

To Faculty and Staff

From A. Jennifer Clarke, Interim Provost

Date December 4, 2007

Subject Implementation of the recommendations of the *Task Force on Educational Initiatives*

Dear Colleagues: I write today to bring you up-to-date on our (the Provost's office and the Deans) efforts to implement the recommendations of the *Task Force on Educational Initiatives*, and to let you know, formally, that Professor Wayne Te Brake has decided to step down from his position as Associate Provost and Interim Director of the Center for Integrative Studies.

During his two-year tenure, Professor Te Brake has become a highly valued member of the Provost's office, and we shall all miss him when he steps down at the end of this calendar year. I want to take this opportunity to thank him, both on behalf of the office and on a personal level for all the help, support and advice of which I have been the beneficiary since my arrival on campus the last week of August. I shall miss that support. Given the interim nature of my appointment, and wanting to provide to the incoming provost the opportunity to shape the structure and the work of the office, there will be no immediate search for a new Associate Provost. Wayne's responsibilities will be shared out, on a temporary basis, among the Provost, the Associate Provosts, and the Deans; for example, Dean Jonathan Levin will assume temporary oversight of International Programs, and the work regarding integrative studies will be handled by the Provost, her staff, and the Deans.

As the Final Report of the *Task Force on Educational Initiatives* noted, this is "a moment of extraordinary opportunity for Purchase College--one in which we can realize as never before the founding vision of a single college in which artists and scholars, both students and faculty, challenge and strengthen one another through sustained interaction and collaboration"--and this remains the fundamental vision that is guiding discussions this semester among the Interim Provost, the Deans and the Associate Provosts. At the same time, we have remained mindful that then-Provost Elizabeth Langland, in her response to the Final Report, charged us, as administrators, "as a priority, first, to assess the curricular needs of our existing interdisciplinary programs and to identify, if possible, some synergies and common needs" among these programs.

As you know, for several years, Purchase College has struggled to establish a strong identity in the Liberal Arts and Sciences and thereby fulfill its charge of integrating distinctly separate learning environments within the Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Performing/Visual Arts. Over the past ten years, the College has created new integrative academic programs that were designed to connect individual student passion for the arts with new BA programs, i.e. in New Media; Media, Society & the Arts; Cinema Studies; Drama Studies; Creative Writing; Journalism; and Arts Management. On a number of levels, these integrative programs have been successful; most attract large enrollment, for example, and demonstrate somewhat higher retention and graduation rates than those currently pertaining in the liberal arts and sciences. Nevertheless, they continue to be viewed as remaining at the margins of the College's traditional academic disciplines, with the result that the College's academic reputation continues to rest largely on our high quality (and high cost) professional arts programs.

The strategic initiative outlined below, and on which work has already begun, does, we believe, provide us with the opportunity to begin to move the existing seven integrative studies majors to the center of the College's academic profile and at the same time to address enrollment management, marketing and advertising issues. Our discussions have been structured by the conversations with faculty that took place this past year during which concern was expressed about the possible start-up of new programs before necessary resources had been identified for,

and committed to, existing programs. Going forward, we will also find ways to engage the Budget Planning Committee so that our work is grounded in the fiscal realities and governance mechanisms of the College.

To this end, we have adopted the following "next steps" and timetable for the current academic year and beyond:

- Complete the assessment of the curricula, faculty resources, and infrastructural requirements of the seven Integrative Studies majors: New Media; Media, Society, and the Arts; Cinema Studies; Drama Studies; Creative Writing; Journalism; Arts Management; in time to inform the budgetary process for AY 2008-09. Fall/winter 2007. *Responsibility: Deans and Provost's Office.*
- Develop, for immediate implementation, a marketing and recruitment strategy that promotes these majors as a distinctive characteristic and integral component of the Purchase College academic profile. Fall/winter 2007 and ongoing. *Responsibility: Vice President for Enrollment Management, Deans, Provost's Office.*
- Complete, as soon as possible, an assessment of the history (past three years) of School of the Arts (SOA) course offerings for liberal arts students to ensure an expanded and more clearly coordinated number of SOA course offerings for Fall 2008 and on. Fall/winter 2007 and ongoing. *Responsibility: Provost's Office and Arts Deans.*
- Develop, in coordination with the ongoing conversations about space allocation (Perkins-Eastman), a proposal for a facility to support integrative and collaborative projects, possibly in the Library. Spring/summer 2008. *Responsibility: Director of the Library/Deans/Office of the Provost.*

In addition, the discussion surrounding the development and implementation of B.A. programs in the arts will continue among the faculty, deans, and cabinet. Prospective students will be surveyed to determine student interest in such programs. If warranted, a preliminary proposal for creating the first arts B.A. (possibly in Art + Design) will be developed by the end of this academic year and subjected to careful analysis.

In the longer term, the Deans and the Provost's office will take up the recommendations in the report of *the Task Force on Educational Initiatives*, including the development of proposals to (a) promote collaborative practices among Arts and Liberal Arts & Sciences students and faculty; and (b) encourage integrative and collaborative coursework that engages students across the traditional disciplines and the integrative studies majors. When we have ensured a solid foundation for our existing integrative studies majors, we will continue to explore the possibilities for a center of integrative studies, and what that can mean at Purchase College.