



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

A private university in the public service

Office of the Provost

Elmer Holmes Bobst Library
70 Washington Square South, Room 1221
New York, New York 10012-1091
Telephone: 212 998 3077
Facsimile: 212 995 3190
david.mclaughlin@nyu.edu

David W. McLaughlin *Provost*

September 26, 2013

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome the new faculty who are joining New York University and to greet our returning faculty colleagues for the new academic year. NYU is a wonderfully vibrant and energetic research university, whose schools, departments and their faculties carry out literally thousands of activities in undergraduate and graduate teaching, professional training, special events, community outreach, and scholarship and research. You, the faculty, are the heart of our institution and the core of our mission of excellence in research, scholarship, and teaching.

This year we have much to celebrate, including the formal integration of [NYU-Poly](#) as the Polytechnic School of Engineering, the opening of our new degree-granting campus at [NYU Shanghai](#), the graduation of our first undergraduate class at [NYU Abu Dhabi](#), the initiation of the combined Global Public Health major, available in multiple schools, and the entry of our first classes of master's degree students at CUSP (the [Center for Urban Science and Progress](#)), at the [Center for Data Science](#), and in the multi-school [MAGNET](#) facility (Media and Games Network). The University takes pride in your academic accomplishments, and I am certain that ongoing work by our faculty—to assess and ensure the University's global educational efforts meet NYU's high standards, to improve the use of technology in teaching and learning, and to frame the University's approach to meeting its physical space needs—will enhance NYU's academic momentum and positively shape its future.

Our Faculty

I am exceedingly proud of our faculty, whose strength continues to grow from year to year. This year, the schools and departments successfully attracted an exceptionally strong group of new faculty, who include junior colleagues beginning their careers as well as mid-career and senior faculty who decided to join our present faculty and make NYU their home.

A [list](#) of our new tenured and tenure-track faculty (not including faculty at the School of Medicine), with brief statements of their research interests and backgrounds, is available at the Provost's web site, where new appointments in recent years may also be found. Additional accomplished faculty have joined NYU as global distinguished professors, arts professors, music professors, clinical professors, visiting professors and in other capacities; these faculty are listed on the web sites of the individual schools. I am also pleased to recognize our new academic leadership: *K.R. Sreenivasan*, President of Polytechnic Institute of NYU and Dean of NYU Engineering; *Trevor Morrison*, Dean of the School of Law; *Cheryl Heaton*, Director of the

Global Institute of Public Health and Dean of Public Health; *Sherry Glied*, Dean of the Wagner School; and *Dennis DiLorenzo*, Dean of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Our new colleagues join a distinguished community of scholars, researchers, and teachers. A number of faculty members received honors of great distinction this past year and deserve special mention and congratulations: *K.R. Sreenivasan* was elected into the Rome-based Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, the oldest scientific academy worldwide whose early members included Galileo Galilei; *Anna Deavere Smith*, University Professor and professor of performance studies (Tisch), was presented by President Obama with the National Humanities Medal; *Jan Vilcek*, professor of microbiology (School of Medicine), received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, the highest honor bestowed by the president upon scientists, engineers, and inventors; *Tom Bishop*, Florence Lacaze Gould Professor of French Literature, professor of French and comparative literature, was named a *Commandeur* in the French *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, the highest rank bestowed by the *Ordre*. Three faculty members were elected as members of the National Academy of Sciences: *David Heeger*, professor of psychology and neural science (FAS); *Joseph LeDoux*, Henry and Lucy Moses Professor of Science (FAS); and *Ruth Nussenzweig*, C.V. Starr Professor of Medical and Molecular Parasitology and Pathology (School of Medicine). Three faculty members were also elected into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences: *Martin Blaser*, Singer Professor of Translational Medicine and professor of microbiology (School of Medicine); *David Chalmers*, professor of philosophy (FAS); and *Alastair Smith*, professor of politics (FAS).

Numerous other faculty members were awarded Guggenheim Fellowships, elected as fellows in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and received the top prizes in their creative and scholarly fields. Their accomplishments can be viewed [here](#). I am also proud to recognize the outstanding faculty scholars whom the University honored this past year with the designation of [University Professor](#) (*J. Lawrence Aber*, Steinhardt; *Paul Romer*, Stern; and *Hirokazu Yoshikawa*, Steinhardt), and, in the Faculty of Arts and Science, [Silver Professor](#) (*Lauren Benton*, History; *Percy Deift*, Mathematics; *Leslie Greengard*, Computer Science; *Sally Engle Merry*, Anthropology; *David Pine*, Physics; and *Larry Wolff*, History.) Please keep an eye out in your email inbox for the *Faculty News Brief*, which regularly posts new faculty awards and events, and visit [NYU Stories](#) as well as the [NYU Public Affairs Blog](#).

I have the occasion to meet many of our faculty at academic events, and, as I have been visiting the schools to discuss University priorities, I have had the opportunity to hear from numerous faculty groups about academic issues of concern to them. I and my vice provosts work closely with the faculty in planning and advisory committees, including the [Provost's Faculty Advisory Committee on Academic Priorities](#), the [Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee](#), the [Undergraduate Curriculum Advisory Committee](#), and the [Graduate Commission](#); as well as the [Faculty Senators Council](#); and especially in meetings with individual members of our faculty.

As Provost, my major commitment is to our faculty, and while I do not have the occasion to work individually with each one of you, I hope you will all feel free to [write](#) or phone or schedule a meeting to talk with me about issues that concern you.

Sustaining Our Academic Momentum

NYU's academic trajectory has been strong and positive across all dimensions, including student quality, student diversity, the strength of our faculty, and national and international rankings of our academic programs. For a quick and graphic overview of how NYU has evolved over the past decade, see [NYU by the Numbers](#). The University's marked improvement in its academic standing reflects the hard work and commitment of our faculty—in recruiting students, recruiting faculty colleagues, strengthening existing programs and developing new ones, and most importantly, in their research and scholarship.

As a strategic component of our academic ambitions, we have been working to increase our institutional aid for undergraduates, up by almost 138% over the past decade; one result is that our average scholarship grant has increased from meeting 38% of tuition to now meeting 55% of tuition. However, while we provide more than \$190 million per year in NYU grant aid, we are not yet where we want to be to adequately support our students and their families. Accordingly, this year, the NYU Board of Trustees will officially announce NYU's "Momentum Campaign" with the goal of raising \$1 billion over six years for scholarship funding. The campaign is anchored by a number of our Trustees—William Berkley, Evan and Barbara Chesler, Helen Kimmel, Martin Lipton, Larry and Klara Silverstein and the Starr Foundation, Judy and Michael Steinhardt, Anthony Welters, and Leonard Wilf—who have partnered to pledge more than \$70 million in lead gifts.

An additional source of strength is the diversity and quality of our students. Of entering freshmen, the majority were ranked in the top 10% of their graduating class; 16% are from the New York metropolitan area; 60% are women; 18% are non-U.S. citizens; 17% are first generation college students; and 20% are receiving Pell Awards. (In 2012, NYU was second among AAU private universities with respect to freshmen receiving Pell Grants.)

One very important aspect of our academic trajectory is the return of engineering to NYU, which will be completed in January 2014 when the former Polytechnic University becomes the Polytechnic School of Engineering. Engineering and technology are essential to modern and future society; hence, a modern research university must have a significant presence in engineering, technology, and applied science. NYU is very fortunate that Poly's faculty and students will provide us this presence as NYU's Polytechnic School of Engineering. For background information about the merger, see "[NYU Facts](#)."

Over the years, NYU has strengthened the academic quality of each of its schools, institutes, and departments. As we continue to do so, we are aided by the opportunities provided by coordinated academic development across NYU's schools and campuses—in faculty hiring, curriculum development, student recruitment, research initiatives, and facilities—to create synergies that leverage the strength of individual units and their faculties. Among our interdisciplinary and cross-school programs are the [Humanities Initiative](#), the [Global Institute of Public Health](#), the [Marron Institute on Cities and the Urban Environment](#) including [CUSP](#) and the [Institute for Public Knowledge](#), and the [Center for Data Science](#). MAGNET (Media and Games Network) brings together partner programs in Steinhardt ([Educational Technology](#)), Tisch ([NYU Game Center](#)), Courant ([Computer Science](#)), and Poly ([Integrated Digital Media](#),

[CITE Game Innovation Lab](#)). Over the past two years, NYU's interdisciplinary programs have been a focus of the self-study conducted as part of the re-accreditation process that NYU, like all American universities, undergoes every ten years; the University-wide committee that is chaired by Professor Norman Dorsen (Law) recently issued its [draft report](#) for comment.

NYU's global network provides singular opportunities for faculty and students. NYU encompasses the New York campus (at Washington Square, downtown Brooklyn, Museum Mile, and the First Avenue Health Corridor); two degree-granting research university campuses ([NYU Abu Dhabi](#), which will graduate its first class this spring, and [NYU Shanghai](#), which welcomed its first undergraduate class this fall); and 11 [Study Away](#) sites in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America, and Australia. NYU's global presence makes possible additional special opportunities for faculty (and graduate students) to conduct research throughout the network:

- The [Global Research Initiatives](#) program (GRI) defrays travel costs and provides research space and administrative support at NYU global academic sites—to date, in Berlin, Florence, London, Prague, Tel Aviv, and Washington, D.C.
- The [Global Institute for Advanced Study](#) supports faculty working groups that conduct sustained multi-year collaborative research on an international scale; presently five groups—led by Professors Jeremy Waldron (Law), J. Anthony Movshon (Neural Science, FAS), G. Gabrielle Starr (English, FAS), Jess Benhabib (Economics, FAS), and David Chalmers (Philosophy, FAS)—are supported.
- Through the [NYU Abu Dhabi Institute](#), NYU faculty from New York are leading research groups and hosting conferences, workshops, performances, and other public programs in Abu Dhabi.
- [NYU Shanghai](#) has plans for joint research institutes with our partners at East China Normal University in neuroscience, mathematics, computational chemistry, and social development, with plans underway for institutes in data science and urban science.

Faculty Involvement in University Decision-Making: University Faculty Committees

Several faculty committees have been working to shape the future of the University. I highlight three committees in particular, each of which has representatives from across the NYU community. All faculty are encouraged to share suggestions and concerns with each of these committees through their chairs, committee members (who are listed on each committee's web site) or by commenting directly on that web site.

- The [Faculty Advisory Committee on NYU's Global Network](#) is assessing the academic state of NYU's global network and how to best integrate its programs throughout the University. Formed in spring 2013, the Committee, which is co-chaired by Professors Eliot Borenstein (Russian and Slavic Studies, FAS) and Una Chaudhuri (English, FAS and Drama, Tisch) held regular meetings in the spring, and its sub-committees met over the summer. Summaries of all the meetings, documents related to the Committee's discussions, and a schedule of future meetings can be found on its web site. In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee will be hosting open forums for faculty, beginning with a forum on October 15.

To further strengthen faculty participation, Matthew Santirocco (Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs) and Linda Mills (Vice Chancellor for Global Programs and University Life) recently [wrote](#) to the faculty about broadening the scope of involvement in academic planning for NYU global sites, including curriculum development, faculty hiring, and other academic and co-curricular initiatives related to each NYU global site.

- The [Space Priorities Working Group](#) was established in September 2012 to consider how NYU can best proceed to use the approvals for additional space granted by the New York City Council to meet projected space needs near Washington Square. The 26-member Working Group, which is chaired by Professor Ted Magder (Media, Culture, and Communication, Steinhardt), met throughout the past academic year, reviewed numerous documents and extensive sets of data, and consulted with deans, administrators, students, faculty, and representatives of the community. The Working Group assessed the University's space needs and the financial assumptions underlying the University's capital plan. This past July, the Group issued an [interim report](#) and is reconvening this fall to continue its deliberations and, importantly, solicit feedback on the interim document via two town halls. A final report is planned to be issued in December.
- The [Faculty Committee on the Future of Technology-Enhanced Education at NYU](#), co-chaired by Rick Matasar (Vice President for Enterprise Initiatives) and Matthew Santirocco (Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs), met on a bi-weekly basis in spring 2013 and issued an [interim report](#) in July. In response to the Committee's recommendation that the University provide a greater level of support for faculty who want to use technology in their teaching, a new service model that coordinates, augments, and streamlines University services has been put in place and is being piloted this fall. This new approach aims to supply faculty with enhanced [instructional technology support](#) and a simpler means of finding it. This fall, the Committee will conduct robust consultations with the NYU community, visiting faculty in the schools to discuss their ideas and concerns about technology-enhanced education. It will also co-sponsor workshops and, later in the year, a conference on teaching with technology. The Committee expects to issue a final report in the spring.

These committees, along with the activities of the school faculty councils and the Faculty Senators Council, are crucial to the informed and participatory decision-making processes that are being strengthened across the University. Going forward, as the NYU Board's Special Committee wrote in its [August message](#), our goal is for at least half of the membership of faculty committees on University-wide matters to be chosen by representative faculty bodies in our schools. The commitment to faculty participation in University governance extends to the non-tenure-track faculty, who play an exceedingly important role in all our schools in teaching and scholarship at NYU; another goal for this year is to formalize the way in which non-tenure-track faculty are represented in the University Senate.

To further improve communication across NYU constituencies, the Special Committee called for the establishment of a Joint Committee of NYU Stakeholders with membership to be filled by board members and representatives from across the University community—including faculty representatives selected locally within the schools and representatives of the Faculty Senators Council, Student Senators Council, and Administrative Management Council. [This week](#) the Special Committee asked that the academic units, through their established representative bodies, begin the process to select representatives who will sit on the Joint Committee in time for the committee to hold its first meeting on November 1.

Institutional Support for Faculty Scholarship, Research, and Teaching

To spur faculty innovation and support their scholarship, seed money and project funds for faculty are available on a competitive basis from a variety of institutional sources, including:

- [University Research Challenge Fund](#)
- [NYU-Poly Seed Grants for Collaborative Research](#)
- [Curricular Development Challenge Fund](#)
- [NYU Whitehead Fellowships for Junior Faculty in Biomedical and Biological Sciences](#)
- [Global Public Health Research Challenge Fund](#)
- [Humanities Initiative Awards](#)
- [Visual Arts Initiatives Awards](#)

Faculty entrepreneurs can visit [Entrepreneurship at NYU](#) to learn about additional funding programs. Support and resources for teaching are available from the [Center for the Advancement of Teaching](#). Support for program level assessment of academic outcomes is available from the [Office of Academic Assessment](#). Support for obtaining external funding for research, including support for faculty who are writing interdisciplinary and interschool ‘mega’ (or center) grants, is available from the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#).

In a new initiative, NYU kicked off a “[Grand Challenge](#)” competition last year to promote scientific research that can address the major challenges of our day. Thirty-two teams of faculty submitted applications, with award decisions made by an external advisory committee. Awards were made to each of two multi-school teams of researchers: a “MetaGenome” project that will map the microbial genome of New York City and a project to develop a brain-machine technology that uses neural signals to wirelessly enable sensory and motor prosthetics. Each team receives a \$250,000 grant in unrestricted seed funds—coming from the proceeds of spin-offs of technologies and discoveries developed by the NYU faculty—plus administrative support to help generate additional external funding.

Academic Facilities

The improvement of our academic spaces is an ongoing priority. This year, projects in progress at the Square include renovation of the upper floors of 726 Broadway for physics, space in Meyer for brain and cognitive sciences, and space in Silver for new chemistry labs. Planning is underway to renovate 383 Lafayette Street to create a service center to assist students with financial aid, registrar, bursar, and housing issues as well as to provide a center

that will assist students, faculty, visiting scholars, and staff with outbound and inbound visa services. And, at 20 Cooper Square, we are designing a novel home for externally funded academic researchers in the social sciences from multiple schools.

Among our recently completed projects are a new home for English at 244 Greene Street; major improvements for Steinhardt's departments of Teaching and Learning, Media, Culture and Communication, and Art and Art Professions; the [Academic Resource Center](#) on Washington Place that clusters [NYU Opportunity Programs](#) with the [University Learning Center](#); new research and study spaces in the Bobst Library, 6th floor; and new general purpose classrooms in Silver, 4th floor. In the University's "health corridor" work is underway at 433 First Avenue for a new home for the College of Nursing, research space for the College of Dentistry, and space for a new bio-engineering institute, to be completed in 2015. In Brooklyn, [CUSP](#) moved into temporary headquarters in 1 Metro Tech Center; design of a permanent home for CUSP a short distance away at 370 Jay Street is in progress. At 2 Metro Tech Center, MAGNET—which opened at the beginning of the fall semester—was designed jointly by faculty from the participating schools; this shared space is the first multi-school facility of its kind for NYU.

Each year, as I complete this annual letter, I am always struck by the vitality, quality, progress, and improvements of NYU. This year, I also reflect upon the serious issues and challenges that face NYU—space, technology-assisted education, the global network, representation of non-tenure-track faculty, and, more generally, the importance of faculty involvement in the governance of the University and in University-wide decisions. Over the past few years, many faculty members have expressed dissatisfaction with the level of faculty involvement in decisions about University-wide issues. I take these concerns seriously and I join the Trustees and President Sexton in committing us to do all that is possible to improve and broaden faculty input in major decisions. But I also worry about the tone of the dialogue on our campus. I sincerely hope that our dialogue will be civil and based upon facts, rather than rancorous and based upon misstatements, misinterpretations, rumors, and hurtful personalization. Given the passion with which views are held, it is all too easy to slip into the latter form of unproductive dialogue. We must all do everything that we can to avoid this trap, because negative dialogue will only damage NYU and its academic momentum and special environment. Only through *constructive* criticism and dialogue will NYU become a better research university.

In closing, let me first apologize for the length of this letter; as you see, there was much to highlight. Finally, let me return to my thoughts at the beginning of this letter. NYU is a wonderfully vibrant research university that owes its academic progress and momentum to the collective talents of its faculty. I thank you, the faculty, for being the core of our university, and I send each and every one of you my best wishes for a fulfilling and productive academic year.

Sincerely,
David W. McLaughlin
Provost, New York University