



OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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DATE: September 2018

TO: Parents of Entering Students

FROM: Courtney Battista Bish  
Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students

Congratulations on assisting your son/daughter to this point in their life. I am sure it is a momentous occasion for both you and your child as they begin this new chapter. We are looking forward to an action-packed and exciting year. Homecoming and Family Weekend (Parents' Weekend) is Friday-Sunday, September 14 - 16. Our hope is that you will return to campus for a fun-filled weekend. For accommodations, check out this link: [http://www.canton.edu/about\\_canton/hotels.html](http://www.canton.edu/about_canton/hotels.html). Our Parents' webpage (<http://www.canton.edu/parents/>) has lots of other helpful information for you as well.

Our campus ethos is "Everyone is Welcome Here" and we truly want your student to succeed at SUNY Canton. We will do everything in our power to support them, and are just a phone call away if you have questions or we can assist you in helping your student succeed.

Some helpful advice to ensure your student's success would be to encourage them to ask questions. Far too often I encounter students who are "in crisis" for one reason or another. If they had only asked some simple questions early on in the incident, more than likely the crisis would never have occurred. They don't need to worry about who to ask because, if a faculty or staff person can't answer the question, I am confident they will either find out the answer for your son/daughter or direct them to the appropriate individual or office.

Your student's educational endeavor during their attendance at college will hopefully reflect positive experiences so necessary for good citizenship and personal development. Students are drawn to SUNY Canton by its reputation as an institution of quality. We value this reputation, but we also recognize the importance of Canton's atmosphere – a place where everyone is welcome– which contributes greatly to the intellectual and personal development of our students. This is a campus which encourages learning "in as well as out" of the classroom; a place in which to make valued and lasting friendships with a variety of people of many varied backgrounds and viewpoints; a place of energy and reflection; a place rich in opportunities for active involvement; a place to have fun.

Below, I have outlined some of our major campus policies and areas I thought might be of concern or interest to you or your student. While we pride ourselves on the safety of our campus and hope it is information you will never have to use, like any college campus, it is possible. We would rather you and your student were aware of the possible dangers and the consequences for rule violations and have these conversations early.

### **Alcohol and Illegal Substances**

We do not tolerate the illegal use of alcohol, drugs or violence. I am sure that you are aware of the State laws restricting the possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons under 21 years of age but what you may not be aware of is the College's Alcohol, Drug and Violence Policy which can be found in the online Student Handbook; the link for the Handbook is: [http://www.canton.edu/student\\_affairs/pdf/handbook.pdf](http://www.canton.edu/student_affairs/pdf/handbook.pdf) . The Village of Canton, St. Lawrence University and SUNY Canton have agreed to work together to curb underage drinking and drug usage in the Canton community. Both universities pursue disciplinary action against their students who behave inappropriately off campus in the Canton community.

### **Preventing Bullying and Physical Violence**

Bullying, and in particular, cyber bullying (bullying through technology like social media and text messages), is not tolerated at SUNY Canton and we take swift action to combat bullying when it occurs. Additionally, we take a strong stance on violence of any kind and students who are found responsible for acts of violence through our judicial process typically face suspension or even expulsion from college.

### **Title IX (Sexual Violence, Dating and Domestic Violence)**

Members of the SUNY Canton community, including students, employees and guests, should expect to be free from sexual violence, behavior that is inherently abusive of the humanity that each of us brings to the campus community. Sexual misconduct is against university policy and will not be tolerated at SUNY Canton.

Sexual misconduct includes any sexual act perpetrated against someone's will. Sexual violence includes rape, an attempted nonconsensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (i.e. unwanted touching), noncontact sexual abuse (i.e., threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment), dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. All types involve victims who do not consent, or who are unable to consent due to incapacitation.

When accused students are found to have violated this policy, serious sanctions will be imposed. This policy is intended to define community expectations and to establish a mechanism for determining when those expectations have been violated. The sexual orientation and/or gender identity of individuals engaging in sexual activity is not relevant to allegations under this policy.

While there are a number of laws and regulations that mandate how universities handle allegations of sexual misconduct and assault, it is impossible to set forth every scenario that could be a violation of this policy. Ultimately, the University has the discretion to determine whether or not the policy has been violated and impose appropriate sanctions.

### **Get Involved!**

Our hope is that your student will quickly GET INVOLVED with campus life. For the latest information on student activities and campus happenings, check out the following:

Facebook - - StudentActivitiesatCanton

Instagram - - SUNYCantonActivities; or

Twitter - - CantonsCAB.

There is also an activities calendar on the Parents webpage:

(<http://www.canton.edu/news/index.php/upcoming-events/>). Our new Convocation Athletic Recreation Center (CARC) houses an ice arena, pool, fitness center, field house, basketball court, and running track for student use. Over 70 clubs and organizations as well as leadership and community service opportunities are offered. They should be able to find some niche that fits their interests, needs, and skills. Academics are important, but that is only part of the picture. Employer after employer tells us they are looking for students who get involved and have developed leadership and communication skills.

As your student considers joining clubs and organizations this semester, I want to notify you of an organization that is currently suspended from the College and is not a recognized club/organization. This organization is:

- Zeta Alpha Phi Fraternity (permanently expelled for hazing)

This organization is restricted from recruiting new members or operating in any way as a club or organization at this time. Any students found affiliating with this organization risk receiving disciplinary sanctions from the College, up to and including suspension. If your student tells you that this organization is reaching out to them or operating in any way as a club/organization, please contact me in the Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students Office at (315)386-7120 or you can contact me directly by email at [bish@canton.edu](mailto:bish@canton.edu).

There are many wonderful clubs and organizations for your student to join, including many Greek organizations who are civic-minded and focus on philanthropy and high academic standards. Please check out this link for more information:

[http://www.canton.edu/student\\_activities/clubs](http://www.canton.edu/student_activities/clubs).

We have found it most helpful when parents candidly discuss with their student their expectations concerning behavioral standards, encourage them to get involved with campus life, learn to put their inhibitions aside, and ask questions. You might want to share this letter as a kick-off for discussion of their personal and academic responsibilities as a college student.

## **Hazing**

I would also like to draw your attention to a SUNY policy regarding hazing. It has not been a big issue at SUNY Canton, but we need to be constantly vigilant. Hazing can occur in any kind of group, although nationally it is most common in social Greek and athletic organizations. It is a violation of the NYS Penal Law and a violation of the College's Code of Conduct, which is outlined in the online Student Handbook at: ([http://www.canton.edu/student\\_affairs/pdf/handbook.pdf](http://www.canton.edu/student_affairs/pdf/handbook.pdf)). If an individual is found to have violated the College's Hazing Policy, the following action will be taken: the student will be suspended/expelled from the College with a permanent notation recorded on their official transcript and they will remain liable for all the semester's tuition and fees.

## **Student Privacy Law (FERPA)**

Lastly, I need to draw your attention to a Federal law which affects you and your child when they enter college. The law is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (F.E.R.P.A.) which protects the privacy of students. In effect, the law prohibits the College from releasing most information pertaining to the student to anyone, including parents, unless we have written permission from the student. This includes student grades, health and counseling issues, and academic progress. The College does make every effort when dealing with students to encourage them to communicate with their parents/guardians, especially on major issues. If your son or daughter wishes to complete a F.E.R.P.A. waiver so that you can discuss issues/concerns with College staff, the form can be found online on the Registrar's webpage ([http://www.canton.edu/registrar/pdf/FERPA\\_WAIVER.pdf](http://www.canton.edu/registrar/pdf/FERPA_WAIVER.pdf)). Also, our webpage (<http://www.canton.edu>) can be a source of good and accurate information for you. It includes the Student Handbook and academic calendar, among other things.

If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter, please feel free to stop at my office in the Miller Campus Center 229, call me at (315)386-7120, or e-mail me at [bish@canton.edu](mailto:bish@canton.edu). We are excited about your child's decision to attend SUNY Canton and hope it will be a positive experience for them.

