



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT WILMINGTON

GARY L. MILLER
Chancellor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gabriel Lugo, Chair Faculty Senate

FROM: Gary L. Miller, Chancellor

DATE: October 24, 2011

SUBJECT: Department Merger of Physics and the Department of Geology and Geography

Thank you for your memo of October 12, transmitting the Senate's recommendations regarding the merger of the Department of Physics and the Department of Geology and Geography. I very much appreciate the Senate's thoughtful consideration of this issue.

However, I am unable to support the recommendation to override the decision to combine the two departments. While I am sympathetic to the academic arguments regarding the juxtaposition of these disciplines, I also note that all degree programs have been maintained within the new administrative structure. The structure should not prevent faculty from promoting the growth or differentiation of either degree program though it may require new strategies for doing so.

I do not agree with the assertion in recommendation (b) that the internal approval process was not followed. However, given the difficult times in which we find ourselves and the likelihood that we will face additional consolidation decisions in the future, I have asked the Provost to work with the Faculty Senate to strengthen the way in which we consider such consolidations. My expectation is that she will bring proposals to you in the near future. I am also aware that Dean Cordle continues to have discussions with the departments involved regarding their future.

These are extraordinary times and we will be required to consider many new structures and new processes in the university. I am fully committed to working closely within the shared governance system to affect change in a way that promotes the important values of UNCW.

Thank you for your work on this difficult issue.