Franklin College Faculty Senate

Planning & Evaluation Committee

Strategic Planning Vision Document

Our objective is to advise and assist the Dean's Office in producing a "vision" document for the incoming Dean detailing the aspirations of the collective departments, units, programs, centers and institutes in Franklin College. In some instances our conclusions reflect and reinforce the themes identified by the Dean's Office; however, our unique contribution to this process has been to formulate and propose the implementation of more visionary ideas and policies (while still using the collected departmental reports as a point of departure). It is our hope that this document will serve as a point of departure for a larger discussion, to take place across divisions and faculties, of the distribution of resources across the College—with priority given to ways of enhancing teaching and research that do not require a significant increase in funding.

Although this document emphasizes ideas of relevance to multiple units across Arts & Sciences, the Planning & Evaluation Committee also wishes to stress the importance of articulating a vision for each specific department and division—in line with their own unique priorities and strengths and weaknesses.

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Primary recommendations:

♦ **Improve faculty work-life balance and enhance faculty quality of life**. There are a number of methods (in lieu of giving pay raises) by which the Dean could help to enhance the support system for employees: methods that do not require a significant financial commitment. Existing "quality of life" policies vary from department to department. The Dean's Office, however, could provide for a centralized system of handling such issues, including sabbaticals, paid maternity leave, domestic partner benefits, stopping and starting the tenure clock, and improved facilities. (The new University Childcare Center is an excellent example of a related service.) A reduction of administrative demands on faculty, or a more efficient prioritization of administrative work, would further benefit faculty and increase their productivity as educators and scholars.

♦ **Count more extracurricular activities toward tenure and promotion.** Faculty have taken on extra responsibilities in recent years as university, college, and departmental budgets have been trimmed or have remained stagnant. This extra work—including outreach, work for centers and institutes, initiatives such as *STEM*, and additional administrative duties—should be reflected in consideration for tenure and promotion and for course release. Again, the Dean's Office could provide a set of centralized guidelines to replace those currently determined by each individual unit.

♦ **Establish a series of competitive small grants for teaching or research.** Other than the Office of the Vice President for Research and Lilly Teaching Fellows, there have historically been few sources upon which all the faculties of Franklin College can draw for needed financial support. Having the ability to apply for and obtain small grants from the Dean's Office would encourage more innovative instruction and research, and help to offset the negative effects of dwindling resources. In some respects this practice is already beginning to be implemented, as

the Provost has recently made available summer research and teaching grants. Such efforts should be continued and expanded to help support faculty during the academic year. Those who teach large lecture classes, in particular, would benefit from an enhanced investment in course materials, technology, and student assistants.

♦ **Build and strengthen connections between the sciences and the humanities through the creation of an institute.** Many of the resources currently exist for the formation of an institute that serves to bridge the gap between divisions of Franklin College that have historically been separated. An Institute of Science and Society could take advantage of the diverse study areas and bases of knowledge within Arts & Sciences by combining them in research and instruction.

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The Planning & Evaluation Committee also wishes to further encourage, support, clarify, and/or strengthen:

♦ **Collaboration across departments through cluster hires, joint positions, and team-teaching.** We recommend that such appointments continue to occur in areas that already have the administrative and faculty connections in place, and that other faculties discuss and explore potential areas of cooperative teaching and research across departments and divisions. The tenure and promotion requirements for faculty who teach in more than one unit must be communicated with maximum clarity.

♦ **Visiting scholars and faculty exchange programs.** Such programs significantly enhance the intellectual lives (and research undertakings) of faculty at a relatively low cost. In funding these activities, the College could thus supplement the efforts of the (underfunded) Willson Center..

♦ **Developing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Initiatives in Public Education.**

In collaboration with the School of Education, Franklin College should continue to strengthen this outreach initiative, especially with regard to training teachers for K-12 education. Franklin College faculty should be rewarded for their efforts in these areas at the levels of tenure and promotion.

♦ **The status of lecturers.** The university has already committed itself to expanding the role of lecturers. Consequently, Franklin should develop a more coherent and consistent College-wide policy, or a set of principles, to guide departments in their hiring, retention and granting of governance responsibilities to lecturers.

♦ **A strategic plan regarding a predicted increase in retirements in the Franklin College.** Franklin College should clarify how it intends to support hiring new faculty that would represent new or expanded areas within a department while preserving or protecting the lines currently filled by senior or older faculty. Strategic hiring may be contingent upon an increase in the number of immanent retirements, an increase predicted by many departments in their reports. If so, it would be helpful to have a transparent set of guidelines about hiring practices from the Dean's Office.

Chair: Chris Sieving. Fred Dolezal; Christine Franklin; Kelly Happe; Jim Lauderdale. Spring 2012.