TO: Deans, Vice Presidents, Vice Provosts, Department Heads, and Directors

FROM: Tim Sands, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

DATE: March 13, 2013

SUBJECT: University records surveys

Since Purdue created its University Archives just three years ago, there has never been a comprehensive inventory of historic records that document Purdue’s history and its important role in defining the ‘land grant mission.’ However, the time has come to get our arms around the scale and depth of the historic record that each department, college, school, and administrative unit hold that is essential and documents Purdue history. Compounding and exacerbating this challenge is the move to a nearly total digital environment at the University. Print records stored in file cabinets or in closets and attics ultimately can be retrieved and made accessible fifty to one hundred years after creation; that cannot be said for our digital record.

Therefore, I request your cooperation and support for a two-year campus wide records survey project. This project, led by the Purdue Libraries, Archives and Special Collections, will include the assessment and identification of records generated, in print and digitally, that have historical value located in each department or unit. Lauren White, Project Archivist, will undertake the project beginning in March 2013, working in collaboration with Sammie Morris, University Archivist.

After Archivist White develops a plan on how to proceed in surveying the campus, she will establish a schedule for the next two years. When she contacts you to discuss the types of records currently created by your department or unit, please designate a staff member who will serve as liaison with her.

The long-term goal of this project will be a university wide archives program that enables efficient access to decision making documents and information about Purdue’s accomplishments, changes, growth, and innovations over time. And, in collaboration with records management in the Business Office, a schedule for the retention and disposition of University records and documents as they are generated in the future.

Thank you for supporting this important initiative to preserve the historical record of Purdue University.