

EDUCATION

SUNY New Paltz creates new regional resource center

SUNY New Paltz recently announced the creation of the Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach (CRREO), to be directed by Gerald

Benjamin. The center's mission is to provide "a new level of intellectual engagement to a whole new level," said College President Steven Poskanzer.

According to Benjamin, the center's portfolio will include, but will not be limited to: conducting and publishing research on regional topics; encouraging faculty to build regionally-based service activity into their scholarship and teaching; creation/direction of one or more institutes focused on specific topics of regional interest; leading the college's academic outreach to local governments, non-profits and for-profit organizations; and creating programs to train newly-elected regional officials.

The center will also house the college's existing Regional Education programs under the new leadership of Dean Helise Winters.

Poskanzer noted as well that the new center will help advance the institution's effort to "become a cultural and intellectual hub of the

Mid-Hudson Region," a top college goal articulated in his 2005 State of

the College address. In order to effectively direct the Center, Benjamin, who officials said has a reputation throughout New York State as an expert on state and local government, will assume additional titles of CRREO Director and Associate Vice President for Regional Engagement. He will be stepping down as dean in May 2008 after a 12-year run in the position. A search for Benjamin's

successor is already underway.

"Public service must be at the core of the mission of any great public university," said Benjamin. "We have a truly distinguished college with a fine record of leadership and service in the Hudson Valley. I have long been an advocate for the creation of a regional center at New Paltz to focus and advance our efforts in this area of our mission. It has been deeply rewarding to spend my academic career in the Hudson Valley and, in recent years, to lead the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

I am excited now to be called upon to provide leadership for this new SUNY New Paltz initiative."

Gerald Benjamin was named by the SUNY trustees in 2002 as Distinguished

Professor of the University in Political Science. He was an elected member of the Ulster County Legislature from 1981 to 1993 and during

that time served as both majority leader and chairman. Dean Benjamin has been involved in a number of major efforts to reform state and local government New York State. He chaired the commission that proposed the

first charter for Ulster County, N.Y., adopted by popular vote in

November 2006. Benjamin was appointed to New York State Governor Eliot

Spitzer's Commission on Local Government Efficiency in 2007.



Gerald Benjamin

Benjamin, current dean of the College's Liberal Arts and Sciences program. The center will work to raise the college's involvement with communities, businesses and government throughout the Hudson Valley region, college officials said.

"Although for many years New Paltz has supplied faculty expertise and talented graduates across the Hudson Valley, this new center will let us raise the visibility and impact of such intellec-