III. Evaluation of Students:** Faculty must evaluate student work in a manner that is appropriate to the level and expectations of the course. Retention of first-year students, in particular, is enhanced by frequent and timely evaluation of student work.
- A. Mid-term grades:** Faculty are required to give all students in undergraduate courses at least one major grade on a paper, examination, or other appropriate basis of assessment by the mid-point of the semester (**October 14 for fall 2015, March 8 for spring 2016**).
- B. Mid-term evaluations:** Additionally, faculty should complete mid-semester evaluations for first semester freshmen, first semester transfer students, students on academic probation, student athletes, students in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), the Scholar's Mentorship Program (SMP), students in AC<sup>2</sup> (AMP/C-STEP programs supporting underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students in sciences, math and engineering), student on probation within the School of Business and students in the Turkish dual degree programs. Mid-term evaluations are submitted through [mynewpaltz.edu](http://mynewpaltz.edu). Faculty completion of these evaluations will encourage students with academic difficulties to seek help from the Academic Advising Center and Student Affairs staff.
- C. Final examinations:** Faculty members giving final examinations must give those exams during the assigned time in the five-day examination period or on the Common Examination day each semester.
- If a final examination or presentation is not part of the assessment of student performance for a course, the time designated for the final exam is to be used for instruction. Requests for exceptions to the mandatory final examination rule must be approved by both the department chair and the academic dean.

**D. Submission of grades:** All grades must be submitted electronically on Final Grade Rosters through *my.newpaltz.edu* no later than the grade submission deadline listed in the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 Academic Calendars (<https://www3.newpaltz.edu/calendars/>). *Students not listed on the Final Grade Roster for a course are not entitled to a final grade.*

**E. Incomplete grades** ([www.newpaltz.edu/ugc/policies\\_incomplete.html](http://www.newpaltz.edu/ugc/policies_incomplete.html)): A grade of Incomplete ("I") must be *student initiated* and is awarded at the discretion of the instructor *only* when the student has successfully completed at least three-quarters of the required work for a course. College policy states that a grade of "I" may only be granted when a personal emergency prevents a student from completing the work. The maximum time a faculty member may allow for completing the necessary work is the mid-point of the following semester.

**F. Maintenance and retention of student work:** Instructors must maintain a permanent written (or hard copy) record of all student work in every course. That record must contain all the information utilized in assessing a student's performance in a course and in computing the final grade (e.g., rubrics). Such records must be retained for a minimum of three years and be available to department chairs for review. Student work that is not returned – papers, quizzes, reports, examinations, projects, or other products upon which assessment of a student's performance is based – must be retained by the instructor for no less than one year beyond the academic year in which the work is done and must be available for examination. Final examinations not returned to students must be retained for three years beyond the academic year in which the examination was given.

**IV. FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) – [www.newpaltz.edu/ferpa](http://www.newpaltz.edu/ferpa):** All New Paltz faculty should be familiar with the basics of FERPA, a 1974 federal law that provides for the confidentiality of student education records. FERPA prohibits discussion of an individual student's work with anyone other than the particular student, except in cases where open discussion of work is part of the established pedagogy, as in art, design, and theatre critiques. Therefore, open evaluation of a student's work in the classroom and grading of student assignments by other students are not permitted.

Under FERPA, posting grades for individual tests or assignments, posting final course grades, or placing papers and projects in public areas where persons other than the student may have access is prohibited. Use of students' social security numbers, student identification numbers, or any other method of providing public access to student information (e.g., seating chart) is likewise prohibited.

Faculty and staff are strongly advised that while discussions and disclosures of students' education records may be allowed, this information must not be shared with anyone on or off campus who does not have an immediate, specific, and job-related need for such information. Status as a parent or family member of a student or as a member of the faculty or staff does not alone establish a right to access student information. They can simply gain permission from the student in order to share their educational record, via a signed letter or email from their official campus email account.

**V. Textbooks:** Faculty play a key role in helping students to plan ahead for textbook expenses and take full advantage of a highly competitive marketplace. State and federal laws – specifically, the New York State Textbook Access Act (2009) and the reauthorized Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA, 2010) – require colleges to include on their Internet course schedules the ISBNs and retail prices for required and recommended textbooks and supplemental materials. Our campus “adoption rate” – our HEOA compliance indicator – is based on the percentage of course sections for which textbook information has been received *by the time students pre-register*. To ensure students’ timely access to required information, the following submission schedule has been established in consultation with The Bookstore at New Paltz:

- **October 15 for spring semester textbooks**
- **March 15 for summer term textbooks**
- **April 15 for fall semester textbooks**

The Bookstore at New Paltz facilitates the College’s compliance with state and federal textbook affordability laws by collecting textbook information through its online requisition form: [https://adoptions.efollett.com/OnlineAdoptionsWeb/onlineAdoptions.html?storeNumber=1651&langId=en\\_US](https://adoptions.efollett.com/OnlineAdoptionsWeb/onlineAdoptions.html?storeNumber=1651&langId=en_US). Please note, students are not obligated to purchase their textbooks through the Bookstore and may be directed to other sources.

**VI. Use of emerging technology:** Use of technology that is inaccessible to an entire population of individuals with disabilities (e.g., electronic book readers for individuals who are blind or who have low vision) is discriminatory and prohibited by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 unless those individuals are provided accommodations or modifications that enable them to achieve all the educational benefits provided by the technology in an equally effective and integrated manner.

**Faculty should also be aware of the following:**

- **Academic advising:** Academic advising is an integral part of the faculty’s teaching obligations, and effective advising plays a key role in student retention and timely graduation. Faculty advisers may be responsible for advising undergraduate pre-majors, majors, and/or graduate students. They also help students to understand academic policies and regulations. For undergraduates, effective advising is key to four-year degree completion – the expected norm for most students (and their parents). Taking an average of 15 credits per semester, fulfilling General Education requirements and required prerequisites in a timely manner, and making a firm decision on a major as early as possible (but no later than the beginning of the student’s third year) ensures progress toward timely graduation.
- **Academic assistance:** The Center for Student Resources & Academic Support (SRAS) offers programs and services for students who need assistance with reading, writing, mathematics, and study skills. Resources include professional staff trained in developmental work, student tutors, and faculty members on special assignment. Don’t hesitate to refer your students to SRAS for assistance – student success is often associated with such encouragement.
- **Classroom and/or testing accommodations:** The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates accommodations based on the impact of a disability. Any student who requires such accommodations should contact the DRC (Student Union, Room 210; 257-3020), which will provide instructors with an Accommodation Memo verifying the need for accommodations.

Students should be encouraged to request accommodations as close as possible to the beginning of the semester.

## **Title IX**

*"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Title IX of the Education Amendments prohibit sex discrimination in education programs and activities. Its protections extend to sexual harassment and sexual assault that impairs or interferes with access to equitable educational and employment opportunities. The College is committed to providing to all who study, live, work and visit here an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex-based or gender-based harassment, discrimination or violence. We offer services to students, faculty and staff to address concerns about, proactively educate, train and empower members to meet both the requirements and the spirit of Title IX. Our campus Title IX coordinator is Tanhena Pacheco Dunn, who is also the Executive Director for compliance and campus climate. Information about Title IX at New Paltz and about when and how to make a complaint may be found here: <http://www.newpaltz.edu/titleix/>.

To report incidents of sexual discrimination, assault, violence, harassment, intimate partner violence or stalking, STUDENTS are encouraged to speak to The Dean of Students, Title IX Coordinator, University Police, Psychological Counseling Services, Health Services, Resident Director, Resident Assistants, Student Leaders, Orientation Leader, Dean, Faculty or Faculty Chair. The community resource form has further information (<http://www.newpaltz.edu/titleix/>).

If you are an EMPLOYEE, you are encouraged to report concerns or knowledge of sexual harassment or violence to your supervisor, Human Resources or Title IX Coordinator.