



EMORY
COLLEGE
OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES

Robin Forman
Dean, Emory College of Arts and Sciences
Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Mathematics

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To the Emory College Community:

We have reached a critical juncture in the history of Emory College of Arts and Sciences.

The foundation of a great college — and a great university — is academic eminence. We need to be able to support an agenda of research and teaching that makes the most of the talents of our faculty, and that also provides the best education possible for our undergraduate and graduate students. We must continue to attract the top thinkers in our fields of study to our campus, as well as recruit students from around the world with the talent and ambition to become the next generation of leaders.

In most regards, these past two years have been tremendously exciting for the College — and for me. I have had the great joy of congratulating faculty who have been recognized at the highest levels of their profession; recognizing departments that have dramatically enhanced their prominence and impact; and welcoming a student body which becomes stronger, more diverse, and more interesting with each year. Additionally, we have enjoyed remarkable success in attracting exceptionally promising new faculty. For example, in the past year, we successfully recruited 23 (of 27) of our first choice candidates following national searches. This is a remarkable track record, one few universities can hope to match, and it is a forceful demonstration of the nexus of talent, resources, and location Emory has to offer.

This is a time of great opportunity for Emory College. Yet during my time as Dean of the College I have heard repeatedly from both faculty and staff that the limitations on our resources have placed in doubt our ability to sustain our accomplishments. We have too many departments and programs where resources are stretched to the limit, leaving us in danger of falling short of our goal of providing a world-class education for our students.

For the past 30 years, Emory College has grown in scope and in impact. We have continually extended our reach, stretching our resources; yet we have eventually grown into our new aspirations. However, the financial challenges of these past few years have required us to pause that growth, creating an uneasy equilibrium in which far too many of our programs are under-resourced relative to their mission and potential.

If we are to remain committed to our vision of a superlative liberal arts education, we must now be prepared to reexamine our scope and to set clear priorities. In order to

Emory University
400 Candler Library
550 Asbury Circle
Atlanta, Georgia 30322

Tel 404.727.6062
Fax 404.727.9360

An equal opportunity, affirmative action university

increase our investment in our current areas of scholarly and educational distinction as well as to develop new strengths in both existing disciplines and emerging areas of inquiry, the College must slightly reduce the number of academic programs that it supports.

These reductions will allow us to invest in traditional strengths of the arts and sciences at Emory, building and enhancing areas of true eminence in research and undergraduate and graduate education, as well as to build new, interdisciplinary areas of instruction and inquiry in those areas that will be of increasing significance in the coming decades.

When I first spoke to the faculty two years ago, I identified three areas where faculty saw opportunities for strength: the study of health, quantitative theory and methods, and questions of how communities struggle with difference. The College now has three units (the Center for the Study of Human Health, the Institute for Quantitative Theory and Methods, and the James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference) focused on those aspects of our mission. Now, as I explained in my recent address to the College faculty, we are forming committees to create strategies for addressing several areas that cut across departments and disciplines— the study of contemporary China, the impact of digital and new media across the arts and sciences, and neuroscience as a powerful window into the human condition — as well as to create new strategies for strengthening undergraduate science education and fostering interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching.

In making decisions about these steps, I have been guided by my work with the Faculty Financial Advisory Committee — whose members formally represent, and are appointed by, the College's Faculty Governance Committee. Our discussion of these questions builds on two years of planning that this committee conducted with the previous Dean of Emory College. I also have worked very closely with the Dean of the Laney Graduate School, Lisa Tedesco, and Provost Earl Lewis. This plan has been approved by both the President and the Board of Trustees. However, I want to make clear that these decisions were finally made by me. While difficult, I believe that they are necessary for the College to achieve its aspirations and for Emory to maintain its place as one of the top liberal arts universities in the nation. Throughout this process, the questions that I have asked are basic ones: Which programs have achieved distinction, what new investments are required, and which programs are truly essential for a twenty-first century liberal arts education? We have also considered carefully the ways in which our academic units make contributions to other academic programs and to the broader College and University missions.

We are beginning a multi-year process that will lead to the closing of three academic departments: The Division of Educational Studies; the Department of Physical Education (which is already being phased out in favor of new approaches to health and physical fitness education); and the Department of Visual Arts. We will also be closing the Program in Journalism. These actions will unfold over a period of years, enabling

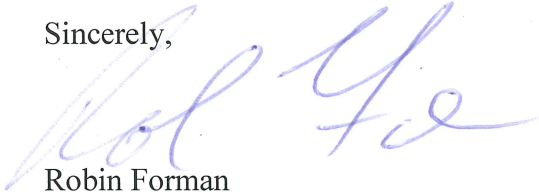
currently enrolled undergraduate majors and graduate students to complete their courses of study. Staff and faculty positions will not be impacted by this reorganization before the close of this academic year. Tenured faculty in these departments will eventually have their lines moved to other departments. In partnership with the Laney Graduate School, we are also suspending admissions to the graduate programs in Spanish and Economics, so that we can be deliberate in reimagining the role that graduate education in these fields will play at Emory. There will be funding reductions to several centers, and some contraction of College administrative positions, responsibilities, and operations that I will not detail here. Finally, we will suspend graduate admissions to the ILA and reorganize the ILA into an institute without permanent faculty. In this reimagined institute, we will strive to create a more fluid structure for promoting interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching, perhaps through rotating faculty appointments.

While I have spoken about our operating deficit on numerous occasions, these steps are not in response to the deficit, and will play no role in reducing our expenses. We are currently addressing the deficit, with notable success, through other means, through the committed partnership of leaders on our campus and Oxford College and the strong support of the central administration. However, as I have said in the past, for the College to reach its intellectual goals requires more than simply breaking even; we must have the flexibility to make the investments that our aspirations require. All of the funds that will gradually become available through the changes I have described will be reinvested in the College, strengthening core areas and expanding into new ones. While our financial challenges add urgency to these decisions, these are fundamentally academic decisions about the size and scope of our mission. In fact, it is precisely because we are on the path to resolving our most pressing financial challenges that we have this opportunity to recommit ourselves to this vision. These steps are not a sign that our financial pressures are mounting, but rather an indication that we are emerging from the yoke of those pressures, and we can begin to imagine a more exciting future. That said, I am as confident as one can be — given the uncertainties associated with any such prediction — that this reorganization will put us on a financially sustainable path.

These difficult decisions impact our community at all levels — faculty, staff, and students. The programs most affected by these changes have made important and fundamental contributions to our campus, and they have passionate supporters. Some of their faculty have been at Emory for decades, and they have been collaborators, mentors, and friends to many on this campus. There is nothing about this process that has been easy. However, we have a primary obligation to our students to allocate resources in a way that will allow Emory College of Arts and Sciences to train the leaders of the century to come. Emory students — both at the undergraduate and graduate level — have the right to assume that they have access to a world-class education regardless of the course of study that they choose here, even if that ultimately means that we cannot support all of the possible choices.

This is a challenging moment for the College, but also an exciting one. We have faculty who are leaders in their fields, and we are welcoming faculty who will be leaders for decades to come. We have students — both undergraduates and graduates — who are pushing us in new directions. And we have enthusiastic and engaged alumni and other supporters who are ready to help. This reallocation of resources is a step toward the aspiration that we all share: to build and sustain a community of scholars and students that will stand at the forefront of liberal arts universities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robin Forman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robin" and the last name "Forman" clearly distinguishable.

Robin Forman
Dean, Emory College of Arts and Sciences