September 16, 2010

Mr. Leo Morton, Chancellor
University of Missouri – Kansas City
5100 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64110

Dear Chancellor Morton:

Chapter 173 of the Missouri Statutes authorizes the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) to review academic programs. The CBHE also is required to recommend to the governing board of any institution of higher education in the state the development, consolidation or elimination of programs, degree offerings, physical facilities or policy changes where that action is deemed in the best interests of the institutions and the Missouri public that depends on our system of higher education.

Governor Nixon set goals for higher education during the Governor’s Summit on Higher Education on August 17, 2010. One of the goals is to conduct a high-level statewide review of academic programs.

Purposes of the review:

- To ascertain if we have the right mix of programs in the right places, linked to the economic development goals of the state, to enable the higher education sector to better prepare the future workforce.
- Provide data upon which to base initiatives related to improved efficiency in the use of state resources. Note: As I am sure you are aware, there are data indicating that a number of academic majors do not meet the CBHE policy for degree productivity. In some instances, these programs are duplicated at several institutions. In a time of steadily decreasing resources, it is important to have at least an initial, but coordinated examination of this issue so that policy makers, along with the institutions, can re-evaluate the distribution of public resources in support of higher education.
- Identify opportunities for greater collaboration between and among our institutions with the aim of improving accessibility and affordability. Note: A separate letter will address the Governor’s goal of greater cooperation and collaboration.

In response to the governor’s direction, the CBHE directed MDHE staff on September 9, 2010, to conduct a limited, multi-phased review of existing programs focusing on program productivity and duplication of programs. In the first phase of the review, MDHE will analyze all academic programs, at all degree levels, at all 4-year public institutions. We will review graduation data reported to the MDHE through the Enhanced Missouri Student Achievement Study (EMSAS) and to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), under each 6-digit CIP code associated with the academic programs in the state’s official inventory.

To begin the first phase of the review, I would like to solicit your input as institutional leaders to help us refine the criteria and data points for assessing program productivity. A draft form that we will use to gather information about program productivity is attached. The draft “Program Productivity Review” form will be used to confirm with each institution the programs that are identified as being below the productivity threshold laid out in CBHE policy. Institutions can indicate on the form the actions they
propose to take regarding each low productivity program. The form also solicits whatever mitigating factors or extenuating circumstances the institution may wish to identify as justification for continuing to offer a program with low productivity.

Please provide your advice and suggestions for improving the form, as well as a copy of the summary of findings from your institution’s latest campus-based program review, to the MDHE, attention: Dr. Tim Gallimore, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs at Tim.Gallimore@dhe.mo.gov or 573-751-1764 by September 27, 2010.

MDHE staff will analyze the self-study/campus-level program review reports from each institution in order to reconcile the state’s official academic program inventory with the institutional reports and with the EMSAS and IPEDS data on file.

The envisioned timetable for the program review process is as follows:

- On September 29, 2010, all chief academic officers and other stakeholders from the public institutions are invited to meet with MDHE staff at the MDHE office in Jefferson City to discuss and finalize the criteria and process for conducting the limited program productivity and duplication review.

- The chief academic officers will have until October 1, 2010, to provide feedback on the final set of criteria and processes that will be used for the review. By October 4, the MDHE will provide the institutions with its analysis and findings about program productivity and duplication.

- By October 21, the MDHE should receive from the institutions the proposed actions they will take concerning low performing and duplicate programs. Between October 21 and November 30, the MDHE will consult with the institutions and draft a preliminary findings report with recommendations for submission to the CBHE in December.

The timeline, which admittedly is ambitious, will be discussed when we meet on September 29. I intend to deliver a preliminary report to the CBHE on December 2. The final report will be submitted to the Governor and the CBHE in February 2011.

The MDHE Academic Affairs staff and I look forward to working with you on this very important exercise to advance the quality and availability of education for all Missouri citizens.

Regards,

David R. Russell, Ph.D.
Interim Commissioner of Higher Education

1 Enclosure

cc: Coordinating Board Members
    Tim Gallimore, Ph.D.
    Mike Nietzel, Ph.D.
    Gary Forsee
Missouri Department of Higher Education

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO PRELIMINARY
PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY REVIEW AND REQUEST FOR EXEMPTIONS

1. Institution Name: _____________________________________________

2. Admissions Selectivity Category: _________________________________

3. Program Title: _________________________________________________

4. CIP Code: _____________________________________________________

5. Degree Designation (e.g. AA, BS, MA, MBA, MD, EdD, PhD): ________

6. Date of Original Program Approval: _______________________________

7. Date of Last Review: ___________________________________________

8. CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TO DESCRIBE ACTION THE INSTITUTION WILL TAKE CONCERNING THIS PROGRAM AND ATTACH REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:

   _____ 1) Program has or will be voluntarily terminated (submit copy of MDHE program deletion form).

   _____ 2) MDHE data are inaccurate; program meets criteria/standards for productivity (document discrepancy in data and identify source).

   _____ 3) New program approved within the past three years and is except from program review process (provide documentation with program initiation date).

   _____ 4) Program is critical to mission and will be retained (provide supporting documentation).

   _____ 5) Program contains courses that support other programs offered by the institution (provide documentation to show how the program supports other programs).

9. Please use this space to provide sufficient context justification and description of pertinent factors, and other special considerations as appropriate.

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