Academic Planning Committee
Final Report
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I. Preface:

The Academic Planning Group is composed of the Dean of the Faculty, the Associate Deans of the Faculty, the Vice President for Finance/Planning & Treasurer, and 10 full-time faculty members representing the breadth of the curriculum. These members include Dawn Abt-Perkins, Carla Arnell, Nancy Brekke, Muris Hadzic, Chloe Johnston, Anna Jones, Courtney Joseph, Matt Kelley, Nathan Mueggenburg, David Park, Davis Schneiderman, Erica Schultz, Lori Sundberg, Tracy Taylor and Sara Zelenberg. Dominique Allion provides invaluable staff support. The group began its work in November 2021.

The group's interim report (February 2022) identified five key challenges that the College faces in the coming years as well as key themes and priorities for academics at the College. The group formulated initial questions regarding each challenge and theme/priority, which need to be further explored by the College community to develop possible paths forward.

To reveal these potential pathways for future exploration, the group used most of its spring 2022 meetings to engage directly with various campus constituencies, in order to sharpen and refine our thinking about planning. These included the Career Advancement Center; Admissions; the Registrar; the chairs of ARRC, CPC, and FPPC; Information Technology Services; the DEI planning group; and the Center for Academic Success.

These discussions produced additional areas of consideration for academic planning, while also reminding the group, in each case, how the various offices of the College intersect with the academic mission. In particular, because the work of the DEI planning group was proceeding at the same time as our process, we could only be informed of the general direction of their work. DEI principles are closely related to all aspects of academic planning, and those who take up the efforts suggested in this report should do so with the DEI planning document close at hand.

In order to refine and prioritize the ideas that emerged from these various discussions, academic planning group members completed a survey that asked about prioritization of specific questions for further discussion and led to the report contained in this document. This report outlines what questions are most urgent for the College constituencies to discuss and what processes might be required to answer them.

While the considerations in this document represent meaningful work by a dedicated group, the relatively short time from the inception of this group to its report means that we simply could not be exhaustive. Given more time, we would have spent additional meetings further considering the information we gathered from the constituencies above. Further, the survey we used to prioritize planning concerns captured many important questions that we generated in our first months, but additional time may have led to additional questions or further refinements to the survey instrument. These caveats are not meant to suggest that we do not stand by the report below, but rather to highlight that the recommendations below elucidate some promising ways to address the key challenges and questions—but not all such ways. Further investigation will reveal additional questions, issues, and directions that fall underneath our general headings.

Structure of the Report:

- The report begins with key recommendations, described in more detail in the document, but highlighted in this first section.

- The report continues with the key academic challenges, which were identified in the interim academic planning report of February 2022.

- This is followed by content sections that identify questions that the campus community should engage with in order to respond to the key academic challenges.

    o In each case, the questions are prioritized as Tier 1 or Tier 2, designating those questions that should be investigated first and offering potential strategies for that investigation.

    o For each item under discussion, a number in parentheses indicates the percentage of respondents who rated the issue as a "medium priority" or "high priority". The other choices were "low priority" or "not a priority." These ratings were used to designate tiers:

        ▪ **Tier 1:** The Academic Planning Group believes that responses to these above challenges are essential to consider in the near term, and these, together, make up our most immediate recommendations for action items.

        ▪ **Tier 2**: The Academic Planning Group considers these issues to be important, although these may be of less immediate importance, or might represent wider divergence of opinion, in comparison to Tier 1 issues.

II. Priority Recommendations

1. Create a temporary **Curricular Working Group (CWG)**, jointly reporting to CPC and ARRC, to explore several of the questions identified in this report. While we must look to existing structures whenever possible for this work, a series of issues that exceed existing capacity calls for the creation of new advisory group. The CWG would particularly address the questions outlined in the Academic Program Portfolio section below, although their purview might also extend to other areas. This group should directly engage the full faculty as it conducts its work.

2. Create a temporary **Faculty Experience Working Group (FEWG),** reporting to FPPC, to address faculty work in terms of and in addition to specific policy questions. The policy questions relate to issues of real importance, including, for example, the use of student evaluations of teaching and advising and the counting and equitable distribution of faculty service. In addition, the FEWG would make sure that expectations on faculty are reasonable, that the College is fostering a healthy work-life balance, and that our faculty policies respond to the demographic diversity of the institution. This group should directly engage the full faculty as it conducts its work.

3. **Ask ARRC to regularly recommend shifts of permanent allocation**, informed in their process by the work of the CWG. This concept is discussed in the Governance section below.

4. **Have the Student Success Committee take the lead in considering *policy* questions related to the student academic experience.** In so doing, they should work with various administrative offices and in consultation with all governance bodies and other campus stakeholders. Issues they should take up include: advocating for more flexible and accessible academic policies; drafting an inclusive tuition proposal; reconsidering the use of time slots and other scheduling issues; revisiting the role of summer and possible J-term in student paths to graduation; discussing a possible revision of the terms of part-time student status, and so on. These issues arise in a number of sections below, related to flexibility in response to student needs and the necessity of supporting a more diverse student population. New proposals, though, must take into account the impact on faculty and staff workloads (see below).

III. Key Academic Challenges

The Academic Planning Group recognizes a set of intersecting near- and medium-term challenges that our academic program (alongside other parts of the College) must address in the coming years.

1. **Demographic trends are not favorable for future enrollment at colleges and universities, and the budget of the College is highly dependent on enrollment.**

   Lake Forest College has a strategic advantage in this regard: we have consistently recruited a socioeconomically and demographically diverse student body, which aligns directly with our mission and values. Nonetheless, the coming demographic cliff will make recruitment and retention even more challenging, and the competition for fewer available students will challenge many aspects of higher education.

   We cannot take our appeal to students for granted. Accordingly, we must ask which programs will attract more students, and whether students will be willing and able to pay a higher proportion of our tuition. How do we continue to provide our high-quality education and hew to our mission and values, in the most cost-effective way? What areas of the College should we strengthen to increase our attractiveness? How can we further improve our retention and graduation rate, while also maintaining our commitment to enrolling a diverse group of students? We remain a tuition-dependent institution. How can we strive to provide additional financial support for students in need?

2. **The student body is changing.**

   Students are coming to the College with more varied challenges and needs, including disability accommodations, mental health challenges, differential academic preparation, and the need to work off campus to finance their degree. These challenges impact faculty, staff, and students, in the form of increased workload (for faculty and staff) and impediments to the traditional eight-semester plan for graduation (for students).

   This changing student body also provides abundant opportunities for the College to reconsider how we teach and how we structure our curriculum for this new generation of students. How can we provide for thoughtful curricular innovation in line with our values? How can we continue to provide our students with an outstanding education that prepares them for the challenges they will face post-graduation? How can we ensure we have the proper support for these efforts?

3. **Careers and outcomes are important to students and their families and will likely continue to increase in importance in the coming years.**

   The College has benefited from its consistent attention to this priority on the part of students; we even amended the mission statement to include "prepar[ing] our students for…productive and rewarding careers." At times, however, our students' understandable focus on career outcomes can (falsely) seem to exist in conflict with another closely held value of the

College: the breadth of education, as expressed in the Forester Fundamental Curriculum. Many students may not fully understand the value of that breadth, nor do they fully explore the range of academic programs we offer due to their predisposition to certain careers that they may believe require a narrower path and an earlier focus.

Accordingly, how do we adapt to incoming student interest in particular majors, while broadening and deepening their understanding of what we find most important in a liberal arts education? For students who arrive wanting to specialize, how can we ensure they experience both multifaceted approaches to their field and different methods of inquiry entirely—thus making them even more in-demand on the job market?

4. **Students expect their areas of academic study to reflect the present realities of the job market.**

We should continue to support innovation and change in our curriculum (including both our current and new programs) to ensure we have the right portfolio to provide vital, responsive, and forward-looking offerings. Such innovation, aside from evolving student interest, is essential to the strength and integrity of our academic program.

We recognize that, just as our students are changing, all academic fields evolve and change over time. This presents a challenge at both the course and the department/program level. How can we ensure that we are continuously improving and innovating—not only in what we teach but how we teach—in a manner that responds proactively rather than reacts defensively?

Our assessment mechanisms have been meaningfully strengthened in recent years; these offer one tool to prompt such reflection. What are other ways we can incentivize renewal in our curricular and pedagogical offerings, while also ensuring that the academic portfolio serves the students we have now, and the students we will welcome in the years to come?

5. **Our faculty are an invaluable asset that must be nurtured and developed.**

The College's faculty are qualified, dedicated, and talented. Many of us happily spend our entire careers at Lake Forest College. The nature of our work has changed, however, and the demands on faculty have increased significantly. We need to find ways to best support our faculty in response to these new challenges.

How can we promote a healthy work-life balance? How do we ensure reasonable and equitable workloads, and provide systems that offer reasonable and meaningful administrative work? How do we support our faculty throughout their careers to remain engaged, energized, and dedicated to our collective enterprise? How can we ensure that we maintain and strengthen the high quality of instruction, in the face of the abundant challenges outlined above? How can we ensure that we provide adequate support for the growing diversity in our faculty ranks? As noted in the introduction, the DEI report will have relevant recommendations that should be considered at the same time as the issues identified in this report.

Questions for Discussion and Action
1. The Academic Program Portfolio: What We Teach

How do we develop and maintain academic programs that will attract students and be economically sustainable?

Tier 1 Concerns:

- Examine the resources we devote to departments and programs. Should we identify certain current or future programs for specific development? (100%)

- Build department/program resources to anticipate future demand, in order to increase enrollment. (94%)

- Provide additional resources to departments with reduced demand, to increase their attractiveness to students. (80%)

While these questions are interrelated and fall to various extents under the purview of ARRC, the College should convene a new temporary Curricular Working Group (CWG) to produce a series of recommendations for revisions to current processes and to create a system for the development of existing and new programs—including new program proposal guidelines that encompass sunset mechanisms. Further, the CWG should evaluate whether and how to specifically buttress programs that are currently experiencing less success. In addition, the CWG should evaluate the current allocation of resources to determine operational inefficiencies.

To be clear, the CWG is *not* a committee charged to reduce tenured faculty positions, but a forward-looking body that can anticipate how the College should respond to future changes to the full-time faculty (attrition and retirement); propose College guidelines for "need" in the tenure process; and develop strategies for how best to use and market the rich resources of people and curriculum currently employed at the College across all divisions.

Further, the CWG will develop position statements on the allocation of resources and criteria for assessing tenure-track and non-tenure track full-time positions. The current system for these requests, while improved in recent years, should be further refined to capture the complexity of decision-making regarding resource questions: namely, to what extent should resources follow current popularity of departments/programs, and to what extent should they be used to invest in the possible future strength of departments/programs, or to assert the values of the College's education, regardless of popularity? The CWG should assess the processes employed at peer institutions, interview current and past members of ARRC, survey College faculty about challenges to the current system, and propose, if warranted, amendments to current procedures. The composition could include faculty members assigned by FPPC, ideally composed of the past ARRC chairs and members, the Director of Institutional Research, the Dean of Faculty or representatives, and staff support. The CWG should also review the analysis of instructional cost-per-seat by department that this committee reviewed early on, as this data may be helpful to their work. This analysis should be considered in terms of the academic mission of the College,

and not solely as a metric of cost efficiency. The CWG should be provided with any additional data they deem necessary.

The tensions between breadth vs. depth are expressed elsewhere in this report, and the CWG should also make a recommendation as to whether the College should appoint a senior faculty member or associate dean to be **more directly responsible for the Forester Fundamental Curriculum**. The person in this role would chair the Forester Fundamental Curriculum Implementation Subcommittee (FFCIS), liaise with (or serve on) the Assessment Committee, and work closely with the director of First-Year Studies. This director would serve as a resource for Admissions and an ambassador for promotion of the FFC. This position would follow from our discussions of the role of breadth versus depth in the College curriculum.

The CWG produces recommendations which would be enacted, if warranted, through the governance system. The CWG is envisioned as a temporary working group.

Tier 2 Concerns:

- Examine the curricula in departments and programs to ensure they are as "up to date" and "attractive" to students as possible? (60%)

- Articulate the importance of breadth vs. depth in a Lake Forest College education going forward (i.e., how much time/resources should be devoted to the FFC/FIYS vs. majors)? (54%)

While both issues are rated above 50% in terms of medium or high priority, the Academic Planning Group sorts these as having less immediate urgency compared to Tier 1.

Concerning up-to-date curricula: the College should provide information on increases or decreases in majors and students in departmental courses that follow significant curricular revisions, for review by ARRC and individual departments. CPC should work closely with ARRC when reviewing curricular changes, and in all matters related to the evolution of the curriculum. Further, the Office of Faculty Development should continue to offer incentive grants to fund curricular innovation efforts; the Dean of the Faculty Office should assist departments and programs in learning about how innovative peer institutions construct their curricula.

Regarding breadth vs. depth: this issue is complicated and potentially polarizing. The College has not taken a firm position on its identity related to these issues, and opinions vary as to whether we should allow students to specialize in their academic program more fully and earlier in their time at the College, or whether we should "double down" on breadth requirements. Naturally, these questions are fundamentally tied to the Forester Fundamental Curriculum and must become part of the CWG's charge to explore.

In addition, the following groups should explore these issues:

The Forester Fundamental Curriculum Implementation Subcommittee (FFCIS), advised by the Assessment Committee, should take a snapshot of the state of the FFC and regularly issue a report to faculty about what is working and what is experiencing growing pains. This report should recommend adjustments or provide reaffirmations and is not a charge to "redo the GEC." Far from it, as a new GEC is a significant change and takes many years to develop and flower. The report might highlight a lack of courses to support a particular aspect of the FFC, for instance. Yet, we cannot just assume "it will all work out," and we need regular public-facing reporting of challenges that the College must address to ensure the success of the FFC.

The FIYS committee should consider how FIYS can stabilize its roster so that each year is less "hand to mouth." The College should ask the FIYS committee to articulate and seek endorsement of FIYS staffing goals. Once identified, the FIYS committee should create plans for FIYS staffing that extend beyond a single year; the dean should build in FIYS teaching to specific continuing faculty contracts (as has started to occur in recent years); and the College should determine whether specific full-time positions should be created, as resources allow, to teach FIYS every year. Further, the FIYS committee should research similar programs at peer institutions, and consider approaches to shared readings, speakers, pods, thematic units, and co-curricular programming.

How do we provide students with the flexibility they (increasingly) desire while also being mindful of concomitant increases in faculty and staff workload?

Tier 1 Concerns:

- Explore changing pricing to move toward "inclusive tuition" options (e.g., summer course/s are part of the tuition price; this could also lead to an adjustment of faculty teaching load [3/2/1, etc.]) (93%)

- Create more flexible schedules (e.g., more evening/weekend courses, use of summer term) (80%)

- Create more opportunities to teach students outside the traditional classroom (research experiences, career preparation, etc.) (73%)

- Explore changing pricing to make part-time study more feasible for interested students (73%)

For the two items that concern pricing, the Student Success Committee—working with various administrative offices and in consultation with all governance bodies and other campus stakeholders—should draft an inclusive tuition proposal that would account for financial aid, the potential distribution of teaching load, the potential positive financial impact on the College, and the implications for staff time to support an enlarged summer enterprise and a potentially adjusted academic year model. With particular attention to retention and graduation, the College should determine whether further "leaning in" to a year-round academic operation is desirable and feasible. The Academic Planning Group would not want any current faculty to feel pressed into summer service, and the option must work with existing interest and capacity.

With regard to flexible schedules, the Office of the Registrar and the Office of the Dean of Faculty should analyze current usage of course slots and identify areas of low slot coverage but high desirability. This analysis should then become comparative—when do peer competitors offer courses, and in what numbers? —to determine existing strengths and vulnerabilities. From there, current student levels of satisfaction should be assessed, and a plan to improve the schedule-building process to engage more predictive analytics should be undertaken. For instance, can schedule-building software identify optimal times based upon known students? This process must then lead to an assessment of whether expanded course slot offerings are possible or desirable given current staffing capacity and interest, and, only then, to plan for how to expand offerings to provide additional flexibility. Any changes of this kind would need to meet the capacity and interest of faculty and support staff, and to be assessed through the governance system.

Finally, the College should audit **current ways of teaching outside the traditional classroom structure**, identifying the scale of student usage of non-traditional credits (the recent passage by the faculty of practicum experiences is an example of a potential type of change). From there, departments interested in expanding research-based experiences for credit should be encouraged to generate proposals. Expanding the amount of teaching done outside of the traditional classroom structure has implications for faculty workload, the criteria for evaluating faculty, and the need for further faculty positions (perhaps continuing, non-tenure-track faculty). As such, it would need careful consideration from a workload lens.

Tier 2 Concerns:

- Offer an increased range of remote courses, alongside in-person courses (53%)

- Create more flexible programs of study (e.g., expand College Studies and the Self-Designed major; develop more tracks/concentrations within existing departments/programs; create focus areas not tied to existing departments) (46%)

The issue of remote courses was settled for the near term by the College's recently approved policy for non-COVID emergency remote teaching. Importantly, that policy must be reviewed every two years to account for the rapidly changing environment. In addition, and because the College endorses summer remote courses and accepts student transfer credits of remote courses from other institutions, we should explore the ACM's developing interest in this topic, which could take the form of remote course sharing and seamless transfer of peer offerings for our students who will transfer in remote credits.

Regarding flexible programs of study: This is an area that connects to many aspects of the College, and many stakeholders may have different definitions of appropriate flexibility. We seek here to address several interrelated issues. First, the current ARRC review of the Self-Designed major will explore this question for students who wish to pursue an area of academic focus outside an existing program; further, the Student Success Committee should weigh in on the feasibility of any potential expansion of the Self-Designed major. Second, the College should stabilize the resources for student development courses offered by College Studies, which are currently determined on an *ad hoc* basis; affirm the Associate Dean for Student Success as chair of the program; appoint the Student Success Committee as the program committee for College Studies; and ensure that College Studies enters the ARRC program review process. The program should have its initial review within three years, as a mechanism to assess current practice and to propose new developments.

In addition, CPC should bring a definition of concentrations or tracks to the faculty, and, if passed, departments and programs may make use of these structures for their own curricular development. In the case of focus areas not tied to existing departments, CPC should discuss the possibility of implementing programs in areas such as media production work, finance-related professional certifications, or non-profit humanities/arts professions, as examples.

2. The Changing Student Body—Those Whom We Teach

How are the demographics of our students changing, and how should that affect our curricular offerings?

Tier 1 Concerns:

- Through the curriculum, address the career focus of many first-generation/non-traditional and traditional students (100%)

- Survey and address the major interests of first-generation students (including the practical and skill-building aspects of our courses or areas of study) (94%)

- Create/expand further programs/offerings that engage the experiences of historically marginalized groups, along the model of the AFAM department (LNAM, Indigenous Studies, Disability Studies) (84%)

The College continues to work to recruit a more diverse student body, both in terms of identity groups and socio-economic status. This raises foundational questions about the ways in which the College's curriculum should be responsive to the changing population of students we serve. To what extent should a curriculum be based on academic demands and values decoupled from a particular student audience? To what extent, conversely, should our curriculum evolve to meet the needs of the students we have? These will be questions for the Curricular Working Group as well as Admissions and other offices on campus.

A first step would be to obtain data about desired majors and academic priorities of incoming students over time, and then disaggregate that data based on identity groups, first-generation status, Pell eligibility, and so on. This would allow us to identify patterns in what students from different groups want from their education.

Even with such data, however, we would still confront complex questions about the extent to which incoming students have an accurate sense of what will be significant in their academic development; the ways in which an institution's educational identity should morph in response to demand; and so on. The College should neither ignore the needs and interests of its students (and its consequent attractiveness to potential students) nor chase trends. The case could be made, for example, that it is important to establish programs that offer coursework focusing on the experiences of historically-marginalized groups, whether or not such courses prove popular with the student population.

Conversations about this issue must occur that involve multiple constituencies on campus: Admissions, Student Success, OIR, faculty, staff, and students.

How will we support the needs of an increasingly diverse student body? These items reference specific offices or potential areas of adjustment.

Tier 1 Concerns: Offices and Staffing

- Disability Services (100%)

- Center for Academic Success (93%)

- Additional full-time faculty to support current programs (80%)

- Academic Technology/ITS (66%)

As noted in more detail in the DEI planning report, we must devote more resources to **Disability Services and the Center for Academic Success**. Adding more resources in Disability Services will respond to the growth in this area in recent years, and the anticipated growth in years to come; in addition, it will provide additional resources to support faculty when navigating student accommodations. Furthermore, this unit must engage in continued assessment and planning processes that can adjust and improve current programs, and develop others, including these examples:

- A program to support first-generation students that runs year-round, with academic, financial, co-curricular, and life-coaching support services
- An academic skills peer-coaching program
- Supplemental instruction in addition to one-on-one tutoring for highly enrolled introductory courses
- More COLL courses that work on student development skills
- Instructional support training for students with various disabilities (i.e., Universal Design for Teaching)

Because the Associate Dean for Student Success position is filled by a faculty member in a term appointment, the College must carefully consider staffing and leadership issues for CAS to ensure continuity and continued success.

The question of **full-time faculty to support current academic programs** must be addressed in academic program reviews, and by ARRC, informed by the work of the CWG. Our student-to-faculty ratio remains favorable, so we need to consider which areas of the College have proper staffing within that ratio, and we need to address imbalances when the College is confronted with retirement or attrition.

In order to address the last concern**, Information Technology Service needs to further their developing plans for supporting our students**. This connects to classroom technology and individual student technology, and this unit is already at work on new directions. These should be shared with the Library and Information Technology Services committee for consultation and review.

Tier 1 Concerns: Initiatives (separate from Offices and Staffing, but also Tier I)

- More financial advising resources (94%)

- More flexible financial aid packages (93%)

- Course material costs (textbooks and software) (87%)

The first two items are addressed elsewhere in this report, while the question of **course material costs** can be addressed in part by additional promotion of Open Access Resources, led by the Donnelley and Lee Library. In addition, course material costs (including software) and alternative methods of access should be included in course description information and made available before the start of classes via syllabi (so that students can make advance purchasing choices). The Business Office should also develop a mechanism for students with financial aid to understand how they can access help (e.g., so that online materials can be easier to finance through financial aid and student accounts)

Tier 2 Concerns: Offices

- Registrar's Office (33%)

- Donnelley and Lee Library (40%)

- Global Engagement Office (34%)

- Center for Chicago Programs (33%)

These areas were deemed to have less immediate urgency in the eyes of this planning group (in terms of their direct support for our increasingly diverse student body), largely because of their acknowledged current success in providing essential support for our students. Nonetheless, these offices should each be charged—along with the offices in Tier 1—with preparing near-term work plans that will improve their offices in the next 1-3 years.

The Academic Planning Group also notes that in recent years the Office of the Registrar has become more closely tied to the efforts of the Center for Academic Success, and that its workflow has changed significantly. The Office must continue to improve its use of systems and technologies to enable more "frictionless" experiences for faculty and students.

Should we expand our non-traditional student population?

Tier 1 Concerns:

- Expand our transfer-friendly and transfer-inclusive strategy (100%)

- Expand (and expand support for) our commuting population (100%)

- Expand other non-traditional populations (military, adults, learners with full-time day jobs). Might require flexibility not needed by traditional populations. (80%)

- Expand dual-credit high-school partnerships as a way of attracting more area students (67%)

While we often appear to visitors to be a traditional residential college, our location gives us a different student profile—as the first two points above indicate, we have a dramatically larger **transfer and commuter student populations** than many of our sister SLACs. Our primary competitors are not other liberal arts colleges, but rather larger Illinois universities. Accordingly, the first two items in this list recognize the reality of our current population. As of fall 2021, we had approximately 225 transfer students, which represented 15% of the student body but 26% of seniors, and approximately 500 commuter students (from the four-year and transfer populations). We have become a much more transfer-friendly and transfer-inclusive institution—in part through the creation in recent years of a new support position in the Office of the Registrar—yet we must now seek ways to better serve this population, including identifying challenge points in the curriculum. The informal Transfer Team, composed of representatives from Admissions, DOF, and the Registrar, should become a formal group with regular meetings, charged in the near-term with producing a report that will identify what supports are needed to serve the current population, and, in consultation with Admissions goals, to develop a plan for potential growth. The commuter student population requires a similar effort, to be led by the Office of Student Affairs, in partnership with Admissions, DOF, and other relevant offices.

The third point above, regarding **other non-traditional populations,** is related to the other two and should accordingly be taken up by these groups; this must be done sequentially, however. The priority order is transfer and commuter students, followed by new populations.

Finally, given that **dual-credit partnerships** have been approved by the faculty, interested departments should present proposals to CPC. The DOF can advise on the departmental commitment necessary to support such efforts.

Tier 2 Concerns:

- Explore graduate and community education beyond the MLS/MAT offerings (47%)

- Create a "transfer college," which could have different GEC requirements, and advising structures (40%)

- Create a separate "college of applied studies" within the College: this college could have different GEC requirements, and advising structures, for instance (Education, Accounting Applied Arts, etc.) (27%)

These items would represent a more radical departure from the current College structure. Because these concepts are so different from our single-college model, and because they would significantly alter College operations, we do not favor proceeding with investigations at this time.

3. The Faculty Experience: How We Teach

How do we equitably evaluate faculty and ensure that labor is recognized?

Tier 1 Concerns:

- Determine whether class-size guidelines should be revised (rewards for teaching more students, or some weighting mechanism, between, for instance, lecture vs. lab) (87%)

- Further clarify expectations for faculty work and to equalize faculty workload as much as possible (66%)

- Revisit assessment of tenure-track faculty performance criteria for promotion and tenure (the role of anonymous evaluations; the quality of advising; etc.) (60%)

- Explore the awarding of credit for labs, for both students and faculty (60%)

- Consider improvements to schedule-building support (better planning mechanisms to help departments schedule optimal courses in the best slots, etc.) (60%)

Addressing **class-size guidelines** would require the College to collect and share the differential teaching loads of current faculty, and this item should be given to the Curriculum Working Group as part of its charge.

The issue of **faculty work expectations** must remain in front of FPPC, as that committee continues to audit service. Additionally, FPPC should look to eliminate unnecessary service (although the Academic Planning Group recognizes the difficulty of this task). Further, FPPC's recent consideration of workload and work-life balance should continue through the **Faculty Experience Working Group (FEWG)**. The issue can also be addressed in any new or revised faculty policies, and should be a categorical consideration in the development or revision of future policies. (The FEWG might also, for instance, explore whether we can provide additional resources for supporting faculty grants, as well as resources for supporting prestigious undergraduate fellowships and awards [to lighten the burden on faculty]).

College-level criteria for tenure and promotion are connected to the role of anonymous course evaluations and to the place of DEI efforts in tenure and promotion. These issues are discussed in the DEI planning report.

The issue of **lab credits** is controversial, and it is worth noting there are a range of opinions among the members of the Academic Planning Group. The College needs to complete an analysis of the benefits and costs of its current model, recognizing the value of our lab experiences, the strong outcomes for our students, and the needs of our faculty. We should consider issues such as the length of science labs, the frequency of labs, lab enrollments, staff support for labs, how students are credited for taking labs, and how faculty are credited for teaching labs. We must also recognize that faculty who teach other labs or extended periods (Art,

SOAN, Math, MLL, Econ) do not receive additional teaching credits for their efforts, and there are questions raised by this disparity of fairness in faculty evaluation and workload.

Schedule-building improvements should be taken up by DOF and the Office of the Registrar, working with ITS as needed, to allow better and easier schedule planning. This issue is also important for concerns around flexibility in response to student needs.

What lessons have we learned from the pandemic about teaching modalities and the need for flexibility/accessibility of learning?

Tier 1 Concern:

Expanded role of remote learning and/or flexible modality (73%)

This is the only item that accrued more than 50% support, and it relates to questions above regarding flexibility for students. It requires regular and further consideration through the governance system.

Tier 2 Concerns:

- Expanded availability of instructional design resources and academic technology resources (47%)

- Further development of "flipped classrooms" (e.g., multi-section introductory courses as flipped classrooms, with standard videos for all students, and hands-on work in class) (40%)

- Expanded resources for the Office of Faculty Development (OFD) (40%)

The first two items relate in separate ways to classroom instruction, and the Academic Planning Group suggests that the Director of Academic Technology and ITS work to survey faculty on areas of potential development. The College can then assess what resources would prove helpful, although we recognize that some of this is idiosyncratic to individual faculty needs.

The third item recognizes the current strength of the **OFD**; there is agreement that its current level of programming should continue.

What facilities development should be prioritized to allow faculty to do their best teaching?

Tier 1 Concerns:

- Identify new buildings that could aid student recruitment (e.g., a fine and performing arts center?) (87%)

- Identify needed improvements in existing buildings (86%)

- Identify classroom technology improvements (73%)

There are many campus constituents who value the concept of a **new facility for the fine and performing arts.** Because facilities of this kind could potentially allow the College to attract students to these areas (in the way Lillard and Brown have done, respectively), and because our proximity to Chicago continues to provide opportunity for students interested in the fine and performing arts, the Academic Planning Group strongly endorses continued attempts to identify donor interest in this direction. However, because the College has identified endowment development as a more pressing concern than capital projects, this group endorses two separate near-term measures:

First, we encourage the continued development of the new Krebs Center for the Humanities as support center for fine and performing arts activities, along with the humanities more broadly (with the caveat that the Krebs Center does not have the physical capacity for larger productions and audiences).

Second, the College should identify **improvements to existing facilities** that can be accomplished in the near term. One example is the improvement of the Music Department practice rooms that is now underway; a less recent, but equally relevant, example is the Mellon Foundation-funded improvement of the Hixon Hall theater. Because certain academic buildings are aging or, like Carnegie Hall, are in need of significant attention, the College should carefully consider how space is being used in newer campus buildings and develop options to move relevant departments when feasible.

The third concern above requires ITS planning, and improvements are currently underway to the operations and planning side of that unit.

4. Governance

Should we conduct a comprehensive review of the governance system and procedures? It was last reformed in the 1990s—does it need a comprehensive review, given concerns about the distribution of faculty workload as well as other important issues? Further, how can the growing diversity of our faculty be effectively supported by the governance process?

Tier 1 Concerns:

- Discussion of the future role of part-time faculty; full-time non-tenure-track faculty; review and promotion opportunities for NTT faculty (100%)

- Empower ARRC to shift permanent allocation as needed (87%)

- Review of the governance system and procedures (80%)

- Address sabbatical challenges for small departments (80%)

- Establish clearer tenure criteria at the departmental level (67%)

- Improve College academic policies for student success (P/F deadlines, etc.) (86%)

- Review and revision of the faculty handbook (54%)

The status of **part-time faculty and non-tenure-track faculty** should be taken up by FPPC, with a goal of proposing standardization of titles, review, and promotion opportunities. The College should acknowledge that we already have a significant complement of full-time non-tenure-track teaching faculty, and that the time has come to formerly create this category in terms of review and promotion practices. This item is also discussed in the DEI planning report.

The question of permanent allocation occupies an ambiguous space in the governance system. To remedy it, ARRC should regularly recommend shifts in permanent allocation to the President. The Curriculum Working Group can help identify metrics for this decision-making, yet the idea that ARRC can only recommend temporary allocation and never shift continuing allocation from one area to another is not responsible stewardship of resources. ARRC should seek to manage College resources while keeping the faculty-to-student ratio steady and providing departments and programs with adequate resources to staff their curricula. Yet, the student-to-faculty ratio at the College level does not tell the story of specific pressure areas, and the CWG must also attend to this at the level of the individual academic unit.The challenges posed by **the governance system and the faculty handbook** are multifaceted. Governance committees should seek to identify the aspects of their work that might be improved were procedures different, and then convey those findings to FPPC. The College should offer staff support to CPC and ARRC, to aid in workflow and coordination. FPPC should seek to review the Faculty Handbook in the coming years to identify items that a) require updating simply because practices have changed over time, as well as those that b) represent questions about faculty work and governance. After assessing

the scope of potential change, FPPC may advise the creation of a new temporary group or may remand various identified issues to existing committees.

Sabbaticals are, again, part of FPPCs purview, and the committee has in recent years started discussion of this issue. FPPC should survey faculty on the efficacy of the current sabbatical policy, examine those of other institutions, ask ARRC to further consider the implications of not replacing faculty on sabbatical, and propose, if warranted, a revision to the existing policy.

Regarding **tenure criteria at the department level**, FPPC should ask departments to develop tenure criteria for research to create consistent expectations for junior faculty. These criteria can be revised and updated but should not be "implied." Departmental-level discussions should take place in the context of College-level conversations about equitable faculty evaluation.

The Student Success Committee has taken up a number of **revisions to academic policies**, making recommendations to CPC, and this group should continue this important work. This is part of the multi-faceted work for the Student Success Committee that is envisioned for the years to come in the Priority Recommendations.

FPPC should assess progress in these area in the next 2-3 years, and, after consulting faculty, determine if a larger governance revision may be warranted.

Finally, the College should regularly review the progress of academic planning and ensure that its direction provides support for our faculty (see key challenge #5). We must ensure that as we grow, plan, and amend our procedures in times ahead that we always do so with an effort to improve the work-life balance of faculty, ensure that faculty are given the time to pursue their work as free from unnecessary tasks as possible, and with institutional recognition of their continuing accomplishments.