Welcome to the new academic year! I hope that over the summer, you found some respite from the demands of your jobs, and that you feel renewed and ready to welcome our new and returning students. Many of you were on campus all summer, whereas for others, today marks the return to our community and the chance to reconnect with colleagues and friends. I am so grateful to my colleagues who have spoken today, because I respect and admire their roles and responsibilities. I firmly believe in shared governance, whether it comes in the form of College Senate, Brockport Student Government, or our vital organized labor units. We may not always agree, but we are all striving for the same goals: a campus that is respectful of difference, that is inclusive of diverse opinions and backgrounds, and that promotes civility, so that we can achieve the best for our students, our employees and our visitors. As Betsy Balzano put it during the Presidential Taskforce on Budget and Planning, we can agree to disagree without being disagreeable. Thank you, colleagues, for continuing to keep us focused on building a better Brockport.

One of the messages I heard from you during my first year at Brockport was that we need to celebrate our successes. As a result, we are working on new and better ways to communicate both internally and externally. Last year we re-introduced town halls, and also offered vision cafes, a Twitter town hall, open office hours and even a new committee focused on communications, all of which we will continue this year. I know not everyone is comfortable asking questions in large groups, so in addition, we will be piloting a new function on the website, Hey Heidi, giving you a chance to ask questions or raise concerns about campus and make suggestions, too. Another tangible result of convening the Celebrations and Communications Committee is the planned launch of a new monthly magazine, aimed at a wide audience, including faculty, staff, students, alumni and emeriti. Look for the inaugural issue of The Port in early October. Our newly re-designed website will assist with disseminating information, and we also have a new web calendar system and process for planning campus events. I promise to continue to work with you on how we can get our stories out there.

One of the best ways for me to show my gratitude to you is to thank you for all of the successes you have accomplished over the last twelve months. I wish I could share all of the stories that I have heard, but I also know that there is a point past which a president should never talk—and that point is roughly 20-25 minutes! So I need to limit myself to some of our successes, and hope that in other fora, there will be opportunities to celebrate your hard work and excellent results.
TopRNtoBSN.com has published its 2016 listing of the Top 50 Residential BSN Programs, and Brockport’s nursing degree was on the list at 44. This ranking focuses on reputation, student support, and economic value. Dean Kittleson notes that the ranking shows that there were only seven institutions among the 50 that had enrollment less than 10,000.

Did you know that there were 560,000 downloads of Brockport scholarship from Digital Commons last year? Added to that, on June 1, we launched the digital imprint SUNY Brockport eBooks, with our first title being Dr. Cesar Torres’ book *Columna deporte: articulos sobre deporte, etica y sociedad*. Since its publication, *Sports Column: Articles on Sports, Ethics and Society*, to use the English translation, has been read by more than 500 people, and 90% of its readership is from outside the USA. This eBook initiative ([http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/sunybeb/](http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/sunybeb/)) is an excellent opportunity for the publication of quality work by our Brockport community. If you are interested in learning more about how to publish your work on this platform, please contact ebook editors Kim Myers or Jennifer Kegler.

I was thrilled to see that we have exceeded last year’s grant capture by 9%, which amounts to over $5.2 million. Notable examples of recent success include the following: grants from the National Science Foundation for over $400,000 for Laurie Cook, over $360,000 for Michel Pelletier, both of which include opportunities for undergraduate research, and over $600,000 for Sandy Miller for scholarships for economically disadvantaged, academically talented STEM majors; an ongoing grant from the NIH for almost $400,000 for Huey Hing; ongoing grants of over half a million dollars for Camp Abilities and the training of key individuals to ensure inclusion of visually impaired youth athletes by Lauren Lieberman; and over $100,000 over five years for student research in an ongoing project by Chris Norment. Other ongoing or renewed grants include Talent Search, a Federal TRIO Program that was just renewed for another five years at approximately $1.5 million. This program has been funded for more than 18 years, and our McNair program has been funded for more than 27.

The talented faculty—and administrators—winning awards include new faculty member Clayton Williams, who started last fall, Deans Malekai and Hernandez, who are engaged in service/community based projects, as well as our newest dean, Joy Bhadury, who has two pending awards he brought with him from his previous institution. I think it is also important to note that our new provost, Jim Haynes is a principal investigator for two awards, including a brand new one, as well as co-PI on the $1.2 million EPA/Central Michigan award received by Douglas Wilcox. Thus he is leading from the front as he takes on this significant new role in academic affairs.

I’d like to take a moment to remind you of last year’s Chancellor Award Winners from across campus and ask them to stand if they are present.

**Chancellor’s Awards**

**Excellence in Adjunct Teaching**
Michael Krickmire, Theatre and Music Studies
Janet Winkie, Art

**Excellence in Classified Service**
Pamela Turner, School of Health and Human Performance

**Excellence in Faculty Service**
Kadathur Lakshmanan, Computing Sciences

**Excellence in Librarianship**
Logan Rath, Library, Information & Technology Services

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**Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities**
James Cordeiro, Accounting, Economics & Finance

**Excellence in Teaching**
Austin Busch, English
Michel Pelletier, Biology
Angela Thompsell, History

Please give a round of applause to all of our award winners, who so wonderfully represent Brockport in the whole of the SUNY system.

This year, I’m pleased to announce that, in collaboration with Brockport Student Government, we will be launching a new, student-nominated, department-validated award, **The College at Brockport Teaching Excellence Award**. I believe strongly in celebrating teaching excellence, which I know occurs all across the campus. In speaking with students last year, I heard many stories of the individuals who had a transformative effect on their lives. These individuals deserve special recognition, and three teaching excellence awards will be sponsored by the President’s Office, which will include not only public recognition, but also an investment in these individuals, who will be awarded funds to support their educational practices and professional development. Look for more information on the award this spring.

Individual success should be celebrated, but institutional success is also important, and what we say about ourselves is a measure of our focus. We have signed up for various national campaigns because we know our community is wider than this campus. As part of our plan to achieve the Voter Friendly Campus designation through the Campus Vote Project, we have signed up for the AACU All In Campus Democracy Challenge, and I want to thank Kim Piatt for leading this charge. This is a national, non-partisan initiative, and it not only seeks to increase our student voter participation rate, but also ensure that our students graduate with a lifelong commitment to civic engagement. The Campus Vote Project will be profiling Brockport as one of several institutions engaging in promising practices towards voter engagement.

We signed up to the ACE Moving the Needle Campaign. The goal of this campaign is to achieve gender parity in higher education leadership by 2030. As your first female president, I have a personal stake in this campaign, but I also know from speaking with our students that this campaign is important to them.

And finally, over the last year, we have signed up to Generation Study Abroad, which aims to double the number of American students studying abroad, and I am grateful to Ralph Trecartin for his leadership of this important initiative. I like to tell students that the best gift you can give yourself is to study abroad. It is a transformative opportunity and one that I wish every student could avail themselves of. To support this campaign, we have promised to focus on securing additional funding for more study abroad scholarships, including for students in the EOP, and offer additional faculty-led study abroad programs that are dynamic and academically rigorous. If you want to know more about our pledge, or how to start a faculty-led program, do please get in touch with Ralph. In one example, led by Barb LeSavoy, students took classes at St. Petersburg University this summer, and undertook internships. This fall, several of the students will present their experiences at a roundtable accepted for the National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) Conference in Montreal. In another example, Jennifer Ramsay’s students undertook a six-week archaeological dig in Jordan and made some amazing discoveries, including two marble Aphrodite statues, a Roman military sword, jewelry and a large quantity of ceramic vessels. They also lived in a developing world village and worked with the
local Bedouin population. What an opportunity for those students! These are just two examples of the opportunities for engaged and applied learning that we offer through Brockport, and why we are so passionate about this campaign to offer more such opportunities.

A little closer to home, we offered our first-ever successful student and alumni excursion to New York City this last academic year. Thirty-five students had the opportunity meet with alumni at CNN, ABC, Fortune Footwear, and a major Wall Street firm. As a result of last year’s successful collaboration between career services, the alumni engagement office and the provost’s office, I am pleased to announce that a second trip is planned for this fall, thanks to very generous support from our alumni. In other fundraising news, we raised more than $100,000 to support our students and various projects across the campus through the Day of Giving, during which nearly 800 members of our college community pledged support. Thank you for ensuring that our Faculty and Staff fundraising goal was exceeded this year. This support is crucial to the Brockport Foundation, which is able to award more than 350 student scholarships totaling over $440,000 as a result of ongoing support through endowments and individual gifts. Over the last year, we developed a new Flying Start, Flying Finish award that is aimed at ensuring that students can start—and finish—successfully, even if unexpected costs come their way. The program is available to students who need gap funding, perhaps to help them go to a conference or acquire materials or experience that will help “launch” them after graduation.

The Education Trust has recently praised Brockport in a major report entitled *The Pell Partnership* for our six-year graduation rate for Pell eligible students. We know that economically disadvantaged students are at risk of dropping out at higher rates than our students who are more economically secure. This makes our Pell eligible graduation rate of 66%, which is well above the national average, even more remarkable.

Our students succeed best when they develop strong ties on campus, and pursue activities that have them working in partnership with others. The development of a new Community Service Tracking System revealed that 1 in 3 Brockport students completed community service during the year, totaling more than 273,000 hours. Thus I am proud to report that Brockport was one of 100 schools named as a NASPA Lead Institution for its efforts in promoting civic learning and democratic engagement.

Our campus also received an award at the SUNY Student Assembly for “Greatest Impact on Social Justice and Equality,” largely based on the work of The Movement and Brockport Advocates for Individuals with Disabilities. The Living Learning Communities program received the 2015 SUNY Outstanding Student Affairs Program Award. Our Community Conversations, launched last year by Dr. Faith Prather, who led our diversity office, and then Provost Mary Ellen Zuckerman, had a big impact on how we have difficult conversations around ethnicity and diversity, and I am grateful to each of them for the leadership they took in this important endeavor. Both Mary Ellen and Faith have returned to the classroom this year, and I want to publicly acknowledge all that they achieved in their roles, and to thank them for their service.

I am pleased to say that Megan Obourn, our new Interim Chief Diversity Officer, is launching this year’s series of conversations on September 15, and I would invite you to join us at 5 pm at Eagle’s Lookout for a session entitled “Building Community in the Face of Divisiveness.” Our work on diversity awareness and programming is ongoing, and this year we will also be launching a new Bias Incident Reporting mechanism to track and respond to incidents on campus that run counter to our focus on community and civility. We will also continue to promote our Better Community Statement.

Our athletic teams—and coaches—have had success over the last year. The women’s volleyball team were the 2015 SUNYAC Champions and advanced to the 2nd round of NCAA Tournament. The women’s gymnastics team hosted the NCGA championships and finished in second place. The women’s lacrosse team advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament, finishing 9th in the country, and their coach, Steve Wagner, was named SUNYAC Coach of the Year. The men’s lacrosse team was second in the SUNYAC conference, which is their best finish in the program’s history, and their coach, Ben Wineburg, was also named SUNYAC Coach of the Year.

**So what can we expect from the 2016-17 academic year?** Many of the goals I laid out last year will continue to be a focus. They include:

1. Integrating our planning and budget activities, with a strong focus on reducing our budget deficit
2. Commencing the North Campus Revitalization Project
3. Submitting bids to the SUNY Expanded Investment and Performance Fund
4. Launching our strategic planning process, including planning for a strategic initiative fund from 2016-17 onwards

As you can probably see, many of these goals are inextricably linked. We will continue to work on integrating our planning and budget activities, and we have made significant progress on our budget deficit. Due to hard work and some tough decisions, as well as creative thinking, the Presidential Taskforce on Budget and Planning identified $3 million in savings that will allow us to close the structural deficit. As we undertook this work, we kept a clear focus on minimizing the impact on student success and maintaining program excellence. As I have previously reported to you, we made decisions to repay a NYPAP loan early, which had a limited effect on our capital planning project timelines; to reduce our reliance on temporary staffing, both instructional and non-instructional, by 10%; to reduce our Other than Personal Services—OTPS—budget, which covers supplies, expenses, travel, contracts and equipment, by over $750,000; to adjust our summer and winter temperature settings to secure savings; to review our computer replacement cycle; and to take $300,000 out of our non-instructional staffing base, focusing primarily on high wage positions. While none of these decisions is without a downside, we felt that these choices represented the best way to fund our future and ensure fiscal strength in years to come.

The task force—and the wider community—asked us to continue to look at ways to grow revenue as well as cut costs, and this is a major focus for the upcoming year. We will reconvene a group to look at how our income generating activities can be enhanced, while not distracting us from our mission and priorities to focus on student success. We will also continue to review our administrative structures, including the number and shape of our schools, and our physical footprint in Rochester.

In relation to the North Campus Infrastructure project, the dry weather this summer as well as good project planning mean that we have made greater progress than we dared to hope. Later this fall, the areas west of Edwards should be completed. Thank you for your ongoing patience as we invest in the campus’s physical infrastructure and ensure that the area down to Tower is accessible for all students, faculty, staff and visitors. Despite the disruption, we continue to be...
complimented by visitors regarding the overall appearance of our facilities and grounds, and I want to thank our hardworking facilities staff for all that they do in this area, as well as for the friendly waves and greetings during the morning and evening dog walks! They always brighten my day.

Last year, I mentioned that we were preparing and submitting our SUNY Expanded Investment and Performance Fund RFPs. Out of the 15 proposals we submitted, we were asked to develop seven of them further, of which five were eventually funded. We were the most successful comprehensive institution in the SUNY system and received over $3 million in funding. This money will go to support the following projects: our Western New York Strategic Sourcing Initiative, our new Academic Success Center, our MBA program development, the RISE network, which is a collaboration with MCC and REOC, and our degree completion project, whereby we reach out to nearly graduated students who walked away and help them achieve a degree. To date, 160 students have graduated as a result of this project and its precursor project and an additional 15 are enrolled and actively working towards degree completion.

Perhaps the most remarkable story of success in this area relates to Robert Meringolo, a leading figure in fine arts, antiques and collectibles for more than 25 years. He was originally due to graduate in 1973, but circumstances intervened. In May 2016, he finally completed his degree, due to the hard work of the team involved in our completion agenda, led by Eileen Daniel, and was presented with his diploma at a Friends of Drake Library event at which he was speaking. Those who were in attendance can attest to the emotional impact of this event. Our completion program was featured prominently in The Democrat and Chronicle and is another example of how we are telling our story and ensuring that our good news is more widely known.

You may recall that last year, I wanted to position us to launch a strategic initiative fund, and we will do so this year, linked closely to our developing strategic plan. Our four pillars—Community, Engagement, Excellence, and Transformation—will be further outlined in the coming months, with new subcommittees formed to develop definitions, metrics and measures that will be applicable across the institution. We have also named a new subcommittee on Mission, Vision and Values. All subcommittees will share their developing thoughts and priorities with the campus through town hall meetings and online surveys. Our strategic planning website will shortly be updated to offer additional information, and I would urge you to visit it regularly this fall.

And here are some new goals. We will be commencing a project to review salaries against nationally normed data. I can't promise we will resolve all such salary issues, but I do believe we need to understand how our salaries stand up against comparable institutions so that we can determine appropriate starting salaries for our faculty, professional staff and administrators, and deal with inversion and compression as they occur. In addition, we will continue to implement our Professional Promotion Program, which began in February of this year, which has already allowed us to promote several professional employees across The College.

We are also continuing to work on raising our profile regionally and beyond. We want to work in partnership with others, and are in the early stages of discussions of a Community Clinic, focusing on the needs of the local population and in collaboration with Brockport Central School District, Strong West, and Hillside. Our Counselor Education practicum students already provide in excess of 20,000 hours of counseling to schools, colleges, and mental health agencies throughout the region. We want to build on these successes and ensure that we are serving our local community well.

We are further developing the Institute for Poverty Studies and Economic Development, and are hoping to partner with the Rochester Community Leadership Academy, an initiative of the Southwest Neighborhood Service Center, a division of the City of Rochester. We are also expanding our work with the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council. Several Brockport colleagues sit on important subcommittees of the FLREDC, including Beau Willis, Jan Pisanczyn, Nasos Mihalakas, Jose Maliekal, and me.

In addition, we are strengthening our already strong relationship with the Rochester Educational Opportunity Center. The REOC was recently awarded an additional $363,000 from SUNY, of which more than $300,000 is an adjustment to base budget. The REOC is a leader in Rochester in supporting economically disadvantaged students, and I am looking forward to seeing how our new RISE network can build on the opportunities we already offer our greater Rochester residents.

I want to thank Dean Mareus for the pivotal role he plays in the Rochester Monroe County Anti-Poverty Initiative, which is being led by double Brockport alum, Leonard Brock. These goals will help us continue to position Brockport as part of greater Rochester, because, I have so often said, I believe in a greater Brockport for a greater Rochester, and a greater Brockport for a greater world.

As we close today, I want to remind you that if you did not receive a gratitude stone at the inauguration, and would like one, please let my office know; we do have some spares and Mark Noll has also volunteered to gather and polish more of them. (And for those of you who were concerned that we had robbed Lake Ontario, the stones are from a local quarry, so there's no ethical dilemma here!)

There are many new faces on campus this fall, or people in new positions. I want you to be able to put names to faces, so as I call your name, if you are here, I would be grateful if you could stand.

Joy Bhadury, our new Dean of the School of Business Administration and Economics
Karey Pine, our new AVP for Student Affairs
Thomas Chew, our Academic Success Center Director

And people in new roles:
Ed Giblin, our new Chief of Police
Megan Obourn, our new interim Chief Diversity Officer
Eileen Daniel, our new Vice Provost, replacing Michael Fox, who has returned to the classroom. Thank you, Michael, for your years of service.
Jim Haynes, Interim Provost

We also have 65 new faculty and staff amongst us. If you joined our Brockport community in the last twelve months, will you please stand and be recognized by your colleagues? If you joined within the last 5 years, please stand. Those who have been with us between 5 and 10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, 20-25 years, and more than 25 years. Thank you so much for all that you do. Enjoy the 2016-2017 academic year!