Welcome from Virginia Torczon, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Arts & Sciences

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to William & Mary, to graduate studies in Arts & Sciences, and to our community of scholars and teachers. Allow me to begin by telling you a little about yourselves as a group.

For this year’s entering class we received 723 applications and admitted 119 new students across the eleven graduate programs in Arts & Sciences – so you are among a competitive, select set of students. Most of you already have significant research experiences under your belt, and many of you have been active teachers and mentors. You will, of course, have many more such opportunities in the coming years. Your experience and your diverse interests, hobbies, and backgrounds are an important part of what makes our graduate program distinctive. We are a dynamic group of teacher-scholars striving for excellence in all of our endeavors.

While you are here we want you to immerse yourself fully in your studies and teaching. Make use of every resource, from the expertise and wisdom of your faculty to the professional development opportunities offered through our GRAD courses, through programming with the Cohen Career Center, and through programming with the Swem Library staff in the new Graduate Student Commons. My goal as Dean of Graduate Studies and Research is to provide you with an enriching, nurturing, and challenging environment that will prepare you for future success.

As you look ahead, I encourage you to be mindful of the professional opportunities we provide as well as the possibility for recognition for outstanding efforts in research, mentoring, leadership, and service. These include:

- **A&S Graduate Student Research Grants** and a **Conference Funding Program** to facilitate and enhance your scholarship;
- **S. Laurie Sanderson Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring**;
- **Carl J. Strikwerda Awards for Excellence**;
- **Distinguished Thesis and Distinguished Dissertation Awards**;
- and the university-wide **Thatcher Prize for Excellence in Graduate and Professional Study** given each May at Commencement.

The generous and supportive members of the **Graduate Studies Advisory Board** have provided the funding of the awards available exclusively to graduate students in Arts & Sciences.

In partnership with the **Graduate Student Association** for Arts & Sciences, we encourage you to share your achievements through the **Student Portfolios** maintained for each of the eleven graduate programs. Publicizing your academic achievements brings broader recognition to you for your accomplishments, and also helps us attract more support for you, your graduate program, and future Arts & Sciences graduate students. If you receive a prestigious external prize, award, or fellowship, please let me know and we will work to secure a **William & Mary News** story to further publicize such a major accomplishment. I delight in seeing stories that feature Arts & Sciences graduate students on the William & Mary home page.

As you will quickly come to know, our academic community is friendly and informal – you can seek guidance and advice from anyone on campus – and in this spirit I encourage you to contact me if you think there are ways we can improve your graduate experience. Professor **Peter Vishton** serves as your **Graduate Ombudsperson**, and can be contacted for consultation should you encounter any situations for which you seek advice or help.

I look forward to working with you over the coming years.

Virginia Torczon
Dean of Graduate Studies and Research