



The Fund for Science and Technology

Message from the Co-Chairs

This is the most recent in a series of conversations with Ms. Janet Perna '70 and Dr. William Pietrafacc, co-chairs of *Visions↔Solutions: The Fund for Science and Technology*.

You shared big news with us in our last visit, important enough to recap?

Janet: We were thrilled to report in the last issue of *Reflections* that because of the gifts, commitments, and hard work of alumni, faculty, and friends of the College, *The Fund for Science and Technology* had surged past its goal of raising \$4 million in gifts and grants. This achievement is even more remarkable when you consider that it was done despite the longest global recession in generations. Surpassing our financial goals in this environment makes it clear that SUNY Oneonta alumni and friends understand just how important the success of *The Fund for Science and Technology* is to the future of our College, our students, and in many ways our society.

Before Bill and I say anymore today, I'd like to take a moment to offer our sincere thanks to each of you who has made a gift to *The Fund for Science and Technology* to date. Your support of this initiative means a great deal to us, and I assure you that it will have a tremendous impact on SUNY Oneonta.

Bill: Thank you, Janet. That is a very important point to make. As is the case with so many monumental accomplishments, the success that *The Fund for Science and Technology* has experienced is a result of the work and contributions of so many. I too have been impressed by the level of support we have

seen for *The Fund* from graduates of all academic backgrounds.

When last we spoke, Janet and I also shared the news that the College at Oneonta Foundation Board of Directors had voted unanimously to extend the public phase of *The Fund for Science and Technology* through December 31, 2010. The Board's decision to do this underscores their understanding of how significant *The Fund for Science and Technology* is to maintaining and building on our reputation for strong academic quality. Doing so also provides an additional opportunity for alumni and friends to take an active part in supporting *The Fund*.

In the past we've talked a great deal about the scholarship opportunities that have been created through *The Fund*. Would you like to share with our readers any of the other impacts *The Fund* is making?

Bill: In America today, there is a pronounced and troubling achievement gap in both STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education

and workforce readiness. According to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, at the K-12 level, American students ranked 25th in math and 21st in science among students in 30 industrialized countries. As someone who has dedicated my life to science education at the college level, I will tell you that this is simply not acceptable.

These findings, and others like them, have frightening implications for the future. As the 21st century progresses, the need for citizens and workforces with strong knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics will only continue to grow. For our country to remain one of the world's leading economic powers, and home to the world's top innovators, we must address these challenges today.

Through *The Fund for Science and Technology*, we are doing just that at SUNY Oneonta today.

Janet: Bill is not speaking in hyperbole. Right now at our College, the first SUNY Oneonta Noyce Scholars are training in a program specifically designed to prepare science majors, students who possess strong command and appreciation of

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CAMPAIGN GOAL:
\$4 MILLION

raised by June 2010

TOTAL GIFTS,
GRANTS & PLEDGES:
\$4.8 MILLION

as of September 21, 2010



Pictured (left to right, front) are students Kaitlyn Austin, Erica Bornhoft, Dan Cole and Anna Downey, representing part of the first class of SUNY Oneonta Noyce Scholars. Behind them are Drs. James Ebert and Paul Bischoff, two of the professors who will implement the program.

science, to become a new generation of highly successful science teachers. Through a combination of academic, experiential, informal science education and practical experiences both inside and outside the classroom, this program will train our students to be the science educators that are needed in the 21st century.

The program, funded through a \$900,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, is being implemented under the direction of Dr. Paul Bischoff of the Secondary Education Department with Dr. John Schaumlöffel of the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department, Drs. James Ebert and Todd Ellis of the Earth

Sciences Department, and Dr. Paul French of the Physics and Astronomy Department.

This innovative program is just one of the concrete examples of how *The Fund for Science and Technology* is impacting the lives of today's SUNY Oneonta students and changing the way science education is approached and administered at our College.

So how can our readers help?

Janet: As I have shared before, as an alumna of SUNY Oneonta and someone who enjoyed a successful career in the fields of science and technology, I know how important a strong foundation in the STEM disciplines is to our students. As graduates, we have the opportunity now to help SUNY Oneonta develop the scientists, researchers, teachers, public

servants, business people, and citizens who will be leading our communities in the years to come. I want to make sure that these individuals are poised to succeed in any endeavor—one way we can do that is by making a gift to *The Fund for Science and Technology*.

Bill: This is likely the last opportunity that Janet and I will have to discuss *The Fund for Science and Technology* before it ends in December. For that reason, I'd like to make a final appeal to ask friends and alumni of the College to join us now by making a gift to *The Fund*. With your support, *The Fund for Science and Technology* will provide our College—and our students—with the resources to meet the challenges of a world increasingly driven by science and technology.

Please make your gift to *The Fund for Science and Technology* today.



Janet Perna '70 is a retired General Manager of Information Management Solutions—IBM Software Group and currently serves on the Board of Directors of The College at Oneonta Foundation, Deltek Inc.,

Flexera Software, Red Prairie, Inc, and Varicent Software. She is on the advisory committee for Georgian Partners and is the founder of The Perna Foundation for Hope. Janet resides in Stamford, CT, and Incline Village, NV.



Bill Pietrafacc is a Professor and Chair of the Biology Department at the College at Oneonta. He is Past President of the College at Oneonta Foundation Board of Directors

and Chair of the Advancement Committee.