

# New York Six Annual Report

## June 2016

### ***New York Six Engagement***

One year ago, as the New York Six Liberal Arts Consortium completed its fifth year of formal collaborations, we conducted a survey of faculty, staff, and administrators who had been involved in the consortium's activities. These were the major findings:

- The New York Six Liberal Arts Consortium needs to improve communication of activities and events to increase awareness and expand involvement.
- New York Six-hosted events attract individuals beyond those involved in project working groups, and provide an opportunity to increase future engagement.
- On average, only about 40% of respondents expected to be more involved in New York Six projects/activities in the future, providing an indication that improved communication and increased opportunities to connect are needed to continue the work of the Consortium.

While there always is more progress to be made, we have taken significant strides during the past year. The accompanying dashboard provides a glimpse at the level of engagement in the New York Six during 2015-16.

Communications: The New York Six e-newsletter has been published monthly to a list that has grown to more than 250 faculty and staff, helping to raise awareness of programs and achievements. We have just completed the compilation of a directory of leadership and working groups, and will further expand the newsletter list accordingly. We have been more proactive in updating the website and this summer will be revamping the website to make it more user-friendly and informative. We have an active Twitter account (@NewYorkSix) through which we share NY6 news and information from the member campuses. We are coordinating regularly with the campus communications staffs to enlist their help in publicizing and promoting NY6 activities and the people involved. In addition, we held Town Hall meetings on all six campuses in March and April to provide our campus colleagues with an opportunity to discuss the future direction of the consortium.

Expansion of engagement: The accompanying dashboard depicts the growth in NY6 engagement, which has been particularly significant in the past year. The number of academic working groups has grown from eight to 13, an increase of 63 percent. Administrative working groups have increased from eight to 18, or 125 percent. Over the past four years, engagement of staff members has grown by 76 percent (from 96 to 169), and faculty engagement has increased an incredible 595 percent (from 21 to 146), due largely to the NY6 Mellon International Initiative. In addition, 623 students attended NY6-sponsored events in 2015-16. The total number of people who were engaged in the New York Six in 2015-16 is 938.

During the past year, we have opened a number of our programs and activities to individuals who are not members of specific working groups, both from the member campuses and from neighboring campuses. For example, we routinely invite students and faculty from nearby institutions to participate in the NY6 Upstate Undergraduate Research Conference; we invited colleagues from the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley to the Title IX workshop at St. Lawrence this spring; and we include a wide range of faculty members in NY6 Think Tank events and other academic gatherings.

Increased opportunities to connect: Through the use of WebEx, we have made it much easier for our working groups to hold meetings, and as a result both the number of working groups and the frequency of connections have increased. Most working groups are meeting monthly, through a combination of virtual WebEx meetings and occasional in-person meetings. We also have designated many groups as self-supporting, which gives the participants ownership and thus incentive to keep the groups active.

In addition, we have encouraged and been responsive to new proposals for collaboration, such as a model African Union program, German symposium, and a chemistry collaboration. As much as possible, we are supporting those who wish to use the NY6 as a resource to connect, not just through our established projects, but also through new opportunities identified by individuals across the Consortium.

### ***Cost-Saving and Efficiency***

Health4Edu: The dashboard developed in 2014 focused on savings realized through self-funding of employee health plans. The accompanying dashboard reflects savings in two areas: costs for third-party administration of health plans (e.g., Excellus) and prescription drug savings through membership in the Preferred University Rx Purchasing Coalition (PURPC). In sum, the participating institutions have saved \$1.3 million in cumulative savings in TPA costs from 2014-2016, pro-rated based on the number of covered lives. Participation in PURPC is a more recent activity, and we project that savings for the 2016 plan year, under a new provider (OptumRx), will total \$231,000, again pro-rated by school based on the number of covered plan members.

Office Supplies: The purchasing directors working group issued a new RFP for office supplies, which was completed in late February 2016. The resulting savings total \$419,330 annually for a three-year contract term.

Professional Development: As noted in the NY6 Five-Year Report (2015), the Consortium has provided regular opportunities for staff members in a wide range of areas to come together to learn about best practices and new developments in their fields, at a fraction of the cost of attending a conference or workshop outside of the Upstate region, and groups are able to meet more frequently as a result. As described in the Five-Year Report:

Here is a particular scenario to illustrate the savings: sending a staff member to a two-day workshop at a New York Six campus (for which the schools pay travel expenses as part of their cost-share) would cost about \$325 per person (\$200 in mileage, \$120 for lodging, with food costs being paid by the New York Six). A comparable workshop in New England would cost \$540 (\$300 in mileage \$120 per night for lodging, \$71 per diem, \$150 registration fee). A New York Six workshop involving 20 staff members would result in a total of \$4,300 in savings versus a regional event. And the sense of community and connection established through our New York Six gatherings is priceless.

Projected Cumulative Savings: The final chart on the dashboard brings together the projected savings for 2016-17 (note that the PURPC savings are for calendar year 2016, which is the plan year). The NY6 member schools are expected to save a combined total of more than \$1.4 million in the coming year through the various Consortium cost-saving initiatives. This figure does not include “soft savings,” such as the cost-avoidance from professional development activities.