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President Marie Hardin reflects on her first year and shares her hopes for the future

By AVA HIGHLAND
Managing Editor

Learning. Interacting. Responding.

Three core principles of Quinnipiac University President Marie Hardin's first year.

The Chronicle had an opportunity to sit down with Hardin to reflect on the past year and discuss what the future holds.

For Hardin, her first year largely focused on getting to know Quinnipiac and its community.

"It was a remarkable year for me," Hardin said. "I would describe it as a year of discovery and connection. You know, as a new leader coming in, what was really important to me was understanding the culture and forming connections with the community and faculty and staff, but also with students."

Looking back, a collection of pivotal memories stand out to Hardin, from convocation to commencement to attending annual events like the Battle of Whitney Ave.

Hardin has truly immersed herself in the Quinnipiac community, most notably by interacting with students around campus.

Hardin came to Quinnipiac from Pennsylvania State University, where she served as the dean of Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications. Going from a university with over 86,000 students to one with roughly 9,700 students, it was a surprise for Hardin to have so many interactions with students.

"It was surprising to me every time I showed up somewhere, and there were lots of people there who wanted to hear what I had to say and wanted to respond to it," Hardin said. "I have to tell you, that's a really special thing about this community, and it's something that I don't take for granted."

Early in her role at Quinnipiac last year, Hardin shared a desire to connect and interact with students as much as she could. And she has.

"I think one of the most important things that a president here at Quinnipiac can do is stay connected with students because you're the reason this institution exists," Hardin said. "I would also say that it's one of the most fun parts of the job, and I like having fun."

Not only is student connection enjoyable for Hardin, but it is crucial to making students know they are valued.

"I also think that when students understand that they are worthy of attention from the leader of the institution, I hope what that tells students is that they are important, that they are important to this place," Hardin said.

Around campus, Hardin wants to ensure students are just as comfortable interacting with her as she is with them.

"Every student here brings hope for me about the future of this institution, the future of our communities, the future of this country," Hardin said. "…I hope students see me as somebody that they can approach. I hope they see me as someone that wants to hear from them, wants to talk to them, wants to know how they're doing, and has the highest hopes for their futures."

For any university president, the highlights also come with their challenges too.

Last spring, Quinnipiac students raised concerns regarding the Office of Title IX, questioning their processes and procedures.

An op-ed published by The Chronicle about an experience with the office quickly led to a student-run protest and several other students sharing their stories.

For Hardin, this student response came as another surprise.

"You know, you learn about things, things become unearthed and you start addressing those," Hardin said. "That was a challenge I didn't expect to have, but looking back, that was important. It was important that the students spoke up, and I feel good about how we've responded."

To any of those students who spoke up, Hardin shared two words: "Thank you."

Hardin mentioned the importance of students highlighting issues and calling for change. She knows that it's "not always easy" and says those actions were "admirable."

To students feeling concerns about the university's procedures or handling, Hardin says to keep advocating.

"What I would tell those students now is, please continue to hold us accountable because your concerns are important, and if we're not responding in a way that addresses those concerns genuinely and powerfully, then I want to hear about it," Hardin said.

Students have also continued to raise concerns about on-campus operations, including facilities such as laundry complications and parking. While students have shared those complaints, some have also shared frustration with not seeing change.

Hardin wants students to know that their concerns are not going unnoticed.

"Oftentimes we're not going to be able to solve the problem overnight," Hardin said. "But I want students to know that we don't ignore these things, that I pay attention to these things, that we have a team of people, and my job is to get the team moving to address these issues, and to make sure that you all know that we are working to address these issues."

Looking ahead, Hardin has several goals focused on furthering connections with students and their well-being. One of those includes utilizing the Sleeping Giant State Park — sitting just across the street from the university's Mount Carmel Campus — for sunrise hikes with Hardin.

"I'd love to have a culture where Sleeping Giant becomes a sort of a feature that students embrace and understand how special it is, and it may be a small thing, but I like doing," Hardin said.

On a larger scale, Hardin is focused on launching a strategic plan that focuses on the well-being of students.

"It also involves thinking and planning and creating an experiential learning opportunity for every student at this institution," Hardin said.

That plan includes a devotion to setting students up for success in their career outcomes.

And the overarching goal as university president stays with the students, all of them.

"I don't know if this is possible," Hardin said. "Again, I'd love to have a positive interaction with every student here at Quinnipiac University in some way."

MIDTERMS from cover

ertarian Party candidate Ken Krawchuk and 5% who did not choose a candidate.

Shapiro received 60.44% of votes to win a second term, as of publication. This was 1.44 percentage points more than the poll. Garrity received 38.27% of votes, 4.27 percentage points more than the poll.

Aside from Trump's aforementioned unfavorability playing a big role in the political environment, several top issues remained consistent across the three states, with cost of living at the forefront.

"It became evident in our polling that the cost of living was the number one issue among voters, not only in our state poll, but in the national poll," Snow said.

Other top issues for voters included the economy, healthcare and immigration.

A relatively newer issue was also on the radar for voters in Pennsylvania. While it wasn't the top concern, artificial intelligence and data centers still posed some concern.

"Because of its rural areas, it is resonating more," Snow said.

The Oct. 7 poll results show most Democratic and independent voters saying they would do more harm than good, while Republican voters remained fairly split.

Specifically, 80% of Democrats said AI data centers in Pennsylvania would do more harm than good, 11% said they would do more good than harm and 9% did not offer an opinion.

For independent voters in Pennsylvania, 72% think AI data centers in the state would do more harm than good, 20% said they would do more good than harm and 8% did not offer an opinion.

Pennsylvania Republicans had a closer split, with 40% saying AI data centers in the state would do more harm than good, 44% think they will do more good than harm and 16% did not offer an opinion.



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During the 2026 midterm election season, the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute conducted three polls regarding the gubernatorial races in Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania.