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MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President

From: Richard L. Williamson
Chair, Faculty Senate

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard L. Williamson'.

Date: February 25, 2010

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2009-12(B) – Charter changes for the Leonard and Jayne
Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy

At its February 24, 2010 meeting, the Faculty Senate unanimously approved the proposal to
change the charter for the Leonard and Jayne Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy.

The approved charter is enclosed for your reference.

This legislation is now forwarded to you for your action.


RW/rh

Enclosure

cc: Thomas LeBlanc, Executive Vice President and Provost
Kenneth Broad, Director, The Leonard and Jayne Abess Center for Ecosystem Science
and Policy

CAPSULE: Faculty Senate #2009-12(B) – Charter changes for the Leonard and Jayne Abess
Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

APPROVED:  DATE: 3/12/2010
(President's Signature)

OFFICE OR INDIVIDUAL TO IMPLEMENT: Kenneth Broad, Dir.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF LEGISLATION: IMMEDIATELY
(if other than June 1 next following)

NOT APPROVED AND REFERRED TO: _____

REMARKS (IF NOT APPROVED): _____



CHARTER

MISSION

The principle mission of the Leonard and Jayne Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy (“Abess Center”) is to create innovative, interdisciplinary initiatives designed to bridge the gap between science and policy in the environment.

CENTER OBJECTIVES

The Abess Center will fulfill its mission through encouraging interdisciplinary faculty research and hosting seminars, colloquia and outreach projects on a regular basis. The Abess Center will also carry out undergraduate and graduate programs. New degree programs and major changes in existing programs will be submitted to the Senate for approval.

BACKGROUND

Environmental policy and management cannot successfully be advanced or sustained unless demonstrably based upon the best available science. Science has shown us that the complex connections within and among earth’s components must be considered in environmental policy-making. Frequently it is necessary to act in the face of scientific uncertainty. This means that scientists and decision-makers have to work in close collaboration to solve environmental problems. They need to communicate effectively, to ask for and receive salient advice, and to resolve scientific and related political disputes. The interaction of science and policy provides an effective focus for an inter-disciplinary center for environmental studies at the University of Miami that can make a unique contribution to the field.

STAFFING & GOVERNANCE

Faculty will be invited to participate as fellows of the Center for a semester. Those selected will be provided released time from teaching, research assistance and travel support to work on interdisciplinary projects in the Abess Center. The Abess Center will also provide seed money to interdisciplinary teams of faculty to support development of projects and securing extra-mural funding for them. Nine new faculty members will be hired to serve as permanent fellows of the Center in various science and policy fields that complement our current strengths. The new faculty will be hired into existing schools and departments of the University, following their established criteria and processes, and promotion and tenure decisions will be made through the home school or department in collaboration with the Abess Center. The Abess Center will pay up to 60 percent of the salary and, where appropriate, start-up expenses for each new faculty member. The Provost will select a tenured member of the Regular Faculty to be Director, who shall administer the Abess Center. Staff may include a secretary, a meeting planner/outreach person and a webmaster retained on a contract basis, as well as members of the University Faculty who will serve as part time Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate programs respectively.

The Provost, after consultation with the appropriate deans and the Center leadership, will appoint a 15-member Faculty Advisory Committee of representatives of participating schools and departments. Faculty Advisory Committee members will serve staggered three-year terms. The Faculty Advisory Committee will meet regularly to consider faculty hiring, curriculum, program development and other issues. At 24-month intervals, the Faculty Advisory Committee will submit a written report to the Provost evaluating the initiatives and accomplishments of the Center and evaluating the performance of the Center’s Director.

FUNDING

The Abess Center will be financed through a combination of University operating funds, and gifts and grants from outside sources.