To: All Staff and Managers in CCS

From: Charlotte Yates, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Date: January 9, 2017

Subject: Comprehensive Review of All Major IT Functions

Dear staff and managers in the CCS,

Happy New Year. I hope that all of you were able to take time to relax and recharge your batteries over the winter break. As we return to the University in 2017, I am emailing to inform you that, working jointly with the Vice President Research and Vice President Finance and Administration, we are undertaking a comprehensive review of all major IT functions and organizational structures across the University. The Provost, VPR and VP Admin will be issuing jointly an RFP to secure professional services to prepare a report on the state of IT on campus, including identifying best practices for University IT, opportunities for greater effectiveness and efficiencies in service delivery and any major gaps in IT services, systems, infrastructures and governance.

The importance of information technologies (IT) for the delivery of University programs and services has never been greater. Whether in the form of web tools, research applications or major enterprise business processing applications, IT is a critical underlying infrastructure component in almost all activities across the campus. Further, the world of IT is rapidly changing with the development of new technologies and cloud-hosted solutions with potential applications that can both challenge us and provide opportunities for improving the quality and breadth of our programs and services.

For a number of years, this growing reliance on IT capacity has meant we now consider a significant portion of these services as a central University resource; a type of “utility”, as critical to operations as hydro, heat, and physical space. With growing demands, including the requirement to improve security of data, the allocation of University resources to IT systems and services has continued to increase significantly. In addition, enterprise-wide business systems, many of which were installed in response to the Y2K risks over 15 years ago, are “mature” and may be in need of reinvestment. The number of campus IT applications has continued to multiply which has resulted in the emergence of decentralized IT models, resourced from a variety of sources, including new cost recovery initiatives and allocations from departmental program resource reallocations.

These many challenges and opportunities make this an appropriate time to undertake a comprehensive review of IT functions and organizational structures across the University.
As many of you will know, we are not the first campus to undertake such an IT review. This is no surprise given the integral place of IT in all of our University activities. At a time when IT needs are growing exponentially and IT changes so rapidly, the University needs a clear understanding of the IT road ahead. We expect this report to help us chart this future successfully framed by the foundations laid out in the University’s 2016 Strategic Framework.

To make sure that everyone has an opportunity to understand the nature of this review I will be meeting with Deans and other senior managers before the review begins. In addition, because of the special role that you, as CCS staff have in delivering IT services, I will be meeting with you separately as soon as it can be arranged. I look forward to meeting you then.

Best wishes.

Charlotte A. B. Yates
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)