MEMORANDUM

To:        Members of the Presidential Search Committee, SUNY Potsdam
From:  Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor
Date:  October 28th 2013
Subject:  Charge to the Committee

It is my pleasure to work with you to identify the next President of SUNY Potsdam.

With its roots tracing back to the St. Lawrence Academy which opened its doors in 1816, SUNY Potsdam is the oldest college in the SUNY System and is one of America’s first 50 colleges. Embarking on its 200th anniversary in less than 3 short years, SUNY Potsdam is proud to be recognized for its long and strong commitment to teacher training and preparation.

Also, uniquely Potsdam is home to the highly selective and world renowned Crane School of Music, which was founded in 1886. Today, The Crane School of Music is known for its long legacy of excellence in music education and performance, and it is also known as the birthplace of music education in America. It is also the only All-Steinway institution in our SUNY System.

The College has approximately 4,350 undergraduate and graduate students who can choose from a wide array of 98 undergraduate majors and minors, as well as 12 graduate degree programs. Potsdam has one of the smallest faculty/student ratios in the SUNY System, which proves its commitment to a handcrafted education for each one of its students. The College has also seen a dramatic increase in the diversity of the student body, with 18% of students self-identifying as students of color. Also, Potsdam is currently home to the System’s largest percentage of both Canadian and Native American Students.

Over the years, Potsdam has also demonstrated its dedication to improving the environment and supporting the local community. Potsdam has been consistently named to the Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges since the first year the guide was published. The newest building on campus, The Performing Arts Center has already been certified LEED Silver, and is on track to receive Gold status. Potsdam Auxiliary and College Education Services (PACES) has developed a commitment to trayless to reduce the amount of waste, while also increasing the commitment to purchase local and organic food. Each year they spend over $300,000 on goods from local farmers. Their commitment to quality food has led them to become number 1 for dining services out of all 27 colleges and universities in the SUNY System. In regards to community support, SUNY Potsdam generates approximately $375.9 million worth of economic activity in the North Country Region each year and is the 3rd largest employer. It is quite obvious that SUNY Potsdam has much to be proud of and should attract a top quality leader.

I am also very proud that the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) chose SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton to receive the 2013 Innovation Award for their
shared service achievements. The award recognizes higher education institutions for demonstrating excellence in process improvements and resource enhancements. Through Shared Services, SUNY is committed to working together, leveraging resources, and providing innovative service delivery solutions. Shared Services aims to improve core academic and student support services SUNY-wide, regionally, between campuses, or within an individual campus. The Potsdam Canton Alliance and its successes are truly setting the example for not only our SUNY System, but also for colleges across the country in how to direct more funding towards ensuring our students have the services needed for them to find success throughout their academic career.

As Chancellor, the selection of campus presidents is of utmost importance to me. I greatly rely on their leadership and counsel, and their support helps strengthen the effectiveness of my role as system head. This is why the diversity of our presidents in both culture and experience is a major priority for me. Over the past year, the State University of New York has experienced milestone accomplishments. We are committed to expanding on SUNY’s “Systemness” to ensure that we move the University forward as a national leader and a major driver of economic revitalization in New York State. With 64 campuses and many innovative ideas, I will increasingly look to our campus presidents to work collaboratively with other SUNY colleges, administrators, faculty and staff, and surrounding communities to lower cost, enhance productivity, and elevate the importance of degree completion at each of our institutions.

SUNY’s incredible network of research universities and comprehensive, technology, and community colleges comprises nearly a half-million students, 88,000 faculty and staff, and 7,669 degree programs encompassing every county of the state. Our strategic plan, The Power of SUNY, will leverage our assets and utilize our vast network of campuses and resources to maximize our educational and economic impact for New York.

In pursuit of that vision, the Search Committee is hereby directed to recruit a highly diverse group of candidates with the utmost personal and professional qualifications to fill this position. The successful candidate will be appointed by the SUNY Board of Trustees after receipt of recommendations of the Potsdam College Council and of the Chancellor, and shall serve at the pleasure of the SUNY Board of Trustees. As dictated by “The State University of New York Policies of the Board of Trustees,” before making its recommendations the Potsdam College Council shall consult with the presidential search committee. The president shall report directly to the Chancellor.

As chief administrative officer of SUNY Potsdam, the President will be responsible for the development and effectiveness of the campus. The President's broad areas of responsibility include working with the Potsdam College Council; academic affairs, which encompasses development and ensuring sufficient support of the curriculum; oversight and maintenance of facilities; fundraising and communicating the image of the college; community engagement; financial management of the institution; and resolving issues of student life. This list is by no means exhaustive and includes additional responsibilities detailed in a job description to be developed by the Potsdam College Council and search committee.

I extend a special thank you to June O’Neill for her dedicated leadership as the Chair of the Potsdam College Council. In her capable hands, with the assistance of search consultants, Jessica Kozloff, President & Senior Consultant, and Thomas Fitch, Vice President and Senior Consultant, both from Academic Search. SUNY System Administration will also have a liaison to work directly with the council, search committee and search firm. I have every confidence in this presidential search process and stand ready to assist in any way I can.

This is an exciting and challenging time for Potsdam, the State University of New York, and New York State as a whole. I look forward to working with all of you to recruit a top notch candidate and ensure a smooth transition for the next leader of this wonderful institution.