

Dear Colleagues,

We offer a note of best wishes for this final week of classes, and an expression of our ongoing and deep gratitude for all you have done to maintain our academic mission in these past weeks. We write as well to share updates on where we find ourselves as we look to 2020-21.

### **Academic Continuity Group Aligns with Recovery, Stewardship, and Renaissance Steering Committee**

After thinking through the many models for fall that are being discussed in higher education, and focusing on a few as of the end of last week, the Academic Continuity team's 50+ members now need to align their work with that of the Recovery, Stewardship, and Renaissance Steering Committee (RS<sup>2</sup>). We will be doing so by having RS<sup>2</sup> members co-lead the smaller groups that Academic Continuity must now necessarily break into. These groups are

- Curriculum Planning – co-led by **Caleb Elfenbein** and **Mark Levandoski**
- Academic Program Allocations – co-led by **Vida Praitis** and **Todd Armstrong**
- Administrative Program Allocations – co-led by **Angela Voos** and **Keith Archer**
- Health and Living – co-led by **Sarah Moschenross** and **Heather Cox**
- Campus Climate – co-led by **Lakesia Johnson** and **Mark Peltz**

We have used governance and expertise to determine group leadership and sketched out the proposed membership of each group. The groups will be convened by their co-leaders to research and gather information and feedback from campus constituents and to make recommendations to President Kington.

### **Academic Year 2020: Researching Ideas**

The drivers of our work on fall 2020 are the health and safety of our campus and community and a commitment to the rigorous academic experience Grinnell is known for within a sustainable financial model. The levers (each with their own complexities) that are active in explorations of models are testing, student density, amount of on-campus instruction, amount of online support and interaction, and costs.

Our new teams will be investigating these ideas and diving deep into the details about feasibility and practical consequences. For example, how do we allow students to move through hallways between classes and maintain appropriate distances? How do we encourage compliance with testing? With maintaining social distance outside of class? **In short, how do we restructure our living and learning model within a pandemic?**

As the last week of teaching draws to a close and we enter exam week, we sincerely hope that you can take some time to reflect with fulfillment on all that you have made possible this semester. As we realize that we will all be engaged in the process of rebuilding the College to live and learn in an age of pandemic, we know that we will all be called upon for our ingenuity, our collaboration, and our labor. The likelihood of a "typical" semester (though no two semesters are alike at Grinnell!) with each student carrying four classes and faculty teaching two or three classes is minimal. The interest now is in developing a model that decreases workload and population density so that both are manageable in uncertain conditions, while creating as many conditions as possible that we can control (thus the interest in testing, for example). We will be reaching out to academic departments and staff divisions over the coming days with models that foster an on-campus experience within a public health and safety framework. In response to a question brought forward at the faculty meeting yesterday, "How creative can we get?" - as creative as you can possibly be! We are Grinnell – we thrive in the realm of possibilities

and their implementation. We look forward to working with departments and divisions starting next week and to continuing to think through possible futures.

### **Announcing the Associate Dean of Student Academic Life**

With thanks to Executive Council for their consultation, and to the next associate dean for all of the care and advocacy for the student academic experience that she will bring, it is a great pleasure to announce that **Cynthia Hansen**, associate professor of linguistics in the Department of Anthropology, has accepted the position of associate dean of student academic life. Cynthia's extensive experience and advocacy bring great promise to the work ahead, and her commitment to creating opportunities and learning partnerships for faculty, staff, and students is inspiring.

### **Announcing the Acting Dean**

The departure of President Kington and appointment of an acting president necessitated the appointment of an acting dean. Following a consultation with Executive Council on a process, it is wonderful to be able to announce that **Elaine Marzluff**, professor Chemistry and Breid-McFarland Professor of Science, has accepted the appointment of acting dean. Elaine's tremendous experience through her previous term as chair of the faculty and her transformative partnership with Dean Mike Latham, her generosity in sharing her expertise and ideas for solutions not just at Grinnell but throughout higher education, and her deep and abiding care for this institution and each and every colleague provide great strength to the transitions ahead, and great promise for the partnerships that await.

### **Future Communications**

As we transition Academic Continuity into the next phase of planning and the work of RS<sup>2</sup>, we plan to continue to keep you all informed. To that end, we will phase out our Tuesday and Thursday communications, and move to a weekly report on Fridays.

We remain deeply appreciative of the feedback and questions we have received as we develop our planning for the summer and next academic year. We will only benefit from your many and diverse perspectives, ingenuity, and creativity as we continue to respond as a community and institution to the pandemic. Please continue to share your ideas, questions, and concerns, with us, and with the many colleagues across campus hard at work in finding the best possible way to fulfill the academic mission and community care that we hold in trust together. In the meantime, thank you for the tremendous feats, sustained commitment, and steadfast strength with which you have responded to our students, each other, and our community this semester.

With admiration and in solidarity,

Anne F. Harris, Dean of the College  
Todd Armstrong, Chair of the Faculty