DATE: March 31, 2013
TO: Vice-Chancellor Kleine
FROM: Members of the University Senate Academic Policies Committee:
Lori Bica Jerry Hoepner Bob Nowlan
Selika Duckworth-Lawton Patricia Kleine Stephanie Wical
Doug Dunham Jill Markgraf Sam Fish, Student Senator
Gail Hanson Brenner Don Mowry Jean Pratt, Chair

SUBJECT: Program Review for Department of Chemistry

The Academic Policies Committee (APC) appreciates the efficient eloquence of the self-study report in documenting the successes and challenges of the Department of Chemistry, supplemented with Appendices and evidence of faculty productivity in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service.

The APC also thanks the internal review team for synthesizing the self-study report and comprehensive documentation; meeting with students, faculty and administrators; to generate clearly articulated and objective recommendations which focus on the enhancing and sustaining the already commendable contributions of this program. The top ranking among comprehensive institutions in the upper Midwest baccalaureate programs in preparing Ph.D. chemists highlights the dual commitment to education and scholarship.

Based on our review of the supporting materials and our discussion with Chair Carney, the APC recommends that the Department of Chemistry continue in its present form.

Commendations
Both internal and external reviews abounded with acclamations for the Department of Chemistry. The department’s commitment to providing a comprehensive and integrated curriculum is validated by diverse assessment data. In addition to featuring faculty with a high level of scholarly productivity, the department maintains a commitment to facilitating learning and encouraging pursuit of scholarship among its students. This is evidenced by two Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award recipients among the faculty, a commitment to student-faculty collaborative research, a high level of student satisfaction, and growing enrollment of majors. In addition to serving Chemistry majors, minors, and Biochemistry students, the department provides foundational knowledge to thousands of students from a variety of majors each year.

Concerns
We have only a handful of concerns:
• The internal and external reviewers were unified in their concern over availability of space for research, lab sciences, and classroom purposes. The APC concurs with those concerns and wishes to express an urgency to address the space issues in the immediate transition period, preceding eventual construction of a new science building.
• The APC also identifies the importance of addressing and nurturing human resource sustainability and morale issues. Given the high standards of excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service established in the department, maintaining an attractive and sustainable departmental faculty is challenging without appropriate space and recognition.
• A growing strain is being placed upon foundational Chemistry courses such as Chem 103 by other majors, such as Nursing. While value is placed on serving other disciplines from a broad, liberal education standpoint, concerns that the course serves as a ‘weed out’ rather than a foundational course lead us to question whether the investment is worthwhile.
• The final concern relates to recommendations identified by both internal and external reviewers. Addressing safety and equipment management issues is a space, financial resources, and human resources issue.
Suggestions & Affirmations
Rather than recommendations, we will suggest potential action steps and provide statements of affirmation regarding pressing needs in the Department of Chemistry for addressing some of the goals stated in the recommendations:

- We wish to reiterate suggestions of reviewers to initiate planning for future space acquisition and development, while addressing the current space needs.
- Rather than waiting for the realization of the long-term plan to address space, we suggest immediate planning (negotiations?) to address current space and related human resource, safety, and equipment access needs.
- Establish mechanisms to recognize the contributions of faculty and staff productivity in the broad areas of scholarship, teaching, and service.
- Continue to collect and analyze data on the pilot credit-based student-faculty research program. Increase awareness of the value of such integrated programming to students and faculty alike.