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COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE FACULTY AND STAFF

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the many of you who have contributed over the past several years to conversations about the future administrative structure of the College of Letters and Science. This process has included a series of rich discussions, including the work of the joint Academic Senate/Provost Task Force on the Academic Organization of UC Davis, co-chaired by André Knoesen and Carolyn Thomas and numerous communications with members of the campus community in a variety of venues.

These earlier stages of discussion led me to charge a Letters and Science Reorganization Work Group, which met nearly twenty times over the past months under the chairship of Professor and Interim Chair of Economics Alan Taylor. The discussions of the Letters and Sciences Reorganization Work Group were additionally enriched by conversations with five distinguished colleagues from outside institutions, who shared their personal perspectives and experiences of alternative forms of college administrative structures. This was an extraordinary effort, the fruits of which are impressive. The Work Group's final report accompanies this letter. You will note that the Work Group's report summarizes the perspectives offered by the five external visitors; in addition, I append the observations of two of the external visitors on the final Work Group report.¹

After integrating and contemplating the totality of the work on this topic, and with the recommendations (and caveats) of the Work Group very much in mind, Chancellor Katehi and I have decided to proceed with the implementation of a new model for the administration of the College of Letters and Science according to which, effective July 1, 2016, or thereabouts, the College will be administered by a single dean. Even as we celebrate the significant advances the divisions have made under the three-dean model, and especially as a result of the careful stewardship and superb leadership of those who have served as deans, we believe that the new organization will serve us more effectively given the current challenges and opportunities facing the campus, and higher education more broadly.

As the Work Group and others emphatically noted, there are other decisions, of different sorts, that will be critical to the College's successful evolution to a new administrative model. To effect the transition, at the beginning of fall quarter I will convene three groups to operate more or less simultaneously.

¹ All five visitors had the option of commenting on the final report; only two did so formally; two of the others told us that they had no objections to the report but felt they had nothing to add to what must be a UC Davis decision.

First, obviously, there will be a Recruitment Advisory Committee (RAC) that will proceed according to the normal fashion for dean searches. The chancellor and I have asked Vice Chancellor-Human Health Sciences and Dean-School of Medicine Julie Freischlag to chair the RAC. The other members of the RAC will be identified and appointed in September so that the RAC can begin its work in earnest at that time. I will ask the RAC to hold multiple open meetings so that they can get the richest possible input on the characteristics we should be looking for in the individual we will ask to lead and inspire the college in its transformation.

The Work Group persuasively and eloquently highlighted the importance of the development of a vision for the College of Letters & Science at UC Davis, including a vision of the educational and intellectual values that it embodies. Moreover, as the Work Group has suggested to us, it was only by means of the “journey” the members of the group took together that they could begin to see the challenges and opportunities the entire college had, ever mindful to be sure of the way those challenges and opportunities vary across the divisions, but very much convinced of the degree of commonality.

The Visioning Committee I will convene and charge in September will engage faculty and other members of the college community for much of the entire academic year. If L&S’ experience proves similar to that of other colleges and schools where searches have run parallel to “visioning” or comparable planning exercises, the thinking that is emergent in those settings will provide context for the interaction of the faculty with the finalists the RAC brings to campus. In these past examples, the visioning process provided a foundation and common language for the collaboration of the incoming dean and the faculty to evolve the vision together and take steps towards its full implementation.

The importance of preparing for the new dean is also critical in the area of infrastructural support. Over the coming academic year, even as we ensure that the college runs smoothly, with all its operations intact and robust – across all the departments, across the three divisions, across the common college functions –, indeed, even as we continue to make progress in those areas where we have made some fresh investments (e.g., advising, development), I will work directly with a group consisting of the three deans and many other administrators and faculty representatives to develop a transition plan for the college administration. The Work Group makes clear that great value is seen in maintaining strong administrative support for the three divisions, yet, as both Dean Stacey of the University of Washington and Provost Hanson of the University of Minnesota note, it will be crucial to clarify in advance what range of responsibilities each of the roles in the new structure will have, especially in matters budgetary. The advice of the Work Group in this regard is important, and we will work to design and set up a college infrastructure that will support faculty, students and staff appropriately and efficiently, in other words, absent “bloat.”

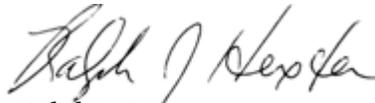
The aim of this administrative work group will be to determine what the initial state of the administrative infrastructure will be on July 1, 2016, so that the college can function well from the first day the new dean takes his or her post. We recognize that this is merely the initial state; the college itself may over time adjust its administrative infrastructure, as colleges and schools often do, with input from the new dean as well as faculty, chairs, staff, students and others.

The Work Group also pointed to the all-important issue of resources. With the advice of the administrative work group and others, I will develop a plan to provide the college the appropriate level and mode of resources with which, and investments by means of which, it can fulfill its

mission under its new dean. The Chancellor and I want the College of Letters & Science, and all its constituent parts, to thrive and excel.

Again, my sincere thanks to all of you for the hard work and thought that went into evaluating how best to position the College of Letters and Science for the brightest possible future. I look forward to working with all of you as we turn this vision into reality.

Sincerely,



Ralph J. Hexter
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Attachments: Report; Stacey's letter, Hanson's email

c: Chancellor Katehi
Academic Senate Chair Knoesen
Interim Dean Kaiser
Dean Mangun
Interim Dean Navrotsky
Council of Deans and Vice Chancellors