



December 12, 2016

To: The Faculty and Staff
From: Barry Pearson, Provost

Dear Colleagues:

What's in a biography? At first, I imagine most of us think of it as an event-driven account of one's life told by someone else. Usually it starts with the circumstances of a person's birth and moves forward. It goes something like, "S/he was born here on this date, moved, or didn't move, to wherever and wound up doing this, that, and another thing."

Trust me, I know that this formula has none of the makings of a biography worth reading. My "take" on biography here is obviously for the sake of argument.

What I've been surprised by, though, is that, for many of our students, their autobiographies—the versions they recount themselves—are often presented as arguments for why they won't succeed.

Maybe there's a maturity required to see in one's life the makings of success. And, to that end, sometimes our students may not know themselves well enough to see their pasts as preludes to future successes. On this point, I am unsure.

What I do know is that sometimes students see their futures with an eye toward looming failure. Within their memories seem hardened images of disappointment. Of course, memory is a funny thing.

For my part, I wonder if they even realize their successes? Do past accomplishments feel gratifying? After all, this is the most over-tested generation in history. And with that condition there are consequences. One penalty may simply be a devaluing of the very academic success we want them to hold in high regard.

Regardless, I think it's worth considering how students see their futures. I worry that too often they can't imagine success. Wherever we can help them on this front is time well spent.

Happy Holidays. And thank you for all you do each day.

Dance Events Coming This Spring to the PAC

The **2016–17 Dance Series** at the Performing Arts Center got off to a strong start last month with the world premiere of Doug Varone's [in the shelter of the fold](#), which was co-commissioned by the PAC and the Conservatory of Dance. Varone is a member of our faculty and a Purchase alum; 12 dancers from the conservatory were featured in the premiere. The piece was created on campus, which allowed the community unprecedented access to the creative process. The Dance Series will continue in this vein, with a line-up of world-class performances plus lots of extras—master classes, open rehearsals, and artist residencies. We can look forward to experiencing the [Paul Taylor Dance Company](#) on **January 28**, Donald Byrd's [Spectrum Dance Theater](#) on **February 18**, [Shen Wei Dance Arts](#) on **March 25**, and finally, the [Bill T. Jones / Arnie Zane Company](#) on **May 13**.

Upcoming Events: December

For the most current information on upcoming public events, please refer to the [featured public events](#), [campus calendar](#), [Neuberger Museum calendar](#), or [Performing Arts Center calendar](#). (Events and details may be added, changed, or deleted after an issue of *Notes* is prepared.)

Exhibitions on view:

Richard and Dolly Maass Gallery:

– [MFA Group Exhibition](#) (**last day!** through December 12)

Neuberger Museum of Art:

- [Ray Spillenger: Rediscovery of a Black Mountain Painter](#) (through December 23)
- [Post No Bills: Public Walls as Studio and Source](#) (through December 23)
- [Inside Out: The People's Art Project](#) (through December 23)
- [Destination: Latin America](#) (through January 22, 2017)
- [POP! Prints From the Permanent Collection](#) (through February 19, 2017)

Neuberger Museum of Art at SPACE | 42:

– [Deborah Kass: Day After Day](#) (through May 28, 2017)

[Visiting Artist Lecture: Ann Agee \(MFA\)](#)

Wed., Dec. 14, 4:30 p.m.

Visual Arts Building, Room 1016

[The Hip Hop Nutcracker](#)

Thurs., Dec. 15, 8 p.m.

Performing Arts Center

Last Day of Classes

Fri., Dec. 16

[Rob Mathes](#)

Fri. & Sat., Dec. 16–17, 8 p.m.

Performing Arts Center

Winter Break

Sat.–Tues., Dec. 17–Jan. 24

Last Day to Submit Fall 2016 Grades

Wed., Dec. 21

Deadline for resolution of Incomplete grades: Fri., Jan. 27, 2017

[Winter Session](#)

Begins Dec. 28 (through Jan. 17)