



September 18, 2014

Dear Faculty,

Each year, it is my pleasure to greet returning faculty and to welcome new faculty to New York University. You, our faculty, are at the heart of who we are as an educational community and research university.

As I do each year, I use this occasion to bring your attention to some of the recent developments and initiatives at NYU. Throughout NYU—across its campuses in Washington Square, Brooklyn, the Health Corridor, the Upper East Side, our campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai, and the 11 global academic sites—academic life is extraordinarily vibrant. Our faculty are winning major academic prizes, producing pioneering research, leading the creative arts, receiving project and interdisciplinary grants, and creating new degree programs. A source of particular pride for me and a clear demonstration of our faculty's scholarly activity is the dramatic increase in research expenditures—between 2009 and 2013, research expenditures at Washington Square and our School of Engineering rose from \$72.5 million to \$162 million (and, with the inclusion of the School of Medicine, from \$273 million to \$412 million).

This year, we will continue on these same pathways to nurture our core of academic excellence, advance our ambitions, harness our locational 'endowment' and our characteristic entrepreneurial and experimental spirit, and fulfill our responsibilities to the students who entrust their education to us. We build on a rich tradition, as we were reminded earlier this week in a memorial program celebrating the leadership of L. Jay Oliva, 14<sup>th</sup> president of NYU. Always the champion of faculty, and with a deep commitment to teaching and student life, Jay led the way for NYU to emerge as a major national and international research university.

As you know, this year the University is undertaking the extremely important task of identifying NYU's next president. The [Presidential Search Committee](#), chaired by William Berkley (chair-designate of the NYU Board of Trustees), is charged with finding a leader who can build on what has been accomplished, sustain NYU's drive for excellence, and further propel the University's trajectory upward in the years to come. The search committee—whose efforts I know will be enhanced by the presence of faculty—will begin its work with a number of meetings this fall with faculty and other members of the University community. I urge you to nominate candidates for the Committee's consideration at [nyupresident.search.committee@nyu.edu](mailto:nyupresident.search.committee@nyu.edu), and to participate in the Committee's listening sessions for faculty, including the one scheduled for September 30.

This year, our schools and departments have recruited an extremely strong group of faculty colleagues. Our new full-time faculty are listed [here](#), along with brief profiles of their scholarly interests and backgrounds. Faculty colleagues are our most valuable resource; thus, I encourage you

to visit this web site to learn more about your new colleagues, both in your department and across the University, and to reach out and welcome them to NYU.

I am also pleased to welcome superb new academic leadership to NYU: *Dominic Brewer*, Drukier Dean of the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, and *Allyson Green*, Dean of the Tisch School of the Arts.

Our faculty continues to receive honors of great distinction. As examples, this past year: *Subhash Khot*, professor of computer science, received the Rolf Nevanlinna Prize for 2014, given every four years by the International Mathematical Union. *Spike Lee*, artistic director of Tisch graduate film, received the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Gish Prize. Our physics faculty were among the 3,000 scientists who contributed to the research process that earned the Nobel Prize for the physicists who discovered the Higgs boson. *Ann Kurth*, College of Nursing, and *Danny Reinberg*, School of Medicine, were elected to the Institute of Medicine. Three faculty members were elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS): *George Downs*, professor of politics, *Bryan Stevenson*, professor of clinical law, and *J. David Velleman*, professor of philosophy. Recipients of the 2014 Pulitzer Prizes included *Annie Baker*, adjunct professor of dramatic writing, and *Dan Fagin*, associate professor of journalism. Mathematics professor *Yann LeCun* received the Neural Networks Pioneer Award, given by the Computational Intelligence Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). *E.L. Doctorow*, Glucksman Professor of American Letters, received the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters.

Numerous additional faculty were awarded Guggenheim Fellowships, Sloan Foundation Fellowships, and Simons Fellowships, were elected as Fellows to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and received early career 'superstar' awards, lifetime achievement awards, and the top prizes in their disciplines. Their accomplishments can be viewed [here](#). I also congratulate our faculty colleagues who have won the esteem of their peers at NYU, receiving special University honors such as the [University Professor](#) title and [Distinguished Teaching Awards](#).

It is impossible to chronicle in a single message the full extent of the academic accomplishments and intellectual excitement at NYU—across the span of its schools, colleges, and institutes. However, among the highlights of the past year: on January 1, 2014 Polytechnic Institute became NYU's Polytechnic School of Engineering, returning engineering to NYU after a 40-year absence; NYU Abu Dhabi celebrated commencement for its first graduating class; the Center for Urban Science and Progress ([CUSP](#)) celebrated commencement for its first master's degree class; and NYU Shanghai opened the doors to its first freshman class. NYU launched the Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of Decision-Making ([IISDM](#)), based in the Center for Neural Science, and the New York State Resilience Institute for Storms and Emergencies ([RISE](#)), housed at the School of Engineering and Stony Brook University. The doors opened at [MAGNET](#) (Media and Games Network), the inter-school facility at the Brooklyn campus that links Tisch, Steinhardt, Engineering, and Courant, including the new BFA program in Game Design announced by the Tisch Game Center. NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai both moved into their permanent new facilities. In affirmation of the new [Center for Data Science](#), which offers a master's degree in data science, we launched the five-year \$37.8 million [Moore-Sloan Data Science Environments Initiative](#) in collaboration with the University of Washington and University of California, Berkeley; this project will develop data science as an academic discipline within the life, physical, and social science

domains. Interdisciplinarity in research is complemented by a strong number of cross-school programs, including the robust [Global Institute of Public Health](#), which offers ten innovative undergraduate majors in global public health in collaboration with several NYU schools and departments. This coming year, we will be consulting with school deans and faculty about how to best realign our health programs and schools to continue our strong trajectory in the health area.

Our academic strengths—including the excellence of our faculty, student quality, and student diversity—are reflected in national and international rankings. Historic trends can be viewed at [NYU by the Numbers](#). Most recently, the [Center for World University Rankings](#) puts NYU in the top 0.1% of 22,000 degree granting institutions worldwide—at rank 17 up from rank 19 last year and rank 23 the year before. [Forbes](#) ranks NYU 16 among the 60 top ‘startup’ or entrepreneurial universities. And Shanghai’s [Academic Ranking of World Universities](#) places NYU as number 27 in the world for the third year straight.

In support of [research at NYU](#), the University administers a wide range of [institutional funding opportunities](#) that are available on a competitive basis to facilitate research, teaching, and entrepreneurship, with a number of funds reserved for junior faculty. NYU’s global network offers additional singular opportunities for faculty through its research institutes at [NYU Abu Dhabi](#) and [NYU Shanghai](#), and through the [Global Research Initiatives](#) program (GRI). Support in generating and administering external research support is available from the offices of [Sponsored Programs](#) (OSP), [University Development and Alumni Relations](#), [Industrial Liaison/Technology Transfer](#), and [Sponsored Programs Administration](#) (SPA).

This year, our planning efforts will follow up on the important work done by three committees charged with helping shape the future of the University. These committees, each of which included faculty representatives from across the NYU community, issued final reports of findings and recommendations that are presently under discussion and implementation. In fact, these areas—space, technology-enhanced education, and the global network—are among the top academic issues to be addressed this year.

- The March 2014 final report of the [University Space Priorities Working Group](#), whose recommendations were accepted by the President and the Board of Trustees, identified a critical shortage of space and prioritized the development of new academic space, including for classrooms, student study and meetings, and the performing arts. This year a faculty-led [Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee](#) established by the President will serve as a continuing forum for consultation on quality-of-life issues on the superblocs before, during, and after construction on the site of the Coles Sports Center—including the design process, mitigation of the effects of construction, and communication between the University and its neighbors.
- In its June 2014 final report, the [Faculty Committee on the Future of Technology-Enhanced Education at NYU](#) developed basic principles for technology-enhanced education and issued recommendations about innovation, experimentation and evaluation, support for instructional technology, and infrastructure (including classrooms and connectivity). This arena of technology-enhanced education offers great opportunities that will be essential for the future of NYU. Thus, I am pleased that this year, all schools will be developing new modalities of

presentation and technology-enhanced courses and programs as appropriate in their individual settings. I urge you to join proactively in your school and departmental efforts, and to continue to enhance your courses with technology. Individual faculty can draw on support for these initiatives from the University's Enhanced Service Model for Instructional Technology Support ([ESMITS](#)), as well as from school-based pedagogical and technical resources.

- The June 2014 report of the [Faculty Advisory Committee on NYU's Global Network](#) affirmed the idea of the global network as consonant with the identity, history, and values of NYU and the University's commitment to the highest standards of research, teaching, scholarship, and creativity in the global network. The report proposed fundamental principles to guide the development of the network, identified areas of concern to be addressed, and issued multiple recommendations. In response to a priority recommendation, later this month the University will launch "Faculty in the Global Network," a new website that consolidates information for faculty about opportunities in the global network and highlights research and teaching opportunities at NYU's portal campuses and global academic sites. A number of important initiatives introduced last year involve faculty more fully in the academic mission of the global network, including through [global academic partnerships and affiliations](#) and Site-Specific Advisory Committees (faculty working groups that ensure long-term, comprehensive departmental involvement in academic planning at each site).

This past year, faculty also participated in a major and successful undertaking—the 2014 [self-study](#) for the decennial Middle States Commission on Higher Education re-accreditation. Our self-study focused on multi-school, interdisciplinary programs that exist outside or alongside the school and departmental structure of the University, and as examples, focused upon public health, cities and the urban environment, humanities and the arts, and data science. Based on the April 2014 [report of the evaluation team](#), NYU accreditation was reaffirmed with flying colors; indeed, the report observed, "the evolution and rise of New York University over the last quarter century represent one of the great success stories in American higher education... Today NYU is one of the elite research universities in the world." The Middle States team made a number of recommendations and suggestions that NYU will address in the coming years.

This year, we are formalizing the representation in University governance of our non-tenure-track faculty, who play an important role in all our schools. In accordance with the recommendations of the University Senate and following approval by the University Trustees, the Full-Time Non-Tenure Track/Contract Faculty Senators Council was established to represent its constituent faculty. The new faculty council is convening and beginning its work this fall.

Student financial aid continues to be the University's most important fundraising priority. Last fall, NYU launched the [Momentum Campaign](#), with the ambitious goal of raising \$1 billion by 2017 exclusively dedicated to scholarships for graduate and undergraduate students. The campaign was anchored by a \$75 million collective lead gift from a group of "partner" Trustees, and thus far we have raised \$370.5 million—more than a third of the way toward reaching our goal. This year alone, NYU raised \$142 million for scholarship support.

NYU continues to develop physical facilities to meet our academic needs. Among the larger ongoing facility projects, planning for 370 Jay Street in downtown Brooklyn includes a permanent

home for CUSP and other academic and administrative units from Brooklyn as well as Manhattan. Later this year, the University will open a new health care education and research facility building on 433 First Avenue that will house the College of Nursing, parts of the College of Dentistry, and a Bioengineering Institute as part of the Polytechnic School of Engineering. The new Mark and Debra Leslie Entrepreneurs Lab ([Leslie eLab](#)) on Washington Place opened its doors this fall as a collaborative space to train, coach, and support entrepreneurs, and as the headquarters for the NYU [Entrepreneurial Institute](#) and the [NYU Innovation Venture Fund](#).

Given the scope of our global network and the multi-faith, multi-national character of our community (with international students making up approximately one-quarter of the incoming freshman class), NYU faces the challenge and responsibility to maintain civil discourse on the many serious matters facing global society today—matters which by their very nature engender strong feelings. The University's tradition prizes thoughtful, reasoned, and respectful discourse on even the most fractious and polemical of topics, and affirms academe's commitment to the free exchange of ideas that undergirds academic freedom. Given the passion that attends some current international events, vigilance will be needed to maintain our principles of discourse; however, I am certain that our long-standing traditions at NYU will sustain us in this regard.

In closing, I want to celebrate our faculty, who work to advance our academic disciplines, contribute to public discourse, educate our students with dedication, and address the pressing challenges of our day. I also want to thank those faculty who volunteer their efforts on the University committees I listed above and numerous other [advisory committees](#).

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

I wish each of you a fulfilling and productive academic year.

Sincerely,  
David W. McLaughlin  
Provost, New York University