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**To:** Joe McLaughlin, Chair, Faculty Senate  
**From:** Pam Benoit, Executive Vice President and Provost *PB*  
**Re:** Resolution on Budget Priorities (1-11-10)

I am pleased to sign the Resolution on Budget Priorities passed by Faculty Senate on January 11, 2010. The work that the Finance and Facilities Committee did in drafting the resolution was instrumental in making possible a shared commitment to advancing the academic mission. I also want to thank members of the Senate for their willingness to suspend judgment and thereby contribute to a climate that will permit the goals of the budget process to be met.

In signing the resolution, I would like to draw attention to some of the principles that shaped the construction of the strategic budget process. I do so in order to highlight elements of the process that are different from past years and to suggest ways in which the final budget recommendations should be measured.

#### **Elements of the FY2011 Budget Process**

- The budget guidance specifically states a commitment “to protecting the university’s academic quality and to ensuring an exemplary experience for our students.” Lessons learned from past years suggested that our budget decisions this year be tightly tied to a set of impact criteria that relate directly to protecting the core of the university’s academic mission.
- The highest level of protection from reductions will be given to those activities at the university that are primary to supporting the following criteria:
  - Impact on meeting enrollment objectives
  - Impact on graduation/retention rates
  - Impact on generation of student credit hours
  - Impact on the quality of the student experience
  - Impact on research and creative activity
- Units that perform activities essential to the university’s operation but not directly related to the five key areas must demonstrate that they are delivering services effectively and at the lowest feasible cost.
- The FY2011 budget process also allows for university-wide review and comment on a draft set of budget recommendations. The goals here are transparency and facilitation of shared governance. Input will be sought on whether the draft budget reduction recommendations are sufficient to position the university to advance its mission of undergraduate and graduate education and to meet immediate budget needs while holding to the established constraints of the strategic budget process.
- The budget process also obligates President McDavis, Interim Senior Vice President Angelini, and me to provide a full accounting that outlines the rationale for our decisions.

I welcome Faculty Senate’s engagement in this budget process and appreciate its principled advocacy on behalf of the primacy of the academic mission. I recognize that any process that we construct will not be perfect and that the difficult decisions emerging from that process will not please everyone in the university community. My hope is that all members of the university will continue to contribute substantively to this process so that we can feel confident that we have worked together to serve the greatest good of our institution.

