February 26, 2020

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: John A. Elliott, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Appointment of Retired Faculty to Emeritus Status

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees appoint retired faculty members John Alexopoulos, Lawrence Gramling, Sandra Shumway, and Robert Wyss to emeritus status.

BACKGROUND:

Following recommendations of the Retirement Committee and of President Thomas Katsouleas, the following four retired faculty are presented to the Board of Trustees for appointment to emeritus status.

Professor John Alexopoulos retired on January 1, 2019 from the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources; Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture. Professor Alexopoulos was quite integral to the development of the nationally accredited, professional degree (MSLA) program housed within the department and College. For a number of years, Professor Alexopoulos served as the sole instructor for that program and facilitated its successful accreditation in 1998. Such dedication is matched by a commitment to curricular rigor, as evidenced by the program’s high national reputation. In addition to these considerable administrative achievements, Professor Alexopoulos was a skilled classroom practitioner who offered numerous courses at the undergraduate level. Such talent was recognized early on via a college-wide alumni award for teaching excellence. Moreover, Professor Alexopolous greatly expanded the department’s international reach vis-à-vis his work with the university’s Education Abroad program, wherein he led summer programs to Greece in for several years. Professor Alexopoulos’s work within and outside the classroom was admirable. He has actively mentored students and taken seriously the professional development of the department’s students. In 2011, he was the recipient of the Provost Award for Excellence in Public Engagement (“Program” category). He has maintained an active research profile via community design projects and initiatives (which include 70 professional site planning projects, funded community projects, and applied community research projects). Professor Alexopoulos was hired at a time when the M.S. was the terminal degree in his field. Accordingly, Professor Alexopoulos retired at the associate professor rank. If approved by the Board of Trustees, he would be appointed to the status of “Associate Professor Emeritus.”
Professor Lawrence Gramling retired on September 21, 2018 from the School of Business; Accounting Department. As George A. Plesko (Head, Account Department) summarizes, Professor Gramling—who most recently completed a six-year tenure as the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs in the School of Business—has been a leading administrative figure on campus. To wit, Professor Gramling served on the University Senate, Honors Program, Senate Scholastic Standards Committee, and several other ad hoc task forces and committees. Such service was by no means limited to the university, a point made clear in Professor Gramling’s election as President of the Connecticut Society of CPAs (CTCPA), which marked the first time an academic served in the position. In addition to service, Professor Gramling, according to Professor Plesko, “has left a lasting impression on [the] department and the thousands of undergraduate students he taught over the years.” He has served as a faculty advisor for several School of Business student organizations and has taught every undergraduate course except for Federal Taxation. Such student engagement is emblazoned by Professor Plesko’s assertion that former students consistent “comment on the impact [Professor Gramling] has had on them whenever Interim Provost John Elliot or I visit with our distinguished alumni.” If approved by the Board of Trustees, he would be appointed to the status of “Assistant Professor Emeritus.”

Professor Sandra Shumway retired in May, 2019 from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Department of Marine Sciences (Avery Point Campus), having served for 17 years as a research professor. Professor Shumway has authored more than 180 peer reviewed papers and book chapters, edited even book volumes, and has what J. Evan Ward (Department Head and Professor of Marine Sciences) notes is “an impressive scholarly reputation with a google scholar h-index of 60, an i10-index of 161, and a Research Gate score of 39.96.” With regard to teaching, Dr. Shumway has been a tireless mentor and advocate for undergraduate and graduate students. Such advocacy and support is evident in her university-level service, emblazoned by her work with the National Scholarships and Fellowships Committee. Shifting to a national register, Dr. Shumway has served in key editorial positions for foundational field journals and has been the recipient of numerous fellowships, which include being named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Most recently, she was recognized by the FUCOBI Foundation for Outstanding Contributions by Women in Aquaculture (2019). If approved by the Board of Trustees, she would be appointed to the status of “Research Professor Emeritus.”

Professor Robert Wyss retired on September 1, 2018 from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Journalism Department. Professor Wyss joined the Journalism Department in 2002 after working as a reporter and editor for more than thirty years at the Providence Journal (in Rhode Island) and the Daily Olympian (in Olympia Washington). According to Professor Maureen Croteau (Department Head, Journalism), Professor Wyss was a highly productive faculty member, publishing three books (Brimfield Rush, The Thrill of Collecting and the Hunt for the Big Score; Covering the Environment: How Journalists Work the Green Beat; and The Man Who Built the Sierra Club, A Life of David Bower). These monographs occurred alongside numerous newspaper and magazine articles (which appeared in high-profile venues such as the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, the Boston Globe, Smithsonian, Yankee, Environment Writer, E- The Environmental Magazine, and the Hartford Courant). As evident by
this brief listing, Professor Wyss is an incredibly capacious scholar, whose published work covers a diverse array of topics that include sport, the environment, nature, ecological crises, material culture, and U.S. popular culture. Professor Wyss also contributed greatly with regard to curriculum and teaching, apparent in his highly popular courses in journalism history, copy-editing, news writing, and environmental journalism. Last, but certainly not least, Professor Wyss expanded the department’s purview via a successful $500,000 NSF grant award focused on making scientific research more accessible through public-facing scholarship and journalism. If approved by the Board of Trustees, he would be appointed to the status of “Professor Emeritus.”