

To: University Faculty Council

From: Tim O'Donnell, Provost

Date: September 11, 2025

President Paino will be joining the upcoming UFC meeting and will offer an oral report on construction, strategic planning and other pertinent issues. I also encourage all to review the September Academic Affairs report to the Board of Visitors which includes a great deal of information about all that is happening across the division of Academic Affairs. It can be found in BoardDocs under the September 18-19 2025 meeting. Here are a few additional updates:

Academic program approval: As of today, we continue to wait for feedback on the MSN proposal (the new process does not appear to be more nimble). The MS in AI in Business is almost ready to go to SCHEV, along with the two certificates approved by the UFC in the spring and the BOV this summer. Technical change requests to create a BFA in Theatre and an MS in Geography are also sitting with SCHEV. The MS in Counseling is starting to work its way through university governance and a new adult degree program (e.g. a Bachelor's in Interdisciplinary Studies) working group has been formed as a combined effort of CAS and COB.

College names: A number have asked about this. The lesson of the past 18 months is that the path through SCHEV is long and does not always end with the result for which we have consensus. For example, SCHEV staff, over the last year, have made it clear that they expect us to have a college called "Education and Human Development" because that is what they have approved elsewhere in the Commonwealth. However, we will still need to prepare the voluminous package required for such a change to be approved.

Search for a new Dean: As many of you know, Dean Kelly has announced his retirement at the end of this academic year. Pete has been an important leader at a critical time for teacher preparation and has been recognized throughout the region and the Commonwealth as a steady voice on K-12 education. We will miss him. The search for a new dean who will continue to support our strength in education while growing new programs in human development, including nursing and counseling is underway. The search committee includes: Janet Atarathi-Dugan, Patrick Catullo, Keith Mellinger (chair), Christy Pack, Kyle Schultz, and Laura Wilson.

AI initiatives: The AI task force continues to work to identify a suite of AI tools that would be available institution-wide and which would be secure, providing protections for privacy and support for accessibility. The goal is to have these in place prior to the spring semester.

Digital accessibility: We continue to make progress on this important initiative with the goal of having support resources available when the Canvas shells of courses go live during the second week of October. Expect to hear more soon.