



Sept. 21, 2021

Dear Members of the University Community,

Debra Pellegrino, Ed.D., who has faithfully served the University as Dean of the Panuska College of Professional Studies for the past 15 years, has decided to conclude her tenure as dean in January 2022. On behalf of the University, I wish to thank her for her inspiring leadership and dedicated service to the University.

With tremendous energy and vision, Dean Pellegrino has worked with her colleagues to develop and guide PCPS's 23 undergraduate majors and more than a dozen graduate and doctoral programs. These programs, which combine theory and practice, have continued to grow and thrive over the past 15 years. PCPS departments include counseling and human services, education, health administration and human resources, health and human performance, nursing, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Recently, new programs on the undergraduate and graduate level were added to the College including the B.S. in Communication Science Disorders, the M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis and the M.S. in Speech and Language Pathology.

Passionate about Jesuit education, Dean Pellegrino has ensured that Ignatian pedagogies are embedded throughout the student educational experience at PCPS. During her tenure as dean, T.A.P.E.S.T.R.Y., a four-year professional development program was added for all PCPS undergraduates. First-year PCPS students participate in the Blessing of the Books, an annual book collection program she began in 2007 at the very start of her time at Scranton and which has distributed nearly 35,000 books to children in need. She has written editorials and initiated programming to encourage literacy, locally and beyond.

Under Dean Pellegrino's guidance the University built and dedicated the Edward R. Leahy Jr. Hall. This eight-story, 116,360-square-foot building with 25 state-of-the-art laboratories, nine traditional and active-learning classrooms, and multiple simulation environments has become the home of Health and Human Performance, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy departments. The project also included important new resources in and renovations to McGurrin Hall, such as the nurse anesthesia simulation center.

During her tenure as Dean, Dr. Pellegrino became the Executive Director of the Leahy Community Health and Family Center, which now houses five different pro bono clinics: medical, counseling, low vision, physical therapy and community health education. The Center is also home to the Alice V. Leahy Food Pantry for the underserved of Lackawanna County. By

supporting these important community-based initiatives under the Dean's leadership, the students, faculty and staff continue to be "women and men for and with others."

The annual U.S. Conference on disAbility continues to grow and the University serves as the executive hub for the Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence, a regional initiative designed to deliver a full array of services and support for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Under Dean Pellegrino's stewardship, the Leahy Endowment continues to grow in support of faculty and student research that focuses on pediatric disability studies. She remains grateful to the College's many donors for their continued support for the students and faculty of PCPS.

"Embracing the Call to Care" is an apt description of Dean Pellegrino's service throughout her time at the University. She has written about that theme in articles in AJCU's *Connections* and used the theme to celebrate Leahy Hall's completion. Needless to say, her accomplishments and successes, and those of her students and graduates, are as boundless as her energy. I am very grateful for all of this and especially for Dean Pellegrino's visible and authentic dedication to the Catholic faith and to Ignatian spirituality.

Dean Pellegrino will be granted a well-deserved sabbatical while she discerns her future steps and she will be named Dean Emeritus.

The University will immediately begin the process of initiating a national search for Dean Pellegrino's successor. I have asked Provost Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D., to assemble a search committee so that we can advertise this position in early fall and hope to fill the position in summer 2022. Information about an Interim Dean will be shared in the coming weeks.

Please join me in wishing Dean Pellegrino well and in thanking her for her wonderful service to the University. May God's blessings be upon her now and always.

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Joseph Marina, S.J.  
President