Dear Colleagues:
I am very pleased to announce that Claire Sterk has accepted my invitation to serve as acting provost beginning November 10, following Earl Lewis’s departure for New York City, where he will assume the presidency of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation early next year.

As you know, we are in the advanced stages of the search for Earl’s permanent successor as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. The search committee, headed by Candler School of Theology Dean Jan Love, plans to send forward three to four candidates for my review by early December. Claire has kindly agreed to serve in an acting capacity until December 31 and possibly later, if needed, until the chosen finalist is able to take office.

For most of our deans, faculty, and senior administrators, Claire Sterk needs no introduction. She is well known for her energy, optimism, personal warmth, and extraordinary ability to juggle multiple responsibilities as a senior faculty member, principal investigator, and senior vice provost. Importantly, she works in a seamless fashion across divisions, with her major academic appointment based in the Rollins School of Public Health and associated appointments in Emory College of Arts and Sciences.

In 2000, she was appointed Candler Professor in Public Health. In 2005, she was appointed senior vice provost for academic affairs. She also holds appointments in anthropology, sociology, and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies. Claire is a former associate dean for research in the Rollins School, and served for five years as chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Health Education.

A native of the Netherlands with a PhD from Erasmus University in Rotterdam, Claire has focused her sociological research on the connections between drug and alcohol abuse and high-risk sexual behavior. She has received funding by the CDC and/or the NIH for more than two decades, and currently serves as PI on two NIH grants, totaling more than $6.3 million, on the relationship between neighborhood effects, HIV risk-taking and drug abuse. Please join me in welcoming Claire to this important – albeit time-limited – job as acting provost. I know that she and the rest of her colleagues in the Provost’s Office will be grateful for the understanding and support of the entire campus community during this time of transition.

Best regards,
Jim Wagner