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Academic Plan Steering Committee
Prof. Bill Andrews
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Dear Colleagues:

In response to your call for specific ideas and recommendations to assist the Academic Plan Steering Committee as it considers six guiding issues, we offer the attached abbreviated proposal for the creation of a formalized system of options, procedures, and structures to better support, develop, deploy, and recognize the contributions and potential contributions of Carolina's Ph.D.-prepared EPA Non-Faculty administrators.

We look forward to discussing this idea with your further.

Sincerely yours,

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Enclosure

**Proposal for Academic Plan Steering Committee:
Carolina Administrator-Scholars Corps
5/6/2010**

The Proposal

In response to your call for specific ideas and recommendations to assist the Academic Plan Steering Committee as it considers six guiding issues, we offer this abbreviated proposal for the creation of a formalized system of options, procedures, and structures to better support, develop, deploy, and recognize the contributions and potential contributions of Carolina's Ph.D.-prepared EPA Non-Faculty administrators.¹

Specifically, we suggest that formal structures be developed to support this growing cohort in pursuing their ongoing scholarly research and teaching while they continue to develop their administrative skills and talents. With relatively modest administrative changes and financial support, we believe it would be possible for the university to more fully realize, and indeed optimize, the value of this rich existing resource to support Carolina's educational mission, while improving markedly the quality of the workplace and the opportunities for professional development of this vital contingent of the university's professional workforce.

Such a program responds to several of the goals the Steering Committee has been asked to address:

- Create transformative education experiences for our students (undergraduate, graduate and professional)
- Find new opportunities for multi-disciplinary collaboration
- Optimize opportunities for scholarship with real-world applications

Additionally, this proposal expands the Committee's goal of recruiting and retaining top faculty by investing in efforts to recruit, retain, and develop skilled professional administrators (many of whom, it should be noted, are women) whose scholarly and teaching contributions complement those of the full-time faculty.

The Problem and the Opportunity

There is a growing cadre of EPA Non-Faculty administrators on our campus who also hold Ph.D.s. or other terminal degrees in their fields (an extremely informal count has produced a list of approximately forty such individuals, approximately three-quarters of whom are women). Many of these administrators continue to pursue their scholarly research, writing, publication, public speaking, engagement, and teaching while fulfilling their administrative duties for the university. They contribute in myriad ways to the academic mission of Carolina.

Many – but by no means all – already have adjunct appointments in their academic disciplines. They teach already-existing courses, design well-received new courses, serve as faculty supervisors and site supervisors for student internships, and serve as faculty sponsors for student research projects and honors thesis. They are innovative teachers who use digital media, employ various forms of contract grading to encourage student empowerment, create new forms of experiential education, and engage in many other transformative pedagogical practices. Many of them have also published important works of scholarship, won major research and teaching grants, and are leaders in professional organizations in their fields.

¹ We refer throughout this proposal to "Ph.D.-prepared" administrators, but we would like to make it clear that we anticipate such a program also extending to other administrators with terminal degrees in their fields (e.g. MFA, Ed.D., etc.).

In several respects, then, the overall configuration of their work – a hybrid blend of scholarship and administration – strongly resembles that of their faculty-administrator colleagues who rose to administration through the faculty ranks.

The structures supporting each group's work, however, are markedly unequal. While the faculty-administrators usually have either tenure or an established faculty post and departmental home to provide a base, legitimacy, money, rewards, and other support for their ongoing teaching and research, the administrator-scholars generally carry on their teaching and research under the radar, on the side, or as an overload on top of their regular jobs – often only minimally supported, frequently unrewarded, and often relatively unrecognized or unacknowledged by the university or their home units. These realities, too, are shaped by the differing long-term professional development timetables along which each group works, with faculty members' work built upon long periods of focus on scholarship punctuated with more time-limited and episodic forays into administration, while administrators necessarily have to weave their scholarship into a long-term commitment to their administrative roles.

While the university's reward structures clearly signal that the institution sees myriad benefits in having its faculty-administrators continue to engage in research and teaching, academe has done less well in recognizing how administrator-scholars' ongoing engagement in those same activities could be more integrated with their administrative roles to take even greater advantage of the ways this work enhances their administrative effectiveness. Yet there is no question that, even now, these scholars' research and teaching activities bring enormous benefits to the university, for which these professionals receive far less compensation, explicit support, or encouragement than do their faculty-administrator counterparts.

Instead, we are aware of some cases where administrator-scholars have been encouraged to maintain a firewall between their identities as scholars and as administrators, to the detriment of both the university and the individual's professional growth. This situation has the potential to create a group of professionals who are overworked, divided, professionally frustrated, and undercompensated, while preventing the university from taking full advantage the real benefits they bring to the educational and scholarly mission.

Benefits to the University and Advancement of Academic Plan's Goals

Formalizing administrator-scholars' role offers the university an unparalleled opportunity to capitalize, quickly, on a rich resource already in place in ways that clearly advance the Academic Plan's developing goals.

Offering transformative educational experiences for our students: Those of us who are already in the classroom are contributing now, on an individual basis, to student learning in many areas. But our positions as administrator-scholars offer a number of unique benefits, many of which are unrealized when we feel we must curtail our interaction with students so as not to take on significant uncompensated, unrecognized work:

- A broad knowledge of campus resources and opportunities. As administrators, we circulate widely around the campus and often have knowledge of a wide range of resources and campus opportunities that can inform and further the education of Carolina students.
- Continuity. In our role as instructors, we provide continuity for students in ways that are not always possible for other per-course contract instructors. Research demonstrates that one factor in student satisfaction with an academic experience is whether they were able to develop a personal relationship with a faculty member. If the university creates a system which maximizes the ability of Ph.D.-prepared administrators to function as scholars and teachers, the potential for faculty contacts for students – and thus their opportunity to have a close relationship with these faculty members – increases significantly. Because we are already

- committed to Carolina in long-term positions, we are here to respond to our students' requests for letters of recommendation and other forms of support.
- Broader pool of scholars for thesis and dissertation committees. We have the potential to augment thesis and dissertation committees with a wide range of additional areas of expertise, but at present this level of involvement with students is neither compensated nor formally encouraged or, in some cases, even allowed.
 - The potential to provide for our graduate students (especially in the College) models of scholars who have followed non-traditional career paths, yet who continue to contribute to their disciplines and to institutions of higher education. Such models are critically important for Ph.D.s in disciplines (especially in the humanities and social sciences) where a disheartening imbalance between full-time faculty positions and the number of job-seeking Ph.D.s has produced a generation of extremely well educated but underemployed professionals.

Finding new opportunities for multi-disciplinary collaboration: Our administrative positions often require that we work across departmental and disciplinary lines and across the divides that are perceived to exist between professional schools and the College. The connections and knowledge we have built through this work allows us to recognize and operationalize potential opportunities for increased collaboration and cross-/multi-disciplinary projects. Being involved in such projects helps us grow as administrators while drawing on the knowledge, skills, commitment and expertise we've developed as scholars.

Optimize opportunities for scholarship with real-world applications: The very nature of our work as administrators means that we are scholars who recognized, very early in our careers, the applicability of our knowledge, skills, and abilities to realms beyond the traditional outlets of scholarly publication and teaching. Our disproportionate employment in sectors of the university involved in interdisciplinary work and public service and engagement (centers, institutes, and academic support programs), furthermore, gives us knowledge of and direct access to avenues of connection between the university and many communities. Additionally, for many of us, years of scholarly work outside the pressures of the tenure track has allowed us to develop scholarly portfolios that are innovative, entrepreneurial, and engaged with practical problems. We could therefore provide a deep well of expertise that could help the university continue to grow and develop programs that put scholarship to work in the world.

Recruit and retain top faculty (and professional staff): There is a beneficial human resources component to such a program as well. It provides a strong framework for us to recruit and retain highly-qualified and competent administrators who can also fulfill faculty roles as appropriate. In this time of ongoing budget cuts and reductions, Carolina can develop robust opportunities to use most effectively people in whom the university has already invested. At a moment when the job market for Ph.D.s (especially in the liberal arts) is undergoing radical shifts, we could become known as an employer of choice for a large pool of highly capable, underemployed Ph.D.s – smart, creative people with a record of excellence and a deep commitment to the culture and mission of academia.

Advancing Other University Initiatives: 2009 Tenure Task Force, Fixed-Term Faculty Policies, and Gender Diversity in Leadership

Our proposal builds on and extends two current ongoing initiatives: (1) the recommendations developed by the 2009 Task Force on Future Promotion and Tenure Policies and Practices that suggest ways to encourage and reward increased engagement with the public, new forms of scholarly work, and increased scholarly activity across disciplinary lines; and (2) efforts by the Faculty Council Fixed Term Faculty

Committee and the College of Arts and Sciences to develop standard, fair, and equitable policies for fixed-term faculty employment and career advancement.

Additionally, because of the demographics of employment of Ph.D.s in the non-faculty ranks, this program has great potential to advance the development of professional women across the university who make up the majority of Ph.D.-prepared administrators. Targeting Ph.D.-prepared non-faculty professionals can help the university build a large pool of women leaders who can be expected to rise into increasingly responsible positions both at Carolina and across academe.

Benefits to the Professional Staff

Developing a clear system or program such as we propose here would also offer a number of tangible benefits to Ph.D.-prepared EPA Non-Faculty professional employees:

- An opportunity for much more authentic and healthy integration of multiple professional identities and work.
- The assurance that the university values their intellects and actively encourages and rewards their continued engagement with learning.
- Predictable and open avenues for the development of meaningful and enriching networks and connections with other faculty and students.
- The chance to build their leadership and administrative skills in ways that also take advantage of their discipline-based scholarly expertise.
- Practical, accessible ways to leverage employment in a university environment to continue to make important intellectual contributions to their fields, to the university, and to society through scholarship, publication, and dissemination of their own work.
- A greater sense of investment in and commitment to the University's academic and scholarly mission.

Specifics to be Worked Out

We are aware that a number of specific matters would need to be addressed for a program or system such as that we propose to be put into place. If the Steering Committee is interested in our proposal, we would be happy to develop a small working group to more fully elaborate particulars such as:

- How to build the program in a way that does not simply amount to overburdening an already-busy cohort of employees.
- How to expand existing support structures to facilitate administrator-scholars' research, publication, and teaching. While many or most of these support structures are already in place for full-time Carolina faculty, they are extremely variable in the degree to which they are presently available to professional staff. Some of the important support structures include:
 - clear system for arranging appropriate, stable faculty appointments in home departments
 - increased and/or more regularized and predictable opportunities to teach in areas where home departments have need
 - clerical support
 - access to graduate teaching and/or research assistants
 - technical assistance
 - grant support
 - professional development support (e.g. access to the IAH or other internal fellowship and/or leadership development programs)
 - travel support for conferences and professional involvements beyond the university

- research support (e.g. research leaves, ability to accept external research awards such as NEH fellowships)
- How to design workload management, compensation, reward, and advancement structures that account for administrator-scholars' scholarly and teaching work. Would this work be recognized with salary increases, would it be incorporated into annual reviews in the home unit or the sponsoring academic department? How would it relate to paths of advancement? How would the tendency for teaching- and student-related demands to grow over time (e.g. recommendation writing, advising, service on thesis committees, etc.) be managed?
- How to incorporate administrator-scholars who are teaching and doing research into departmental and university-wide faculty governance structures.
- How, and at what levels, to fund such a program, which would include questions of teaching and/or research stipends, staff support, and other factors.
- How to design a program that is flexible enough to accommodate administrator-scholars' varying levels of interest, desire, and ability to continue their scholarly work and teaching. It would be ideal, we think, to offer administrator-scholars an array of opportunities and pathways out of which they could assemble individualized work plans that accommodate their unique needs and interests as well as the needs and imperatives of the administrative positions into which these scholars are hired.

By building a comprehensive and intentional system for developing and nurturing its administrator-scholars, Carolina has a unique opportunity to design a nationally significant, visionary, innovative program that advances the university's academic mission while also making more efficient and effective use of existing resources, responding to calls for greater accountability and stability in teaching, addressing issues related to contingent and fixed-term faculty, advancing creative solutions to the Ph.D. career crisis, and building a cadre of professional women leaders for academe.

We look forward to speaking with the Committee further about this idea.

Respectfully submitted,

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