

Messages from the Deans

The content of this chapter is applicable to both full-time and adjunct faculty.

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A Message from the Dean Emeritus



In 1858, John Henry Cardinal Newman described the ideal university as a residential community of students and teachers devoted to intellectual and spiritual matters. Unfortunately, few institutions of higher education today have managed to approach this ideal. There are widespread reports, nationwide, of low morale among teachers who feel overwhelmed and under-appreciated, performing work that seems mindless and mechanical. At the heart of this problem is the lonely work of teachers who often feel disconnected from

administrators, colleagues, and many of their students.

Many in higher education speak of creating learning communities to address this issue. This idea of community is so appealing to many of us at Seaver College that my office has embraced it and has adopted the theme of “Building Community” as our focus for the college for the next few years. This is a challenging agenda. However, I am convinced that the building of a residential, liberal-learning community is an essential step in the larger goal of academic excellence within the context of Christian mission.

We are also fully aware that building community is an ongoing process and will always be unfinished work. As Martin Buber reminds us, “The empirical community is a dynamic fact. It does not take away (a person’s) solitude but fills it, makes it positive. It thereby deepens the consciousness of responsibility for the individual. The community does not have its meaning in itself.” As many of us know, one of the joys of teaching is the joy of participating in learning communities. I hope you will join us in one or more of the many programs we will initiate in the coming years and fully experience the joy of working as a co-learner in a collaborative setting.

W. David Baird

Dean Emeritus of Seaver College

A Message from the Dean



C.S. Lewis, the British theologian and author, claimed that, “The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.” As a biologist, I appreciate the subtlety of this quote. Most people consider deserts to be void of biodiversity. However, in reality, these seemingly desolate landscapes are rich with life, and completely dependent on occasional and seasonal rain.

As professors of Seaver College—a premier Christian, liberal arts college –our objectives revolve around nurturing the intellectual curiosities of our students. In the classroom, the chapel program, the research field, and across the globe at our international campuses, we have the opportunity to journey alongside students as their passions develop and come to life. Throughout this process, we are charged with the responsibility of mentoring and training these young people to view their interests as part of a larger purpose—one in which their talents are applied to benefit their neighbors, the global community, and the kingdom of God.

In order to guide our shared approach in this noble and important effort, the Seaver Dean’s Office and Seaver Faculty Association have prepared the following handbook. Here, you will find the vital policies, procedures, and outlined responsibilities put in place to inform your service as an effective faculty member. It is my hope that this document supports you in our shared effort to promote academic excellence throughout our campus.

Thank you for the significant role you play in the lives of our students. Thank you for joining your fellow faculty members in the pursuit to inspire and encourage the abundant curiosity of tomorrow’s problem solvers– each one of our students.

Lee B. Kats

Dean of Seaver College

Frank R. Seaver Chair of Natural Science