This is the proposal of the Reorganization Task Force which was convened and organized by the Chancellor on February 6. I want to thank the Chancellor for convening this Task Force and for the deliberation and the participation that he has structured. I also want to thank the members of the Task Force. There are about 20 of us. I want to thank Marilyn Blaustein and the Office of Institutional Research. They pulled together a lot of data and information for us.

This is a preliminary report. The recommendations that are in the executive summary are as follows: first, in the original proposal there are two mergers that are proposed. As a Task Force, we quickly determined that we needed to think of these mergers separately. The logics of the two are separate. Our first recommendation, then, was that those analyses had to be carried out separately. The second recommendation was that the integration of Life Sciences go forward. The third was a recommendation that we look seriously at organizing a College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). The fourth recommendation stated that a strong alternative to a CAS, at least for the time being, would be what we called a seven college model with a merger between Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE) and the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM). The Task Force also recommended autonomy for Humanities and Fine Arts (HFA) and Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS). This may or may not be a model that moves towards Arts and Sciences in the future. The fifth recommendation was to recommend against a merger of Humanities and Fine Arts and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Here is a little bit of information about our task and our timeline. We were convened on February 6. We met for the first time around February 13. Our due date for the preliminary report was March 6. We want to note that there is much data gathering, analysis and deliberation that still needs to be done. This analysis needs to be done not just by the Task Force but by our campus generally. We want to make clear that our charge was to consider four colleges only. We were not representative of any other part of the campus. Our charge was: “to provide advice about a proposal on college reorganization and to explore as well the possibility of a College of Arts and Sciences, or any other alternative organizational structure that it finds appropriate for the campus.” This is on the web along with a lot of other information.

This is the list of our members (referring to slides). The Task Force was composed of faculty chairs or directors. We had three at-large members who were recommended by the Faculty Senate. We had a very strong, representative, hardworking group. Our process was to gather input. We all interacted with our colleges. We set up a blog. I think that is an important record for our campus and hope that it will continue. We also benchmarked our school against others so that we could have a sense of how our own campus compares. A list of ten peer schools helped guide us in a benchmarking sense. This list was put together by Marilyn Blaustein, Bryan Harvey and others. These are schools that compare to UMass on various dimensions: size, research dollars. They were land-grant institutions with no medical or vet schools. There is also a Carnegie Research Universities classification list. We are a Carnegie Research University, classified as a very high research school. MedVet means that we do not have a medical school or veterinary school. There is a list of about 12 schools that fit those criteria.

Finally, there is the American Association of Universities (AAU) which is a membership association of excellent universities. Some were made members a long time ago. We might argue that they should
not be members now, but basically it is a very creditable list. There are 34 public universities on that list. There are about 35 privates. We looked at the publics. These gave us a way of looking at the rest of the country. We considered the alternatives a bit repetitious. They were: a College of Natural Sciences, a College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS), a College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) that would include NRE or departments to be named, and a seven college model, meaning that HFA and SBS would remain autonomous and NRE and NSM would merge. Finally, one of the options is no change at all.

We spent some time thinking through our criteria. This is an unranked and partial list. These are measurable efficiencies. We did not measure or try to estimate staff cuts, prices, budgets around staff. It was completely beyond our scope. When we were thinking of efficiencies we also thought in terms of coherence and reducing fragmentation. We also considered the costs of crossing boundaries on the campus. These are not costs that show up on budgets. These show up in terms of lost opportunities, lost time, lost productivity. They are hard to see on paper, but they are very real. One of our criteria was to demonstrate the responsiveness of the campus to this crisis. We are also thinking in terms of the long-run. As we come out of this budget crisis, there should be a campus organization that will allow us to take advantage of strategic opportunities. We do not want an efficient structure that contours the campus in a way that hurts us later on. Specifically, we are thinking through possibilities for new research and engagement opportunities, for new education and outreach opportunities and a myriad of other strengths and weaknesses. I just taught Charles Lindblom’s Incrementalism, successive limited comparisons. We did a lot of that kind of deliberation on the Task Force under conditions of multiple and competing constraints.

Again, let me talk about our recommendations and point to the integration of the Life Sciences. In the report, we quote at length from statements and letters that have been written by department and program heads from the units, particularly NRE and NSM, who would be affected. I just want to briefly consolidate those here to point to a statement about Life Sciences and the Environment that I commend to your reading. There is a second statement about the coherence between Life Sciences and the physical and computational sciences and mathematics. Bringing greater coherence to Life Sciences affects related departments and units in a variety of ways. This requires some careful thinking and analysis. We think that structure matters, and we do not think that researchers or research groups can simply be placed anywhere without affecting productivity, creativity and their ability to collaborate and produce good work.

Let me speak to the recommendation about Arts and Sciences. This may be something that is taken up at a later date, but let me try to convey some of the principles so you can understand our thinking. We talked about collaboration and what we started calling “integrative potential.” We fairly quickly began to apply this to other parts of the campus. We thought about coherence in education, particularly General Education, and the possibilities for improving undergraduate education. We deliberated about coherence across the disciplines. As you are reading in journals, this collaboration now extends very widely from the arts to the most advanced sciences and across to other schools as well. We want to be in a position to structure ourselves so that we can easily collaborate to take advantage of opportunities and to allow people to exercise their creativity.

At most universities, Colleges of Arts and Sciences are referred to as the heart of the campus or the intellectual core of the campus. Many of you came out of such colleges. They combined all of the disciplines under one roof and their related fields. It is the dominant form nationally. Except for one, all of the peer schools on our list use an Arts and Sciences model. The University of Maryland College Park, which is the exception, uses a decentralized model that looks like ours, but they have many more Schools and Colleges than we do. On the AAU list of 35 schools, 75 percent of them use a College of Arts and Sciences. We should not consider this model because other schools use it. But, we wanted to see what the landscape looks like so that we can analyze where we stand and generate meaningful alternatives.

Creating fluid boundaries might improve administrative processes, making them more coherent across a larger number of units. This would include an ease of de-layering, less paper work, less red
tape. We think that making boundaries more fluid might foster innovation and more research productivity. We think that making boundaries more fluid would be a catalyst for program collaboration and for energizing our undergraduate education.

Here is a quotation from a General Education Council memo from March 2: “The assumption behind General Education—and behind the idea of liberal education in general—is that our students will be encouraged to integrate the various dimensions of education … a curriculum that challenges disciplinary divisions, such as those between the ‘two cultures’ of science and non-science … we note that challenging questions in bioethics, cognitive science, evolutionary psychology of art, the poetics of physics … call upon knowledge and skills taught in various distinct department, schools and colleges.” It is this vision for coherence in liberal arts that would be helpful to our undergraduates. We can extend this to both coherence in research as well as coherence in administrative and management systems.

Colleges of Arts and Sciences come in two forms: a functional form, which I will show you in a few minutes, and a divisional form. On our peer list, these are the schools that have a functional form, and this is what the functional form looks like (referring to slides). We don't recommend this form, but it is not an unusual form and it may become increasingly prevalent. This is an example from Indiana Bloomington. There is an Arts and Sciences Dean. The Associate Deans, in this case, are functional. There is a Strategic Planning Dean, an Executive Associate Dean, an Associate Dean for Graduate Education, an Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and an Associate Dean for Research and various directors and staff underneath them. On their website, there are blocks for: the College of Arts and Humanities, the College of Social and Historical Studies, the College of Life Sciences, and the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences, but there is no dean or associate dean sitting on top of them. Many of us said it would be hard to imagine how they relate with their dean.

Three of the peer schools have a divisional form. Again, Maryland is the exception here. Here is an example from Rutgers. Here most of the deans sit on the top of their divisions. So there is a Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences, a Dean for Life Sciences and Vice President for Health Science Partnerships, an Executive Vice Dean, a Dean of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and a Dean of Humanities. They have other associate deans for business affairs, for personnel, for IT and for education. In most schools, the divisional deans are associate deans. At Rutgers, they are not. The associate deans would be appointed from within the college. They would not come from a national search. One way to get coherence across these divisional structures is by cross-cutting units. These are often informal committees, centers, institutes and advisory councils. We noted that although structure matters, leadership and the people who would be in those leadership roles also matters. In all, we think that more analysis should be done as we move forward.

There are a few limitations of CHASS. Going to this list of 34 public universities in the AAU, there are only two schools that have a CHASS model: the University of Texas Austin and the University of Minnesota. Both of these universities are twice the size of the University of Massachusetts. Both of them have psychology departments within them, and both of them are part of much more decentralized models. As a Task Force, we are very concerned about the potential dynamics of having a science college and a non-science college. We are concerned about the gap that would have to be bridged for various collaborations. We see much more cohesion in the Arts and Sciences model.

Finally, we began calling the process of reorganization a Progressive Transition Model. We came up with what we think are important guiding principles. The first is that much more analysis needs to be conducted and that we want to share data and findings widely across the campus so that they inform our deliberations. The deans and the faculty of the colleges need to work out the details. The core mission of research is very particular in our society because it involves the production of knowledge, and it is a very specialized kind of work. It has to be understood in that way. Mergers in universities are not like mergers in manufacturing firms or financial firms or other kinds of organizations because we do a very particular kind of work that combines creativity, specialized knowledge, research groups, social relationships, equipment, facilities, and these need to be carefully considered.
The planning for these transitions should include interim deans, acting deans, incoming deans, and outgoing deans. Otherwise, we have very unbalanced representation. We expect that there will be multiple budget cuts. We need a plan that allows us to do reorganization in line with a sequence of cuts. If we can think through that in a systematic way, we think we will be better off. We recognize the need for a timeline, and we are operating under terrible time constraints in a terrible economic situation. There are other functions and services on the campus. We looked at four colleges. There is much more to be examined. This was only three weeks of work. We need this work and much more. Alignment with a strategic plan will be important. There are many structures and functions around the campus at the Provost and Graduate School level. We should not only look for efficiencies but also ways to put ourselves in a position for excellence.