



As we ready ourselves for the end of term, I want to update you on new initiative and progress toward a few of our priorities.

### Advancing Teaching and Research Excellence

➤ This year, the DS Council—the school’s shared governance body—spent considerable time thinking about how **service tasks** could be better and more equitably distributed among the faculty. In the fall, our Chairs and Program Directors will take up suggestions from

the Council and consider what changes might be warranted in our departments, programs, and centers.

➤ In the next academic year, I will ask the DS Council—and the school’s faculty, staff, and students more widely—to think collectively about **interdisciplinarity in the Dietrich School**. Currently, our structure is primarily departmental and disciplinary; there are clear advantages to this structure that should be preserved. But we also need to consider how best to accommodate existing and emerging interdisciplinarity in knowledge, research production, and education across the arts and sciences. This is not an easy task, but it is essential to the intellectual direction of our school.

➤ To ensure that our **processes of promotion** are fair and consistent, we have created videos in which Associate Dean Kay Brummond discusses what is required for promotion in the Dietrich School and how to assemble a dossier that fully represents your work. To access the videos, use this link and your Pitt credentials:

<https://pitt.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Sessions/List.aspx#folderID=%2263fb5658-40b8-42c9-805c-aa0d0122e003%22> or link through <https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/governance>. is welcome; email Associate Dean Brummond at [kbrummon@pitt.edu](mailto:kbrummon@pitt.edu).

### Enhancing the Educational Experience

➤ On Friday, April 12 from 3 – 5 p.m. in the O’Hara Student Center we’re hosting a **Celebration of Research (COR)**—by almost two hundred undergraduate students in the First Experience in Research (FE-R) program, as well as students in the Archival Scholars Research Awards and New York City Field Studies programs. Participants will present posters that display their inquiries, methods, and results. I invite you to this always-inspiring afternoon.

➤ I continue to be impressed by the innovative **new academic programs** being launched by departments and programs to meet the needs of our increasingly ambitious undergraduate and graduate students. Recently approved for undergraduates are a major in

Computational Biology and minors in LGBTQ and Critical Sexuality Studies and Mediterranean Art and Archaeology. On the graduate side, the Provost approved a new major in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages leading to the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Linguistics. Proposals for other majors, minors, and certificates are in the pipeline.

### Creating a More Diverse and Inclusive Environment

➤ The **Diversity Taskforce** has been meeting regularly and reviewed the initial results of the Dietrich School Climate Survey conducted in Fall 2018. The Taskforce is now preparing for our external review visit, which will occur on April 14-15. External reviewers include Erika Gold Kestenberg, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Consultant from Pittsburgh; Paulette Granberry Russell, Senior Advisor to the President for Diversity at Michigan State University; and Keivan G. Stassun, the Stevenson Endowed Professor of Physics & Astronomy and the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research at Vanderbilt University and former co-chair of the Chancellor’s Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community. The Diversity Taskforce will be seeking the reviewers’ advice on best practices in creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for faculty, staff, and students in the Dietrich School.

### Embracing Core Operating Principles

➤ The Dietrich School has launched a new digital payroll/personnel document management system—**Perceptive Content**. The Dean’s Office has been using this system to transmit documents to Faculty Records, HR, and Payroll since December and Department and Graduate Administrators were introduced to the system recently. Perceptive Content allows users to trace to whom documents have been assigned for processing. It will provide a central storage solution with one file of record per employee, minimize paper and campus delivery costs, allow remote access to files, reduce processing time and misplaced documents, reduce the risk of unsecured documents, and minimize storage costs.

➤ Our IT/Data Team recently completed an IT strategic plan for the school. The objective of the **Information Technology Strategic Plan** is to leverage information technology to advance the mission of the Dietrich School, help achieve the goals identified in the Dietrich School Strategic Plan, and shape the future direction for information technology (IT) initiatives to create a competitive advantage for the school. The Technology Strategic Plan is the culmination of an in-depth process that involved strategic thinking, research on IT and higher education trends and discussions about technology needs in the Dietrich School community. The Plan provides direction and sets IT priorities for the next few years. The Plan is available on the home page of school’s intranet—KennyNet—at <https://knet.as.pitt.edu> under Documents.