



# AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

W A S H I N G T O N , D C

SCOTT A. BASS  
PROVOST

## MEMORANDUM

May 15, 2009

**TO:** AU Community  
**FROM:** Scott A. Bass, Provost  
**SUBJECT:** Dr. Peter Starr, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Peter Starr as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) effective July 1, 2009.

Dr. Starr is currently a Professor of French and Comparative Literature in the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California (USC), where he also served as the College's Interim Dean, Dean of Undergraduate Programs, Acting Chair of the Department of French & Italian, and Chair of the Department of Comparative Literature. As Interim Dean, Dr. Starr managed nearly 500 full-time tenure-track faculty, 28 departments, 7000 undergraduate majors, 1200 graduate students, and an annual operating budget exceeding \$280 million.

Dr. Starr brings to AU a background that will be valuable in promoting the centrality of liberal arts and sciences on campus and in continuing to further strengthen the academic and financial foundation of CAS. Under his leadership, the USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences made significant gains in student quality and faculty hiring. By completing a campaign to recruit 100 world-class faculty, the college enhanced its cross-disciplinary offerings and moved its environmental studies institute into the top rank of marine science research centers. Dr. Starr's commitment to diversity is such that, of nineteen faculty members hired by the college when he was dean, eight are from underrepresented groups and four are African-American. In his view, hiring strong minority faculty members is the single most effective step in improving the recruitment and retention of minority students.

Dr. Starr also achieved high levels of growth in the liberal arts and sciences, a notable accomplishment at a university with 17 professional schools. In one year, he increased foundation and corporate support for research by 89% and raised a record \$53 million dollars for the college. He also oversaw the construction of major new core facilities in the sciences—clearly an area in need of attention at AU. As the incoming Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Starr places a high priority on achieving similar gains.

In addition to being an experienced administrator, Dr. Starr is a scholar with an academic background in the liberal arts. He earned his Ph.D. in comparative literature from the Johns Hopkins University, where he also earned an M.A. in French, and received his B.A. in humanities from Stanford University. His publications include *We the Paranoid*, *Commemorating Trauma: The Paris Commune and its Cultural Aftermath*, and *Logics of Failed Revolt: French Theory after May '68*.

AU was fortunate to have many outstanding candidates apply for the position, and I am grateful to the search committee for its thorough work in identifying candidates for final consideration. Specifically, I would like to acknowledge Jeff Hakim, chair of the search committee, and the other committee members: Tony Ahrens (CAS), Fanta Aw (Campus Life), Caleen Jennings (CAS), Larry Kirkman (SOC), Andrea Klotzsche (CAS graduate student), Monika Konaklieva (CAS), Jonathan Loesberg (CAS), Larry Ward (KSB), James Wigley (CAS undergraduate student), and Lacey Wooton-Don (CAS). The search committee was assisted by Isaacson, Miller.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Peter Starr as the new dean of CAS.

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