Dear all

A reminder we are (or should be) all on the same team.

Per faculty meeting, Leslie and I have a meeting scheduled with CALES finances this week to review the status of account reconciliations and back-logged transfers. Given a brief turn-around time will be needed summarize relevant information and determine if the proposed use of scholarships is feasible, I promised information before the end of the week or early next.

As I reiterated in faculty meeting Friday - because SPLS finances are not 100% reconciled, expenditures from the previous year (or 2022) may hit the foundation accounts, and therefore the balances may not reflect accurate dollars. More details can be added to ease your minds. In early March, Leslie and I requested an appointment with the CALES scholarship team to learn about these accounts/status. We were told the updated financials would be available late April or early May (i.e. now/soon). Last Wednesday I reached out to them again to schedule a meeting first thing because as we are all aware, these funds are essential for student support.

It is likely that a portion of the total amount needed to ensure all grad students are funded for the summer by supplement grant funds with scholarship funds. Per above, we will have a better sense of endowment balances that can be tapped for scholarships to supplement grant funding in all semesters, by July 1. This is also true for TAships (0.25 / 60 students; incrementally greater for 120, 180, etc.). That said, you are all responsible for covering your students for summer, fall, and spring semesters, and for conveying this through the funding plan. If your funding plan is not received, your students will not be entered into payroll. This is how we’ll do things, going forward. Thanks.

Also, the point was made that it is not be wise in this climate, or perhaps every, to spend the scholarship funds out completely at the beginning of the fiscal year, given future unknowns (grants ending, renewals not received, etc.). The concept of maintaining a healthy ‘savings account’ will be the norm going forward, such that scholarships will be apportioned as needed/available for summer, fall, and spring. The scholarship interest revenue does not have to be spent out every year. Mark is correct that there are tax considerations but that does not mean we have to run the accounts down as soon as the funds are available.

Also, reiterating, TAships will be sorted out in time for Fall semester,  by mid-June or early July, once accounts are up to date and the SPLS 2024-2025 budget is available. Leslie and Janis this week to understand the status and projections. Financial reports for SPLS and pay-back must be finalized before the end of the fiscal year.  This is why no decisions can yet be made. Leslie and I will share with the faculty /grad students as soon as the information is available. Be reminded, we’re required to embrace financial responsibility and fiscal trust to achieve financial stability within our means.

I’ve heard from several of you regarding faculty meeting discourse Friday. I’m not sure what we gain by insisting it’s our way or the highway instead of listening and compromising and taking into account as many perspectives as possible. If you are upset or concerned or would benefit from understanding other’s opinions and perspectives, why not why that individual may hold those opinions or perspectives. Perhaps step back and consider how you can provide a thoughtful response, which could very well be, asking a question for clarification, or possibly an apology, instead of contributing to discord. Please contact your fellow-faculty and engage in respectful conversations, one-on-one. We are all people with concerns and the desire for fairness and equity. I am not happy either about how some of you speak to me but I find it’s easier to let it go and hope you sort out the real reason for your anger or disappointment. Can we not turn down the heat by not speaking everything that comes to mind ..