

Dear UM-Flint Colleagues:

I hope you are having a nice summer!

The VPAA office is busy at work during the summer months, hosting some new events and also doing some essential preparation for the fall semester.

In conjunction with the K-12 Partnerships Office, Office of Educational Opportunity Initiatives, Student Success Center, and Education Department, we recently hosted two K-12/Higher Education breakfast events during which we listened to diverse perspectives from our K-12 community about how we, as a university, need to prepare for our incoming freshman class. Many of our incoming freshman spent the bulk of their high school experiences during the pandemic, and as a result, they are coming to our campus with unique psychological and educational needs. The first session involved individuals from Flint Community Schools, Beecher, and Westwood Heights. The second session involved individuals from Byron, Lake Fenton, Fenton area schools, and the Shiawassee Regional Education Service District. We look forward to sharing our findings during the Academic Pre-Convocation event as well as at other venues across our institution. We would like to make sure that our campus is adequately prepared to support this unique student population in a seamless transition to the university and to ensure that they receive the scaffolding they need regardless of which academic programs or units they choose to enter.

We have also been working steadily on analyzing the data from the WhyIBelong@UM-Flint project, which consisted of a campus wide survey and several focus groups with “identity groups” across our campus. We will be sharing our findings and recommendations with faculty, staff, and administrators across our campus starting in late July and into early October. The discussions we have had with students have been very enlightening and we are looking forward to sharing some specific details at the Division of Student Affairs assessment event, Academic Pre-Convocation, and at other events where our staff and senior leadership team are also present.

This is only a short preview of the work we have been doing! We look forward to sharing more in our fall update.

Feel free to connect with either Joyce or I over the summer. As always, we would love to hear your ideas about how we can strengthen our work and presence at UM-Flint.

Sincerely,

**Sapna Thwaite**

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs