To: UNI Faculty Senate

From: Educational Policies Commission

Date: November 5, 2012

RE: Educational Policy Commission statement regarding changes to 3.17 Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

The EPC has met and discussed the issue of adding “language in the policy that said the instructor should allow some means of emergency communication to the classroom” (email from Tim McKenna). The EPC believes that adding such a statement violates the spirit of the Personal Electronic Devices policy. Requiring faculty and/or a student to have their cell phone on during class is problematic. First, not all faculty members and students have a cell phone. Second, it will undoubtedly be disruptive. Regardless of who is designated as having to leave their cell phone on during class, it is a given that it will go off at some point during class time, and perhaps multiple times. This will require either the faculty or the student-designee to check from whom the text message, voice mail, or email (for those with a smart phone) was sent. Third, not all classroom/rooms/buildings receive cell phone service (e.g., McCollum Science Hall, Rod Library). Requiring faculty or a student to have a cell phone on in class in these locations is a moot point if there is no service. What accommodations will the university make for these rooms/buildings? If they can make accommodations for these rooms/buildings, then it suggests that university administrators can provide the means of emergency communication in the classroom, rather than relying on faculty and/or students to do this. In fact, the EPC believes that the responsibility for maintaining student, faculty, staff, and guest safety lies with the University administration, and should not be left to individual faculty members in the ways suggested by the President’s Cabinet. It is incumbent on the university to provide the specific means in which students, faculty, staff and guests will be notified of an emergency on campus.