



University of Pittsburgh

JUL 27 2010

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

801 Cathedral of Learning
4200 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-4223
Fax: 412-383-9640
E-mail: jvmaher@pitt.edu

James V. Maher
Provost
Senior Vice Chancellor

July 26, 2010

Dr. Ronald L. Larsen
Dean
School of Information Sciences
514 IS Building

Dear Ron:

I have deeply appreciated your assistance as we navigated our difficult budget and planning challenges together during my years as Provost. I know that you and your colleagues on the Council of Deans are aware that in order to continue to advance our goals we must make very judicious use of our limited resources. I know the decisions you have made in years past, and the ones you will be faced with in the years ahead, are not easy ones. And yet you have established a record of addressing those decisions with care and attention, and I thank you.

Your plan is by now rather well formulated, and our main challenge is to implement it as best we can and with whatever mid-course corrections your annual review of the external scene and your own prior year's experience would suggest. I know that the senior staff of the Provost's Office is committed to working with you to do all that we can to keep your plan on track despite the ongoing financial situation faced by the entire country. In prior years I wrote to you in July to give you a detailed response to your plan along with a commitment to work with you to achieve various goals of your plan during the year to come. Because I will be stepping down as provost on August 15, I will provide you with a more general statement of my assessment of your latest planning submission, and I will leave any further or more detailed discussion of the FY11 implementation of your plan to your next meeting with my successor.

Again this year, most schools made effective use of the templates and stayed on target in aligning goals and priorities with broader University goals as well as the units' own focused areas of excellence. I appreciate the added effort in this year's School of Information Science plan to learn what can be learned via benchmarking and to use what is learned to move toward more effective implementation of the plan. I applaud your efforts of the past year to advance the School toward our agreed-upon goals, and I was delighted to see that the School's Board of Visitors also applauded your efforts. Please be vigilant to keep moving toward the goals of your plan at whatever pace is permitted by the constraints that will be imposed by the external economy.

Dr. Ronald L. Larsen
Page two:
July 26, 2010

During the past year we have struggled with decisions about faculty searches, wanting to take advantage of real hiring opportunities occasioned by the greater stringency felt by some more endowment driven universities while simultaneously needing to preserve budgetary flexibility to deal with the real potential for further deterioration of the national economy. The Commonwealth budget has now been passed and includes an appropriation for the University that is basically the same as last year, leading our Board of Trustees to approve a budget for the University that is very much in line with the assessment I gave you at the last meeting of the Council of Deans. You should structure your request for approval of faculty searches with the viewpoint that I provided you at that last meeting of the Council of Deans; namely that we must regard last year's 5% reduction in base budget as permanent, but within that constraint, we should hire to fill faculty vacancies during what should again be a very favorable year for recruiting very high quality faculty. As during the past year, I deeply believe that we can draw comfort again this year in realizing that our more strategic approach, learned over the past fifteen years, is strong enough that we are positioned to emerge from the recession in an even more elevated position among the nation's best universities.

As has been our practice, I enclose the analysis of the School's plan that was formulated by the Provost Area Planning and Budgeting Committee. That committee works very diligently and conscientiously to provide their advice, and so I find it very interesting to receive that advice from such an independent and respected source.

I deeply appreciate your efforts to advance the ambitious agenda of the School of Information Sciences and of the University. Thank you for all that you have done during my years as Provost.

Sincerely,



James V. Maher

Enclosure