



June 23, 2016

Dear Dean VandenBosch,

Continual budget reductions have put a majority of CALS departments at risk of falling below a critical limit of personnel and capital resources needed to maintain program excellence and, in some cases, basic competencies. This widespread condition has prompted a variety of informal discussions amongst chairs seeking to apply collective wisdom to address the difficult challenges we face. Although some solutions exist to aid departments in addressing specific short-term issues, mechanisms for resolving the larger long-term issues of maintaining excellence and critical mass are lacking. Thus, we believe that a timely and comprehensive evaluation of the options for college-wide restructuring and their associated costs and benefits is needed.

The diverse, historical portfolio of departments, facilities, and programs nested within CALS has enjoyed significant success and productivity over an extended period of time. However, the current budget and, most likely, future budgets are not capable of sustaining the standard of programmatic excellence, or even competency, originally envisioned across that portfolio. Therefore, we recommend a comprehensive review of this historical portfolio and seek implementation of a redistribution of college resources in a manner that will restore programmatic excellence in core, strategic areas of strength, productivity, and impact.

We realize that this task will require significant investments of time and energy, and the potential disruption of legacy-bound programs will necessitate careful stewarding of stakeholder relationships. We offer our involvement and full support in these tasks and commit to sustaining these efforts throughout this restructuring process. We believe this effort is required to successfully propel CALS toward a better and brighter future, while building upon the guiding principles of a commitment to the basic sciences, support of impactful state industries, and excellence in instructional programs.

Two years were invested in the development of the CALS Strategic Framework 2014, including significant discussion of collegiate structure. It is time for action and we believe the August 19 department chairs' retreat is the right forum for reviewing the procedure and process that will lead to our long term communal goal – a college of excellence. We are specifically asking you to appoint a group of representative chairs to craft a set of principles upon which a restructuring model would be designed. The goal would be for that group of chairs to propose this set of principles in time for discussion and adoption at the August 19 department chair's retreat. Immediately following the retreat, we ask that you appoint and charge a CALS restructuring committee and provide them with milestones by which their work would be completed and adopted by the college.

Respectfully submitted,

cc. Senior Associate Dean Straub

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