

Talking Points for News Conference

- The purpose of I Am an Ally is to identify support systems regarding diversity and create an open, safe environment for all.

History of our campaign:

- After last year's presidential election, many minority students were fearful of leaving their dorms at times.
- In addition, some of our classmates noticed that people seemed uncomfortable walking around the campus hallways after discussions about race once again took a national spotlight.
- Although students indicated a fear and discomfort on campus, our student survey also showed that the majority of our students were supportive of people from different walks of life and would be interested in starting friendships with those people. This included students of different races, religions, genders, sexual orientations and socio-economic classes.

Our purpose: We wanted to create a way for these students to publicly show their support in a comfortable way.

Our campaign:

- With this in mind, students created an I Am an Ally pledge, which committed signees to encourage diversity by welcoming people of all backgrounds, demonstrate empathy in a culturally sensitive manner, foster intercultural dialogues by examining their own biases and challenge, deter and report incidents of discriminatory behavior.
- Students, faculty and staff were encouraged to sign it.
- After they signed the pledge, they received a free I Am an Ally button, symbolizing that the student wearing the button supports diversity and is someone to whom others can go to talk about social issues or hardships involving diversity.

Student response:

- Students responded positively to this campaign.
- We've given away about 1,000 buttons.
- And we still have students looking for them.

Moving off-campus:

- In our survey last fall, we saw that students felt safer on campus than in the community, and we felt there might be diverse families in the Plattsburgh community who feel a similar way.
- Now we want to do something about that.
- MENTION COMMUNITY EFFORTS HERE -- mayor, supervisor, high school, local businesses.

Colin Read:

- Plattsburgh mayor Colin Read has been an advocate for people from diverse backgrounds. Most recently he joined forces with other groups to create Plattsburgh Cares in an effort to provide support to immigrants in need.
- In addition to being mayor, Colin is a professor of economics and finance at SUNY Plattsburgh, where he has previously served dean of the college's School of Business and Economics.
- He is a prolific author who has written many books and articles in the field of economics and one of the co-founders of Vision2Action.
- He and his wife, Natalie Peck, are also owners of the Champlain Wine Company.

- We are proud to have him become the first to sign a pledge in this new community leg of our campaign efforts.