February 22, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Council for Academic Governance

FROM: Provost Kim Wilcox

RE: Request for Consultation: Lyman Briggs School of Science to Return to College Status

In January, 2006, the Director of the Lyman Briggs School of Science approached me on behalf of the faculty and students of the School to request consideration of the return of the School to college status. This marks the 40th year anniversary of the School.

Over the past year, the School has engaged in discussions with departments and colleges across campus, as well as my office, about the implications of such a transition. Although I was initially reluctant to consider the formation of an additional college, I now support the proposed transition. Michigan State University has a growing reputation for excellence in undergraduate living and learning programs. Restoring the Lyman Briggs School to college status allows the University to advance residential colleges in the sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities, and establishes some uniformity in administrative structure and processes across the three colleges.

The arguments successfully made by the Residential Colleges for the Arts and Humanities and the College of Music about enhanced development opportunities, heightened national visibility, and distinctiveness of the curriculum are also persuasive on behalf of Lyman Briggs. It is for these reasons I believe their proposal has merit, and now seek consultation from appropriate standing committees of academic governance.

The attached information is provided as background for discussion.
Introduction:

Lyman Briggs was founded as a College of Michigan State University in 1967 and graduated its first class in 1971. In 1981, financial and political pressures led the University to change the status of Lyman Briggs to that of a School within the College of Natural Science. James Madison College, founded at the same time as Lyman Briggs, remained a College.

Dr. Lou Anna K. Simon’s 2003-04 report *Realizing the Vision: Liberal Arts in the 21st Century Land Grant University* acknowledges the role that residential programs currently play at MSU, calling them “a vital asset in attracting a wide range of academically talented students,” and noting that they “provide a more personal undergraduate experience,” which is “the benchmark for the kind of rigorous, high-quality practical liberal education we aspire to provide.” The report calls for MSU to “improve the quality, breadth, and community of the undergraduate experience by expanding degree-oriented residential options and doubling the number of students participating in these options.” As a result, MSU has requested both Lyman Briggs School and James Madison College to increase their enrollments (by 25% in the case of Briggs), and is preparing to establish a New Residential College in the arts and humanities in fall 2007.

Given the renewed University emphasis on residential academic communities, the imminent founding of the New Residential College in arts and humanities, and the expressed expectation that the Lyman Briggs School collaborate with James Madison College, Honors College, and the New Residential College on student recruitment, academic programs, and faculty development, it is natural to consider whether Lyman Briggs would be better able to undertake these collaborations and sustain its own distinctive mission if it returned to College status.

This document argues in the affirmative: The University’s ongoing generous investment in its residential academic programs, particularly in the expansion of the Lyman Briggs program, will have a far greater impact if Lyman Briggs returns to College status as soon as possible – preferably in fall 2006. Restoring Lyman Briggs College will also help to advance the strategic imperatives of Boldness by Design, particularly those related to the student experience, diversity, and stewardship.

At the same time, it will be essential for the new Lyman Briggs College and the College of Natural Science to maintain a strong relationship. Most Briggs students undertake coordinate majors with a CNS department, a large cohort of Briggs alumni are also CNS graduates, and a number of our faculty benefit from having joint appointments in CNS departments. Lyman Briggs gratefully acknowledges the strong support it has received from CNS under the leadership of Dean George Leroi, and anticipates that a continuing collaboration will serve both units well.
Lyman Briggs Context: The Program and Its Ongoing Expansion

The Lyman Briggs School of Science is a residential undergraduate academic unit devoted to studying the natural sciences in their historical, philosophical, literary and social context. All under one roof, LBS encompasses physics, chemistry, and biology laboratories; classrooms; faculty, administrative, and academic support staff offices; student residences; and a dining hall. With approximately 1600 students, LBS offers the benefits of a liberal arts college with the resources of a great research university. The disciplinary faculty members, whose primary appointments are in Lyman Briggs, span the fields of biology, chemistry, literature, history, mathematics, philosophy, physics, and sociology. Students' majors likewise are broadly chosen: in addition to interdisciplinary concentrations such as "Physical Sciences" or "Science and Technology Studies (STS)" , they can choose from over two dozen majors and specializations joint with departments in Natural Sciences, Engineering, James Madison, and Agriculture & Natural Resources.

The educational philosophy of Lyman Briggs is based on the belief that those sharing an interest in the sciences will benefit from learning and living together. By taking many of their academic courses in the building where they live, students find it easy to form study groups or to seek the advice and assistance of Briggs upperclassmen, who have taken the same courses in previous years. LBS faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and academic advisors based in Holmes Hall are readily accessible for questions and guidance. Many of the undergraduate learning assistants also live in Holmes Hall and are available to work with students on an individual basis.

As of fall 2005, Lyman Briggs has 1580 students, of whom 561 are entering freshman. The Briggs freshman form 37% of the CNS freshman cohort and 7.6% of the MSU freshman class; 19% are members of the Honors College. Given the national attention being paid to the need for encouraging more women and persons of color to pursue studies and careers in science, it is notable that the Briggs freshman class is 66% women and 20% students of color. As discussed on page 7, our students’ rates of membership in the Honors College, graduation within six years, and pursuit of graduate or professional studies are all significantly above the University average.

In working to expand the Lyman Briggs School, according to the University’s request, the challenge has been to maintain the aspects of LBS which Dr. Simon’s report praises: “more writing, hands-on lab experience, critical thinking experiences, small classes, and individualized faculty mentoring.” These characteristics, along with the strong sense of community, the interdisciplinary curriculum, and undergraduate engagement in the faculty’s disciplinary scholarship are what the students find especially valuable. To sustain, and indeed enhance, these facets of the Briggs experience the University has generously increased its investment in faculty and staff, in physical plant, and in operating funds. At the same time, LBS has been working with CNS to raise development funds (so far: $1.75M from foundations, $250k from individuals) to support the improvement and enlargement of the teaching laboratories required by the expansion. See the LBS Expansion Plan (available on the LBS website) for details.
Aspects of Lyman Briggs Not Affected by Resuming College Status
The following aspects of the Lyman Briggs community and program would not be changed if Lyman Briggs were restored to College status. See the Appendix for further information.

Educational Mission
Lyman Briggs is a residential undergraduate academic unit devoted to studying the natural sciences in their historical, philosophical, literary and social context. Briggs offers its students “The Best of Both Worlds”: the benefits of a liberal arts college with the resources of a great research university. Maintaining a diverse, inclusive community is also a vital part of the Briggs mission. The essential aims of Lyman Briggs did not change when it became a School, and would not alter if College status were restored.

Size of the student body.
The size of Lyman Briggs is limited both by its physical facilities in Holmes Hall and by its nature as a smaller, more close-knit community within the larger university. The current university-requested expansion to a freshman class of 625 and total enrollment of 1810 will saturate the physical and community resources. The size of Briggs would not be altered by a change to College status.

Class sizes.
The sizes of the classes are set by pedagogical considerations (e.g. promoting interactive class sessions, inquiry-based labs, and writing-intensive courses) and are long established within Briggs. This would not be affected by a return to College status.

Curriculum, majors, and advising
The Briggs curriculum and the system of coordinate majors and fields of concentration are independent of the status of Briggs. They have existed since the founding of Briggs as a College, through its transition to a School, and would remain intact if Briggs returned to College status. Likewise, Lyman Briggs would continue to have its own Academic Orientation Program (AOP), Welcome Week, and advising staff to serve students’ academic needs.

Size of the faculty.
The size of the faculty is currently growing to accommodate the expansion of the student body, while maintaining the scope of the educational programs, in accordance with the Lyman Briggs Expansion Plan. Making Briggs into a College will not, of itself, require a further increase in the number of faculty.

Faculty joint appointments
The faculty members in the Lyman Briggs School of Science are actively engaged in research and scholarship as well as in excellent, innovative teaching. This is made explicit at every stage of the hiring, reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes. The faculty will continue to have joint appointments in disciplinary departments to facilitate their scholarship and increase ties between Briggs and the broader university.
Scholarly Mission and Collaborations
Briggs will maintain its interdisciplinary research mission, which is distinct from that of the College of Natural Science and which is a source of strong collaborations with other units across the university. The primary scholarly field of each Briggs faculty member matches that of the joint appointment department; our 14 tenure-stream faculty members are spread across 10 disciplinary departments, many of which are outside CNS (see Appendix). While many Briggs faculty members individually participate in research clusters within their disciplinary departments, the Briggs faculty do not constitute a research cluster in any single CNS discipline. There are, however, two interdisciplinary research clusters within Briggs, to which many of the faculty belong: (a) History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science, and (b) Scholarship of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in Science and Mathematics. The first involves the disciplines of several colleges other than CNS (e.g. CSS, CAL, CHM). The second is not a discipline supported by individual CNS departments; rather, it overlaps the interests of the Division of Science and Mathematics Education, which jointly reports to CNS and the College of Education.

Admissions.
The first-come first-served admissions policy of Briggs serves the community well by promoting diversity and access. This will not change if Briggs becomes a College.

Student Participation in Governance
The Lyman Briggs tradition of student participation in standing and search committees is an essential part of the community and will be maintained.
Aspects of Lyman Briggs Directly Affected by Resuming College Status
See the Appendix for further details.

Visibility
As a College, the Lyman Briggs community will have greater visibility within and outside MSU. This will enhance opportunities in student and faculty recruitment, raise the value of an LBS degree as perceived by graduate and professional schools, and help Briggs gain more widespread acknowledgment for its accomplishments. These issues were referred to explicitly in many of the survey responses and discussions. Briggs recruitment staff, in particular, have stated quite forcefully that the designation ‘school’ is ambiguous to potential students and their parents, who tend to infer that Briggs is a pre-college rather than an undergraduate program.

MSU is expanding James Madison and Lyman Briggs and creating a New Residential College in arts and humanities because it perceives these residential/academic programs to be valuable for recruiting high-ability students and providing a top-quality educational experience. MSU will clearly benefit from having these programs be highly visible. The greater visibility that College status would accord Lyman Briggs can only help MSU.

Parity and Partnerships
Having the same status as its peers, James Madison College and the New Residential College, will enable Lyman Briggs to be a more equal and effective partner in joint ventures on recruitment of excellent students, fundraising, creation of academic specializations, course exchanges, and faculty cluster hires.

Reporting
A Dean reporting directly to the Provost would lead Lyman Briggs College. At the present time, when residential programs are integral to the university’s success in recruitment and academic quality, such access would help to ensure that the Briggs residential program receives the attention required for its continuing success. It would also mean that the fortunes of Briggs would be less adversely affected by the advent of a CNS Dean less appreciative of Briggs than the current Dean. On the other hand, it means that Briggs would need to speak up for itself as a small College within MSU rather than having one of the largest colleges in the university advocate on its behalf.

Resources
The change in visibility and reporting line would directly affect the ability of Briggs to obtain the resources required to maintain and improve its programs.

For example, within MSU, Briggs would be able to speak directly to the upper administration to advocate for support of its programs during the APP&R and Quality Fund processes. On the other hand, Briggs would also be directly responsible for its share of any budgetary cuts, rather than benefiting from the ability of CNS to mitigate the effects on its departments.

As a College, Briggs would also be expected to maintain an active development effort. Realization of greater development (including endowment) income would allow Briggs to provide new academic opportunities to its students and faculty.
Student Affairs
The Student Affairs Office of Lyman Briggs would take on responsibility for certain matters now handled by the CNS Associate Dean for Student Affairs. These include certification of graduation applications as meeting College requirements, monitoring administrative action forms, ensuring FERPA compliance, certifying transfer credit equivalencies, monitoring course listings and changes, and dealing with students at risk of academic probation or dismissal.

CNS currently handles science-related pre-professional (e.g. pre-medical, pre-dental, pre-vet) advising for all MSU students and it is anticipated that this will continue. Hence, Briggs students would still receive such advising through CNS.

Benefits
• LBC would be able to monitor student requirements and approve substitutions directly, when appropriate in the context of the Briggs curriculum and a particular student’s plan of study
• Advising of Briggs students would be maintained more smoothly as students progress towards degree completion

Challenges
• Both LBC and the college in which a student completes a coordinate major should receive appropriate credit for their contributions towards the students’ education. SCH are one natural mechanism, but others could be explored.
• It will be necessary to maintain sufficient equivalency of requirements for each Briggs coordinate major with its departmental counterpart. This is already done not only with CNS departments but also with departments in other colleges and should be feasible.
• Attention should continue to be paid to coordinating the advising a student receives from Briggs advisors and faculty (departmental) advisors.
• Briggs students are currently eligible for academic awards in the department of their coordinate major, in which they take many upper-level courses. We propose to work with the coordinate major departments so this arrangement can continue.
• At present, Briggs students attend the CNS graduation ceremony and can choose to march with their Briggs cohort, their coordinate department cohort, or both. Some means should be found to continue honoring students’ dual ties to Briggs and their coordinate major department; perhaps a joint CNS-LBC graduation ceremony should be considered. The distinctive Lyman Briggs graduation brunch would continue to be held to honor students’ accomplishments within the Lyman Briggs program as well as in the wider University.
Change of Major
Any student wishing to change major from a Lyman Briggs coordinate major or field of concentration to a major in another college will still be able to do so, provided s/he meets the transfer requirement of the other college. This presents no change to current procedures for students transferring to most MSU colleges. Students wishing to transfer to a CNS major would now have to meet the CNS requirement of a 2.0 GPA; that would be the only alteration to current procedures.

Coordination with CNS
To best serve the academic and career planning needs of Lyman Briggs students and faculty, it is proposed that Briggs maintain certain well-defined ties to CNS to facilitate communication and coordination. These include the following:
- An LBC representative would attend the monthly CNS Chairs & Directors meetings
- LBC would have a non-voting representative on the CNS Curriculum Committee
- LBC and CNS would continue to collaborate on identifying faculty mentors for their Honors College students who receive Professorial Assistantships
- LBC and CNS would continue to coordinate professional development activities for their student affairs and advising staff
- LBC faculty would continue to have access to the CNS Research Services Office.
- The LBC Career Services and Internships Officer would partner with his/her CNS counterpart to serve the career planning needs of their students and mutual alumni.
- Given our many joint alumni, it would be essential for the LBC Development Officer to work closely with CNS Development. A position shared between the two colleges might be appropriate.
- Likewise, the LBC and CNS Alumni and Public Relations Coordinators should collaborate closely.

Development
As a College, Lyman Briggs would be expected to employ a dedicated development officer; this would enable us to exploit several key development opportunities:
- With the help of CNS, we have recently made a more concerted effort at fundraising, using the lab renovation as the focus. This has built momentum that can now transition into a more sustained and structured development program.
- The change of status should be a fundraising magnet, as the lab renovation has been. The attendant immediate publicity and increased long-term visibility will make a gift supporting Briggs seem more desirable to our alumni and friends.
- The recent retirements of many of the original LBS faculty members presents an opportunity to establish endowed scholarships in their honor. Some of these have been started but most are not yet fully endowed.
- The Dutton endowment gives critically needed support for bringing new young faculty into Lyman Briggs. The expansion has accelerated the pace of hiring and made the increase of this endowment a priority.
Benefits:
Realization of greater development (including endowment) income will allow Briggs to provide new academic opportunities to its students (scholarships, research internship support, special seminar), and faculty/staff (support for scholarly and pedagogical projects, professional development funds). In the long term, as the Briggs alumni cohort increases in number and depth, the development effort should become self-sustaining.

Challenges:
LBS and CNS should work closely on these issues and share resources where possible. Many alumni and development prospects are in common; the two colleges (and perhaps also the MSU medical schools, where many Briggs students matriculate) should approach these in a coordinated fashion so as to respect their personal preferences. The Development officer will also have a direct reporting line to the University Development Office.

Alumni and Public Relations
A Lyman Briggs College would have a combined Alumni and Public Relations Coordinator, responsible for improving alumni involvement in Briggs and using the web and other media to enhance the visibility of Briggs and the accomplishments of its community members. This person would report to the Development officer.

Alumni benefits
The alumni coordinator would have the time and resources to build on recent efforts to strengthen alumni participation in Briggs.
- More regular communications via e-mail, the website, letters, and the Briggantine
- Meetings with alumni at Homecoming, LBAA meetings, and gatherings in cities with large concentrations of alumni
It would also enable Briggs to provide consistent and well-organized opportunities for alumni to interact with current and prospective students, including individual mentoring (e.g. via e-mail), participation in recruitment events, and regular presentations to current students in the context of career-planning activities.

Visibility benefits
The public relations coordinator would give focused attention to communicating the accomplishments of Briggs faculty, staff, students, and alumni to University Relations and external media. S/he would consult closely with the LBC computer support staff on improving and maintaining the Lyman Briggs website. These efforts would help Briggs reap the benefits of the visibility boost conferred by returning to College status.

Challenges:
The Briggs Alumni and Public Relations Coordinator must work in synch with his/her CNS counterpart. We have many alumni in common and must take care to acknowledge their connections to CNS as well as to Lyman Briggs. Likewise, the Coordinator will need to strengthen the working relationship between the LBAA and the MSUAA.
Bylaws and Governance
Lyman Briggs would need to revise its bylaws to reflect the change of status; the bylaws of the original Lyman Briggs College are available as a template.

The College would require appropriate standing committees to enact community governance functions. By Briggs tradition and bylaws, such committees have student as well as faculty representation and it is anticipated that this would continue. In some cases, existing standing committees of the Lyman Briggs School could become the analogous standing committees of the College. For example, the Briggs Advisory Council could become the LBC Faculty/Student Advisory Council; the Briggs Educational Policy Committee, the LBC Curriculum Committee; and the Briggs Awards Committee, the LBC Awards Committee. In other cases, new standing committees would need to be created; for example, in parallel with the CNS Dean’s Women’s Advisory Committee, an LBC Diversity Advisory Committee could be created.

University Governance
Lyman Briggs would have representation on University-level governance committees. It may be that Briggs, Madison, and the New Residential College would seek to share representation on some committees, as was done by Briggs, Madison, and Morrill Colleges before 1981. Such sharing would encourage close communication among the three colleges to ensure that the viewpoint of each was appropriately represented, while reducing the service burden on the relatively small faculties of the three colleges.

External Advisory Board
A College Dean should have such a board to help keep the College’s mission well focused and ensure that the institution remains attentive to external realities. All CNS units have been encouraged to have their own Chair’s/Director’s advisory boards; Briggs has already begun to form one, and this could be the nucleus of the LBC Dean’s EAB.
Conclusions

This proposal has argued that restoring Lyman Briggs to College status at the earliest possible date will enable Briggs and MSU to take advantage of important opportunities in development and student recruitment and will maximize the effectiveness of the University’s investment in the expansion of Lyman Briggs. Lyman Briggs College will make strong contributions advancing the strategic imperatives of Boldness by Design, particularly those related to the student experience, diversity, and stewardship.

MSU is expanding James Madison and Lyman Briggs and creating the New Residential College in arts and humanities because it perceives these residential academic programs to be valuable for recruiting high-ability students and providing a top-quality educational experience. Arguments about the nature and function of the academic program for the New Residential College that support its college status have been shown here to apply equally well to Lyman Briggs. Moreover, comparison with the residential learning programs at other U.S. universities underscores the unique academic character of Briggs and Madison, with their distinctive curricula, majors, and faculty. Putting all three programs on an equal footing will make it easier for MSU to exploit their unique character as part of a strategy to differentiate the University from its peers. For these reasons, it is appropriate that Lyman Briggs become a College again.

In addition, it is clear that MSU’s significant investment in its residential academic programs, will have a far greater impact if Lyman Briggs returns to College status. Having the same status as its peers, James Madison College and the New Residential College, will enable Lyman Briggs to be a more equal and effective partner in the joint ventures expected of the three units. The unique approaches to science-related teaching and scholarship within Briggs would be more easily encouraged, developed, and rewarded if Lyman Briggs were once again an independent college. In addition, the greater visibility conferred by being a College will be a boon to student recruitment and development efforts. For these reasons, restoring Lyman Briggs to College status will make it an even more effective unit of MSU.

Lyman Briggs looks forward to collaborating with the College of Natural Science on effecting the proposed transition in a manner that will ensure a continuing partnership benefiting all of our students, faculty, alumni, and programs.