



A&S Newsletter

November 29, 2022



Dean's Note

Dear colleagues,

I have some great news to share: we just established another endowed professorship—this one in Biology! The Marshall and Judith Flapan Professorship in Biology is made possible through the generous gift of biology alum Marshall Flapan and his late wife Judith who have been long time supporters of the College of Arts & Sciences. This endowed professorship is the culmination of their engagement and generosity, and it is the strongest recognition of our science faculty, their research and impact on teaching. Closely following the announcement of the Mark J Jarret Professorship in Physics, the Marshall and Judith Flapan Professorship in Biology constitutes the second endowed professorship of Drake's comprehensive campaign! We couldn't be more grateful and proud!

I'd like to share what I heard during my conversations with your departments. Thank you for making time during your department meetings, and for your frank and honest feedback. These conversations were immensely useful and have informed my priorities for this year. I wanted to share a summary of what I heard, and what I plan to tackle first.

I have organized what I heard into different "buckets":

Bucket 1: Hiring/Staffing

This was the concern that was voiced most frequently. We have lost faculty members due to retirements and resignations, and have not been able to replace all of them. Out of the 15 case statements that were submitted just last April, only two were approved initially! We went back and are now in the search process for seven tenure track lines, but the concern about lines not filled or lost is real. There were also questions about the case statement and search process, about backfilling courses for faculty on administrative duties or with course releases, and concern over instructional staff hires, pay structure and adjunct pay.

Hiring and filling lines is one of my most important priority for this coming year, and I will work closely with your departments on strategic case statements, more transparent processes and clear communication with search committees. I am also working with our budget manager on adjunct pay.

Bucket 2: ITS

I heard a lot of frustration about outdated research computers, computer labs, classroom technology, and about insufficient ITS support.

This needs to be addressed heads-on. I am working with CITO Keren Fiorenza, with our A&S Tech Committee, with my Dean Team and with Ashley on solutions and improved processes and service. We will also look into sustainable ways to replace and refresh lab and research computers.

Bucket 3: Resources

These last years have been lean. While we were able to push back on larger cuts and protected budgets for faculty travel and development, a lot of the day-to-day operations have been impacted. It sometimes feels painfully like a "death by a thousand cuts!" You should know that we have been great stewards of our resources, and that the Arts & Sciences net revenue is strong. I will continue to advocate for new resources where needed, steward donors to secure gifts that benefit directly our operations in the classroom and in research, and work with you to support new initiatives. This includes streamlining as well as looking for new growth areas, for new programs that attract new student populations. This is imperative, as there are strong headwinds blowing in higher ed.

Bucket 4: Student Support

You all are on the forefront of student support, and have noticed how students are struggling, deal with mental health issues and demand more accommodations. The effect on faculty workload is real. We will collaborate with offices across campus, allocate resources and improve structures to share this burden.

Bucket 5: Intellectual Climate at Drake

In the midst of the pandemic and financial crises we seem to have lost track of celebrating research, celebrating faculty accomplishments and marketing the intellectual and artistic life at Drake. It is the most amazing aspect of working on a university campus, and we need to do that again! A group of faculty and administrators have begun brainstorming ways to showcase and celebrate faculty accomplishments—and it will take all of us to make this happen.

Bucket 6: Facilities

We need to renovate FAC, finish the renovation of Olin, and address Howard Hall! The current state of these facilities, the deferred maintenance (emphasis on "deferred") is going to detrimentally affect recruitment and performance at Drake. The comprehensive campaign will have to address these building issues. This is not a one year goal, obviously, but it's a long term goal that cannot be deferred any longer! In every conversation with donors, with advancement officers and with campus partners the specific needs come up. I am also hopeful that a new Performing Arts facility in the new University Center will become a reality and be a place to showcase Drake's fine arts programs to the world! A new building would alleviate some stress on FAC, a building that needs to be renovated before it crumbles before our eyes.

Bucket 7: Communication

Every department conversation started and often ended with a discussion of communication, how it is perceived, how it can be improved, and how it can be more transparent. I vow to do my part, and I look forward to having you as partners in the conversation.

I stop here. Thank you for reading till the end. Any feedback, comments, questions regarding the above would be greatly appreciated. You can email, stop by my office hours, ask me to come to your office or department meeting, meet for a cup of coffee, or call me on the phone, on Zoom or on Teams. I look forward to talking with you.

See you soon,

Gesine

Dean's Office Hours

Gesine will hold open office hours on **Tuesday, November 29**, from 3-4pm in the Olin Hall entrance lounge and on [Zoom](#). Just stop by --- no appointment needed.

Faculty Spotlight

Congratulations to Kieran Williams, assistant professor and co-chair of the Department of Political Science, for publishing a chapter on the secret police in Communist Czechoslovakia in the book [Czechoslovakia and Eastern Europe in the Era of Normalisation, 1969-1989](#), edited by Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe. Williams's chapter charts the rebuilding of a web of surveillance in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, and uses a surviving file on one family as a case study.

Brett Russler, Visiting Assistant Professor of History

Brett is from the suburbs of Chicago. He moved to West Union, IA where his father hails from. He completed his Ph.D. at Purdue University. His research revolves around Black conservatism during the civil rights era and how it overlapped with black nationalism in ways scholars have little discussed. During his undergrad studies, he wanted to be a high school history teacher, but changed his plans and is now thrilled to be teaching at Drake.

Fun Fact: Before getting into graduate school, Brett sold Medicare supplement insurance. Yes, he can answer most of the health insurance questions!

Claire Sedovic, Visiting Assistant Professor of Art

Claire graduated from Drake University in 2015 with a BFA in Graphic Design and a minor in Printmaking. She worked for Meredith Corporation as an Associate Designer before branching into a freelance art and design career in 2018. In 2019, Claire realized a lifelong pursuit of becoming a published children's book illustrator. Since her first book, she understands even better how her words, pictures, and actions can help shape younger generations and she aims to create art that resonates with and brings joy to children. For the past two years, Claire has taught at Grand View University as an instructor for the Digital Media and Drawing classes. She also leads art classes at her own studio at Mainframe Studios for children and adults.

Fun fact: Claire is a certified yoga instructor with four years of teaching experience and over 1000 classes taken at her local studio, PowerLife.

Advising Corner

Eight End of Term Pointers

- As the end of the semester approaches, please provide your students with an opportunity to complete student evaluations. According to the A&S Handbook, "the College of Arts and Sciences affirms the importance of student course evaluations to both the development of teaching excellence and of evaluation of faculty performance in relation to tenure, promotion and merit reviews." It mandates that "all faculty must provide for student evaluation of each course taught" (section 4.7 of the [Handbook](#)).
- Final grades are due before 10:00am on Wednesday, Dec 21.** It is extremely important to submit final grades by the deadline because academic standards (probation/suspension), graduation, transcripts, and scholarship awards are all dependent upon the timely submission of grades. Grades submitted late may affect a student's academic standing, progress towards graduation, pre-requisites checks, eligibility for financial aid, or, importantly, ability to graduate.
- Submit grades for everyone on your roster(s). If a student appearing on your roster did not validate his/her/their attendance at the beginning of the semester, or stopped attending, please email marybeth.holley@drake.edu, so follow-up can be completed. If a student has a non-reported grade on his/her/their transcript, he/she/they cannot be listed on the Dean's List or President's List or earn a degree, as applicable.
- If you enter a grade incorrectly, i.e. you enter a grade of B, but the student earned an A, please complete the following steps: MyDrake > Self Service > Teaching & Grading > Grade Changes. **If you catch an error, please report it quickly. University offices will be closed Friday, Dec 23. Over the break, grade changes will not be processed. University offices reopen on Tuesday, Jan 3.**
- If in a previous term you issued an incomplete (I) or in-progress grade (IP) and the student has now earned a letter grade please enter that grade: MyDrake > Self Service > Teaching & Grading > Incomplete, In Progress, or Not Reported Grade Updates. If you wish to extend the time by which a student has to complete the work in a class currently marked as incomplete or in-progress, please email marybeth.holley@drake.edu so she can work with the Registrar's Office to create the extension.
- If you oversaw an independent study(ies) or internship(s), please remember to enter a grade(s).
- If you are considering granting an incomplete (I), please refer to the [Academic Regulations](#) portion of the General Catalog for procedures and note the differences between an incomplete (I) and an In Progress (IP).

If you encounter a case of plagiarism, please refer to the procedures outlined [here](#).

Teacher of the Year Nomination

Nominations for the A&S Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award are open and due by February 15, 2023. The honoree receives a plaque, a cash award, and delivers an address at the following year's A&S Honors Convocation. Letters of nomination should address the nominee's (1) use of innovative teaching practices, (2) enthusiasm for teaching and/or the subject matter (3) personal commitment to students, and/or (4) overall effectiveness in facilitating student learning. Please submit nominations using this [form](#).

Please direct questions to the selection committee chair [Dr. Mark Vitha](#), A&S Council president [Dr. Dina Smith](#), or the A&S Office with [Karla Rincon](#).

Last Ultra Hours for the Semester

Drake and Continuing Education will hold the last Ultra Hours of the semester on Friday, December 2. Faculty are invited to work through any questions about using Blackboard Learn Ultra with our instructional design team. This is a great time to review your Gradebook as the end of the semester draws near. Will be in Cowles Library Room 201 or [virtually](#) from 10:00 to 11:30.

[Please sign up](#) to indicate when you plan to come and what types of questions you have.

A&S Faculty and Staff Social

Come celebrate the end of the semester with colleagues and friends! Our annual Arts & Sciences Social will be held on Friday, December 9, from 3-5pm at Dough and Co Pizzeria on University Avenue. Stop by for some pizza, drinks, and great company!

A&S Important Dates

The full calendar is located [here](#).

- December 2: Honor Band Festival Concert, Performing Arts Hall 7:30pm
- December 2: Honor Band Festival Concert, Performing Arts Hall 5pm
- December 8: Drake Orchestra & Choirs, Performing Arts Hall 7:30pm
- December 9: Day free for study
All Faculty and Staff Social, Dough and Co, University Ave, 3-5pm.
- December 12-16: Final evaluation period
- December 16: Fall 2022 term ends
- December 17: December Commencement Ceremony
- December 21: Fall semester grades are due by 10am
- December 23-January 2: Winter Break
- January 3: J-Term Begins

Submit News