



University Provost
Office of the Provost

1 February 2007

Dear University Community,

Well, winter has finally arrived and just in time for the spring 2007 semester! With the arctic winds blowing and the snow falling, I would like to wish everyone a *warm* welcome back to campus and my best wishes for a terrific semester.

The start of the new year and the beginning of the semester evoke a sense of anticipation. And, this anticipation is not unwarranted. Under the broader framework of *UB2020*, our campus community in many distinct and important ways is contributing to our vision of academic excellence. And, I would like to truly thank and congratulate our entire University community for your thoughtful participation in evolving the expression of our tripartite mission so we may embrace the opportunities of the 21st century.

Subsumed within our educational mission, we continually challenge ourselves to provide transformative experiences across the vast spectrum of our educational activities. With this, we are mindful of our goal of graduating students who are intellectually adept and ethically responsible at creating and applying new knowledge to understand and lead efforts to improve their local and global communities. Beginning this week, as part of this wide spectrum of University educational activities, UB's Distinguished Speakers Series will welcome to our campus some of the foremost explorers, thinkers, and activists who are leading the environmental sustainability public policy debate. As a campus community dedicated to improving the health and sustainability of our planet, we hope our faculty, staff, and students will take this semester to participate in *A Greener Shade of Blue: UB's Environmental Leadership* by bringing their environmental teachings, creative activities, and scholarship to our broader campus community through special lectures, exhibitions, and other activities.

Also within this spectrum of distinctive and transformative educational experiences, this past fall semester, we inaugurated our Discovery Seminar Program. The Discovery Seminar Program spans the disciplines with faculty from Architecture, Engineering, English, the Libraries, Management, Mathematics, Pharmacy, and Physics offering courses designed to pique students' interest through, in part, connecting academic disciplines to the dynamic nature of our 21st century world. Eager to be part of this opportunity to bring my research to our undergraduate students, this semester I am teaching a Discovery Seminar course – Data Mining: Myth and Reality. While we have just begun our course, thus far this has been a truly wonderful experience for me. The students are eager, engaged, and active learners; and I suspect I will learn much from them as I hope they will learn from me.

I am excited to announce that, beginning next fall semester, UB will introduce two Undergraduate Academies – Civic Engagement and Research Exploration. Each Undergraduate Academy will be led by a Master Scholar who will facilitate connections between classroom-based theoretical learning and

experiential applications by focusing on an area of common interest. In the Civic Engagement Academy students will have many and varied opportunities to broaden their perspective and knowledge regarding the salient social, political, and cultural issues of today and, based on their informed perspective will learn how to foster positive societal change.

Students in our Research Exploration Academy will have the opportunity to be active participants in the grandeur of the research university. Through the mentorship of our faculty, students will become active inquirers and discoverers. Through these mentored experiences, students will formulate novel questions and seek answers to those inquiries through their own laboratory research, humanities related scholarship, and original creative expressions. Within the next year, we hope to introduce two additional Learning Academies building upon our prominence as a global institution and as an innovative leader in the arts.

Across our entire academic enterprise, our shared priority is the pursuit and practice of academic excellence. This pursuit includes creating and nurturing an academic culture which thrives on innovation and excellence. In more tangible terms, ensuring our undergraduate and graduate academic programs are progressive and rigorous is facilitated through a formalized departmental Academic Program Review process. Through this Program Review, our faculty are examining their broader academic and research vision, undergraduate and graduate educational objectives, and the totality of their students' educational experiences.

Under the auspices of UB's Graduate School, we have established the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars. This office has become an important place for our postdoctoral scholars to learn about off-campus housing and to acquaint our new scholars to life in the Buffalo/Niagara region. Moreover, the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars sponsors enhanced training opportunities through targeted seminars and research symposia. Wanting to introduce our postdoctoral scholars to our University community, the Office hosts social functions for our scholars across the disciplines.

We, at the University at Buffalo, are especially proud of our rich international history and our contemporary leadership in international education. Not content to rest on our laurels, this semester under the leadership of our Vice Provost for International Education - Professor Stephen Dunnett, I have invited a group of distinguished faculty to contemplate an International and Globalization Vision and Strategy for our University. I anticipate this vision for international education will be a broadened expression of all areas of our tripartite mission: Education for Global Citizenship; Innovative and Impactful Research and Scholarship and Creative Activities; and Public Service for the Benefit of our Local and World Communities.

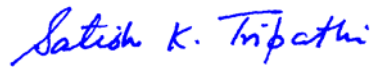
The University at Buffalo, we believe, is much greater than national rankings would suggest. In an active attempt to correct this perception, I am implementing a Faculty Recognition Program. A major objective of this Program is to help bring to our faculty well-deserved national and international recognition for their outstanding accomplishments as scholars and teachers. Through recognizing the laudable achievements of our faculty, we will further enhance the University at Buffalo's culture of academic excellence and national/international reputation for innovative research, provocative scholarship, and transcendent creative activities.

In this new millennium, higher education institutions are being called upon more than ever before in our history to be the incubators of knowledge, discovery, and innovation. Today in many ways, we are witnessing the previously unimagined benefits of the collaborative work of our faculty conducted under our University's unique multidisciplinary framework – the Strategic Strengths Initiative.

Through this multidisciplinary research paradigm, faculty are developing projects so we can understand and resolve societally relevant questions of the 21st century. A vital example of these collaborations, this semester five multi-disciplinary teams of investigators were awarded seed-funding through the *UB2020* Research and Development Activities Fund. With the help of UB seed-funding, we believe these investigators will have the very real opportunity to expand their research and impact through funding from external funding agencies.

In closing, I would like to thank our entire University community for your commitment to academic excellence throughout the many manifestations of our tripartite mission. I wish our entire campus community a genuinely enriched semester filled with exciting challenges and rewarding successes.

Best wishes,



Satish K. Tripathi
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs