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MĀNOA

November 5, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Bley-Vroman, Interim Dean
College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature

FROM: Reed Dasenbrock 
Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: LLL One-Year Progress Report

Thank you for meeting in July with me, Krystyna Aune, and Wendy Pearson to discuss your one year progress report on your 2008 program review and for your October 25th update. As you know, we are endeavoring to make the program review process more substantive and to link it to various aspects of accreditation, especially the continuous improvement commitments involved in quality assurance. External peer review is an important part of that process, as evidenced in the 2008 review, but equally important is a continuing effort to implement the suggestions in the report that make continuing sense. This document will focus on that report and on what in our judgment needs to happen over the next year as part of our evolving implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 review. In our judgment, the College has moved with commendable diligence to address the recommendations in the program review, particularly given the transitions in leadership at your and my level since the review.

The faculty workload issue has been front and center over the past year, and the College's workload policy is a great start to addressing this issue, to be followed as you pointed out by departmental-level policies due this Fall. I agree with your amendment to the language of the program review that it is less a matter of disparities than differentiation, as the disparities in formal teaching load among the departments are explicable in terms of the programmatic differentiation among the departments. The key issue for me is implementation: whatever the baseline teaching load for a given department, are faculty who are less productive in the area of research than the departmental norm picking up additional responsibilities in other areas, whether through an increase in formal teaching or through other means, so that there aren't disparities in workload?

In our meeting and in your update, you identified strengthening research in the College as a high priority. I think your ideas here are sound, and I also encourage you to highlight the possibility of externally funded research in those areas of the College with good funding prospects and to discuss support for your plans with Vice Chancellor Ostrander as well as with the deans you mentioned as possible partners.

Interim Dean Robert Bley-Vroman

November 5, 2010

Page 2

The process of redistributing faculty lines to areas with strong enrollment pressures is already underway, and I appreciate your complementary attempt to work on the demand for some of the more lightly enrolled areas. The B.A. in Pacific Island Studies should help with this when it is approved. I have asked Dean Shultz to focus his faculty's attention on enrollments in Asian Studies, and perhaps the two of you can jointly address some of the issues with lightly enrolled Asian languages. I suspect that further reallocation of positions towards highly enrolled areas is a process that will need to continue, and the process the College has used so far strikes me as exemplary.

This leads directly into an issue is perhaps a longer term but very important issue, which is developing "a strategic sense of languages across the campus, especially those of the Asia-Pacific region." I think the College maintains that sense, and it was clearly a factor in the desire of the faculty for LLL to remain a College. I am working on a document representing areas of reputational strength for the University that may be helpful in this regard: our commitment to language instruction in a broad range of languages is a core area of strength and identity for the University. The various steps outlined in your update all look like good discrete steps towards this larger sense, so I encourage you to pursue them. Bringing LLEA to a greater awareness of Asia/Pacific in particular will help the cohesiveness of the College enormously in my judgment.

In terms of assessment, LLL is certainly ahead of the curve, so your consistent attention to this issue is commendable. In keeping with your update, we need a focus in the next year on more programs creating curricular maps, one area where you are not above the campus average (and where the campus average is an unsatisfactory 46%), as well as on using results from assessment to improve programs, the issue of closing the loop. Since we expect a strong focus during the EER visit next spring on whether we are consistently closing the loop, this is a particularly urgent issue this academic year.

Finally, to discuss one issue not mentioned in your update (and more an issue for the colleges than LLL itself), we remain concerned about the state of advising in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences as a whole. In my judgment, the four deans involved need to take more responsibility for college-wide advising than they have done. We do not believe that this is a resource question as much as a question of how well the available resources are being deployed. I look forward to hearing more from the four deans on this vital issue.

c: Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Aune
Program Officer Pearson