September 7, 2017

Dear colleagues,

Welcome back! I hope that you all have enjoyed summers that were both rejuvenating and productive.  The changes in pace and responsibilities over the course of the academic year can be invigorating, and I hope that you were able to use the summer to catch your breath from the past academic year as well as to recharge in preparation for the upcoming one.  I look forward to seeing you (and meeting some of you for the first time) very soon!

In this letter, I’d like to share some of the developments pertaining to faculty life and work from last year and looking forward to the year ahead.

This summer, though some of you did your work away from Williamstown, the campus was once again busy, with a combination of construction, camps, conferences, teaching, and research activity.  On the construction front, the new bookstore on Spring Street officially opened its doors in early August! The addition to the Science Center on Morley Circle is well underway, and construction in the science quad and on a new residence hall for the Center for Development Economics has also begun.  This work brings with it a certain degree of disruption of course, and we are grateful to everyone who’s been working to make things happen as smoothly as possible. Though the work brings some stresses, it’s exciting to watch as things take shape!  Many of you worked with students on campus over the summer, whether teaching in the Summer Science and Summer Humanities and Social Science Programs with over 50 incoming first-year students or with the well over 200 students on campus pursuing research projects of various kinds in all departments and programs.

***News from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty***

There are a few important changes to note in our office this year.  Denise K. Buell has headed off on her well-earned sabbatical for this academic year; she’ll return to serve another term as Dean of Faculty on July 1, 2018. Meanwhile, I’ve returned from my own sabbatical in South Korea and will be serving as Interim Dean of Faculty for the year.  You also recently received a memo about the [Design Thinking pilot](https://faculty-networks.williams.edu/events/design-thinking-pilot-williams/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), an exciting three year initiative to promote faculty creativity and innovation. Please join me in welcoming Ric Grefé, our Design Thinker in Residence to our office, and stay tuned for design-related programming throughout the year.  The other members of our office who work in support of all things faculty-related and generally keep things running smoothly are: Veronica Bosley (Commencement and Academic Events Assistant), Gail Burda (Executive Assistant), John Gerry (Associate Dean of Faculty), Carrie Greene (Director of Commencement and Academic Events), Megan Konieczny (Assistant Dean of Faculty), Rhon Manigault-Bryant (Associate Dean of Faculty), and Barb Pietras (Faculty Information Systems Administrator).  Finally, a piece of sad news for our office: Gail Burda will retire as of Sept 30.  We will all miss her sorely and hope that you will join us at a gathering on Wednesday, September 27 from 4:00-5:30 in the lobby of ’62 CTD to wish her well and thank her for her many years of service.

I’d like to call your attention to our newly improved [Dean of the Faculty webpage](https://faculty.williams.edu/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), which has been redesigned to highlight the ways faculty most commonly understand our work as it relates to teaching, scholarship and service. Also underway is the overhaul of our [Networks for Faculty Development](https://faculty-networks.williams.edu/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) site, which is being reconfigured to offer greater clarity about the vast array of resources available to support faculty in our teaching, creative work, mentoring, and professional development at every stage of our careers.  Some of the opportunities that we made available last year are outlined below.

We continued to host a variety of fora in which faculty could come together to discuss topics of mutual interest.  One venue for this is the partnership between our office and OIDE (the Office for Institutional Diversity and Equity).  To this end, Rhon and Ngoni Munemo (the Associate Dean in OIDE) hosted the weekly Associate Deans lunches last year, and will continue to do so in the upcoming year.  Please keep an eye on the NetWorks for Faculty Development site for the [schedule](https://faculty-networks.williams.edu/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) of topics, which will be updated throughout the year.  In addition to these lunches, last year included four gatherings under the heading “Healthy Debate,” to foster broad, yet passionate, discussion on why differing points of view actually matter and can cultivate camaraderie among faculty. We will again partner with the Office of the President and the Gaudino Scholar to develop further programming to be held this fall.

Our office, in conjunction with the Provost’s office and other senior staff, launched a seminar-style series for tenured faculty and senior athletic faculty called “How the College Works”.  This series provided an in-depth opportunity to learn about and discuss aspects of the college that affect faculty, that are linked to committees on which faculty serve, and that bear on big decisions made at the college. Topics included the organizational structure of the college, financial fundamentals, the CAP, capital projects, and faculty governance.  Fourteen faculty members participated in the inaugural iteration of six sessions in the fall of 2016 and a similar number will participate this year.

Last year also marked the launch of an annual research, teaching and technology series, “#SocialMedia: Digital Trends in Research & Teaching.” Be on the lookout for series programming this year, which we will co-host with the Office of Institutional Technology and the Library.

In lieu of our [annual publishing day](https://faculty-networks.williams.edu/campusresources/facultydiscussion/researchgroupsevents/publishing-day/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), we hosted a NEH regional workshop, which gave 22 participants from 10 institutions a general overview of NEH programs and initiatives, as well as strategies for preparing successful grant applications.  We look forward to hosting publishing day again in the spring of 2018.

The second all-faculty retreat was held at Mt Hope at the end of the spring semester.  Nearly 50 faculty gathered at Mount Hope to identify the cultures that affect us at the unit level and how that impacts the broader faculty climate at Williams. The retreat, “Minding the Gap: Navigating Cultures at Williams,” was a productive follow up to the 2016 retreat on classroom climate. We look forward to programming the next retreat in the spring.  If you have ideas for topics for future all-faculty retreats, please share them with Rhon, John, or me.

Part of what makes Williams unusual, even among many of our liberal arts peer schools, is the range of leadership positions available to faculty members.  Playing these roles is unrelated to our training for the professoriate but is crucial for robust faculty governance. I want to call your attention to an opportunity that will be available beginning in July 2018 to serve as [Director of the Oakley Center](https://faculty.williams.edu/request-for-proposals-faculty-director-oakley-center/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

Last year we introduced a new opportunity for faculty, [The John Hyde Teaching Fellowship](https://faculty.williams.edu/grants-and-funding/the-grant-process/prospect-research-2/the-hyde-teaching-fellowship/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a three-year fellowship to support curricular innovation especially aimed to reach students outside of one's primary area or to stretch one's own pedagogy and areas of teaching.  Ronadh Cox (Geosciences) began as our first Hyde Fellow in 2016; she is working to highlight the societal relevance of Geosciences in the modern world, and to attract to Geosciences a wider diversity of students.  Steve Gerrard (Philosophy) begins his term as Hyde Fellow this year, focusing on the philosophy of education using Plato’s question:  can virtue be taught?.

This year we announced another opportunity for faculty to spend a semester at our Mystic campus, learning with and from the faculty and students at Williams-Mystic, as a [Williams-Mystic Faculty Fellow](https://faculty.williams.edu/residential-faculty-fellowship-at-williams-mystic/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).  This opportunity is available as early as Spring 2018.

Lois Banta will complete her time as the Gaudino Scholar in January during which time she has brought to campus a range of programming exploring the theme “At What Cost?”  Susan Engel will then begin her term as the Gaudino Scholar exploring how engaged conversations in the classroom and beyond can form opinions and bring about intellectual change.

Finally, our office is interested in other ideas that you might have for information or support that we might provide.  One possibility that has occurred to us is some kind of media-related training or guidance.  We are in fact running a small-scale pilot with a group from the “Op-Ed Project” this fall, but if other faculty are interested, we will look into expanding this work in the future.

Many curriculum-related activities are worth noting as well.  A number of units undertook department or program self-studies in the past year (English, Economics, the Center for Development Economics, and Theatre.)  This year Political Economy, Psychology, and the Asian language programs will host external reviewers as part of this self-study process.

Last year the CPC (Curricular Planning Committee) led by Gail Newman produced their first (quite thorough) analysis of the curriculum at the college, which can be found [here](http://www.cs.williams.edu/~jeannie/cpc/files/REPORT.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).  This year’s committee, led by Jon Bakija will carry on the work of the CPC in facilitating a holistic view of the curriculum and our future needs.

We’d also like to remind faculty that while much of the work that Laura Muller (Director of Quantitative Skills Programs and Peer Support), Stephanie Dunson (Director of Writing Programs), and G.L. Wallace (Director of Accessible Education) do is student directed, they are all eager to work directly with faculty on issues related to their classrooms as well as in their own areas of scholarship.

***Faculty Milestones***

A number of faculty reached important milestones last year.  Six colleagues were reappointed as second term assistant professors:  Michele Apotsos (Art History).  Corinna Campbell (Music), Charlie Doret (Physics), Susan Godlonton (Economics), Leo Goldmakher (Math), and Greg Phelan (Economics).  Four faculty received tenure and begin this year as Associate Professors:  Rashida Braggs (Africana Studies), Nicholas Howe (Environmental Studies), Tim Lebestky (Biology), and Catherine Stroud (Psychology).  Seven faculty members were promoted from Associate Professor and begin this year as Full Professors:  Jeannie Albrecht (Computer Science), Edan Dekel (Classics), Sarah Goh (Chemistry), Gage McWeeny (English), Bojana Mladenovic (Philosophy), Mihai Stoiciu (Mathematics), and Tara Watson (Economics).  Finally many long-serving colleagues retired to emeritus status:  Ilona Bell (English), Ed Epping (Art), Darra Goldstein (Russian), Meredith Hoppin (Classics), Andrew Jaffe (Music), Eugene Johnson (Art History), Steve Levin (Art), Chris Mason (Athletics), Jefferson Strait (Physics), Karen Swann (English), William Wagner (History), and William Wootters (Physics).  Congratulations to you all!

Of course, there are other many other kinds of milestones in faculty work as well including major publications, receipt of grants in support of scholarship and pedagogy, national and disciplinary awards, and recognition of a variety of creative endeavors.  This year faculty across disciplines were awarded funds from a wide range of federal and private foundations in support of work to be carried out on campus, as well as in collaboration with others.  Recent grants awarded to faculty can be found [here](https://faculty.williams.edu/recently-awarded-faculty-grants/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).  (Note that Bridget Wiffin in the Office of Corporation and Foundation Relations is eager to assist any faculty with identifying and applying for external funding opportunities.)  For the annual end-of-the year reception celebrating such work, the library compiles a list of faculty publications for the year, which can be found [here](https://unbound.williams.edu/williamsarchives/islandora/object/facultypublicationlistings%3Apdfs%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).  Congratulations to the Athletics faculty for their many successes, resulting in Williams winning its 20th Director's Cup.  Working with the Office of Communications, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty is always interested in showcasing the myriad forms of faculty work.  In addition to continuing to submit annual activity reports and sending the office a copy of any books, CDs, or other work you produce (for display), please do not be shy about letting us know about your accomplishments as they occur throughout the year.

As always, it is very exciting to welcome new faculty to campus, some of whom you will recognize as having been here previously as visitors or fellows. This year, the following colleagues are joining us as tenure-track faculty: Zaid Adhami (Religion), Sarah Allen (Comparative Literature), Dan Barowy (Computer Science), Ron Bassar (Biology), Alexander Bevilacqua (History), Mari Rodriguez Binnie (Art History), Nicole Brown (Classics), Anthony Carrasquillo (Chemistry), Kai Green (Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies), Katie Hart (Chemistry), Iris Howley (Computer Science), Vivian Huang (Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies), Bill Jannen (Computer Science), Kate Jensen (Physics), Haydee Lindo (Math), David Loehlin (Biology), Kimberly Love (English), Laura Martin (Environmental Studies), Ianna Owen (English), Justin Shaddock (Philosophy), Chad Topaz (Math), and Mason Williams (Leadership Studies and Political Science).  New Athletics Faculty who have joined the college recently include Anik Cepeda (Women’s Tennis), Alice Lee (head coach of Women’s Lacrosse), and Marc Mandel (Men’s Crew).  At Williams-Mystic, Timothy Pusack is beginning as an assistant professor in Marine Ecology.

We also welcome dissertation and postdoctoral fellows to campus.  Our new Bolin Fellows are Tyler Rogers (American Studies) and Sebastien Perez (Latin@ Studies).  Aleksandar Matovski is beginning as a Mellon postdoctoral fellow in Political Science and Chad Levinson as a Stanley Kaplan Postdoctoral fellow in Political Science and Leadership Studies.  As always, we have a number of faculty playing crucial roles as visitors this year and we are grateful for their contributions.  You can learn more about all of this year’s new faculty [here](https://faculty.williams.edu/2017-18-new-faculty/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

***The year ahead***

Many academic units will be conducting one or more tenure-track searches: American Studies, Anthropology/Sociology (Sociology), Arabic Studies, Art (History and Studio), Astronomy and Physics, Biology, Classics, Dance, Economics, Geosciences, History, Political Science, Psychology, and Mathematics/Statistics (Statistics).  We are also searching to fill two open positions for the Williams-Mystic Program (Literature of the Oceans and Maritime History).  In addition, a number of units will conduct searches for visitors and all units will have the opportunity to nominate candidates for Bolin fellowships.  As always, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty will partner with the Office for Institutional Diversity and Equity to support all searches and provide resources and tools to help us recruit and assess candidates in ways that will allow us to hire and retain more faculty from groups still underrepresented at the college, especially faculty of color.  This year again, we will benefit from the expertise of Pat Romney and Linda Marchesani.  Please be sure to contact our offices if you have additional ideas for enhancing recruiting efforts in your units.

These efforts are not new to Williams.  We have worked over the years to develop longer-term recruitment strategies both here at Williams and through collaborative efforts with other institutions.  Williams was a founding member of both the [Liberal Arts Diversity Officer](https://liberalartsdiversity.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) consortium (LADO, a consortium of small liberal arts colleges) as well as the [Creating Connections Consortium](http://c3transformhighered.org/%22%20%5Cl%20%22sthash.LNo4KuM8.dpbs%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) (C3, a Mellon-funded initiative in which four LADO institutions partnered with U.C. Berkeley, University of Michigan, Columbia University, and the University of Chicago).  Through these bodies we have been working actively to develop and share best practices for supporting students and scholars underrepresented in higher education at all stages of their careers, as well as to recruit faculty from underrepresented groups.  In recent years we have hosted eight postdoctoral fellows (our C3 fellows) from our partner C3 research institutions. Meanwhile, roughly ten Williams undergraduates have participated in summer research fellowships at UC Berkeley, Columbia University, University of Michigan, and the University of Chicago.  In April, Williams hosted the C3 Summit on “The Transformative Power of Race in the Academy: Measuring Change, Charting Futures,” a conference that brought over 200 scholars and representatives from over 25 institutions (including LADO schools, C3 R1 partner institutions as well as others) to campus to showcase undergraduate and graduate research as well as a series of sessions focused on the larger goals of C3.

Many of you have participated in various aspects of our work with LADO and C3 on behalf of the college and your individual units, and we thank you for those efforts. This year, we will once again participate in several recruiting visits in conjunction with our [C3](http://c3transformhighered.org/%22%20%5Cl%20%22sthash.ek2419O6.dpbs%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) and [LADO](https://liberalartsdiversity.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) partners.  These will include visits to various University of California campuses, the University of Michigan, Columbia University, the University of Chicago, Howard University, and SREB Conference (the Southern Regional Education Board).

Over October 22-25, the college will also host the 10-year reaccreditation team, a group of external reviewers led by Robert Zimmer, President of the University of Chicago.  Prof. Steve Fix (English) has led this reaccreditation process, which is essentially a college-level self-study, guided by standards set by a regional accreditation association.  Some of you have helped in assembling some of the information that will make up our report, and we thank you for those efforts.

The beginning of each year includes a number of receptions to welcome new and returning faculty.  I encourage you to attend those, but also invite you to informal gatherings that will occur throughout the year and provide an opportunity for us to come together and get to know one another.  The first of these will be at 3:30-5:00 on October 11 in the faculty house lounge.  We hope you’ll mark your calendars and join us then.

Good luck to you all with the beginning of the year!

Warmly,

*Lee*

Lee Park

Interim Dean of Faculty

Williams R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Chemistry