

Dear Colleagues,

We've built incredible momentum in the last several years under the leadership of President Capilouto and thanks to your dedication and outstanding work.

We are educating and retaining more students than at any time in our 150-year history. We have the second highest graduation rates in our history, and student quality is at unprecedented levels even as we have significantly grown enrollment. We are more diverse than ever before, and we've maintained our commitment to access and affordability by slowing the rate of tuition increases and expanding aid and scholarships.

Our progress is a source of pride. But now we must take the next step.

The Strategic Plan charts an ambitious course to become one of the country's leading public, residential research universities. It envisions retention rates of 90 percent; graduation rates at 70 percent; and a significant closure of the gap in retention and graduation rates that exist for underrepresented student populations.

To reach these goals, we must think and act differently. And we must make dramatic change now.

We must – and we will -- create an organization that allocates every available resource toward directly supporting enhanced student success and academic excellence through innovative teaching and learning, and enrichment experiences.

Today, we have too many islands of effort, where instead we need a seamless and integrated organizational structure among all our units in support of students and their success. Over the next several months, we will:

--Take critical services in what is today Undergraduate Education and merge them into the colleges and Student Affairs, where they can more directly support student success

--Blend the services of Student Affairs directly into academic programming

--Invest more in advising and direct student support, such as counseling, by eliminating administrative bureaucracy and providing more professional development and career advancement opportunities for advisors.

As part of this process, many positions will change their scope and responsibility; some will be eliminated, some will shift, and some will be added. The goal of every move is to increase the number of personnel directly working with and supporting students, while removing administrative layers that inadvertently serve as an impediment to a more integrated and seamless structure.

In short, the result over the next several months will be fewer administrative roles and more front-line positions directly devoted to supporting students. We know why our students succeed and why they don't:

- Academic success
- Financial capability
- Wellness
- Belonging/community

Knowing this, we are committed to investing more in each of these areas. This refocus is part of that commitment.

For example, we are now advertising for eight additional counseling positions, essentially doubling the capacity we have there currently to support the health and well-being of our students.

That will be in addition to the more than \$5 million spent in recent years at the direction of President Capilouto and the Board of Trustees on safety measures, including more police, counselors, and technology (such as cameras, locks, and lighting).

The goal is to better function as a seamless team, rather than continuing to try to make progress as silos or islands of effort.

Making swift and dramatic progress will require a more seamless and integrated approach to our efforts.

Our Strategic Plan will act as a beacon, guiding us through this important process. This process of refocus will take several months. I know that can create some sense of uncertainty, but working together, I'm confident we can create an organization focused intently on what matters most – our students.

As we move forward, I ask for your patience and continued counsel. I pledge in return that we will communicate openly and transparently about how we will move forward. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the head of your individual unit.

Regards,

Timothy S. Tracy
Provost