SUNY Potsdam Profile

History
The State University of New York at Potsdam is one of 64 units of the State University of New York and one of 13 SUNY arts and science colleges. Its origin was the St. Lawrence Academy, founded in 1816 by early settlers of the region. It continued as Potsdam Normal School in 1867, as Potsdam State Teachers College in 1942, and became part of the largest university system in the United States, The State University of New York, in 1948. Throughout its distinguished history, the institution has served the people of the North Country and of New York State.

Mission
The State University of New York at Potsdam prepares students to act as engaged global citizens and to lead lives enriched by critical thought, creativity, and discovery. As an inclusive scholarly community rooted in our historic role in providing exemplary teacher and music education and our leadership in the fine and performing arts, we are committed to the liberal arts and sciences as an academic foundation for all students. With an abiding sense of responsibility to our region and to the world beyond, SUNY Potsdam fosters an appreciation of and respect for the variety of human experience.

Locale
The College is located in New York’s picturesque North Country, an area imbued with scenic tranquility and replete with cultural and recreational activities.

The Adirondack Mountains to the southeast offer hiking, swimming, fishing or relaxing beside quiet streams and lakes. In winter, skiing the beautiful trails of Whiteface Mountain in Lake Placid (scene of the 1980 Winter Olympics) and Titus Mountain in Malone, or cross-country skiing the numerous scenic trails, is a popular pastime.

The world-renowned Thousand Islands region is also an hour’s drive away. There, visitors can take a boat tour, fish, swim or visit one of the many quaint little shops.

For those who prefer the cultural atmosphere of large cities, Ottawa and Montréal are 70 and 80 miles away, respectively. While in Ottawa, students can visit the National Art Gallery or Museum of Natural History; attend a concert or theatrical production at the National Arts Center; tour the Houses of Parliament and witness the changing of the guard in the summer. Montréal provides the opportunity to indulge in the European experience.

Of course, it’s not necessary to travel. The Village of Potsdam has much to offer. Local stores carry the latest in clothes, books and CDs, and there are many fast-food restaurants, fine eating establishments and a movie theater.

People
While location is a definite plus for SUNY Potsdam, the people who make up the College community are its greatest asset. The students, faculty and staff make us what we are – a very special place.

Our enrollment is approximately 4,300 – including about 3,500 undergraduate and 800 graduate students. Our students are an interesting and diversified group. They come to us from all over the United States with a small number from foreign countries, although the number of international students is rapidly increasing with students from Canada, Korea and China. Students come from farms, small towns, the suburbs and large cities. They are traditional students (those who come to us straight from undergraduate programs) and non-traditional students (those who enroll after raising a family, teaching for a few years, serving in the military or deciding to switch careers in mid-stream). Wherever they come from, whatever their ages or backgrounds, our students are a warm and friendly group.

SUNY Potsdam also has a diverse faculty. They hold degrees from such prestigious universities as Harvard, Stanford and Yale. They are published authors, well-known researchers, accomplished artists and musicians. Like their students, they are a friendly, caring group – always ready to discuss a problem or assist with a project. Dedicated to teaching, they are not just active in the classroom, but in every facet of their students’ lives. Many of our students say they learn as much through professional interaction with their professors as they do through classroom instruction.
Public Service and Outreach Activities

Faculty, staff and students have always taken an active role in public service activities through the different schools and departments. The College has long served as a major center for the arts in the North Country through its extensive musical programs performed by the students and faculty of The Crane School of Music, the Roland Gibson Art Gallery and dance and drama productions.

Over the years, the College has increased, diversified and made more accessible a variety of educational services to the North Country. The North Country Migrant Education Program housed in Van Housen Hall provides educational services to migrant workers and their families. The Sheard Literacy Center in Satterlee Hall offers literacy tutoring for area children several afternoons a week. The Northern New York Early Childhood Direction Center provides information and referrals for families of young children with disabilities.

Thomas E. O’Shaughnessy Center

The Thomas E. O’Shaughnessy Center for Assistive Technology is housed within the Sheard Literacy Center. Dr. O’Shaughnessy was dedicated to finding technological solutions that would help people, and particularly children with disabilities, become independent learners. The purpose of the center is to allow opportunities for SUNY Potsdam students to gain hands-on experience with technology for students with special needs, and to create a demonstration center in northern New York for parents and teachers seeking to enhance the literacy skills of area children with physical and learning disabilities. The Center’s collection includes software and adaptive hardware that can be used to increase accessibility to computers for those with special needs.

St. Lawrence Valley Teachers Learning Center

The St. Lawrence Valley Teachers Learning Center, housed in Satterlee Hall is funded by a state grant to provide professional development to 2,300 St. Lawrence County educators. Nearly 70 training opportunities are offered annually, most of which are held on campus. Complimentary attendance is extended to full-time SUNY Potsdam students at no cost. Students are also welcome to browse teacher resource materials and use the Ellison machine with assorted dies located in the Literacy Center.

Information about upcoming professional development offerings is available at www.teacherslearningcenter.org or by calling them at 315-267-3411. To be added to their e-mail newsletter list, send an e-mail message to tlc@potsdam.edu.