



MEMORANDUM

TO: Teaching Faculty
FROM: Lorin Basden Arnold, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
DATE: August 10, 2017
SUBJECT: New-Student Profile & Faculty Role in Student Success

Welcome to the 2017-18 academic year! I am pleased to be moving into my second year here at SUNY New Paltz and I look forward to working with you again this year to provide our students with exceptional educational programs and services.

New Paltz continues to be a first-choice option for talented new students. We have received 16,600 applications for undergraduate admission, and our incoming class includes more than 1,150 first-year students and over 900 transfer students, which is an historically high number of new students for the college. Although the incoming class is large, the College achieved this goal while maintaining its highly selective admission standards. Despite the large size of the incoming class, the College's overall enrollment has not grown. This is due in part to the drop in the College's graduate enrollments and the fact that a larger incoming undergraduate class must be recruited to replace the ever-increasing number of New Paltz undergraduate students who are completing their studies sooner.

Further, we maintain our standing as one of the most diverse campuses in SUNY, with 40% of first-year students and 30% of new transfer students coming from traditionally under-represented groups. This is numerically and proportionately the most diverse group of new students to enter this institution. Although 95% of our student body are New Yorkers, our students also hail from California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania.

Approximately 400 international students contribute to the diversity of our campus. This year they include 21 new undergraduates from China, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Turkey; 25 new graduate students from Bangladesh, China, India, Korea, and Turkey; and 40 exchange and visiting students from our partner universities, including two new universities in Switzerland and Milan. In addition, next spring we will welcome back our dual-diploma students from Turkey, who will call New Paltz home for the spring and summer terms.

Policies that provide critical support for student learning, retention, and timely graduation can be found in the Faculty Handbook at <http://www.newpaltz.edu/acadaff/>. 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.

As you plan your syllabus, please follow the College **Syllabus Requirements** at http://www.newpaltz.edu/media/academic-affairs/Syllabus_Requirements_2017-18.pdf.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of **accessibility in education**. In addition to the laws that require us to make classes accessible to students with disabilities, it's just the right thing to do. Two excellent sources that speak to creating accessible syllabi and course material are Accessible Syllabus (<https://accessiblesyllabus.tulane.edu>) and the collaborative Universal Design Ideas (<http://universaldesignideas.pbworks.com/w/page/97590854/FrontPage>).

Additionally, the following – also addressed in the faculty handbook - are important items of note for your scheduling:

- **Final Examination Schedule:** No major examinations should be given during the last week of classes before the final exam period. A final exam must be given in all courses during the assigned time in the five-day examination period or on the Common Examination day each semester, which is listed for each course in the Academic Calendar drop-down menu under the heading of the current semester, at <http://www.newpaltz.edu/events/academic.php>.
- **Religious observations:** Students who will be taking time to observe religious holidays should communicate with faculty, coaches, etc. as soon as possible regarding absences for religious observations and be prepared to discuss plans for making up missed work. Faculty and staff will continue to respect the needs of our students and, in compliance with the New York State Education Law (Chapter 161, Section 224), honor students' requests for such rescheduling and collaborate with them to determine a path to make up missed work. While you are not required to place this information on your syllabus, you may find it helpful to embed it into your attendance policy statement.
- **Black Solidarity Day** is Monday, November 6 (observed on the first Monday of November, the day before Election Day). During the week of November 6, we encourage faculty across all disciplines to consider incorporating materials or discussions that explore African and African American contributions. Please also consider encouraging student participation in appropriate extra-curricular programming (talks, seminars, panels, movie screenings, etc.).

We remind you that, in observance of Black Solidarity Day and according to New Paltz policy (https://www.newpaltz.edu/ugc/policies/policies_blacksolidarity.html), and as noted each year on the academic calendar:

- No tests, quizzes or graded assignments of any kind should be issued or due on Black Solidarity Day.
- Students who choose to participate in Black Solidarity Day should notify their professors beforehand and will not be held accountable for absence on that day.
- While you are not required to place this information on your syllabus, you may find it helpful to embed it into your attendance policy statement.

Finally, I would also like to draw your attention to the following **student resources** that offer important academic support to our students:

- **Academic advising:** The Office of Academic Advising (OAA) is responsible for advising undergraduates who are in the process of selecting majors. OAA also provides a variety of services and support to students in academic transition. To contribute to the overall culture of advising and student success on campus, the OAA provides services, programs, and materials to assist academic departments in providing high-quality advising to all our students.
- **Academic assistance:** The Center for Student Success (CSS) provides students with peer-based academic success coaching, online tutoring, subject tutoring in historically difficult courses, and developmentally appropriate writing support across the curriculum. CSS services are intended

to enhance, not supplant, other forms of collaborative learning. The Center also houses the campus-wide Early Academic Warning System. Please encourage your students to visit www.newpaltz.edu/studentssuccess to learn more about the services available at the CSS.

- The **Disability Resource Center (DRC)** coordinates classroom and/or testing accommodations related to a disability. Any student who requires such accommodations should contact the DRC (Student Union, Room 210; 257-3020) as close as possible to the beginning of the semester.

The DRC will then provide instructors with an Accommodation Memo verifying the need for accommodations. Specific questions about services and accommodations may be directed to Deanna Knapp, Assistant Director (knappd@newpaltz.edu) or Jean Vizvary, Director (visvaryj@newpaltz.edu).

- In partnership with academic and professional faculty, the **Office of Veteran & Military Services (OVMS)** makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals who must be absent due to military obligations. The student and faculty member must agree that the length of the absence is reasonable for the type and structure of the course and must devise a written plan detailing expectations for successful course completion. Students who actively participate in the United States Military Reserve or National Guard are highly encouraged to provide each faculty member, as well as the OVMS, a copy of their Reserve and/or National Guard schedule during the first week of class each semester.

Note: The undergraduate student military leave policy is posted on the New Paltz website at www.newpaltz.edu/veterans/policies_military_leave.html; the graduate student policy is posted at www.newpaltz.edu/veterans/policies_military_leave_grad.html.