

## **Fiat a Winning Recipe!**

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Alfred University President  
Mark Zupan

We have some good news to report regarding our admissions outlook for the coming academic year. First-year applications are at an all-time high, up 13 percent over last year at this time, and up 5 percent over our previous high. While it is still early in the process, moreover, deposits are up 33 percent over last year. We are seeing increased applications to all four of our academic units—the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, the Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering, and the School of Art and Design, with the most marked increase being for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Given that the results of our web redesign and branding work will not impact our application numbers until Fall 2019, we are pleased with the application trend this year. The positive trend garnered us some coverage in the New York Times on Saturday. We attribute the uptick to several factors:

Interest in our APEX (applied and experiential learning) program that will be formally launched next month and will provide up to 200 awards of up to \$1,000 for juniors and seniors in each of the next two academic years. For first-year students who will be joining us this fall, all will have the opportunity to access an APEX award of up to \$2,000 by their junior year to participate in a meaningful co-op, internship, service learning, research, or study abroad opportunity. According to many studies, such opportunities are the best predictor of students' future success.

Several recent gifts from our Board of Trustees, alumni, and friends that are allowing us to spruce up our residence halls and our athletic facilities for our student-athletes and our broader community.

More fully engaging our alumni, faculty, staff, and current students in recruiting our next class through our recently launched VISA (Volunteers in Support of Alfred) program.

Smoothing the path of transfer students into Alfred University through articulation agreements with community

colleges. We are also working on agreements with relevant graduate schools of medicine and law to help connect the dots for our students vis a vis their long-run professional opportunities in such fields.

Developing an Alfred University pledge whereby we better set expectations for students and our faculty/staff regarding what all relevant parties commit to so as to ensure that our incoming first-year students will graduate in four years. Better marketing our cross-disciplinary offerings. These offerings include a management minor for students in our School of Art and Design. There is also the opportunity to earn two degrees from Alfred University in five years through our 4+1 option that allows students to pair bachelor&s work in fields such as chemistry, astronomy, English, engineering, math, psychology, sociology, and art and design, with an MBA from our business school.

While we are convinced that we are taking many of the right steps, deciding on a school is not an easy decision for students or their families, and many factors enter into the process. An article in U.S. News & World Report last week highlights the level of debt parents are incurring to help finance their children&s educations. U.S. News & World Report looked at the average Parents PLUS loans families take on, and Alfred University compared favorably to other institutions of higher learning. According to the report, which relies on U.S. Department of Education data, the average Parent PLUS loan at Alfred University is \$11,198, less than one-third of the average loan at elite schools. Alfred University also comes in well below Clarkson, Cornell, St. John Fisher, Nazareth, Elmira, RIT, University of Rochester, and the Rhode Island School of Design, among others.

What this all means is that Alfred University continues to provide terrific value to our students, something that is affirmed by U.S. News & World Report in a separate report recognizing Alfred University as a “Best Value,” ranking us number 16 among colleges and universities in the Northeast region of the United States in its section on “Great Schools at a Great Price.”

We are committed to cutting through the confusion among students and parents today about the actual cost of higher education. Alfred is recognized as a “Best Value” after students have been awarded financial aid—dramatically lowering the actual cost of attendance when compared to its sticker price. Historically maintaining one of the lowest tuition prices of any private college or university in western New York, Alfred University also awards over \$31 million in financial aid to students annually, much of it due to the philanthropic investment in our annual Alfred Fund or through the establishment of endowed scholarships by our alumni and friends.

Mixed together, the foregoing ingredients will ensure that Alfred University continues to provide the right recipe to transform student lives and better the world.

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Mark