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From: bulkmail.noreply@artsci.utoronto.ca
[mailto:bulkmail.noreply@artsci.utoronto.ca] On Behalf Of A&S Office of the Dean
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 3:20 PM
To: luste@physics.utoronto.ca
Subject: FW: Message from the Provost re the FAS Plan

The Provost has requested that this message be widely distributed within the Faculty. We apologize if you are receiving this message twice.

From: Provost
Sent: October 20, 2010 2:08 PM
Subject: Message from the Provost re the FAS Plan

Please distribute this message within your unit.

Dear Arts and Science Faculty Members,

I am writing you today to try to set to rest some continuing concerns about the Arts and Science Plan. Some of you will know my view, as I have been meeting with you as individuals and groups since the summer. However, I think it important that it gets wider distribution. This does not mean that I will curtail my visits to departments for open discussions about these and other matters.

As you all know, publicly-supported universities around the world are in precarious financial positions. The bottom line is that most governments are in serious deficit and universities are feeling the consequences of reduced public funding. I know that you will have been following the distressing news in the UK over the last week where the government is proposing to reduce its funding for university teaching by 80%; and we know that many of our sister institutions in the US are already struggling with deep budget cuts.

The University of Toronto is of course not immune to what is happening in the world's economy. I very much appreciate the hard work done by countless faculty members to sustain the University's momentum and reputation in these challenging times. For its part, your administration, in both Simcoe Hall and your Dean's office, is working day and night to help ensure that we get through this difficult time with our educational and scholarly mission intact and thriving. (Lest you think that we have somehow protected ourselves from the financial realities, let me assure you that in my immediate office alone, I am down three people from the already-lean office of my predecessor.)

The Faculty of Arts and Science has been under some of the most severe financial pressure at this University, for a complex web of reasons and with a constantly and inevitably shifting set of parameters. Its structural deficit in 09-10 was in excess of \$22 million a year and its accumulated deficit threatens to approach \$70m. I have been working with your Dean to tackle this deficit on a number of fronts, including an increased re-allocation of the University Fund to the Faculty over the last two years and other influxes of monies. But, as you can appreciate, these re-allocations

must proceed incrementally as revenues flow in --- a sudden and dramatic reallocation would imperil other faculties.

The budgetary issue in Arts and Science is real and pressing. My understanding is that there was broad support within the faculty for selective, rather than across-the-board budget cuts. Your Dean and his Strategic Planning Committee have been engaged in a local planning exercise over the past year. They have brought to you a plan that has attracted much attention. My office has received an unprecedented number of communications, both in support of and in opposition to various aspects of the plan. Some of the concrete recommendations, particularly those focusing on structural changes, have been highly controversial and have clearly created significant stress for many faculty, staff and students.

As I have said on numerous occasions, there were no doubt flaws in the way the Strategic Planning Committee released and justified these concrete recommendations. At this point, however, there is little to be gained from ongoing reproaches. Your Dean has heard your concerns; he has been working on adjustments for units which seek amendments to re-structuring proposals; and he has engaged in an open process of serious consultation with the community as a whole (in Town Halls) and with individual units. I remain optimistic that positive alternative plans can be advanced for all the contentious proposals and that resolutions between the affected units and the Faculty can be reached by the end of this term.

Most faculty and students in the units implicated in those recommendations have responded creatively and with a strong sense that all involved want what is best for their discipline, for the students and the scholars who work within it, and for the Faculty of Arts & Science in general. I urge those with a particular interest in the recommendations to work together and with the Dean on the alternative proposals currently being discussed. This is a time for pulling together, not for divisiveness; and I trust that you, like me, want nothing more at this stage than to prevent reputational damage to our fine Faculty and see it unify and successfully work its way through the current budgetary and planning difficulties.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Misak
Vice-President and Provost