To: Program Review Team

From: Ronald L. Elsenbaumer  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: May 21, 2013

Re: Charge to the Program Review Team

Thank you for your participation in our program review process. I know you have busy schedules, and I appreciate the time you are dedicating to the evaluation of our undergraduate and the graduate programs.

The purpose of program review is to evaluate the status of each approved degree offering/departmental unit throughout the university. The Program Review team is charged with the responsibility of answering the questions: “How is this department doing?” and “What is the quality level of the degree programs offered?” and “How might the department and/or its programs be improved?” How is the program contributing to the University’s vision of attaining National Research University status? To answer these questions, a significant amount of information is required. In preparation for this review, each of you has had a chance to examine the self-study. The schedule that has been prepared for the days of the review is designed to provide you with information on the various elements that are critical to the operation of academic units. Issues that are of interest to the administration include:

1. Curriculum
   ° Consistent with academic philosophy of the discipline?
   ° Consistent with the needs and goals of the profession?
   ° Structure makes sense?
   ° Balance between depth and breadth?
   ° Appropriate distinction between graduate and undergraduate levels?
   ° Rigorous at both levels?
   ° Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes?
   ° Number of hours to degree in unit’s programs?
   ° Alignment of admission standards to enter a major and earn a degree with college admission standards to enter the university?

2. Faculty
   ° Quality of teaching?
   ° Scholarly productivity/research/funding?
   ° Service to the discipline?
   ° Student/Faculty ratio appropriate?
3. Students
   - Quality at both graduate and undergraduate levels?
   - Morale, attitude toward faculty/department?
   - Doctoral student retention, completion and attrition rates relative to disciplinary norms?
   - Masters and Doctoral student yearly graduation rates vs minimum thresholds?
   - Opportunities/placement?

4. Administrative structure
   - Appropriate for the unit?
   - Effective? Supportive?
   - Support staff numbers?
   - Facilities/laboratories?

The goal of this review is to identify areas where necessary improvements can be made leading to higher program quality. Program Review Teams often find deficiencies that can be ameliorated only by adding additional funding to the unit operating budget. You will likely identify some of these often but the more difficult problems to discern are those not associated with budget limitations. As a Program Review Team, please attempt to identify issues that may be addressed through budget modifications and those that are of a more fundamental nature. I also ask that you prioritize your recommendations so that we can more clearly attend to the most significant issues and concerns.

The University of Texas at Arlington’s roadmap for becoming a national research university is sketched out in Strategic Plan: Achieving Recognition as a National Research University 2010–2020 (ATTACHED), which emphasizes improving our undergraduate student retention and success rates, our doctoral programs, and our external research funding. As part of our effort to improve doctoral education on campus, we have been increasing doctoral student support significantly. In order to maximize the impact of this investment, we are particularly interested in assessing retention, attrition, and completion rates in our doctoral programs and how they compare to national disciplinary norms. As we move to invest more resources to support doctoral students, it is critical that we track and discuss trends in completion and retention so that we can optimize the impact of these investments. The program’s self-study contains reports on their doctoral student quality, retention, and completion and retention and compares these findings to data from similar programs in Texas and in the nation. I ask that you pay
especial attention to the quality of this doctoral program and review and comment on the program’s assessment of their doctoral retention and completion data and provide comments or recommendations so that we can begin a dialogue about appropriate responses to these data.

Finally, the operation of the academic units should relate directly to The University of Texas at Arlington’s efforts to become a national research university. We must be certain the programs offered by each unit are consistent with the strategic plan for attaining this goal described in the provided attachment, *Strategic Plan: Achieving Recognition as a National Research University 2010 – 2020*. If there are any inconsistencies in these matters, it is paramount that they be identified in the review process.

Again, let me express my appreciation to each of you for serving as a member of the Program Review Team. I look forward to reading your final report.