DATE: March 23, 2017

FROM: Eric J. Barron

TO: James A. Strauss

Thank you for your advisory/consultative report, Disciplinary Communities Revisited, which was passed by the University Faculty Senate on January 24, 2017. The One University concept is the hallmark of Penn State, and those practices or processes that promote and sustain university-wide collaboration are deserving of consideration.

The recently reorganized Office of Planning and Assessment (OPA), under the purview of the Provost, in particular, has been an effective vehicle for addressing a number of the curriculum concerns the report raises. OPA’s Department of Learning Assessment has been facilitating timely dialogue among disciplinary faculty who share curricula to build consensus on learning goals and outcomes in response to recommendations from our Middle States accreditation review. It is my expectation that these kinds of “communities” become sustained practices across academic units to promote opportunities for faculty to engage in matters of curriculum integrity. Here I would look to the University Faculty Senate for its partnership to complement these practices.

These advances made recently I believe satisfy the intent of the recommendations in this report. I am open to continuing the discussion about how these efforts might be complemented with Senate efforts, but am reluctant to accept recommendations that duplicate existing structures.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this item.

cc: Blannie E. Bowen
    Daniel R. Hagen
    Madlyn L. Hanes
    Nicholas P. Jones
    Robert N. Pangborn