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January 23, 2012

Dr. Paul Vos  
Chair, Department of Biostatistics  
East Carolina University

Dear Dr. Vos,

I've read your letter of January 17, 2012 very carefully. You (and your colleagues) have expressed a number of important concerns about our program prioritization process and the work of the PPC. We all want to establish the best possible plan for coping with this difficult budget situation and the specter of budget cuts that will come in the future. So, first and foremost, thank you for investing time and expertise in this important process. As noted by the committee and amplified here, the recommendations and our implementation can only be as strong as the positive engagement of the entire ECU community.

As noted in the report, your earlier engagement in the process has benefited the final report in significant ways. There is no doubt in my mind, that being new to such a process, ECU can and will improve upon this initial attempt. This type of process must endure as we move forward and I am very thankful that you have volunteered to assist with any future efforts. Your unit's collective expertise can only improve upon the analytic phase of this type of work. We have not finalized the institutionalization of this process but as we give that some additional thought, I can assure that your sense of volunteerism and your expertise will be incorporated.

As noted in your letter, there is special concern for the use of statistical modeling. I have queried the committee on this concern and am confident that these judges (PPC members) are not misled by inappropriate methods. For example, the regression analyses that you refer to were only used in the assessment of productivity (instructional and scholarly). In reading the *Self-Study* and in the feedback that I have witnessed, the assessment of productivity is rarely at issue. In contrast there has been much more concern for the measurement, analysis, and assessment of quality and centrality. No regression analyses were employed to assess quality or centrality. In addition, as clearly illustrated in the report, qualitative evaluation of a very large and diverse volume of narratives and testimonies from individuals, units, colleges, and external constituencies have played key roles in forming the recommendations provided to me by the PPC. Given the breadth and depth of these varied analyses, I must conclude that the Committee's reliance on statistical modeling to arrive at recommendations was appropriate in

the context of the overall report. Finally, I have read the section in the final report that deals with qualifications and limitations of the committee's work and I am quite satisfied that they were keenly sensitive to the difficulties inherent to the complexity of the task.

I can assure you that I will remain sensitive to all of these concerns as we move forward. I reiterate to you and your colleagues that I very much appreciate your emphasis on the limitations of the quantitative analyses and I am even more pleased that you and your colleagues stand ready to assist in the future.

Sincerely,



Steve Ballard  
Chancellor

cc: Marianna Walker, Chair of the Faculty  
Mark Sprague, Vice Chair of the Faculty  
Hunt McKinnon, Secretary of the Faculty  
Brenda Killingsworth, Parliamentarian  
Phyllis Horns, Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences  
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