

## Faculty Retention at UNC-Chapel Hill: A Preliminary Report

This preliminary report provides initial findings from a study of faculty retention and related issues that was undertaken in during the 2003-04 academic year by the Office of Faculty Governance, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Institutional Research, with the assistance of a distinguished group of faculty colleagues who provided guidance on questions of methodology and approach.<sup>1</sup> It summarizes key findings from responses of half of Carolina's 3,000 full-time faculty received in early March 2004, and raises areas for priority deliberation and possible action during the current academic year.

This study on faculty<sup>2</sup> retention was undertaken at a time of growing concern among colleagues regarding long-term prospects for their professional futures here. While appreciating the financial constraints of the current economy and the continuing commitment of North Carolina's people and elected leaders to support the University through thick and thin, many faculty members have in the last few years been troubled by their sense that future excellence of this treasured institution is at risk. Although wonderful buildings are rising on all parts of the campus, the intellectual and social capital created over the years by a vibrant community of faculty has been tapped and touted, but is in danger of being tapped out. Other institutions have with increasing frequency come calling in hopes of luring Carolina faculty interested in professional advancement, higher salary, and improved professional support elsewhere. The morale of those committed to spending their careers at Carolina has been sorely tested as external talent is recruited and accorded better pay and greater respect. The many faculty who are strongly committed to Carolina's future hope to bring their best thinking to these issues so that the deeply treasured values of collegiality and devotion to the University's inspiring mission are re-emphasized and reemerge from this time of challenge rather than being allowed to fade.

It is in this spirit that this preliminary report outlines faculty views about the strengths of Carolina (including high esteem for colleagues, good relations and leadership in most departments, support for teaching, collaboration in many fields, regard for students, and desire to contribute actively not only to the university's research mission, but to teaching and service as well). On the other hand, areas of considerable concern do exist and must be noted, including the need for appropriate compensation, greater professional recognition, adequate professional support, better benefits, fair and transparent salary processes, and a good work climate for all. This preliminary report is intended to affirm the need for faculty colleagues to have their voices heard as one step in improving the University's ability to help them thrive and continue the tradition of excellence here. There is more to be done on this journey, as is more fully discussed below.

The preliminary report seeks to (1) document and understand key factors that are likely to affect Carolina's ability to recruit, retain, and help its faculty thrive in the immediate future; (2) identify key issues that need further attention; and (3) begin the process of recommending policy changes, priorities for resource allocation, possible administrative responses, and collaborative efforts that may yield improvements. This document is not intended as the final word on these matters, but rather as an initial step that allows all members of this community to begin more active and concerted deliberations about next steps that can be taken by Faculty Council, departments, university leaders, and others willing to find common sense solutions based on the collective wisdom. A further report will be tendered to Faculty Council in April to provide an update on that continuing work.

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<sup>1</sup> Those who assisted included Dr. Lynn Williford (Assistant Provost and Director of Institutional Research and Assessment), Dr. Larry Mayes (OIR); Executive Associate Provost Steve Allred; members of the working group on methodology (Professors Kenneth Bollen, Abigail Panter, Carroll-Ann Trotman, Arne Kalleberg, Ed Halloran, Kerry Kilpatrick, Noelle Granger, Alice Ammerman); members of the 2003-04 Executive Committee of Faculty Council (Professors Granger and Ammerman, Professors Margaret Leigh, Laurie Mesibov, Lloyd Kramer, Steve Bachenheimer, Charles Daye, Jan Yopp, Bobbi Owen, Ron Strauss, Pamela Conover, Joseph Ferrell) and new members beginning this fall (Professors Connie Eble, Evelynne Huber, Steve Matson, and Robert Dalton). I take responsibility for the drafting of the preliminary report and have been guided by the counsel of these valued colleagues, particularly that of Dr. Lynn Williford, but any errors that may be present should be attributed to me alone.

<sup>2</sup> The focus of the survey was on full-time faculty in fixed-term, tenure-track, and tenured positions. Although the findings are likely to be of interest and possible relevance to colleagues in professional library positions, the target population was deliberately limited to those listed in order to allow sound data collection and analysis regarding topics particularly relevant to the identified faculty roles.

## Summary: Key Findings

- Coming and Remaining: Top Factors. The quality of colleagues, research support, academic rank and institutional/departmental prestige were cited most frequently as “very important” to tenure-track and tenured respondents, while fixed-term respondents placed colleagues and geographic location at the top of the list.
- Appropriate Compensation.
  - Rising Concern. Nearly 2/3 of respondents believe that their salaries do not correspond to their contributions to the university and their departments. While salary appeared as the 7<sup>th</sup> most cited factor in connection with hiring, it has now risen near the top of the list in remaining (2<sup>nd</sup> for fixed term, 3<sup>rd</sup> for tenure-track, and 4<sup>th</sup> for tenured respondents).
  - Particular Subpopulations. Associate professors, those who have worked at Carolina 6-20 years, women, faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences, and those in Dentistry report particular concerns with appropriate compensation, and salary compression was cited as a particular problem by many.
  - External Offer Required. Nearly 2/3 of respondents indicated that they believed that an external offer was needed to get a good raise and more than 90% of respondents condemned such policies as corrosive.
  - High Living Costs. About ½ of respondents said that the cost of living in the area was too high relative to salaries.
- Fair Salary Process. About 1/3 of faculty respondents reported that they did not understand the process used to allocate raises, while a slightly lower proportion said that they believed the process was not fair or that a small group received the largest raises unfairly. Those in junior ranks, women and faculty of color, those on campus less than five years, in fixed term or tenure-track positions, in academic affairs units outside the College, or in dentistry and medicine expressed the highest incidence of concern.
- Benefits. More than half of respondents said that health benefits did not meet their needs, and 45% said that retirement benefits were a problem. Concerns were noted most commonly by full professors, those in tenure-track or tenured positions, and faculty outside the medical school’s clinical departments.
- Professional Recognition and Leadership. Respondents reported mixed experience with the adequacy of recognition regarding their contributions to research, teaching, and service. Fixed term respondents reported less widespread recognition, while tenure-track and tenured respondents reported that research was most commonly recognized, teaching increasingly recognized once tenured, and service recognized least.
  - Multidisciplinary and Collaborative Efforts. About half of respondents reported that such work was recognized, with untenured and fixed-term respondents reporting adequate recognition, but half of tenured faculty members reporting inadequate recognition on this score.
  - Departmental Leadership. Nearly ¾ of respondents reported that they had confidence in department leaders.
  - Subpopulations Concerned. Several subsets of respondents reported particular concern about the level of professional recognition available, including associate professors, men, and respondents at Carolina more than 10 years (especially those here 16-20 years, standing in sharp contrast to the high level of satisfaction experienced by those here less than five years).
- Professional Support. While about 2/3 of respondents reported satisfaction with departmental support for teaching, support for research was of more widespread concern. Professional development support was deemed adequate by about ½ of respondents. Particular concerns were raised by respondents outside academic affairs professional schools and by women.
- Climate. Respondents generally gave widespread, positive ratings to departmental climate and relations with colleagues, but respondents outside dentistry and medicine, women, and faculty of color reported more widespread concern in this arena.
- Vulnerabilities and Risks. Although fewer than 10% of respondents said that they expected to leave Carolina in the next three years, about 2/3 have been recruited in a similar period, and 2/3 have given serious consideration to their professional alternatives. Dissatisfaction with appropriate compensation, professional recognition, and professional support (as well as with each of the other factors listed) is strongly related to considering leaving or expecting to depart in the short term. Those with greatest concerns include associate professors, those at Carolina 6-10 years or 16-20 years, those concerned about research support, women, and faculty in certain disciplinary areas, as well as those who are concerned with departmental morale, research support, or recognition of their discipline. Those inclined to stay are particularly concerned with spouse/partner issues, institutional prestige, and location.

## I. Why Faculty Come and Remain at Carolina

Faculty respondents rated 13 factors as “very important,” “somewhat important” or “not important” in their decisions to accept a position and remain at Carolina. Profiles of respondents in tenure-track and tenured positions different in important ways from those of fixed term faculty members, and several factors of lesser importance at the time of hire have evidently risen in importance as respondents think about remaining here.

Tenure and Tenure-Track Respondents. For tenure-track and tenured faculty respondents, the following themes emerged:

- The quality of colleagues in the department or unit was of great importance at the time of accepting a position at Carolina and continues to be of great importance to many faculty in thinking about remaining.
- Research support has increased in importance to a substantial portion of respondents, particularly for tenure-track faculty (for whom it was the most cited factor in remaining).
- The reputation of the department and the institution were also of enduring importance to more than half.
- Academic rank was reported as very important by more than 60% of these respondents, looming as particularly significant in the minds of those not yet tenured.
- Salary and benefits were deemed very important to fewer than 40% of tenure-track and tenured respondents at the time of their appointment (7<sup>th</sup> most cited of 13 factors), but these concerns were cited as very important in remaining by more than 70% of tenure-track respondents and more than 59% of those with tenure. Respondents emphasized, however, that rating salary as very important in their consideration of remaining did not mean they believed salaries were a positive factor in Carolina’s favor, since concerns about salary were affecting their thinking about looking elsewhere.
- The quality of students was cited as very important by nearly half of tenured respondents in considering remaining.
- Job opportunities for spouses and partners were seen as an important factor in remaining to half of tenure-track respondents (a notable jump from the importance of this consideration at the time of hiring).
- Community resources and schools were deemed very important to many respondents, particularly among those on the tenure-track thinking about remaining.

| Very Important Factors (% citing)    | Tenure Track  | Tenure Track     | Tenured       | Tenured          |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
|                                      | <i>Coming</i> | <i>Remaining</i> | <i>Coming</i> | <i>Remaining</i> |
| Colleagues                           | 73.8          | 79.8             | 70.1          | 74.3             |
| Support for Research                 | 65.1          | 80.6             | 58.4          | 66.2             |
| Academic Rank offered                | 42.6          | 65.0             | 50.1          | 61.5             |
| Reputation/Department                | 59.7          | 56.3             | 57.3          | 57.2             |
| Reputation/Institution               | 57.9          | 52.5             | 59.8          | 56.5             |
| Salary/Benefits                      | 39.3          | 70.9             | 38.6          | 59.3             |
| Quality of students                  | 35.7          | 39.2             | 39.4          | 46.2             |
| Support for teaching                 | 27.8          | 35.6             | 26.3          | 37.7             |
| Community resources/schools          | 41.8          | 45.0             | 37.2          | 40.5             |
| Job opportunities for spouse/partner | 38.7          | 50.2             | 28.9          | 37.1             |
| Other personal/family considerations | 24.9          | 33.2             | 20.1          | 30.3             |
| Geographic Location                  | 28.1          | 28.2             | 32.1          | 36.1             |
| Other (unspecified)                  | 30.6          | 42.1             | 34.5          | 48.5             |

Fixed Term Respondents. For respondents in fixed-term positions, the picture emerging differs in some respects.

- Colleagues were most frequently listed as very important just as was the case for tenure-track and tenured respondents.
- Geographic location was deemed of great importance to more than half the fixed-term faculty respondents, ranking as the second most often cited factor in coming and remaining (in marked contrast to those tenured or on tenure-track).
- The reputation of the institution and department were also of great importance to more than half.
- Substantially increased numbers of fixed-term respondents cited salary and benefits, research support, and academic rank as very important in remaining at UNC, compared to their views at the time of appointment.

| Very Important Factors (% citing)    | Fixed term | Fixed term |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|
|                                      | Coming     | Remaining  |
| Colleagues                           | 68.6       | 76.6       |
| Geographic Location                  | 51.3       | 50.8       |
| Reputation/Institution               | 49.5       | 49.1       |
| Reputation/Department                | 43.2       | 48.0       |
| Community resources/schools          | 42.9       | 44.4       |
| Job opportunities for spouse/partner | 42.7       | 48.3       |
| Salary/Benefits                      | 40.4       | 64.1       |
| Support for teaching                 | 39.7       | 47.7       |
| Other (unspecified)                  | 36.6       | 45.2       |
| Other personal/family considerations | 36.5       | 40.8       |
| Quality of students                  | 33.1       | 37.5       |
| Support for Research                 | 31.7       | 41.3       |
| Academic Rank offered                | 20.3       | 42.6       |

The thrust of these findings is encouraging, for they indicate the many factors that favorably influence faculty members to come to Carolina and stay. On the other hand, it is clearly evident that concern for salary has grown during recent years when state funds have been significantly constrained, insurance and housing costs have grown. It appears as well that research support is of growing concern to junior faculty members. While half of fixed term faculty respondents regarded geographic location as very important, only 1/3 of those in tenure-track or tenured positions share these sentiments. These differences may have their important implications for long-term recruitment and retention strategies in times of fiscal constraint, for fixed term faculty may feel frustrated by the need to stay in the area, while tenure-track and tenured faculty generally feel less deeply rooted (whether or not comparable professional opportunities are available elsewhere).

## II. Major Factors Affecting Faculty Members' Current Views and Future Plans

The survey sought to identify major factors affecting faculty members' views regarding their recent experiences at Carolina and their future professional plans. Analysis of the responses indicated that six major composite variables were powerful predictors of faculty members' consideration of departure and long-term plans, after controlling for all other factors. These variables affect some subpopulations of faculty differently from others depending on institutional factors (disciplinary cluster; institutional role); and demographic factors (time at UNC, rank, race and gender). General patterns of response are summarized in the table which follows, while several high points are outlined below.

### Appropriate Compensation.<sup>3</sup>

- Nearly 60% of respondent faculty members believe that their salaries do not correspond to their contributions to the university and their departments, and many commented in particular about problems with salary compression.
- Certain subgroups of respondents felt exceptional concern about compensation issues, including
  - Associate professors;
  - Faculty members who have worked at Carolina 6-20 years (particularly those here 6-10 years and 16-20 years) (suggesting significant concerns about salary compression);
  - Women, and
  - Faculty in non-science disciplines within the College of Arts & Sciences, those in the sciences in the College, and those in Dentistry (standing in sharp contrast to those in medicine/basic sciences, and to a lesser degree other parts of health affairs and academic affairs).
- Half of the respondents said that the cost of living in the area was too high relative to their salaries, with many supplemental comments indicating particular concern about the rising burdens of health care costs, housing costs, and future cost of children's college tuition.

<sup>3</sup> Responses to the following questions were reflected in the composite variable "appropriate compensation": (a) My salary closely corresponds to the contributions I make to the University; (b) My salary closely corresponds to the contributions I make to my department; (c) Getting an outside offer is almost the only way to get a good raise in my department; (d) The cost of living in this area is too high relative to my salary.

- High proportions of tenure-track and tenured faculty members indicated that getting an outside offer was almost the only way to get a raise (particularly those in the College), but widely disagree with the wisdom of such policy.

#### **Fair Salary Process<sup>4</sup>**

- A substantial proportion of respondents (more than 40%) indicated that they did not understand the process used by their department in allocating merit raises.
- When asked whether they believed the process used for determining merit raises was fair and whether a small group received the greatest raises without regard to contributions, nearly 1/3 of respondents indicated that they did not know or that the issue was not applicable, while about 1/4 said the process was not fair and about 20% said that a small group received the greatest raises without respect to the contributions.
- Certain subgroups of respondents expressed particular concern or lack of knowledge about the merit increase process including those at the rank of assistant professor or below, minority and female respondents, those on campus less than five years, those in fixed term or tenure-track positions, those in academic affairs units outside the College, dentistry, and the medical school (especially clinical units).
- Administrators viewed the merit increase process much more favorably than did respondents without administrative roles.

#### **Benefits<sup>5</sup>**

- Concern with the adequacy of health benefits was deep and widespread, with 59% of respondents indicating that the health benefits package did not adequately meet their needs. Concern was especially evident among tenured and tenure-track faculty and those outside the medical school's clinical departments.
- Concerns were also voiced concerning current retirement benefits (with 45% of respondents indicating that current retirement benefits did not meet their needs).

#### **Professional Recognition & Leadership<sup>6</sup>**

- Professional recognition was of concern to many respondents in slightly different respects.
  - About 40% of fixed term respondents reported adequate recognition of teaching, research and service, while 1/4 to 1/3 indicated that in certain respects one or another of these roles were inapplicable.
  - About 2/3 of tenure-track and tenured respondents indicated that their research contributions were adequately, with recognition of teaching apparently rising to that level for those with tenure. About 1/3 of untenured and slightly more than 1/2 of tenured respondents reported that their service contributions were adequately recognized (although it was unclear whether they referred to departmental service or broader types of efforts).
  - Recognition for multidisciplinary and collaborative work appeared to vary, with about 1/2 of fixed term and tenure-track respondents reporting adequate recognition, about 1/4 viewing recognition as inadequate, and the balance concluding that the question was inapplicable or that they did not know. In contrast, 1/2 of tenured respondents said that such work was adequately recognized or supported, but nearly as many said that it was not.
- Respondents generally reported relatively widespread confidence in the leadership of their departments, with nearly 3/4 agreeing or strongly agreeing on that count. A lower proportion registered confidence in university leadership (left undefined, so encompassing everyone from deans to highest level administrators and external boards), while many respondents noted in comments the importance of dean searches then underway
- Subsets of faculty expressed contrasting views regarding the adequacy of professional recognition. The following groups of respondents stood out from the group as a whole:

<sup>4</sup> Responses to the following questions were reflected in the composite variable "fair salary process": (a) I understand the process that my department uses to determine merit raises; (b) The process that my department follows in determining merit raises is fair. (c) A small group in my department receives the greatest raises irrespective of what they contribute to the department (negative).

<sup>5</sup> Responses to the following questions were reflected in the composite variable "benefits": (a) The current health benefits package adequately meets my needs; (b) The current retirement benefits package adequately meets my needs.

<sup>6</sup> Responses to the following questions were reflected in the composite variable "professional recognition and leadership": (a) My contributions to teaching are adequately recognized by my department.; (b) My contributions to research are adequately recognized by my department.; (c) My contributions to service are adequately recognized by my department; (d) I have confidence in the leadership of UNC-Chapel Hill; (e) I have confidence in the leadership of my department; (f) My department recognizes and rewards collaboration and multidisciplinary research.

- Associate professors were much less satisfied with recognition received than assistant professors, and those on the tenure-track reported much more widespread satisfaction than their colleagues who had tenure.
- Faculty members on campus for more than 10 years stood out as especially dissatisfied with the level of recognition (particularly those 16 or more years here), while those on campus five or fewer years had a relatively high incidence of satisfaction.
- Male respondents reported a more wide-spread level of dissatisfaction than their female peers did.

### Support for Professional Work<sup>7</sup>

- Respondents reported a relatively widespread satisfaction with the level of departmental support for teaching (more than 60% indicated satisfaction, with satisfaction among tenured faculty respondents reaching 68%).
- Satisfaction with support for research was more split with about 1/2 of respondents expressing satisfaction, 40% expressing concern, and 10% indicating that they did not know or that the question was inapplicable. The adequacy of current facilities for research drew praise from about 2/3 of fixed term and tenure-track respondents, and about 3/4 of those with tenure.
- The level of professional development support from departments once again reflected a mixed picture, with about 1/2 of respondents finding it to be adequate but nearly 40% concluding it was not.
- Subgroups expressing the greatest incidence of concern included women, and all faculty other than those in academic affairs professional schools.

### Climate<sup>8</sup>

- Relationships with colleagues and departmental climate generally received positive ratings from respondents with about 4/5 agreeing or strongly agreeing that faculty in their departments got along fairly well, and that the climate for faculty members in their department was good.
- While respondents generally said that they thought the climate for women was good and for faculty of color was good or unknown to them, contrary opinions were commonly expressed by women and respondents of color.
- Respondents in dentistry, medical basic sciences and medical clinical units reflected more widespread satisfaction with climate and good relations with colleagues than those elsewhere in health affairs or in academic affairs and the College.

The thrust of these responses suggests widespread strength in some arenas (confidence in departmental leadership, good relations between colleagues and generally good climate). Concerns already known to campus decision makers were generally confirmed (as to problems with salary levels and health benefits in particular). At the same time, more nuanced difficulties are evident:

- Particular concerns are evident with regard to salaries among those with long-term ties to the campus (6-10 and 16-20 years, reflecting lingering effects of past recessions and market-based hiring at entry and lateral levels), as well as those in certain schools and among women.
- Substantial segments of the faculty are unfamiliar with salary processes, creating lingering doubts about fairness.
- Recognition of professional contributions is uneven and falls short in the perception of many, once again particularly among those at the level of associate professor and those who have been on campus for 10 years or more. Although recognition of research contributions appears strongest, recognition for teaching and service may fall particularly short in the views of some, and desired support for multidisciplinary and collaborative efforts may be missing.
- Professional support is seen as sufficient in some areas of campus, but falls short in the view of many, particularly with respect to support for research and more general professional development support.
- Concerns about climate linger, particularly in some schools and for some faculty (women, faculty of color, gays, and lesbians) even though many colleagues may believe that such concerns are no longer as substantial as they may once have been.

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<sup>7</sup> Responses to the following questions were reflected in the composite variable “professional support”:

(a) I am satisfied with the level of departmental support that I receive to teach my courses; (b) I am satisfied with the level of departmental support that I receive to conduct my research; (c) I am satisfied with the level of professional development support I receive from my department.; (d) The current facilities are adequate to support my teaching and research responsibilities

<sup>8</sup> Responses to the following questions were reflected in the composite variable “departmental climate”: (a) Faculty in my department get along fairly well with each other; (b) The overall climate for faculty in my department is good; (c) The climate for women in my department is good; (d) The climate for faculty of color in my department is good.

| <b>Composite Variables</b>   | SD   | D    | A    | SA   | DK/NA |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------|
| <b>Appropriate Compensation</b>  |      |      |      |      |       |
| Salary closely corresponds to contributions to University                                  | 25.2 | 32.5 | 30.0 | 4.5  | 7.8   |
| Salary closely corresponds to contributions to department                                  | 24.1 | 34.3 | 30.4 | 5.0  | 6.2   |
| Getting outside offer almost only way to get raise   | 5.3  | 14.7 | 23.7 | 37.6 | 18.7  |
| Cost of living in area too high relative to salary   | 3.5  | 43.3 | 34.6 | 16.4 | 2.2   |
| <b>Fair Salary Process</b>   |      |      |      |      |       |
| I understand process department uses for merit raises                                      | 16.1 | 22.5 | 36.2 | 16.7 | 8.5   |
| Process department follows for merit raises is fair  | 9.6  | 14.7 | 34.3 | 12.0 | 29.4  |
| Small group in dept. get greatest raises w/o regard to contributions                       | 19.1 | 27.1 | 12.6 | 17.2 | 34.1  |
| <b>Benefits</b>  |      |      |      |      |       |
| Current health benefits package adequately meets needs                                     | 32.6 | 26.6 | 30.5 | 8.6  | 1.6   |
| Current retirement benefits adequately meets needs   | 17.1 | 27.8 | 45.5 | 5.3  | 4.2   |
| <b>Professional Recognition/Leadership</b>   |      |      |      |      |       |
| My contributions to teaching adequately recognized by department                           | 8.4  | 25.5 | 47.9 | 7.2  | 11.0  |
| My contributions to research adequately recognized by department                           | 7.2  | 20.8 | 48.6 | 8.7  | 14.7  |
| My contributions to service adequately recognized by department                            | 12.7 | 26.2 | 43.3 | 7.2  | 10.6  |
| I have confidence in leadership of UNC-CH  | 12.7 | 27.1 | 45.2 | 4.8  | 10.1  |
| I have confidence in leadership of my department   | 7.9  | 15.7 | 45.2 | 26.6 | 4.6   |
| My dept. recognizes & rewards collaboration & multidisciplinary research                   | 8.1  | 22.8 | 44.0 | 9.5  | 15.6  |
| <b>Professional Support</b>  |      |      |      |      |       |
| I am satisfied with level of departmental support for teaching                             | 6.9  | 19.4 | 48.9 | 12.8 | 12.0  |
| I am satisfied with level of departmental support to conduct research                      | 12.6 | 26.3 | 40.3 | 10.7 | 10.2  |
| I am satisfied with level of professional development support I receive from my department | 14.8 | 26.8 | 42.5 | 9.4  | 6.5   |
| Current facilities are adequate to support teaching/research responsibilities              | 10.2 | 26.3 | 50.2 | 10.6 | 2.8   |
| <b>Climate</b>   |      |      |      |      |       |
| Faculty in my department get along fairly well with each other                             | 3.3  | 10.0 | 57.3 | 27.8 | 1.6   |
| Overall climate for faculty in my department is good.                                      | 4.4  | 15.5 | 53.9 | 24.8 | 1.3   |
| Climate for women in my department is good   | 2.8  | 12.1 | 54.0 | 23.4 | 7.8   |
| Climate for faculty of color in my department is good.                                     | 3.2  | 10.2 | 44.1 | 15.7 | 26.8  |

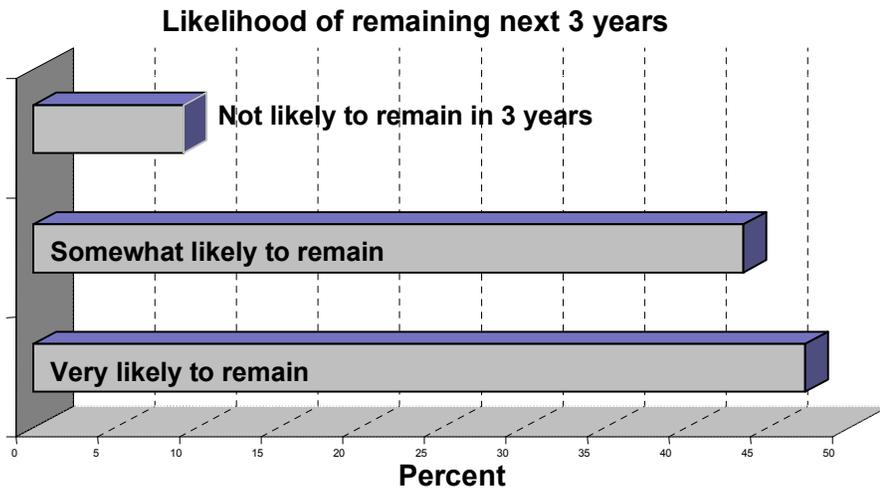
### III. Vulnerabilities and Risks

This study was undertaken in order to determine Carolina's risk of losing talented faculty members at this crucial time in its history, the factors that might influence faculty decisions to stay or leave, and strategies useful to the University in endeavoring to retain them here. Although the issue of retention has in recent days been posed in terms of the success (or failure) of counter offers made to a relatively small number of faculty members (typically between 40 and 60 a year), the dimensions of this issue that have emerged from the current study are rather different and affect many more of those who have to date committed themselves to Carolina and its mission here.

The evidence indicates that while a relatively small proportion of Carolina's faculty believes that they will depart within the next three years, a much larger proportion of respondents report that they have given serious consideration to that possibility in the last three years and in about half those cases have taken intermediate steps such as interviewing elsewhere and securing an offer.

Additional analysis was completed in order to understand the concerns of respondents who reported that they had seriously considered leaving and those who said they were very likely or somewhat likely to depart in the next three years. Respondents' level of concern regarding the six composite variables just described were powerful indicators of their views about their professional future. Significant, negative ratings in each of these areas were powerfully related to giving serious consideration of leaving, and serious consideration of leaving was in turn linked to anticipated decisions to remain or depart in the next three years. The more negative an individual felt about these

factors at Carolina, the more likely he or she was to say they had considered or were likely to leave, and vice versa.<sup>9</sup> After multivariate analysis was completed, taking into account all the demographic variables and the composite variables, the only demographic variable that still made any difference in predicting statements about leaving was time at UNC (respondents who had been at Carolina from 5-20 years were more likely to say they had considered leaving than those in other groups). In terms of overall impact on respondents' plans, the composite variables appeared to rank in the following order (from strongest to weakest) in predicting respondents' serious consideration of leaving (with the subpopulations who evidenced particularly elevated levels of concern noted here as previously discussed):



| <b>Composite Variable</b>                           | <b>Particularly vulnerable populations</b>   |
|---|--|
| Appropriate Compensation                            | Associate professors<br>Those at Carolina 6-10 years and 16-20 years<br>Women<br>Faculty in Arts & Sciences and Dentistry  |
| Professional recognition & leadership in department | Associate professors<br>Those at Carolina 10 years or longer<br>Men  |
| Support for professional work                       | Those with concerns about research support<br>Women<br>Faculty in units other than academic affairs<br>professional schools  |
| Benefits  | Full professors<br>Faculty on tenure track or tenured<br>Faculty other than those in Medical Clinical units  |
| Climate   | Women<br>Faculty of Color<br>Faculty in units other than Medical Basic Sciences,<br>Medical Clinical, or Dentistry   |
| Fairness of salary determination process            | Faculty in fixed term and junior ranks<br>Women<br>Faculty of Color<br>Faculty in units academic affairs outside the<br>College of Arts and Sciences, and faculty in<br>Dentistry, Medical Clinical, and Medical Basic<br>Sciences units |

A second set of factors also appear correlated with respondents' serious consideration of leaving and judgments regarding their likelihood of remaining at Carolina in the next three years. Respondents were asked to indicate what attributes of other jobs were very important, somewhat important, or not important in their consideration of alternatives. Statistically significant differences were evident between those who were had seriously considered leaving or who believed it likely that they would leave in the next three years, and those who were not so inclined or did not anticipate departure. These attributes and relevant differences are summarized below.

| <b>Attributes ranked "very important"</b>        | <b>%</b>    | <b>Seriously Considering Leaving</b> |             |             | <b>Likely to remain in 3 years</b> |                 |             | <b>Sig.</b> |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
|  |             | <b>No</b>                            | <b>Yes</b>  | <b>Sig.</b> | <b>No</b>                          | <b>Somewhat</b> | <b>Yes</b>  |             |
| Salary   | <b>75.6</b> | <b>68.1</b>                          | <b>80.9</b> | *           | <b>80.5</b>                        | <b>81.1</b>     | <b>69.5</b> | *           |
| Better benefits                                  | <b>67</b>   | <b>62.4</b>                          | <b>70.3</b> | *           | 66.1                               | 69.9            | 64.8        |             |
| Support of faculty                               | <b>58</b>   | 54.9                                 | 60.3        |             | 63.3                               | 57.5            | 57.3        |             |
| Overall department/college morale                | <b>58</b>   | <b>53.2</b>                          | <b>61.3</b> | *           | 63.6                               | 59.3            | 55.2        |             |
| Favorable geographic location                    | <b>51.4</b> | 55.1                                 | 48.6        |             | <b>46.1</b>                        | <b>46</b>       | <b>57.4</b> | *           |
| Increased emphasis on/appreciation of discipline | <b>50.2</b> | 43.5                                 | 55.3        |             | <b>60.9</b>                        | <b>51</b>       | <b>47.4</b> | *           |
| Great opportunity to conduct research            | <b>49.2</b> | <b>44.8</b>                          | <b>51.6</b> | *           | <b>50.8</b>                        | <b>52.3</b>     | <b>45.6</b> | *           |
| More opportunities for professional advancement  | <b>48.8</b> | <b>40</b>                            | <b>54.9</b> | *           | <b>59.7</b>                        | <b>54.9</b>     | <b>41.4</b> | *           |
| Tenure track/tenured status of position          | <b>47.1</b> | 46.6                                 | 46.7        |             | 41.7                               | 49              | 45.9        |             |
| Job opportunities for spouse/partner             | <b>45.5</b> | 45.2                                 | 45.7        |             | <b>38.6</b>                        | <b>47</b>       | <b>46.4</b> | *           |
| Quality of research facilities                   | <b>46.2</b> | <b>43.7</b>                          | <b>47.9</b> | *           | <b>44.4</b>                        | <b>51.1</b>     | <b>41.8</b> | *           |
| Good environment/schools for family              | <b>43</b>   | 45.2                                 | 41.6        |             | <b>30.7</b>                        | <b>41.6</b>     | <b>46.4</b> | *           |
| Prestige of institution                          | <b>40.5</b> | 43.2                                 | 38.5        |             | <b>24.2</b>                        | <b>38.2</b>     | <b>45.8</b> | *           |
| Other  | <b>33.2</b> | 25.9                                 | 38.1        |             | 23.3                               | 40.9            | 28.2        |             |
| Greater support for multidisciplinary research   | <b>28.6</b> | <b>25.7</b>                          | <b>30.8</b> | *           | 32.8                               | 30.2            | 26.3        |             |
| Adequacy of instructional resources              | <b>27.8</b> | 27.6                                 | 27.7        |             | 30.7                               | 27.6            | 27          |             |

|   |      |      |      |   |      |      |      |   |
|---|------|------|------|---|------|------|------|---|
| Greater department support for teaching     | 25.2 | 20.2 | 28.8 | * | 38.4 | 25.5 | 22.3 | * |
| Better opportunity to conduct clinical work | 15.4 | 12.2 | 17.7 | * | 19.4 | 16.6 | 13.5 |   |

Based on these data it appears that:

- Salary is of concern to all respondents, but plays an even more significant role in the minds of those considering leaving.
- Benefits were a concern for most faculty, but were cited as especially important to those considering leaving.
- Concern with overall department or college morale is particularly important to those considering leaving.
- The most prominent difference between those likely to remain and those not likely to do so in the short term relates to opportunities for professional advancement.
- Concerns about emphasis on or appreciation of a faculty members' discipline also differ significantly between those inclined to leave and those inclined to stay.
- Concerns for greater opportunities for research and better research facilities are evident among those considering departing.
- Greater concern for support of multidisciplinary research, greater department support for teaching, and better opportunities for clinical work were less commonly ranked as “very important,” but also reveal differences between those considering leaving and those inclined to stay.
- Respondents inclined to stay appear more concerned about job opportunities for a spouse or partner and a favorable geographic location.
- Those inclined to stay are also more concerned with the prestige of the institution.

While it is heartening to hear that efforts to retain distinguished faculty colleagues in the face of compelling external offers have been more successful in the last year than in the year before, it remains critical for University leaders to appreciate the full scope of the problem at hand. Many, many faculty members are being recruited for positions elsewhere and the lasting impacts of recent financial retrenchment and associated restlessness has yet to be seen. Salary improvements were implemented this summer, thanks to legislative increases, enrollment increase funding, continuing success in securing research funding, and campus-based tuition hikes. Compelling cases must continue to be made and counter offers tendered. At the same time, cohesive strategies are needed to address widespread problems and craft more systemic solutions in order to assure that looming problems that lie beneath the surface not result in ill effects that may escalate in future years.

#### **IV. Possible Next Steps: Topics for Consideration and Conversation**

The insights provided by respondents to the survey and the department chairs and deans who participated in focus groups have suggested a relatively lengthy agenda of possible next steps for consideration by Faculty Council, deans and chairs, faculty members more generally and University leaders. What follows is a list of possible areas for further work in the year to come. The list is grouped by the kind of work that might be required: policy review, resource allocation, administrative fine-tuning, and further collaboration.

Beginning at its October 2004 meeting, Faculty Council will begin to explore these and other possible responses to the findings just summarized, testing their wisdom and weighing key priorities. The information gleaned from the recent survey will also be shared with deans and department chairs, university leaders, schools and departments, those affiliated with key programs such as the Institute for Arts and Humanities, and with friends of the University including members of the Board of Visitors and Board of Trustees. The initial list that follows is offered as a menu from which certain matters may be embraced, rejected, or selected for further attention in various venues. It seems most appropriate, however, to present preliminary findings to the Faculty Council as a whole, since that group represents all colleagues at Carolina, and provides an important means to invite their active engagement in contributing to widespread efforts to assure the excellence and vitality of faculty to serve the University's crucial mission now and in years to come.

## A. Policies

1. **Salary compression.** Widespread concern with salary compression was evident in survey responses, both with regard to the concern for “appropriate” compensation and fair processes in setting compensation. Review of past Faculty Council action reveals that in the mid-1990’s requests were made for recurring review and analysis of salaries that may be out of line because of the uneven availability of legislative raises. Would it be advisable to adopt a standing policy to review salary compression every three years and report findings to the faculty? Are other approaches to compression advisable? Should there be a university policy on such matters, or should such analysis be left up to interested deans as they believe advisable from time to time?
2. **“Get an offer to get a good raise.”** Many faculty voiced grave concerns about the effect of this perceived practice in undermining morale and building lingering salary inequities. Although substantial numbers of faculty consider and receive alternative offers, funds remain limited. Is this a matter that needs university attention, or is it instead something best addressed by individual departments and schools?
3. **Information on salary setting.** Uncertainty about how salaries are set creates unease, particularly among more junior faculty members, those in certain disciplines, and those in traditionally disadvantaged groups (women and people of color). There is long-standing Faculty Council legislation regarding the need for faculty to receive information on such matters and to participate in decision-making. Are there ways that a deeper commitment to compliance with these policies can be assured? Are there “best practices” regarding sharing of information that might be identified and shared?
4. **Models and incentives:** Faculty and administrators, particularly within health affairs, raised possibilities and questions about the use of overhead receipts and clinical revenues to provide incentives and support for those who secure grants or perform clinical work, buffer departmental budgets in an era when federal research funding may decline, address inequities between salary levels of those on state funding and those funded in other ways, and support campus administrative infrastructure in various ways. Is there need for greater clarity or uniformity in some of these policies? If so, is that a matter for consideration at the school, department, or university level?
5. **Responsibilities to research, teach, serve, expand horizons through multidisciplinary collaboration, and produce funds from grants, professional services or entrepreneurial ventures.** Many respondents commented about the importance of all aspects of the University’s mission, not only research. Survey responses also indicated that a substantial portion of faculty respondents believed that in some parts of the university multidisciplinary research, collaboration, and service are not supported, valued, or encouraged. Is there need for clarification at the university level about the extent to which contributions of these sorts should be encouraged and recognized? As greater emphasis continues to be placed on “buying out” time through securing alternative revenue sources, are there policies that need to be reviewed to assure that fair and appropriate expectations are evident to those who bear the brunt of ongoing collective responsibilities relating to teaching, student advising, committee and administrative work?

## B. Resources

6. **Priorities for private fundraising geared to faculty recognition and support.** The Carolina First campaign has set faculty support as a high priority, and is endeavoring to raise funds for 200 distinguished chairs. Many faculty members (particularly those at middle ranks) are concerned with appropriate compensation, professional support and recognition, and chairs will provide significant support for those who received them. The survey responses suggest that there is a much broader need for professional support geared to faculty post-tenure and in mid-level positions. What priorities should be advanced for meeting these needs and for stretching available resources to have the greatest possible benefits? Should the creation of more competitive research grants be set as a higher priority, particularly for mid-level faculty seeking release time during the academic year or summer months? Could more flexible university-level “opportunities” funds be created to provide other forms of assistance to faculty at critical points in their careers? Are there ways that faculty members could make the case for these needs more effectively than in the past?
7. **Additional forms of recognition.** Faculty members in Arts and Sciences and Medicine report that there are significant forms of professional recognition available within their spheres, while others report that desired professional recognition is lacking. Is professional recognition necessarily a costly venture, or are there ways that contributions can be more systematically recognized using existing funds or otherwise addressed?

8. **Addressing unmet needs in certain disciplinary areas and basic levels of professional support.** Respondents in certain disciplinary areas appeared to suffer exceptional burdens as a result of the lack of private funding available in other parts of the campus. Are there ways to address these difficulties in order to assure a base level of minimum professional support and to allow all faculty to have access to critical opportunities (e.g., to attend major off-campus meetings, or collaborate with colleagues from elsewhere)?
9. **Life stages, vitality, and growth.** The survey suggested that faculty members recently tenured and those at the mid-point of their careers often feel frustrated in their search for professional support and recognition as their careers advance and priorities change. While some may seek to establish new centers and institutes, are there other flexible and cost-efficient ways in which such creative vision might be tapped? Those nearing retirement may have important contributions to make in areas that might both fit with their evolving interests and address pressing university priorities. Are there “best practices” that can be brought to bear in circumstances such as these?
10. **Centralized versus decentralized funds.** As a general rule, nearly all available state resources are distributed to departments and units, while relatively little funding remains in a central pool. Are there ways that key priorities and existing disparities in professional support could be addressed more effectively if allocation formulas were readjusted? Many of the compensation issues raised in the survey arise from the unevenness of state funding from year to year in light of the state’s economic circumstances. Are there ways that centralized or longer-term funding and allocation strategies might be employed to buffer these ups and downs?
11. **Supplemental health benefits.** Faculty in clinical departments in the Medical School are covered by supplemental medical plans that reduce the pressure on faculty members that has resulted from increasing deductibles, limited benefits, and the absence of dependent coverage under the State Health Plan. How might some sort of supplemental health plan be made available to others? The University System is about to launch a major employee survey in connection with tentative plans to seek authorization to opt out of the state health plan for a pilot period of up to five years. Are there other approaches that should be explored?
12. **Other benefits.** More senior faculty members report concerns with retirement benefits, while more junior colleagues expressed concern with the cost of living, the challenges of securing funds for a home down payment, and looming costs of college for their children. Are there ways in which a supplemental benefit fund might be created for faculty members to be tapped according to life stage and related needs, based on their continuing commitment to remain at Carolina? Are there ways that faculty could be assisted to gain access to benefits or support that may already exist?

### C. Administrative Fine-Tuning

13. **Reducing “hassles” and burdens on time.** Faculty members report increasing frustration with time spent on paperwork required for securing grants, administrative duties, insufficient funds for classroom copying and phone calls, and lack of parking. Are there ways that considered attention could be given to reducing hassles such as these? Might certain services and forms of support that have been developed centrally be well-publicized so that those who need them could benefit? Are there adequate forums for feedback with regard to support services so that improvements can be made based on users’ insights without substantial added costs? Might more intensive efforts be made to invite suggestions that would save money to be reallocated toward areas of need?
14. **Research support.** Research support is a critical issue facing faculty members. Are opportunities that currently exist to support the research venture well enough publicized and easily enough accessed to assure that faculty are getting what they need? Are there adequate feedback mechanisms to assure that support strategies are addressing the most critical faculty needs as they evolve over time?
15. **Spouse/partner employment opportunities.** The survey reflected a surprisingly high level of concern regarding spouse/partner employment opportunities as they might affect faculty members’ decisions about remaining at Carolina. In the past, attention to spouse/partner issues has been focused on initial hires, rather than on faculty decisions whether to depart. The effectiveness of the spouse/partner assistance program may also need to be reviewed to determine whether its effectiveness and visibility might be improved, and whether efforts in this area are receiving adequate priority given other pressing needs.

### D. Collaborative Efforts

- 16. Departmental morale.** Departmental morale appears to play a crucial role in influencing faculty members' decisions to stay or depart. Are there "best practices" that might be developed and shared with current and newly recruited department chairs and associate chairs? Are there ways that faculty members more broadly could receive encouragement and support for building positive morale? Faculty members with long-term commitments to Carolina often place great value in collegial relationships that reach beyond their departments and into the larger campus and the surrounding state. How might such links be fostered more effectively at critical points in faculty members' careers?
- 17. Climate issues affecting particular populations: women, faculty of color, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered faculty, and those at different points in their personal lives.** Although efforts have been made over the years to address the special challenges facing faculty members in "nontraditional" populations, continuing concerns were reported by those in several of such groups. Are there better ways to identify and address these concerns on a recurring basis? How can the concerns of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered faculty members be addressed? Junior faculty members new to the area and those in mid-career also reported concerns or frustration about the climate they experience. How might these concerns be addressed?
- 18. Leadership development.** Are meaningful professional advancement opportunities available on campus to interested Carolina faculty members, or are they increasingly expected to leave if they wish to exercise significant leadership? Are there ways that interested faculty members can gain opportunities to mentor and be mentored, as well as to contribute their talents to the betterment of their departments, the university, the state, or the world? The Institute for Arts & Humanities has created a leadership fellows program that engages groups of faculty members from different disciplines in reflection and conversation. Are there other ways in which faculty members could be encouraged and supported in the work of university "citizenship," as they take on important roles as chairs and members of committees, developers of curricula, and more?

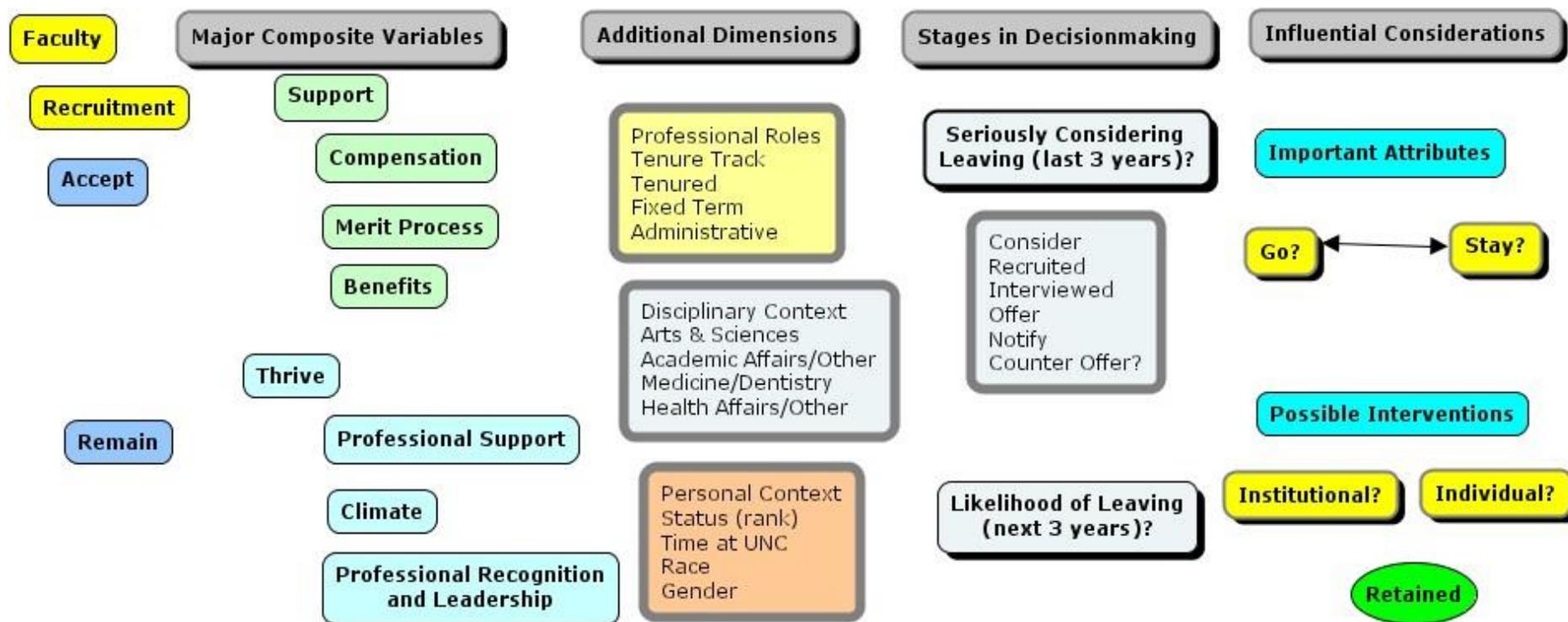
## **E. Continuing Commitment**

- 19. Measuring "improvement."** What would "improvement" look like as the campus attempts more concertedly to recruit excellent faculty, support them, help them thrive, and encourage them to continue their affiliation here? Is the critical issue prevailing disproportionately in the face of outside offers, or is it possible to set other interim goals regarding faculty support and engagement with the campus? Could a more effective system be developed at the campus level to track and communicate with faculty members regarding their experiences and needs in a timely and responsive way (for example, through periodic surveys, more meaningful exit reviews, and more)?
- 20. Accountability.** What is the best approach to assuring continuing attention to the critical issues addressed in the retention survey? What can be done to assure that recurring problems (such as salary compression, need for effective leadership, uneven support affecting those in different disciplines, and the need to address differences in developmental needs across the faculty lifespan) are addressed on a sustained basis, rather than sporadically as has been the case in the past?

## **Conclusion.**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has long taken pride in the quality of education it offers its students, the development and dissemination of knowledge it generates, and the service it provides to North Carolina and the world. Generations of faculty members have been the primary movers in each of these areas. Without their talent and commitment, the educational enterprise would falter whatever the talent of students or the grandeur of buildings here. The University and its faculty stand at a critical juncture for many reasons. The undergraduate population is expected to grow in the next several years, in response to a rapid growth in North Carolina's high school population. The need for effective higher education, knowledge development and transfer is greater than ever if the state's economic downturn is to be addressed and its workforce prepared to compete not just nationally but internationally. Although critical challenges face the campus as its leaders endeavor to shape an enduring vision suited to the new century and secure the resources needed to attain enduring dreams of excellence, its faculty stand ready and eager to do our part.

## Appendix: Faculty Retention Concept Map and Study Methodology



Methodology Summary: The faculty retention survey discussed in this report was developed through intensive work during the 2003-04 academic year. After consultation with the Executive Committee of Faculty Council and a research methodology working group, the Office of Institutional Research conducted an initial on-line and telephone survey of faculty members who had received retention offers and either stayed or departed UNC-CH at the end of 2002-03 academic years. Insights from this process provided important insights that shaped deliberations and preparation of the on-line survey administered in March 2004 to 3004 eligible full-time faculty. 1493 responses were received, for a 50% response rate. Respondents were similar to the population target population in terms of gender, ethnicity, and academic rank. By school, response rates varied from a low of 32% for the School of Dentistry to a high of 72% of the basic sciences within the school of medicine. Fixed term faculty members, were less likely to respond to the survey and those who also held an administrative appointment were more likely to respond. Four focus groups were also conducted to seek perspectives of chairs and deans from the College of Arts & Sciences, academic affairs professional schools, the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, and other health affairs schools. Intensive data analysis was completed by the Office of Institutional Research with the aid of members of a faculty working group including those with social science research expertise drawn from around the campus. Results were presented to members of the Executive Committee of Faculty Council, the Chancellor's Advisory Committee, and senior administrators as final work on this preliminary report was underway.