

## **Interview with Paul Otis, Dean of Students**

### **What do you enjoy about working at SVA?**

Our small class sizes, hands-on laboratory experiments, and close bonds with students really stand out to me. I love the fact that I know everything about my students-where they are from, what their interests are, and even what type of learners they are. Having all of this information about my students makes me a more effective teacher.

### **What is a particular moment that has strengthened your love for SVA and the students you serve?**

There have been students in the last few years who have become really interested in science and biology and have went on to college to major in these fields. It is very powerful to think that I gave them the building blocks to be successful and I think our classroom environment had a large role in that.

### **You teach biology here at SVA. Why did you become so interested in science?**

I've always had an interest in science because it explains the natural world around us. I have always been curious how things came into being and why they are on this planet. I enjoy watching students discover new ideas on their own and my teaching style gives the opportunity for discovery.

### **What is your favorite topic to teach?**

My favorite topic is cellular biology- learning about cellular processes and evolution. It is interesting to study our own bodies on a cellular level, the way our genetics transfer from own generation to the next, and how our species has evolved on earth. All of things are an "instruction manual" on how we became the people we are today which I find very interesting.

### **Thanksgiving is coming up, how will you be spending this day?**

One popular tradition in our family is to go around the table and say what we are thankful for. I think this makes the day not just about food and football, but about the connections in our family and the appreciation we have of each other. But, of course, I love the food and football.