

Benjamin Gianni
Associate Professor

While it's said that the only constant is change, and while we have much to look forward to, tonight is a sad occasion inasmuch as we are saying a provisional farewell to Jill Stoner, who is stepping down as director after six years. Jill heads off to a well-deserved sabbatical as of the end of this month.

Having served as director myself for a number of years, I know how challenging the job is – as do several of my colleagues who have occupied the director's office at various points. I learned early on that you never know when you are going to put your foot in it and who might misinterpret your actions or ideas, however sound or well-intentioned. And with the expansion of the number of programs, faculty, students, and initiatives over the last decade, the director's job has become ever more complex.

I can attest to the fact that Jill has been on call 24 hours a day for the last six years – not out of obligation, but out of a remarkable sense of dedication to the school – to its growth, wellbeing, reputation. It is largely due to her vision and creativity that we've been able to navigate the numerous challenges, changes, and opportunities that keep coming our way.

While we're here tonight to celebrate you, I ask you to join me in celebrating Jill's many contributions.

The school will long benefit from her vision, dedication, and fortitude, her resiliency and commitment, and from the skill and finesse that she brought to bear on supporting and challenging all of us. We are so much stronger for her initiatives and accomplishments.

To Jill – with gratitude.

Here's to you! Wherever you go, please don't let it be too far from us. Your legacy will live on, both in the big things and the innumerable small things you've done to make the school the amazing place it is.