

Niagara University starts academic year with a bang



Niagara University welcomed more than 700 incoming freshmen and transfer students to its Lewiston campus over the weekend with an engaging and informational new student orientation program that incorporated a number of traditions and introduced them to available opportunities.

The orientation began as the new students moved into their campus residence halls with the assistance of returning student leaders and community advisers. After posing for the university's "Human NU" photo and participating in a "PurplePride" convocation, students took part in a beloved university tradition, the "Walk to Whirlpool." This was the 10th year of the event, during which students walk together from Niagara's campus along the

Niagara Scenic Parkway pedestrian path to Whirlpool State Park, where they enjoyed a Chiavetta's barbecue dinner. More than 20 university departments sponsored welcome stations to meet and greet the students as they walked. Students also participated in an interactive diversity, equality and inclusion program, and the day ended with a moonlight bingo event that offered over \$500 in prizes.

Day two of the program began with a morning of informational sessions from the offices of equity and inclusion, residence life and campus safety, after which students had the opportunity to participate in one of six area attractions, including the Maid of the Mist, Cave of the Winds, Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours, Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, a

self-guided walk of Center Street in Lewiston, and a Niagara Gorge hike led by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. That evening, the students enjoyed activities that included an open skate event at the university's Dwyer Arena and a silent disco headphone party.

The orientation continued on Sunday with a variety of social and traditional programming. During the day, more than 300 students participated in fun and competitive events outside the Kiernan Recreation Center, and that evening, a "Mass on the Grass" was celebrated on the university's front lawn. Niagara University's president, the Rev. James Maher, C.M., presided.

The program concluded with an event for both new and returning students that

included a student club and organization fair, a live DJ, food, and a beer tent for those of age. A fireworks display wrapped up the weekend for the more than 800 students in attendance.

"The primary goal for our orientation program is to provide a variety of inclusive opportunities for new students to learn about various aspects of university life from current student leaders, university staff and the campus community," said Bill Newton, assistant director of campus activities. "Programs are designed specifically to help new students connect with one another so they can begin to make friends and be comfortable on Monteaugle Ridge. We are extremely proud of our program and think it sets our new students up to be successful."

'In the Loop'

Lew-Port 'eagerly looking forward to welcoming back all of our students'

BY DANIELLE MULLEN

President
Lewiston-Porter Board of Education

I am so pleased to be bringing back "In the Loop" to the Tribune-Sentinel.

The Lewiston-Porter school community is eagerly looking forward to welcoming back all of our students on Tuesday, Sept. 7, for the first day of the 2021-22 school year. I know it is hard to believe that we will be entering our third school year affected by COVID-19. The district leaders have been busy planning all summer for our students to return to campus for five days a week of instruction.

On the evening of Aug. 27, we received news of a mask mandate issued by the New York State Department of Health. This new regulation will now supersede our board-approved plan for masking in our district. While ensuring that we comply with laws and mandates, every effort will be made to provide our students with as many traditional school experiences as possible.

Per the NYSDOH commissioner: "Effective immediately, in accordance with the Commissioner's Determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, any person over the age of 2 (including all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors) must wear masks at all times indoors in P-12 school buildings, regardless of vaccination status. People with medical or developmental conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask may be exempted from mask requirements, as documented by a medical provider.

"After careful review and con-

sideration of CDC recommendations for face coverings/masks in school settings, the NYSDOH, hereby adopts such recommendations, imposing them as requirements, where applicable, until this determination is modified or rescinded. Accordingly, universal masking of teachers, staff, students, and visitors to P-12 schools over age two regardless of vaccination status, is required until this determination is modified or rescinded. With the importance of in-person learning, schools should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirements."

Even though school has not officially started yet, the campus has been busy! Incoming sixth-graders participated in the Where Everyone Belongs program recently. The WEB program pairs

up sixth-graders with eighth-grade leaders to help ease their transition to middle school. This relationship continues throughout the whole school year and has proven to be a very beneficial experience for all involved.

At the high school, freshmen orientation took place this past week. Upperclassmen served as "Lancer Leader" advisers and were specifically trained to help welcome in our new ninth grade students.

The PEC and IEC held new student orientation for new families to the district this past week as well.

The fall sports season has been officially underway since Aug. 23.

While we are still operating under COVID-19 restrictions, we are grateful to be able to offer these in-person experiences that our students and families have become accustomed to.

If you are looking for some fresh Lew-Port gear for the new school year, the PTSA has you covered!

The districtwide PTSA is holding its annual "Spirit Wear" sale and orders can easily be placed online at <https://lewportptsa.itemorder.com/sale>. This link can also be found on the district website. There is something for everyone, including T-shirts, hoodies, polo shirts, jackets, leggings, PJ bottoms, hats, masks and more. Orders can be placed until Sept. 15.

Here are some key dates to mark on your calendar:

✓ Tuesday, Sept. 7 – first day of school

✓ Wednesday, Sept. 8 – middle school sixth grade parent open house

✓ Thursday, Sept. 9 – middle school seventh and eighth grade parent open house

✓ Thursday, Sept. 9, and Friday, Sept. 10 – high school picture day

✓ Tuesday, Sept. 14 – early release day (secondary students released at 1:14 p.m. and elementary students released at 2:25 p.m.)

✓ Wednesday Sept. 15 – middle school picture day

✓ Thursday, Sept. 16 – IEC open house

✓ Thursday, Sept. 23 – high school open house and PEC Parent Night

✓ Wednesday, Sept. 29 – IEC picture day

✓ Tuesday, Oct. 12 – PEC picture day

More information will be forthcoming from the schools on specific protocols for open house and Parent Night. We are so excited to see all students back on campus Tuesday, Sept. 7!

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