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April 18, 2017
For Immediate Release

Mayor Colin Read to Sign First Community Pledge for Diversity

PLATTSBURGH (April 19, 2017) — Mayor Colin Read will kick-off the community leg of an effort to encourage inclusiveness in race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, socio-economic class and privilege.

As part of it, he will be the first to sign a pledge committing to exercise careful word choice, demonstrate empathy in a culturally sensitive manner and challenge, deter or report any incidents of discriminatory behavior.

After the signing, which will take place at City Hall, 9:15 a.m. Thursday, April 20, a SUNY Plattsburgh PR Campaigns class will present the mayor with a button, a copy of the pledge and a window decal to hang in his office. The class will then open the pledges to the public.

The campaign started on the SUNY campus after the election this fall, when reports of a national increase in hate crimes stirred up fears among some minority students. More than 90 percent of students responding to a survey conducted by the Public Relations Campaign Planning and Development class indicated that they were very comfortable with the idea of being close friends with students of different races, nationalities, religions and economic backgrounds as well as members of the LGBTQ community.

Members of the Planning and Development class and, later, of the PR Campaigns class, wanted to harness this energy and allow others to pinpoint mobile safe spaces on campus.

The result was the “I Am an Ally” diversity campaign, designed to get people to commit to supporting others and to help those others identify support systems.

The students gathered about 1,000 on-campus pledges, but now they want to bring these efforts to the community.

Public Relations Campaigns Member Kayla Thorsey explained the reasoning for community expansion. “Our survey showed that students felt less safe in the Plattsburgh community than they did on campus, so we can only imagine some community members feel the same way, especially after the recent presidential election and the #BlackLivesMatter movement,” Thorsey said. “Nobody should have to feel this way. We’re trying to create a comfortable atmosphere for students and residents alike.”

During the months of April and May, students will visit local businesses to explain the pledge’s meaning. They will encourage local businesses to sign the pledge, and businesses will receive an “I Am an Ally” window cling as a symbol of their commitment to the community.

To learn more about the effort or to sign pledges, contact the class at IAmAnAllyPlatts@gmail.com.

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