

Arts and Sciences Council
12 April 2007
139 Social Sciences
Chair: Prof. Lee D. Baker

At 3:35 p.m. Prof. Baker called the meeting to order, welcomed all attendees, and apologized for the extra half-hour that he had tacked onto this meeting in order to accommodate a heftier-than-usual agenda.

He then turned to the minutes of the Council's meeting of 8 March. Requesting a motion and its second, and lacking any voiced objection, he declared the minutes approved.

Next, since this was his final meeting as Chair, he wanted to pause briefly to praise and thank both the Council as a whole and the members of the Executive Committee in particular. Both had functioned as effective bodies of governance, and the latter had worked particularly hard, collaborating closely not only with one another but also with Dean of the Faculty George McLendon and Dean of Trinity College Robert Thompson. He therefore proceeded to thank each member of ECACS: Professors Owen Astrachan (Computer Science), Leslie Digby (Biological Anthropology and Anatomy), Peter McIsaac (Germanic Languages and Literature), David Malone (Education), Suzanne Shanahan (Sociology), and Zannie Voss (Theater Studies). He then put forth a resolution as follows: "Whereas Dale B. J. Randall has been at Duke University for fifty years; whereas Dale B. J. Randall has been a dedicated teacher and excellent scholar and has provided important service to the college: Be it resolved that the Arts and Sciences Council recognizes his half-century commitment to Duke and deeply appreciates his efforts as the Executive Secretary of the Council."¹ There were no audible demurrals.

¹ The Executive Secretary's arm had to be twisted to include this particular formal resolution.

Prof. Baker then continued: “The reason the Arts and Sciences Council is a real and effective body of faculty governance is that we make it real and take it seriously.” He appreciated receiving thanks and handshakes, but pointed out that the Executive Committee and the Council itself had done so well because it had begun to “shoulder its responsibility.” His predecessor, Prof. Kathy Ewing, had done a wonderful job of restructuring the Council, making it “more nimble, responsive, and representative of departments and programs.” Now during his own term of office, possibly the “most important piece of the puzzle” was Dean of the Faculty George McLendon, “who trusted our judgment, valued our opinion, and listened to our insights.” Together with Dean of Trinity College Robert Thompson and the other Trinity deans, all had been able to create and maintain “real collaboration,” and, frankly, “a model for faculty governance.” After alluding quickly to some of the subjects that had been broached by the Council during his term of office, he closed these opening remarks by stating his confidence that Prof. Suzanne Shanahan—the incoming Council chair—would carry on the Council’s momentum and take it to “new horizons.”

Prof. Baker next announced that Provost Peter Lange had expressed a wish to address a few words to the faculty members in attendance. Moving off agenda, therefore, and inviting all students and media personnel to exit for a while, he pronounced the Council to be in executive session.

Provost Lange then spoke of “yesterday’s division” at Duke—i.e., the many months of accusations and acrimony occasioned by the false claim of an “exotic” dancer that three Duke lacrosse players had raped her. Only now, too long afterward, could we at last welcome the close of this “deeply troubling period” in the life of the University. All of us had shared in the pain, anger, and distress of these months, and now at last all could share in the relief of the students who had been most immediately involved. Now, in keeping with the public rush to defend the students, there was reason to hope that the “avalanche” of abusive e-mails would cease. Each of us alone, however, and all of us collectively would need to

be diligent about avoiding misinterpretations. Among other things that had been learned during the past year, perhaps the most important was that the right of faculty members to speak had not been infringed. At the close of Provost Lange's forcefully delivered remarks, the faculty applauded.

Returning then to the announced agenda, and readmitting those who had exited, Prof. Baker reminded Council members of the need to elect two members to sit on the Executive Committee, one from the Social Sciences and one from the Humanities. For the Social Sciences the candidates were Prof. Linda Barton (Sociology) and Prof. Nestor Schmajuk (Psychological and Brain Sciences); and for the Humanities, Prof. Sarah Beckwith (English) and Prof. Güven Güzeldere (Philosophy). There being no further nominations from the floor, ballots were distributed to all members of the Council (or their departmental substitutes).

Prof. Baker turned next to Prof. Alvin Crumbliss (Chemistry; Chair of the Arts and Science Curriculum Committee), who wished to recommend to the Council the approval of two new certificate programs, both of which had been thoroughly vetted and then approved by both the Curriculum Committee and the Executive Committee of the Council. He himself considered both proposals to be exemplary.

The first to be presented was an undergraduate certificate in Modeling Biological Systems, and the faculty leaders proposed to manage it were Prof. John Harer (Mathematics and Computer Science), Program Director, and Prof. David Kraines (Mathematics), who would serve as Interim Director in 2007-08. The primary goals of this certificate were to (1) provide a structured way for students to take classes and do research at the intersection of quantitative methods and biological sciences, (2) expand quantitative/computational biology curricula through collaborative efforts of Biology, Computer Science, Math, ISDS, and the IGSP, and (3) give students an opportunity to engage in independent research early in their academic careers.

Prof. Crumbliss pointed out that this proposal would help to fill a current

gap between the quantitative and the biological sciences as well as provide students with a better chance to do significant research.

After noting that all of the details concerning the proposal were available on the web, Prof. Baker recognized Prof. Ron Grunwald (Biology). Prof. Grunwald wondered how the proposal might affect the proposed minor in Computer Science. Could a student in Computer Science “latch on”? Prof. Harer replied that the planners had “worked pretty hard to get a good fit” with courses already in place, and Prof. Crumbliss observed that “a lot of time” had been devoted to that sort of thing.

Prof. Christopher Conover (Public Policy; Director, Health Policy Certificate Program) was curious about the size and funding of such an undergraduate certificate. Prof. Harer replied that for various reasons he was “not too worried” about the funding aspect.

Put to a vote, the proposal to create an undergraduate certificate in Modeling Biological Systems was approved without dissent.

Prof. Crumbliss then turned to the proposal to establish a certificate program in Islamic Studies, a cross-cultural program designed to engage with the Muslim world. One of the most obvious strengths of the program was that a period of study abroad was among its requirements. The faculty director proposed for this program was Prof. Bruce Lawrence (Religion), currently Director of the Duke Islamic Studies Center. Thoroughly vetted as the proposal had been, and strongly approved by those who had studied it, it appeared to Prof. Baker himself to be a model proposal. Among other good aspects, and especially considering the current state of the world, its timing was optimal.

With minimal further commentary, the Council proceeded to approve the proposal without dissent.

Prof. Baker next stated that the ordering of the agenda needed to be altered again at this point because Dr. Christoph Guttentag (Dean of Undergraduate Admissions) had to leave somewhat earlier than had been anticipated. The last in

a series of invited guests of the Council during the academic year 2006-07, Dr. Guttentag had been asked to report on undergraduate admissions. In particular, in response to the information and comments of Lt. Col. J. D. Wroth (Professor and Commander of AFROTC Detachment 585) regarding ROTC students at Duke, the Executive Committee had requested that Dr. Guttentag respond to three questions: (1) Why doesn't Duke seek out and target those young men and women who wish to serve as officers in one of the armed forces, many of whom would enroll with a substantial military scholarship? (2) Since Duke is seeking diversity, would not those who are pursuing a commission as an officer in the Armed Forces enrich that diversity? And (3), is there any reason that Duke should not be eager to enable our future military officers to share in the riches of a well-rounded education?

Dr. Guttentag, expressing his appreciation for being invited to address the Council, observed first that when it came to Admissions, there were so many variables that "We all juggle." Plan and try as one might, we could end up offering entry to two hundred too many students. A strongly positive factor in the situation, however, was that the appeal of Duke made it possible to choose applicants from "a large and deep pool."

More particularly, during the last year, as a lacrosse-troubled summer manifested itself in shrinking numbers of visitors to the campus, Admissions had recognized the need to "get the word out" about Duke. Admissions had increased its enrollment efforts in a number of ways, including mailings to more parents. The gratifying result was that for the entering class of the Fall of 2007 there were 19,206 applicants—one of the largest pools of applications in the University's history. He was proud to say also that the overall quality of the class remained high. And among other achievements, Duke had attracted a record number of Asians and Hispanics.

Now, during the current year, Admissions had worked on improving its

website, hosted more than the usual number of students, organized more alumni meetings for interested students, and held more Blue Devil Days. Furthermore, Admissions would continue to recruit throughout the month of April. At the moment, he was cautiously optimistic about returns.

Dr. Guttentag then went on to point to the “diversity within groups.” The situation was complicated, of course, in part because Admissions was dependent on what students reported about themselves.

As for the questions posed by the Council, he recalled that when he was a student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, anti-military sentiment was at its peak. Nowadays, here at Duke, the Admissions Office tried to take diversity seriously. Admissions had had “consistent and constant contact with ROTC officers on campus.” “When we can do something, we do it.” And, true enough, “we do deny fine students.”

Dr. Guttentag then observed that the Campus Culture Initiative was recommending the raising of Duke’s “low-end of admissions.” The bottom line currently was merely a student’s “ability to graduate from Duke University.” On the other hand, although Duke drew applications from a good many students in the top three-to-five percent of their class, Admissions was able to admit only some of them.

Prof. Al Goshaw (Physics) commented that many years ago he had volunteered or maybe been recruited to help work on admissions. How did one find faculty readers now? Answer: We have no faculty readers. We expect our “first readers” of applications to spend about twenty hours a week—and have not figured out how we might ask faculty members to read fifty to a hundred applications.

Dean McLendon noted that faculty, nevertheless, could have input. For instance, was it not relatively routine to refer potential music students to the Department of Music? Response: There was quite a bit of that sort of back-and-forth evaluation, especially in the arts, where supplemental material was reviewed

and evaluated by the Departments.

Prof. Marjorie McElroy (Economics) observed that faculty members all had read a lot about student partying. She wondered how social problems were addressed by Admissions. Reply: We do not have all the information we would like to have. The fact is that two generations or so ago we found nothing like the level of advocacy we have now. A negative comment in a letter nowadays would be astonishing. Another sort of answer seemed to be simply “Advantaged students have advantages.”

With thanks, then, to Dr. Guttentag, Prof. Baker moved on to the agenda item titled “Initial Approval of Review of Grade Procedure.” Dean Norman Keul (Associate Dean of Trinity College), in a document made available at the meeting, had reported that six of the universities he had queried allowed grade override in “egregious cases of misassignment,” but five did not ever permit an override. Schools allowing override did so in extreme situations involving, for example, sexual harassment, mental illness, or cases of plagiarism that had been eschewed by judicial boards.

Dean Thompson explained further that he had asked ECACS to review, revise, and recommend approval of a document specifically relating to the problem of grade-change, and the Executive Committee of the Council had now tackled the subject and aired it for the Council. For a period of close to a calendar year, a new document had been discussed and created, and it was now being presented to the Council again, this time, it was hoped, in a more or less finished state. And even if it was passed by the Council this afternoon, it still would have to be approved by both the Engineering Council and Provost Lange.

To get the process underway, Prof. Baker, on behalf of the Executive Committee, recommended that Arts and Sciences Council approve the following policy:

A student who questions a grade received in a course should first discuss the matter with the instructor within thirty days of

receiving a grade. After meeting with the instructor, if the student still believes the instructor has assigned an inaccurate or unjustified grade, the student should discuss the matter with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. If no satisfactory solution is reached, the student may make a formal complaint to the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the department or program concerned.

The DUS should present the problem to the Chair of the department or program Director, and the two of them will review the case with the instructor involved. If the Chair or the DUS agrees with the instructor that there are no legitimate grounds on 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 the semester following that for which the instructor recorded the grade.

The Dean will review the case and decide whether 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 Pratt School of

Engineering). The two faculty members of the committee 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.

Dean McLendon (observing that he himself was the final stop at the end of this trail) said he supposed that a situation such as was implied by the document would be a rare exception, something that might occur no oftener than once or twice a decade. As for himself, he was in favor of the document, which he considered “the best we can do that allows us to respond in a morally defensible way to a unique problem.”

Prof. Grunwald was completely supportive of the document, which he considered “a great step forward.” On the other hand, he believed that the observations collected by Dean Norman Keul suggested the value of interaction between “a” and “b” –i.e., the process described by the document at hand and the work of the Judicial Board. We agreed years ago that faculty members might make decisions regarding Honor Code problems.

Dr. Judith Ruderman (Vice Provost of Academic and Administrative Services) was a little uncomfortable about the potential of mixing apples and oranges.

Prof. Baker: Yes, indeed, we would like to keep the two processes separate..

Prof. James Bonk (Chemistry) observed that according to the document the DUS and the Chair were presumed to agree. What if the instructor in question were the DUS or the Chair or the dean? Prof. Baker said he believed that there were mechanisms for choosing proxies.

Prof. Bonk continued: According to the document, it also appeared that two out of three votes would carry the day, whereas a consensus really would be most

desirable.

Prof. Baker: We left that a little ambiguous but hoped, of course, that consensus could be reached. We certainly intend to uphold the sanctity of a professor's grade. And, yes, we have consulted the University Counsel with regard to the matter.

Since no further conversation seemed to be forthcoming, he proposed that the Arts and Sciences Council put the matter to a vote—which proved to be unanimously positive.

Moving on to the agenda item labeled “Organizing the Campus Culture Initiative,” and thanking Dean Thompson for chairing the committee that had created the C.C.I., Prof. Baker asked Dean Thompson to speak on the subject.

Dean Thompson first acknowledged a number of his co-workers by name, then observed that he appreciated the opportunity to relate how all of them, individually and collectively, had addressed their assignment. Furthermore, he wanted everyone to understand that the recommendations resulting from their work were by no means stand-alone items: all were part of the overall enterprise.

The committee had endeavored to bring together individuals from various sectors of life at Duke University—including not only students and faculty but also alums. On the other hand, there was no “Noah's Ark” model, with samples of every this and that. Members, moreover, were not saddled with representing any particular constituency: instead, they were charged with expressing their own personal views.

Although “the events of last spring” certainly were an impetus for the committee, the committee was by no means focused on “last spring.” Its mission was, first, to identify and define campus culture and then to devise ways to make it better.

The committee consisted of twenty-five members, and their goal was not to seek unanimity but to discover and create a “sense of the whole.” Everything involved the committee as a whole, and the over-all goal was to foster an inclusive academic community in a world that was multicultural. The committee had discussed what it meant to be a student (a powerful force for conformity had to be

acknowledged), the relation of space to social dynamics (privileged space was by definition not equitable), the importance of faculty engagement with students, and the possibility of developing a more nearly ideal model. Finally, as the Council members were aware, the committee had come up with twenty-eight recommendations.

Provost Lange then stepped forward and expressed his pleasure in having the good fortune to be charged with the “follow-up on the work of the committee.” It provided him with a very strong starting point, and he was pleased to think that the Campus Culture Initiative would make for “profound changes” in life as it was lived at Duke University. During the committee’s sorting out of matters, the “hot-button” issues that proved to be most evident were selective living, alcohol, athletics, gender relations, and what one could call “engaging difference.” As we moved forward with the planning and the reconstruction phases, both faculty and students who were not “the usual suspects” either had been or would be engaged, as would the staff itself (e.g., pre-major advisors and student affairs personnel).

Among the preliminary themes to be pondered, there was the fact that student living at Duke was very complex. For instance, gender-separation meant no co-ed blocking, and rules concerning common space provided advantages to some groups but not others. Furthermore, it appeared that students craved inter-generational interaction. As a step in that direction, plans were already afoot to make dinner in the Faculty Commons a reality.

Along with a number of other significant changes that were already in the offing, late fall or early winter of 2007 would see the actual presentation of the committee’s finished report to President Richard Brodhead.

With thanks to the Provost for his comments, Prof. Baker moved on to inform the Council and its guests that the ballots for the election of two members of the Executive Committee of the Arts and Sciences had now been tallied, and he was pleased to announce that the new representatives would be Prof. Burton (for the Social Sciences) and Prof. Güzeldere (for the Humanities).

Well aware that all the clocks were ticking, Dean McLendon nevertheless

expressed a wish to congratulate the Arts and Sciences Council on a year that had been remarkably effective. Since the latter was in no little part attributable to Prof. Baker himself, the Dean wished also to “memorialize” his achievement with a handsome chair, which was duly brought forth for all to admire.

Furthermore—and truly this was the penultimate item on the agenda—with many of those working at Duke called upon to do more and then more, and with available time shrinking with each new chore, it had become evident to Dean McLendon (and, of course, others, thanks to Prof. Craufurd Goodwin and his committee) that sometimes the best reward was time itself, something that one might call “Dean’s Leave.” It was clear enough that those faculty members who were most aggressive in putting themselves forward were often the most likely to be rewarded. Dean McLendon wanted to see a move toward granting Dean’s Leaves in a more transparent way—leaves, of course, to engage in intellectual work. And, yes, faculty members in the Humanities probably would be affected most. And, yes again, the possibility really would be extended to Professors-of-the-Practice.

With haste and good will apparently prevailing throughout the meeting room, the final Arts and Sciences Council meeting of the academic year 2006-07 was belatedly adjourned at 5:37 p.m. A good many attenders made their way to the refreshments that had been laid out for everyone in the lobby of nearby Allen Building, and others struck out briskly for hearth and home.

Respectfully submitted
Dale B. J. Randall
Executive Secretary