20 September 2012

Dear Colleagues,

The Arts and Sciences Dean’s Office is considering several new initiatives involving College structure and hiring procedures. Our hope is that these initiatives will help us attain even higher levels of academic success, enabling us to build College strengths and breadth. Such efforts depend on the vision and leadership of our faculty.

We would like to invite you to serve as a member of a working group composed of a subset of College Chairs and Directors, termed the Arts and Sciences Leadership Committee. The group will provide recommendations to the Dean’s Office concerning important College issues, including timely input and advice on matters of strategic importance that arise throughout the year. We would like to invite you to serve on this committee, either for a three-year term or until your term as a Chair or Director expires, whichever is less.

We envision that the group will assist in two major ways during the current academic year. First, we would like to consider the possibility of developing a “school” structure within the College of Arts and Sciences. A discussion around this issue could be centered on several questions:

-What systems do peers employ?
-What advantages and disadvantages of a school structure could A&S anticipate?
-What are possible configurations of a school or schools within the College?
-Should interdisciplinary degree programs be included in schools?
-How would various school models relate to the recent “new college” proposal?

A number of additional questions will undoubtedly arise as discussions proceed. Ideally, the Council will have responses to the most important questions by the end of Fall Semester.

During Spring Semester, we ask that this group advise in a second critical area. Specifically, the Committee will review hiring proposals from A&S units, and make recommendations to the Dean’s Office for hires based on rigorous proposal evaluation. These proposals will serve the function of Category III requests. We will distribute a call for proposals early in Spring Semester, asking departments and programs to identify clear intellectual rationales for hiring. Units will also be asked to provide key metrics enabling the Committee to assess the impact and potential of hires in each department or program in terms of research, creative activities, teaching, and service.

We anticipate that the Committee’s main role in this process will begin after a mid-April deadline for proposal submissions, followed by Committee review and deliberation in early May. As may be evident, this entails an increase in the degree to which faculty leadership will play a role in evaluating position requests, so your collective knowledge and wisdom will be essential to instituting best practices for the College.
We would like to ask that the committee elect a chair during the initial meeting. In the meantime, Professor Lewis Harvey has agreed to serve as acting chair until a chair can be elected. Our first meeting is scheduled for 9:00-10:30 a.m., Thursday, October 4, 2012 in the Old Main conference room. Our group should anticipate 2-3 full group meetings during Fall Semester. Similarly, 2-3 meetings during Spring Semester will probably be sufficient.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Leigh  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Professor, Department of Anthropology  
University of Colorado Boulder  

(Revised 4 October 2012)