December 17, 2010

To: Kofi Mensah, President, Student Government Association  
    David Maciewicz, Vice President, Student Government Association

From: Jane Knodell, Provost and Senior Vice President

Subject: Response to Resolutions: Increased Course Information at Enrollment  
          Priority Registration

I have had the opportunity to meet with the many stakeholders invested in the matters the Student Government Association (SGA) raised in its resolutions supporting increased course information at the time of enrollment and limitations on priority registration. Let me take each of these up in turn.

**Increased Course Information at Enrollment**

This is an important issue and it has been discussed with the leadership in the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee as well as the Council of Deans. We all recognize the limitations of the course information provided in the university catalogue, and in the Banner system, and support the idea of providing students with more information about courses as part of the registration process. The Curricular Affairs Committee has proposed a solution that will respond to student needs, and at the same time preserve instructional flexibility and acknowledge faculty intellectual property sensitivities. Prior to registration, faculty will post either a syllabi or an enhanced description for their courses. These descriptions will give students a better sense of the nature of the course, its objectives and expectations. It may also include information on typical/tentative course work, methods of evaluation, and proposed textbooks or readings. This approach will allow faculty to make improvements to their courses (i.e. they won’t be bound to something that was posted six months before the course begins), and it will also provide students with more information about courses and the pedagogical methods used to teach them. This information will be posted on departmental websites before Spring, 2011 registration for Fall, 2011 courses.

**Priority Registration**

The SGA’s concerns related to priority registration are understandable. As you know, we have been addressing this issue since the SGA resolution in Spring, 2009. Previous discussions have led to a reduction in the total number of students with overall priority and some groups have already been moved to in-class priority. Your most recent resolution prompted us to develop the following pilot two-tiered approach for all groups that still have overall priority (ACCESS, Advocats, Athletics and Honors College). These groups will identify no more than 50% of their students for overall priority registration with the rest receiving in-class priority. If members of the Honors College or student-athletes in this latter category are faced with insurmountable scheduling challenges, the Associate Provost for Curricular Affairs will review their situations.
on a case-by-case basis and make appropriate accommodations. I believe this approach increases the equity associated with course registration while still recognizing the needs of particular student populations. This system will be in place for the Spring, 2011 registration for Fall, 2011 courses and we will assess the impact regularly and modify the system if needed, while respecting the spirit of this change.

I am pleased that we have made progress on these resolutions. The SGA continues to produce thoughtful legislation that reflects an impressive level of engagement and I look forward to our continued work together and hope we can find ways to further collaborate. I wish you all the best for a successful semester’s end and a peaceful holiday break.