DATE: March 28, 2013

FROM: Robert Pangborn, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost
      Brent Yarnal, Chair Elect, University Faculty Senate

TO:  Mark Brennan  Jonna Kulikowich  Keith Shapiro
     Caroline Eckhardt  Andrew Lau  Jane Sutton
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     Krishna Jayakar  Aldo Morales  Careen Yarnal
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SUBJECT: General Education Planning & Oversight Task Force

During the past year, a small group of faculty and administrators engaged in a conversation on general education. Included was discussion on observations drawn from a survey of the general education landscape in the U.S., the program currently in place at Penn State, and principles and challenges to be considered in making changes in the program. The group’s report was presented to the University Faculty Senate on December 4, 2012, and the Senate leadership is now prepared to resume the process of revisiting and potentially revising general education. In partnership with the Interim Provost and Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education, we will take the next step to form a task force to plan and oversee this process.

The General Education Planning and Oversight Task Force will be charged with:

- Developing the process for revisiting and revising general education
- Creating and managing a timeline with milestones for developing and implementing the process
- Determining subcommittees to be charged with addressing various components of the process
- Identifying the many stakeholders in general education and insuring their consultation
- Providing ongoing oversight of the process, including oversight of the subcommittees

The task force will be convened prior to the end of the spring semester 2013 and will meet as possible during the summer, aiming to finish the first two charges—developing the process and creating a timeline—in time to populate and charge the subcommittees at the beginning of fall semester 2013. The general education revision process is projected to take at least two academic years, thus requiring an ongoing commitment by task force members.
All task force members will have a deep understanding of undergraduate education and general education. The task force will consist of approximately 18 members, with two administrators from Old Main, five unit administrators, and 10 faculty members drawn from many of the University’s units. A majority of the task force members will have Senate ties.

Although the Senate leadership recognizes the many responsibilities you carry, we nonetheless hope you will agree to serve on the task force. Your experience and commitment will be an essential contribution to the success of general education revision.

Please respond to us at your earliest convenience. Thank you for considering our request.