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FROM: Nicholas P. Jones, Executive Vice President and Provost

TO: President's Council, Academic Leadership, and Unit Executives

SUBJECT: Updates to unit planning process and timeline

In my January 2020 memo titled “Unit planning process and timeline,” I summarized the resources available to you all as you continued your plan development process, including the institutional strategic plan assessment, the revised institutional strategic plan, the planning guide for Penn State, a template for strategic plans, and a general self-review form for a final check of your unit plan. By this time, all units had also completed their reflection reports from the previous cycle’s strategic plan. In this memo, I also outlined the feedback process for your draft plans.

In March 2020, due to the impacts of COVID-19, Daniel Newhart, Assistant Vice Provost for Planning, communicated an option to extend your unit draft strategic plan deadline to September 15th, 2020, with final plans due December 21st, 2020. Some units elected to utilize this extension, while some units elected to stay with on the original July 31st timeline.

Because of the importance of and energy around strategic planning and given the nature of our return to campus in the fall, I have decided to offer another extension to the draft unit strategic plan timeline until November 15th, 2020. If your unit requires this extra time, please inform Daniel Newhart, Assistant Vice Provost for Planning (dwn24@psu.edu) by August 14th, 2020. Units electing this extension will also be allotted more time to turn in their final plans, with a deadline of February 21st, 2021.

We will begin the feedback process I outlined in my January memo soon for units that have turned in their draft plans or plan on doing so by September 15th and would encourage those who are working towards this deadline to try to submit draft plans by this date. You will all receive feedback by mid-October, with an opportunity to integrate feedback prior to December 21st, 2020. The OPAIR group will also be entering your plans into the Nuventive system referenced in my January memo.

I am encouraged by the ways the planning process has allowed units to position themselves for not just a return in the fall, but also for the direction of the next five years. We have learned a great deal during this time, and one thing is certain: this is not a time to let consideration of our future fall by the wayside. The robust strategies developed by the units should be ready for implementation in the upcoming academic year and beyond. As well, we should be continuing our proactive consideration of any efforts which may be subject to disruption. Consider the theme of resilience from our institutional strategic plan with a question: is this effort outlined in our unit plan simply bouncing back from COVID-19, or is it also a way to bounce forward and thrive as we emerge from this pandemic?

The work of each unit is critical in Penn State’s success, and we look forward to learning how your unit plan will contribute to our work as a University throughout the next five years.