COUNCIL OF DEANS AND VICE CHANCELLORS

Re: Hazardous Material Removal Program

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to follow-up previous discussions regarding the importance of conducting a comprehensive program to dispose of unneeded hazardous chemicals and radioisotopes. Effective July 1, 2014, a Hazardous Material Removal Program will be launched under the leadership of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). This new program will provide all academic departments and faculty with the opportunity to dispose of unneeded hazardous chemicals and radioisotopes at no direct cost to them, by participating in an organized, building by building disposal process. Both the routine waste generated by on-going research as well as removal of the inventory of unwanted materials are included and will be covered during this 2-year operational period.

In February’s 2014-2015 Budget Framework letter, I pledged to work with stakeholders to identify a shared funding mechanism to remove and dispose of surplus and unwanted chemicals, noting that such an effort was needed to mitigate recharge disincentives and improve the safety of research laboratories and the general campus. Discussions over the subsequent months have highlighted that a hiatus of direct charges to faculty is an essential first step toward this goal.

As currently envisioned, the Hazardous Material Removal Program will incur expenses of approximately $3M. While this is a best faith estimate, the ultimate costs may vary and ongoing updates will be provided to track the ongoing expenses. The Provost’s Office will cover 30% of this cost, with the remaining 70% assigned to the deans proportional to estimated amount of hazardous waste generated and collected under this program. Deans will have the opportunity to pay for their part of the cost over a three-year period and I anticipate that they will use indirect cost recovery or other school, college or division funds for this purpose.

Over the coming months talks will commence to identify the best approach for long-term funding for hazardous waste disposal after completion of the two-year direct charge hiatus. These consultations will be informed by active involvement of the deans, the Academic Senate, and established advisory groups. I am also asking that policies be established that
address laboratory clean-outs when space is reassigned to avoid any future build-up of “legacy materials”.

Finally, there are some ongoing waste streams (like medical waste or used oil) that are currently handled directly between departments and external vendors. The costs of disposal of these materials are not included as a part of this program. Therefore, the direct cost reprieve only applies to activities that are currently handled via the chemical and radiation waste recharge process in EH&S. I hope that the steps being taken for this program will provide substantial mitigation for research even as costs for some services are necessarily increasing.

I appreciate in advance your active support of the upcoming Hazardous Material Removal Program and your active participation in the additional discussions ahead. EH&S will work directly with local safety officers and other constituents to develop a schedule and approach for the building-by-building efforts.

Sincerely,

Ralph J. Hexter
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

c: VC Lewin
AVC Parker
Sr. AVC Mohr
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Associate Deans for Research
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