MEMORANDUM

TO: IUPUI Faculty Council
FROM: Nasser Paydar, Chancellor
DATE: February 28, 2022
RE: Administrative Review, Dean of the School of Engineering & Technology, David Russomanno

This memo summarizes the Administrative Review Committee Report on Dean of the School of Engineering & Technology, Dr. David Russomanno.

John DiTusa, Dean of the School of Science, chaired the committee. Its faculty representatives included Lauren Christopher (Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering), Rob Elliott (Teaching Professor, Computer Information and Graphics Technology and Faculty Council Representative), Patricia Fox (Clinical Assistant Professor, Organizational Leadership), Patrick Gee (Director of Minority Engineering Advancement Program, Student Services), Katharine Macy (Business & Economics Librarian, University Library), David Mannell (Lecturer of Music Education, Music & Arts Technology), John Schild (Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering and Faculty Council Representative), Andres Tovar (Associate Professor, Mechanical Engineering), and Ken Yoshida (Professor, Biomedical Engineering). Campus administration was represented by Stephen Hundley (Ex Officio) and Janice Blum (Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education). Staff representatives were Jenna Machunas (HR Coordinator) and Jennifer Watson (E&T Staff Council President). The student representative was Rashi Dhenia (President, Engineering and Technology Student Council) and the community representative was Cynthia Munerol (Retired Area Manager-Program Management, AT&T and Dean’s Industrial Advisory Council Member).

To complete its work, the review committee considered a personal statement provided by Dean Russomanno and met with him to discuss his goals for the review. The Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) conducted a survey of part-time and full-time faculty, staff, and students from the School of Engineering & Technology as well as Council of Deans members, yielding nearly 400 responses. Survey feedback was augmented by responses to interviews and/or focus groups with students, staff, and faculty, deans and administrators, and community partners.

The feedback that the committee gathered clearly indicate that Dean Russomanno’s leadership has many strengths. These include:
• Thoughtful, calm, and effective strategic leadership that is supported by excellent communication skills, trustworthiness and effective advocacy for each of the school’s programs. The school’s excellent record of enrollments, graduation rates, and externally funded research during his tenure is attributed to his data-informed approach to strategic planning.

• A strong commitment to DEI objectives and initiatives, including his direct participation in funded projects, such as IUPUI’s ADVANCE grant as well as his own professional development. The development and execution of the school’s DEI Strategic Plan was praised, and it is clear that Dean Russomanno is sincerely passionate about these efforts.

• Strong fiscal acumen and an entrepreneurial approach to collaborations and partnerships that are to the benefit of the school. Dean Russomanno is fiscally conservative but also very transparent in managing the school’s budget.

• Accessible, person-oriented, and effective in developing and sustaining collaborations on the campus, with Purdue University, with alumni and community partners, as well as within his own leadership team. He is a very strong advocate for students and staff and is described as an “excellent role model as an employee as well as a person.”

The review committee also identified specific suggestions aligned with opportunities for improvement (several of which relate to the need to continue to focus on or expand initiatives that already are in place). These include:

• Remain committed to DEI efforts, particularly in the hiring of faculty and staff from minoritized backgrounds with respect to addressing pay equity and gender bias.

• Ensure that leaders within the school are reviewed regularly to promote effective performance as well as identify optimal organizational structures, and advance efforts to improve faculty and staff retention.

• Enrich and further improve undergraduate student recruitment and retention by addressing issues in student services, continuing to advocate for Purdue branding at IUPUI and by recognizing excellent teaching and service, particularly in the technology programs.

Overall Dr. Russomanno should be commended for his outstanding leadership in advancing the School of Engineering and Technology, as well as his deep understanding and advocacy for strategic initiatives, particularly related to equity and inclusion, that are priorities for the IUPUI campus.