

Report of the

Provost's Oversight Committee on Online Learning

Prepared for: Provost Eric Isaacs

May 18, 2015

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## OVERVIEW

The Provost's Oversight Committee on Online Learning (POCOL) was created in 2013 and charged with two primary tasks: 1) overseeing the University's first forays into online learning; and 2) after two years, making recommendations for the University's future utilization of, and participation in, online learning based on knowledge gained during that time period.

Based upon feedback from faculty members, and discussions with campus leaders and among committee members, POCOL came to two conclusions:

- The University's divisions, schools and alumni community all recognize the centrality of and share a commitment to promoting excellent pedagogy, not just online, but in every form. While recent technological developments have facilitated rapid growth in online education, new technologies and modes of teaching have the potential to change, and improve, pedagogy and education more broadly. As such, we focus our recommendations on achieving pedagogical excellence, with online learning serving as one avenue to reach this goal.
  - Distinct intellectual and legal issues come to the fore when offering online courses to the general public. The University should focus on targeted solutions to these critical issues, in order to enable the University to continue to explore the use of online courses while also holding firm to our core values.
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We address these two areas with two specific recommendations:

1. To create the appropriate structure and forum to articulate, support and enhance excellence and innovation in teaching, we propose the creation of a center on campus, the Chicago Center for Advanced Pedagogy (C-CAP), to advance innovative and effective pedagogy. Creating a central location and set of resources for support of pedagogy will enable the University to provide higher quality and more consistent supports to the University community than would uncoordinated activities across campus.
  2. To ensure a rigorous and intellectually driven vetting process of online courses, we propose the creation of an editorial board that will review and approve online University-branded courses not otherwise vetted by a degree-granting entity at the University. The board will be independent of the production of online courses.
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## POCOL'S CREATION AND PROCESS

Three years ago, POCOL's predecessor, the Provost's Committee on On-Line Learning, issued four key recommendations to the Provost on how the University should approach developments in online education:

- The University should facilitate the use of online teaching methods by University faculty.
- The University should try to work with Coursera, EdX and other platforms in connection with new online course offerings.
- To organize and promote online learning at the University, the Provost's office and the divisions/schools should provide central support and organization for online courses.
- The Provost should appoint a second committee to review developments in online education and to make recommendations regarding online teaching at the University.

POCOL was then created to implement the recommendations of the Provost's Committee on On-Line Learning. POCOL was tasked with providing oversight for the University's endeavors in online learning and providing guidance regarding the continued exploration and refinement of the University's approach to online learning more generally. We offer recommendations for the University's future utilization and participation in online learning in this report.

In its first year, POCOL focused on soliciting, approving and creating a structure for the creation of five experimental massive open online courses (MOOCs) described below. In its second year, POCOL met monthly, with invitations to selected leaders including John Boyer (Dean of the College), James Nondorf (Dean of College Admissions and Financial Aid), Martha Roth (Dean of Humanities), Mark Nemec (Dean of the Graham School), and Damon

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Cates (Executive Director of University Alumni). In addition, a representative group of faculty with concerns about online learning (Cliff Ando, Classics; Gabrielle Lear, Philosophy & Social Thought; Robert Pippin, Philosophy & Social Thought) met with the Committee to discuss their reservations. POCOL was privileged to have several opportunities to speak with the Provost. In addition, the Chair met with selected faculty and staff including the members of Board of Computing Activities and Services (BCAS), Susan Levine (Interim Chair, Committee on Education), Ron Thisted (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs), Bill Rando (Director, Center for Teaching and Learning), and Chris Higgins (Executive Director for Academic & Scholarly Technology Services).

Through discussion, both among its members and with this wide range of experts across campus, POCOL came to consensus on the need to situate explorations and evaluations of online teaching within a broader discussion of pedagogy. This evolution in perspective broadened the Committee's discussions and ultimately the scope of its recommendations. As such, our recommendations focus on supporting pedagogy and excellence in teaching and learning, with online learning represented as one tool or mode for innovation in pedagogy.

We begin with a summary of current developments in the field of online learning, among our peer institutions. We next argue for situating discussion of online learning in the broader context of pedagogy more generally. Modes of teaching at the University of Chicago and existing structures that support pedagogical experimentation and innovation are then reviewed. We close the report with a detailed description of our recommendations, specifically 1) the creation of a center, the Chicago Center for Advanced Pedagogy (C-CAP), devoted to the advancement of pedagogy broadly; and 2) the creation of an editorial board to ensure the scholarly excellence of online courses authorized by the University.

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**POCOL'S MEMBERSHIP**

Reid Hastie (Booth)

Chris Higgins (Academic Technology)

Brenda Johnson (Library)

Kathie Koch (IT)

Peggy Mason (Neurobiology) - Chair

Mark Nemec (Graham)

Randy Picker (Law)

Stefan Quick (Counsel)

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**ONLINE LEARNING: DEVELOPMENTS AND UNIVERSITY CONTEXT**

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In this section, we provide a brief overview of developments in online learning and summarize the use of online pedagogy at the University of Chicago. We further provide a framework for online learning in the broader context of pedagogy, teaching, and learning.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF ONLINE LEARNING

The tools, approaches and pedagogy for online learning have been in development for decades. Online courses have deep roots, extending back to correspondence courses. Notably, founding University of Chicago President William Rainey Harper was one of the earliest proponents of such courses based upon a belief that students should pursue learning "systematically, persistently, and continuously." More contemporaneously, the commercial educational service *thegreatcourses.com* and the currently popular TED talks, both started in 1990, can be considered direct antecedents to today's online platforms. Between 2006 and 2012, Khan Academy, Coursera, edX, Udacity and Minerva were founded and grew rapidly, serving millions of students around the world. While their business models vary, these companies all provide free courses with fee-based course certifications to individuals of diverse ages, educational backgrounds and geographic locations. One study estimated that roughly one-third of post-secondary students (~7 of 21 million) were enrolled in at least one online class (Allen & Seaman 2014).

New ventures in online education with innovative pedagogical approaches are being created at a rapid pace. Much of the academic and media attention devoted to online learning centers around online offerings that aim to capture a large number of diverse participants through massively open online courses, or MOOCs (e.g. Coursera, EdX, and Udacity). A MOOC generally includes a set of brief (5-min) learning snapshots that are compiled into a course on a topic. MOOCs tend to have diverse participants by age, educational level, and geography.

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While many view MOOCs as a way to engage students beyond campus, educators at traditional institutions have also used pedagogical lessons gained from MOOCs along with recorded videos to augment on-campus teaching by “flipping the classroom.” A flipped classroom typically involves asking students to gain basic skills, process informational facts or master material from online videos so that face-to-face class meetings can be spent clarifying particular points or deepening understandings through discussion. While the term flipped classroom is currently used to reference classes where pre-class learning employs online videos, American law schools, including the University of Chicago Law School, started “flipping” classrooms at least as far back as 1870 when Langdell introduced the case method at Harvard Law School. Law students are expected to engage with cases prior to attending class so that they may discuss the readings Socratically during class.

Perhaps surprisingly, online technologies can be used to offer a more personalized approach than is always possible in a traditional classroom. For example, intense engagement is afforded by online seminars targeting a limited number of participants. Each participant's face is visible on an interactive screen along with that of the faculty leader. Every participant is individually prompted to respond to questions posed by the leader. The deliberate and differentiated attention given to each participant is designed to guarantee deeper and more consistent engagement than is afforded by a typical educational experience. Peer institutions, including Princeton and Stanford, are using online intense engagement seminars in a small number of on-campus courses.

Many online courses are offered in a modular format. Specific modules may target procedural skills such as software programming, statistical analyses, or foreign language competency. These modules may include intelligent automated tutors that monitor skill development, pronunciation or comprehension, or provide in-time feedback and correction.

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Considerable innovation has led to software systems that provide feedback, assess and grade students, drawing upon either automated grading or peer-review methods. In this respect, marrying content and technology provides significant opportunity for personalized learning and adaptation.

Educational uses of online technology continue to evolve and the examples cited above are not exhaustive. For example, there is increasing innovation and experimentation with the use of gaming. In this form of learning, a course may take the form of a virtual scavenger-hunt or obstacle-course in which students master material by “playing a game” that requires learning and applying a series of intellectual skills. The rapid developments in online learning over the past decade will undoubtedly continue in the decades to come though it is impossible to predict the trajectory of that evolution. POCOL believes that faculty must have the opportunity to experiment within the online arena and to do so in ways that cannot yet be enumerated.

### **PLACING ONLINE TECHNOLOGY WITHIN A BROAD PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

The distinctions between online and traditional education have blurred over the past decade. We believe that this trend will increase with further innovation and evolution. How then will faculty members continue to discover and utilize the best possible methods, tools and practices to teach effectively? In light of the common challenges and synergistic solutions offered by online and traditional educational methods, we believe it is proper to consider online education as one aspect of a robust and organized approach for integrating new technologies and pedagogy. As such, our analysis extends beyond online learning to consider, and offer recommendations to help shape, the University’s distinctive approach to creating educational excellence.

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The impetus for exploring and creating clarity in the University's approach to pedagogy is driven by many important factors, both internal and external to the University. For the purposes of this report, we highlight four: 1) significant developments in student learning needs and educational methods; 2) the commitment of the University to excellence in teaching for all learners; 3) creating opportunities for University students to be life-long learners; and 4) the need to create a thoughtful and strategic approach to education that embraces the University's distinctive approach to education while ensuring the University's relevance and excellence in a landscape that is rapidly evolving.

- **Developments in student learning needs and educational methods.** Student learning needs have shifted over the past decade. Modern learners have lived most or all of their lives in a fast-paced, technology focused environment. Given the needs of students and developments in technology, higher education has seen significant and unprecedented developments in the use of technology in the classroom over the past ten years. Rapid innovation has led to opportunities to use technology to enhance as well as replace in-person instruction. These developments raise critical questions about the appropriate use of technology in educational settings of all kinds. They push us as faculty members and as an academic community to define the technological uses that will enable us to embrace the capabilities of powerful tools while protecting the quality, essence and distinctiveness of a University of Chicago education.
  - **Excellence in teaching.** As an institution, the University is committed to excellence in teaching, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. We see clear indications of the value placed on high quality teaching in the commitment of the Divisions to prioritizing teaching as a critical aspect of the training of graduate students, as well as in the allocation of resources to the Chicago Center for Teaching (CCT) dedicated to graduate student and
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faculty instruction. Increasing teaching knowledge, broadening the use of technological innovation, and providing opportunities for empirical research are critical to enhancing teaching excellence across campus, as well as preparing graduate students and faculty for current realities and expectations in university teaching.

- **Evolving concept of The University of Chicago student.** The University has long been committed to the idea of students as lifelong learners. New energy is being placed on defining and solidifying this critical aspect of the identity of the University. Emergent endeavors aspire to initiate the teaching and learning process to reach prospective students before they formally enroll and arrive on campus as well as to provide learning opportunities after graduation. New pedagogical approaches, technological and otherwise, are necessary to support and ensure lifelong learning.
- **Positioning the University of Chicago.** The University's reputation as a preeminent institution in higher education reflects the University's core values: intellectual debate, commitment to liberal arts represented by the College Core Curriculum, the excellence of faculty across disciplines, and inter-disciplinary inquiry. To promote these core values, the University is committed to engaging with both the ideas and practice of pedagogy. Given the rapid evolution of teaching and learning practices, online and in-person, identifying a strategic approach to the development of teaching and learning that will enhance, support and reinforce the values and essence of the University, on campus and beyond, will be a critical aspect of maintaining University excellence in the years to come.

We view pedagogical excellence at the University as being of the highest priority. Given the rapid evolution of educational methods and technology, we believe that the best approach to supporting current and future pedagogy must be nimble and flexible, both to

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accommodate the needs of different disciplinary content as well as to ensure relevance in the face of future innovation and evolution of the educational landscape.

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## TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

In this section, we consider teaching and learning at the University of Chicago, embedding online learning within a broader discussion of pedagogy. In doing so, we summarize the support for teaching and learning that is currently available. In the recommendation section that follows, we build upon this context to outline a plan for a more ambitious approach to supporting teaching and learning on campus, with online learning included within it.

We begin by presenting background on the diversity of teaching approaches used at the University. This is followed by a summary of online learning methods that are currently in use across campus. We then provide a summary of the current state of teaching support at the University.

### TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY

Faculty members at the University are responsible for teaching students in the ways that they believe will best serve those students. For some, little more is required beyond chairs, books and space for thinking and reflection. Yet, there have always been and always will be faculty members who are interested in experimenting with novel approaches to pedagogical practice. For faculty members who want to try new teaching methods, the University should ensure access to diverse educational resources and supports to successfully implement new teaching methods. It is relatively straightforward to implement and support chalk, the messy kind; in contrast, it is much more work to make Chalk, the University's learning management system (LMS), available to faculty members. It is yet another leap of complexity to produce fully mediated online courses such as those produced over the last two years as part of the University's online efforts.

Innovation in teaching methods is critical to the continued relevance and growth of a great university. Currently, experiments in teaching are driven through local initiative, custom, and

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preference. Typically, new approaches to teaching emerge from individual faculty acting alone or in collaboration with close colleagues. The experiments attempted and lessons learned then tend to stay local and are not broadly disseminated across campus. Yet academic and scholarly excellence is best served by facilitating teaching innovation and assessment, learning from experimentation, and promoting effective teaching and learning throughout our community. Our challenge is to achieve these goals while remaining faithful to the University's core values.

#### **THE USE OF ONLINE EDUCATION ON-CAMPUS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

Technology has been in use to support teaching and learning for some time at the University. For instance, the majority of University classes use the above referenced learning management system, Chalk. Of greater substance, there are numerous classes in which students are required to employ online resources, programs or evaluations. For example, statistics courses require that students use a variety of statistical packages such as STATA, SAS or SPSS online to conduct research and statistical analyses. Language programs often employ online approaches. In the case of less commonly (LCTL) and almost never (ANTL) taught languages, this entails distance-learning in partnership with sister institutions of higher learning. For years, the medical school has employed an online platform (TIME Portal) that, among other features, allows students to opt for online video or in-person learning according to individual preference. It is also noteworthy that students employ online methods extensively to connect with one another for both social and academic purposes.

The foregoing list is not exhaustive and surely only captures a small portion of the online tools currently used across campus. Neither the committee nor those interviewed by POCOL felt that current practices of online teaching by University instructors to University students raised concerns. Universally, the use of online technology for on site (in Chicago or at our

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global locations) instruction is considered to be an entirely local matter that is within the purview of individual units and faculty members.

### MOOCs: ACTIVITIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Over the past two years, POCOL has overseen the vetting, preparation, production and launch of several MOOCs (see table below). The chosen MOOCs intentionally spanned academic units and content areas, allowing us to gain experience and data regarding the extent to which online education is transferable and useful across disciplines. As this represented the University's initial exploration of online learning, the University contracted with two different platform providers (Coursera and EdX). This was intentional, allowing the faculty to explore the differences in the MOOC environments, and allowing for a direct comparison of the two platforms in the case of one course. Three faculty members were able to offer their MOOCs more than once, which led to an appreciation of the differing time commitments required for creation and first-time teaching vs repeating an online course.

The newest MOOC, *Internet Giants*, will be supplemented by alumni discussion groups as part of a pilot for *Alumni U*, a broader effort to develop new approaches for engaging with alums led by Mark Nemec, Dean of the Graham School, and Damon Cates, head of Alumni Relations. This test will be run in the summer of 2015 with an eye towards a more extensive roll out of AlumniU coinciding with the University's 125th anniversary celebration. This course will be offered on Coursera's new on-demand platform, a venue that enables this innovative pilot.

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Faculty Member	Division	Course	Offered	Platform
Cochrane	Booth	Asset Pricing I & II	Taught 3x, most recent: January-May 2015	Coursera (123,633 cumulative students)
Archer	PSD	Global Warming: The Science and Modeling of Climate Change	Taught 4x, most recent: September-December 2014	Coursera, EdX (45,806)
Mason	BSD	Understanding the Brain: The Neurobiology of Everyday Life	Taught 2x, most recent: February-May 2015	Coursera (100,049)
Stoelinga	SSD	Critical Issues in Urban Education	February-May 2015	EdX (2,853)
Picker	Law	Internet Giants: the Law and Economics of Media Platforms	July-September 2015	Coursera

In sum, the University's initial foray into offering MOOCs has been of tremendous value. The major lessons learned include:



- **Pedagogy.** Teaching a MOOC presents challenges that *require* significant attention to teaching pedagogy, attention that is not required for on-campus teaching. Given the limited number of video hours in a course, faculty are forced to consider content anew for inclusion or exclusion. Moreover, research shows that 6-7 minute video segments are the optimal length for attention and comprehension of concepts. Therefore, ideas must be distilled into smaller chunks, and instructors are forced to become more intentional and concise in articulating concepts. Teaching MOOCs also requires thinking about all aspects of content in a way that translate to a much more diverse group of students in terms of age, education level, culture, ethnicity, language, and disability. An exciting opportunity for the future is to transform pedagogical insights from MOOC-teaching into the on-campus classroom.
  - **University reputation.** The visibility of the University of Chicago has been greatly extended and its reputation boosted by the MOOCs offered to date. Satisfaction with the MOOCs is extremely high, topping 95% of respondents. More than 90% of MOOC students of have a high opinion of the University of Chicago. A tangible measure of the effect on University reputation comes from those students who first encounter the University through a MOOC and subsequently apply, receive admission and matriculate into the College. While we have little data for academic year 2015-16, this is an area where we will be collecting data in the months ahead. Similar bumps in student applications and matriculations are anticipated for participating academic units including Pritzker School of Medicine, Booth, and the Law School.
  - **Development, production, and launch process.** POCOL now has experience in vetting faculty proposals. Staff from ASTS has gained valuable insight into working with faculty to optimally prepare for a smooth production process. For faculty, creating a MOOC involves
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re-purposing content that was used in on-campus courses and the creation of new content. The time required to develop and complete an initial MOOC session has been roughly 200 hours of faculty time. However, this number may decrease as faculty who are just beginning the process of planning a MOOC are now the recipients of a wealth of information from the several faculty members who are experienced in each phase of the process. The cost per MOOC is roughly \$50,000.

- **Platforms.** Offering MOOCs on two platforms allowed for direct comparisons in terms of the capabilities, strengths and weaknesses. POCOL recommends that the University revisit its agreement with each platform in the pedagogical possibilities, alignment with University goals, and with an eye toward analyses of courses offered to date.

Although the University's pilot with MOOCs has been relatively small, the benefits have been of great value. Based on the faculty's experiences and on data gleaned from MOOC students, POCOL believes that open, online courses are critical for both faculty's dissemination of knowledge and for the University's reputation in today's higher education landscape. Therefore POCOL recommends that the University energetically engage in this arena.

### CURRENT SUPPORT FOR PEDAGOGICAL ADVANCES

Teaching and learning support at the University is currently composed of disparate groups and resources across campus (not catalogued in this report) and of two central organizations detailed below:

- **The Chicago Center for Teaching (CCT)**

The CCT's predecessor, the Center for Teaching and Learning, was centered on ensuring a rich foundation of instruction in teaching for our graduate students. Now restructured and

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under new leadership, the CCT is expanding its portfolio to support innovative teaching practices across the College with a focus on engaging faculty in discussions of the elements of successful pedagogy with the hope of encouraging both experimentation in teaching and an ongoing interest in the practice of teaching.

- **Academic & Scholarly Technology Services (ASTS)**

ASTS is one of six units in Information and Technology Services (ITS) and is responsible for a variety of services related to teaching and learning. These consist of oversight of the LMS, instructional design, classroom support, and content production, among many others. It serves all members of the University community and is under the leadership of the CIO, advised by the Board of Computing Activities and Services (BCAS).

While some units across campus are equipped to support their own faculty, there is currently no central, widely available, and cross-disciplinary unit committed to supporting effective pedagogy regardless of modality across the University. Further, there is currently no standing organizational unit that contributes a pedagogical perspective to technological decisions related to teaching and learning, such as the choice of an LMS.

Both CCT and ASTS face challenges meeting the breadth and diversity of campus demands for resources to support and enhance teaching and learning. The CCT has focused its efforts on graduate students who teach in the College and is in the midst of an expansion to support College faculty, primarily in Humanities, SSD, and PSD. However, the CCT's scope is limited relative to the number and diversity of University academic units and the range of faculty needs across campus. ASTS has successfully supported the campus in the last two years, but faces challenges in light of new proposals, initiatives, and projects combined with a limited expansion of their workforce.

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## POCOL RECOMMENDATIONS

### We make two specific recommendations:

1. To create the appropriate organizational structure and forum for understanding, supporting and enhancing teaching and learning, we propose the creation of a centralized center –the Chicago Center for Advanced Pedagogy (C-CAP) – on campus to facilitate and advance innovative and effective pedagogy. We believe that a central focus on pedagogy will provide better and more consistent support to the University community than do isolated groups across the campus. The proposed center would unite a diversity of currently active groups under one roof with one faculty director supported by an advisory board. This consolidation of resources will improve collaboration, increase the number of students and faculty served, and enhance the quality and consistency of University teaching.
2. To ensure a rigorous and intellectually driven vetting process of online courses, we propose the creation of an editorial board that will review and approve online University-branded courses not otherwise vetted by a degree-granting entity at the University. The definition of courses under the board's purview is deliberately broad as future innovations, beyond today's MOOCs, are anticipated. The board will be independent of the production of online courses to ensure rigorous and impartial review that protects the integrity and quality of University online courses.

### CHICAGO CENTER FOR ADVANCED PEDAGOGY (C-CAP)

The resources for education at the University are less than ideal. We are committed to teaching and learning but have not systemized resources to achieve this. Currently, achieving

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excellence in teaching and enabling learning is primarily left to individual units. While some schools, divisions and departments forge their own pedagogical oversight and support and may do so superbly, neither consistent resources nor deep expertise is available across the University. POCOL believes that in order to fully realize our mission of creating and disseminating knowledge, resources supporting dissemination should not take the form of *ad hoc* efforts by individual faculty and units; rather the University should offer common resources that support teaching in its multiple forms. Such a resource would also have the benefit of training graduate students for their careers as educators across multiple platforms.

In recommending the creation of C-CAP, POCOL aims to bring together talented and experienced individuals to enhance collaboration and provide essential pedagogical resources to faculty, students, and staff across campus. C-CAP will elevate teaching at the University of Chicago by empowering faculty to utilize innovative teaching approaches and technology, providing graduate students with opportunities to teach in a variety of settings, and pursuing excellence in University initiatives focused on teaching and learning. C-CAP will also serve as the hub for the University's production and innovation in online and distance learning courses, through which the University's values can be enhanced on campus and beyond.

While by no means universal, a number of leading institutions have experience with structures similar to the proposed center. Among the more established is Georgetown's Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS). Founded in 2000 to "bridge the gap between pedagogical and technological advances," CNDLS serves both faculty and graduate students. In its most recent accreditation report, the Middle States Association praised the operation, stating, "CNDLS has distinguished Georgetown as a leader in the scholarship of teaching and learning with a particular strength in developing innovative

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forms of pedagogy and the development of new ways of supporting teaching and learning.” CNDLS has three streams of activity: Teaching & Learning, Technology, and Assessment. Beyond Georgetown, Stanford and Columbia announced similar efforts this past year, both under the administration of a newly created Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning. Notably, Stanford’s and Columbia’s efforts involved placing a previously focused team on online learning into a more broadly aimed pedagogical structure.

**Our vision for C-CAP would see the following results in the first five years:**

- New programs for innovative teaching practices (e.g., flipped classrooms, active learning, game-based learning)
- Successful implementation of a program, in partnership with the Neubauer Initiative, to use open online courses to reach potential college applicants from diverse, disadvantaged backgrounds
- Increased engagement of parents and alumni in on-campus courses, online educational programs, and other University learning experiences
- A productive research program that assesses and analyzes teaching experiments administered by C-CAP in collaboration with interested faculty across campus
- A rigorous, data-intensive method for assessing the efficacy of pedagogy of the University of Chicago

POCOL envisions that C-CAP will become the hub for development and implementation of innovative pedagogy that promotes effective teaching, both on- and off-campus. C-CAP will combine expertise and individuals devoted to teaching and learning that are currently scattered in existing units across campus. The organizational structure will facilitate

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collaboration and provide targeted and effective support to faculty and staff in online and on-campus teaching.

The overall aim of C-CAP is to enhance teaching and learning at the University, regardless of intended audience, class structure, or teaching modality. Specific decisions on the organizational structure of C-CAP are outside of the scope of this report. But, the vision of POCOL is that C-CAP will become the overarching entity within which several previously extant units are organizationally and geographically nested. In particular, those staff in ASTS (and potentially other units) charged with faculty consulting and production would be part of C-CAP while those whose principal roles involve maintaining classroom hardware, network connectivity or similar technological capabilities would remain in IT Services. CCT would work in concert with C-CAP staff and associated faculty. By centralizing personnel and resources, C-CAP will enable faculty members to better discover, access, and use new technology and modes of teaching, while decreasing the costs associated with potentially uncoordinated projects currently carried out by disconnected groups. Faculty and staff from The Committee on Education, Library, Graham School, and Urban Education Institute are expected to play critical roles in the direction and operation of C-CAP but will not be under C-CAP's organizational umbrella.

#### **C-CAP will be organized into five sections:**

- **Pedagogical Science:** This section will work closely with faculty and students to make available the vast knowledge base on human learning and memory. The goal will be to build a translational educational science that makes faculty and graduate students aware
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of best teaching practices and ideas (e.g., testing effects, spaced learning, desirable difficulties) and helps them incorporate such practices into their curriculum.

- **Consulting:** This section will work closely with faculty and students interested in pedagogical innovation. Workshops and consultations will be available on topics such as class design, teaching methodology, student evaluations and teaching assessments. It is expected that this section will steer University teaching and learning into territories as yet unimagined and facilitate pedagogical experimentation in coordination with the Pedagogical Science section.
  - **Online education:** This section will continue to support the work of faculty who specifically want to disseminate knowledge on a very broad scale. This section will lead in the development and production of future online offerings, including but not limited to MOOCs, and will serve as “editors” presenting these courses to the Review Board (see below) at the proposal stage and as a finished product.
  - **Experimentation & Assessment:** Pedagogical innovation will be encouraged to include empirical testing of effectiveness so that learning outcomes can be rigorously assessed and shared with academic colleagues, here and more broadly. Formative and action-oriented research aimed at assessing the effectiveness of teaching will be used to reward and highlight strong teaching and to disseminate successful practices. Fellowships will be available for students interested in carrying out pedagogical experiments. Student fellows will carry out their accepted proposals with oversight from experts in this section.
  - **Production:** This section will include a fully equipped, multimedia production team that can execute novel projects imagined by faculty and students in coordination with the Consulting and Pedagogical Science sections. Productions are expected to serve online and
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on-campus classes as well as to provide a vehicle by which students and faculty can develop their teaching skills.

Students from any University unit may assist in the overall mission of C-CAP while also learning skills that will serve them well for a life in the ever-changing academy. It is anticipated that students' interests will run the full gamut from classroom teaching techniques to educational video production, educational research, assessment strategies and so on. Interested students will be integrated into the appropriate C-CAP section. Included in C-CAP would be staff dedicated to the direction and support of students in order to meet goals of excellence in both C-CAP's performance and the students' education.

We propose that the C-CAP director be a faculty member appointed by the Provost who works with a governing committee that is similar in composition to POCOL. The governing committee will include representatives selected from among the Chicago Center for Teaching, Graham School, Academic & Scholarly Technology Services, the Library and the Urban Education Institute and from faculty members of all units across the University. Faculty will comprise at least 75% of the 12 Board members.

Finally, we propose that C-CAP be located centrally on campus. A single location would allow C-CAP to contain a dedicated production space in close proximity to offices and small conference rooms. Further, locating C-CAP centrally within the campus will facilitate faculty involvement and participation in what we hope to be an exciting new era of educational innovation at the University. Ideally, the chosen location will be mutually advantageous to C-CAP and to the other inhabitants of the chosen building. For example, placing C-CAP in Regenstein Library, on Floor A, would fulfill C-CAP's need for campus centrality while also greatly increasing faculty, student and staff traffic in the Library.

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As POCOL talked with campus leaders regarding the idea of C-CAP, a common concern raised was potential redundancy with the newly re-energized, renamed and revamped CCT. This is an important issue as duplicated efforts do not serve the University community. However, as proposed, C-CAP would not be redundant with current offerings, but instead would broaden the capabilities and reach of CCT. C-CAP would provide additional production, consulting, and research resources to those already available to CCT. In addition, while CCT is primarily focused on the College, C-CAP would widen the catch area of potential participants to include those from University schools (Booth, Divinity, Graham, Harris, Law, Pritzker, SSA) that have not traditionally been served by CCT or its predecessor. In sum, C-CAP would further facilitate as well as gain from the exciting new initiatives at CCT.

#### **A REVIEW BOARD FOR UNIVERSITY-BRANDED ONLINE COURSES**

For a number of years, the University has offered diverse, but relatively limited online educational experiences for alumni, parents and the public at large. Alumni and parents across the globe can attend Harper lectures, which are scholarly talks sponsored by the University Alumni Association. These lectures are also disseminated to the general public through the University's youtube channel. As the University's unit dedicated to lifelong learning, the Graham School has offered non-credit professional certificate programs in Editing, Medical Editing and Clinical Trials, and Regulatory Compliance both in Chicago and online.

Recently, there has been a movement among peer institutions of higher learning throughout the United States and abroad to provide free, online courses to the general public. Within the University community, there are faculty members who are eager to offer online courses to the public. There is enthusiasm from several fronts, most notably the Graham School and College Admissions, to take advantage of the "long tail" reach afforded by free, online

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instruction. On the other hand, there are also faculty members who have grave concerns that online courses will homogenize scholarly training and take away academic jobs. Nonetheless, POCOL and concerned faculty all agree that faculty members who wish to pursue teaching online to a broad audience should be allowed that option. In a spirit of academic freedom, University faculty should be supported as they explore new ways to express and share their scholarly pursuits.

To date, POCOL has reviewed and approved applications for new online courses. POCOL recommends that a Board of Online Courses (BOC) perform this function in the future. BOC would function similarly to the Board at the University of Chicago Press. The BOC would become a statutory board with rotating three-year faculty terms. The Board would be charged with ensuring that those MOOCs that are officially offered by the University of Chicago have sufficient intellectual quality and integrity to preserve the University's reputation for excellence. Faculty would be free to offer MOOCs under their own names without submitting to the BOC. The BOC would review applications for online courses that meet two criteria:

- Upon successful completion of the course, a student could receive a certificate bearing the name of the University of Chicago.
- The course is not part of a degree-granting program at the University and has not been vetted by a degree-granting program.

Thus, BOC would not review on-campus teaching. Additionally, BOC would not review any publication, online or traditional. Finally, BOC would not review the blogs, videos, or vlogs of individual University faculty, students or staff.

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## REMAINING ISSUES

In this closing section, we outline issues that still need attention and discussion. These issues are of significant importance, and must be considered by future committees and University leaders.

### ACCESS TO ONLINE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

In order for the University's participation in online learning to be consistent with our values of free academic expression, participation must be feasible for all interested members in our community. POCOL is concerned that there are structural constraints for faculty participation in online teaching opportunities. Among the most significant barriers is the time commitment required, roughly six months, to prepare an online course. This time commitment makes it unlikely that faculty members with contractual teaching commitments would be able to participate in online teaching. Therefore, POCOL recommends that faculty members are provided the opportunity to obtain teaching relief while developing a new online course or while incorporating online technology for major innovations of on-campus courses (e.g., doing the production work to support flipping a classroom).

Our recommendation would be that teaching relief would only be available to faculty with contractual teaching commitments, principally faculty in SSD, Humanities, and PSD; and would be offered competitively, in a manner similar to the University-wide competition for funds to develop teaching methodologies. Such relief could be restricted to a limited number of faculty members, such as one faculty member per division, per academic year; and to the development, but not for subsequent sessions, of an online course. The goal of this relief would be to ensure that faculty from all disciplines can offer online courses and to prevent a barrier that would restrict online courses to select intellectual disciplines. Adoption of the

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proposed initiative would ensure that the intellectual freedom that defines our campus endeavors extends to our online presence.

### **LEGAL CHALLENGES ACCOMPANYING ONLINE TEACHING**

Producing and distributing online courses raises a variety of legal issues, many of which do not arise in connection with on-campus teaching. These include issues of copyright ownership and liability in connection with course materials, control over course content, use of course materials by third parties, equal access for persons with disabilities, and accreditation. An unclear and changing legal landscape adds further complexity.

In March, 2013, the Committee on Intellectual Property at the University reviewed a draft Recommendation Regarding Intellectual Property Rights and Royalty Distribution Policy for Initial Online Courses, which was ultimately adopted as a working policy for the University's first online courses. The policy addressed ownership of course materials, control of course content, use of third-party materials, use of instructors' names, images, and likenesses, and distribution of royalties. Recognizing some of the unique challenges presented by online courses, this policy departed from similar policies adopted by the University for on-campus courses. For example, the policy specified that the University would own online course materials, rather than the faculty member, as is the case for on-campus courses. POCOL recommends that the Committee on Intellectual Property be tasked with revisiting and updating that policy, based on current knowledge.

In addition, the University assumes legal risk and liability associated with online courses, both under its contracts with providers of online learning technology and under the law. POCOL recommends that the Office of Legal Counsel, together with the Provost's office, consider whether additional policies and procedures should be updated or created to minimize risk to the University. POCOL also recommends that the Office of Legal Counsel designate a contact

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person for questions that might arise as new online materials are created and questions regarding compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

### **CERTIFICATION, CREDENTIALS AND ACADEMIC CREDIT**

Since POCOL's establishment, faculty members have robustly debated whether, and to what extent, the University should offer certifications, credentials, and credit for completion of online courses. On the one hand, some faculty have objected to the University offering any certification, stating that doing so is inconsistent with University processes and values. On the other hand, the possibility of obtaining some record of achievement is important to students who are proud of what they have accomplished. In fact offering some type of certificate is required by some course platforms including Coursera. Both Coursera and EdX currently offer certificates to students that complete the University's online courses, although the language and form of those certificates differ.

With respect to certifications offered by the University, POCOL recommends that the Provost's office establish a process for approving the form and language of any certificate bearing the University's name, logos, or trademarks. The BOC would appropriately serve as the effective cognizant faculty body for this task. POCOL also recommends that the Provost's office revisit the form of the certificates currently offered in connection with the University's online courses to determine if modifications or updates are warranted.

Prior to POCOL's formation, the Provost's Committee on On-Line Learning recommended that the University not offer for-credit online courses. While POCOL agrees with this recommendation for the present, the University should remain open to the possibility in the future as technologies and the landscape surrounding online education evolves. With respect to any credential proposed in connection with any online course or set of courses, POCOL

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recommends that the Provost's office establish a process for evaluating such proposals consistent with the University's governance principles and practices.

Presenting materials online raises a variety of legal issues, in the creation of those materials, with respect to control over ownership and use of those materials, and with respect to equal access for persons with disabilities. POCOL recommends that the Office of Legal Counsel continue its work on ensuring compliance on reasonable access for online material.

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## CONCLUSION

POCOL members have discussed and analyzed the pathways, possibilities and challenges of online learning. In doing so, we have become convinced that consideration of online education must occur within the broader lens of pedagogy more generally. In the evolving context of higher education, student learning needs and technological innovation, our task, which is both an opportunity and a challenge, is to codify, define and embrace a set of supports and opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning, with online learning as one aspect of these efforts. At the same time, we must ensure that the appropriate mechanisms and review processes are in place to protect the integrity and quality of online course offerings. In sum, it is our firm belief that online learning should be used to service innovation in pedagogy.

We believe that our two main recommendations, the creation of a Center to support the enhancement of pedagogical excellence and innovation; and the creation of an editorial board to review online course offerings; represent a path forward that attends to both the University commitment to excellence in teaching and the specific needs of protecting the quality of online educational offerings.

The Committee is grateful for the opportunity to have explored this set of issues on behalf of our colleagues across the University. We close our duties as a Committee convinced that a University commitment to innovation and excellence in pedagogy is among the most essential considerations to ensure University of Chicago's continued leadership and eminence in higher education.

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