The Launching Committee: A How to Guide

Purpose: To provide the support and mentoring to help the new hire feel like a part of the community and be able to get up to speed with their research as quickly and effectively as possible.

The launch committee will begin working with the new hire from the day they sign their contract until the end of the hire's first year. At that point, the committee will transition to a more typical mentoring committee and the membership may change depending on the hire's needs.

Goals: There are five areas which must be addressed for a new hire to be successful
- **Lab space.** Engineers cannot be successful without functional lab space.
- **Funding.** The committee will work with the hire to identify opportunities, review proposals internally, and help include the hire in larger program project-type grants
- **Lab personnel and hiring.** The committee will help the new hire find the right people to build the lab.
- **Integration in the university.** The committee will be the first people the hire will know. They will help to introduce the hire to potential collaborators and colleagues across the university.
- **Effective Teaching.** While the teaching and learning center is an exceptional resource for support and guidance on teaching effectively, the mentors play an important role in conveying the department expectations for teaching and interacting with students

Makeup of committee:
- **The advocate**. This is the person whose research is most closely associated with the hire. They will be the person's champion. They need to take a strong responsibility for all of these issues because of their close alignment
- **Department member.** This is a member of the hire's home department whose research is, ideally, aligned with the hire and who can help them with department logistics and culture
- **Department chair.** This is the facilitator particularly for space and renovations

Meetings
- The advocate is the chair of the committee and calls the meetings
- The committee is expected to formally meet at least once per month either in person or by video conferencing with the hire from the time they sign their contract until the end of the hire's first year. After that, typically, the chair is not part of the committee (assuming space issues are resolved,) but the committee can continue meeting, typically, once per semester or more often as needed)
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Expectations of the Members of the Committee
- Members of the committee are also expected to meet with the hire informally
- Members are expected to introduce them to potential collaborators and colleagues
- Members are expected to review the hire's grant applications before they are submitted to provide feedback and improvement
- Members are expected to include the hire on grants as a co-investigator or co-PI where appropriate and help the hire make collaborative or synergistic connections that lead to the hire's being included on larger grants

<mark>Monthly</mark> Progress/Assessments (To be completed at each monthly meeting by the chair of the committee—the Advocate and sent to elavik@umbc.edu)

- **Space:**
  - Has the space been identified? Yes No Date:
  - Are there drawings? Yes No Date:
  - Has construction begun? Yes No Date:

  Expectations for space:
    - Temporary space, if needed, identified and available before starting
    - Drawings in hand before starting date
    - Construction commenced within the first month
    - Construction completed within 3 months of starting

- **Funding:**
  - Are the hire's grants getting internal reviews? Yes No Date:
  - Is the candidate being included in larger program projects or team-based grants? Yes No Date:
  - Is the hire getting funding? Yes No Date:

  Expectations for funding:
  - Within the first year, the committee will have reviewed at least 3 grants which are submitted
  - The committee will include the hire in grants
  - The committee will help direct the hire to appropriate collaborators for grant applications

- **Mentoring students/personnel**:
  - Is the person getting people in the lab or the new hire's research group? Yes No Date:
  - Are the lab members productive? Yes No Date:

  Expectations for mentoring of students and personnel
    - Within the first three months, the committee should ensure that the hire understands the various mechanisms for hiring lab members and has the opportunity to bring in members
    - The committee should provide suggestions for mechanisms for managing groups
    - The committee may help the hire in finding and screening potential applicants

- **Integration in the university**:
  - Is the person meeting people across schools and programs? Yes No Date:
  - Is the hire forming collaborations? Yes No Date:

  Expectations for integration
    - The committee members are expected to introduce the new hire to members of the dept, school, and the university at large
- **Effective Teaching:**
  - Is the launchee getting syllabi, previous class notes, and other materials to facilitate teaching classes? Yes No Date:
  - Are members of the department sitting in class and providing constructive feedback? Yes No Date:
  - Is the launchee interacting with the Faculty Development Center: Yes No Date:

  Expectations for Teaching
    - The launchee typically has a reduced load in the first year and does not need to develop new courses. Ideally, they have class materials, notes, and texts shared to facilitate teaching