DATE:

TO:

FROM: Chris Roush

SUBJECT: Classroom Observation

The School conducts in-class observations of first-year faculty members, nontenured faculty members, part-time teachers and graduate teaching assistants. We have several teachers in those categories, and I thank you for agreeing to contribute to this important activity by observing this semester one of our colleagues:

TEACHER TO BE OBSERVED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is not an evaluation. You are not being asked to criticize, rate or grade that teacher. You should observe carefully and tell that teacher what you saw in the classroom. It will be appropriate to offer suggestions. The objective is to improve teaching, and our experience has shown that everyone – those observing and those being observed – benefits from the experience. The teacher being observed has been given similar information and has been asked to arrange the following meetings with you:

1. **Pre-observation conference.** Choose a date for the observation and determine which course is to be observed if the faculty member teachers more than one course or section of a course. Because of the value of this for the teacher being observed, please do this as soon as possible. I have advised teachers who are to be observed to choose a day when they will be at their best and to avoid days when exams, guest speakers and student reports are scheduled for the entire class period. (If the student reports are an essential part of a course, and if commenting about reports is an important part of the teaching approach, that would be OK.) Ask for copies of the syllabus and discuss the overall course and the teacher’s plans for the designated class section. Ask about an appropriate place to sit in the classroom. At the pre-observation conference, it will be a good idea to set up a date for a post-observation conference, which should be a week or so after the observation.
2. **Observation.** On the day of the class, you should try to arrive a few minutes early and be as inconspicuous as possible. You will want to take notes, based on the Classroom Observation Checklist, which is attached. If the class is a two-and-a-half-hour course, such as “Newswriting,” you should stay during the lecture part of the class, then leave when students begin to write. Following the observation, please write a one- to two-page summary of the instructor’s teaching using the Classroom Observation Checklist as a guide for discussion topics. You may find that some items on the checklist will not be pertinent to the class you observe. You should also feel free to add comments about things that are not on the list. Remember that the objective of the visit and the report is to help improve teaching, so you may offer specific and concrete observations and suggestions. Give a copy to the instructor, ideally within two weeks of the observation.
3. **Post-observation conference.** Set this time when you send the observation report. The conference, which should be fairly soon after sharing the report, gives you a chance to discuss any points, such as the teacher’s clarification of a particular interaction with a student. After this conversation, you should make any changes in the draft report, and then give me a copy.

RETURN TO CHRIS ROUSH

Return this form to me once you have set dates for the observation.

Observation plans for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The pre-observation conference is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The observation is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.