Recommendations to the Dean following the October 11, 2011 Faculty Council meeting

The October meeting included a presentation by Dr. David August, chair of the Advisory Committee on Appointments and Promotions during which he described the development of new guidelines for faculty tracks and criteria for promotion along those tracks. Discussion of how the current guidelines are communicated to faculty highlighted the importance of the role of department chairs in mentoring faculty in their departments. This observation, along with discussion that followed regarding communication between the administration and faculty, underlie two primary recommendations to the Dean from the Faculty Council:

1. The Faculty Council recommends that **steps be taken to improve communication** between the Dean's Administration and Executive Team, the Executive Council, Department Chairs, Standing Committees and the Faculty. The Council applauds efforts to make the RWJMS website more user friendly for those who wish to be better informed of important policy changes, administrative changes, or actions being taken on behalf of the Faculty. These efforts would include the posting of meeting minutes, draft policies for which input is sought, etc., and will require a commitment of administrative support to improve functionality of the website.

2. In light of the restructuring of the basic science departments and reorganization of administrative functions critical both to departments and individual faculty, **the role of a Department Chair needs to be defined clearly.** Department Chairs play a pivotal role in communicating information and mentoring faculty. These roles must be valued and recognized, but in an age of shrinking resources available to departments, the degree to which Chairs can set priorities and influence the direction of their departments is unclear.

As a point of information, issues regarding distribution of faculty time and effort based on clinical, teaching, service and research obligations were discussed. These issues were raised in light of the new pre-clinical curriculum, which is no longer departmentally based, and the reported effort by the RWJ Medical Group to incentivize clinical faculty to increase patient efficiency. Faculty members are faced with multiple demands on their time and must make decisions as to how best to distribute their effort. Thought should be given to increasing the transparency with which fund allocations are made so that Faculty members can make educated decisions regarding the distribution of their effort. Optimally, such decisions would maximize the use of individual faculty member skills in ways that best contribute to meeting all of the mission areas of the School.