



November 22, 2019

Dear Parents,

As we head into our Thanksgiving Break after classes conclude tomorrow morning, I want to begin this letter with an expression of gratitude for all you have contributed to the long fall we are now wrapping up. The time and support you have shared with the school and your children since we got underway in early September has enriched the experience for all of us. Hosting team dinners, providing snacks and treats after games, sharing your time and perspective greeting families in the admission office waiting room, and joining us for school events held on and off campus, constitute just a fraction of the many ways in which you make the school better. As we move further into the year, and in the spirit of the holiday now upon us, thank you for giving to Brooks in the many ways you do. We are having a great year due in no small part to your engagement.

With what follows, I would like to take some time to reflect on the many great moments we have enjoyed as a school over the past few weeks, and look ahead to what will await us when we return from Thanksgiving Break. We have a lot to look forward to in December.

When I was last in touch, we were closing in on a number of the fall term's culminating events. Twelfth Night was a lot of fun for the company and all who were able to attend. The students did a fantastic job mastering Shakespeare, which is no small feat. A few nights later following our Veteran's Day holiday, we enjoyed the Fall Festival Concert with wonderful performances from our festival chorus, concert chorale, and chamber ensemble. The vocal and instrumental talent in all of these groups was on full display! We hosted our Homecoming and Athletic Hall of Fame induction ceremony on the final Saturday of the fall athletic season. It was fun to have alums, family, and friends of the inductees back at school with so much going on all over campus.

If you have not been able to enjoy 200 Women Who Will Change the Way You See the World in the Robert Lehman Art Center, I hope you will have an opportunity to do so before the exhibition closes on Saturday, December 14. We have had a wide range of classes and visitors in the space and will welcome Diane Foley to school for an event in the Lehman on Wednesday, December 4, at 7 p.m., and then a Chapel talk on Thursday, December 5, during the school day. Ms. Foley is featured in the show, and is the mother of James Foley, who was taken captive and then murdered by ISIS in 2014 while covering the war as a journalist in Syria. Many thanks to Director of Institutional Advancement Gage Dobbins and Arts Department Chair Babs Wheelden for pulling this terrific exhibit together.

Last weekend, we were treated to two tremendous performances, by our field hockey team and boys soccer team, in New England tournament semi-final games. When we learned the two teams were playing at Rivers and Nobles, respectively, we decided to offer transportation to any students who might want to attend the games. Candidly, we thought there might be one bus. With well over 100 students signing up to support their peers, we needed two busses and just about every school vehicle we could muster. While the results

were not what any of us hoped for, both teams fought impressively to overcome deficits, and students, faculty members, and many of you who were in attendance turned road games into home games. It was quite a sight and a super way to bring the fall season to a close.

Before looking ahead to December, I do want to share how good it felt to be in Chapel yesterday to present the Richard F. Holmes Chair to Spanish teacher Lillian Miller. We have six endowed chair holders on the faculty, and all of them earned the chairs they have due to nominations and expressions of support from their colleagues. With Dusty Richard's retirement this past spring, the Holmes Chair was vacant and we welcomed a new set of nominations earlier in the fall. One of the school's many strengths is the fact that we have so many talented and deeply committed teachers worthy of this type of honor. Yet, the depth of support for Lillian and all she has meant to her students and the school made her an eminently worthy recipient. To present the chair to her with family members, close friends, and the whole school together in Chapel was an incredible privilege. I will not soon forget the eruption of joy and support when I called her name -- a great moment for the school and a profoundly deserving teacher.

By now, our hope is that you have been in touch with your children about Winter Term courses they are considering for January. If not, there is still time with forms requiring advisor approval due by noon tomorrow -- before everyone departs for Thanksgiving Break. There is a wonderful blend of new and returning options to consider, and it is important that all students select five they are interested in taking. We are aiming to share all course assignments with students at some point during the middle week of our time together in December. If you have questions, please reach out to your child's advisor and/or Lance Latham in our academic office.

When we return to the dormitories on Monday, December 2, and then start classes the following morning, I will be on the West Coast. After stopping for a couple of days in the San Francisco area to visit with some alums, I will head to Seattle to join our school's contingent at this year's National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) People of Color Conference (POCC). We will have six faculty members and six students at this year's conference, which runs from Wednesday, December 4, to Saturday, December 7. It has been some time since I last attended POCC, and I am very much looking forward to what I will learn and be able to bring back to Brooks with me. To share the experience with colleagues and students will be great fun, as well. You can learn more about the conference [HERE](#).

I will return to school on Saturday, December 7, in time to enjoy the Rock Concert scheduled for that evening at 7:30 p.m. in the theater. This will be the first of two concerts we hold in December with our Jazz Concert scheduled for Friday, December 13, also at 7:30 p.m. in the theater. We hope a lot of you will be able to join us. Both are certain to be great shows!

In between these two concerts, this year's oratory class talks will be given on Tuesday, December 10, and Thursday, December 12. Both sets of talks will take place in the Chapel and begin at 7 p.m. The combination of the topics these students choose to share, and the poise with which they go about doing so, never ceases to amaze me. With a number of student talks coming over the second half of the year, this initial set will get us off to a good start.

On Sunday, December 15, at 2 p.m., we will host our Lessons & Carols service in Frank D. Ashburn Chapel for alums, parents, and friends, interested in attending. While I make no claim to being impartial about this service, I am confident anyone attending will find it to be an incredibly special gathering full of holiday spirit and beautiful music. I do hope you will be able to join us.

We will begin our first semester exams with one scheduled for Monday afternoon, December

16, followed by two more on Tuesday, December 17, and then one on Wednesday morning, December 18. After a collective sigh of relief with exams behind us, we will wrap up first semester classes on Thursday, December 19, and then celebrate the end of the term together that night with our own Lessons & Carols service followed by an all-school dinner, caroling, and a dance. This is always a fun and festive way to usher in winter vacation.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have already made a gift to this year's [Brooks Fund](#). Each year, we hope to earn your participation and support of this critical component of the school's budget by doing great work with your children over the course of the year and years you allow us to have with them. To continue earning your support is our goal. So, thank you for considering a gift of this sort in support of the school. It makes a difference.

I will be in touch again at some point in mid-December before we head into our next vacation. Until then, please do let me know if you have any questions or thoughts you would like to share. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Best,

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