



February 10, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Professor Clarence Pearson

FROM: Rachel M. Petty, PhD  
Interim Provost and VPAA

SUBJECT: Approved Faculty Senate Motions #1, #2, and #3 (01/14/2014)

I am in receipt of copies of three motions approved by the Faculty Senate on January 14, 2014. I wish to respond in writing to the actions requested by these motions, but I will also welcome the opportunity to schedule time at your next meeting to discuss and answer questions about the issues these resolutions address.

**Motion 1** requests that “the administration of the University of the District of Columbia give the Faculty Senate an opportunity to review the revised “Vision 2020 Plan” and future revisions to the Vision 2020 Plan and give the Senate adequate time to formulate its recommendations before submitting the Plan to the Board of Trustees. “ It is the administration’s position that the Faculty Senate and, in fact, the University and local community were afforded ample time and opportunities to provide input and comments regarding the plan prior to its submission to the Council on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

As early as last spring (2013), Provost Bain briefed the Senate and worked with Deans to craft an academic plan that was responsive to the Council’s May 2012 “right-sizing mandate.” Over the summer, faculty participated in workgroups that began the work that was the basis for Vision 2020. Also, Provost Bain and Interim Provost Petty crafted guiding principles for use with faculty in discussions about the impending program changes. Petty shared these with each school/college faculty in meetings on August 16-17. Subsequently, deans and department chairs lead faculty discussion that led to specific recommendations regarding program changes. These were incorporated into an academic plan that was transmitted to the Senate with a request that they provide preliminary recommendations prior to the Board of Trustees’ October Retreat (these comments were received October 9<sup>th</sup>). In the interim, Senate leadership and many members of the faculty participated in the Strategic Planning retreat that made recommendations regarding all aspects of the plan: academic program changes; career services expansion; athletic program changes; new international program initiatives; expansion of online learning, etc. The Senate provided a final written response to the academic plan on November 18<sup>th</sup>; their recommendations were a formal part of the report to the Board following that meeting. The University and local community were also afforded an opportunity to respond to the first draft of Vision 2020 at a series of public hearings conducted on the Main Campus, on the North Capital Street campus and at P R Harris, and several Senate members presented at these hearings. In addition to in-person testimony, written testimony was solicited. The testimony was codified, and, as a result of community input, the academic plan was revised and some programs slated for elimination were removed from the list. Other changes made to the plan after then were editorial in nature, including development of a shorter, public version and an implementation plan. (I wish to remind you that, although a draft plan has

been sent to Council, the Board has not formally voted to approve the plan. This will occur at the next meeting, planned for February 18, 2014.)

Vision2020 was precipitated not solely by a “demonstrated budget shortfall”—although this certainly existed both last year and in the current fiscal year—but by legislation enacted by the Council and by our regional accreditors’ concern that the University is attempting to do too much with its limited resources. Dr. Lyons has repeatedly discussed these issues with the University community. In the spirit of shared governance, he recently appointed a University Budget Committee that is charged with reviewing and making recommendations regarding the University Budget. Senate President Pearson is among the members of this committee. This should foster greater transparency and allay mistrust about fiscal issues.

Middle States Standard 4 indicates that, “Within any system of shared governance, each major constituency must carry out its separate but complementary roles and responsibilities. Each must contribute to an appropriate degree so that decision-makers and goal setters consider information from all relevant constituencies. While reflecting institutional mission, perspective and culture, collegial governance structures should acknowledge also the need for timely decision-making.” I respectfully submit that Vision 2020 has been thoroughly vetted and that principles of shared governance were respected throughout the process, and it is now time for us to move forward.

**Motion 2** makes the similar recommendation that the University, adhering to MSCHE Substantive Change request guidelines, provide the Faculty Senate an opportunity to review the revised Vision 2020 Plan and any subsequent revision....” Review of MSCHE Substantive Change policy/procedure and consultation with staff confirms that there is nothing in Vision 2020 that requires a substantive change to the University’s Middle States profile (see attached profile and substantive change policy). The University’s mission is set in legislation. Vision 2020 updates and tweaks the Mission Statement, which has been done before and is allowable because the changes are not substantive (as they do not impact our core mission). Furthermore, schools adjust their complement of offerings constantly—but as long as what remains is consistent with the Carnegie classification for which they are approved, the change is not substantive. The types of changes that would be substantive are if we began to offer doctoral degrees (as we would no longer be a small, comprehensive Masters institution) or if we became a private institution. We have already requested and been granted approval to offer online programs (see profile), so that is within our profile, and expansion is not a substantive change. **Nothing else that is proposed in Vision 2020 equates to a substantive change.**

**Motion 3** directs that “the university administration, as a protocol in the system and in the spirit of shared governance, selects a chair (self-study) recommended by the Faculty Senate.” Faculty are fully engaged in all of the self-study workgroups, and any member of the University community who is willing to participate in self-study can volunteer and will be utilized. However, the University has invested in training the individuals selected as co-chair; moreover, they have a proven track record with accrediting processes. We are committed to moving forward with them as long as they are effective.