



## MEMO

Date: September 7, 2017

To: Rick Muma, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Strategic Enrollment Management

CC: Ron Matson, Dean of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

From: Dennis Livesay, Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President of Research and Technology Transfer

Re: Elliot School of Communication 3-Year Program Review

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This review is part of the 3-year review process of the Elliot School of Communication at Wichita State University. As Dean of the Graduate School, my review and recommendations will be primarily limited to the master's program in communications. I am very impressed by the candor of the assessment document. In particular, I appreciate that the school has identified specific areas of need and set goals to address them. This is the way program review is supposed to work and its comforting to see it when it does. I am also very impressed by the extent of the curriculum changes discussed on pages 11 and 12 (section 3.i).

I offer the following as helpful suggestions:

- There isn't much "big picture" discussion regarding where the Department is going. Yes, there are goals that need to be addressed, but most of the document is retrospective based on its retrospective nature. As presented, the goals are very tactical and do not convey the larger strategies and aspiration of the school. The most effective program reviews provide a clear vision going forward that helps align actions and efforts. For example, the 3 R's vision (recruitment, retention, and research) was very striking in your Graduate Enrollment Management plan, but a similar guiding direction is not present here.
- The school has correctly identified that they need to do a better job of collecting assessment data, and one of the goals is to correct that. With that said, I suggest that the Elliot School to not stop with just exit survey and current student feedback. What a current student or recent graduate think about a program is vastly different than someone that has been employed for some time. While difficult to carry out, getting feedback from alumni that have been working for 5-10 years can provide some of the most telling information regarding curricula relevance and effectiveness. In addition, I further suggest that you have focus group discussions with frequent employers of your graduates, who typically bring a different viewpoint. All of this is to say, since you have identified the

need to do a better job with assessment, I encourage you to embrace the challenge and adopt a comprehensive model.

- While I understand that declining faculty numbers are impacting productivity, the amount of scholarship activity, especially grants, is lower than I would normally expect to see – the number of journal articles is less than a 0.5/year per FTE when assuming three research active faculty. While difficult with teaching and service expectations, grants are the best and most reliable way of ensuring that you have the time and resources to do so. I encourage the faculty to keep writing and submitting proposals to support their scholarship. Further, the Provost and I are looking to align funding/incentives with external grants activity, so the importance of these efforts will only increase.