October 14, 2009

TO: Matthew S. Platz, Interim Dean of Biological and Mathematical and Physical Sciences

FROM: Joseph A. Alutto, Executive Vice President and Provost
Caroline C. Whitacre, Vice President for Research

SUBJECT: Targeted Investment in Excellence review

Thank you for the reports on the Mathematical Biosciences Institute and the Center for Cosmology and Astro-Particle Physics Targeted Investment in Excellence (TIE) initiatives. As we have done for the last two years, we invited the President’s and Provost’s Advisory Committee (PPAC) to review the third-year TIE reports. The committee was asked to provide feedback, giving consideration to the following questions:

- Are the accomplishments as expected, and is there an appropriate trajectory of accomplishment?
- Are there significant threats to success? If so, what might those be?
- Are there opportunities to enhance success? If so, what might those be?
- Does it appear that the anticipated impact and influence of the TIE is being and/or will be achieved?
- Are there concerns regarding the projected allocation of funds for the next academic year? If so, what are those concerns, and what are possible steps for remediation?

The PPAC’s reactions to the third-year report are attached for your use in optimizing the success of your TIEs. The PPAC will be consulted about the approach to subsequent reviews.

In consideration of PPAC’s and our own review, we are approving the release of the fourth year of projected TIE funding in amounts equal to the original allocations, unless adjustments are warranted, given previous distribution of funds. Please keep in mind that the timing of the actual release of funds into the general ledger system should not be a factor in carrying out the objectives of the TIEs, particularly since the colleges are contributing substantial matching funds.

The fourth-year review will build on this year’s review and will focus on the issue of sustainability of the TIE. The primary factors for the continuing success of the TIE programs over the next ten years will be emphasized. As you know, it is anticipated that the TIEs will be sustained in the years following the “official” TIE program. With that future in mind, the next review will also assess whether the anticipated impact and influence of the TIEs are being achieved.
For the fourth year report, we will use an enhanced general ledger fiscal tracking mechanism to assure that the colleges are meeting their TIE commitments. This mechanism will also permit a retrospective assessment of the impact and influence of the TIE initiative in future years. We met recently with the senior fiscal officers about this, and they understand the approach that will be taken. For questions about this issue, please ask your senior fiscal officer to contact Assistant Vice President Donna Hobart at hobart.1@osu.edu. She can provide information on the general ledger reports that will be used to track sources and uses.

Please be aware that your fourth-year TIE reports should be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs no later than Friday, April 16, 2010, unless you are notified otherwise.

As a follow-up to this letter, you and your various TIE faculty teams will be asked to attend a project-specific meeting before the end of the quarter. You will shortly be contacted about scheduling these meetings, whose purpose will be to discuss the results of the third-year review, any issues associated with the success of the TIE, and possible approaches to the fourth- and fifth-year reviews.

A separate meeting will be scheduled with the TIE-designated communicators and representatives from University Communications to further refine our TIE communications strategies. As you know, we are employing an issues-based communication strategy, as these issues will continue to receive attention in years to come. For that reason, our knowledge generation and solutions applications will be highlighted to assure the reputation-enhancing aspects of the TIE program.

If you have questions, please contact Vice Provost Mike Sherman at sherman.4@osu.edu.

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Encl: PPAC reviews