

Charles Kenyon Joins Wells College as Interim Dean of Students

Kenyon, who comes to Wells with decades of student affairs experience, will begin his position in early February.

AURORA, N.Y.—Wells College has named Charles Kenyon as interim dean of students, to serve in that capacity through the 2019–2020 academic year. As interim dean, Kenyon will provide leadership in all areas of student life, including activities and programming, residence life, and diversity and inclusion. He will begin his position on Feb. 4, 2019.

Kenyon comes to Wells with an extensive background in managing student affairs and student development programs. He served as associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students from 2003 through 2017 at the State University of New York College at Buffalo, where he was responsible for student developmental services, student conduct management and division-wide assessment and planning efforts. In that role, he supervised the offices of student judicial affairs, career development, counseling and health services, as well as programs for disabled student services, volunteer and service learning and three pre-college programs.

“I am pleased to welcome Charles Kenyon to Wells as interim dean of students,” said Jonathan Gibraltar, president of Wells College. “Charles will draw upon his extensive professional background in all aspects of student affairs, having led a division at Buffalo State that supported the needs of over 10,000 students. His commitment to promoting a campus atmosphere of civility, mutual respect and openness makes him an excellent fit for Wells,” President Gibraltar added.

“Throughout my career, one of my chief goals has been to focus on understanding the interests and needs that students have, so that I can help provide programs that respond to their interests and services that address their needs,” said Charles Kenyon. “During my initial visit to campus, I was impressed by the level of caring that faculty and staff showed toward the students, as well as by the students’ commitment to being successful in their own college careers,” he added. “I look forward to collaborating with partners all across campus to help our students succeed, both during their time at Wells and long after they graduate.”

While at Buffalo State, Kenyon was the chief architect of the Compact for a Civil and Caring Academic Community, a shared set of principles that outlines the expectations and commitments of those who live, study and work together at Buffalo State. This value system, which initially arose out of strategic planning efforts a decade ago, remains a core element of the Buffalo State experience to this day.

Kenyon also has many years of experience in securing grant funding that helped increase access and opportunity for students. He was instrumental in obtaining millions of dollars in state and federal funds for programs that aided first-generation students, at-risk youth and other underrepresented groups.

He previously served at Buffalo State as associate vice president for student affairs from 2000 to 2003, and as assistant vice president of student affairs from 1992 to 2000. Prior to his time at Buffalo State, he was director of the Cooperative Learning Center, the academic support services unit at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth.

Hiring an interim dean will allow for continuous leadership in student affairs while Wells College conducts a national search for a permanent dean of students over the next 18 months. Jennifer Michael, who had served as dean of students at Wells since 2012, departed in late October for a position at Cornell University.

Kenyon received his doctorate in higher education from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, with a concentration on labor relations and organizational behavior. He also received his master's in education from Harvard and a bachelor of arts in education from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. An amateur pianist, Kenyon and his wife, Deborah, enjoy cooking, kayaking and traveling to visit their two children in Boston and Sacramento.