September 17, 2014

To: The University of Rhode Island Community

From: David M. Dooley, President

Subject: Evaluation of the performance of Provost DeHayes

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you very much for your participation in the evaluation of the work of Provost DeHayes at the University of Rhode Island. I especially appreciate the thorough and thoughtful analysis and report of the Faculty Senate’s Administrator Evaluation Committee for Provost DeHayes. All of us owe Professors David Byrd, Ginette Ferszt, Cheryl Foster, Richard McIntyre, and Sarina Rodrigues a substantial debt of gratitude. Although laborious and often challenging for those involved, I believe that reviews of the administration of URI are important to the vitality of our community and are a critically important element of a strong shared-governance culture. I have carefully reviewed the Evaluation Report of the Committee, including all the comments, and discussed its findings with them. I have also discussed the report with Provost DeHayes and shared this response with him, as well.

The report of the Administrator Evaluation Committee was based on a well-designed survey with an overall strong response rate. In his work related to the Academic Goals of URI, Resource Management, Personnel Development, and Communication Provost DeHayes generally received favorable reviews, with some exceptions, as noted below. Within each group that follows, more respondents from the ranks of tenure-track faculty, nontenure-track faculty, and administrators/staff/external representatives, assessed Provost DeHayes positively (compared to negatives) as providing “excellent leadership”. Further, positive responses outweighed negatives for each group with regard to having “confidence in the Provost’s ability to provide future leadership in this position.”

My own evaluation of Provost DeHayes’ performance is consistent with these findings. Provost DeHayes displays a deep understanding of the core academic mission of the University of Rhode Island, in teaching, research, and engagement. The interests and success of the university, and its students and faculty, are his highest priorities. He rejects the notion that higher education is essentially a business but believes strongly in the values of assessment and accountability. In addition, he has been highly effective as a member of the senior leadership team for URI and has represented the university very effectively in a variety of external settings.
Accordingly, I have renewed his contract through June 30, 2017, and I look forward to the continuation of his collaborative, energetic and innovative leadership.

Importantly, the surveys, together with the insights of the Administrator Evaluation Committee and my independent assessments, have identified some areas for growth and improvement in Provost DeHayes’ work on behalf of the university. Based on the survey, Provost DeHayes’ performance in areas related to consultation and collaboration with colleges, understanding their characteristic missions and traditions, and working with departments and faculty in the “non-STEM” disciplines was assessed more negatively than other areas. Additional concern was expressed with regard to how well Provost DeHayes receives and processes input and feedback.

Provost DeHayes and I have discussed these concerns, which both of us regard as, for the most part, constructive. I have emphasized that it is important to address both the perception, as well as the reality, represented in these critiques. As one important step in this process, Provost DeHayes will meet individually with the faculty of every department in the coming months. I have recommended that he do this on an ongoing, systematic basis. Provost DeHayes will also discuss and invite additional input and suggestions for improvement on these matters in his meetings with Deans and Department Chairs.

In the surveys, concerns were also raised with regard to the Provost’s impact on “morale” and the process and outcomes of resource allocation decisions involving the Provost. “Morale” is a highly idiosyncratic matter and may be profoundly influenced by multiple factors unrelated to the one being queried. It may also vary significantly over time. Resource allocation, in a research university as complex as the University of Rhode Island, is determined by several factors and multiple individuals. For example, the decisions of the Provost and a Dean or Deans may be readily conflated. In short, issues related to “morale” and resource allocation are more institutional in nature. For these reasons, I plan to discuss these issues with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Executive Committee of the AAUP.

Allow me to thank, once again, the Faculty Senate, the members of the Administrator Review Committee, and all those who participated in this important process.

With my best wishes,

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David M. Dooley