

# Message from the Co-Chairs

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



The Fund for  
Science and Technology

## Have you visited the Oneonta campus recently?

**Janet:** Yes, in January I had a wonderful visit to campus, where I met with President Donovan, the College Foundation Board of Directors, and a number of faculty members and students. I also had the opportunity to have lunch with Michele Daly, the recipient of the Women in Technology Scholarship that I endowed last year. It was thrilling to see the difference that this scholarship is making for a very talented student. It was also energizing to see how excited and committed the College community is to the success of our new initiative to enhance academic quality and scholarships for science and technology at the College. I left campus assured that with the help of the Fund for Science and Technology, the College is headed in exactly the right direction.

**Bill:** Janet and I also took this opportunity to tour the College's Science Building I, where major renovations are currently underway. After touring, I can assure you that these renovations are impressive. The design creates multi-use spaces, while energy efficiency and the reuse of some of the original building materials have reduced both the overall environmental footprint and cost of the project. The new instruction and lab spaces in the building are absolutely magnificent (in the interest of full disclosure, I did take a peek at my new office too!). When it officially re-opens in Fall 2008, students will return to a building that offers opportunities for collaborative lab work and research the likes of which have never before been available on our campus. While Science Building I will provide a new home for the sciences, the Fund for Science and Technology will create the new opportunities.

## What kind of feedback have you received about the Fund for Science and Technology?

**Janet:** In my conversations with students, College officials, fellow alumni, and friends, a recurring theme always arises: Science and technology literacy is absolutely imperative to the success of not only individuals, but our society as a whole. We all agree that a strong understanding of science-related concepts is an increasingly important aspect of a full liberal arts education. And finally, for the College at Oneonta to continue to attract the highest quality students and faculty, we must make investments now in our science and technology capabilities. Everyone I have talked to agrees that the Fund for Science and Technology will fill a critical educational need. By working together with the College at Oneonta, we as alumni and donors can ensure that the College has the resources needed to offer scholarships, increase research capabilities, and incorporate fully science and technology into every course of study.

**Bill:** I have heard similar sentiments. My colleagues here at the College, as well as all of the people I have spoken with in the community, absolutely understand the importance of implementing the Fund for Science and Technology at this time.

## How do you think the Fund for Science and Technology will benefit non-science majors?

**Janet:** I've already mentioned the importance of science and technology literacy to a strong liberal arts education, but I also see an opportunity for this initiative to make a real and lasting impact for decades to come. Imagine an elementary school teacher who does not have a strong grasp of science and technology. Because of his or her lack of comfort or fear of the subject matter, the teacher may shy away from truly engaging our young students in the sciences. After years of only touching the edges of a science curriculum, by the time these students are in middle and high school—they too are then afraid of science, perpetuating a cycle that has existed for far too long in our educational system. The teachers who are graduating today will be instructing young people around the country well into the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We need to provide them the knowledge and science literacy they need to inspire scientific curiosity not only in the next generation, but the generation that will follow them. It is my heartfelt belief that the steps Oneonta takes now to bolster our science and technology programs and science literacy across academic disciplines will impact our communities well into the next century.

**Bill:** As Janet has just stated so well, the impact of the Fund for Science and Technology will indeed be far reaching. To me, this single example is reason enough for anyone to support the Fund for Science and Technology! While this initiative, the first in the history of the College to target specific disciplines, will provide greater resources to our science-related programs and scholarships, the Fund for Science and Technology will give all of our students the scientific and technological literacy that is critical today in all of our lives. With the help of alumni and friends, the College at Oneonta will become an even stronger leader in education among public liberal arts institutions.



Janet Perna '70 is the retired General Manager of Information Management Solutions—IBM Software Group and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Cognos Inc. and Deltek Inc. She resides in Stamford, CT, and Incline Village, NV.



Bill Pietraface is a Professor and Chair of the Biology Department at the College at Oneonta. He is the Vice President of the College at Oneonta Foundation Board of Directors and chair of the Advancement Committee.

A tour of the ongoing renovations of Science Building I will be available on Reunion Weekend. Call (607) 436-2825 for more information.