Date: April 13, 2012

To: Dr. George Hynd, Provost and Executive Vice-President of Academic Affairs

Cc: Dr. Bev Diamond, Associate Provost of Academic Affairs

From: Dr. Martin Perlmutter, Chair, Faculty Welfare Committee

Subject: Recommendations to Revise Merit and Annual Review Procedures for Faculty, Chairs, and Deans

Please find attached a summary of faculty concerns relating to the current organization of the College of Charleston’s annual and merit review procedures. In considering these concerns and after conducting preliminary research on our peer institutions’ merit and annual review procedures, the Faculty Welfare Committee offers a number of recommendations for addressing these concerns. Clearly, these recommendations represent a starting point in a larger discussion of how to best document and evaluate faculty performance in teaching, research and service. It is the Committee’s hope that these recommendations will spur changes to the current system that address faculty concerns while maintaining the core function of the current annual and merit review system.

[Signatures]

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The State of South Carolina requires that each state employee be evaluated on an annual basis (SECTION 8-17-380. Grievance and performance appraisal procedure for academic employees). This law has resulted in a range of faculty concerns relating to the current system in place at the college for evaluation of faculty, department chairs, Deans and other academic administrators (e.g., Associate Provosts, Associate Deans, and Program Directors). These concerns emerged in the Faculty Welfare Committee’s surveys of faculty in the fall of 2011 and, as a result, we collected various sources of data in the spring of 2012. These data serve as the foundation for a number of recommendations for changing, clarifying and simplifying the college’s procedures for annual and merit reviews.

**Background Research on Annual and Merit Review of Faculty**

The Faculty Welfare Committee asked each department chair at the College of Charleston to submit a description or copy of the materials they solicit from faculty to complete the annual and merit reviews, to describe the assessment categories used in the review and to identify other procedures that typify the Department’s review process. In addition, the Faculty Welfare Committee conducted an online search of the College of Charleston’s peer institutions’ webpages to learn about our peers’ procedures for annual and merit reviews. In that search, we were only able to find information about the procedures used at The Citadel, UNC-Greensboro, the University of Northern Iowa, and Saint-Mary’s College in Maryland. Those peers’ procedures are described below:

- The Citadel appears to have a single annual evaluation that results in a merit rating of faculty performance categorized as “Does Not Meet,” “Meets,” “Exceeds,” or “Substantially Exceeds” performance expectations (this is not unlike the College of Charleston’s 4 category scheme for merit reviews).

- At UNC-Greensboro, “Annual reports [the information prepared by faculty each year] form the basis for Annual Reviews, which in turn typically provide the basis for salary increases, when available...Annual reports...are due from all faculty members each year, and some form of annual merit review is advisable in order to maintain a continuous record of faculty performance for purposes of promotion, tenure, or post-tenure review.”

- At the University of Northern Iowa, “Each academic Department Head shall annually evaluate the teaching, research/scholarly work/creative work, and professional service of each tenured, probationary, and term Faculty Member for the purpose of merit salary increases. A written report of the results of the evaluation shall be transmitted concurrently to the Dean and the Faculty Member and shall be placed in the evaluation file. The evidence used in this evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, material already contained in the evaluation file. Additional evidence used shall be identified and placed in the evaluation file. Merit increases will be awarded on the basis of each faculty member’s performance in the areas of teaching, research/scholarly work/creative work, and service weighted according to the faculty member’s work load. Faculty who are given a nonstandard 12 hour teaching load will be entitled to merit on the basis of teaching and service. Department Heads will
distribute evaluation standards to all members of the bargaining unit with an
explanation of how faculty will be evaluated for merit based on their workload with
respect to research/scholarly work/creative work, teaching, and service. Annual
evaluation letters to each faculty member will include a summary of that faculty
member’s assessment in the areas of teaching, research/scholarly work/creative
work, and service, along with an explanation of how merit was awarded in relation to
the Departmental evaluation standard.
• At Saint-Mary’s College in Maryland, it is unclear whether faculty members undergo
separate annual and merit reviews and what are the procedures in the review.
However, the following best summarizes the Saint-Mary’s approach:

“There will be an annual salary base increase for all faculty members. This includes
faculty on sabbatical and leave of absence. Evaluation Merit will be granted to faculty
members during times when they have completed one of the College’s major
evaluation reviews [e.g., Three-year review, tenure review, promotion to associate
professor, promotion to professor, and five-year post-tenure reviews]. The purpose of
evaluation Merit is to consider the long-term accomplishments of each faculty
member and recognize the significance of those accomplishments in terms of the
value they add to the College.”

Current Concerns at the College of Charleston and Associated Recommendations

Below is a summary of concerns that have been expressed to members of the Faculty Welfare
Committee through formal (e.g., the first Faculty Welfare survey done in August of 2011) and
informal means (e.g., conversations with colleagues in the Committee members’ home
Departments). Recommendations are proposed to address each concern or set of concerns.

1. Some department chairs have expressed concern about the inclusion of annual reviews in
Tenure and Promotion packets, suggesting that its inclusion in the packet restrains chairs’
desire to provide formative guidance to junior and tenured faculty out of fear that the chair’s
comments or suggestions in the annual review will be taken out of context or misinterpreted
in higher levels of review.

RECOMMENDATION #1: Academic Affairs will change the Faculty Administration
Manual by excluding annual reviews as a required component of the Executive Binder for
Third-Year Review, Tenure and Promotion Review and Post-Tenure Reviews.

2. A. Some faculty are confused about the difference between the merit and annual reviews and
the criteria used to determine how one is evaluated and assessed (i.e., classified or
categorized) for each review.

B. Faculty generally express concern about the time it takes them to prepare materials for
their chairs to complete the annual and merit reviews.
C. Chairs generally express concern about the amount of time it takes to complete the annual reviews which, in some departments, involves a lengthy narrative or letter for each faculty member assessing her/his performance in the three areas of teaching, research and service. The merit review form does not require considerable commentary by the chair, but the latter must still assess each faculty member’s record of performance over the last three years. The time that chairs spend on annual and merit reviews varies depending on the number of faculty in a department and the procedures used by the chair, but it is not unusual for chairs to spend 2-3 hours on each faculty member’s annual and merit review—this results in well over 40 hours of a chair’s time spent on these reviews in a department with 20 faculty.

**RECOMMENDATION #2a:** Combine the annual and merit review into a single “Annual Merit Review” in which the chair evaluates each faculty members’ performance in teaching, research and service over the last three calendar years. A single Annual Merit Review form—similar to the current merit review form currently used across Schools—will include a comments box for each of the three areas of evaluation in which chairs can provide brief comments on each faculty member’s performance during the three years under review. The current time table for annual reviews may need to be revised accordingly.

**RECOMMENDATION #2b:** In addition to the “Annual Merit Review,” tenure-track faculty will continue to receive a substantive annual review with the intent of the review being to provide formative guidance to junior faculty to facilitate their progress toward tenure and promotion. Tenured faculty can also request that their chair complete a formative annual review evaluating their performance in teaching, research and service during the previous calendar year. If Recommendation #1 is adopted, these formative annual reviews will not be included in T&P packets and will serve solely as formative documents between the faculty member, the chair and/or the faculty member’s departmental colleagues who might assist the chair in assessing the faculty member requesting the in-depth formative review.

**ALTERNATIVE ADDITION TO RECOMMENDATION #2b:** If eliminating detailed and substantive annual reviews of tenured faculty is deemed unacceptable, we recommend staggering substantive detailed reviews in the third year after the most recent major review (e.g., Tenure and Promotion Review or Post-Tenure Review).

3. There are discrepancies across Schools in the assessment categories used to evaluate faculty for the annual reviews. For example, some Schools use the merit review categories—Exceptional Professional Competence, High Professional Competence, Professional Competence and Unsatisfactory—for the annual review while other schools use Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory (or some variation on that theme).
RECOMMENDATION #3: If the college continues to require that Chairs complete separate annual and merit reviews for all faculty, we recommend that Academic Affairs establish a single set of assessment categories for both reviews to be used by all Schools and Departments. We recommend extending the use of current merit review categories for the annual review (e.g., annual review assessments would use the categories of Exceptional Professional Competence, High Professional Competence, Professional Competence and Unsatisfactory).

4. Faculty members generally express concern about the quantity of materials they are required to submit for these reviews. A survey of department chairs conducted by the Faculty Welfare Committee found there to be significant variation among Schools and among departments within the same School in terms of the materials faculty are required to submit for these reviews. Current FAM guidelines contribute to this problem by requiring that faculty submit the following items for annual and merit reviews:
   - Minimum for the Annual Review
     - Current CV
     - 1-2 page narrative describing accomplishments in teaching, research and service over the last calendar year
     - Schools and Departments may require additional materials. “The Department Chair or Dean of Libraries will conduct the annual evaluation and will have access to additional information, including the faculty member’s
       - Previous annual evaluations and personal statements
       - Course evaluations
       - Information included in the Faculty Activity System.
   - Minimum for the Merit Review
     - 1-2 page personal narrative describing accomplishments in teaching, research and service over the last three calendar years

Some concerns stemming from the current FAM guidelines include the following:
   - It is redundant to require faculty to submit two 1-2 page narratives, covering overlapping time periods (i.e., the past calendar year), especially if chairs can assemble the faculty member’s annual review narrative for the last three years to constitute a 3 year narrative.
   - Academic Affairs has encouraged chairs to encourage faculty to keep their Faculty Activity System entries updated. Faculty do not generally use the FAS to generate their CVs and thus, without some incentive, faculty are apt to avoid FAS. To provide that incentive, some chairs require faculty to update their FAS entries in lieu of submitting a CV for annual and merit reviews.
   - The stipulation that Schools and departments “may require additional materials” has resulted in faculty in some departments across campus being asked to submit mini-
T&P packets (including printed copies of course evaluation summary sheets [which Chairs have access to electronically]).

Faculty and chairs also generally express frustration with the FAS, citing some “bugs” in how “works in progress” and other ongoing activities that do not have a definite publication date appear in reports generated by FAS. In addition, there is an interest among some faculty and Chairs to have a field in FAS in which faculty could enter their annual Goals in teaching, research and service.

**RECOMMENDATION #4a:** Academic Affairs will revise the current FAM guidelines for what materials faculty should submit to chairs. The goal will be to lessen the burden on faculty by limiting what chairs request from faculty for reviews and to make uniform across campus what materials faculty are asked to submit to their chairs.

**RECOMMENDATION #4b:** Academic Affairs will also continue working with chairs and faculty to enhance the functionality of the FAS to better meet the reporting needs of the college and to better facilitate the annual merit review process.

5. Faculty and chairs express concern about performing merit reviews when it is unclear whether there will be funds available for salary increases. Similarly, when there is a limited pool of money to fund raises (e.g., less than 2% of the overall salary pool), we end up making minor distinctions among meritorious faculty (i.e., any faculty member who is found to have exhibited Professional Competence or higher during the previous 3 years) or, as some faculty and Chairs would say, “robbing Peter to pay Paul” without significantly changing a faculty member’s base salary.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** When the amount of funding made available for salary adjustments is less than or equal to 2% of the overall faculty salary pool, equivalent salary adjustments will be made to all roster faculty who have received a merit rating of Professional Competence, High Professional Competence or Exceptional Professional Competence.

**Background Research on Annual Reviews of Department Chairs, Deans and Academic Administrators**

The Faculty Welfare Committee asked all College of Charleston Deans to provide a description of the process used to evaluate department chairs in their respective schools. Three of the six Deans provided the requested materials, with one additional Dean promising to provide the information once it was recorded and approved by the school’s academic council (that Dean had not yet provided this information at the time this proposal was finalized). In addition, the Faculty
Welfare Committee asked Academic Affairs to share the process used to evaluate Deans; the requested information has not yet been received.

The aforementioned information gathered on annual evaluation processes indicates the following:

- Annual evaluations for department chairs and program directors at the College of Charleston are scattered at best. Evaluations at this level primarily include asking department or program faculty to provide feedback on their department chair through either a developed survey instrument or a letter to the Dean. It is important to note that the majority of Deans do not complete an independent assessment as the supervisor of chairs but rather rely solely on the feedback provided by department faculty. Further, review of the provided materials revealed that the current evaluation system for department chairs lacks consistency, uniformity, and structure.

Current Concerns at the College of Charleston and Associated Recommendations

Below is a summary of the concerns that have been expressed to members of the Faculty Welfare Committee through formal (e.g., the first Faculty Welfare survey done in August of 2011) and informal means (e.g., conversations with colleagues in the Committee members’ home Departments). Recommendations are proposed to address each concern or set of concerns.

6. The faculty at the College of Charleston have shared a concern that administrators are not being evaluated on a consistent basis, if at all. The 2011 Faculty Welfare survey revealed strong faculty sentiment that the College needs to conduct evaluations of department chairs and Deans. To investigate these faculty concerns, the Faculty Welfare Committee reviewed the processes currently employed across campus for department chair and Dean annual evaluation. The materials suggest that although annual evaluation does take place in most Schools, it varies significantly between each School.

RECOMMENDATION #6a: We recommend Academic Affairs require a uniform, substantive annual review of department chairs and program directors at the College of Charleston. This review will serve as formative guidance in facilitating progress toward promotion, post-tenure review and/or continued administrative service. In addition, we suggest that the annual review of department chairs include evaluation in the areas of teaching, research, service as well as in the role as chair such that the reviews are aligned with the expectations of chairs communicated by Academic Affairs.

RECOMMENDATION #6b: We recommend Academic Affairs require a uniform, substantive annual review of Deans at the College of Charleston. This review will serve as formative guidance in facilitating progress toward post-tenure review and/or continued administrative service.
7. There are discrepancies across Schools in the processes used to evaluate department chairs for the annual review. For example, some Schools use voluntary, subjective letters from department faculty while other Schools survey faculty using objective, quantitative instruments. However, the School of Science and Math has adopted a process that combines an evaluation from the Dean as well as a survey of the faculty.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** As an extension of Recommendation #6a, we recommend Academic Affairs develop a single process for department chair annual review to be used by all Schools at the College of Charleston. The Faculty Welfare Committee suggests that this process mirror that of the School of Science and Math by including an evaluation from the Dean as well as feedback from departmental faculty.

8. Faculty also voiced a concern with the lack of transparency and accountability at the administrative levels of campus. These concerns include the feeling that “administration (chairs, deans, etc.) are not accountable for a lot of the decisions they make” and that “administration lack leadership skills necessary to get the job done”.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** In addition to the required annual review of department chairs and Deans, we recommend Academic Affairs use the annual evaluations of department chairs and Deans as guidance for leadership development. If the annual review reveals a weakness in leadership skill and ability, we suggest that Academic Affairs fund a program for development in administrative leadership that would support participation in leadership conferences and/or training in higher education administration.