



May 11, 2015

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

Dear Colleagues:

There is little that happens in our lives to support the notion that our deepest and richest experiences come as a result of straight-line narratives whose endings resolve neatly. If anything, all things point to the opposite. Collectively and individually, there is everything to suggest that expecting orderly arrangements of our lives is irrational. Even more lunatic, perhaps, is to hold too staunchly to the idea that we can “plan” real education—at least the kind that liberates us. Yet it seems, in reaction to a world that can feel chaotic, we plan because we feel we must. I would suggest that we are fighting strong forces that push us back within the walls of an asylum. These same forces may also keep us tied too tightly to the wrong anchors. For instance, it may be that, by jettisoning time for basic human contact as we oversubscribe to the notion of “rational planning for efficiency,” we contribute to our own lunacy.

The “A-to-B,” once-upon-a-time storyline sometimes feels like a tall tale of a bygone era. More and more, I think our students find it hard to believe that such a narrative ends with a promise fulfilled. Reinforcing this suspicion in them, in ways that may be hard to comprehend, are events around the world that they consume every day in voluminous amounts of media. These ubiquitous sources reinforce both the quixotic and irrational nature of our lives and the world. If the events of this past year across the nation (Ferguson, Staten Island, Baltimore) and overseas (the massacre of 147 students in Kenya, the beheadings by ISIS, the Charlie Hebdo murders in Paris) have taught me anything, it is that we seem to shut ourselves off from one another more and more, which can lead to thinking the worst of each other.

Given the rupture in the “life as a well ordered” narrative and our digitized modes of communication, how do we ask our students or ourselves to believe that any plan we present can lead to fulfillment? There is little that is tidy about educating, given the hazardous and even cruel chance in our lives, and especially in those of our students. Perhaps it is time to leave the lunatic asylum and walk toward the simpler notion that human endeavors require us, first, to remain human.

What is to be done? (And, of course, in steps the lunatic with a plan!) But since I asked, I’ll answer. For me, the answer is compassion. If the events of this past year on our own campus have taught me anything, it is that compassion and humility are the ways in which we remain human. They have provided for me the resolve to stay true to the moorings proffered by our ideals. They have been the entrée to interactions aimed at healing the constant skepticism that seeps into our hearts and leads to spiraling negativity. And compassion and humility have given me a real education, unplanned and ungraphed.

Such a way forward is not easy. To set aside one’s own pride and to be open to the condition of another person is a scary proposition. To do so means to admit that you may not have the answer. And who wants to admit that? But to stop and listen is also to create a pathway that honors another’s voice. Ultimately, I think that being heard—not simply in a response to an email, but to have our voice make contact with another person—is what we yearn for. If we aren’t allowing for these unplanned, serendipitous moments, aren’t we simply tightening our own straitjackets? And, yes, I mean to suggest that it is time to think about our use of time in terms of our daily and weekly schedules—aka “the grid.”

How we use our time, how we organize our efforts with each other, should reflect the greater need to remain human and in touch. Not to do so is to rob us of the very inspiration we need: each other. While our work this year has been challenging and difficult, it has also been healing and has reminded me of our community's capacity for compassion. This is the stepping-stone for what can follow, which is to be critically engaged, expansive, and then open. And I do believe compassion can lead us there.

I also think that the most liberal education should inspire in us the confidence to live life openly. But this is a confidence that we can only draw from each other. I hope all of you will find renewed energy as you reflect on the year. The work you have done deserves inquiry as you sail across the summer days relaxing and renewing, which I hope you do. Have a great summer.

2014–15 Chancellor's Awards for Excellence

Our 2014–15 faculty and staff recipients of the SUNY Chancellor's Awards for Excellence were recently announced in the notice for next September's Convocation, where they will be honored. These awards are system-level honors conferred to acknowledge and provide statewide recognition for consistently superior professional achievement and to encourage the ongoing pursuit of excellence. Before we conclude this academic year, I want to take this opportunity to publicly congratulate them. We are very proud of your accomplishment and dedication!

Excellence in Teaching:

Nancy Bowen, Associate Professor of Art+Design (Sculpture), School of Art+Design

Peter Schwab, Professor of Political Science, School of Natural and Social Sciences

Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities:

Lisa Jean Moore, Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies, School of Natural and Social Sciences

Excellence in Professional Service:

Michael DeGrazia, Director of Finance and Administration, School of Liberal Studies & Continuing Education

Sheryl Secor, Registrar, Enrollment Services

Excellence in Classified Service:

Rachael Remenyi, Office Manager, Career Development Center

Purchase College Faculty Awards

I am pleased to announce the recipients of this year's final round of Purchase College faculty awards. *Please join me in congratulating them.* Given the restrictions of state funding, we are deeply grateful for our donors' generosity in providing this essential support. Special thanks are also due to the Faculty Professional Standards and Awards Committee for evaluating and providing recommendations for each award.

[2015–17 Peter and Bette Fishbein Junior Faculty Research Award in the Liberal Arts](#)

Thanks to the generosity of Peter and Bette Fishbein, this award provides \$4,500 to cover costs necessary for undertaking a scholarly research endeavor in one of the liberal arts disciplines. The 2015–17 recipient is **Stephen Flusberg**, assistant professor of psychology. This award will support an extension of his research on people's reasoning about mental health. It will allow him to run a large initial study, do a series of follow-up studies with his seniors, and support his students' travel and attendance at a national conference to share the results of the research they conduct together.

[Faculty Support Awards](#) are used to fund research, academic travel and conference presentations, artistic endeavors, or other comparable professional activity. The **spring 2015 recipients** are:

Nancy Bowen, Sculpture

Paul Kaplan, Art History

Matthew Bollinger, Painting and Drawing
Kimberly Detterbeck, Library
Rachel Dickstein, Theatre and Performance
Stephen Flusberg, Psychology
Jesse Gastelle, Economics
Darcy Gervasio, Library
Paula Halperin, History
Sharon Horvath, Painting and Drawing
Sanford Ikeda, Economics
Chris Kaczmarek, Sculpture

Beth Livensperger, Painting and Drawing
Susanne Markgren, Library
Gaura Narayan, Literature
Mehdi Okasi, Creative Writing
Jordan Schildcrout, Theatre and Performance
Karen Singer-Freeman, Psychology
Jessica Wexler, Graphic Design
Lynn Winters, Psychology
Renqiu Yu, History

Transitions in Governance Leadership

The conclusion of the academic year is also a time of “passing the gavel” to newly elected governance leaders. Congratulations to **Dan Hanessian**, the incoming faculty presiding officer and chair of the Purchase College Senate (2015–18); and **Joseph Chiavaro**, the 2015–16 president of the Purchase Student Government Association (PSGA). **Keith Landa** has been elected to serve a second three-year term (2015–18) as the Purchase senator on the University Faculty Senate (UFS), and **Kathy Ceng** will complete her two-year term in 2015–16 as president of the Professional Staff Council. *Special thanks to the outgoing leaders for their service and dedication: Peggy De Cooke*, 2012–15 faculty presiding officer and chair of the Purchase College Senate; and **Latisha Blackburn**, 2014–15 PSGA president. In particular, I want to note the [resolution](#) in appreciation of Peggy De Cooke’s distinguished service, passed by the Faculty at Large on April 22.

New MFA Program in Media Art and Culture Approved by the EPC

Following unanimous approval by the LAS Academic Council on April 29, the Educational Policies Committee approved a substantive proposal for a **new MFA program in media art and culture** at its meeting on May 6.

This new program, presented by **Michelle Stewart** and **Suzanne Kessler** on behalf of the faculty in the **School of Film and Media Studies**, is designed to attract students seeking progressive, experimental, and participatory forms of media practice that reflect the contemporary media art landscape. Students will be encouraged to explore new modes and sites of media creation, exhibition, and reception, with select classes organized in concert with community groups and galleries. Emphasizing a hands-on approach to making, it will appeal to students who learn by doing in close mentorship with artists and scholars active in contemporary media arts. The 48-credit, three-year degree requires a common core, electives in media arts practice and media history and theory, and a 6-credit thesis project.

I would like to commend everyone involved for their good work in the bringing the proposal to this stage. The next step is submission of the proposal to SUNY and the New York State Education Department for review and approval. The anticipated effective date is Fall 2016 for this new MFA program.

Faculty Honored at the Annual Achievement Recognition Reception

Seventeen faculty members were honored on April 22 at the seventh annual Faculty Achievement Recognition Reception, held in the Library’s second floor Reading Room. The showcased work included eight books and an essay; two recordings and three films; and documentation of an NIMH grant and research article, dialect coaching for Alley Theatre productions, a performance art piece, and an artist residency. Special thanks to my co-host, **Patrick Callahan**; to **Suzanne Kessler**, for organizing this event; and to **Erik Landa**, **Anna Oyola**, **Eileen Prager**, and **Joseph Swatski** for their assistance.

Works by the following colleagues were on display at the reception: **Judith Dupré**, **Joe Ferry**, **Brandon Harris**, **Christopher McCann**, **Julian Kreimer**, **Jeanine Meyer**, **Lisa Jean Moore**, **Alex Orlovsky**, **Lenka Pichlíková**, **Jason Pine**, **Edward Pomerantz**, **Pamela Prather**, **Jeff Scheible**, **Jordan Schildcrout**, **Paul Siegel**, **Jeffrey Taylor**, and **Gary Waller**.

Purchase to Host the SUNYLA Conference in June

Purchase College will be hosting the [2015 SUNYLA \(SUNY Librarians Association\) Conference](#) on June 3–5. The conference theme is “The Art of Librarianship.” Anyone who is engaged in librarianship, or who works and collaborates with librarians, knows that it is not just a profession—it’s an art. Successful librarianship combines professional knowledge, skills, and experience with creativity, curiosity, passion, imagination, and vision. Each library, and each librarian, blends these elements in unique and different ways.

The majority of the sessions will be held in the Library, with approximately 200 attendees expected. The Library will be open as usual during the conference.

Upcoming Events: May

For the most current information on upcoming public events, please refer to the [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:

Neuberger Museum of Art:

- [Kuba Textiles: Geometry in Form, Space, and Time](#) (through June 14)
- [Plastic: Art in an Era of Material Innovation](#) (through August 23)

Richard and Dolly Maass Gallery / Moment Gallery, Brooklyn:

- **Senior Thesis Exhibition** (through May 13)
Maass Gallery and throughout the Visual Arts Building
- [All Cats Are Gray in the Dark: MFA Thesis Exhibition 3](#) (through May 17)
Momenta Gallery, 56 Bogart Street, Brooklyn

Passage Gallery:

- [Senior Show: Cinema Studies, Screenwriting, and Media, Society, and the Arts](#) (through May 12)

[Final Exam Week](#) *continued*

Mon.–Tues., May 11–12

[Senior Week 2015](#)

Mon.–Thurs., May 11–14

[Spring Chamber Music Festival](#) *continued*

Mon., May 11, 5:30 & 8 p.m.

Music Building, Recital Hall

Last Day of Spring 2015 Classes

Tues., May 12

[21st Annual Senior Project Processional](#)

Tues., May 12, 4 p.m.

Southside to the Library

Followed by a [party](#) at 5 p.m. for participating seniors, faculty, and staff

[Harlan Jacobson’s Talk Cinema](#)

Tues., May 12, 7 p.m.

Performing Arts Center

[School of the Arts Student Awards Dinner](#)

Wed., May 13, 5 p.m.

Performing Arts Center

[2015 Westchester GIS User Group](#) (all-day conference)

Thurs., May 14, 7 a.m.

Natural Sciences Building, Room 1001 and other rooms

Senior Days BBQ

Thurs., May 14, noon

Behind Fort Awesome

Faculty/Staff vs. Seniors Kickball Game

Thurs., May 14, 3 p.m.

Great Lawn

Rain location: The gym

[43rd Annual Commencement](#)

Fri., May 15: The procession begins at 12:30 p.m.

Check-in: 10:30–11 a.m.

Westchester County Center

198 Central Avenue, White Plains

[Summer Session I begins](#) (100% online)

Mon., May 18 (through June 5)

[Purchase Dance Company at New York Live Arts](#)

Wed.–Sat., May 20–23, 7:30 p.m.

219 W. 19th St., New York City