Dear colleagues –

At the January 16, 2018 meeting of the UMKC Faculty Senate, I presented a draft proposal regarding academic reorganization, to be considered following the process for academic reorganization developed and approved by Faculty Senate during Academic Year 2016-17 (see attachment #1). On February 21, 2018, I sent an email to the Faculty Senate, Academic Council and Executive Council with copies to Executive Committees of Staff Council and the Student Government Association that included the final version of the proposal for academic reorganization in a document titled “Provost Charge to Faculty Senate – Academic Reorganization” (see attachment #2).

Upon receipt of the charge, and based on questions received from faculty, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee worked in the early months of the Spring semester with Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Diane Filion and myself to revise and refine the process for overseeing proposed reorganizations, which was approved by Faculty Senate on March 6, 2018 (see attachment #3).

This document addresses the proposal in the Provost Charge to move the Department of Chemistry from the College of Arts and Sciences into the School of Biological Sciences.

The purpose of this move, as with all moves, should be to create conditions that foster even greater success for all affected parties in the conduct of our tripartite mission of teaching, discovery and innovative service.

**Votes and Rationale of Faculty to Move the Department of Chemistry into the School of Biological Sciences**

In response to the proposal in the Provost’s charge to move the Department of Chemistry into the School of Biological Sciences, Chair Kathleen Kilway reported on April 17, 2018 that faculty of the Department of Chemistry in the College of Arts and Sciences voted in a meeting on March 15, 2018 to support of the proposal, and providing supporting rationale for the vote (see attachments #4 and 5). Attachment #6 is a more extensive document that provides a profile of the Department of Chemistry which is helpful, though not required, for consideration at this stage of the reorganization process, and will also be useful to any implementation committee that may be convened.

On April 20, 2018, Professor Jerry Wyckoff reported that faculty of the School of Biological Sciences voted in support of the proposal, and providing supporting rationale for the vote (see attachments #7 and 8). Attachment #9 is a more extensive study document provided by Professor Wyckoff which is helpful, though not required, for consideration at this stage of the reorganization process, and will also be useful to any implementation committee that may be convened.

**Provost Recommendation and Rationale for Move**

As outlined in Step II.2 of the revised process, having received the relevant votes and reports from the moving unit (Department of Chemistry) and the receiving unit (School of Biological Sciences), this document serves as the Provost’s compilation of reports and recommendations regarding the move of the Department of Chemistry into the School of Biological Sciences for consideration by Faculty Senate.

***Benefits of Move for Department of Chemistry and the School of Biological Sciences***

In considering the benefits of moving the Department of Chemistry from the College of Arts and Sciences into the School of Biological Sciences, I am in agreement with summary reports provided by SBS Faculty Chair Jerry Wyckoff and Chemistry Department Chair Kathleen Kilway.

Drawing from these documents, and in brief summary:

- for students and the teaching enterprise, the benefit of this move at the most basic level is to remove any natural, unintended or intended competition between units for the same students. On a more positive note, the move facilitates more collaborative opportunities for interdisciplinary programs and connections with the health sciences campus, and provides opportunities to develop signature programs that set UMKC students apart, and that should benefit students ultimately with more opportunities for internships and job placement.

- the primary benefit to the discovery enterprise is that the move provides opportunities for establishing better connections and greater funding success for researchers who typically seek external funding from similar sources (NSF and NIH). The move should encourage collaboration, sharing of resources, hiring of faculty that bridge Biology and Chemistry, and provide a larger set of disciplinary-informed faculty to support and review the work of junior faculty.

- with regard to service, the primary benefit of the move as I see it would be an opportunity to strengthen the presence and connection of our primary feeder programs to the health sciences campus, which should allow these programs to offer much more integrated, coordinated, and collaborative service to the health sciences campus and to the Greater Kansas City region.

- administratively, the move allows UMKC to market both programs with a distinct advantage over peers and to take advantage of administrative efficiencies in unit operations, including the use of resources, equipment and space for teaching and research.

***Risks of Move for Department of Chemistry and the School of Biological Sciences***

The Department of Chemistry and the School of Biological Sciences are both strong, highly subscribed programs. From my perspective, the greatest risk associated with this move are that it would be “on paper only” – meaning that the move would simply place the Department of Chemistry in SBS with no actual benefits gained in practice. There are real differences between the units in terms of governance, policies and operations that will need to be reconciled in order to take make both units even stronger as a result of the merger. There will need to be meaningful and respectful dialogue, thoughtful consideration of what is in the best interests of students and faculty, and willingness to change on the part of all parties. The implementation committee absolutely must be committed to developing best practices and innovations that improve the student experience, the faculty experience, and ensure that staff can be successful in completing their work.

The second risk that I see in this move is to the College of Arts and Sciences, in losing a strong and revenue-producing program. Careful consideration will need to be given by the implementation committee and university administration about the transition plan to ensure that there are no unintended negative impacts to the College as a result of this move.

***Provost’s Recommendation***

Assuming the risks identified above will be addressed to the satisfaction of all parties during implementation, the Provost is in support of this merger and recommends moving to the implementation stage of the reorganization process.

**Next steps**

As outlined in Step II.3, the next step in the process is for the Faculty Senate to provide additional comment and recommendations regarding the proposal, and to consider whether or not to endorse the proposal.

As Interim Chancellor and Provost, I will consider the various positions and recommendations provided by the units and by the Faculty Senate as I work with Chancellor-designate Mauli Agrawal to make a final determination of approval of the proposed merger.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of and perspective on these important matters.

I look forward to your guidance as I work with Chancellor-designate Agrawal to make a final determination regarding the constitution of an implementation committee to further the work of advancing this proposal for reorganization.

Respectfully,

Barb

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