

Student Affairs News



Dear Colleagues,

It has been an exciting first year with much being learned about UNI and the community. I thank you for your welcoming reception and your patience as I learn the needs and style of UNI. Over the course of my first year, I have discovered good people with a strong work ethic and a deep concern for students and community.

When I first arrived, I was made aware of several areas that needed attention: mental health, diversity and inclusion and faculty connections. I am happy to make you aware of several changes to address each of these areas in this newsletter.

I am so appreciative of your support and encouragement in the first year! I will continue to share exciting changes from across the division to better support our students.

Paula Knudson
Vice President, Student Affairs

Continued Progress at Counseling Center

We have worked hard to better meet the mental health needs of students. I am very thankful to Shelley O'Connell for her interim leadership of the Counseling Center and the openness of our counselors to adjust practices to better meet the needs of students. Some of the changes include:

- Group counseling
- Counselor on call
- 24/7 mental health care either via phone or text
- Suicide prevention efforts
- Triage assessment for immediate needs during the work day

I am also pleased to announce that Jennifer Schneiderman has accepted the role of interim Director, Counseling Center, beginning July 1st. Jennifer has been with us in a counseling role since September and has been instrumental in helping with the changes to better meet student needs. She has over 20 years of clinical experience in the mental health field and most recently comes to us from Waverly Health Center Behavioral Health Clinic.



Coordination of Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

We have many opportunities for progress in our inclusivity efforts. We believe that coordination of our diversity and inclusion efforts will benefit students and our community. Thus, Jamie Chidozie, Director of the Center for Multicultural Education, will be overseeing our broader inclusivity efforts. Effective July 1st, she will be retitled as the Director for Diversity, Inclusion & Social Justice with oversight for multicultural education, veteran services, and gender & sexuality services (formally LGBT* Center).



We have spent significant time partnering with Catering Services to better meet the cultural authenticity for our cultural banquets. This is a learning opportunity for all of us, and we continue to make progress.

Changes with Dean of Students



I also met the year with an opportunity to serve as interim Dean of Students during spring semester. This was eye opening and I'm appreciative of so many who stepped up to help navigate the semester. After numerous conversations with colleagues around campus, I am pleased to announce that Allyson Rafanello has agreed to serve as Dean of Students effective June 1, 2018.

We are in the process of searching for an Assistant Dean of Students and hope to have someone on board by the beginning of fall semester. We have also committed to building partnerships across campus and utilizing a philosophy of 360 communication to better support students and partners.

The division has also adopted a parent and family practice outlining this philosophy.

The division of Student Affairs acknowledges the role and importance of parents and families in the success of our students. We are committed to recognizing and responding to the concerns and suggestions of parents and families by:

- *Sharing information regarding their student with parents and families to the extent permitted by UNI policy and federal and state law*
- *Communicating opportunities about student learning, student development, university processes, and resources*
- *Listening and hearing various perspectives from parents and support networks*

Updates to Student Accessibility Services

Student Disability Services will continue to report to the Dean of Students, with a location move to ITT 7 to partner more closely with Exam Services to better serve students and faculty. Additionally, Student Disability Services will be changing its name to Student Accessibility Services to reflect the focus on access and not disability. Student Accessibility Services will be rolling out Accommodate, a new electronic system for communicating accommodations with students and faculty more efficiently.

Campus Food Pantry Coming Soon

A task force on food and essentials insecurity worked over spring semester to explore the needs of our students. A survey was conducted with 1,425 UNI students responding. The results indicate that UNI students are experiencing food insecurity.

- 16% of respondents have low or very low food security
- Of minoritized students who completed the survey, 50% have low or very low food security
- Of first-generation respondents, 42% have low or very low food security
- 88% of respondents express support for a food and essentials pantry on campus

Division of Student Affairs

118 Gilchrist | University of Northern Iowa | Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0010
www.uni.edu/studentaffairs