

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome and welcome back to the 2017-18 academic year. Classes begin August 28, and our first department meeting will be on Thursday, August 31, in 501 Cathedral of Learning, 9:30-11:00. I'll be introducing new faculty and new staff, noting last year's promotions, and briefly anticipating the year's work. Program directors will also look ahead, and our Library Liaison, Robin Kear, will update us with news from the library. If there's time, announcements from the floor will be welcome.

The dates for the remaining scheduled department meetings are all in 501 at 9:30:

October 12
November 9
December 14
January 11
February 8
March 15
April 12

We will have a lot of other meetings for various subsets of the department for tenures, renewals, and promotions in the fall and for hiring in the spring. Dean Blee has approved all three of the positions we requested, African American Literature and Poetics, African American Rhetoric and Public Writing, and Black Media.

I've attached a crucial information sheet with a list of department administrators and staff and important procedures. Please go over it carefully and keep it handy to review when you have questions about whom to see about what. I have asked Gayle Rogers to serve as acting chair while I am in China, September 2-September 19.

There are a couple things I'd like to highlight here:

My assistant Jen Seemann (j.seemann@pitt.edu) will be keeping a **Department Calendar**. Please consult with her before you schedule events and keep her informed when you schedule them. We'd like to avoid as many conflicts as we can.

Jen will also be compiling and distributing weekly department **Enews**. Please send her announcements of events and opportunities to include, and please look it over regularly to keep abreast of funding opportunities, calls for papers, departmental events, and special recognition won by our colleagues. We can't send out separate emails for every event without overfilling mailboxes, but we can on special occasion send out special or late breaking announcements.

I look forward to seeing you and to working together with you this year.