To all members of the Department,

As we enter 2017, it is hard for me to imagine that I am now entering my sixth year as Department Chair.

Looking back it has been a very productive time. Not only have we resolved the many challenges that we faced in 2012, but we have been able to increase our academic productivity (grants are up by almost 50% compared to five years ago and publications by 40%), expand the number and scope of our educational programs, build a rich and rewarding academic environment and recruit some outstanding faculty, both junior and senior, who are helping to build a really bright future for our Department.

The five-year report on the Department’s progress from 2012 to end of 2016, which we have just completed, is an impressive document that details our many accomplishments and outlines the opportunities that lie ahead. I hope that you share the sense of excitement I do as we embark on the implementation of Equity, Innovations and Partnerships, our Strategic Plan and look forward to seeing new partnerships develop, a strengthening and expansion of our academic programs, and new funding strategies to sustain our work as we re-establish ourselves as a major force in Canadian Psychiatry, whose impact is felt locally, nationally and globally.

And once again, I would like to say thank you to all of you whose contributions have made the last five years so successful. The heart of a healthy Department is always going to be its faculty and I do not think we could wish for a more talented and more committed group than we currently have.

I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge a few accomplishments over the last month that had not been addressed in previous updates and also some coming and goings.

Firstly, I would like to welcome Anne Gaetan who joins us from CE&B (now known as Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact or HEI) as the Education Coordinator in our Education Office, replacing Linda Bondy and Gabriela Rivas, who replaces Amanda Hamilton, as Ellen Lipman’s new Admin Assistant.

And I want to thank Michelle Allan for all her work and support for the AFP over the last 3 years and wish her the very best in her new position in Biochemistry and also thank Nicole Sloss who has agreed to fill this role until Michelle’s replacement is hired, while continuing her role in the Research Office during this period.

I would also like to welcome back Paul Links, who is known to many of us from his previous time here at McMaster, from his work at the University of Toronto and most recently as the Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Western Ontario. He is joining us as a GFT and will be gradually increasing his time here over the next three months, starting with the Hamilton FHT later this month. Paul has a very distinguished track record as an administrator, researcher – especially in the area of suicide - and a clinical leader and will be a great addition to our Department.

And good luck to Peter Cook who has returned to his role as Acting Psychiatrist in Chief. I look forward to working together over the coming months.

Congratulations to...
Carrie McAiney who is a co-Investigator on a project funded as part of the recent CIHR competition on Social Inclusion for Individuals with Dementia and Carers. She and her colleagues received $498,350 for their project: Improving Quality of Living and Dying for People Living with Advanced Dementia and their Caregivers.

Mohammed Warsi and Majedeh on the arrival of their daughter Amara Jehan.

Sarah Garside who has just returned from Paris, France where she was chosen to be one of 10 Canadian artists to show their work at an International Exhibition at the Louvre.

Four members of our Department who have just completed 25 years of service at McMaster. They are Pri Weerasekera, Margaret Fahnestock, Margaret Secord-Gilbert, and Mary White whose contributions will be recognized by the University at an upcoming Reception hosted by President Patrick Deane. Congratulations to all of you.

CBS
As you may be aware, Debbie Nifakis will be stepping down this summer after eight years as Director of the CBS Program. Debbie agreed to extend her time to assist us with the preparation of the materials to support the transition of CBS to a Masters Program and both for that and for everything that Debbie has contributed to CBS in her time as program leader I am extremely appreciative.

The search for a new Director is getting underway. The chance to develop a new Masters program, expand the range of course offering and reach out to new stakeholders while building on the strong foundation CBS has created makes this a really exciting opportunity. If you are interested in finding out more about this role, please let me know.

Department Meeting on February 15th.
The next Department Meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 15th and we will have two Agenda items. The first will be a brief version of the presentation that I will have made to Faculty Executive at the end of January, summarising our progress over the last five years. The second and major item will be to look at the implementation of EIP and specifically to hear from each of the direction Heads and priority leads about the work they are embarking upon and the opportunities this presents for any member of the Department to join them. The meeting will be from 9:00-10:00 at St. Joes W 5th. site and I hope you will be able to join us as it will give you an excellent overview of some of the things that we will be happening in the Department in the coming years.

Nick