April 27, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

UA’s proposed School of Veterinary Medicine is not a CALS initiative, but is within the sphere of interest for many in CALS. UA’s appeal of the Council on Education’s (COE) denial of a Letter of Reasonable Assurance was not upheld by the COE. The COE formally communicated this decision to the UA on April 26, 2017. The President, Provost and I, and our many supportive stakeholders, remain committed to achieving a Letter of Reasonable Assurance for UA’s proposed veterinary medical school.

I want to share the steps that have already been taken to ensure that the UA’s resubmission meets or exceeds the required standards for a Letter of Reasonable Assurance.

UA’s appeal hinged on five standards that the AVMA determined had not been met: veterinary research, finance, faculty, students and clinical resources. We succeeded in demonstrating that the UA plan met the requirements for research. Following some additional revisions and organizational steps to clearly establish the veterinary medical school as an independent academic endeavor and address remaining COE issues, the UA will reapply for the Letter of Reasonable Assurance in June.

In the modern era, six programs have applied for a Letter of Reasonable Assurance; four have been in a similar position to UA. The UA team is now working with the experienced outside consultant who has a positive track record in helping three universities achieve accreditation since 2011.

The Provost intends to recruit an established academic veterinarian-scientist to serve as interim dean of the vet school. A new interim dean will lead the effort assisted by our consultant while the UA conducts a search for a permanent dean. I will continue in my role as vice president for agriculture, life and veterinary sciences, and Cooperative Extension. As far as the School of Veterinary Medicine is concerned, my role will be much more in the background. I will work as requested with the new interim dean on UA’s resubmission, focusing on facilitating win-win relationships between the two academic entities, the Experiment Station, Cooperative Extension and the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, as well as our stakeholders.

The UA continues to plan for responsible and appropriate use of the state funding it received for the Oro Valley facility last year.
Achieving accreditation is a process essential to our commitment to provide a superior school of the highest quality that meets the needs of Arizona, its people and the future of veterinary medicine. UA fully intends to work with the COE to meet or exceed all of their standards and launch a world-class veterinary medical school.

Regards,

[Signature]

Shane C. Burgess