

April 17, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to introduce CALS unit strategic planning Phase III. Up to now every unit has completed the 12-question "Phase I" and three question "Phase II" strategic thinking documents. "Phase III" is the strategic planning document itself. Although this document will be emailed to the unit heads, they are primarily facilitators in and of the process. It is essential that you are aware of the document, contribute to it, comment on the draft versions and be cognizant of the version that will be sent to my office. I also recommend that appointed professionals and staff, as well as others who you think are important stakeholders, be aware of it and consulted. This is the unit's strategic plan and not the unit head's alone, and certainly not the Executive Council's strategic plan for the unit.

Like Phase I and II, the Phase III document is specific to the unit and is not intended for circulation outside of the department for general comment and then revision. However, if your unit's future involves another unit then it is extremely appropriate (or even essential) to work with that other unit as necessary. This document is also meant to be a "living document" that can and should be revised as and when needed as circumstances change. One of the aims of the document is to enable the CALS Executive Council to clearly and quickly follow what is needed in the department to realize its 2021 vision. Once completed, this document will, like all of our documents, be a public document.

The Phase III document's format is important to maintain. This format includes strategic goals and strategies for achieving these goals. Multiple strategic activities may be listed for each goal. Each goal will have a stated time period (based on financial years) in which it is to be achieved—some will be short-term, some mid-term and others long-term—and the strategies to achieve these goals will need identified actions. Clearly there will be inputs as well as measurable and achievable metrics. I understand that no single metric can quantify what we do and so we need to think broadly about what we use as objective data. Also, I suggest keeping in mind how others measure and perceive you. Pragmatically, we also need to identify how everything we do will be realistically financially sustainable within CALS. Essential throughout this process is to carefully consider what the implications for adopting goals and strategies will be (this includes the status quo).

The completed document will be due to the EC by May 18.

This document is the culmination of a lot of work by you. While it also complements the other strategic thinking/planning work that will be submitted to the Executive Council, it is also the only unit-specific strategy document. Circumstances have allowed us a unique opportunity to imagine—and then work to achieve—different, novel (even revolutionary) ways to do things and, at the same time, renew our commitment to our truly unique, critical and exceptional mission areas that are as relevant today as they were revolutionary in 1862, 1887 and 1914.

Best wishes,


Shane