OUT & ABOUT WITH STEVE

Never before has the title of this little column been more apt. For today is, indeed, the day that I am “out and about,” leaving a post it’s been my great honor to occupy for the last nine years. As I take leave of you all, I carry with me many fine memories of challenges met, losses grieved, new adventures embraced, setbacks accommodated, and colleagueship valued and celebrated.

This evening, I had a quiet moment to read the many kind, gentle, humorous, and touching little notes many of you tucked into the farewell cake at last week’s USNH Annual Picnic. I thank you for them. But more importantly, I thank you – individually and collectively – for the fine service you provide to the students served by our University System. For many of you, the link between what you do each day and the changes that are wrought in students at Keene State College, Granite State College, the University of New Hampshire, or Plymouth State University, are probably hard to make and to understand. Yet each spring, hundreds of students of all ages, circumstances, talents, hopes and fond ambitions walk across stages at our commencement ceremonies and they do so, in no small measure, through your efforts.

As I move “out and about” to try new things, I am extremely grateful that our friend and colleague, Ed MacKay, will take on the role of chancellor. I ask that you support him and give him your best. Ours may well be one of the smallest public university systems in the United States, yet our goal should be nothing less than to be one of the very best. And as I have shared with you many times before, we shall judge ourselves, and be judged by others, in our progress toward that goal by four criteria:

- That we are truly student-centered in all decisions we make;
- That our programs and services are of recognized excellence;
- That we operate in an efficient, effective, and collaborative manner; and
- That we are a “Partner of Choice” for people, communities, agencies, businesses, and organizations across New Hampshire.

I challenge you to post these goals on your office bulletin board, shaving mirror, Facebook page, or car dashboard and ask your colleagues regularly, “How are we doing?” Knowing you all, I have great confidence that the answers will be both honest and accurate.

Warmest wishes to you all and sincere thanks for being such fine colleagues!

CATCHING UP WITH COLLEAGUES

Mary Ellen Fleeger

Mary Ellen Fleeger, the associate vice chancellor for research and planning, has a lengthy title and a penchant for data. Her position at USNH consists of coordinating academic and student affairs, and conducting research for the system, but Fleeger’s dedicated and kindhearted spirit illuminates both the inside and outside of the office.

Fleeger has been working for the system since 2003, having been recruited by Chancellor Stephen Reno from Southern Oregon University, where he was president and she was vice president of research and communication. Since relocating to the east coast, she has become known across the University System for her hard work, humor and creativity. But as a registered nurse, professor, and administrator, she finds time to combine all three of these roles into one that returns her to both the classroom and the hospital room.

The Deerfield, NH resident also teaches one graduate course in Nursing at UNH. This year she participated in the first exchange with the Nursing department from UNH and the Nursing department of the Universidad de Guanajuato in Celaya, Mexico. Fleeger has been teaching in Mexico since 1993.

This past March Fleeger, along with two other UNH nursing faculty members and 19 students, worked in a local hospital with maternal and infant care patients, adults, pediatric oncology, as well as a community health clinic in a rural setting.

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NEWS & BOARD NOTES

- Eligible NH Students Can Earn a Four-year Degree without Incurring Debt through the Expansion of the Affordable College Effort (ACE)
  ACE awards assist financially needy students attending USNH residential institutions
- Chancellor Stephen Reno Receives the Chairman’s Award from the NH High Technology Council
  This award is given out periodically to recognize an individual for significant contributions to the role of technology in New Hampshire.
- USNH FY10 Budget Focuses on Keeping Student Costs Down, Supporting Financial Aid, and Maintaining Quality
  The total direct cost of attendance for full-time undergraduate students will increase between 4.6 and 6.2 percent across the USNH institutions for the 2009-10 academic year.

COMINGS & GOINGS

Ed MacKay will be making the move from Myers to Dunlap shortly as he formally steps into the role as Chancellor on July 1. He was named Chancellor-elect last October by the USNH Board of Trustees and has been with USNH for 33 years, serving in many leadership roles during that time. Ed is also being honored by the National Association of College and University Business Officers on June 29th when he will receive their “distinguished business officer award.” This prestigious award is the highest honor given out by the association to an individual’s outstanding contributions to business and financial management in higher education. Congratulations to Ed!

Also on the move is Ken Cody, who will be moving into the office at Myers that Ed is vacating. Ken will begin serving as Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs & Treasurer as of July 1. Ken will assume new responsibilities in the areas of internal audit, risk management, major contracts, capital projects, budgeting, and treasury operations. He will continue his current duties as chief financial officer that span purchasing, controller functions (including accounts receivable, accounts payable, and payroll), and debt financing and management. Please join us in congratulating Ken on his appointment!

A big welcome to Tom Franke, our new USNH CIO and Executive Director of Enterprise Computing! Tom is assuming leadership for USNH Information Technology Policy and Planning. Tom is located on the second floor of the Dunlap Center and we are glad to have him aboard!

We said goodbye to Sharyn Stuart after 15 years with USNH. She worked in several positions at UNH and for the last several years was in Financial Services. She is looking forward to spending time with her husband and has trips planned to visit her children and grandchildren. We will miss her and wish her well.

In June, Liz Gagne was hired into an Accountant I position working for Ashley Ferenczy and Carol Mitchell after graduating from UNH in May. She maintained terrific grades while working as an Accounting Services intern for 25-30 hours a week during this past academic year. We’re pleased to have her join us!

“...I wanted the students to see how nursing is practiced in a different country, and to be able to practice without a lot of the technology and equipment we have in the US,” Fleeger explained. “I also wanted them to get an appreciation for the wonderful Mexican people and their culture.”

According to Fleeger the trip this past March was quite a success. She received feedback from students saying that the experience was life-changing.

“The students saw several deliveries a day and the hospital averaged about 30/day,” said Fleeger. “For the women giving birth in a general hospital in Mexico, they are left alone during labor, and so the students could provide labor support. It’s very different from here.”

Fleeger and her students also made home visits to people that didn’t have toilets or running water, along with some homes that had dirt floors. Although the trip was very emotional for both Fleeger and her students, they certainly reached their goals.

“My most memorable moment from Mexico was seeing the reactions from the students,” Fleeger explained. “They acquired a new understanding of a very different culture and that people are people no matter where they are. It was hard work. We worked all day every day, but it was rewarding.”

As for future plans, Fleeger would like to travel to Guanajuato to continue the nursing exchange, as she continues to work in her current position at USNH. She hopes that journeying to Mexico will expose her students to different cultures and nursing practices in North America and make them more aware of the cultural differences and the challenges that can exist when practicing nursing in different environments.

By Terri Ogan