

After further thought and discussion, I have decided to move ahead with a variant on my idea of "presidential essays" for the year ahead. Recall that the general idea is to provide those who are curious with a glimpse of the issues "on the president's mind". Since the essays will probably not be of broad enough interest to merit circulation to the entire readership of the University Record, Walt and I have worked out the following plan:

1. Each essay will be developed as a stand-alone paper on a particular issue (e.g., research policy, interdisciplinary scholarship, academic leadership) in a simple format similar to Lisa's state relations background pieces with a length in the 4,000 word range. Liene is developing a design.
2. Since the primary target is the faculty, the initial circulation will be to department offices (e.g., the 3-D list) with a sufficient backup inventory to respond to internal and external requests. However, each essay will be announced and summarized in a short column in the University Record.
3. I will prepare the first draft of these pieces. However, Walt, Carole, and Shirley should develop a process of timely review, revision, and polishing to develop the final product. For these to be effective, we must achieve a publication frequency of 6-8 essays per year. Hence it is essential that we develop a production schedule and hold to it. I'll do my part to get you the drafts on time, and I will depend on you to take it from there.
4. Although we can announce the first year's worth of essays as associated with the 175th Year activities, I would like to continue these indefinitely if they receive positive responses.
5. It is my hope that these essays can also serve as feedstock for external publications such as op-eds, letters to the editor, and articles for journals, thereby helping to break the prose logjam that has been so frustrating to me.
6. The first essay will concern the changing relationship between research universities and federal sponsors. Carole has a new draft of this, running about 4,000 words in length. I expect this to be ready to distribute in September, so we can work backwards to design an appropriate schedule.

While lots of folks will have a role in this, Walt, I would like for you to take the lead in assigning the editing, production, and handling roles and putting into place the necessary oversight mechanisms to keep us on schedule.

Many thanks.