

12-2016

Academic Affairs Update, December 2016

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Recommended Citation

University of Northern Iowa. Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs., "Academic Affairs Update, December 2016" (2016). *Academic Affairs Update*. 22.
<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/provostnews/22>

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December Academic Affairs Update



Office of the Provost and Executive
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Interview: Dean Gaëtane Jean-Marie



COE Dean Gaëtane Jean-Marie

In June, Dr. Gaëtane Jean-Marie joined UNI as the College of Education's (COE) new dean. Dr. Jean-Marie holds a doctorate from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro as well as degrees from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. She recently took time from her busy schedule to be interviewed.

Rod Library Wins National Award for Quest

The American Library Association recently awarded Rod Library's innovative fundraising approach with the 2016 \$2500 Gale Cengage Learning Financial Development Award.

The award, for which all types of libraries are eligible, recognizes innovative projects that develop income from

Q: Now that the Board of Regents has approved UNI's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, what do you believe is one significant way in which COE uniquely can enact the Plan's mission, vision, unifying goal/supporting goals, initiatives, and/or metrics?

UNI's Plan serves as a blueprint to inform our process towards envisioning COE's future and elevating the university's tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service. As the new dean, I've been in initial discussions with the leadership team, faculty, and staff about where we've been and where we are, to get insights about where we want to go--and we will further embark upon this through our strategic planning.

The momentum of moving forward with the university's Plan will enable COE to focus on areas of positive progress, with additional care and attention to the university's unifying goal of student success, and nurturing accountability areas of educational excellence, scholarship and creative activity, community engagement, diversity and inclusion, and campus vitality.

Building on the foundation of COE and working collectively in stabilizing and moving the COE forward in significant ways, I'm excited about our future efforts to advance the profile and productivity of the College, and measuring our progress.

Q: In your "Welcome [statement] from the College of Education Dean," you make reference to how COE is "expanding in the modern world," and elsewhere you've mentioned the many programs, initiatives, and efforts COE offers. Of these, what program/initiative/effort would you say is one example as to how COE is attentive to today's world?

At the undergraduate level, in addition to field experience opportunities in Iowa and through our teaching centers in several states in the U.S., our pre-service students also have opportunities globally in our world teaching centers (such as Costa Rica, Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil, Ireland, Thailand and several others). These opportunities enhance the breadth and depth of students' knowledge and skills, and increase their global awareness and cultural understanding so they are successfully prepared when they graduate.

At the graduate level, we offer some of our programs fully online, attracting international students and expanding educational attainment in the modern world. These endeavors are indicative of the many exciting

alternative sources.

Using UNI's crowdfunding platform PAWprint, Rod Library developed a video, *North Iowa Jones and the Quest for the Surface Hub*, chronicling Rod's initiative to purchase Microsoft Surface Hub for Rod's Learning Commons. This technology enables users to collaborate, videoconference, and annotate pack-and-go presentations.

The video was supported by companion media marketing efforts, to solicit contributions to the campaign

opportunities that impact our commitment to improving the quality of life in Iowa and the nation, as well as globally. There are glimmers everywhere around us of this impact and possibility.

Q: When initially visiting UNI, you noted the institution's dedication to an "upward trajectory" as we move forward. As a UNI community member who's interacted with a wide cross-section of constituents since June, how would you now characterize the institution's conceptualization of this trajectory?

One of the areas that was a focal point during my initial visit at UNI was a recognition by senior administration and faculty of the lack of diversity of the student body and of faculty and staff composition. Given the increasing demographic shift in Iowa, UNI's quest for increased diversity is instrumental to improve its communities both in the public and private sector, and to help our students succeed in a highly diverse world.

This is attainable by exposing our students to a variety of competing ideas through perspectives held by individuals of different cultures, races/ethnicities, socio-economic classes, genders, and sexual orientations.

In the short time I've been at UNI, I've become aware of strategic initiatives to recruit, develop, and retain diverse students through our academic programs and student support services. In a recent enrollment report, UNI's first-year class had the most diverse student composition (11.2%), signifying the institution's dedication to an upward trajectory.

However, there is still much work to be both ignited and accomplished about diversity and inclusion (e.g., admissions strategies, talent acquisition of faculty and staff, curricular development and pedagogical practices, student services, etc.). Diversity matters.

Q: Similarly regarding your experiences here so far, what would you say is an especially memorable or profound interaction, event, etc. that to you represents what UNI has to offer?

The best way I can capture it is that there's a spirit of generosity that permeates not only UNI but also the community. Through a variety of gestures, people have been very welcoming not only towards me but also

and update donors on the campaign's status--an aspect that allowed Rod Library's fundraising project to go viral.

The award committee noted of Rod Library's application its clarity of project description, need for the fundraising campaign, and evaluation of the crowdfunding platform strategy, as well as the significance of crowdfunding as a revenue stream for libraries.

Dean of Library Services Chris Cox accepted the award during the American Library Association's

in how faculty and staff support each other, our students and alumni, and the community.

There are numerous examples I've observed that illuminate the thoughtfulness and care demonstrated every day at UNI. For instance, I've been meeting with alumni, donors, and emeritus faculty, and these events are coordinated by COE's development staff, Jane Halverson and sometimes including Andrea Elliott. Their preparation in advance of our visits, and the care and attention to detail that they provide to each person I've met, has been superb. It's no wonder UNI has a large network of alumni and active donors who are committed to this institution.

Q: You enjoy gardening as a favorite past-time, and you've lived in several places nationally and globally. How do you find gardening to be in the Midwest?

When I moved here, I wanted to get started on planting flowers and herbs. I visited several nurseries and farmers' markets to learn about what grows well in this climate, which I find to be windy. This was a different climate compared to other places I've lived. I talked to local experts about the soil and obtained successful tips to grow plants, herbs and vegetables.

For this season, I started with perennials, select annuals, and herbs such as basil, thyme, mint and parsley. While some plants didn't survive, I'm excited about next season, especially spring, because of the purple and yellow tulips I recently planted in my garden.

Annual
Conference.

Click [here](#) to see *Northern Iowa Jones and the Quest for the Surface Hub*.

To learn more about PAWprint, click [here](#).

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