



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

Report of the Task Force on Collaborative Hiring

March 6, 2009

Table of Contents

Members of the Task Force	2
Introduction	2
Part I: Collaboration at Notre Dame Today: A Snapshot	4
Part II: Challenges and Impediments to Collaborative Hiring	5
Part III: Recommended Strategies to Address the Identified Challenges	11
Conclusion	26
Appendix An Informal Survey of Collaborative Hiring at Peer Universities	

Members of the Task Force

Nicole Stelle Garnett, Professor of Law, Chair

Ted Beatty, Interim Director, Kellogg Institute, and Associate Professor of History

Robert Bernhard, Vice President for Research

Kevin Bowyer, Department Chair and Schubmehl-Prein Professor of Computer Science and Engineering

Daniel Myers, Associate Dean for Research, Graduate Studies and Centers, College of Arts and Letters, and Professor of Sociology

Bill Nichols, Professor of Accountancy, Mendoza College of Business

Thomas Noble, Department Chair and Professor of History

David Severson, Director, Eck Institute for Global Health and Professor of Biological Sciences

Richard Taylor, Associate Dean for Research and Computing, College of Science, and Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Introduction

In September 2008, Provost Tom Burish convened an *ad hoc* Task Force on Collaborative Hiring and charged it with addressing several issues raised when more than one academic unit is involved in an appointment of a teaching and research (“T&R”) faculty member, including joint appointments between departments, appointments initiated by a center or institute, and appointments arising from SAPC initiatives. The Task Force was asked to focus in particular on the following:

1. Challenges that arise when more than one academic unit participates in the recruitment and appointment of a T&R faculty member;
2. Structural challenges that arise when a T&R faculty member has responsibilities to more than one academic unit, including teaching, administrative, and service responsibilities;

3. Issues involving the mentoring, evaluation, and tenure of T&R faculty members affiliated with more than one academic unit; and
4. The tension between departmental autonomy and the desire to foster a more collaborative culture among all of the academic units of the University.

The Provost asked the Task Force to assess these issues and to identify as many potential strategies as possible for addressing them. The Task Force was to develop an array of strategies from which academic leaders might choose, rather than prescribe a single approach for every given challenge.

Addressing these challenges is critical to advancing Notre Dame's goal of becoming a preeminent research university. In order to achieve true preeminence we must hire the very best faculty and enable them to excel in their research, scholarship, and teaching efforts. While maintaining and/or building strength in core disciplines remains essential, we also must facilitate cross-disciplinary work if we are to remain at the forefront of research, scholarship, and teaching. Some of the most exciting and important contributions to research and scholarship are at the borders among disciplines and involve multidisciplinary collaborations. As the Strategic Academic Planning Committee emphasized in its second call for proposals, "today's great universities are being asked to help understand and solve the most difficult questions and challenges facing our world." Notre Dame is uniquely situated to answer this call. Not only does our mission enable us to provide a distinct perspective, but the Catholic intellectual tradition itself demands that the best research in all academic disciplines—in collaboration with one another and in harmony with faith—be brought to bear on the issues of our day. In order to answer the call, however, we must embrace this universalism and understand the need to engage in collaborative inquiry across disciplinary boundaries.

Collaboration enables us to complement traditional departmental hiring by establishing a critical mass of faculty in a scholarly area that could not be addressed through existing departmental structures, to build upon and generate new synergies among our existing disciplinary and interdisciplinary strengths, and to create the kind of curricular offerings needed to responsibly educate the next generation of graduate and undergraduate students. Moreover, collaborative hiring also can foster *disciplinary* excellence. Not only may more than one academic unit of the University have a particular interest in building a critical mass of scholars

engaged in the same area of inquiry, but, importantly, the lessons learned from scholarly interactions among the disciplines promises to make all of us better at our craft.

Part I: Collaboration at Notre Dame Today: A Snapshot

To date, much of the impetus for collaborative hiring at Notre Dame has come from major interdisciplinary institutes and centers. Since the University's academic articles specify that all T&R faculty members must have a departmental appointment, centers and institutes seek to collaborate with the department or departments that would be a natural "tenure home" for a targeted faculty member or a faculty line in a particular field of study. In these collaborations, the initiating unit often fully or substantially funds the faculty member's line. At present, there are at least fifteen T&R faculty members who were hired as the result of collaboration between an institute or center and an academic department and who are paid, in whole or in part, by an academic unit other than their home department. In seven of these instances, a center/institute and department divide responsibility for funding the faculty line; the other eight lines are funded entirely by a center or an institute. Another twenty-one faculty members hired by a department are now totally or partially funded by a center or institute. Still other faculty members, who were hired collaboratively, with a center or institute funding the line for a limited time, are now supported entirely by a department.

The Task Force was surprised to learn that there has been little formal cross-department or cross-college collaboration in the recruitment and appointment of T&R faculty at Notre Dame. For example, while over thirty percent of the University of Michigan's faculty members hold joint appointments, apparently only two T&R faculty members currently hold full appointments in more than one department at Notre Dame. Additionally, 53 T&R faculty members hold "concurrent" appointments that enable them to teach courses and supervise graduate students in multiple departments, but do not entitle them to vote on departmental governance matters.

Notre Dame faculty members collaborate across departmental and college boundaries in many exciting ways that are simply not reflected in joint appointment statistics. For example, faculty in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering in the College of Engineering and in the Department of Biological Sciences in the College of Science have collaborated closely in building the bioinformatics research area. When Computer Science and Engineering recruited

a faculty member in the bioinformatics area two years ago, Biological Sciences faculty actively participated in the interview process and the hiring decision. While the new faculty member has a single "tenure home," the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, the Dean of Engineering and the Provost's office agreed to expand the regular CS&E committee on appointments and promotions ("CAP") to include a faculty member from Biological Sciences for the purpose of this faculty member's evaluations. The faculty member also has a senior faculty member in each department as designated mentors. The Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, the Institute for Educational Initiatives, and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies each have faculty fellows from three or more colleges who work across disciplinary boundaries on common projects. All told, dozens of institutes and centers enrich the scholarly lives of 207 faculty fellows. And, dozens of interdisciplinary faculty teams have submitted proposals over the past two years to the Strategic Academic Planning Committee. During the first round, the SAPC process funded projects sponsored by faculty members from multiple colleges and departments.

Part II: Challenges and Impediments to Collaborative Hiring

The Task Force began its inquiry with the first aspect of its charge, that is, by seeking to gain a better understanding of the challenges that arise when one or more academic unit participates in the recruitment and appointment of a T&R faculty member. Understanding the impediments to collaboration in the hiring of T&R faculty at Notre Dame represented the first step in our effort to articulate strategies to encourage greater collaboration. An important springboard for this inquiry was a discussion about the issue at the August 2008 Deans and Department Chairs retreat. During the Fall 2008 semester, members of the Task Force built upon this discussion by meeting with and soliciting the input of the Associate Provosts, the Dean and Chairs groups in the Colleges of Engineering, Science, Arts and Letters, and Business, with the Dean and Associate Deans in the Law School, and with the Dean of the School of Architecture. The Task Force also held a roundtable discussion about collaborative hiring with the Directors of several institutes and centers that have been active in collaborative faculty recruitment efforts.

These valuable and constructive conversations helped to distill our understanding of both the potential for, and the obstacles to, greater collaboration among the academic units of the University. One theme that emerged in all of these conversations was that many of the most significant impediments to collaborative hiring are not solely, or even primarily, about money. Certainly, greater resources can be, and in our view should be, strategically employed to incentivize units to collaborate. But, additional resources alone will not address all of the concerns voiced about collaborative hiring. For this reason, this report divides the discussion of obstacles to collaborative hiring into two categories—financial and structural. We emphasize, however, that this bifurcation is a somewhat artificial one, as many of the concerns falling into each category intersect and overlap. We also emphasize that, while the concerns of senior academic leaders are entitled to respectful consideration, our articulation of these concerns should not be interpreted as an endorsement of them. Rather, it is our view that any effort to structure policies that will encourage collaboration in hiring must necessarily flow from a nuanced understanding of the impediments to the project.

In an effort to gain an appreciation of the challenges to collaborative hiring generally, as well as to surface potential strategies to address them, the Task Force also consulted the official policies and initiatives of many peer universities. Additionally, the Task Force undertook an informal survey of academic leaders at twelve preeminent universities, seeking information on their experience with, and practices pertaining to, collaborative and joint appointments. Ten of those universities generously responded to our questions. A copy of the query, and a summary of the responses that we received, is appended to this report.

A. Financial Challenges Presented by Collaborative Hiring

Concerns about resources were, not surprisingly, among those most frequently expressed by all parties involved in the faculty hiring process. These include:

1. A Faculty Member with Responsibilities to More than One Unit Cannot Contribute Fully to Either

Especially when one academic unit substantially funds a faculty line that will be housed in another unit, the funding unit may worry that the faculty member's contribution to the receiving unit will draw them away from teaching and service responsibilities in the funding

unit. In one of the Colleges, the chairpersons voiced the unanimous view that their departments would be unwilling to fund a faculty line that would be “shared” with another unit for this reason. Collaborating academic units have addressed this “divided loyalties” problem in divergent ways. The Kroc Institute and Kellogg Institute, for example, enter into a memorandum of understanding with the departmental home of the collaboratively hired faculty member. This agreement, as discussed in greater detail below, sets forth the faculty member’s teaching and service responsibilities, in both the institute and the department, as well as other aspects of the employment relationship (including, in the case of some junior-level hires, the procedures that will be followed for evaluating the faculty member for tenure and promotion). In a recent collaborative hire between the Institute for Educational Initiatives (IEI) and the Department of Psychology, IEI funded a junior faculty member but determined that she should, at least in the short term, concentrate her teaching, writing, and service in the department. At the other extreme, we learned that, several years ago, a department entered into an agreement with a faculty member with interdisciplinary research and teaching interests that prohibited him from participating in the intellectual life of, or teaching courses in, other academic units.

2. Externally Funded Faculty Lines Influence Collegiate Resource Allocation

Several departmental chairpersons expressed a concern that, if they collaborate with another academic unit in the appointment of a T&R faculty member, the Dean will take the “free line” into account when allocating additional lines for departmental hiring. If the Dean declines to provide the receiving unit with a line that it would otherwise have received, the decision to collaborate would arguably disadvantage the department. This is a particular concern if the externally-funded faculty member does not satisfy the department’s strategic goals and/or teaching needs. Especially if the decision to collaborate influences collegiate resource allocation, departments may reasonably worry that they will “lose” a faculty line if the collaboratively hired faculty member leaves the university.

The concern about “losing” lines as a result of a departure also arises when units collaborate in order to build strength in a field or subfield. In this case, the unit offering to fund the new line, in whole or in part, may ask for a departmental commitment to maintain a particular subfield size. Under these circumstances, departments worry that accepting the line will reduce departmental flexibility to respond to new needs or opportunities and seek to

maximize flexibility in the future allocation of lines if the collaborative hire leaves the University. Conversely, units funding lines for this purpose—frequently institutes or centers—worry that their investment in a new faculty line that aims to build field strength could tempt the a department to reallocate existing lines away from that field. The funding unit may seek assurances that the department will not reduce the total number of faculty lines committed to the targeted field of study, at least for the duration of the external funding.

3. Many Collaborative Hires are Funded with Short-Term “Soft-Money”

In the past, centers and institutes have agreed with departments to “seed” a faculty line in a particular subfield, for a short time—for example, for three to five years. Under these circumstances, the department eventually must assume responsibility for funding the faculty member. If the department would not have hired the faculty member without the request from the collaborating unit, it may resist assuming this long term financial responsibility. In the past several years, this practice of “seeding” has become disfavored, for the reasons discussed more fully below. Institutes have, however, been permitted to provide the bridge funding needed to “prehire” a faculty member in anticipation of a retirement.

B. Structural Challenges Presented by Collaborative Hiring

The concerns articulated above are, in a sense, the “easy” ones. While the University’s financial resources are not limitless, financial incentives can, and in appropriate cases should, be used to address them. Many of the most serious concerns about, and impediments to, collaborative hiring, however, are not primarily about money. These include:

1. Collaboration May Undermine Departmental Autonomy

Many of the concerns that we heard expressed might be categorized as “departmental autonomy concerns.” For example, when the impetus for hiring a faculty member comes externally, the department may feel that it is being asked to absorb a faculty member who does not advance its scholarly goals and aspirations. Since academic units’ strategic plans usually are internally generated and tend to reflect disciplinary goals and standards, candidates identified by another unit may not fit within a department’s strategic plan. For example, a department may not believe that an individual, or targeted subdiscipline, will advance the department’s scholarly

profile, especially if the individual or subdiscipline straddles disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, the existing departmental faculty may worry that incorporating an individual with a nontraditional or interdisciplinary scholarly focus will lead the department, over time, to alter its strategic plan in a way that undermines disciplinary excellence. Similarly, units that prioritize hiring for mission may be reluctant to accept candidates identified without regard to mission commitments as full voting members of their faculty.

2. Interdisciplinary Scholarship Lacks Reliable Indicia of Excellence

There are obvious and important connections between the demands for greater collaboration in hiring and the University's goal of fostering interdisciplinarity. Increasing interdisciplinarity may demand hiring faculty members whose scholarship does not fit neatly into any disciplinary category, but instead lies at the intersection of two (or more) disciplines. Many departmental leaders expressed concerns about their ability to gauge the quality of non-traditional or interdisciplinary scholarship, which poses a particular problem for evaluating a faculty member's progress toward, and qualifications for, tenure and promotion. The evaluation of *disciplinary* scholarship is aided by well-established indicia of excellence, such as the publication in "premier" journals. Interdisciplinary scholarship, or scholarship in emerging fields, may be better suited for publication in nontraditional journals, some of which may have a reputation for being less prestigious or employing less exacting publication standards. Moreover, the established system of external evaluations of tenure candidates' scholarship may be strained in these situations for similar reasons, as departments may be forced to seek out external reviewers with whom they are unfamiliar. Sentiment is clearly divided about the wisdom of addressing these concerns *ex ante* in a memorandum of understanding that articulates pre-tenure publication expectations (*e.g.*, by identifying appropriate publication venues). Some departmental chairpersons worry that such "customization" of tenure standards run counter to established academic practices or that junior faculty members evaluated according to customized standard will be disadvantaged in the tenure and promotion process precisely because their packages will not conform to established practices.

Some departmental leaders also expressed the view that the best *interdisciplinary* scholarship is that which satisfies the *disciplinary* standards of each collaborative subdiscipline, rather than branching off into merging and emerging fields. Everyone with whom we spoke

enthusiastically supported the hiring of senior scholars, with established scholarly reputations within their home discipline, who wish to take on interdisciplinary projects. Some individuals, however, expressed concern about hiring junior scholars with interdisciplinary research agendas, both because they worried that the junior faculty members would ultimately be disadvantaged in the tenure and promotion process and because they felt that the junior scholars likely had not yet developed the disciplinary skills that form the building blocks of truly excellent interdisciplinary engagements.

3. Not All Departments at Notre Dame are “Ready” for Interdisciplinarity

A related unease expressed by some departmental leaders focused on the type of interdisciplinary collaborations (in hiring or otherwise) that the University should prioritize. Some individuals articulated the view that the University should not view interdisciplinarity as a means to excellence, but instead should prioritize interdisciplinary efforts that build upon existing disciplinary strengths. One departmental chairperson, for example, asserted that his department was “not ready” for interdisciplinary collaborations because it has not yet achieved disciplinary excellence.

4. Collaboratively Hired Faculty Members May Have Difficulty “Fitting In” with Departmental Colleagues

When a collaboratively hired faculty member engages in non-traditional, emerging, or interdisciplinary scholarship, he or she may find it difficult to integrate into departmental life. For example, one chairperson expressed concern that his department has absorbed several collaboratively hired faculty members who are “not really” engaged in the department’s field of study. Another chairperson expressed the related concern that departments and institutes/centers have “different ecologies.” (For example, centers and institutes may place greater emphasis on outreach and advocacy.) Therefore, a faculty member who devotes significant time to work in a center or institute may find integration into a department challenging. Any time a faculty member divides his or her time between multiple academic units, there is a danger that he or she will not develop the same level of rapport with colleagues in each of the units. These concerns are heightened when, as in a handful of recent cases, the collaboratively hired faculty member enters into a memorandum of understanding that expressly precludes voting on departmental

matters, including hiring. For all of these reasons, many departmental leaders argued that, at least before tenure, a faculty member needs to have a “primary” departmental home.

Part III: Recommended Strategies to Address the Identified Challenges

As the Introduction to this report highlights, the Provost asked the Task Force on Collaborative Hiring to develop a “toolkit” of strategies that can be used to address the challenges discussed above. Our recommendations, detailed below, are articulated in the spirit of that charge. Some of the strategies require University policy changes and resource commitments; others can be implemented by academic leaders in colleges, schools, departments, institutes and centers. The appropriate set of strategies will vary according to the circumstances of the collaborative effort.

Recommendation #1: Continue to Support Core Disciplinary Excellence

Our conversations with departmental leaders surfaced a concern that an increased focus on interdisciplinary inquiry will undermine disciplinary strength. Some departmental leaders expressed the view that disciplinary excellence is not only a necessary prerequisite for interdisciplinarity, but that some departments at Notre Dame have not achieved the foundational level of disciplinary excellence needed for premier interdisciplinary collaboration. Others worried that devoting resources to interdisciplinary endeavors inevitably will reduce the funding available for core disciplines.

We strongly urge the University leaders, especially the Provost and Deans, to minimize these concerns by reassuring all members of our community that they value core disciplinary research and that the disciplines will continue to be funded at levels of excellence. We also believe that all departmental faculty members—including those hired for collaborative or interdisciplinary efforts—usually should be able contribute to the University’s core teaching needs, especially of undergraduate students.

Recommendation #2: Carefully Evaluate and Reward Excellence in Faculty Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Research

Established indicia of academic excellence, such as rankings, may undervalue interdisciplinary collaboration. Colleges and departments understandably tend to prioritize efforts that will improve disciplinary standings and may resist collaborations that will not advance this important priority. And, while the University encourages interdisciplinarity, academic leaders may reasonably believe that disciplinary rankings drive the central administration's evaluation of programs. We recommend that University leaders both praise and reward academic units that engage in innovative, interdisciplinary collaborations. More concretely, we recommend that the Provost and Deans develop flexible protocols for internal evaluations of programmatic strength that recognize that interdisciplinary excellence may not be captured in disciplinary rankings.

Concerns about the quality of *interdisciplinary* inquiry also are important. Indeed, as highlighted above, anxiousness about the rigor of interdisciplinary scholarship can impede collaborative hiring efforts. We therefore also urge all academic leaders to address these concerns by committing to undertaking careful, rigorous, ongoing evaluations of the interdisciplinary research programs at Notre Dame. For example, current efforts to review Notre Dame's many centers and institutes represent an important step in reassuring the entire academic community that the University values rigor and quality above any abstract desire to be more "interdisciplinary." Regularizing these reviews will serve to reinforce Notre Dame's ongoing commitment to excellence in all areas of scholarly inquiry.

Recommendation #3: Take Steps to Minimize the Concern that Units are Penalized for Collaborative Hiring

As discussed above, many departmental chairpersons expressed the concern that they will be penalized for accepting a collaboratively hired faculty member, because the Dean will take the collaboratively generated line into account when making collegiate resource allocations. This concern is minimized when collaborative hires do not influence collegiate resource allocation – that is, when the college sees the collaboration as providing additional resources and opportunities. Deans should take steps to avoid the perception that collaborative hiring does in fact influence resource allocation, especially by avoiding the temptation to assume that a

department accepting an externally funded line does not “need” a line that it otherwise would have received. Furthermore, when allocating resources, we recommend that the Provost and the Deans take account of the resource imbalances that may result from collaborative hiring, including a need to hire additional teaching faculty (SPF, adjunct, etc.) to cover for a faculty member with teaching responsibilities in another unit, disparities in salaries and merit raises across colleges and departments, etc.

Recommendation #4: Coordinate Strategic Planning at the University and Collegiate Levels

The Task Force found that the prevailing “bottom-up” strategic planning model frequently is insufficient, standing alone, to encourage collaboration among academic units. Within-unit strategic planning can, and has, surfaced exciting opportunities for collaboration in the past. On the other hand, departmental, institute, and center strategic plans that focus primarily on within-unit or disciplinary priorities can miss opportunities for collaboration. One way to encourage collaboration is conversation among academic leaders at the beginning of the strategic planning process, before the unit-specific priorities are established. The University has already taken important steps to encourage broader strategic planning, and these efforts should continue. Specifically, we recommend that, in the future, the academic strategic planning process *begin* with conversations between the Provost and the Deans of the Colleges and between Deans, Department Chairs, and Directors. These conversations should, in our view, inform, but not supplant, unit-specific strategic planning. Before unit-specific plans are finalized, however, we recommend that the relevant Deans, Chairs, and Directors be given the opportunity to review them in order to identify cross-unit opportunities for collaboration. The Provost and Deans should take account of the collaborative opportunities identified during the strategic planning process in the allocation and reallocation of faculty lines.

Recommendation #5: Establish New Faculty Lines Dedicated to Collaborative Research Efforts and Allocate Them Competitively

We recommend that the University establish new faculty lines dedicated to collaborative research efforts, to be allocated through a competitive process directed by a standing committee on strategic research priorities. The Harvard University Science and Engineering Committee

(HUSEC) provides a model for such a committee. HUSEC was established in January 2007 to advise the University's senior leadership on all matters related to collaborative, interdisciplinary, and interschool science. HUSEC oversees, among other things, the allocation of resources for new interdisciplinary science ventures, including faculty slots, resources for students and education, and physical space and equipment. HUSEC is chaired by the Provost, and includes the Deans of the faculties of Arts and Sciences, Medicine, Public Health, and Engineering and Applied Sciences, and approximately a dozen of Harvard's leading scientists, engineers, and hospital leaders.

For the past two years, the Strategic Academic Planning Committee has served some of these functions at Notre Dame, by providing seed funding for interdisciplinary projects that advance the University's strategic research goals. We recommend that this process be regularized. We further recommend that the University empower the SAPC (or a similar entity) to allocate the newly created faculty lines to faculty-generated multidisciplinary research efforts that advance the University's mission, target promising strategic priorities, and leverage our existing disciplinary and interdisciplinary strengths. We recommend that the lines created for this purpose be allocated to academic units on "career-long loans," with lines reverting to the central pool if a faculty member leaves the University. We further recommend that the eligibility for the new faculty lines be extended to both multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary appointments. That is, we believe that faculty from several units should be permitted collaborate to assemble multidisciplinary teams – with individual faculty members holding single departmental appointments – to advance strategic research goals.

Competitive, interdisciplinary, hiring processes at other universities include:

- The University of Wisconsin's Cluster Hiring Initiative funded more than 150 new faculty lines through five competitive rounds between 1998 and 2001. In each round, the faculty submitted hundreds of proposals to pursue new and promising areas of collaborative research. Lines allocated through this process are permanent, but remain with the hiring department only so long as a cluster faculty member remains at the university. If a cluster faculty position becomes vacant, the line reverts to the

central funding pool for either replacement or reallocation to new or existing clusters.¹

- The University of California, Berkeley, has given six strategic interdisciplinary initiatives the authority to appoint new faculty to departments on what amounts to career-long loans.²
- The University of Michigan's Interdisciplinary Junior Faculty Initiative will fund more than 100 junior tenure-track positions in areas that advance strategic interdisciplinary research priorities. Faculty members are invited to submit proposals for these new faculty lines, which are reviewed by a faculty committee.³

These initiatives are highlighted as representative examples; we leave the precise details of the competitive process up to the University leadership. We do wish to emphasize, however, that while the Provost's office could direct the competitive allocation process, it is our view that a faculty committee is a superior model. Faculty involvement in both the generation and selection of projects promises to increase the entire faculty's understanding of, and support for, our joint enterprise.

Over the past 10 years, the T&R faculty at Notre Dame has grown by eight percent, from 743 faculty members to 815.⁴ In light of the Notre Dame's goal of becoming a preeminent research university, we believe that the University should pledge to create at least as many new lines over the next 10 years and allocate them competitively, as outlined above, to collaborative projects. In our view, these lines should be truly "new;" that is, they should supplement, not supplant, other expected growth in faculty size. In making this recommendation for the creation of new lines, rather than the reallocation of existing ones, we are cognizant that the current economic situation substantially complicates the University's ability to commit to major new initiatives. But, we also believe that the University should weigh these difficulties against the high expected benefits of acting boldly at a time when we are relatively well positioned *vis-à-vis* our peers and aspirational peers.

¹ See University of Wisconsin-Madison, Report of the Cluster/Interdisciplinary Advisory Committee to Evaluate the Cluster Hiring Initiative (July 2008) (available at <http://www.provost.wisc.edu/2008clusterreport.pdf>).

² See Issues Related to Interdisciplinary Inquiry at UC Berkeley (10/10/07).

³ See <http://www.umich.edu/pres/committees/interdisc.html>

⁴ Source: Institutional Research; Full and Parttime T&R faculty included.

Recommendation #6: Consider Endowed University or Collegiate Chairs

Many universities have “endowed university chairs” reserved for preeminent faculty members, whose tenure is held centrally, instead of in a college or department. While it is beyond the scope of the Task Force’s charge to recommend that Notre Dame adopt such a practice generally, we believe that University chairs are particularly well suited for preeminent scholars whose work crosses multiple disciplinary boundaries. For example, the University of Pennsylvania’s “Penn Integrates Knowledge” (or “PIK”) initiative funds 18 endowed professorships, each of which must straddle the boundaries of at least two of Penn’s 12 schools.⁵ Notre Dame might similarly establish endowed chairs reserved for appointments across two colleges, or even two departments within a college. The prestige of an endowed university professorship undoubtedly would aid faculty recruitment efforts. Moreover, a provision for tenure that is held in the University (or, theoretically, a college) would help to overcome some of the structural barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration. The Task Force strongly urges that university- or college-level appointments be reserved solely for unquestionably preeminent scholars who advance the University’s mission.

Recommendation #7: Carefully Study the Possibility of Allowing T&R Appointments Outside of Existing Departments

The Task Force’s informal survey of major research universities provides anecdotal evidence that, at our peer institutions, the practice of allowing the Notre Dame equivalent of centers and institutes to appoint tenured and tenure-track faculty is more widespread than we believed when we began our inquiry. We discussed the possibility of recommending non-departmental T&R appointments at Notre Dame. In these discussions, however, the myriad complexities presented by such appointments quickly became apparent. As a result, we are not prepared to make a recommendation on this point at this time. (Indeed, it is not clear to us that any such recommendation is within the purview of our charge, as eliminating the Academic Article’s requirement that all T&R faculty members have a departmental “home” arguably would eliminate a major incentive to collaborate.) The members of the Task Force are in agreement,

⁵⁵ Trey Popp, “Proof of Concept,” Pennsylvania Gazette (Sept.-Oct. 2008) at 32-43.

however, that the issue of non-departmental T&R appointments is worthy of consideration, and we urge the Provost to undertake a careful study of it.

Recommendation #8: Encourage Junior Faculty Members to have a Primary Pre-tenure Departmental Appointment

As discussed previously, very few T&R faculty members have appointments in more than one department at Notre Dame. As a general matter, we believe that joint departmental appointments should be encouraged and rewarded. The challenges presented by joint appointments, however, are undoubtedly easier for established senior scholars to negotiate. The credentials and experience that make them attractive to multiple departments also provide bargaining power against creeping teaching and service demands. Indeed, as discussed previously, senior scholars with established reputations within one or more disciplines frequently are best situated to engage in interdisciplinary inquiry. In light of the very real concern that junior scholars may find it difficult to satisfy “two masters” by balancing teaching and service responsibilities in multiple departments, we recommend that, in most cases, untenured faculty members be assigned to a primary departmental home, with full voting rights, primary teaching and service responsibilities, established mentoring procedures, etc. Cases may arise when joint appointments in more than one department at the junior level are warranted and/or desired by junior faculty members. In such cases, the collaborating departments should agree *ex ante* about the details of a junior faculty member’s teaching, research and service expectations, in consultation with the faculty member, as discussed below.

Recommendation #9: Encourage Collaborating Units to Agree *ex ante* on a Faculty Member’s Terms of Employment

The uncertainties surrounding a collaboratively hired faculty member’s teaching and service responsibilities, research agenda, and method of evaluation can generate anxiety, both on the part of the collaborating academic units and on the part of the faculty member. We recommend that the collaborating units and the faculty member act, before the faculty member joins the University, to minimize these uncertainties by agreeing on details of the faculty member’s relationship with each unit. In our view, collaborating units should discuss the elements of a joint hire’s relationship as early in the hiring process as possible, although in many

cases, post-offer negotiations with a faculty member will shape the details of the agreement between the units.

As a recent report of the National Academies of Science and Engineering details, this practice of entering into a “memorandum of understanding” (“MOU”) between the collaborating units has become standard practice at many research universities. We agree with the National Academies’ endorsement of it, although we also urge that the units take care to ensure that the agreement does not preclude the natural evolution of a faculty member’s teaching and scholarly interests.⁶ In some cases, we believe that it may be appropriate for the University to address one or more of the issues listed below in a faculty member’s offer letter.

The University can minimize the institutional barriers to collaborative hiring by establishing a checklist of issues that collaborating units should consider addressing in an MOU, including:

- (1) **The duration of the agreement.** The units may agree to limit the agreement for a number of years, for the duration of the faculty member’s time at Notre Dame, or until a funding stream is exhausted. The units should consider whether to place different durational limits on different aspects of the agreement. For example, as discussed in more detail below, the units’ commitment to staffing a particular field or subfield might extend that commitment even after the targeted faculty member leaves the University.

- (2) **Teaching and service responsibilities within each unit.** The fact that a faculty member reports to more than one unit should not mean that he or she is put in a position where $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 2$. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the Task Force recommends that a jointly appointed faculty member’s overall responsibilities not exceed those of normal departmental appointments. Standard teaching loads vary across the University, but, as a rule of thumb, faculty members should not be asked to teach more in both units than the normal course load in the faculty member’s primary departmental home. There may be reasons to depart from this standard in appropriate

⁶ National Academy of Sciences, *National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine, Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research* 98-114 (2005). At Notre Dame, the Kellogg and Kroc Institutes regularly enter into such agreements with the departmental homes of institute-funded faculty members. These practices can serve as a valuable model for other collaborating units

cases – for example, a senior scholar might request a heavier teaching load in order to teach in both collaborating units. Except in extraordinary circumstances, however, we recommend that junior faculty members not be asked to exceed the teaching expectations of the department where they will seek tenure.

Chairs, Directors, and Deans should also consider faculty members' service expectations, applying a similar rule of thumb whenever possible. The academic leaders of the collaborating units should also consider joint teaching/cross-listing course opportunities presented by the collaboration. It may be appropriate, in some cases, to “double count” courses that satisfy both units' teaching needs.

(3) **Resource commitments of each unit to support the position.** The units should agree upon how to allocate responsibility for salary, benefits, moving and start-up costs, research funds, search costs, office and laboratory space, etc. Collaborative units should think creatively about how to share the burden of the resources needed to attract outstanding faculty, beyond mere percentage allocations of the total budget. A nonexhaustive list of examples includes:

- One unit might agree to pay the base salary and benefits, with another contributing summer research support;
- One unit might pay salary and benefits, with another unit providing necessary research space and/or equipment, fees for journal submissions and reprints, graduate student stipends, administrative support, travel expenses, etc.;
- The units might decide to reimburse one another for variations in teaching demands across time. The “price” for large service courses, graduate seminars, etc., might be established *ex ante*.

(4) **Voting privileges.** In several recent cases, a collaboratively hired faculty member has agreed to waive departmental voting privileges. Such an agreement may minimize the concern that absorbing “nontraditional” faculty members will undermine departmental autonomy. On the other hand, a number of the academic leaders with whom we consulted expressed concern that faculty members without voting privileges do not enjoy full membership in the academic community, and,

moreover, that such “second class citizenship” undermines opportunities for genuine inter-unit collaboration. In light of these concerns, the Task Force recommends that the faculty member should have full voting privileges in at least one academic unit, and, except in extraordinary circumstances, junior faculty members should not be asked to waive voting rights in their primary departmental home.

- (5) **Research expectations if the faculty member’s scholarly interests are interdisciplinary or otherwise fall outside of disciplinary norms.** Careful consideration of research expectations is particularly important for junior faculty members, who may be concerned about how nontraditional scholarship will be evaluated for purposes of tenure and promotion. At a minimum, collaborating units should decide whether it is necessary to specify expectations for tenure and promotion that differ in any way from the norm for the host department, including:
- Journals, presses, conferences, funding agencies, etc. appropriate to the particular interdisciplinary field of the faculty, including the premier venues relevant to the interdisciplinary research;
 - Provision for assessing the quality of the interdisciplinary scholarship internally, if there are not senior established scholars in a similar field at Notre Dame;
 - Provision for a multidisciplinary CAP, which includes members from outside the junior faculty member’s primary departmental home;
 - Procedures for consultation of external reviewers.

Collaborating units should take care to address the concern that “customized” tenure standards may water down expected levels of excellence (as well as the risk that a MOU will overcompensate for this concern by establishing standards that exceed normal tenure expectations). Moreover, before entering into a MOU, departmental chairpersons must determine whether the departmental CAP needs to be amended in order to implement these arrangements.

In the case of senior faculty members, the collaborating units should consider whether to make similar provisions for evaluations relevant to annual salary reviews, etc.

- (6) **Mentoring.** The units should consider how to best provide assistant and associate professors with excellent mentoring. At a minimum, a faculty member should receive the standard mentoring support provided in his or her primary departmental home. In some cases, both units might agree to appoint a mentor or, alternatively, might seek a mentor outside of both units (or even outside of the University) who can provide guidance about the faculty member's unique research priorities.
- (7) **Exit and evolutionary strategies.** Collaborating units should decide how to address the inevitable evolution of a faculty member's research and teaching priorities and service commitments as well as the possibility that the faculty member may wish to alter or terminate his or her relationship with one of the units in the future. If a collaboratively hired faculty member's teaching or service responsibilities in one of the units increase (for example, he or she is appointed Chair, Director or Associate Dean), the unit demanding more of the faculty member's time might agree to commit more resources to funding the faculty member's line.

The units should also consider whether to commit, *ex ante*, to replacing the faculty member if he or she leaves Notre Dame. This aspect of the agreement is particularly important if the units are collaborating in an effort to building a critical mass of scholars in a particular field or subfield. If this is the goal, the collaborating units' commitment to funding a faculty line in a field at a certain level might extend even after a targeted faculty member leaves the university. This aspect of the agreement might take any number of forms, some of which are articulated in more detail below. The Provost's office has worked closely with the directors of major institutes to expand the range of options available to address the "critical mass" or "subfield" concerns. Any approved strategies should be shared, along with the MOU checklist, although units should also be permitted to develop new strategies addressing the particular details of their individual situation.

Recommendation #10: Add Faculty Lines to Advance Collaborating Unit’s Joint Goals, by Augmenting Existing Areas of Strength or Building New Areas of Interest to Both Units

Academic units may wish to expand the number of faculty in a particular area of interest, ideally identified in collaboration with one another. Collaborations to enhance the research and teaching capabilities of a particular field benefit not just the individual units involved, but promise to add to the depth, breadth and quality of the University’s overall scholarly enterprise. A commendable example of such collaboration, discussed previously, is represented by the efforts of Computer Science and Engineering and Biological Sciences to build the field of bioinformatics. Likewise, the Kellogg Institute and the Department of Political Science have collaborated over several decades to build preeminence in the subfield of Latin American politics and studies of democratization. The seed funding provided by the SAPC promises to generate similarly exciting opportunities for cross-unit collaborations. Existing strengths within or across the academic units of the University frequently offer opportunities for collaborative hiring. For example, if a department has a strong core of faculty in a field or subfield, another unit may wish to augment that strength by adding one or more faculty lines in the area. Even if adding a faculty line in the targeted area is not the department’s top priority, the preexisting strength may increase the likelihood that it is willing to collaborate, especially if the other unit will fund all or part of the new faculty line.

As discussed previously, when units collaborate to hire faculty colleagues in a particular field or subfield, they should consider the duration of their joint commitment not only to the faculty member, but also to the targeted area of scholarly inquiry. For example, if a department has three faculty members with a particular scholarly and teaching focus, and a fourth is funded by another unit to continue to build a critical mass in the area, the units should consider different approaches to the difficulties presented if the targeted faculty member leaves the University, including:

- If one of the collaborating units will completely fund the new line, then the units might agree that the funding unit has complete autonomy to reallocate the line in accordance with its priorities at the time of the faculty member’s departure.
- The units might agree that the line will be recommitted to the field or subfield if it is vacated within a specified time frame (*e.g.*, if the faculty member hired to build or

augment a field leaves within five years, the units agree to replace him or her with another faculty member engaged in a similar field of study);

- The units might agree to maintain a “critical mass” of scholars in the targeted field and commit for a specified time to replacing *any* departing scholar in the field, regardless of the funding source.
- The units might agree to relocate the financial responsibilities for *all* of the faculty lines (existing and new), assuming what are in essence “shares” of the targeted field. In the example above, the department might commit to paying a portion (3/4) of all of the salary and benefits for all four lines, with the collaborating partner agreeing to fund the remainder (1/4) for all of the lines. In this case, the presumption would be that the collaborating units are committing to maintaining all four lines, absent a compelling reason for resource reallocation (*e.g.*, urgent teaching needs resulting from an unexpected departure in another subfield). If a faculty member in the targeted field is not replaced, the units’ commitment to the agreed upon proportional responsibilities for the remaining lines should continue, again absent compelling circumstances. Before any reallocation is made, the Chairs or Directors of the collaborating units should meet with the relevant Deans, and, in the case of University Institutes, the Provost, to discuss the justifications for the change.

Recommendation #11: Expand the Range of Options Available for Collaborative Faculty Searches

All of the academic leaders we consulted agreed that opportunities for collaboration are maximized when the collaboration begins before the search process commences. In the past, departments have been asked to absorb a faculty candidate identified, without any prior consultation, by another academic unit. Under these circumstances, the department may feel that the faculty member is being “foisted” upon it as a *fait accompli*. Ideally, the search for a collaborative hire is sparked by conversations among units about how collaboration might advance joint goals. These conversations undoubtedly occur too rarely at Notre Dame, and should be fostered by the kind of strategic planning discussed previously. As a practical matter, however, such collaboration is not always possible. One academic unit may have identified a specific need or subfield and require the collaboration of another unit to serve as a targeted

faculty member's departmental home. Collaboration before the search process commences is further complicated when the initiating unit is an interdisciplinary institute that is targeting candidates from multiple disciplines.

Whenever possible, the unit initiating the search should consult with any department that might be asked to collaborate at the hiring stage. These conversations should seek departmental "buy in" by highlighting benefits to the department from adding a faculty member in the identified field. If the initiating unit is targeting only one discipline, the normal departmental search process might be utilized, with the initiating unit given vetting/veto rights over candidates identified during the departmental search. Alternatively, the departmental search committee might be expanded to include a faculty member affiliated with the initiating unit (who may also be a member of the departmental faculty). If the units are interested in building a field or subfield, as discussed previously, they should consider at the search stage the duration of the commitment to maintaining a faculty presence in the identified field.

In the case of interdisciplinary searches, there are several viable approaches. In some cases in the past, interdisciplinary search committees have been formed, with designates from each of the departments that may be asked to collaborate at the hiring stage. These search committees should remain an option, although we recognized that, in many cases, it may make more sense to appoint faculty members, from one or more departments, with an expertise in the targeted field or subfield. At a minimum, if the search will target candidates in multiple disciplines, the search committee should consult with the relevant departmental chairpersons at the beginning of the search process. The search committee should coordinate all aspects of the search – job advertisement, campus visits, offer – with the relevant Chairs and Dean.

Recommendation #12: Make "Prehiring," Cost Bridging and Position Upgrades Available for Collaborative Hires

In response to the recent recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Recruiting Outstanding Catholic Faculty, the University Committee on Women Faculty and Students, and the University Committee on Cultural Diversity, the Provost has committed, in appropriate cases, to allowing departments to "prehire" promising candidates in anticipation of future retirements (with the Provost providing bridge funding until the line is available) and to upgrade existing lines in order to hire outstanding Catholic, women, or minority candidates. We recommend that

these practices be extended, in appropriate cases, to encourage collaboration among academic units of the university.

Some universities have made a standing commitment to funding centrally a set percentage of the resources needed for each collaborative hire. We considered and ultimately chose not to endorse this practice. Instead, we strongly urge the University to do everything necessary on a case-by-case basis, including cost bridging, to ensure that the very best faculty can be recruited and retained at Notre Dame.

Recommendation #13: Permit Units to “Seed” Faculty Lines

Until recently, academic units – usually major institutes – occasionally “seeded” a departmental line, that is, funded the line for a finite period, after which the department housing the line assumed full financial responsibility. This practice has been disfavored in recent years, apparently due to the concern, discussed previously, that departmental wariness of assuming long term financial responsibility represents an impediment to collaboration. While recognizing the reality of this concern, the Task Force urges that the Provost and Deans include the “seeding” of lines among the range of options available to units seeking to collaborate in the hiring of faculty lines, just as the SAPC provides seed funding for the resources needed to advance strategic research priorities (including faculty lines). In our view, dividing the financial responsibility for a faculty line across time is not materially different than dividing that responsibility at the same time; both options should be made available to collaborating partners. At a minimum, collaborating units should be permitted to provide the bridge funding needed for departmental “prehires.”

Recommendation #14: Provide Necessary Support for Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Inquiry

The need for collaboration among academic units does not end when a faculty member is recruited and hired. On the contrary, collaborative efforts often founder because the structure of university life is not conducive to ongoing interdisciplinary collaboration. Some universities have created a high level administrative post, such as an Associate Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies, to address this and other challenges presented by interdisciplinary research. The Task Force does not endorse this step at this time, although it may become necessary to consider

creating such a position if, as the University hopes, faculty come to devote increasing energy to interdisciplinary inquiry. We do, however, strongly recommend that the University and the collaborating units commit, at the time that a faculty member or group of faculty members is hired, to providing the support needed to ensure successful long-term collaboration. Academic leaders generally, and especially the leaders of the collaborating units, should understand the structural impediments to collaborative inquiry and take steps to minimize them. The kind of support needed for sustainable collaboration will vary, but might include dedicated staff time, co-located office and/or research space, shared meeting space, and regular community activities (including seminars, lunches, social events, etc.).

Conclusion

The members of the Task Force are honored to have been asked to explore the important issues addressed in this report. We hope that our effort to articulate the concerns about collaborative hiring, and to devise strategies to address those concerns, will help Notre Dame achieve preeminence in teaching, research, and service.