

February 18, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

CALS is not simply just a microcosm of the university as a whole. While in many ways we are similar to other colleges, we also have some different faculty structures, some different mandates, a statewide “campus”, a unique funding structure from the state and federal governments, a very specific alumni and philanthropic base, tight connections to a diverse set of industries and our own very strong and important cultures and traditions.

Structure defines function and I want to very briefly reiterate how I see our CALS governance structure. First, and above all, I believe our structures should exist to serve equally our stakeholders and you, the faculty and staff, who deliver daily our three academic mission areas of extension, instruction and research.

Our governance structure has three independent components to advise me directly. These must work equitably together for us to be successful, i.e. they must be interdependent. This is reminiscent of our federal government but I hope we can be more functionally successful than what we have experienced recently in DC. We need to take advantage of our shared wisdom but guard against succumbing to our own version of the tragedy of the commons. Regardless, and not in any particular order, these three interdependent CALS governance structures are:

1. Four appointed associate deans that comprise CALS’ Executive Council (EC);
2. Appointed unit heads (school directors, department heads and county directors);
3. Faculty shared governance.

Responsible for delivering on CALS’ three academic mission areas and business functions at the college-level, the EC advises me on managing college-level resources and directions. The associate deans also have direct line management responsibilities in their respective areas for personnel and their budgets. Of course they also need to respect shared governance within these areas.

Unit heads have delegated authority, accountability and responsibility for unit-level mission delivery. This includes, amongst other things, budget management and faculty duty assignments. Again this must be done within each unit’s unique structure and shared governance practices.

Central shared governance is absolutely critical to our college function and it must be autonomous and independent of the appointed administrative structures. It must be of and for the faculty. Of course each individual unit has its own shared governance processes but, at the college level, shared governance is manifested by the Faculty Consultative Group (FCG). I want to emphasize the fact that the FCG receives no mandates or dictates from the dean or Executive Council; it does not exist to “rubber stamp” Executive Council plans or schemes. However, it is very appropriate for the FCG to take on hard issues on behalf of the college after consultation with the dean. This is an extremely wide ranging responsibility and an important one. One recent example is the arduous work done by the FCG to develop initial recommendations for CALS to be most efficient, effective and innovative in and for today’s world.

Shared governance has been evolving in US universities for over half a century; it will continue to evolve nationally and here in CALS. CALS has some excellent shared governance leadership in FCG chairs Drs. Wanda Howell and Joel Cuello. I strongly encourage you to work with Drs. Howell and Cuello so that

CALS shared governance functions in a way that represents you. I know that both Drs. Howell and Cuello are strong proponents of ensuring that all faculty voices in CALS are heard. The EC, unit heads and I fully agree.

Ultimately, the Board of Regents, President Hart and Provost Comrie expect that when I make decisions, I fully consider all consultative input provided by CALS' three governance mechanisms appropriately. They expect me to take responsibility for the decisions I make on behalf of the college. Accordingly, I have both expectations and confidence that each of these three governance groups will provide their best and most robust input, and do so fairly and objectively, so that we can together rise to overcome the significant and real challenges we face today.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S".

Shane