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To: Joe McLaughlin, Chair, Faculty Senate

From: Pam Benoit, Executive Vice President and Provost ¶ 3

Subject: Resolution on Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

There are many aspects of this resolution on Promotion and Tenure passed at the May 11, 2009 meeting of the Faculty Senate that I endorse. I would agree that most universities could improve upon their P&T process and that it is important to provide clear guidance to candidates as they engage in the promotion and tenure process.

But I do have some concerns about the particular procedures that must be followed by all departments/schools that are outlined in this resolution. In considering this resolution, I have consulted with Deans and some of the Chairs. I believe it is accurate to say that those I have spoken with have been supportive of the goals of this resolution but share similar concerns about the procedural details of the resolution. Let me give a couple of examples to illustrate the types of issues that have come to my attention. The resolution specifies that “the relative weightings of teaching, research/creative activity, and service that will be applied in reaching the tenure decision should be explicitly communicated in writing to the candidate and evaluating committee at the time of the hire.” This statement seems to assume that the relative weightings stay the same over the course of the appointment. This may be the case for some appointments in some departments. But it is not the case in others. And a procedure that is meant to apply across all departments needs to be adaptable. Another issue is the procedure requiring a formal evaluation mid-way through the probationary period in addition to the annual evaluation. In some units, faculty are provided with extensive annual evaluations and a midway formal evaluation duplicates existing efforts to provide feedback to tenure track faculty. So I would ask how the formal evaluation at the midway point differs substantively from the annual evaluation? I raise these two issues as examples of the types of concerns that have been raised with the procedural details of this resolution. I’d like to ask that Peter Coschigano, Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, and Marty Tuck facilitate a discussion of concerns about these types of procedural issues. To be most effective, this policy must be functional and practical to implement across schools and departments. I would like very much to see an amended version of this resolution.