To: University of Chicago Laboratory Schools Community  
From: Daniel Abebe and Jason Tyler, Co-chairs, Lab Search Advisory Committee  
Date: October 20, 2020  
Subject: Update on Director Search and Emerging Themes

We write to share our progress on the search for the next director of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

Over the past month, we have been in the information-gathering phase of the search process. While this is ongoing, we would like to update you on the meetings held to date and the emerging themes from those conversations. Thank you to all who have provided thoughtful feedback and recommendations to the Search Advisory Committee, to our search consultants from Storbeck Search & Associates, or through the Lab search survey and email. Additional meetings with Lab stakeholders are forthcoming, and your feedback will continue to inform the search for the next Lab director.

To learn your perspective on the search, we have hosted open sessions and held individual or group meetings with Lab’s faculty, principals, administrators, and staff; Lab’s students, parents, and guardians; Lab alumni, Board members, and others in the Lab community; and University leadership. Several themes have emerged from these conversations and your feedback through the survey and email, including the following:

- A Lab education is student-centered and focused on academic excellence, inquiry, and engagement with the Lab community and beyond. The next director must put the interests of students first and be committed to working with Lab faculty and staff to develop independent thinkers and lifelong learners.

- The next director of Lab should unify the Lab community around a shared vision informed by Lab’s culture and values. The director should prioritize collaboration and transparency while building strong connections with students, families, faculty, and staff.

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) must be fundamental values for the next Lab director. The director should have a commitment to and a track record of advancing DEI initiatives and fostering meaningful change. The director should also embrace opportunities for dialogue about DEI with the Lab community.

- Lab is part of the University of Chicago. The next director must appreciate the complexity of this relationship while also understanding the rich set of opportunities and resources available at the University to enhance the Lab experience.

- The next Lab director should be fully committed to building a meaningful partnership with the Lab Faculty Association. This is essential to achieving a common vision for Lab and providing an exceptional education for Lab’s students.

- Ensuring Lab’s financial and operational stability, which will include significant fundraising responsibilities, is critical to the next director’s success. The director should
have a record of achievement in leading complex operational and financial systems within an organization and in philanthropy.

As we continue our meetings with the Lab community, Storbeck Search & Associates will begin building a pool of candidates and identifying those who are potentially a good fit for the Lab director position. This will be a critical component of the search and can take six to eight weeks. Your views will continue to inform our work, and we welcome your feedback on the emerging themes or other aspects of the search process. We also welcome your ideas for potential candidates. We encourage you to provide input at any time by writing to LabSearch2020@uchicago.edu. You also may share your perspectives and insights on the Lab director role by completing the Director Search Survey.

Finally, the director position profile can be found on the Lab search website under Lab Director Position Profile. Please feel free to share the position profile widely and encourage talented individuals to consider applying for the director role. We will ensure that the Lab search website continues to be updated with the latest search developments, messages to the community, and other relevant information.

We are grateful for your support and engagement and will provide our next update in late fall.