

# Final Report: Faculty Excellence Working Group

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The committee submitted a preliminary report to the ECAS Senate at the end of January. Since then, the committee has been gathering input from faculty. We received feedback on our preliminary report of guiding principles and goals by email and during a Senate meeting. Carla and Vicki attended a series of meetings with chairs and program directors organized by the Research, Scholarship, and Creativity working group, and committee members attended a meeting of the Lecture-Track faculty. Finally, the committee developed questions for a survey on ECAS strategic planning that was sent to all ECAS faculty.

## **I. Guiding Principles and Goals.**

The working group developed the following set of Guiding Principles and Goals.

### **Guiding Principles:**

Emory College must recruit and support a diverse world class faculty prepared to achieve our dual mission of carrying out path-breaking, impactful research and creative work across the spectrum of the arts and sciences, and offering our undergraduate students a transformative liberal education that prepares them to be leaders in whatever personal and professional communities they find themselves.

Emory College is at the forefront of changes in higher education that recognize tenure-track, lecture-track and tenured faculty as regular faculty in ECAS. Excellence of the ECAS faculty in scholarship, teaching, and service relies on high-functioning synergies among all of these faculty groups. ECAS faculty are expected to achieve excellence in their professional work, and the university must provide the appropriate support and resources to allow them to do so.

- All faculty are expected to be engaged and highly effective teachers and mentors, who share their knowledge, curiosity and passion for learning with our students and colleagues.
- Our tenure-track faculty are expected to be prominent scholars -- conducting research that leads, and often reshapes, their disciplines.
- Our lecture-track faculty are expected to be superlative teachers, inside and outside of the classroom; to learn and contribute to the most effective pedagogical strategies in their respective fields; and to share that knowledge with their Emory colleagues and, if appropriate, broader pedagogical communities.

### **Goals:**

1. Continually reaffirm our forceful commitment to increasing the diversity of our faculty by improving our recruitment and retention efforts.
2. Support our entire faculty across the full trajectory of their professional lives, from recruitment and hiring through retirement. The work of our faculty is not defined solely by successful promotions and

other professional milestones, but is understood to be the many and varied contributions they make along the years, and often decades, in which they serve on our faculty. This is a collective commitment, and the administration, staff and faculty must support the professional development and success of our faculty in all its facets.

3. Commit more forcefully to recruiting superlative faculty at both the junior and senior levels and better supporting, retaining, and rewarding our most productive and valued faculty.
4. Commit to ensuring that faculty can carry out work that transcends the boundaries of the traditional departments and disciplines, and have their work appropriately supported, assessed and valued. We must continue to find ways to create and support vibrant scholarly communities and conversations that live within, between, and beyond the traditional scholarly boundaries.
5. Find appropriate ways to support and value innovative teaching and nontraditional scholarly production among tenure-track and lecture-track faculty - including public scholarship and outreach, digital scholarship, and the production of patents.
6. Find ways to increase the impact of the efforts of our faculty by removing institutional barriers, obstacles to innovation, inefficiencies, and unnecessary constraints and demands on our faculty.
7. To expect and value faculty service and leadership in the scholarly arena, including departmental, College, University level and beyond, as appropriate to rank.

## **II. Strategic Planning Survey.**

256 faculty responded to the survey for a response rate of 46%. The Faculty Excellence working group contributed several questions to the survey; see the Appendix for the questions.

**Q1\_1 on tenure and promotion.** The first question concerned standards for tenure and promotion and asked faculty to respond to proposed university-wide guidelines for tenure and promotion. 68% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the proposed guidelines; 26% strongly or somewhat disagreed. Of the 129 comments in this section, most were supportive of the guidelines and of the idea of changing the expectations for tenure in ECAS to a rating of Excellent in research. There were some reservations expressed concerning specific language in the proposed guidelines, in particular, 'transforming the field' as an expected standard for all faculty, and the distinction between 'continuing' and 'continuous' research productivity.

**Q1\_3 on supporting and rewarding highly effective scholars and teachers.** 92% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement.

**Q1\_4 on diversity.** 75% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that diversity of our faculty should be a core element of its excellence. Several faculty commented that we should take a broad view of diversity and not limit it to gender and race.

**Q1\_6 on interdisciplinary research and teaching.** 66% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that we should prioritize enhancing systems for encouraging, supporting, and assessing interdisciplinary research and teaching; 14% strongly or somewhat disagreed. Many faculty made that point that interdisciplinary teaching and research should not be privileged above and beyond 'disciplinary' teaching and research, but should, like all excellent research and teaching, be recognized and facilitated by reducing institutional impediments and by fostering opportunities for collaboration.

**Q1\_8 on enhancing the teaching mission.** Faculty were asked to rank four ways to enhance the teaching mission. First-place votes were divided fairly evenly among the four choices, but looking at both first and second place choices, support for curricular development (#2) was the winner with support for mentorship and professional development (#3) a close second. Overall, the working group derived a strong sense from faculty and chairs that each of these initiatives should be supported in the Strategic plan.

### **III. Recommendations**

The Faculty Excellence Working Group recommends the following initiatives:

1. Emory College of Arts and Sciences should raise the expectations for tenure and promotion to require (a) Excellence in Research and (b) Excellent or Very Good/Highly Effective in Teaching, in accordance with the University Faculty Senate's recommended expectations for tenure at the levels of Associate and Full Professor.
2. Emory College of Arts and Sciences should develop and implement initiatives to recruit, support, reward, and retain our most highly effective scholars and teachers. For example, merit raises should prioritize our most superlative, invested, and hard-working faculty; fundraising efforts should be redoubled to support endowed chairs including the possibility of teaching chairs open to lecture-track faculty.
3. Emory College of Arts and Sciences should commit to enhancing the diversity of ECAS faculty through new hires and retention efforts.
4. Emory College of Arts and Sciences should develop and support forums, structures, and programs that allow faculty across departments and schools to establish connections and collaborations with a view towards interdisciplinary research and teaching. These could range from a space for informal faculty gatherings to institutes or centers, like QuanTM or the new ILA, which encourage faculty from different departments and programs to interact, learn new methods and areas of scholarship, and advance their research and teaching.
5. Emory College of Arts and Sciences should re-open the Center for Teaching and Curriculum, which would enhance the teaching mission of ECAS by providing support for course development and innovation and help for faculty wishing to improve their teaching. As this is a long-term project, new initiatives and programs could be implemented immediately through existing structures such as the CFDE. Some suggestions: a workshop for new faculty on best practices for teaching at Emory; funds that support curricular innovation; funds to support a peer mentoring program in innovative teaching; support for faculty to attend curricular development workshops or other types of professional development experiences related to teaching.

## **Appendix. Faculty Survey Questions on Faculty Excellence.**

L0\_1 Emory College Strategic Plan: Faculty Survey The following survey for Emory College faculty seeks to gather broad input on the goals and emerging priorities for the College's Strategic Plan, as well as feedback on the criteria for how priorities will be established. There are roughly 30 questions (twelve of which are free-text responses) organized under the following headings: Faculty Excellence Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity in ECAS Priorities for Undergraduate Education Philanthropy, Public Engagement and Communications College leadership will be reviewing quantitative responses, faculty rank, and other basic demographics in the aggregate, along with de-identified qualitative feedback, but individual submissions will be held in confidence by the College's Director of Institutional Research.

L1\_1 Section 1: Faculty Excellence. Emory College must recruit and support a diverse world class faculty prepared to achieve our dual mission of carrying out path-breaking, influential research and creative work across the spectrum of the arts and sciences, and offering our undergraduate students a transformative liberal education that prepares them to be leaders in whatever personal and professional communities they find themselves. Your responses to this first set of questions will help set the priorities for initiatives within Emory College related to faculty excellence.

L1\_2 Tenure and Promotion. At a recent ECAS Faculty meeting, there was a discussion of changing our requirements for tenure to include an expectation of excellence in research. The following criteria have been proposed by the Emory University Faculty Senate as standards for tenure and promotion at Emory: Candidates for appointment or promotion to Associate Professor must show evidence of continuous outstanding scholarship and/or creative inquiry, highly effective teaching, and collegial service contributions to their department, university, community, and/or profession. Candidates for Associate Professor also will have demonstrated promise to become leaders and to transform their field as their career progresses. Candidates for appointment or promotion to Professor must show evidence of continuing outstanding scholarship, highly effective teaching or mentoring, and collegial leadership in their department university, community and/or profession. Candidates for Professor will be established, nationally or internationally, as among the most distinctive and recognized voices in their disciplines, consistently addressing or generating their fields' most pressing questions.

Q1\_1 I agree that these University-wide expectations for tenure and promotion should be endorsed by Emory College of Arts and Sciences.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q1\_2 Please offer additional commentary on why you agree or disagree with the proposed changes, re., the tenure and promotion criteria.

L1\_4 Faculty Recruitment and Retention. Emory College of Arts and Sciences must prioritize recruiting a diverse, superlative faculty and supporting, retaining and rewarding our most highly effective scholars and teachers across the full trajectory of their professional lives.

Q1\_3 To what extent do you agree we must prioritize supporting, retaining and rewarding our most highly effective scholars and teachers?

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q1\_4 To what extent do you agree that the diversity of our faculty should be a core element of its excellence?

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q1\_5 Please offer concrete suggestions for short and long term improvement in attaining the above objectives.

L1\_6 Interdisciplinary Scholarship. Another goal of the Strategic Plan is a commitment to fostering faculty excellence in research and teaching that advances both disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship and pedagogy.

Q1\_6 To what extent do you agree that we should prioritize enhancing structures and systems for encouraging, supporting, and assessing interdisciplinary research and teaching?

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q1\_7 Please offer concrete suggestions for better supporting interdisciplinary research and teaching efforts.

L1\_8 Excellence in Teaching Emory College of Arts and Sciences values highly effective teaching on the part of both lecture track and tenure track faculty.

Q1\_8 Which of the following ways would be most effective in enhancing the teaching mission in the College? Please rank them by dragging-and-dropping into the appropriate order, the top (#1) being most and bottom (#4) being least important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Reward our best teachers with honors and awards. (1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide better support for curricular development and pedagogical research. (2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Support mentorship and professional development in teaching and pedagogy. (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify more effective ways to assess excellent teaching. (4)

Q1\_9 Are there other types of support for excellence in teaching that you would add to this list? Where would you rank them in comparison with the others?