APPENDIX A:

December 16, 2008

TO:       Faculty Senate Executive Committee

From:   Gene Newburgh
       Chair, Academic Advising Council

Re:       Alert Notification System

During the summer AAC Review with the incoming president, AAC was directed to follow up on the Alert Notification System newly adopted by OSU. Todd Simmons, Assistant Vice President of University Advancement, came to our November meeting and gave a detailed plan of the red/yellow/green system of warning for OSU students & faculty and how it would be communicated via an email alert, on the web, radio, etc.

AAC members quickly ascertained that the alert plan Todd presented is a logistical one with the students’ safety of foremost importance. There is, however, no alignment whatsoever with academic expectations. Thus, students might be “alerted” to use precaution and not come to campus under certain circumstances, but they might suffer academic repercussions from doing so since faculty does not have a compatible plan to accommodate such absences. Numerous anecdotal examples from this conflicting message demonstrated the additional stress placed on students. One AAC member referred to a student who had a graded pop-quiz just to penalize those who hadn’t made the effort to attend class on a yellow alert day.

As our non-traditional student base expands, we are noticing far more students commuting from Salem, Portland and Eugene and the coast. If the message of safety is sincere, we feel there needs to be steps taken to have alignment with the academic process (testing, attendance, homework/project deadlines, etc.).

Thus, we are asking the Faculty Senate to consider our request to define how faculty would align their practices with the university’s safety message and how these guidelines would be communicated to all OSU faculty. Perhaps a uniform statement of expectations related to each of the alerts might be drafted to be included in all class syllabi, as is done with ADA regulations.

Thank you for your consideration; we look forward to your feedback.