February 12, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, Chancellor Subbaswamy has asked that I proceed with implementation of the divisional redesign. I am writing to you today to provide more details about this effort.

As we begin this process, I encourage all of you to review Linda Kuk’s report and her recommendations which are based on extensive feedback from throughout the division and the campus. Our reorganization process with Dr. Kuk represents the capstone of nearly a decade of incremental changes that have reshaped our work in a variety of ways. It is through gathering the fruits of these past efforts and the shared insights and concerns of staff, students, and faculty that Dr. Kuk proposed that SAACL move comprehensively to a new executive area model that is more collaborative and functionally focused. This approach emphasizes expanding the breadth of our work across cluster areas and reporting lines while exercising transparency in the way we do our work and achieve our outcomes.

Chancellor Subbaswamy has asked that we proceed with a new structure based on Model 3 Option 1 outlined in the Kuk Report. Embracing this model has three significant advantages for us: 1) it allows us to maximize our resources to provide our students with excellent programs and services; 2) as a functionally aligned area, we emerge with greater capacity to be a strong partner to other campus stakeholders; and 3) it situates SAACL more consistently with Chancellor Subbaswamy’s campus strategic plan. Attached to this email is an organizational chart that introduces the new cluster areas for Student Affairs and Campus Life. While the departments and programs within each cluster are not yet finalized, these clusters provide an overview of the general organizational structure and reporting lines for our area, we will also form “Interdepartmental Collaboratives” based on overlapping areas of function and responsibility, such crisis management, large scale event planning and student success. The cluster approach will allow us to clarify our roles and responsibilities within and across cohesive organizational themes while the Interdepartmental Collaboratives will ensure that we approach our work collaboratively and with a cross-functional emphasis. Although not currently pictured in the organization chart, the Interdepartmental Collaboratives are important in our work moving forward and I look forward to working with each of you to identify the initial collaboratives.
The Kuk recommendations also include centralizing administrative functions (or matrixes) that serve the entire division when it makes sense to do so. Functions to be explored include human resources, finance and budget, technology services, space management, assessment, and communications. Our sequence for reorganization focuses first on establishing clusters and secondly on centralizing functions. By focusing first on forming our clusters, we will be able to more precisely identify our day-to-day needs for service delivery. Our approach to centralization will be informed by the results of several campus planning efforts that are presently underway, including the Joint Task Force on Resource Allocation, the Buck Consultants review of UMass Amherst human resources, and the campus strategic plan. There are varying timelines for the outcomes of these efforts, however centralizing SACL functions for the purposes of efficiency and efficacy remains a priority.

Over the coming months, I will be asking all of you to work together to implement our redesign in collaboration with our Student Affairs Leaders and Directors (SALAD) group, who will be taking a leadership role as we move forward. I expect to finalize the composition of each cluster by the end of March and will be communicating this decision in early April. A group of representatives from each cluster will be invited to attend a half day retreat in mid-May to establish a mission, vision, and identify cluster-specific needs. Further information about our reorganization including a timeline and overview of the work ahead is outlined on the SACL website http://www.umass.edu/studentlife/about/sacl-organizational-review.

As we begin this process, I want to acknowledge that a decade of incremental changes has, at times, lent a sense of unsettling transience to new initiatives. I have been privileged to work alongside you as we have brought this work to culmination. The accomplishment has been fueled by your sustained, long-term, collective commitment and I am deeply grateful to have been part of this with you. As Chancellor Subbaswamy poises our great flagship campus to move successfully into the future, we can be sure that Student Affairs and Campus Life will move forward as a critical and valued piece of the larger whole.

I thank all of you for the professionalism and dedication that you demonstrate on a daily basis, and I look forward to working with you as we make Student Affairs and Campus Life an even stronger contributing member of our university.

Sincerely,

Enku Gelaye
Interim Vice Chancellor
Student Affairs and Campus Life