Dear Colleagues and Students (on the Square and at our global sites):

Our courses are underway, and we are all trying to make the transition from summer to fall that is a distinguishing characteristic of academic life. Even though the summer is certainly a time for scholarship, creative production, exploration, and learning, there is something very different, challenging, and exciting about the start of a new academic year. It holds the promise of new intellectual journeys, experiences, opportunities, and discoveries and will certainly present a few twists and turns, trials and surprises, as well as individual and collective achievements.

I am looking forward to this academic year confident that you all will amaze me with your enthusiastic spirit of inquiry, dedication to learning, and openness to crossing disciplinary and national borders in your studies and research.

Last academic year, our students – in both the LS Core and GLS - garnered awards across campus for leadership and civic engagement, prestigious scholarships and fellowships, and recognition for original research and creative works. Our faculty continued to publish novels, essays, memoirs, collections of poems and short stories, scholarly monographs and articles, new approaches to and platforms for learning, and works of art with great acclaim. Our staff won the top awards for service and innovation, demonstrating the Liberal Studies commitment to excellence in all that we do. I expect that this year will continue these successful trajectories confirming the exceptional quality of engagement distinctive of Liberal Studies. I am truly proud to be among you and cannot wait to see where this year takes us.

This year, indeed, is a very special year for us, as we celebrate GLS at 10 Years. This is a remarkable achievement, and we will have a wonderful semester filled with festive activities and inspiring academic platforms to showcase the features of GLS and celebrate this anniversary. I hope to see everyone involved in some way, after all it’s a wonderful moment to congratulate our students, faculty, alumni, and staff.

Congratulations and celebrations are in order and important as we also face collective challenges as members of the academy and global citizens in a complex, dynamic, and sometimes frightening world. Some used to talk about the university as an ivory tower. I do not think that many of us believe that this is an accurate description or a possibility today – even if were something to which we aspired. The university, especially, New York University, is an integral part of the city, and regional, national, and international networks. We not only engage in knowledge production to meet local and global challenges in our classes, laboratories, and studies, but also participate as members of overlapping and multiple communities in attempting to understand, clarify, and address pressing concerns that affect our lives and the lives of others, from gun violence and mass incarceration to climate change and statelessness. We cannot turn away from these challenges nor escape the hurt, rage, and confusion that comes from experiencing violence in our multiple communities both near and far away, the insensitivity of others to hope and despair at borders or in refugee camps, and inequalities of opportunity and access experienced by many amidst pockets of increasing wealth and privilege.

At the same time, the university is an incredible incubator of change, of fresh concepts and innovative solutions; a space for the exchange of ideas, where we can explore and celebrate our differences and seek ways to advance cooperation. The classroom is the first place for us to experiment with new designs, notions, and approaches and to practice the kind of respect for others and openness to a range of values and concerns that will be critical to us as knowledge producers, creative thinkers, and advocates for a better world.

I begin this year with enormous hope and confidence in you - LS students, faculty, and staff. I know that you will inspire one another to find promise in the new academic year, embrace enthusiasm for learning, and demonstrate a readiness to make a difference together.

Thanks much to all – have a fabulous year!

Julie Mostov
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