July 21, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO:       Donald Nieman, Dean  
           College of Arts & Sciences

FROM:     Louis I. Katzner  
           Acting Chair

SUBJECT: Program Review Committee Report

As you know, the department’s program review self-study report raised a number of resource issues that are not addressed in the committee’s report. Each of these impacts in a significant way the department’s ability to maintain the quality of its graduate program and strengthen its undergraduate program. Thus, although the department is committed to addressing fully the issues identified by the program review committee over the next several years, how it does this, and in some cases whether it is able to do this at all, depends upon how the College of Arts and Sciences and Graduate College plan to address the department’s resources needs. Thus, it would be inappropriate for the program review process to conclude without a common understanding of these needs and how they are going to be addressed. It is only in light of such a plan that the department’s future can be assured and we can figure out in detail how to best address the issues raised in the committee’s report.

Faculty Staffing

The self-study makes the case that the replacement of the three faculty positions vacant last fall (the Robins, Scherer and eminent scholar positions) is essential to maintaining the department’s national reputation within the discipline and carrying out the goals set down in the document. The self-study identifies the History of Modern Philosophy as the most pressing area of need and expresses concern about the fact that both Miller and Katzner are eligible to retire and, when they do, because their salary lines are not in the department, the department will face significant replacement issues that will need to be addressed. The report of the external consultants strongly urges that replacements for the vacant positions be authorized.

However, the situation has changed dramatically since the self-study was submitted last fall. The Robins’ replacement position has been lost to the Provost in payment for a lingering debt, the Scherer replacement has been delayed, and Copp, Oshana and Lomasky have resigned to take positions at other institutions. We believe that the quality of the department’s faculty and programs as reflected in the program review process, combined with the dramatic additional threat to the program’s national reputation resulting from these resignations, warrants giving the re-staffing of the philosophy department the highest priority within the College. We ask that you
meet with the department chair to discuss these issues and include an indication of how they will be addressed in the letter of understanding you draft to conclude the program review process.

**Graduate Assistant Support**
The self-study calls for the addition of six graduate assistant slots over the next several years. Again, we believe that the quality of the program as reflected in the program review and, in particular, the program’s remarkable placement record, warrants these additional slots. Because the number of graduate assistant slots has significant implications for the doctoral program, it is important to reach an understanding about the level of graduate assistant funding the department will receive as part of the program review process. We ask that you join the department in working with the Graduate Dean to reach an appropriate understanding on this issue.

**Administrative Assistant Position**
The self-study identifies the restoration of the administrative assistant position as an important priority for the department. We recognize that in the best of times this is unlikely to happen and that in the worst of times it cannot happen. Some of the activities of the administrative assistant can and will be assumed by faculty. However, there are two tasks handled by the administrative assistant that faculty are not equipped to handle—serving as department webmaster and publishing the department’s new on-line newsletter. Both of these are vital to the department’s graduate, undergraduate and faculty recruitment efforts. The latter is also important to the department’s long term fund-raising efforts. We ask you to work with us to develop a creative way of insuring that these needs will be met.

As far as the Program Review Committee’s recommendations are concerned we are fully prepared to review and address all of them in an appropriate way. The particulars are as follows:

1. Number of undergraduate majors and minors;
2. Requirements for major;
3. Assessment. Last January the department created a committee to review its undergraduate program in light of the recommendations of the external consultants and those of the program review committee that would follow. The department committee will continue its work in the coming year and make recommendations to the department in each of these areas.

4. Graduate student recruitment;
5. Faculty productivity and workload;
6. Internship program;
7. Length of doctoral program. The department will review each of these areas in light of the program review committee’s comments and implement the changes it decides are appropriate.

6. Values initiative. The department aspires to play a significant leadership role in this important initiative and will continue working with you to this end.

9. Balance between applied and theoretical philosophy. The department is committed to maintaining its focus in applied philosophy while maintaining appropriate strength in theoretical areas. All position requests and faculty hires will be made with this in mind.

pc. David Sobel, Chair