MEMORANDUM

TO: IUPUI Faculty Council
    Faculty/Staff of the Herron School of Art & Design

FROM: Nasser Paydar, Chancellor

DATE: October 18, 2017

RE: Administrative Review, Dean of the Herron School of Art & Design, Valerie Eickmeier

This memo summarizes the report of the Administrative Review Committee on the Dean of the Herron School of Art & Design, Valerie Eickmeier.

Tom Davis, Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, chaired the committee. Its faculty representatives from other schools were Charlotte Westerhaus-Renfrow, Clinical Assistant Professor in the Kelley School of Business and Jack Windsor, Professor in the School of Dentistry. Faculty from the Herron School of Art & Design included Paula Differding-Burton, Associate Professor, Visual Communication Design; Aaron Ganci, Assistant Professor, Visual Communication Design; Marc Jacobson, Professor, Painting; Eileen Misluk, Assistant Clinical Professor, Art Therapy; and Danielle Reide, Associate Professor, Painting. Staff included Shannon McCullough, Assistant Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs. Student representatives were Nick Douglas and Lisa Semidey. The community representative was Douglas Tillman.

To complete its work, the review committee commissioned the Institutional Research and Decision Support office (IRDS) to conduct a survey of Herron faculty and staff and a survey of current students. Survey feedback was augmented by responses to interviews conducted with Herron students, staff and faculty and with IUPUI deans, administrators and community members.

Among her greatest strengths during Dean Eickmeier’s tenure is her success at fundraising and her strong advocacy for the Herron School of Art & Design. She has been able to cultivate external relationships that culminate in others investing in the school and improving Herron’s status on campus, as evidenced by her accomplishments in dramatically improving the school’s physical facilities. She also is very community-oriented and adept at expanding collaborations with campus and external stakeholders. However, during the review process, some faculty and staff expressed concerns about interpersonal communication within the school and an appearance of a lack of transparency, as well as a resulting lack of a culture of collegiality within the school.

The review committee concluded that Dean Eickmeier possesses numerous strengths that have allowed her to make progress in specific areas at the Herron School of Art and Design:
• Dean Eickmeier is considered a role model in terms of fund raising. Her efforts have resulted in philanthropic donations that support capital projects, the operating budget, faculty/chair endowments, and student scholarships and fellowships.
• Dean Eickmeier generally is perceived positively as proactive in her approach to program growth and expansion and she responds to barriers in strategic ways.
• Students hold highly positive perceptions of Herron, which is a reflection of the dean’s leadership. Students also have access to resources that greatly improve the academic experience, such as the Basile Center for Art, Design and Public Life.
• Dean Eickmeier has led her unit to accomplish all of the goals that she set for Herron since 2010: Herron has introduced the Think It Make It Lab, a Master of Arts program in Art Therapy, four new minors, the construction of the Eskenazi Fine Arts building, and secured gifts to establish five new endowed faculty chairs and fund 32 new endowed scholarships.

The review also identified issues needing attention and areas where improvements could be realized:

• Some faculty expressed dissatisfaction with Dean Eickmeier’s interpersonal communications with faculty and staff within the school, which contributes to a negative internal culture.
• Although Dean Eickmeier has led her unit to accomplish all of the annual goals she set for Herron since 2010, some faculty perceived opportunities for clarity and improvement in Dean Eickmeier’s vision for the school and her ability to develop, articulate and implement a strategic plan.
• There was concern that faculty are not sufficiently engaged in decision making, particularly with respect to decisions regarding resource allocation, and there was a perception of unilateral decision making and an absence of consensus building by the dean. There is a desire to reconstitute a separate Resource Planning Committee (which previously had been in existence, but was dissolved through a faculty council vote to use the elected faculty council members as Herron’s RPC) to ensure faculty awareness and engagement in planning and budgeting for the Herron School of Art and Design.
• Concerns were expressed regarding inequities within the school and the perceived privileged status associated with staffing, resources and programs that surround donors at the expense of other areas in the school.

Overall, Dean Eickmeier should be commended for her strategic vision for the Herron School of Art & Design, her devotion to the school, and for her effective advancement activities. During her tenure, Herron has significantly enhanced its facilities through capital projects and has established a number of new degree programs. The school also recently received 10-year reaccreditation through the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, which is a positive reflection of Dean Eickmeier’s leadership and the strong faculty and staff that she has helped to hire.