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January 28, 2022

Sara Sanders, PhD, MSW
Professor and Dean
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dear Sara:

In accordance with University of Iowa policy, all colleges are required to undergo a review at least every seven years and the Executive Vice President and Provost is responsible for organizing and directing the process and formulating conclusions.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) recently completed a full collegiate review that focused on the following areas:

1. Student Success:
 - a. Identification of departments and areas of strength and excellence in the college
 - b. Identification of departments and areas that should be considered for growth and targeted for strategic investment, as well as opportunities for consolidation
 - c. Assessment of educational offerings, including the best methods for the development of content to prepare students for future career paths
2. Faculty/Departmental Considerations:
 - a. Assessment and development of robust, effective, and developmentally based annual- and post-tenure review processes
 - b. Expectations for teaching, including amount, timing, and delivery of content; consideration of activities of non-research active faculty
 - c. Role clarifications for DEOs and other departmental leaders, including consolidation of roles in smaller units
3. Building a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Community:
 - a. Development of strategies to recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff
 - b. Address undergraduate retention and graduation rates, especially in first-generation and underrepresented minority students
4. Fiscal Management:
 - a. Fiscal management that allows for both transparency and positioning for the next phase of college life
 - b. Identifying efficiencies and expanded innovations to promote cost containments
5. College Structure:
 - a. Review dean's level structure for service needs and impact on the departments and larger university

The Collegiate Review Committee examined the college's 2021 self-study, the 2014 collegiate review report, and other material that was requested by the review committee. In addition, the Collegiate Review Committee conducted interviews with institutional leadership, including the Council of Deans. The committee also interviewed the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences dean, executive committee, faculty assembly, senior leadership (associate deans and administrative staff), Staff Council, DEOs, and tenure-, clinical-, and instructional-track faculty. The college received the report on December 6, 2021 and was asked to review and respond with any factual errors. A response submitted from the college on December 14, 2021 provided statistics on hiring practices between FY2018 and FY2021; clarified information regarding collegiate versus Graduate College graduate education infrastructure; stated a discrepancy in the number of underrepresented minority faculty leaving the college reported by the college versus the data stated in the report; and noted the review is over an extended period of time and does not necessarily reflect the current activities and practices within the college.

The review team identified many areas of strength within the college, which are summarized below:

1. There is a general spirit of good will toward the deans' leadership group among DEOs and faculty, and there were positive views about the dean's overall performance.
2. Most faculty across all ranks and tracks report positive relationships within their department.
3. Staff had positive remarks about succession planning and staff advancement.
4. Deans from the other colleges expressed enthusiasm for collaborating with CLAS on new and existing program opportunities.
5. CLAS faculty are productive and creative scholars and educators whose work is fundamental to the reputation of the university.
6. CLAS is developing well-rounded citizens with strong reasoning, writing, and critical thinking skills.

The Collegiate Review Committee also provided recommendations, which are summarized below:

1. Integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts into all aspects of CLAS.
2. Continue to explore new, innovative curricular opportunities, including collaborations with other colleges.
3. Evaluate student advising and adopt best practices.
4. Assess promotion and tenure criteria and provide consistency across departments, ranks, and tracks where appropriate. Specifically consider instructional-track faculty (ITF) service expectations, teaching expectations of clinical-track faculty (CTF), and how to incorporate emerging forms of scholarship and non-traditional forms of scholarship into review and promotion processes. Monitoring of ITF:TT ratios across programs is also recommended.
5. Clarify the advisory role that shared governance bodies have in relation to collegiate decision-making processes. Ensure that CLAS Staff Council is integrated into the collegiate shared governance structure as appropriate.
6. Develop clear, transparent three- to five-year plans to address faculty hiring, budgetary issues, and deferred maintenance and new construction. Include plans to implement criteria for establishing, merging, and closing programs, and a plan to increase donor support. Engage DEOs and faculty in these processes as appropriate.

After reviewing the College Review Committee Report and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' self-study and response letter, I have the following observations and recommendations:

Collegiate Leadership: Collegiate leadership is held in high esteem within the college and across campus. While the leadership restructure has generally been viewed in a positive light, continuing to develop and mentor team members as they gain more experience will be important. The current leadership team has been proactive in engaging with central units and utilizing existing resources on campus to assist in decision-making, and continuing these collaborative efforts will be important moving forward.

Faculty and staff would also benefit from more clarity around the advisory role of various elected groups (faculty assembly, executive committee, staff council) and the role of these groups in collegiate decision-making processes. The role the Graduate College as it relates to graduate education also needs clarity and areas of overlap should be identified. You are encouraged to work in concert with the associate provost for graduate and professional education and dean, Graduate College, to identify areas in the college that could be streamlined and resolve duplicative efforts that exist.

The college's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts should be continued and further developed in consultation with the university's executive officer and associate vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a useful resource as the college develops strategies related to these efforts. The college would also benefit from a dedicated position to support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts throughout the college.

Budget: There is an appreciation, both within and outside the college, for the unit's current budget challenges. In addition, there is a willingness to engage in the process of right-sizing the college, driven by both short- and longer-term strategic priorities and enrollment needs. This is also a priority of the university's central leadership team, and we will continue to collaborate with the college on budget-related issues. A three- to five-year plan for hiring and strategic growth is necessary and will allow for better resource management. With this in mind, the entire college will benefit from better fiscal literacy, planning, and transparency as difficult choices are made. Adopting guiding principles to apply as decisions are made would also help with transparency. The hiring of a permanent budget officer will be critical to support these approaches.

Faculty: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' faculty are diverse in rank, track, and discipline and make important contributions to the overall mission of the university. Recommendations to address the observations made related to faculty are as follows:

- There has been variance regarding the kind and amount of service required for Instructional Track promotion. This should be reviewed and made more consistent across the college with reasonable expectations laid out.
- The college would benefit from the development of broad definitions of scholarship to support new approaches and disciplines, as well as alternative pathways to promotion.
- Mentorship – Faculty noted that a more robust process for mentoring would support the development of junior and mid-career faculty in all tracks. While this may be better managed at the department level, there may be creative ways for the college to engage in this process.

- There should be a consistent approach to assigning teaching loads and expectations based on track and discipline. This would also support monitoring IT:TT ratios in various departments and provide clarity for the development of hiring plans.

Support for Undergraduate Student Success: In consultation with the associate provost for undergraduate education and dean, University College, CLAS should initiate a review of its services, policies, and relationship with central student support units to develop and utilize evidence-based practices to support undergraduate students, including students of color, first gen students, and students who may be dealing with academic and/or personal issues. This includes, but is not limited to, its advising program, career development, and special initiatives. I would suggest a small committee be convened that includes faculty and staff who are internal and external to the college to conduct this review.

I ask that you work with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' leadership team, in consultation with the College's governance, faculty, staff, and students, to develop and implement plans to address the recommendations above and incorporate them into the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' strategic plan. I encourage you to be innovative and strategic as you develop these plans, while keeping in mind the current budgetary issues.

In conclusion, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has talented faculty, staff, and students who are highly respected across campus and have an excellent state and national reputation. Much has changed in the last 18 months. While there is considerable work yet to be done, there are also opportunities ahead. I look forward to both supporting you as you move the college forward and hearing progress updates during our regular meetings.

Sincerely,



Kevin C. Kregel, PhD
Executive Vice President and Provost

cc: Barbara Wilson, President

Amanda Thein, Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education, and Dean,
Graduate College

Liz Tovar, Executive Officer and Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Tanya Uden-Holman, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, and Dean, University
College