



DAEMEN

COLLEGE

A World of Opportunity

Office of the President

February 26, 2018

Daemen College
Faculty and Staff

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing with another update. While Daemen and other private colleges are facing increased assaults from the state and, now, federal governments, we are continuing to respond vigorously and creatively to maintain and even strengthen our viability as a college of national distinction.

As I mentioned in my last letter, Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget is proposing to eliminate new direct Bundy Aid for Daemen and other colleges. Bundy Aid is direct, unrestricted aid that campuses earn on the basis of numbers of degrees conferred and is used as student aid. If this proposal is adopted in Albany, Daemen stands to lose approximately a quarter of a million dollars in aid that we would have provided to our students. This would be a major and unexpected blow to the college.

I want you to know that the college has been very proactive in attempting to get this provision withdrawn from the final budget. I personally have sent formal letters to fifteen state senators and Assembly members, and several of us have lobbied additional legislators. In addition, the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York—as well as its hundred-plus member institutions—has been extremely aggressive in lobbying to reverse the cuts to Bundy Aid. These efforts are still ongoing. We should know in mid-March if all of our efforts will bear fruit.

Adding to these troubles is that the U.S. President's recently proposed budget provides for deep cuts to federal student aid. It eliminates the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, an assistance grant provided to college students with the greatest need. It also cuts the Federal Work Study program by nearly a half of a billion dollars and restricts who can receive that aid. The proposed budget also seeks to cut over two hundred billion dollars from student loan programs.

Needless to say, if enacted these measures will have a significant negative impact on Daemen and our ability to attract new students. We have already begun efforts to lobby legislators to protect these important levels of federal financial aid for college students, and I urge you to write your representatives

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to register your position on these proposed cuts. The federal government has supported student financial aid for many decades, and we believe that a concerted lobbying effort to protect this aid has a good chance of being successful.

As I have been reporting to you, despite these assaults on higher education, we at Daemen have been proactive and strategic and are managing to stay ahead of these challenges. We eliminated several administrative positions, moved the Office of Financial Aid under the purview of Enrollment Management so that both areas can work closely together, implemented a new financial aid leveraging system that uses sophisticated analytics to improve enrollment yield rates, reorganized existing college units to create a more modern Communications and Marketing Department so that we can market the college strategically and efficiently, moved Veterans Services to Student Affairs so that we could centralize support services and thereby recruit substantially more student veterans, and implemented a new three-year projection budget planning process that will help us better plan for the future. In addition, we are now one of the first colleges in the region to sponsor an e-sports team and are therefore a destination for a whole new population of prospective students. And, of course, our status as the region's only NCAA Division II athletics program continues to pay dividends in the form of new cohorts of highly motivated and academically well-prepared students, several of whom are international students.

These many measures are paying off; while it is too early to tell how robust next year's student enrollment will be, preliminary data suggests that the number of incoming veteran students is up, as are student athletes, and we hope to see a rise in students wishing to study in traditional arts and sciences disciplines at Daemen. This is indeed promising news!

Most importantly, our central strategic effort continues to show great success: we are continuing to introduce new niche academic programs that draw on our strengths and that have the potential to attract new students. For example, our newly created program in applied behavior analysis is already admitting students to its second cohort (the first cohort has 50 students), and our equally new dietetics program has a full-capacity initial cohort of 12 students. So, the college's strategic vision of setting itself apart from other colleges by continuing to introduce high-quality and unique niche academic programs, especially at the graduate level, is working well. Our distinctive institutional identity clearly distinguishes us from other colleges in the region and beyond. I would like to applaud those in Academic Affairs and in the various academic departments who have been working so hard to keep Daemen on the cutting edge.

So as you can see, my message continues to be mixed: we and other private colleges both in New York and nationally are experiencing unprecedentedly challenging—and even existentially threatening—times. Yet, Daemen has from the beginning responded decisively, strategically, and with alacrity.

I look forward to providing a full account of where we are as a college at the spring State of the College Address on April 20 at 3:30 in the Social Room. I hope to see you there.

Cordially,



Gary A. Olson
President