



November 21, 2018

To: The Faculty and Staff

From: Ross Daly (guest author, Interim Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Science)

Dear Colleagues:

Every one of us has a story about the path that led us to Purchase, and a related but separate story about how we feel about it. For me, it's that I've really only ever had one job. It's a job that many of us share: Translator. We take difficult concepts and arcane language and try to make them intelligible to others.

It's necessary work. How necessary became clear to me years ago when I was talking with a Czech colleague, Jan Jirak. Jan is a linguistics professor who does translation on the side. (He considers the Czech version of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* his masterpiece!) We were discussing the declining number of languages worldwide, and the possibility that at some point in the future all humans would have a common tongue. I suggested that this might eliminate the need for translation. "We might one day all speak the same language," Jan said, "but we'll still need translators."

He was right of course, a point driven home a short while later. President Bill Clinton was coming to Prague in early January 1994 for a summit with President Vaclav Havel, and U.S. journalists were pouring into town to do the sort of set piece "Wither the Czechs?" that precedes such events.

I happened to be in an office where one of the visiting journalists was interviewing a Czech political expert who was fluent in English. He was in the midst of making some point when he said, "Before November..."

The journalists tried to clarify. "Just a few months ago?"

"No, before November."

I could see where this was going so I intervened. Czechs refer to historical events by the month of their occurrence, I said, so "February" means 1948, "August" is 1968, and "November" is 1989. Everyone understood all the words that were being spoken, but because the meanings were dependent on a certain cultural fluency, someone had to translate.

I tried to keep this lesson in mind through my journalism career. Whether I was writing about international issues like the run-up to the war in Iraq, or scientific issues like the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider at Brookhaven National Lab, or the lives of lobstermen in Long Island Sound, my job was to translate the specific knowledge of sources into terms that would make sense to readers. It wasn't about dumbing things down, it was about explaining clearly so that the audience could gain insight.

The analogy for educators is pretty clear. We take concepts that are unfamiliar to students and carefully build up understanding to the point that the students can proceed on their own.

In this new role as interim dean in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, I still see the role that translation needs to play in my life, and in the life of the institution. This time, we need to translate the importance of the liberal arts and sciences, and of Purchase College as a whole to the public, politicians, and potential donors. Support for our efforts can only come along with a serious understanding of the work we do, and the role that work can and should play in our world. The popular stereotypes of the liberal arts can be defeated, but only by making our mission transparent to any who encounter it. Because the work is so vital, I'd be happy to translate.

DANCE:

Purchase Dance Company - Fall 2018 Concert

Experience the unbridled talent of the next generation of professional dance artists during the Purchase Dance Company's Fall 2018 Concert in the intimate Dance Theater Lab.

We are delighted to welcome home acclaimed alumna Rena Butler '11 who will create a fresh re-working of one of her recent pieces. In celebration of the female choreographer, we also welcome back leading Romanian choreographer Ana Maria Lucaciu, whose work was last seen on the Purchase Dance Company during our 2017 season at New York Live Arts. We shine a spotlight on 20th century dance artist Anna Sokolow with an important mounting of her masterpiece *Dreams*. Finally, we round out the program with Norbert De La Cruz III's *Lunar*, a demanding and ethereal pointe work set to a luscious original score by Nathan Prillaman.

December 6, 7, 8 at 8pm

December 7 at 2pm

December 7 at 7:15pm - FREE Pre-Concert Artist Talk moderated by Assistant Professor Darrah Carr

December 8 at 3pm

PAC:

Jazz at The Center Returns December 1

The PAC's popular Jazz at The Center series is back for another season! This year, The PAC's Seth Soloway will be curating and presenting two exciting concerts in collaboration with the Conservatory of Music, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the acclaimed and highly competitive Jazz Studies program.

Kicking off the series will be [*Joe Lovano Plays Bernstein*](#), a tribute to Leonard Bernstein on the centennial year of his birth. Joining sax master Joe Lovano on stage will be Jazz Studies head Pete Malinverni and alumni and students from Jazz Studies, playing arrangements of Bernstein works by Pete Malinverni.

The series will continue on March 30 when acclaimed jazz vocalist Cyrille Aimeé, an alumna of the Jazz Studies program, will perform with professors and other alums.

The magic of these concerts is the melding of touring artists, our talented faculty, and our gifted students all coming together for one-of-a-kind events. Don't miss them!

Tickets are available online at www.artscenter.org, or by visiting The PAC Box Office, Wednesday-Friday from 12-6 pm. Faculty and staff tickets are 50% off the regular price, as are advance student tickets. A student rush sale with \$5 tickets will take place closer to the event date, keep an eye on your purchase.edu email for details!