



September 21, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

The quality of the faculty and staff continues to be outstanding. It is your work that has helped to make Purchase College one of the Top Ten Public Liberal Arts Colleges and a Top Tier National Liberal Arts Colleges in the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges guide for 2021. Purchase is also listed as a top performer on social mobility, which ranks how well we serve economically, disadvantaged students.

It is undeniable that our students respond to the influence of our faculty and staff in so many positive ways. Consistently, their creativity is wonderfully expressed in studios and labs, colloquia and seminars, and locally and globally, in diverse forms of scholarship on and off campus. Recently, it's clear that our students are also modeling the shared responsibility for the safety of our community you show each day. Our first COVID-19 pool test results came back on Friday with no positive cases. The test results indicate the seriousness with which our students have taken their responsibility to remain safe. Thank you for your influence and support of our students.

With all of our success, we remain aware that the future is uncertain, which makes it planning difficult. Prudentially, to assure that we can sustain our success, while maintaining our ability to support the high quality work of faculty and staff, important steps are necessary to adjust to the highly restrictive and fluid financial situation shaped by COVID-19. In short, the financial realities—current and potential—require we reduce spending.

While fiscally we remain stable, we need to restrict annual spending due to reduced funds from the State because of decreased tax revenue, tuition shortfalls due to lower enrollments, and less than expected direct aid to fund student scholarship programs. The accumulative effect of these circumstances is that funds usually available to supplement junior faculty leaves and sabbaticals are not available.

In the last four years, when there were not enough full-year sabbaticals to provide the salary savings needed to fund half-year leaves, we were able to find additional state and foundation dollars to supplement and pay for the leave programs. Because full-year leaves pay half-year salaries, each one creates salary savings that can fund half-year leaves. In this year, as we conserve our financial reserves to sustain our mission into a future that is undeterminable, we cannot supplement the leave program. Neither state nor foundation dollars are available. This situation has also made funding Faculty Support Awards (FSA) not possible.

Proposals for Faculty leaves ([Junior Faculty Development](#) and sabbaticals) will be accepted through October 12th. Please refer to link for applications and further information. Once the complete pool of leave proposals are assembled, reviewed and evaluated, decisions on how to proceed will be recommended to the cabinet and President. I encourage you to speak with your chair/director to discuss your proposal in advance of submitting by our deadline date of October 12, 2020.

For a complete schedule of awards, please see [awards chart](#) on our provost webpage.

It is our desire to continue to support faculty in their professional work as artists and scholars. We realize the importance of academic leaves. We will do all we can to look at the entire mix of leave applications and create opportunities to support faculty in their important professional work. It is also understood that we cannot go for very long without supporting professional achievement.

These and other decisions will help preserve our important reserves and reduce the deficit we face in the current year. While I know this news is difficult to hear, I hope you will understand that these short-term steps, and others like them, will be the means to our continued long-term success.

It is also important to recognize that the dire forecasts predicted nationally for higher education need not apply to us. The fortitude you showed to persevere in the spring and summer by revising and remaking courses, preparing labs and studios, and working collaboratively, is the very resilience we will need to adjust, recover, and thrive. I am more convinced of that today, than I have ever been.