THE START OF THE 2019-20 ACADEMIC YEAR
marks a milestone in Binghamton University’s history as we recognize the University’s lasting commitment to educational excellence and the legacy this excellence has had on our alumni and communities.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of Harpur College, whose initial enrollment was only 503 students, the majority veterans returning from World War II. Binghamton University now enrolls more than 18,000 students in its six schools and colleges, including 3,958 graduate students and 14,145 undergraduates. Since 1950, nearly 140,000 students call Harpur, SUNY-B and Binghamton University their alma mater.

We also celebrate three golden anniversaries this year. Our School of Management and our Decker School of Nursing celebrate 50 years of educational excellence, while our Athletics Department recognizes 50 years of women’s athletics.

These anniversaries provide an opportunity for us to proclaim our pride in the University’s growth, celebrate our increasing impact in the disciplines, and reflect on the core values of educational excellence and world-changing research and scholarship that have guided the campus since its inception.

This spirit of world-changing discovery gained international attention recently, when Distinguished Professor M. Stanley Whittingham received the 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his early work on lithium-ion batteries.

HARPUR COLLEGE’S JOURNEY FROM PUBLIC SWARTHMORE TO TOP-RANKED RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

When Harpur’s founding president Glenn G. Bartle was approached by leaders at Syracuse University to develop a new college in the Triple Cities of Binghamton, Endicott, and Johnson City, he had a broad vision. The college would be a “public Swarthmore,” focusing on the liberal arts and very high academic standards. This foundation remains a core value for the college and Harpur remains the intellectual heart of a research University.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES FOR SOM AND DECKER

A similar story of growth, evolution and national prominence is shared by our School of Management (SOM) and the Decker School of Nursing. In 1970, the University created the School of Business that brought together faculty who had been teaching accounting and related business enterprise courses. Within a year, it was renamed the School of Management to reflect the expectation that its graduates would become managerial leaders with the development of a new MBA program.

Today, the SOM has a strong academic reputation and is the number-one provider of new recruits for top-tier financial firms EY (Ernst & Young) and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Further, the school is recognized as a “best value” by such organizations as PayScale, College Factual and U.S. News & World Report.

Our nursing school also has grown and evolved to meet the changing healthcare needs of our region and state. Established in 1969 in response to a shortage of qualified nurses in New York state, its initial graduating class consisted of fewer than two dozen students. Today, the school educates over 650 students, including more than 240 graduate students. Originally called the School of Nursing, it was renamed the Decker School of Nursing in 1989, in recognition of a large donation from the Clifford G. and Florence B. Decker Foundation.

BINGHAMTON IS GETTING BETTER

Binghamton University’s twin traditions of leading-edge research and unequaled academic experiences ensure that Binghamton is a campus focused on improvement.

Our goal is to make Binghamton better—every day.

And it’s working. We see this in the national rankings for academic excellence and value, where Binghamton is on a consistent path to the top. This fall, U.S. News & World Report placed Binghamton #32 in its Top 50 Public Universities, a list we’ve made for 20 consecutive years. Significantly, we also moved up 10 slots, from 62 to 52, on the publication’s “Best Value Colleges” list. The Fiske Guide to Colleges noted our exceptional value as well, recognizing both our reasonable tuition and our administrative efficiency by ranking Binghamton in its Top 10 “Best Buy Public Colleges.” Similarly, Money ranks Binghamton #33 on its “Best Colleges for Your Money” list. And most recently, Business First placed Binghamton as the 16th best public college in the nation and the #1 public college in New York state.
Perhaps most gratifying is the recognition we are receiving for our impact on our students and communities. The New York Times ranks Binghamton among the colleges and universities “Doing the Most for The American Dream,” while U.S. News & World Report names us a top performer in social mobility for serving underrepresented and low-income students.

And, at a time when climate change is a world-wide concern, Binghamton has been recognized by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) as a #1 top performer among all universities in the category of research focused on sustainability.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SCHOLARSHIP AND OUTREACH

Binghamton’s faculty and staff are rightly earning praise for their work as scholars and educators whose work is helping to solve critical problems. This recognition benefits the University by raising our profile and ensuring that we are addressing the most pressing issues of the day.

For example, this year saw the opening of the Binghamton University Human Rights Institute, co-directed by David Cingranelli, professor of political science, and Alexandra Moore, professor of English. Here, faculty from more than a dozen departments are conducting research and engaging in outreach that will affect public policy in New York state and around the globe. Similarly, the University’s Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention, established in 2016, held its second Frontiers of Prevention conference that drew representatives from 14 different nations and focused on the needs of real-world practitioners, with workshops designed to develop preventative measures and new methods for preventing mass atrocities.

Our alumni share this commitment to activism and social justice and are eager to support the University’s work. In 2019, alumna Ellyn Uram Kaschak donated nearly $2 million dollars to establish the Dr. Ellyn Uram Kaschak Institute for Social Justice for Women and Girls at Binghamton University, with Distinguished Service Professor Susan Strehle serving as founding director. Kaschak, a founder of feminist theory, wants to encourage research and scholarship on the lived experiences of women and girls, and explore the processes by which women create change.

Students across the University are benefiting from an increase in opportunities to participate in high-impact learning experiences, such as education abroad, internships and hands-on research experiences. These experiences provide students with real-life, on-the-job learning and offering more of these opportunities is a key Road Map objective. One of the most visible of these projects is our First-year Research Immersion program that gives our newest students authentic research experience in the sciences and engineering. This year, faculty teaching in these programs received training to help students get the most benefit from their experiences, with an emphasis on developing professional skills including public speaking, collaboration and teamwork. This training was developed by the program’s previous and current directors, Nancy Stamp and Megan Fegley, who have documented its effectiveness.

RESEARCH WITH A WORLDWIDE IMPACT

Binghamton’s research faculty are also gaining recognition for their work, with discoveries that have the potential to shape how the world works. For example, Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Vice President for Research Bahgat Sammakia, along with Professor of Computer Science Kanad Ghose, are collaborating with a team at Purdue University to lead a new, multimillion-dollar research center—the Center for Heterogeneous Integration Research in Packaging (CHIRP)—that will help define the next decade of
electronics packaging. The new center is funded through the Semiconductor Research Corporation (SRC), a technology research consortium that will provide about $1.8 million for the center in its first four years, with matching funds from University, state and SUNY sources.

The University is also at the forefront of advances in flexible, wearable medical technologies, and this past June, New York state designated our Center for Flexible Hybrid Medical Device Manufacturing (called FlexMed) as a New York State Center for Advanced Technology (CAT). Under the direction of Professor of Engineering Mark Poliks, Binghamton’s newest CAT will receive $8.8 million in funding from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) over the next 10 years. We expect the center to serve as a catalyst for industrial investment and economic development in the region.

If our faculty are to produce world-changing research, they need world-class equipment. So we are excited to know that the University will soon be the home of a new a Hard X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy (HAXPES) system. The HAXPES allows researchers to get detailed information about a device or material without taking it apart, helping them determine the chemical and electronic structure of the material being studied. Louis Piper, associate professor of physics, is the principal investigator for this $1.23 million grant from the National Science Foundation’s Major Research Instrumentation program. This will be the only one of its kind in the United States and it will be available for use by researchers across campus.

And now, Binghamton University can claim a Nobel Prize winner as a member of our faculty. Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Materials Science M. Stanley Whittingham was awarded the 2019 Nobel Prize for Chemistry along with two others for their work as inventors of the lithium-ion battery. Whittingham’s work has fundamentally changed the way the world works and his recognition is a measure of the outstanding quality of the University’s faculty.

Binghamton University’s research and scholarship are on a strong, upward trajectory. Last year’s research expenditures totaled $48.6 million, up 2% from the prior year and up 36% from 2014-15. The increase in our faculty’s research and scholarship was crucial in our successful efforts to obtain “RI—very high research” classification by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, a status that only 131 universities in the United States have achieved. Reaching this goal was a primary objective of the Road Map when it was implemented in 2013, and was aided by the hiring initiative that added more than 200 productive faculty to campus between 2013 and 2018. This classification strengthens the University’s reputation in all disciplines and will enhance our faculty’s ability to attract major grants from federal agencies.

2018-19: A BUMP IN THE ROAD

Binghamton University has a rich history of growth and expansion. Of course, that path includes periods of challenges when the campus tread carefully and slowed its progress until it could gain better footing. We’ve just experienced one such bump in the road—the 2018-19 academic year was one of fiscal challenges and measured responses.

The primary cause of our difficulties was a missed enrollment target, particularly among international students. The reasons are complex, though changes in the national political environment certainly made it appear that the United States was less welcoming to students from other nations. The decline in enrollment had a ripple effect that impacted the University’s fiscal situation. In addition, a much-deserved and long-overdue raise for professional staff that was left largely unfunded by the state added an additional financial burden that was difficult to plan for.

Together, these challenges resulted in a shortfall of around $5 million for the 2018–19 fiscal year, and around $9 million for the current year. To address these costs, the University drew from reserves and imple-
mented a new hiring process that slowed new hires, particularly among administration and non-academic staff. We also slowed the pace of several large campus and divisional initiatives.
WHERE WE ARE NOW

Thanks to these efforts, we are now in a better fiscal position. The state has appropriated some support for salary increases and authorized some small tuition and fee increases that have helped fill our fiscal hole. But more importantly, we’ve hit our enrollment targets for the start of the year. Significantly, thanks to an extensive international recruitment effort coordinated by Executive Vice Provost for International Initiatives and Chief Global Affairs and Dean of the Watson School Krishnaswami “Hari” Srihari, we have been able to increase the number of international students.

We have also established a new incentive-based budgeting process that requires each of our eight divisions (student affairs, research, foundation, advancement, diversity, academic affairs, athletics and operations) to determine how they will cover their employees’ salary increases.

With regard to academic affairs, allocations to the schools’ and colleges’ base budgets were decreased for the current academic year. These reductions will be restored if a school or college meets its 2018-19 graduate student revenue target, set at an average of the past three years. As an incentive to increase graduate enrollment, schools will be able to keep all tuition revenues that come from exceeding their targets. We will monitor enrollment for the next few months—but as of now, it looks like most schools are meeting their targets.

We are now moving forward on searches and interviews for several of the positions that have been on hold the past year, including for a new dean for the Watson School, as well as a new vice president of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We will also interview for our vice president for advancement position.

I appreciate the concerns and support of our deans and division leaders as we’ve worked collaboratively to meet this challenge. But most of all, I admire the innovative spirit, creativity and dedication of our faculty and staff who have worked so hard over the last few months.

INCREASING EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Private philanthropy, particularly from alumni, has also played a key role this year in helping us expand our academic and scholarship profile. This past year, the University received $191.1 million in gift commitments, and $15.2 million in actual gifts—$14.2 million of which have been cash. In fact, the University has received 13 commitments of over $1 million over the past two years—compared to only five million-dollar commitments in our prior history. These are records for the campus and reflect the pride our alumni and supporters have in our work.

Binghamton University is in a unique and enviable position—we have a growing alumni base of individuals who are entering their peak earning years and these are people who are extremely proud of their alma mater. A recent survey of alumni conducted on behalf of our Division of Advancement found that a remarkable 82% have a favorable view of the campus—with almost half having a “very positive” view. This places us in a very strong position as we move into our comprehensive gifts campaign next year, with additional fundraising opportunities linked to the celebration of important campus anniversaries.

WHAT’S NEW IN JOHNSON CITY

Although the University slowed implementation of several initiatives over the past year, we continued to make progress at the Johnson City Health Sciences Campus. The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences welcomed its third cohort of students and we are moving forward on the renovation and construction of facilities for our Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences, while a new research and development facility is in the design phase. Funds for these projects come from state appropriations specifically targeted for construction, so they weren’t impacted by the deficit in our operations funding. We have recently purchased property at 18 Park St.—the former Ozalid building—that will be developed as space for University/industry partnerships and startups. In addition, properties on Corliss Avenue adjacent to the new Decker building have been demolished to make space for parking, green space and other health sciences projects.

IMPACT OF HEALTH SCIENCES CAMPUS

The new Health Sciences Campus will bring a fresh vitality to a formerly depressed community. But even more important is the work that will be taking place within the campus facilities.

The Decker School’s presence in Johnson City offers a chance to dramatically increase the school’s programs and enrollment, and today, we are announcing a change of name for the school to reflect its vision for the future. For 30 years, the school has carried the Decker name in recognition of the support provided by the Decker Foundation for our nursing program. However, its growing educational and research programs now transcend the field of nursing to include in-demand programs in speech, occupational and physical therapy. These programs will be housed in two new schools—the School of Applied Health Sciences and the School of Rehabilitation Sciences—under the Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences umbrella.

For many years Binghamton has been a leader in gerontological nursing. The new campus will allow Decker students, as well as those in social work, pharmacy and other related fields to gain clinical experience in gerontology at the new Ford Family Wellness Center, supported by private funds and in collaboration with Lourdes Hospital. Gifts from the Decker Foundation and
Established in 1933, Binghamton University has grown and evolved over the years, becoming one of the top research universities in the United States. The University’s commitment to excellence and innovation is reflected in the many accolades and recognitions it has received. To continue this legacy, the University has been working hard to ensure that the facilities at our Vestal campus are top-notch. The critical maintenance work being done will pay long-term benefits in reduced energy costs; the new exterior at the Engineering Building, for example, not only looks great, but includes new insulation and windows that will save money over time. Similarly, Science 2 is being completely gutted and renovated, with a new metal skin that will greatly improve energy efficiency. Inside, there will be new undergraduate laboratories, classrooms and restrooms, as well as new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. Some of these systems were installed using a large helicopter that you might have seen on campus a few weeks ago.

Hinman Dining Hall is currently closed so we can expand and renovate one of the most popular eating areas on campus. Students will see a new lounge, restrooms, program and retail space when renovations are complete. Cleveland Hall is being updated as well, with new mechanical systems and Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant restrooms. Meanwhile, the University Union basement is being updated with improved space for student activities and entertainment. Given the centrality of Bartle Library to the University’s mission, it would be difficult to close large sections for major modifications. Instead, we are taking a section-by-section approach with work currently being done on the third floor. And, with its importance to so many faculty and students, we will advance a master plan for updates to the Fine Arts Building. Looking ahead, these improvements will make our campus a better, more sustainable place to work and learn, but for now, we are doing our best to minimize disruptions and ensure that everyone can move safely around campus.

### CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

We also have been working hard to ensure that the facilities at our Vestal campus are top-notch. The critical maintenance work being done will pay long-term benefits in reduced energy costs; the new exterior at the Engineering Building, for example, not only looks great, but includes new insulation and windows that will save money over time. Similarly, Science 2 is being completely gutted and renovated, with a new metal skin that will greatly improve energy efficiency. Inside, there will be new undergraduate laboratories, classrooms and restrooms, as well as new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. Some of these systems were installed using a large helicopter that you might have seen on campus a few weeks ago.

### STATUS OF OTHER INITIATIVES

In addition to the Health Sciences Campus, the University identified three other University Initiatives (UIs) as part of the Road Map Renewal developed in 2017–18. Investments in these projects were reduced, but not halted, in response to the fiscal challenges the campus faced last year. This has allowed the initiatives to move forward at a slightly slower pace than was initially planned.

For example, the Health Sciences Core Facility Initiative that adds shared laboratory space and advanced instrumentation for our health sciences faculty opened in 2018. Plans are in development for further expansion and new instrumentation, including a flow cytometer that was recently acquired through National Science Foundation (NSF) funding. Meanwhile, the University is pursuing funding to obtain a functional magnetic resonance imaging or functional MRI (fMRI) as part of the brain and body facility that was folded into the core facility initiative. The University is currently developing a plan for hiring faculty to lead research efforts for the equipment, which will be used in collaboration with UHS.

We’ve also had some success with the Presidential Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship program that was designed to bring faculty from underrepresented minorities (URM) to campus. However, the status of the program is complicated by its similarity to a new proposal from SUNY, called PRODiG—Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion and Growth—that will overlap with or supplant the SUNY Faculty Diversity Program (FDP). PRODiG will provide campuses funding with the goal of adding 1,000 URM or women in STEM fields (WSTEM) to SUNY’s faculty ranks over the next decade. This past summer, Binghamton submitted its proposal for PRODiG funding for:

- cluster hiring of three faculty members in the “Critical Studies in Race, Ethnicity and Inequality” area;
- PRODiG salary support for four recent and/or impending faculty hires that are URM and/or WSTEM;
- hiring of up to two current URM/WSTEM postdoctoral fellows; and
- an innovative request to utilize PRODiG funding for a postdoc-to-tenure-track faculty position.

Binghamton University has received approval to move forward with the hiring of tenure-track faculty. SUNY PRODiG will support the hires of historically underrepresented minorities and women in the STEM fields who have a start date before June 30, 2020. The additional requests to PRODiG are still pending, but all indications are that we should obtain most, if not all, of these lines.

Binghamton also will implement a new policy regarding chosen names with the goal of making it easier for...
students, faculty and staff to use the name they identify with on most campus and SUNY documents. This initiative has been led by Kelly Clark, Q Center director, and registrar Amber Stallman.

The University is also continuing progress on its Data Science Initiative, with its objectives largely assumed by faculty and administration collaborating in the Data Sciences Transdisciplinary Area of Excellence (TAE). This project entails working to move the boundaries of current data science through interdisciplinary educational and research opportunities, the creation of partnerships with other organizations working in the field, and the development of a scalable infrastructure to support intensive data science research and applications.

This expansive initiative seeks to answer questions pertaining to disciplines across the campus. The TAE is pursuing a number of initiatives including a data salon, research seed grant program (supported by $50,000 in University funds), course development and an interdisciplinary speaker’s series. Faculty have developed several interdisciplinary working groups to focus on research and applied science in fields ranging from public health to education, the social sciences and data access. Of course, meeting the infrastructure needs of a large-scale data science program is challenging; the TAE is currently looking to develop secure storage at computational labs at the School of Pharmacy, while a second lab at the Vestal campus is now in the design phase.

We are now also pursuing a new reputation-enhancing project by seeking Carnegie Community Engagement Classification that stresses the importance of collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities. Currently, only 361 universities have earned this classification, including many of our peer institutions. Achieving classification would document and build on successes in one of our Road Map’s key strategic priorities, SP-4: Enhancing the University’s impact.

Over the next few years, the University’s Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) will be coordinating efforts across campus to raise awareness of the Carnegie Engagement Classification and to collect data related to community engagement activities.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The anniversaries we are celebrating give us a reason to look back with pride about where we started and how far we’ve come. We’ve grown from a small college serving returning servicemen into a nationally recognized University at the apex of research and scholarship. Throughout our journey, we’ve maintained and strengthened our commitment to academic excellence and gained a reputation for cultivating alumni who are engaged in their communities, leaders in their fields and dedicated to Binghamton University. And most of all, we have always had a faculty and staff that know how to get things done.

So what does the future hold for Binghamton? As we’ve seen this year, changes can come quickly, and from unexpected directions. The future will be no different.

But, Binghamton is well-positioned to handle these challenges. I believe that highly ranked, highly selective colleges and universities such as Binghamton will remain desirable and will thrive in this new environment.

I think Binghamton University was created to solve challenges. Not simply fiscal challenges like we’ve just passed through, but the world’s challenges. We teach students who go on to tackle the big problems—war and genocide, environmental crises, healthcare issues, technological changes and social injustices, and we have faculty who are changing how we see the world. We want to be the place that the world turns to for answers to our most pressing challenges.

**AND THANKS TO ALL OF YOU, WE ARE.**
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
Contact President Stenger directly at hstenger@binghamton.edu.