May 7, 2014

To: The Campus Community

We are in the homestretch of the 2013-14 Academic Year. Commencement is just around the corner. Students are wrapping up assignments and taking tests, faculty members are grading said assignments and tests, staff members are closing the year’s student-related business and beginning to focus on what needs to be done over the summer.

And then there are committees... many committees, of all types and at all levels, each doing its best to complete its assignments in the most efficient, effective, and transparent way. My thanks to everyone who participates in what to outsiders may seem cumbersome and inefficient but, in our world, is a significant piece of process, inclusiveness, and community-building. Your hard work matters.

There are a number of committees that I need to thank in particular, either because they make their recommendations directly to me or because they have taken on issues that I have asked them to examine. The University Budget Advisory Committee has worked very hard this year to develop a culture of transparency, consultation, and university-wide perspective regarding revenue and resource allocation. Others have put significant effort into the same conversation. I am especially grateful to the Faculty Budget Advisory Committee, ASI, and members of the staff for their budget priority recommendations and presentations during UBAC’s recent open forum.

The Business Continuity Committee has engaged the entire campus in discussions of how best to prepare for the after-effects of a serious regional or campus-specific emergency. The Enrollment Management Committee helped us through serious challenges in admissions and course load demand this year. The Diversity and Affirmative Action Committee continues moving us forward in addressing
dimensions of diversity of all kinds. The Committee on Cross-Divisional Collaboration similarly has worked hard this year to change the culture of the conduct of everyday business on campus. The Ad Hoc Committee on External Public Art has been launched and seeks to move the matter of externally-placed art to a new level on our campus.

We have been striving this year to address health as a campus community issue in the belief that we need to look out for each other. VPs Shimek and Espinoza have been working with others to create a well-grounded, proactive, well-informed approach to health matters. They will soon bring before us a proposal for a campus community health committee. (In a related vein, I very much appreciate the restructuring of and very positive contributions of the Student Health Advisory Committee this year.)

Finally, I have asked the campus community to join me in placing issues of public safety and risk management (including information security) under the larger health umbrella since, ultimately, they reduce to a commitment to protect and assist all members of our community. Slowly and deliberately (we cannot tackle every issue at once), we will work our way through the many safety and risk challenges that we face. I have asked Provost Strong and VP Shimek now to focus faculty and staff attention upon services provided to minors (e.g., camps, private lessons) on our campus. Foremost, we wish to state sincerely and definitively that the University is proactive in looking out for the welfare of the most vulnerable among us.

Again, thank you all for the effort that you devote to committee work on this campus. I am grateful too for your attention to the health and welfare of the members of our campus community.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Sheley
President