

Welcome and welcome back to the 2018-19 academic year. Classes begin August 27, and our first department meeting will be on Thursday, September 6, 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. We'll also have a visit from representatives of Student Health and the Counseling Center to follow up on the concerns that were expressed at our last meeting in the spring. 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 4

November 8

December 6

January 10. Subsequent Tuesdays and Thursdays may be convened 9-12 for Job Talks and Open Interviews.

February 7. This meeting may be canceled or postponed for candidate visits.

March 7

April 18

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. I have not yet received approval of lines for this year but will let you know as soon as I do.

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'm also attaching a Teaching Guide to Policies and Resources that has essential information for all who are teaching to review.

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

We have new directors of the literature and graduate programs. Jen Waldron will be directing the lit program, Tyler Bickford the grad program. Peter Trachtenberg continues as director of the writing program, Neepa Majumdar as Director of the Undergraduate Film and Media Program, and Jean Grace for one more semester as Acting Director of the Composition Program. This year Gayle Rogers will join the Executive Committee with these directors and me as Associate Chair.

My new assistant, Anthony Payne (aep63@pitt.edu) will be keeping a **Department Calendar**. Please consult with him before you schedule events and keep him informed when you schedule them. We'd like to avoid as many conflicts as we can.

He will also be compiling and distributing weekly department **Enews**. Please send him 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 will finish my term as chair at the end of August 2019. This fall Steve Carr will be conducting the process mandated by the bylaws to choose a successor.

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