RE: Administrative Response to Faculty and Staff eCommunications Advisory Committee Final Report

September 11, 2014

I am pleased to have received the Final Report of the Faculty and Staff eCommunications Advisory Committee, formally submitted to me this week, and to offer the following administrative response on behalf of the University.

I wish to thank the committee chair, Professor Michael Luke, all the members of the committee, its assessors, the staff of Information Technology Services (ITS), and all members of the faculty and staff community who provided input to the Committee's very serious consideration of how the University should best enhance the communications tools that it provides to support teaching, learning, research and enabling administrative communications.

The Report makes clear that the University's currently supported services fall far short of contemporary standards, and that this limits our capacity to work effectively, efficiently and safely within our institution and with our many partners nationally and internationally. The Report points to the risks of our reliance on technology that is reaching the end of its useful life, and our highly distributed practices of using international cloud services for which limited, if any, risk assessment has been conducted.

Recognizing these concerns, the Report makes numerous recommendations for the development and implementation of new services, including data encryption, to enhance security of our valuable information assets. Perhaps most importantly, it advocates for a program of user education in best practices in e-communications and information handling. I support these recommendations and have asked ITS to develop solutions to achieve these goals.

While the Committee reached agreement on many aspects of an enhanced e-communications services plan, it was unable to make a unanimous recommendation on the fundamental question it was charged to answer: should the University move to extend to faculty and staff the enhanced services currently available to over 162,000 student and recent alumni using *Office 365 for Education*. A majority of committee members recommended yes, and a minority recommended no, for reasons documented in the Report and its Appendix (the Minority Report submitted by a subgroup of committee members).

In consideration of two issues identified in the Report, I have asked for further information to better inform a decision on how to proceed:

First, based upon a preview of the Report in February 2014, a review of the Minority Report, and a meeting held with a group of the committee members, I asked ITS to revisit the estimates of costs associated with implementing *Office 365 for Education* for faculty and staff, plus the alternatives that had been discussed by the Committee. In April, ITS reported the following: that setting aside costs that

the University would incur in enhancing e-communications services for faculty and staff regardless of the solution architecture chosen, the additional costs below would be unique to each solution:

Office 365 for Education:	$0 OTO, plus $0 annually
On-premises alternative:	$1,348,428 OTO, plus $1,128,579 annually
Off-premises alternative:	$3,438,000 annually

(The full text of this follow-up report on cost estimates is not being published at this time to preclude providing advantage to any respondents to the public process described below; however, it is available in confidence and upon request to members of the University community.)

Secondly, I have asked ITS to work with Procurement Services to conduct a public procurement exercise to assess the availability of any solution that could achieve the integrated e-communications features that the Committee identified to meet both contemporary and future needs of the University's academic and administrative activities. A further condition of any solution would be alignment with the requirements of the draft *Policy on Cyber-Risk Mitigation* currently under discussion within the University community and pending governance approval. In the next few weeks, a public call will be issued by Procurement Services, the outcome of which will inform the University's decision in this matter.

I want to thank all members of the University community for their active interest and engagement in this issue.

Yours Truly,

Cheryl Regehr
Vice-President and Provost