

Arts and Sciences Council
8 March 2007
139 Social Sciences
Chair: Prof. Lee Baker

Having convened the Council at 3:34 p.m., Prof. Baker alluded to recording difficulties confronted during the February meeting, importuned all speakers to speak audibly at the present meeting, then requested and received unanimous approval of the February minutes.

He next welcomed Dr. Eric Mlyn (Director of the Duke-UNC Robertson Scholars Program) and the incoming director of the new Duke Center for Civic Engagement (i.e., DukeEngage), and Prof. Sherryl Broverman (Biology), currently serving as vice chair of DukeEngage's faculty advisory board.

Thanking Prof. Baker for the opportunity to speak to the Council, Dr. Mlyn assured its members that he and Prof. Broverman wanted to hear about their concerns. Many people had been involved in the general sort of work that he and Prof. Broverman were undertaking, and recently a half-dozen new "pockets" had opened up. As an "umbrella organization," DukeEngage was concerned with civic projects at Duke, and now plans were shaping up to insure that every undergraduate enrolled at Duke would have at least one "immersive experience" during his or her four years at the University.

It would become "an essential part of the Duke experience." And he was pleased to say that never previously had he seen an initiative proceed so quickly. Fifteen million dollars of financial support had been offered by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation of Seattle, and another fifteen million would be forthcoming from the Duke

Endowment. Such support would enable DukeEngage to become a reality very quickly.

Moreover, Duke's announcement of such civic engagement had caught attention "far and wide." Some pilot efforts would be underway as early as the summer of 2007. To begin with, the plans would be organized around existing programs, but later a variety of other avenues would be pursued. Whatever their nature might be, the plan was to involve students in one of three basic ways: (1) students might submit applications requiring faculty support; (2) Duke faculty and/or staff might initiate projects; and (3) outside "providers" might be secured for an ongoing project.

With the help of Provost Peter Lange and the support of Dr. David Gergen (Duke trustee and Prof. of Public Service and Director of the Center for Public Leadership, Harvard), a national advisory committee would be created to oversee and facilitate operations of the program. Within five years or so it was anticipated that the program would become a natural part of student life at Duke, an integral part of the “Duke experience.”

Prof. Broverman added that involvement of faculty members in the process would be absolutely essential. There already was enthusiasm both among students and in the city of Durham, and now faculty mentors were needed. Thinking creatively, how might Duke’s intellectual aims be integrated with community service? Faculty members needed to ask what a community partnership might be like. “How can we involve as many disciplines as possible? How can the advisory committee work across the campus?”

Opening the matter for discussion, Prof. Baker inquired whether the planners had as yet thought through the relationship between academic credit and the kind of work that would be involved for both students and faculty members. Response: Some details were still to be worked out. Students certainly would still come to Duke for classroom study, but they would also be involved in summer study and service of some sort. Probably there would be more use of Independent Study courses.

Prof. Margaret Riley (Study Abroad) noted that there would be a need to recognize faculty engagement outside the classroom.

Dr. Mlyn had spoken with Dr. Bruce Cunningham (Duke University Registrar) about the question, and understood that experiences involving payment would not count toward the program as it was envisaged.

Prof. Broverman added that two components would be operating in DukeEngage: eight weeks of both service and “immersion in the communities.”

Prof. David Malone (Education) had another sort of question: How would the “developmental model” now being considered fit into a normal four-year program? Response: Careful planning would be necessary—and, indeed, some students might graduate a semester late.

Prof. Leslie Digby (Biological Anthropology and Anatomy) asked whether the link between service and Independent Study would be a requirement. Answer: No.

Regarding a program involving children in Ecuador, Prof. Jehanne Gheith (Director of International Comparative Studies; Slavic and Eurasian Studies)

commented that students often were not identified until March of their junior year. The synchronization of identifying and timing could be difficult. Reponse: Yes, and “We don’t have the timing figured out yet.” Perhaps someone on the staff would be charged specifically to work with projects that involved timing problems.

There being no further queries at the moment, Prof. Baker thanked the Drs. Mlyn and Broverman for their presentation and responses. He then observed that during the course of the academic year the Council and its executive committee had been educating themselves individually and collectively. Preceding today’s introduction of DukeEngage there had been a series of presentations from a number of Duke’s other areas of interest—for example, ROTC, Athletics, and Central Campus. Now, this afternoon, he was pleased to welcome Dean Margaret Riley (Director of Study Abroad), for whom he had boldly concocted the title “Study Abroad: A Pillar of the Trinity Experience.”

Dean Riley, who fortunately found the title apposite, began with the observation that there was no place at Duke where the faculty and students could interact more fully than in Study Abroad. (In an aside she observed that Prof. Baker would understand what she was saying because he had gone to Ghana with a group of students.) Study Abroad was indeed a Trinity College “pillar.”

She then proceeded to give some statistics: Nationally, about 41% of incoming first-year students indicated that they wished to study abroad, but only about 10% actually did so. At Duke, however, some 43-46% of the students in a given graduating class will have studied abroad—and earned credits toward their Duke degree. The mission of Study Abroad was to “enhance the internationalization of the undergraduate experience at Duke University.” Of the students in the class of 2006, 46% of Trinity College and 25% of Pratt School of Engineering had studied abroad.

She went on to explain that during the academic year, Italy and Spain were currently highest on the list of student destinations (Italy, 105; Spain, 98; and United Kingdom, 87), and Australia, somewhat surprisingly, was falling back a bit (54). In the summer of 2006, however, the most popular destinations were the United Kingdom (52), Switzerland (23), China (21), and Spain (21). In an average year, about nine hundred Duke students traveled abroad. Altogether, however, since Duke accepted students from other institutions as well, the Study Abroad program monitored some 1,200 students per year.

Since the year 2000, the Program had expanded, and via pictures and names on

the big white screen, Dean Riley introduced the members of the Study Abroad staff. Currently they were working on improving “curriculum integration”—i.e., the interdisciplinary liaisons made possible by study abroad. New courses had been developed (e.g., courses in intensive German for engineers and interdisciplinary pre-departure and re-entry courses). Her office was also hoping to foster deeper curriculum integration by increasing involvement with Directors of Undergraduate Study. Furthermore, Study Abroad had also agreed to sponsor ten Summer Research Fellowships, hopefully with study leading to honors work. As DukeEngage evolved, various kinds of natural links with Study Abroad would develop.

Dean Riley then concluded her presentation by projecting a number of postcards that had been mailed by happy participants from faraway places. “In short,” she said, “we’re excited.”

Prof. Malone: Of the Pratt class of 2006 who went abroad, how many did their traveling in the summer? Answer: About one half.

Prof. Conover, who was familiar with the Duke hybrid program that sent students to Glasgow, remarked that they did get some Duke academic credit for their work. Dean Riley: Some programs give Duke credit and some involve transferring credit. Some programs (such as Glasgow) offer a mix of Duke and transfer credit. Duke Directors of Undergraduate Study determined course equivalencies. She also remarked that the Study Abroad Program recommended “full immersion.”

Prof. Luciana Fellin (Romance Studies) commented that enrollments in Florence have varied year to year, from twenty to as many as forty. She asked how programs are added to the approved list, and Dean Riley explained the procedure, commenting that if programs are not used in five years, they are dropped from the list.

After thanking Dean Riley, Prof. Baker moved on to discussion of a “Working Group on E-mail Proliferation.” He explained that Prof. Jane Gaines (Literature) had for years been concerned about the flood of e-mail, and that having presented her case to the Executive Committee of the Council, she had been invited to head a working group to consider the matter. That group had been meeting over the past couple of months, and although Prof. Gaines herself, unfortunately, could not attend the present meeting of the Council, he was glad to share the initial report of her committee.

The working group was made up of faculty members from various disciplines, as well as administrators and IT professionals, all of whom agreed on the scope of the problem and the benefits that might result from change. There was a shared belief in the

working group that loss of time due to the demands of e-mail could not be dissociated from pressures for faculty to take on increasing amounts of administrative duties. And there was agreement that the causes of the problem were complex, defying any single technological or cultural solution. In spite of the absence of any “quick fix,” the working group refused to conclude that no improvement was attainable without at least attempting to address the problem.

Currently the working group was considering strategies that might help to mitigate e-mail’s negative impacts. The goal was not mere reduction in the volume of e-mail but also changes in the way faculty, administrators, and students used e-mail. To help achieve this goal, the working group had secured the promise of a budget from Dean Molly Tamarkin (Arts and Sciences Information Sciences and Technology) and support from Duke’s IT professionals and its administrators.

In the short term, the working group was considering an experiment that might be likened to the “Great American Smoke Out.” For one day, perhaps in early April, all e-mail users on campus would be asked to adopt a set of “best practices” designed to eliminate unnecessary e-mail and to implement a series of simple abbreviations to increase the efficiency of essential e-mail.

During the period while it deliberated this and other strategies, and recognizing that no strategy would succeed without a campus-wide effort to contribute to a solution, the working group invited questions and input from the Council.

Mr. Forrest Smith (Arts and Sciences Information Service), one of the members of Prof. Gaines’s working group, observed quietly that “This is a cultural problem.” Solving it would necessarily involve cultural change. People tended to be slow to change.

As a step in the right direction, Prof. Malone noted that his own classes were informed about what he considered to be appropriate and inappropriate uses of e-mail. He also favored accompanying some messages with the notation “No need to reply.”

There being little discussion forthcoming, Prof. Baker observed that Prof. Gaines would be enabled to pursue the matter and suggest appropriate plans to address it. The Arts and Sciences Council could then “see how they look.”

Prof. Baker next informed the Council that three issues would be addressed at its April meeting: (1) Provost Peter Lange would speak on the Campus Culture Initiative; (2) Dean Christoph Guttentag would respond to questions relating to the Office of Admissions; and (3) Dean George McLendon would comment on new approaches to

the dean's leave.

Meanwhile, since the faculty was supposed to be responding to Duke's current Campus Culture Initiative, he urged Council members to discuss the matter in their individual departments. The Council would also be looking forward to hearing about the perceptions of Dean Robert Thompson (Trinity College).

Prof. Suzanne Shanahan (Sociology) remarked that a number of members of the CCI committee were surprised to learn that it was the Provost who would be its spokesperson, since Dean Thompson had served as its chair. Can we not have both Dean Thompson and Dr. Larry Moneta (Vice President for Student Affairs) participate? No one has better knowledge of how the CCI recommendations were reached.

Dean Thompson observed that he could envision sharing the podium with Provost Lange, especially with regard to how the twenty-eight recommendations of the CCI had evolved.

Inviting any students then present to leave, Prof. Baker then introduced a final piece of business, a matter that had been kept partly "under wraps"—*viz.*, the question of students appealing grades they had received. Dean McLendon and Dean Thompson had both asked ECACS to look into the matter, draft a policy, and present it to the Council. Therefore, over the course of the year, comparative research had been undertaken on the grade-changing policies at the University of Chicago, Purdue, Stanford, and a number of other academic institutions. Some institutions had very cumbersome policies, and at least one, the University of Chicago, had no policy at all: nobody there could change a professor's grade. The more the whole issue was discussed by ECACS, however, the more difficult and "tricky" the problem appeared to be. Various approaches involved various trade-offs. In certain circumstances (e.g., a professor's mental instability), perhaps a faculty grade should be overturned. At any rate, ECACS had at last come up with a draft for consideration by the Council, with the understanding that even if the Council passed it, it would still have to be approved also by both the Pratt School of Engineering and Provost Lange. Meanwhile, Prof. Baker urged all Council members to consult with their departments, especially with their Chairs and DUS's.

To get the process started, copies of the following draft were passed out to all Council members present:

A student who questions a grade that he or she has received in a

course should first discuss the matter with the instructor within thirty days of receiving the grade. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, the student may then take the matter to the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the department or program concerned. If the student still believes that the grade was assigned incorrectly, the DUS should present the problem to the Chair of the department or the program Director, and the two of them will review the case with the instructor involved. If the Chair and the DUS agree with the instructor that there are no legitimate grounds for which to change the grade, the grade stands as recorded. If the DUS and Chair believe there are grounds to consider a change and the instructor is unwilling to change the grade, the student may request a review of the case by writing to the Dean of Arts and Sciences or the Dean of the Pratt School of Engineering, depending on which college or school offered the course in question. A written request must be submitted before the end of the drop-add period of the semester following that for which the instructor recorded the grade.

The Dean will review the case and decide whether or not there are grounds to convene an *ad hoc* Committee for Review of Grade.

If the Dean decides that there are grounds to proceed, the Dean will charge and convene an *ad hoc* Committee for Review of Grade. The committee shall consist of the Dean and two regular rank faculty members from the same division but not the same department (or from different departments in the Pratt School of Engineering). Committee members are to be nominated by the appropriate faculty council, either the Executive Committee of the Arts and Sciences Council or the Engineering Faculty Council. This committee will then evaluate and review the case, and the Dean may initiate a grade change if that is the recommendation of the committee.

Prof. Baker: Among the matters that the committee had considered but did not specify were a professor's dereliction of duty or harassment of some sort. At a certain juncture in some cases, one might be confronted with a situation that proved to involve more of a faculty issue than a student issue.

Prof. Leslie Saper (Mathematics): Perhaps the first two sentences might be

deleted.

Vice Provost Judith Ruderman (Academic and Administrative Services) pointed out that The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that soon would be evaluating Duke University was sure to look for something concerning the grading complaint of a student. Whatever decision was reached, it needed to be written out and published.

Prof. Alexander Downes (Political Science) pointed out that the current rules of the Registrar's Office would permit the changing of a grade only if the instructor involved claimed there had been an error in calculation.

Dean Thompson: Two issues come together with regard to the Registrar's current rule: (1) it shielded the faculty member from a barrage of students, and (2) it protected the faculty member from being asked to record an "A+" rather than an "A." He thought the draft produced by ECACS took a good step toward avoiding action unless a student felt there was a significant disagreement about a grade. Also: What if the Chair and the DUS agreed that the student really had a case? We would be likely to conclude that there really had been some sort of injustice. He himself felt that the document now before the Council did a good job of addressing that possibility. In any case, decisions about grade appeals were a faculty matter, not an issue for a dean's judgment.

Prof. Baker remarked that accepting the ECACS draft would require a change in the Registrar's current policy.

Prof. Maurice Wallace (African and African American Studies) felt uneasy about the language of the first two sentences. The wording might serve to draw a student into the process.

Vice Provost Ruderman believed it necessary to lay out absolutely all the details of a policy, whatever they might be.

Dean Martina Bryant (Trinity College) reminded the Council that there was a current procedure for resolving academic concerns, including grading issues. It was called "Academic Concerns: Procedure for Resolution of Students' Academic Concerns" and could be found in the undergraduate *Bulletin*. Its wording, she thought, might be useful for those considering a new policy.

Prof. Baker: It appeared that our next step would be consulting with Engineering. Looked at in one way, the conversation was still only beginning. Then again, perhaps we would be lucky enough to wind the matter up at our April meeting.

Dean Steve Nowicki (Dean of the Natural Sciences) wished to add that the document as drafted was geared to dealing with extreme (and therefore unusual) cases. All in all, he thought it a step in the right direction. In Duke's current system, it was not possible to remedy even an obvious injustice.

At 5:15 p.m., there being no objections, the March meeting of the Arts and Sciences Council was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted
Dale B. J. Randall
Executive Secretary