TO: Faculty and Staff of the Department of Computer Science
FROM: Tim Sands, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
DATE: May 13th, 2011
SUBJECT: Recommendations of the External Review Committee

I would like to congratulate the faculty, staff and students of the Department of Computer Science for the achievements, recent progress and promise that was so evident to the distinguished members of the External Review Committee. Their report is insightful, thorough and actionable.

President France Córdova and I concur with the assessment of Dean Roberts and support the recommendations that he outlined in his memo of May 13th, 2011.

Specifically, the opportunity to leverage the many parts and programs in the broader field of computing sciences and information technology across the institution is much broader than might be addressed by the proposed merger of the Department of Computer Science and the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering. A more comprehensive institution-wide strategy is needed. Hence, we will not be considering this specific merger proposal further in the absence of such a strategy.

This summer, I will charge a task force to make recommendations for institutional changes and investments that will position Purdue to be among the global leaders in information and computing science, engineering and technology, encompassing the spectrum from fundamental understanding to societal impact. Among the opportunities that the task force will consider are: 1) enabling exploration and mobility of first-year undergraduate students who know that they would like to pursue an education centered around information and computing, but do not know which program at Purdue best suits their aspirations; 2) attracting more diverse, ambitious and highly qualified students to Purdue; 3) lowering barriers to collaboration among faculty members in information and computing science, engineering and technology; 4) enhancing flexibility in the associated graduate programs to allow students to assemble advisory committees with breadth and depth across the academic units; 5) positioning Purdue to take a leadership role in the coming avalanche of change that computing will bring to learning and discovery in every single discipline - from information retrieval and archiving to the humanities to social sciences to life and physical sciences; and 6) solidifying our strengths in computing and information science, engineering and technology to become the global leader in a few strategic specialties.

I am looking forward to a bright future for both the Department of Computer Science and for the larger computing and information science, engineering and technology arena at Purdue.