

VASSAR COLLEGE
POUGHKEEPSIE - NEW YORK 12604
Office of the Dean of the Faculty

To: All Incoming Freshmen

From: Ken Livingston, Director of the Freshman Course Program

Welcome to Vassar! As you have already discovered during the process of selecting your courses for this fall, you are all required to take a Freshman Course, which places special emphasis on writing skills. What you may not know is that every year we invite a well-known author to campus in connection with this course. This author gives a campus-wide public lecture about his or her experiences and career as a writer, and also leads a master class about writing for freshmen and some of their instructors. This year we are pleased that Cornelia Dean, Science Editor for the New York Times, has agreed to join us as the Freshmen Course Speaker. At least some teachers of the Freshmen Courses may include selections of her work in their lists of assigned reading, but whether that is the case for the course you are taking, I would like to urge all of you to read something by Cornelia Dean before she arrives on campus at the end of September. Her recent book, *Against the Tide: The battle for America's beaches*, is on reserve in the library and on sale in the bookstore. The book is a fine example of how to write clear, informative journalistic prose. Ms. Dean also writes frequently, of course, for the New York Times Science section. The easiest way to find her articles is to visit <http://archives.nytimes.com/archives> on the web and use the site's search facility. You will be given references for her articles, which you can then locate in Vassar's library archives for the New York Times. I would also encourage you to spend some time with the Science section of the Tuesday New York Times, paying close attention to what you find there. Good editing is an essential component of good writing, and you will find many examples of it in the selection, organization, and writing in the articles you find in the Science Times.

Ms. Dean will be on campus on Thursday, September 28. Time and location of her master class and lecture will be publicized soon. In the meantime, I wish you all a successful start to your Vassar careers, and look forward to seeing you on the 28th.