

# An Invitation from the Dean

Colleagues,

I am thrilled with the evolution of our May Faculty College. It builds upon traditions of substantive, effective faculty development, from the Summer Writing Institute, to the FYP planning conference formerly at Canaras, to the programs offered throughout the year by the CTL, all times when faculty gather to explore new ideas, share experience, and enjoy time spent together in earnest conversation about our profession.

This year I am especially keen to urge your participation. The title of the conference – “Cultivating Intentionality in Student Learning” - does not simply capture the unifying theme of the sessions, but names what I believe to be the direction of the academic program over the next few years. As a university we are poised to take the next step in realizing our potential, and this step must include a transformation of what we expect of our students. All of the sessions in the program explore, in one way or another, how to cultivate seriousness of academic purpose in our students, how to organize our teaching in ways that ask students continually to reflect on, to revise, and to pursue their academic inquiry as an evolving project, and most importantly, how to situate this project explicitly and consciously as their reason for being here. I think we are poised to make demonstrable progress on this goal, and St. Lawrence will be changed for the better in direct proportion to the extent that we can achieve it.

This year’s May Faculty College is designed to engage faculty with some of the programs and initiatives that contribute to more intentional learning. More importantly, however, the conference will be a collective exploration of how the different strategies overlap and depend on one another. In this way, I hope that the May Faculty College will be something of a strategic planning conference on the future of our academic program. In the opening plenary Christine Zimmerman and I will collaborate on a presentation that will begin with an analysis of what our students report about the quality of their academic engagement and conclude with a case that we are poised to re-think the academic program in ways that will deepen that engagement. I look forward to talking about these ideas with you; the more points of view that are represented, the more inclusive the conversation, the more reliable the outcome will be.

Please, then, plan to participate in all of the sessions or as many as you can make work with your schedule. The conference planning group has created an ANGEL site so that you can get a closer look at the topics around which the sessions will be organized. For each topic you will find a brief description, readings that will be discussed in the sessions, and an account of the pilot work you will be invited to participate in next year. I encourage you to spend some time looking through these materials, whether or not you will be able to join us for this conference. You will notice on the back page on this call that your participation will be recognized with modest compensation.

I look forward to your contributions to these important conversations.

Thank you,

Grant Cornwell

Vice President of the University and Dean of Academic Affairs