Being a Faculty Member in the 21st Century

In January 2014, Provost Martha Pollack issued a set of questions for a committee of faculty to consider as given by the charge:

Charge to the Committee on Being a Faculty Member in the 21st Century

People choose to become faculty members for a variety of reasons: a passion for a particular field of study, a love of teaching and of the opportunity to shape young minds, a deep commitment to core academic values. And of course as faculty members at the University of Michigan, they contribute through teaching, research and scholarships, service and outreach, and clinical activities. As the University adjusts to the changing environment for higher education in the 21st century, it is essential that we pay close attention to those things that motivate our faculty and enable them to be successful across their activities.

The Committee on Being a Faculty Member in the 21st Century is being formed to engage in an intentional consideration of the new pressures on, as well as the new opportunities for UM faculty. The tasks for this committee are:

1. To identify the characteristics of faculty jobs that are most important to ensuring that UM faculty are successful and satisfied in their work;

2. To identify, in as much specificity as possible, ***external pressures*** on faculty jobs arising, e.g., from limited resources for higher education, from increased compliance demands, or from other forces; and

3. In light of (1) and (2), to think creatively, and develop recommended approaches that can be taken at the University of Michigan to ensure that while we respond to the changing environment, our faculty continue to thrive and are able to provide world-class education, conduct cutting-edge research, and participate effectively in service and, where appropriate, in clinical activity.

The set of tasks are intentionally open-ended: the goal is to encourage innovative thinking about how Michigan can be a leader in responding to the changing environment in ways that create a positive experience for faculty. The committee is asked to produce a report, by June 6, 2014, which responds to each of the three tasks listed above.

Selection of Committee Members

The provost chose the committee members from self-nominations as well as nominations from deans and from SACUA. An effort was made to have balanced representation from various faculty ranks and from many of the Colleges and units. The committee members, their ranks, and their affiliations are:

Name	Rank	College
Joel N. Bregman, Chair	Full	Literature, Science, and the Arts
Kathleen M. Canning	Full	Literature, Science, and the Arts
Jason D. Geary	Assoc	School of Music,Theatre & Dance
Ines Ibanez	Asst	School of Natural Resources & Environment
Karen M. Staller	Assoc	School of Social Work
Colleen E. van Lent	Lect III	School of Information
George A. Mashour	Full	Medical School
L. Monique Ward	Full	Literature, Science, and the Arts
Brian P. Rowan	Full	School of Education
Wei Cheng	Asst	College of Pharmacy
Keith P. Mitnick	Assoc	Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Dana C. Dolinoy	Asst	School of Public Health
Carol J. Boyd	Full	School of Nursing & LSA

The committee met approximately twice per month between February 2014 and May 2014, supplemented by electronic communications during the times between meetings. The committee was assisted by very capable administrative staff, notably Anne Berens and Denise Newton. The following document represents a broad consensus with regard to the charge.

Item 1. To identify the characteristics of faculty jobs that are most important to ensuring that UM faculty are successful and satisfied in their work.

Time is the most valuable resource. Every faculty member is working close to their own maximum capacity, well over the 40 hr/week "standard" work week. An informal poll indicates a broad range of work levels with a median near 60 hours per week, which is similar to some in-depth studies at comparable institutions. Faculty generally wish they could accomplish more, despite being efficient and well-organized. Some report that they are working all the time or feel guilty when they are not working. Therefore, a central theme is that the University should find ways of freeing up time for faculty, and any new tasks that tax faculty time should be of very high yield with respect to improvement of the University. Specifically, asking a faculty member for 1 day per year will not have a significant negative impact on scholarship or teaching, while a new request for 1-2 weeks per year will meet with resistance as it has a tangible negative impact on scholarship and teaching.

The characteristic activities of a faculty member naturally fall into one of several categories: scholarship; teaching; and service (including items such as clinical activities).

A. Scholarship

This is a very broad category at the University of Michigan, from funded research projects through performances of creative works. We tried to be sensitive to the full range of scholarship through the broad expertise of the committee, although funded research programs have led to many of the topics below, as the use of funds naturally leads to a variety of reporting and compliance issues.

Success in scholarship distinguishes a faculty member as an intellectual leader and is central to the reputation of a department, and ultimately, of the university. Scholarship is an open-ended activity where the more one accomplishes, the greater the reputation, so there is an incentive to devote as much time as possible to such activities. Also, scholarship is a competitive activity in several ways. For all scholars, being toward the top of one's field means that one produces more work (and programs) of high quality than others in one's field. For grant-funded research, the success rates for grants are low, so researchers must develop innovative programs that can win awards, which is both time-consuming and stressful. These demands emphasize the need to maximize the productivity of faculty.

The ability to conduct research is preceded by a number of essential activities. One must be current with all relevant work in the field, which often requires reading several articles (or chapters or analyzing music) per day along with an organized note-taking effort. Similarly, there are new techniques that arise in fields that one must become aware of and might require significant training to implement. For some lines of work, it is necessary to establish collaborations or community relationships, such as for programs in a community or health studies in a distant country. Finally, for research that requires significant financial resources, raising support through grants (federal, foundation, or industry support) is an extremely taxing and often frustrating process. Once financial support is obtained, material and equipment must

be ordered and renovations of space may be required. All of these activities must occur *before* the actual research begins, so there is a high "pedestal" upon which scholarship rests.

Graduate students are often an essential part of scholarship at the University, so every Department spends a considerable effort in trying to attract the most highly qualified students. Undergraduates sometimes play a role in research projects and find this experience one of the most rewarding at the University. However, in some Colleges, faculty members are not directly involved in evaluating and admitting undergraduates.

Conducting the actual scholarship is one of the most exciting and rewarding parts of being a faculty member. This requires: adequate equipment and space (e.g., labs, recital halls); rapid access to comprehensive information bases (including the library); strong IT support; a capable and knowledgeable support staff; and an intellectually vibrant environment (collegial interaction and mentorship). It may also require financial investment from the university (seed funds; cost-sharing) and the ability to easily work with individuals in other departments or colleges.

B. Offering a High-Quality Education

The other primary activity of faculty is teaching, which encompasses the classroom experience, individualized projects, and experiences beyond the classroom. Faculty members want to offer classes that make an impact and are of lasting value to students. Classes today often offer an interactive experience that takes advantage of the excellent students and faculty at the University of Michigan. However, the pedagogical landscape is changing rapidly both with regard to the technologies available and with the pedagogical approaches employed. Under these changing conditions, faculty would like to understand how best to revise existing classes or to develop new classes (and employ new technologies), which are time-consuming activities and therefore in conflict with other goals, such as scholarship.

The faculty needs strong support and assistance with some teaching activities, such as the maintenance of on-line components (Ctools components; grade book) along with classroom support. Electronic communications with students allows faculty to quickly and effectively inform and interact with students (e.g., class announcements through Ctools; on-line office hours), but some types of interaction can be quite demanding on an instructor (e.g., email; chat before homework is due).

At the graduate level, instruction takes place not only in the classroom but also occurs through formal and informal mentoring of graduate research activities. Training the next generation of scholars can be a rewarding but time-consuming task. Many faculty members devote several hours each week to meeting with graduate students, both in groups and individually, and to editing and supporting graduate students' scholarship.

C. Service

Service duties are expected from one's Departments (e.g., graduate admission committee; undergraduate advising), from one's College or University (e.g., Curriculum Committee; Faculty

Senate), as well as from national or international committees relating to one's field (professional societies; grant reviews; advisory committees; organizing committees for meetings). These demands increase with seniority, and it is natural that as one becomes more prominent in one's field, a greater presence on the national and international stage is expected. Such visibility benefits the faculty member, the Department, and the University.

While it does not neatly fall into the above categories, it is important to have a collegial, safe, and trusting atmosphere at all levels within the University.

Item 2. To identify, in as much specificity as possible, ***external pressures*** on faculty jobs arising, e.g., from limited resources for higher education, from increased compliance demands, or from other forces.

A. Scholarship

The leading stress in scholarship relates to funded programs, where the success rate has become quite low. This puts in jeopardy established research efforts and can lead to the dismissal of devoted and essential lab personnel, which can cripple a research program. It also slows or prevents faculty from establishing new lines of work. This situation raises the bar for promotion for the junior faculty, where the establishment of a funded program has been an expectation for promotion to the Associate Professor rank. The low success rate leads faculty to spend more time trying to attract funding, rather than publishing research, leading to a productivity decrease.

Within one's field, the standing of a faculty member is based on the amount and quality of scholarship accomplished, which is judged by the outside intellectual community in each field. This encourages the person to devote as much time as possible to research, which creates stress as it is in conflict with other university and "life" activities for which one is not professionally rewarded, such as teaching, service within the University, family or non-university activities.

For junior faculty on the tenure-track, a major worry is whether one will be promoted to a tenured position. For grant-supported work, where success rates are at record lows, this is particularly stressful. In fields where publication of a book is necessary, tighter publication standards and the move toward electronic publications can also increase stress when it lowers the acceptance rate of books. This variety of changes adds to the concerns of junior faculty when trying to understand the criteria for advancement. Fortunately, many Colleges provide forms of support that are valuable, such as mentoring, nurturance leave, reviews and feedback during the Assistant Professor stage (e.g., third-year review), as well as clearly defined procedures that are to be followed in the promotion process. Nevertheless, this will always be a stressful situation.

Another common stress is that there have been increases in matters of compliance (e.g., NIH studies with human subjects), which most strongly affects researchers who work in the biological and life science areas.

B. Teaching

There is an expectation that education in the 21st century should be different and improved and there is no shortage of new technological components and new pedagogies. There is evidence that pedagogical and technological innovations improve learning outcomes, but the "best" approach is far from obvious. Faculty members are expected to navigate these waters with only modest guidance, which is both stressful and time-consuming.

Regarding electronic aids and software, faculty often wonder how to choose the best tools for their class, which they often train themselves to use. With many options to choose from just within Ctools, this can be daunting, and there are many valuable tools outside of Ctools as well. Some electronic connections to students (e.g., email) can lead to an enormous load on the instructor, which did not exist in the past. There is a perception that changes in traditional support lead to more tasks that are now carried out by the instructor.

Faculty members often feel that their efforts are underappreciated by students, their parents, politicians, and the public in general. While a faculty member may have only three contact hours per week in a class, the actual time involved in the many stages of giving a class is several times greater, typically 15-20 hours per week. Also, faculty worry that students and parents question how a class (or major/minor) is relevant for the world of employment that follows graduation.

Some faculty felt that there is a lack of recognition for teaching by their departments. An example was cited for clinicians, where teaching might constitute a minor component of their activities.

Faculty often feel pressure to teach larger classes, which can be in conflict with the pedagogical mission of a class, such as one that requires significant interaction with the instructor or/and the GSI. Also, larger classes can lead to more anonymity both for the instructor and the student.

There has been growth in the number of special needs students, which puts additional demands on faculty in large classes. One common example is that an exam has to be given at multiple times and locations, requiring more manpower, often from the instructor.

C. Service, Administration, and General Issues

In the past, when one had to compose physical letters or consider the costs of phone calls, communications was less frequent but individually more important and thoughtfully considered. Such barriers have vanished and the plethora of email, for example, has become a major time demand, far exceeding the time spent communicating through the former traditional forms. Senders of emails rarely consider the demands placed on the recipients, often expecting nearly immediate responses. Many faculty members feel pressure to always be on their email clients.

An important activity for faculty during the year is writing of letters of recommendations for undergraduates (e.g., professional or graduate school), graduate students (e.g., fellowships or faculty positions), and postdoctoral fellows (e.g., faculty positions). It is not uncommon for faculty to write letters for several dozen individuals, with each individual requiring 10-20 letters.

Writing so many letters is a significant time demand and they are all due at about the same time of year, making this a highly concentrated activity. In the past, a faculty member might write a single letter for an individual that would be sent to many institutions, often with secretarial assistance. Now, many institutions use a variety of electronic entry systems that require different formats and different parts of letters be copied to different boxes in a form. This has increased the time demands for this activity during already busy times of year.

Increasing service demands within a Department often falls to a small number of faculty members who have demonstrated success in such roles. Usually, these tasks are not compensated by release time, leading to greater demands on certain faculty, thereby taking time away from scholarship and teaching.

Although not external to the University, faculty felt that there has been an increase over time in the paperwork demanded by departments, colleges, and the University. Also, some previous administrative activities have been replaced by technological "innovations" that shift more duties onto faculty (e.g., travel and reporting). These constitute increased time demands on faculty.

Item 3. In light of (1) and (2), to think creatively, and develop recommended approaches that can be taken at the University of Michigan to ensure that while we respond to the changing environment, our faculty continue to thrive and are able to provide world-class education, conduct cutting-edge research, and participate effectively in service and, where appropriate, in clinical activity.

Scholarship

Distinction in scholarship is the most important measure for the esteem of a university, an area in which the University of Michigan excels. It is essential to maintain or improve the productivity of our scholars, especially in the face of changing technologies and with difficulties in obtaining financial support for those activities. "Productivity" not only refers to having enough time on task, which is the single greatest stress for researchers, but having the various supporting infrastructures to facilitate scholarship. A minimum overall goal is to take actions to prevent increased demands on faculty time. A more positive goal is to implement policies that lead to a noticeable increase in available time for faculty (e.g., a net gain of 1-2 weeks/yr, which is a time increase of 2-4%).

<u>1. High-quality facilities and the capable support personnel</u>

The nature of the research facilities are often set by "standards" from peer institutions with regard to space (e.g., labs), equipment, computer facilities, IT support, and informational services (e.g., library). The University should reevaluate how we compare to our peer institutions in any of these areas (e.g., high-performance computing; library and archival resources) and target areas for future investment if necessary.

Many researchers require assistance, such as in the establishment of research grants, especially where compliance demands are significant (e.g., research on human subjects). This process is more efficient when there are support individuals who know the research needs of the

faculty. Institutional memory of support staff can be critical (e.g., knowing that a NIH compliance document was renewed) and this support is often best provided locally, which also gives the staff member the reward that they are an important part of making scholarship happen at the University of Michigan.

The progress of some tasks are well-documented and easy to follow (i.e., submission of a research grant), while others are not. For example, the schedule and progress for the renovation of a lab is often not shared information, which can lead to a faculty member (often the most junior faculty) becoming frustrated. The University should examine this and other processes to make sure they are transparent to the faculty member that they serve.

2. Increased competition for funded research

The success rates for most grant opportunities has dropped significantly in the past half-dozen years, from typical success rates of 25-30% to success rates less than 10% in the worst cases. With this strain on financial resources, the decision making-process has pushed funding agencies in the direction of becoming less risk-adverse. Agencies want excellent scholarship with a high likelihood of success, rather than funding a research path that, although novel and exciting, might face a number of unaddressed issues. To better compete, it is helpful to remove as many risk items as possible, which often requires a more significant initial effort than in the past. Funding for that initial effort is a challenge, so the University should consider making seed money available in such cases. The pre-proposal effort needs vary enormously between schools and departments (e.g., analysis in a lab; community-based background effort), so rather than a top-down approach, seed money could be allocated by individual departments, which is where the expertise lies. This approach, if taken, should be reviewed to determine its effectiveness. Funding seed-grant programs should be incorporated as priorities in philanthropic and development initiatives.

Also, foundation and other grants without full overhead are sometimes discouraged or faculty are asked to make up the lost overhead through other mechanisms. Given the lowered success rates of Federal grants, individual units and UMOR should revisit their policies on grants with less than the full overhead.

3. New technologies and facilities

The University has a breadth of facilities and skills, but such information often does not cross College or even Departmental boundaries in a useful fashion. To avoid frustrated comments such as “I didn’t know there was a 3D printer that I could use”, the University should find a simple way of making available information on such facilities (e.g., UMOR could collect the information and make it available through a search engine). Departments might ask one individual to stay abreast of new shared facilities and technologies and report to the faculty 1-2 times per year. As not all facilities are suitable for sharing, UMOR might also develop guidelines for this issue.

Information has become increasingly electronic, both for the publication of books and articles or the storage of data in an archive. This can change the traditional metrics used for promotion cases, so affected departments should make clear any changes and communicate them to faculty. As these technological changes occur rapidly, their impact on promotion practices should be revisited on a regular basis.

4. Mentorship

Compared to the "sink or swim" approach, effective mentorship of junior faculty is valuable at many levels. It leads to greater success in teaching, research, and administration, as well as improving the collegial culture of the University, which helps with faculty retention and promotes a willingness to help others. It is useful for a junior faculty member to be able to discuss issues with more than one person, such as in critiquing a proposal, so mechanisms of this kind should be put in place at the departmental level if not yet present. A junior faculty member can be advised by mentors regarding the expectations for promotion, which is particularly important when there are major changes in the nature of publications and the procurement of grants.

Mentoring is valuable at all faculty levels, so if Associate Professors and Professors have not developed a set of fellow faculty and researchers for discussion and analysis (e.g., for faculty hired at the senior level), Departments should take steps to assist in this matter. Mentorship of graduate students is important as well. Some advice and mentorship can be accomplished through a graduate director, but most of the burden lies with the thesis advisor, who should try to teach the student the skills necessary to be a productive member of the field (e.g., writing a research proposal). Mentorship is a skill that requires some training (offered in some colleges), so departments should seek training as necessary and they should formally discuss mentorship at least once per year to better understand departmental "standards".

Faculty members who received excellent mentoring have strong models on which to draw. Those without mentoring experience should receive information and training, which is provided in some Colleges but should be a standard across the University.

While mentorship is valuable, it is a time-consuming activity that the mentor could otherwise spend doing scholarship or teaching. We believe that this is a worthwhile trade, but there should be recognition for being a mentor, which could occur in annual performance reports and be a component of promotion cases. Some mentorship activities might be taken on by emeriti faculty, a valuable segment of departments that should not be overlooked.

5. Attracting Highly Qualified Graduate Students

Attracting the most highly qualified students has become increasingly competitive. For undergraduates, Colleges have developed extensive and highly successful approaches to market their educational strengths and opportunities to students and parents. In contrast, strategies and marketing tactics are far weaker for most graduate or professional schools, although the competition for the best students is intense, *especially for underrepresented groups*. Departments have evolved individual strategies, such as for visiting days, but approaches vary widely and no Department can marshal the marketing expertise that a College regularly applies to attract undergraduates.

As the focal point for graduate studies, the Rackham Graduate School could expand their activities to address this need. They can put together a written document with descriptions of the various "best" strategies employed by different departments. This could lead to a sharing of clever approaches already developed by some Departments. Also, they could assemble a marketing and design team that can assist Departments in producing materials (e.g., brochures, videos, websites) that help improve the attractiveness of a Department.

6. Cross-disciplinary interactions

The University encourages cross-disciplinary efforts, which is commendable. More interdepartmental interaction might occur if there were efforts for departments to learn about each other's activities in a systematic way. One possibility is for the University to sponsor cross-departmental and cross-college symposia, receptions, or facility-tours, and our preference is to feature junior and mid-career faculty. Bringing both related and unrelated departments together could lead to unanticipated intellectual ferment (e.g., physics and psychology). To promote attendance by busy faculty, the length of such symposia and receptions should be hours, not days.

7. Compliance documents

As related to Federal grant support, compliance and documentation has only become more complicated and onerous over time. The University, through UMOR, might join with other universities to begin a dialog with Federal funding institutions to streamline paperwork. It appears that other R1 institutions have begun thinking along these lines and major funding agencies are willing to listen.

Teaching

Several aspects of education have changed quite significantly, some due to electronic communications and technologies, some due to improved pedagogies. In the recent past, classes were predominantly traditional lectures with either written or mathematical homework assignments completed by individuals. Now, classes are often highly interactive and both assignments and in-class activities are frequently group-based and might use recently developed technological tools. A variety of assignments now occur outside of the traditional class environment. This evolving landscape poses challenges for students, faculty, parents, and administrators.

1. Training faculty in pedagogy and providing them with the right information

Faculty and instructors are rarely taught the most effective way of teaching in their discipline. We recommend that all instructors receive continuing pedagogical training in their area. One challenge is arranging for effective pedagogical training and motivating the instructors to become engaged in the training, which might require incentives. Since such training is an additional time demand for faculty, it would have to be brief and high-impact. There are several levels of training, beginning with a “boot camp” for those not familiar with modern pedagogies (LSA now offers something along these lines for new faculty). Training approaches should be organized by Colleges and Departments, and would probably benefit from having an umbrella organization, to share common components. Within Departments, it would be useful to have at least one faculty meeting per semester devoted to a discussion of teaching issues, which is a good way of sharing experiences as to which approaches are successful (some Departments already do this and can serve as models).

Improvements in pedagogies and updates in technologies can occur yearly, so this should be an ongoing part of the activity of an instructor. It is inefficient to have every faculty member sort through what sometimes seems to be a bewildering set of software tools, or existing software tools with new features. A more efficient approach is to have an individual within a department be the expert in such areas and brief the instructors once or twice per year; this is already

implemented in some Departments. Each Department should produce a brief compendium of approaches, techniques, and policies that have worked especially well. These could be compiled and edited (to reduce repetition) so that faculty can benefit from the many successful experiments that have occurred on campus.

Putting new teaching skills into practice can be extremely time-consuming, especially if it leads to a major reworking of a class. For example, teaching an existing class may only require 200 hours per semester, but a reinvention of the same class may require 500 hours during the first semester it is taught. Furthermore, substantially changed courses might lead to poorer evaluations when initially presented. These issues place an enormous disincentive for an instructor to consider a major change to a course. Consequently, the university should consider ways of encouraging such ambitions, such as by offering some teaching release or freeing the faculty member from a time-consuming service activity.

The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) address a number of these issues through a variety of programs, services, and publications. They are a highly skilled and dedicated group of professionals who continue to improve their offerings. However, there is a general experience among committee members who have attended CRLT seminars that the amount of useful information gained is modest for the time spent. This may occur because of the general audience that these seminars serve. We suggest that more specific and targeted programs for departments would be more valuable.

2. Support of classes

There should be adequate support for classes, especially larger ones. The traditional GSI may be appropriate for some classes, but other forms of support may be warranted in this internet age (e.g., someone who helps with the many electronic tools or assists with special needs students). Increases in the number of special needs students should be met with the appropriate amount of increased staffing.

Most classrooms are equipped with the basic technologies needed for modern presentations: digital projectors; computers; clicker systems; sound-systems; connections to the internet; even chalk and erasers. However, these basics are absent in some classrooms, making teaching more difficult and limiting pedagogical approaches. We recommend that all active classrooms conform to similar standards.

3. Mentorship, feedback, and evaluations

Teaching occurs with very little immediate feedback from students, so it can be difficult to determine which parts of a lesson were effective. To help strengthen and improve classes, we recommend a system where the instructor regularly receives feedback from designated individuals, which may include a faculty mentor, GSIs, or undergraduates. While applicable to all classes, it is particularly important for new or heavily revised classes. Mentorship is valuable and should be encouraged at all levels of teaching, both for the instructor and GSI.

The standard evaluations of classes may be helpful in identifying classes with certain problems, but they do not measure the educational outcome of the class. A number of approaches now exist to help in measuring the educational success of a class and these should be brought in to more common use.

4. Defining the “brand” of education that we offer

The public often wonders whether the benefits offered by a university education justify the costs incurred. Within at least each College, we need to clearly explain the nature of the education and how it will contribute to the future professional and personal success of the students (e.g., learning writing and quantitative skills, critical thinking). For example, by explaining that classes are often interactive both between other students and with the instructor, we emphasize the importance of belonging to a strong student body and to skilled instructors who are experts in their field. Another aspect of "brand" is the access that students have to the faculty. For example, students (and their parents) would be attracted to a model where most classes offered are taught by faculty (already the case in many departments).

The university should decide whether MOOCs (or distance learning in general) will play an important role in the future and determine how they are to be structured. This is an area that is in its infancy but the university should decide how the University of Michigan versions of distance learning will be better and distinct from those offered elsewhere at low cost. This would appear to be a policy decision that should be made at the College level or above.

5. Communications between the instructor and student

Faculty encourage a dialog with students, yet it is easy to become overwhelmed, such as by an ocean of emails, where one might receive an excess of 1000 for a single class. This situation is becoming worse as the use of software tools proliferate. It taxes the instructors, often reducing the amount of time for substantive class development.

We believe that there has to be a new understanding of what it means to be a student in the 21st century as well as being an instructor. The interaction between the student and instructor needs to become more professional and ground rules should be established. In a work situation, an employee is discouraged from dashing off a vague and undeveloped missive, while this occurs frequently between student and instructor. For a student in a university, improving the current situation it is not only a matter of responsibility and respect, it is important training for jobs one will encounter after graduation.

A set of expectations should be developed and communicated to students upon entering the university. Such guidelines are most naturally developed at the College level and could be part of orientation. Also, specific guidelines should be communicated at the beginning of courses.

6. Defining the practical application of a University of Michigan education

A number of the Colleges offer professional degrees that naturally lead to entry into a particular field (e.g., engineering). Some schools even have recruiting and job services. However, a degree from one of the liberal arts colleges (e.g., School of Music, LSA) does not have a similarly clear employment path, even though the student has acquired many important skills, such as the ability to analyze complicated issues and write cogently about them. While we should always encourage students to pursue their deepest intellectual desires, we should also help them understand the important skills that they have acquired, as it will help them (and their parents) appreciate the value of a liberal arts education.

Even Colleges that do not offer professional degrees could provide assistance and advice for students entering the job market. This would be valued by students and parents, and in the near future, it may become a criterion for students selecting a college or university.

Service, Administration, and General Issues

1. Streamlining and Transparency in Purchasing

The University should reduce internal hurdles that hamper purchasing, which affects both scholarship and teaching, where equipment is needed. We acknowledge the many skilled and experienced professionals within Procurement Services who often obtain excellent prices. One part of the issue raised here has to do with the speed of purchasing, especially for items over $5,000, where the order is submitted and can take weeks (or longer) instead of days. Not only does the current process slow the pace of research, our primary concern, it is not transparent in that one cannot track the progress of the purchase request. A target time should be placed on each purchasing request and a tracking system put in place. The satisfaction of the purchaser with the purchasing process should be reviewed regularly by a committee where the end-users are well represented. Also, the price point at which a purchase request goes out for bids, now set by the University at $5,000, could be raised, relieving the load on Procurement Services.

While we acknowledge that purchasing agents have much more experience, the current process does not necessarily take advantage of the expertise of the purchaser, who is often familiar with the possible options and may already have obtained multiple cost estimates. Such cost estimates can be utilized by Procurement Services. In the current climate of limited resources, the purchaser is *highly* motivated to obtain the best value.

For some other types of purchases (generally less than $5,000), there are rules that make the process time-consuming and cumbersome. For example, a recent policy change discourages faculty from using a P-card to purchase a computer that is not in the UM catalog. Rather than cite more examples, a committee should gather a variety of cases to identify changes that can be made to improve purchasing for the end user.

2. Lessening the load of low level administrative tasks

Low level but time-consuming administrative activities should be shifted off of faculty, with a prime example being travel. Instead of the faculty member entering all of the items through Concur, the various travel items could be given to a support person who could reconcile the travel costs for the faculty member. This practice already exists in a number of departments and faculty members are very appreciative of the convenience.

3. Administrative access to personal computers

Regarding individual computers, such as PCs and Macs (laptop or desktop), many faculty related frustrating and time-consuming experiences with regard to making simple necessary changes. Examples of such changes are adding a printer or updating a program. Faculty members in some colleges (or departments) do not have the ability to make such changes (no administrator access), requiring that these tasks be carried out by IT personnel, often by bringing the computer to an IT office. This takes the computer off-line for a period of time, hampering scholarship, teaching, and administrative tasks the faculty needs to carry out. Faculty members in this position are *very* frustrated by the inconvenience.

We recommend that faculty can opt-in to obtain administrator access on their computers. This will empower faculty with adequate skills to perform these simple tasks, leading to improved productivity. While IT professionals might feel that there is a risk to this approach, the risk is minor, based on the experience of Colleges and Departments where faculty members have

administrator access. Granting administrator access to faculty upon request is a worthwhile trade.

Some of the unhappiness of faculty members regarding certain IT policies could be prevented if there were IT decision-making bodies that had strong representation from end users (faculty and staff). Decisions that might include certain restrictive or cumbersome policies, could be explained so that the end user appreciates that they are necessary.

The time required to fix some computer problems is longer and more cumbersome for units lacking local IT support. Local IT support has several advantages in that the IT personnel already have knowledge of individuals, their needs, and their equipment. Problems are often solved by a brief conversation between the IT support person and the individual being served, taking the place of multiple slower exchanges on a ticket system. Although local IT service may be more expensive than centralized IT support, it is more effective, improving faculty productivity and leading to more satisfied end-users.

4. Simplify outreach procedures

Some well-meaning rules make it more difficult to achieve certain goals of the University. For example, the University encourages outreach and meaningful opportunities with K-12 students (e.g., volunteering in a research lab), which is embraced by faculty in every College. However, a recent change in the policy on minors involving University-sponsored programs now requires training and background checks for those involved. We applaud the intent of the new rules (in SPG 601.34) and they are not difficult to implement for large organized programs. However, we fear that the new requirements will have the unintended consequences of decreasing the many small and informal opportunities that have been offered to minors in the past.

5. Consolidating University communications

One component of email proliferation is due to the many emails received from the various levels of the University, which often number in the dozens per week and can be of considerable length. Aside from truly urgent emails, we suggest a weekly consolidated email package, organized and highlighted in a manner that permits the reader to quickly identify the issues of greatest importance (it may be necessary to have separate consolidated emails from each College and from the University). The consolidated emails should be centrally preserved and easily searchable. Individual components of the consolidated email should be as concise as possible.

Faculty should be able to easily be removed from blanket emails in which they are not interested (e.g., MHealthy; sporting events). Furthermore, senders of blanket emails should be informed of techniques to avoid "reply to all" chains that can be perpetuated for days and with dozens of emails.

6. Reduce the letter writing burden by introducing standard formats

It should be possible to reduce the burden of writing letters of support and evaluation for students who apply to graduate and professional schools (and possibly for graduate students and postdoctoral associates applying for faculty positions). The establishment of standard formats and methods of uploading that information could be developed by Departments and Colleges in

concert with other universities and with the relevant professional organizations. The Rackham Graduate School might provide leadership and assistance in this area.

Standards should be recommended for requesting letters, where the requester would be expected to provide certain documents (e.g., the application materials) and a request date that gives the writer sufficient time (e.g., two weeks).

7. Distribute administrative tasks more evenly within a Department

The administrative burden within a Department is not evenly spread among the senior faculty (above the rank of Assistant), often concentrated among a few individuals. Some of this results from of the lack of administrative and management training or the lack of mentorship for service tasks. Departments and Colleges should develop plans that allow the administrative load to be spread over a larger fraction of the faculty. Also, Departments should not only come to a quantitative understanding of the many service tasks carried out during the year, they should (approximately) track the amount of time individual faculty spend on these tasks to ensure that the load is fairly distributed. Chairs may need training on how to accomplish this goal. Highly impacted individuals could be compensated, such as with release time (in some cases, this is already in place).

8. Involvement of faculty in undergraduate recruitment and admissions

For some colleges, the faculty have very little connection to the undergraduate admissions process despite that the presence of the faculty in a world-class department is often the primary attraction. In general, admissions offices should find an effective way of integrating departmental involvement in the process, as attracting the best students is highly competitive.

An example of a common shortcoming is when a student and parent visit a faculty member to discuss undergraduate opportunities, allowing them to make a more informed decision. However, in some Colleges, the faculty member does not have a natural way of contacting admissions to provide their insights about the student. There should be an easy way of accomplishing this, which points to the need for better communications in both directions.

9. Collegiality

There was a consensus among the committee members that there is a strong sense of collegiality within the University and its units. Departments and Colleges have developed a welcoming atmosphere, which is very important to maintaining a satisfied and productive faculty. Also, a contributing factor is the general sense of fairness and responsiveness of administrative units at various levels. While we do not have specific recommendations, the University should retain an awareness that a collegial atmosphere is an important attribute.