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DATE: August 24, 2011'
FROM:  Rodney A. Erickson, Chair, Core Council
TO: Madlyn L. Hanes
RE: Core Council General Recommendations for the Commonwealth Campuses

The Academic and Administrative Services Core Council (“the Core Council”) has discussed the recommendations forwarded on behalf of the Campus Academic Review Coordinating Committee (CARCC) regarding the programs and operations of the Commonwealth Campuses. We have also reviewed the discussion of strategic priorities and background information that CARCC provided about the successes and challenges of the Commonwealth Campuses, and ideas for cost savings and revenue generation. The University Park Academic Review Coordinating Committee (UPARCC) also reviewed the curricular and operational matters that may affect University Park colleges and these comments were taken into consideration in the formulation of the Core Council’s recommendations. I should note for the record that you did not participate in the Core Council discussions of the General Recommendations for the Commonwealth Campuses.

The purpose of this memo is to share with you the response of the Core Council to various organizational, operational and academic issues and initiatives, and to make recommendations for further changes based on the analysis and deliberations of both CARCC and the Core Council. This memo represents a general report for the aggregate of the Commonwealth Campuses, and will be followed by individual memos from the Core Council to each of the campus chancellors.

General Comments

The Core Council was pleased to review the aggregate report on the campuses. The report reflects many good ideas and the positive changes you have already put in place.

The Core Council is very supportive of the new approaches and new criteria being put in place for meeting standards in areas such as international campus designation and inter-institutional agreements. The ideas of greater regional collaboration among campuses and increasing the number of change-of- assignment students moving to other Commonwealth Campuses to complete their programs also hold promise. The Council agrees with CARCC that some campuses could explore growth possibilities provided that capacity (faculty

resources, classrooms and other facilities, student services, housing, etc.) currently exists or financing has been identified and that the academic programming available at the campuses will be sufficiently attractive to retain additional baccalaureate students and not simply increase the number of students changing assignment to University Park.

The Council appreciates the tremendous data collection effort that has gone into the aggregate and individual campus reports. Unlike the data the Council reviewed for University Park academic units that have been collected routinely for many years, campus-specific data have not historically been organized in the productive way that the appendices accompanying the individual campus reports are organized. The Core Council heartily endorses the plan to continue collecting such data for use in ongoing evaluations. The Council was also pleased to receive the “dashboard” indicators that CARCC has developed to monitor ongoing campus health (financial and educational quality), to prompt intervention at critical junctures, i.e., “early warning,” and encourages their use for benchmarking, standards- and goal-setting with campus leadership.

The Core Council is pleased to confirm its impression that the Commonwealth Campuses as a whole are healthy and many of the campuses are very successful. However, as we know, the status of individual campuses varies considerably; some campuses are thriving, graduating more than 300 baccalaureate students a year in an array of high quality majors. In contrast, several campuses award 50 or fewer baccalaureate degrees in a given year in a limited number of small-enrollment majors. For some of these latter campuses, the demographics of their service regions are not promising, however, despite their current enrollment stability.

Our Commonwealth Campus structure evolved over the span of a century and expanded greatly in the 1950s and 1960s, long before the growth of community colleges and the expansion of state-owned universities—or the emergence of online education. The current set of campuses emerged at a time before the substantial loss of population in the western and northern regions of the state. To ensure that the Commonwealth Campuses are well positioned for the future, we will need to affirm our vision for the respective campuses in light of declining high school enrollments in some parts of the state, overall demographics, college attendance, and demands for particular kinds of post-secondary education. We must be prepared to implement changes that will position campuses for the longer run.

Recommendations:

1. Consolidation and Sharing of Administrative Infrastructure and Faculty

The CARCC report notes the successful sharing of administrative infrastructure in the Philadelphia area among the Abington, Brandywine, and Great Valley campuses, a relatively new development that was a response to the financial downturn of Great Valley. **The Core Council supports the CARCC recommendation to promote greater shared administrative infrastructure among the Commonwealth Campuses, which is likely to bring about both increased efficiency and increased professionalization and quality of services; it will ultimately enable the campuses**

involved to provide even higher quality educational experiences. We recognize that some functions do require considerable personal and face-to-face interactions, so this recommendation may not be amenable to all functions.

Not every campus needs every administrative function represented on the full-time basis that is typical of our larger Commonwealth Campuses. CARCC has proposed the idea that one larger campus and two to four other smaller campuses in a regional cluster could share personnel for certain functions. CARCC indicates further that regional clusters would not or should not prohibit campuses from working programmatically across the Commonwealth, with other campuses, with University Park, or the World Campus; this builds a degree of flexibility into these approaches. Careful monitoring is advised to consider the impact of these cluster approaches to high quality and responsive administrative services delivery.

The Core Council recommends that the consolidation and shared resources approach to administrative infrastructure at the Commonwealth Campuses be extended to faculty sharing arrangements where feasible and appropriate. We are aware that certain of the western Pennsylvania campuses have already hired shared faculty to provide instruction in the Administration of Justice, Psychology, Nursing, and IST programs, among others, and we commend the chancellors and their faculties for this enlightened approach. Faculty sharing can be accomplished in multiple ways. Faculty may be appointed on the budgets of more than one campus and physically teach at more than one campus where logistics and distance are not prohibitive and creative scheduling can be employed. Alternatively, students on multiple campuses may be able to utilize a course offered from another campus using video or other technology. And, of course, the eLearning Cooperative provides a myriad of possibilities for sharing seats in sections among several collaborating campuses. Such approaches can reduce the number of under-enrolled sections while enriching course choices for students and reducing overall costs of instruction at multiple campuses.

2. Phase-out of Underperforming Degree Programs

The Commonwealth Campuses have many programs that are small and declining in enrollments. Even among some of our larger campuses, the proportion of under-enrolled classes is high, especially at the upper division (300-499 level courses). Although the overall average for under-enrolled sections among the Commonwealth Campuses is 20%, a number of campuses have 400-level classes with an average 30% or higher under-enrollment. Although some under-enrollment may result from a less-than-strategic approach to course scheduling, the Council agrees with CARCC that majors with small enrollments are at the heart of the under-enrollment issue.

Six associate degree programs are currently being phased out at a majority of campuses and this phase-out also extends to five baccalaureate degrees and four options. Other programs, primarily legacy programs, are being consolidated. In addition to on-going phase-outs and consolidations, 17 additional baccalaureate

programs and 10 associate degrees should be examined closely (and soon) for potential closure. The Core Council supports these planned eliminations and the recommendation to consolidate similar majors where one may be “cannibalizing” another. We are pleased that this issue is already being addressed, and encourage timely determinations of the programs proposed for elimination inasmuch as these contribute to a higher number of under-enrolled sections.

The Core Council recommends that you lead a further review effort that will increase the minimum enrollment size for viable majors. A criterion for reviewing majors needs to be established and applied consistently. Majors with 20 students would appear to represent an absolute minimum necessary to deliver a quality educational experience at a justifiable cost unless the major represents simply an amalgamation of existing courses (e.g., Letters, Arts, and Sciences). Some majors may realistically require more than a minimum of 20 majors to deliver effectively and to enroll sufficient numbers of students in upper level courses.

The Core Council recommends elimination of under-performing programs in a timely manner. We recognize that, after campus chancellors receive their letters from the Council, they will need to appropriately consult faculty and file requisite paperwork with the Faculty Senate and the Office of Undergraduate Education. Having the phase-outs in place by Summer 2012 would be highly desirable and, of course, all currently enrolled students must have adequate opportunities to complete the major. Council notes that new majors need time to attract students, so our comments focus on existing majors that, after several years, have remained small and struggling or have declined from initially satisfactory enrollments.

3. Introduction of New Programs

Program portfolios at the campuses, particularly campuses of the University College, vary considerably; some campuses are well positioned for growth while others have limited program arrays (between five and 10 majors), serving small or saturated markets.

Some of the latter campuses will see considerable impact from program phase-outs, with a substantial fraction of their majors slated for elimination. **The Core Council recommends that, as some current programs are phased-out or consolidated as a result of targeted reviews, new programs should also follow in their place. On some campuses, new programming might require a redefinition of mission because the demographics of, or competition in, the area may not support a full array of programs. In all cases, new programs should be strategically selected, based on high prospective demand and high student interest and, to the extent possible, be career-oriented.** There are a number of well-subscribed, high-performing undergraduate programs (sustained high enrollments and number of degrees conferred) offered at the campuses that originate from University Park colleges and some of the larger campus colleges. The campuses also have several

strong niche programs unique to one or a few campuses. In general, however, we should avoid small-enrollment “boutique” majors that exist only on one campus and that do not track well with similar existing programs at other campuses. Numerous curricular policies are now in place to oversee ongoing curricular choices and, as such, we are better positioned to make informed, strategic decisions about programming at the campuses that will better serve the broader educational needs and interests of students. Replacing legacy programs that are no longer viable is an important parallel step.

The Core Council recommends the strategic introduction of new programs that will enable maximum sharing of faculty and other resources, the use of technology, and cooperative scheduling; such considerations should be central to all new program development going forward. Using the P-3 policy to extend existing programs from other campus colleges, including University Park, will also help to ensure that degree offerings at the campuses articulate well for student change-of-assignment and contribute to greater consistency of Penn State’s curriculum across campuses. Your office should utilize centrally held funds to partner with campuses in support of new program initiatives. Promising fields of study (high interest, high demand) currently absent or with limited availability in the program portfolios of many campuses include biology, engineering, communications, human development, and the health professions. Reviews of new academic programs should occur after five years in order to allow adequate time for a successful launch, while existing programs should be reviewed on a three-year cycle. Considerations for continuation, consolidation or phase-out should be based on critical factors including overall major and course enrollments, retention and graduation rates, and the costs of program delivery.

I ask that you oversee this initiative in strategic program planning, working with campus chancellors and University Park deans, and giving full consideration of the use of technology, video and online learning, hybrid and blended delivery.

4. Campus Missions

The Core Council supports a rigorous and realistic examination of the academic missions of several of our Commonwealth Campuses. Our campuses have historically been treated in a rather homogeneous manner, i.e., what is appropriate for some in terms of mission must be appropriate for all. This is not likely to be sustainable in the future given all of the challenges facing higher education and the demographics of the state. Changing campus missions might include both vertical and horizontal eliminations of existing programs. Vertical re-missioning means that a campus might shed a diversity of degrees and focus on a subset of current programs that is of special interest to the campus community and region, e.g., a “special mission” campus. Horizontal re-missioning could mean reexamining the four-year, baccalaureate mission now in place at all campuses. All of our campuses may not need to be comprehensive or similar in their academic programming.

The Core Council recommends a re-examination of the assumption that all campuses should offer traditional baccalaureate degrees, with a specific focus on campuses that graduate less than a specified number of baccalaureate students a year. Small degrees, while attracting some students, also create considerable inefficiencies, especially in the use of faculty and staff resources. In some cases, as CARCC's data indicate, imbalances in the ratio of full-time and part-time faculty have occurred, i.e., tenured and tenure track faculty teach upper division courses in very small classes, while being replaced by fixed-term faculty in lower division courses who are generating increasing number of student credit hours. Small majors also limit opportunities for student exchange while carrying an expectation of a full array of quality student and academic services that add to operational costs. In some cases, a change in mission may make more sense than a quest for "the" major(s) to sustain a campus in its current mission. With certain campuses designated to emphasize their 2+2 mission, there would also be more opportunities for change-of-assignment students at the hub campuses.

Certainly such considerations merit careful study to determine both the financial impact and a threshold of the number of graduates to realize greater efficiencies and other quality measures. We encourage you to explore further the feasibility of differentiating missions at some of our smaller campuses, and the potential impact of such changes.

5. Reductions in Developmental Course Offerings

The Commonwealth Campuses represent the overwhelming proportion of all the developmental coursework that is offered at Penn State, primarily in Mathematics and English. These developmental courses are necessary as foundation courses for some students who matriculate at the University without having satisfactorily completed them in high school or other post-secondary institutions. However, they carry no credits that count toward graduation inasmuch as they are deemed remedial.

The Core Council supports the reduction in resources devoted to developmental courses at the Commonwealth Campuses, provided replacement activities and approaches are developed that will help students to succeed in their chosen programs. Refinements to testing and assessment methods may be used to pinpoint better those aspects of Math and English that represent deficiencies, thereby requiring less than a full course of remediation. It would be helpful if online alternatives could also be provided for students, perhaps as discrete modules, that would bring students up to satisfactory levels of achievement. Such alternatives could be on a fee-for-service basis. The Core Council also supports the CARCC recommendations to eliminate or substantially reduce the number of First Year Seminars on the Commonwealth Campuses, and note the substantial cost savings if the General Education Health and Physical Activity (GHA) requirement is eliminated.

6. Other Cost Savings and Efficiencies

In 2009-10, the Commonwealth Campuses in aggregate paid over \$3.1 million in Supplemental II compensation for instruction to 684 faculty members; in 2010-11 over \$2.4 million in Supplemental II compensation was paid to 617 faculty members. Course releases vary in justification and number across campuses, but all campuses implement, to some extent, the practice of releasing standing faculty from their respective course workload policies. Excluding course reductions associated with sponsored research projects, the Commonwealth Campuses gave approximately 400 course releases in 2009-10, or a 67 FTE faculty equivalency based on a standard workload of six sections per year.

The Core Council recommends that you charge the leadership of each campus to undertake a thorough case-by-case review of all Supplemental II compensation to reduce, insofar as possible, any excessive practices that currently exist.

You have identified several instances in which campus holdings or leases of real estate are underutilized or not essential for current and/or future strategic uses. **The Core Council recommends that, in consultation with the campus leadership and the Office of the Sr. Vice President for Finance and Business, utilization and market studies are undertaken to ascertain whether or not current leases should be terminated or University-owned properties sold to reduce holding costs and provide funds for alternative and more productive uses.**

7. Revenue Generation

The Commonwealth Campuses continue to serve an important land-grant, access mission of the University. Student access to degree programs through “2+2” remains robust and accounts for more than 60% of the Commonwealth Campuses’ core academic activity. In the last 15 years, students were given increased opportunities to complete a degree program at their originating campus or transition to another Commonwealth Campus. Increased baccalaureate capability has realized incremental enrollment growth overall and among first-year entering students at the campuses. Since 2005, the campuses in aggregate achieved success in growing first-year enrollments, although campus program portfolios, changing demographics, and increased competition from lower cost institutions have influenced individual campus enrollments. The Commonwealth Campuses send 3,800 to 4,000 change-of-assignment students to University Park annually and over 800 students to other Commonwealth Campuses to complete their degrees. Over 1,350 advanced standing students transferred from an outside college or university to one of the Commonwealth Campuses, a 22% increase since 2006.

In Fall Semester 2010, the Commonwealth Campuses enrolled 6,722 adult students, an increase of 10% since 2006. The Core Council commends the leadership that you and the Vice President for Outreach have demonstrated in commissioning a joint degree completion task force to increase adult student enrollments by providing greater program development options and services that are essential to attracting, retaining, and graduating more adult students.

The Core Council recommends that you work with each Commonwealth Campus to drive appropriate strategic initiatives to maximize the use of each student access point, control change-of-assignment movement to University Park while fostering more campus-to-campus change-of-assignment among Commonwealth Campuses, and increase the number of advanced standing transfer students through articulation agreements and active communications with prospective students.

The Core Council notes that CARCC has explored strategies for increasing the number of students who remain at the campuses or transition to another Commonwealth Campus to complete their baccalaureate study. The latter is especially important for otherwise qualified students who may encounter difficulty entering UP majors in controlled environments or whose majors are unavailable at the originating campuses. **The Core Council agrees with CARCC and recommends that your Office, in consultation with the Office of Undergraduate Education, explore new central mechanisms for communicating systemically to students in the sophomore year prior to their entrance-to-major, informing them of options available University-wide and redirecting them to campuses with similar majors.**

The Commonwealth Campuses have been increasingly engaged in online program delivery with the World Campus (WC). Fall 2010 course enrollments in campus degree programs delivered via the WC totaled 1,326 and show significant growth (an increase of nearly 400% in five years). Despite the activity in online degrees, the campuses have had little involvement with WC's general course portfolio, albeit a number of campus-based faculty are regularly tapped by University Park colleges to teach these courses for supplemental pay. Additional programs, especially highly subscribed niche resident education programs at the Commonwealth Campuses, may do well in online or hybrid environments. There may be collaborative opportunities with University Park colleges, too.

The Core Council recommends that the Commonwealth Campuses increase their participation in online courses and degrees programs offered through the World Campus including programming delivered by faculty in their own and other academic units. As with all projected World Campus offerings, programs and courses offered by Commonwealth Campus faculties should be subjected to rigorous market and cost analysis *before* they are launched and *should not duplicate existing offerings*.

8. Global Programs

Since 2005, the Commonwealth Campuses have been increasingly engaged in international activities and initiatives. Nearly all (18 of 20) campuses have been given approval to admit international students, which numbered 440 students in Fall Semester 2010, a substantial increase over the past five years. Numerous faculty-led courses with an “embedded” international travel component have been developed and offered by the campuses; in 2009-10, Commonwealth Campus faculty offered 34 such courses with 302 students enrolled.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the University Office of Global Programs (UOGP) have set criteria for the international designation of campuses and provided guidelines for enrolling international students, including important social, cultural and practical considerations available on campus and in the broader community. That said, the Core Council agrees with CARCC that many of the Commonwealth Campuses lack a critical mass of international students and do not offer sufficient social and cultural resources, including student affairs programming, to provide a high quality educational experience for international students. **The Core Council recommends that your office, in consultation with other relevant University offices, periodically assess the criteria for designation of a campus to receive international students, such assessments based on quality indicators, including maintenance of a critical mass of international students, student engagement, retention and graduation rates, and student satisfaction surveys. We recommend that such a review, if not already underway, be conducted before the next student recruitment cycle is underway.** Many members of Council believe that current designation criteria are not sufficiently stringent.

There are currently nine active Commonwealth Campus inter-institutional agreements with international universities, a number that has increased significantly in recent years. However, there is growing concern among campus chancellors, the UOGP, and University Park deans that many of these agreements involve partner institutions that are not highly regarded academically and may diminish Penn State’s other efforts to secure partnership agreements with peer institutions in other countries. We understand that you have placed a moratorium on new agreements pending the work of two task forces a) to identify alternative approaches to international partnerships, procedures, and expectations for inter-institutional selection and b) to formulate new inter-institutional memoranda of agreements (MOA). **The Core Council commends this decision, and recommends that particular attention should be devoted to protection and enhancement of the “Penn State brand” in any new MOA’s, given that all such partnerships affect the University’s stature in overseas markets.**

Finally, the Core Council believes that it is possible to increase the number of Fulbright scholars, both visiting scholars to Penn State and Penn State Fulbrights to other countries, which has been growing at the Commonwealth Campuses in recent years. Fulbright scholarships are a unique and valuable opportunity to increase the

international experiences of both the faculty and wider campus communities. With over 2,000 campus faculty, it seems reasonable that campus participation could be increased. **The Core Council recommends that you and the campus chancellors work with the University Office of Global Programs to facilitate increases in both the number of Fulbright visitors and awards to our own Penn State faculty scholars.**

9. Continuing Education

Continuing Education (CE) offices at the Commonwealth Campuses are staffed with over 96 FTE positions. In addition, 18 Directors of Continuing Education (DCEs) are budgeted centrally in the Outreach organization. As you know, the DCE positions were realigned (with the transfer of the positions and the permanent funds) from the campuses to the Vice President for Outreach in 2005-06.

A financial analysis of CE activity conducted by your Office for 2009-10 (credit and non-credit), including administrative costs (with allocated fringe benefits), shows that ten campuses have positive net returns. The study indicates that an undue emphasis appears to be placed on non-credit activity, where the net return from direct program income and expense is generally much smaller than the return to CE credit offerings. Also, an informal assessment of employee effort reported by Statewide Continuing Education indicates that an average of 70% of staff effort is directed toward non-credit programming.

CE credit courses attract an increasing number of Resident Instruction (RI) students. The campuses offered 709 sections of credit courses coded as Continuing Education in 2009-10. Of the students enrolled in CE-coded sections, 69% were CE students (those scheduling 12 or fewer credits [note that 12 credits is considered full-time in resident instruction]); the remaining 31% were RI students (those scheduling 12.5 credits or more). These full-time RI students generate no additional revenue for the campuses.

CARCC notes the need for greater academic oversight for CE course delivery and planning, and further suggests that the current CE structure does not lend itself to integrating CE into the broader academic operations of the campuses. **The Core Council concurs with CARCC and recommends realigning campus CE and academic affairs operations to more effectively integrate CE activity with broader campus program planning and delivery. We further recommend that you and the Vice President for Outreach, with the assistance of key budget offices, commission a wholesale evaluation of statewide Continuing Education, with an emphasis on developing alternatives for a more effective reporting structure, re-balancing credit and non-credit programming, and planning programs on a regional basis that will generate new net revenue.** The current performance of Continuing Education at most of the Commonwealth Campuses is unacceptable and an inefficient use of University resources. I am therefore charging

you and the Vice President for Outreach, as part of the recommendation noted above, to establish a threshold of rate of return on investment for these CE operations, and to direct the campus leadership to close, consolidate, or significantly restructure those underperforming units before July 1, 2012.

10. Campus Housing and Facilities

A frequent plea from the wider Commonwealth Campus community (including campus advisory boards) is the request for new or additional student residences on campus. The prevailing assumption is that campus housing will permit the campuses to compete more effectively with other colleges and universities for prospective students as well as enriching the student life experience.

The University has been considering additional investments in campus housing with the assistance of an external consultant and its own internal evaluation. Also being considered are different potential models for financing, constructing, and operating new campus housing, the additional investments in student services that would be required, and the additional degree programming necessary to retain more upper division students at the Commonwealth Campuses. **The Core Council recommends the completion of detailed market analyses to assess sufficient demand for student housing at prospective locations, exploration of the possibilities for alternative financing and operating arrangements, and finalization of the set of student services necessary for new or expanded campus housing.**

The Office of Facilities Resources and Planning (OFRP) recently conducted a space assessment of selected Commonwealth Campuses with potential for future growth. Each campus's capacity to accommodate future growth was determined primarily by the availability (assignable square footage) and use of core academic space (classrooms, labs, library, faculty/staff offices, and general student use space). While results are preliminary and vary by campus, nearly all campuses show capacity for accommodating growth with respect to general purpose classrooms. Class laboratories, library, and student-related spaces, for the most part, however, have not kept pace and continued enrollment growth will exacerbate these shortfalls. Faculty office space is also problematic on some campuses. **The Core Council recommends the further study of space uses and needs with consideration for repurposing current space, renovations and other capital projects at some Commonwealth Campuses.**

Also, timely is the assessment of course scheduling practices at the campuses. Course schedules should both maximize the use of classroom space, and assure that students (part-time and full-time) can make steady progress toward degree completion. Each campus produces its own semester schedule of courses. No common course scheduling system currently exists to standardize scheduling class period start/stop times and, in some cases, schedules are reinvented each semester without the benefit of "roll-over" capabilities. **Course scheduling practices also bear on the under-enrollment problem. The Core Council recommends that you conduct campus**

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audits of standard meeting times (day/evening; start/stop) and classroom assignments at each campus to reduce inefficiencies and inform continued improvement of classroom utilization practices.

Concluding Comments

One of the ancillary, but very real, benefits of the work of CARCC has been the compilation of critical, campus-specific data on staffing, budgets, demographics, enrollments, instructional costs, change-of-assignments, student success, and more. Over an 18-month period, CARCC benefited greatly from the development of enhanced performance data for the campuses. Much of that information was never before readily available, and certainly did not match the granularity of standard information produced for the University Park colleges. Going forward, it will be important to retain and routinize this newly found institutional research capacity if evidence-based evaluation, planning, and decision-making for the campuses is to continue. While the OVPCC is central to this effort, institutionalizing the production of key indicators will involve ongoing collaboration with several other units of the University and the campus chancellors.

A number of recommendations in this aggregate report will necessitate additional investments in the Commonwealth Campuses to support program development, student support services and capital projects. New funds will be increasingly difficult to secure in coming years, so choices for investments must be strategic, focusing on those that will product significant returns in enrollments and educational quality improvements. You currently retain a portion of campus enrollment growth dollars in the OVPCC to reinvest in priority initiatives for the benefit of all of the Commonwealth Campuses. **The Core Council recommends that you use and, wherever possible, leverage these funds with other key offices of the University to advance Commonwealth Campus strategic priorities.**

Please report back to Core Council the actions that have been or will be taken in response to these recommendations by November 1, 2011.

cc: Core Council
Craig Weidemann