Follow-up to the
Quality of Academic Life Committee Report

The University-wide faculty committee on the Quality of Academic Life undertook a formidable task; they assessed the challenges faculty encounter in their day-to-day work as well as at crucial junctures in the academic cycle (promotion, retention, recruitment etc.). The committee offered a series of recommendations expected to ameliorate the most pressing issues and generally improve the faculty campus and academic life experience. I am indebted to this group for their thorough work and beneficial suggestions. (Their report is available on the Office of the Provost website (http://provost.uchicago.edu/news.shtml).)

The committee reminds us of the fundamental requirement of preserving faculty time for research and teaching. The recommendations highlight the need to assess the quality of, and perhaps realign, administrative and research support available to faculty. Furthermore, there is a call to redesign some of the processes used to implement policies directly applicable to the research and academic appointment enterprise, as well as the processes used to consider and implement the administrative systems and procedures that underlie teaching- and research-related business functions. Finally, the committee encourages University administration to examine and update policies and practices that relate to important non-work activities complementary to the academic enterprise. For example, efficient service provisions such as access to campus-based and well-organized medical care is not only a recruitment advantage but also saves time and builds community.

The remainder of this document details the faculty committee's recommendations, notes the progress made to date, and provides a venue that we may routinely update as we implement additional improvements to address these concerns. While this document serves as a blueprint to guide University actions, some recommendations may only be addressed at the level of an individual division or school (e.g., standardized sabbatical policies). I encourage everyone to consider the findings and recommendations presented and, where possible, use faculty meetings and other departmental, divisional, and school channels to help address the issues raised and to complement centrally-driven changes.

Committee Recommendations and University Follow-up

I.   General Administrative Issues

The Committee indicates that faculty across the University cite insufficient administrative support. They report faculty have become increasingly responsible for administrative tasks (expense/travel report processing, planning workshops and job talks, etc.) because almost all departments and divisions have reduced the number of administrative assistants employed. At the same time, however, the Committee reminds us that the University has implemented new systems, for example GEMS and UChicago Time (an electronic timecard system), that increase the effort required of faculty to complete such tasks and are thus not good uses of faculty time nor very cost-effective for the University. These administrative systems can be counterproductive when they shift tasks from clerical staff onto faculty. The Committee indicated an appreciation of the fact that the issues surrounding GEMS and other such systems are examined routinely, and that considerable attempts have been made to reduce the burden on faculty, but report that there remain substantial burdens that additional support staff could ameliorate. With these issues in mind, the Committee recommends that the University (1) conduct a survey of staffing efficiency (alignment of employee skills and responsibilities, faculty/staff ratio, etc.) to ensure the best possible faculty support and (2) create a mechanism for faculty to provide feedback (e.g., quality assurance phone line, dedicated and frequently checked email address) to centrally supported systems and services that sometimes are not as valuable for faculty as they might be with some opportunity for feedback and modification.

Follow-up:

Changes to both the GEMS and UChicago Time systems, processes, and platforms have been implemented. First, additional funds were allocated to the Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Sciences Divisions for each to hire one additional staff person dedicated solely to processing GEMS transactions for faculty. The professional schools already provide such services. Second, the GEMS system was modified to allow faculty members to designate formal delegates to remove, either partially or fully, the need for the faculty themselves to engage directly with the GEMS system. It is our intent that every school and division has in place a mechanism that (i) allows faculty to assign dealing with GEMS matters to a staff member, and (ii) there is adequate staff support to handle these requests in a timely way. Third, central staff were able to modify the UChicago Time system in response to faculty suggestions: UChicago Time now functions in a manner that more directly replicates the paper timecards it replaces (e.g., so that students who might choose to work during non-traditional working hours may simply enter the actual hours worked (e.g., 10pm-2am)) and also contains a delegate function so that faculty may authorize other individuals to approve time cards for more junior staff (e.g., postdoctoral scholars may approve the time cards of undergraduates working directly under their supervision in a laboratory setting). Finally, both GEMS and UChicago Time were upgraded to platform agnostic applications so that faculty may access them from mobile devices, laptops, or any kiosk on campus.

New deputy deans and associate deans for administration have been appointed in the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions, with the addition of the requisite resources. The new structures have been designed to support faculty in their intellectual and administrative lives. The Humanities Division has established two new deputy dean positions: Bill Brown, Deputy Dean for Academic and Research Initiatives, will coordinate with the Directors and Chairs and work with faculty members throughout the Division to develop new research initiatives and programs, and Mario Santana, Deputy Dean for Languages, will oversee all aspects of language instruction and pedagogy. The Social Sciences Division has appointed Matt Christian as Associate Dean for Research Initiatives to work with the faculty to help develop and implement new programs. Furthermore, both divisions have appointed senior staff to streamline operations and enhance the quality and responsiveness of the Deans' offices.

Furthermore, we are engaging the divisional and college deans in conversations and assessments to explore the most productive configuration and type of mid-level staff support. We have extended this into a formal staffing analysis currently being conducted by the University's budget office to determine, from an institutional perspective, whether resources are deployed as effectively as possible and to identify where staffing reconfigurations might better serve faculty. The hope is to establish clearly the go-to people for specific problems in each division and school over the course of this year's budget cycle. We will work with faculty and central administrative staff to design an effective mechanism to collect further feedback about the impact of administrative systems, consonant with the ever-shifting government legal requirements.

Finally, we will work to establish a process to solicit regular feedback from faculty on the support they receive from administrative staff in the offices of their respective deans as well as from central services. By soliciting feedback at every juncture we can more readily identify and correct insufficiencies in responsiveness and more reliably meet faculty needs. More information will be posted as progress is made.

The Committee also indicates that University policy development often appears guided by a desire to achieve uniform institution-wide classifications that are broadly imposed, rather than policies that are flexible enough to accommodate the significant variations in timelines, research practices, and cultures of different disciplines, divisions and schools. New rules, faculty believe, are introduced with little input from those who will be impacted the most. To ameliorate this, the Committee recommends that the University implement formal, low-burden processes for faculty to vet directly relevant policy decisions.

Follow-up:

It is always our goal to include faculty in the creation or modification of matters related to faculty. Some times this is manifest as decanal review, input and acceptance of policies. Other times, this is accomplished by direct faculty involvement via standing or *ad hoc* committees that explore various policy needs and either create or update policy.

The University constitutes numerous standing committees and boards that meet at least once a quarter to discuss matters important to faculty, staff and the operation of the University. With regard to institutional practices, these include: the Benefits Committee, the Committee on Campus Planning, the Diversity Leadership Council, the Committee on Academic Fraud, the Faculty Retirement and Oversight Committee, the Committee on Intellectual Property, the Panel on Unlawful Harassment, the Council on Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences Boards, the Board of Computing Activities and Services, the Board of the Library, the Board of Student and Campus Life, and the Board of University Publications. When specific issues arise outside of the purview or expertise of the standing committees, we form *ad hoc* faculty committees to make recommendations on policy. Examples of recent *ad hoc* faculty committees range from those recommending the establishment, governance, and structure of the Institute for Molecular Engineering, the relationship between campus arts initiatives and performing artists, to questions on student disciplinary procedures and graduate student international activities, to factors directly related to faculty compensation. As each committee concludes its work, the reports are posted to the Provost's Office website (http:// provost.uchicago.edu/news.shtml).

There is always the question, however, of the balance between involvement of faculty on such committees and respect for faculty time. Where formal faculty committees are not created, we have attempted to work closely with representatives of those affected to establish appropriate guidelines and approaches. We will renew our efforts to achieve the proper balance as new policies are introduced and existing policies are reviewed and updated, whether in response to internal needs or to external pressures.

II. Research- and Teaching-related Issues

Turning their attention to matters that directly impact faculty teaching and research, the Committee enumerated a series of recommendations, some of which echo recommendations made when considering general administrative intrusions on faculty time. The faculty Committee recommends that the University: (1) consult divisions and schools for input when alteration to the appointment processes and procedures for other academic appointees are being considered; (2) survey research support staffing efficiency (alignment of employee skills and responsibilities, faculty/staff ratio, etc.); (3) explore the concept of a "Faculty Campus Concierge" and how such a position might make a significant contribution to freeing faculty time for research and teaching duties; (4) standardize a process by which school, divisional, and departmental individuals are routinely consulted prior to the implementation of any new technology or procedures related to research or teaching; (5) consider seed grant or mid-career grants to bolster unproven or career-shifting research programs so that external funding is more likely to be successful; and (6) develop and disseminate a database of shared research facilities.

Follow-up:

In recent years, we have devoted a great deal of attention to other academic appointees (i.e., visiting scholars and researchers, postdoctoral fellows, and other non-tenure track appointments) in an attempt to rationalize the manner in which these appointments are made, reviewed, renewed, and terminated. This has always involved faculty input and a great deal of consultation with faculty and relevant deans. Yet we realize this has been, at times, a confusing series of policies to interpret and implement. In an

attempt to clarify this, we have created, and attach to this report as an appendix, a matrix that details the nature of the various other academic appointments available. This document has been vetted by the divisional and college deans and we welcome your reactions as you use it in your efforts to recruit colleagues here for short-term visits or longer term in support of your research efforts. We will work as well with Information Technology Services to develop a more routine approach to consulting faculty as new technology is considered for classroom or research purposes.

We are including, in the staffing assessment discussed above, research and teaching support staff within the college and divisions to ensure a robust analysis of those available (or needed) to support the academic enterprise.

Still remaining to be addressed are the recommendations on the establishment of a faculty concierge, seed grants program, and a database of shared research facilities. The local need for, and likely the desired characteristics of, each one of these recommendations will vary by unit, and creating a functional resource will require a thoughtful design and implementation process and a weighing of divisional and school priorities. These conversations will continue through this academic year.

III. Longer-term Considerations

The final group of recommendations represents longer-term needs that also eventually impact faculty time. These recommendations warrant immediate attention because for any given cohort of faculty, these are current needs or issues. The Committee recommends that: (1) all schools and divisions establish a formal sabbatical policies best suited to their faculty; (2) the Laboratory Schools move its deposits deadlines for the next academic year to a much earlier date so that faculty being recruit have a better sense of the likelihood of enrolling their children there; (3) the University consider making sufficient financial resources available to the Laboratory Schools to ensure that excess capacity is preserved over the next several years (if the Laboratory Schools immediately fill to capacity after expanding, a unique recruiting opportunity for the University will have been squandered); (4) the University routinely explore and improve issues related to the provision of faculty salaries, the extent of service demands, accessibility to medical care, child education services and the like as they have the ability to adversely impact the faculty experience on campus; and (5) the University review its communication strategies, and at the very least centralize and magnify the visibility of the services that this Committee learned are already provided but not known to all faculty.
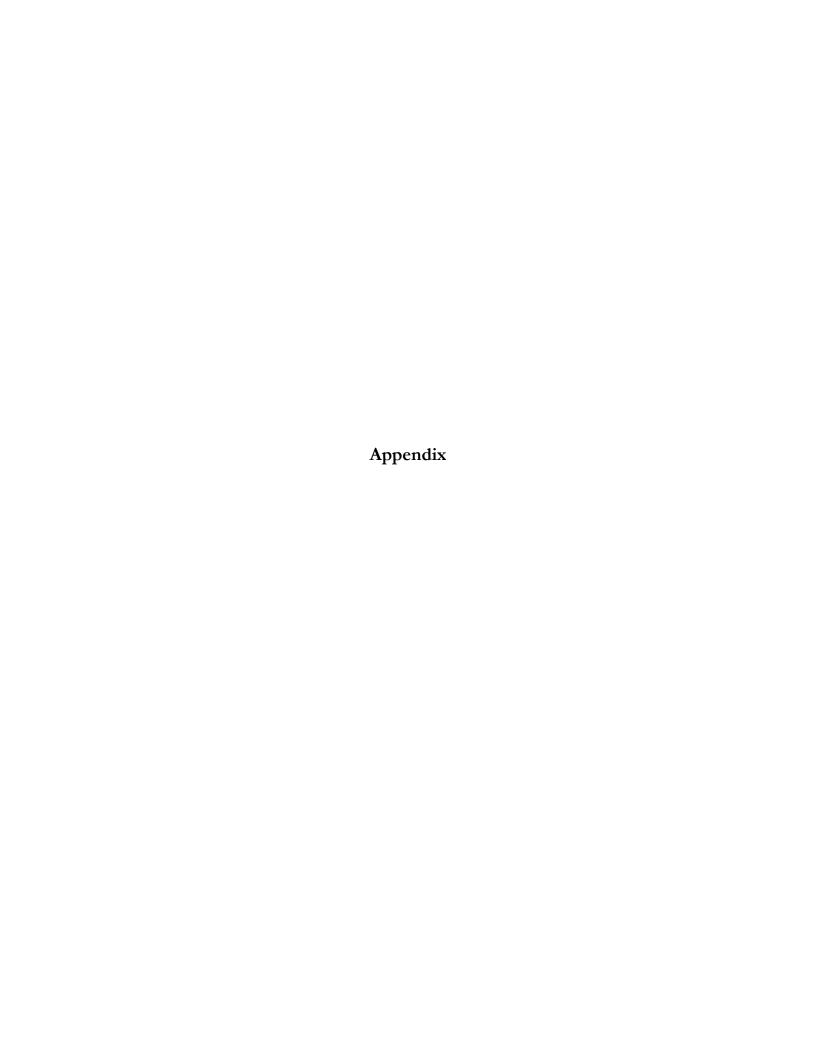
Follow-up:

The first of these recommendations, faculty sabbatical policies, is solely within the purview of each division or school, and we will follow the sense of the various faculties with regard to need and form in each division and school. The recently established sabbatical policy in the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions is available as a template. The remaining recommendations are discussed below.

The next two recommendations speak to the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, a tremendous asset to our community and to the entire Chicago area. As such, space within each Laboratory Schools classroom is in great demand. Recognizing this increased demand and the essential role Lab plays in faculty retention and recruitment, the University has invested in an ambitious expansion of the campus. The construction of Earl Shapiro Hall on the Early Childhood Campus now underway on Stony Island Avenue is a key step in the expansion of the Laboratory Schools, where enrollment will rise from 1,750 students (nursery through high school) to a projected 2,050 students. Following the Committee's suggestion, we have moved up the deposit deadlines from February 1 to January 15 to help provide some indication of open space to new applicants. Finally, during the last academic year we instituted an additional per-child, lump-sum tuition supplement, scaled to family income, to assist families as they face Laboratory Schools' tuition increases. This new supplement augments the 50 percent tuition remission

that is available to all University faculty, and the Laboratory Schools' financial aid budget, which is available to all Laboratory families meeting certain financial requirements.

The final recommendations are holistic statements that remind us to explore routinely issues that have the ability to adversely impact the faculty experience on campus, and then to communicate more effectively what is being done to improve the quality of faculty academic life. The latter is particularly important because not all services, the Committee learned, are known to all faculty. We will continue to work with faculty both to identify new issues and communicate both existing and new programs and policies. A timely example of an issue that we have struggled to address over the years is campus-based child-care for children of our faculty, staff and students. Our current, campus-based, child-care initiative, which will culminate with two campus centers opening in 2013, has been informed by clear and repeated faculty expressions of need; they have been influenced greatly (from steering committee through architect and service provider selection committees) by faculty participation; and we are looking forward to providing this service to our community. We will work with the deans to establish systematic approaches to information dissemination so that faculty members will have proximate sources of information when dealing with day to day matters that impact the quality of their academic lives as well as fielding questions from colleagues being recruited to our faculty.

Appendix

Visitors, "postdocs," and common non-tenure track appointments

1. Visiting academic appointments are recommended by academic units (divisions, schools, IME, or the College), and require the approval of the Provost.

2. A visiting appointment normally may be offered only to an individual who has academic rank from a "home" academic institution: it must be the case that the end of the appointment at the home institution extends beyond the end of the visit to the University. Visiting appointees do not have a University of Chicago Statutory academic rank: they bring their rank with them, and the terms of their appointments here are subject to administrative policies set in the Office of the Provost.

3. Visiting appointments almost always fall into two broad categories.

   a. First, there are visitors who are invited here to meet a need that we have, to explore a possible faculty position here, to contribute to a research effort. The University typically either pays the visitor a salary or reimburses the visitor's home institution for its cost of salary and benefits. For such individuals, units should request appointments as, e.g., Visiting Professor.

   b. Second, some visitors come to collaborate, learn techniques, use our Libraries or other research facilities, while on leave from their home institution, but not to provide services to the University. Generally such individuals should come as a "Visiting Scholar." A "Visiting Scholar" is asked to indicate acceptance of a letter of agreement form, approved by the chair, dean, and provost, offering a temporary affiliation with the University for a defined purpose, under the sponsorship of a member of the faculty who must be in residence during the visit. Since Visiting Scholars are in the professoriate, they are presumed to be scholars who have achieved independence, do not need mentoring, and have sufficient financial resources. (Special rules apply to those who need a visa.)

      i. Unpaid appointments as Visiting Professor, Visiting Research Associate, etc., are strongly discouraged under these circumstances, because of the implication that by using those titles we are offering a person employment. Justification will be required.

4. Sometimes we offer tenured faculty positions to individuals who decline to accept because, for whatever reason, they are not willing to resign from the positions they hold. Although our offer with tenure remains open, such a person cannot be a member of our faculty until they have resigned their previous appointment. Such persons may spend part of the year here as a visitor.

5. The maximum term of a visiting appointment of any kind is one year. Although a reappointment or extension may be requested, it must be in the programmatic interest of the University, and justification is required. For visitors who are paid a salary by the University, extension or reappointment requires verification that the end of the appointment at the home institution extends beyond the end of the visit to the University.

6. Most policies applicable to academic personnel apply to visitors, including Conflict of Interest and of Commitment, Patent and IT policies, etc.

7. The University requires that visiting appointees, like ALL appointees who are here for more than thirty days, regardless of title, have medical insurance for themselves and, when the law requires, insurance for their accompanying dependents. "Visiting Scholars" may enroll in medical insurance through Garnett-Powers. For other academic visitors, units must arrange with the Benefits Office to meet this requirement.

8. Visiting appointees are not eligible for leave of absence unless it has been determined that the appointee qualifies for FMLA.

9. Visiting appointees are ineligible for the "Educational Assistance Plan" discount on tuition for the Lab School, even if the Benefits Office has agreed to "override" their benefits status. Units may cover Lab School tuition from their own funds, by interdepartmental transfer.

It can be useful to see in tabular form how these visiting appointments fit in the structure of Postdoctoral and special-situation appointments that are available.

Visitors, "postdocs," and common non-tenure track appointments

TITLE	Rationale	Effort for University	Academic Eligibility	UC Compensation	Other Compensation	Benefits Eligibility	Term	Hiring Process	Academic Process
Associate	Participation in events, and low-intensity collaboration	No	Degreed, professional, NOT in post-doc phase	No	No proof of financial resources required.	Benefits Ineligible*	Up to 3 years	Not hire. Letter of agreement	Provost approves Agreement in advance
Visiting Scholar	(1) Courtesy appointment or (2) intensive collaboration or study	No	Normally in professoriate; not in postdoc phase	Not allowed, except for certain reimbursements.	Unless supported by home inst., evidence of resources required.	Benefits Ineligible*	1 year, renewal possible	Not hire. Letter of agreement	Provost approves Agreement in advance
Visiting Scientist	Training or scientific exchange	No	For scientists working in industry	Not allowed.	Must be paid by employer.	Benefits Ineligible*	1 year, negotiated	Not hire. Letter of agreement	Negotiated by URA
Visiting with faculty rank	Teaching or research in collaboration with faculty.	Normally, yes.	Normally in professoriate, with a position that ends after the end of the visit here.	Required unless home institution is being reimbursed.	With prior approval,	Benefits Ineligible	1 year max, normally	Offer letter, with prior approval of the Provost	Faculty vote or consultation, Provost approves
Postdoctoral Fellow	Postdoc training	Separate appointment required, subject to the PDR Policy	(1) not in professoriate and (2) in postdoc phase	Stipend	As stipulated by source of funds.	UCPDR plan	1 year minimum, normally	Not hire. PDF Form	Approval at divisional level, form to Provost for final approval
Postdoctoral Fellow-Direct Pay	Postdoc training	Separate appointment required, subject to the PDR Policy	(1) not in professoriate and (2) in postdoc phase	Funds do not go through UC	Documented evidence of support. Personal funds only not allowed.	UCPDR plan	May depend on funding source	Not hire. PDF Form	Approval at divisional level, form to Provost for final approval
Postdoctoral Scholar	Postdoc training	Separate appointment required, subject to the PDR Policy	(1) not in professoriate and (2) in postdoc phase	Salary	Refer to Postdoctoral Researcher Policy Manual.	UCPDR plan	1 year minimum, normally	Managed through HR	Approval at divisional level
External Postdoctoral Researcher	Enables a postdoc appointed at another institution to work here	No	For individuals in positions like our Postdoctoral Scholar positions	Not allowed.	All money comes from other institution.	Must be provided by home institution	Up to one year.	Not hire. Letter of agreement	Approval in division. Form to Provost two weeks before beginning of visit.

Visitors, "postdocs," and common non-tenure track appointments

Lecturer	To deliver courses, primarily. Research effort is not compensated.	Teaching required.	Competency as determined by the faculty.	Salary	Sometimes compensated by outside entity	Depends on level of effort and length of term.	1 Q to 3 years	Posting. Full search for FT Ben-El.	Faculty concurrence, Provost approves
Research Scientist; Senior Research Associate; Senior Scientist; Research Associate with () rank	Research in a group under the direction of a member of the Faculty.	Subject to separate teaching appointment, normally Lecturer.	PhD or appropriate terminal degree	Salary	If the individual is supported on grants, URA must OK additional assignments outside scope of grant.	Regular	Depends on rank	National Search	Vote, Provost approves
[Postdoctoral position at the rank of] Instructor	A limited-term, non-extendable, non-tenure track appointment that normally combines teaching and research	Yes	Normally PhD or appropriate terminal degree	Salary		Regular	3 years, normally	National Search	Faculty vote or consultation, Provost approves
[Postdoctoral position at the rank of] Lecturer	a limited-term appointment that carries a full teaching load	Yes, regular teaching load normally expected	Normally PhD in hand.	Salary		Regular	1 year normally, renewal possible	National Search	Faculty vote or consultation, Provost approves

Notes: Individuals who have not completed the Ph.D. or other terminal degree may not come to the University in any of the capacities referenced in this table.

Associate status normally (1) is available only to individuals who live in the Chicago region, and (2) recognizes recurring participation in the University's public programs.

The Visiting Scholar title should not be requested for individuals who are still in the postdoctoral phase, or need supervision or mentoring, or will be evaluated, or wish to come to the University for a training experience in furtherance of beginning a career as an independent researcher in the academy.

A Visiting Scholar may not, in that capacity, perform services for the University, whether in the laboratory or classroom, whether as a volunteer or paid. Normal scholarly activities, such as guest lecturing and presentations, are permitted.

A Visiting Scholar is expected to present at the University throughout the term of the appointment. The faculty member sponsoring the visit should be in residence during the term of the visit.

Individuals in the US on a tourist visa are not eligible for any of these titles.

* Able to purchase medical insurance at full cost from the PDR benefits plan.