MEMORANDUM

To: Davis School of Gerontology Faculty, Students, Staff and Supporters
From: Elizabeth Garrett
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Date: August 24, 2011
Subject: Future Plans of Dean Davison

Dean Gerald Davison has shared with President Nikias and me his desire to return to his research and scholarship at the conclusion of his term as dean of the Davis School of Gerontology. His leadership of the Davis School, at a critical time in its history, has moved the school forward in significant ways, and the President and I appreciate his willingness to serve in this role since 2007. We also understand that any active scholar makes a sacrifice to serve as an academic administrator, and thus we support the dean's decision to return to his consequential research. Before he was called away from his professorial duties, his recent research program had focused on the relationships between cognition and a variety of behavioral and emotional problems.

Under Dean Davison's leadership, and with the support of the faculty and an able administrative team, the Davis School has achieved many notable accomplishments. Five excellent new tenured or tenure track faculty members have joined the school, coming from post-doctoral or faculty positions at great research institutions such as Michigan, Harvard Medical School and the University of California system. There has been significant grant support from the National Institute on Aging, National Institute on Environmental Health Sciences and other agencies, national associations, and foundations. The school undertook a strategic planning process that has served as the basis for curricular innovation and provided academic values to undergird the upcoming fundraising campaign.

Student enrollment is up dramatically, particularly in innovative masters' programs. In 2009 the school launched a new Masters of Aging Services Management, available both online and on campus, to train top professionals in this area of our economy that continues to grow even during financial downturns, and it also began to offer the Masters of Science in Gerontology online, expanding its reach and influence nationally. The undergraduate experience has also been revised in light of changes in the economy and in the disciplines that form the foundation of the study of life development. For example, the school created a new course for undergraduates focused on global health and aging, as well as a new B.S. in Lifespan Health.

With respect to these and other accomplishments, Dean Davison has worked with the interdisciplinary faculty of the school, the staff, students, alumni and Board of Counselors. The shared goal has been to ensure that the Davis School of
Gerontology continues to be recognized throughout the world as the leading institution of higher education for the study of aging in the context of the entire life span, improving the quality of life for older persons through excellence in education and aging research.

Dean Davison's decision to step away from the deanship at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year is based on his conclusion that, with the school on a strong footing, it is best to have a leader with a stronger reputation in the substance of gerontology. While he cherishes his enduring connections to the Davis School community, he has concluded it is best to support a smooth transition to a new leader. Dean Davison is committed to working hard this year to keep the school's momentum going.

Dean Davison will continue to serve as dean through this academic year, providing leadership for the Davis School as we undertake a search for the next academic leader. Dean R. Pete Vanderveen of the School of Pharmacy and Vice Provost Martin Levine will work with me on that search, and a search committee will be appointed soon. They will be meeting with all the groups who are involved with the Davis School of Gerontology to discuss the next steps and to solicit their input and advice.

I know that all of you join President Nikias and me in thanking Dean Davison for his service to the Davis School and to the university. He has long provided leadership at crucial times, and I appreciate his selfless service, his advice and guidance, and his friendship.

cc: C. L. Max Nikias
    Robert Abeles
    Al Checcio
    Todd Dickey
    Carol Mauch Amir
    Tom Sayles