

# Duke University

## Arts & Sciences Council Minutes

Meeting #6 (February 11, 2010)

### Welcome

Council Chair Ruth Day called the meeting to order.

### Updates & General Information

#### Pass/Fail Policy

- Interim Academic Standards Committee has met
- Resolved remaining issues
- Council will vote on revised policy in March

#### Council Attendance

- Very high this year (e.g., 84% last time)

### On the Horizon

Topics under discussion; may come before the Council.

#### SACS Report

- Duke submitted materials for re-accreditation to SACS (Southern Assoc. of Colleges & Schools)
- SACS evaluation report arrived last month
- Good news: they reaffirmed our accreditation
- Could-be-better news: we are on "monitoring status" for one criterion
- "Institutional Effectiveness"  
*"Duke has not yet demonstrated that its institutional effectiveness practices with regard to student learning outcomes have occurred broadly across its undergraduate and graduate programs."*
- Vice Provost John Simon will visit the Council next month, to provide details & discuss implications

#### Solutions Poll

- The A&S Council Priorities Poll was very successful
- The top priority identified was the budget
- Now, what do we do about it?
- The A&S Solutions Poll is under development
- Faculty will indicate whether they favor specific:
  - cost reduction strategies
  - revenue enhancement strategies
- Also suggest new ideas for achieving both goals
- It will be sent to all regular-rank faculty (not just reps)

### Theme for Today: Innovative Programs

- We want to support and develop innovation programs
- But current times pose challenges:
  - funding is tight
  - we must assess programs
- Therefore we focus today on a new innovative program (Winter Forum), ways to enhance educational programs, and how to assess programs
- We also consider alternative ways to view the current educational climate

### Winter Forum



Steve Nowicki  
Dean & Vice Provost,  
Undergraduate Education

Dean Nowicki reported results of the first Winter Forum, "an experiment that worked remarkably well." It was developed as part of the Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) in the SACS accreditation process and was the brain-child of a student-faculty-staff committee. It pushed three main themes – globalization, knowledge in the service of society, and enhancing student-faculty interactions.

#### Basic Idea.

The Winter Forum is a kind of renaissance weekend. Students come back 2-1/2 days before the spring semester and engage in a real world problem. Would the students come back? They do not get any credit for this. Would they get engaged? Would they get something out of this that was among the learning outcomes that we envisioned? The answer was that it did work.

#### Brief Overview, 2010 (Sun-Tues before classes began)

- Sponsored by Nicholas Program for Environmental Policy Solutions
- Different institutes or units take ownership each year
- Theme this year: "Making the Green Economy Work"
- Faculty involved: Law School, Pratt, Nicholas, A&S
- Outside experts: the Chair of Dupont (a leading green company), the mayor of Winston-Salem (a leading city working for a greener approach), and venture capitalists (gave away \$2000 for students to start a new company).

--Students: good range in demographics, class years, majors, equal number of men and women; but number of nonwhite or under-represented groups was low; connected well with most students, but not minorities or athletes

### **The Program**

- Started with an evening program and went nonstop
- Students divided into teams of 8-10
- Each team had a faculty member and/or outside expert as a team leader.
- Teams: developed and presented a business plan as part of the startup challenge; developed a proposal for a model UN-like recreation of the Copenhagen Summit, etc.
- Student groups were involved in planning and implementation (e.g., Duke International Relations Association (DIRA))

### **Outcomes**

- Students were exhausted and elated
- Sample comment, "Boy, that was exhausting but it was great. Why can't this last longer? How can we continue?"
- Some student groups have continued interactions with their mentor.
- Students who developed a proposal for a startup company to manufacture building insulation from cellulose waste products (e.g., newspaper and nut shells) are going to locate their first factory in Malaysia.
- 95% of students recommend the Winter Forum
- Faculty loved it too
- This was a remarkable success story.
- Matt Serra (Office of Assessment) is looking at outcomes in more detail; will use the results to make it even better next time.

### **Future Plans**

#### Winter Forum 2011 (Jan. 9-11)

- Host: Global Health Institute
- Topic: will engage students from many areas

#### Winter Forums 2012 and beyond

- set up by Dean Nowicki's office
- a student-faculty group will consider proposals

### **Council Discussion**

**Ron Grunwald (Biology):** What is your sense of the cost-benefit ratio in this program? There are some intangibles that appear to be overwhelmingly positive.

**Steve Nowicki:** What does it cost? It was cheap. The SACS requires that an institution put real money behind quality enhancement programs. Given the downturn, the Provost was ratcheting back what he was willing to commit. We negotiated with SACS and they understood that problem. The total price tag was less than \$60,000. I do not think it will be that cheap forever. We work to stay within budget. A&S does not pay for this. We really worked to keep it down. I felt that it was a very good investment.

**Margaret Riley (Global Education Office for Undergraduates):** I have heard other people talk about it and what a great success it was. One thing that I learned was that it went beyond the two and one half days. There were assignments before hand and readings, and the students came into this having done their homework. Once the decision was made of who was going to participate, they were immediately given assignments and ways to participate. That started back in November.

**Steve Nowicki:** I am glad you mentioned that, which is a lesson we learned in the following way. It was one of the things the students complained about. They would rather have known in advance what they were supposed to do and we did not communicate that. It was partly because we were making it up as we went along. In the future, we will tell students there will be some reading and work to do with the group before hand. We will have learned our lesson that as part of the rollout and application package, we need to tell students they are expected to meet a certain amount and they will be expected to do various other things.

**Margaret Riley:** When you think of packing all of that into two and one half days, it is an ambitious project just as it is. But I think the preparation enhanced it and enriched it and allowed them to make more out of the two and one half days.

### **Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)**



Lee Baker  
Dean of Academic Affairs

Steve outlined one of the programs for the Quality Enhancement Program (QEP). All three programs are called "Global Duke: Enhancing Students' Capacity for World Citizenship." The others are the Global Semester Abroad and the Global Advising Program, which we

launch next year (a year from right now).

### **Global Semester Abroad (GSA)**

GSA is a distinctive and innovative study abroad program led by two of our faculty members: Anirudh Krishna (Public Policy) who will direct the India site in Udaipur in the central India region of Rajasthan and Ralph Litzinger (Cultural Anthropology) who will be in Beijing directing the other half. So you are going to have two sets of students at two locations in the world taking a comparative course on global health and development. Then, at the spring break, they swap. The professors stay and teach that same course over again but the students change and have a comparative approach to global health in India and China. We have already identified NGO's to work with. In India, it is called the Action Research and Training for Health and in Beijing it is the Beijing Health Services Center. So we are well on our way in planning this. We do not know how we will fund the swap part. We are working on the details. It is going to be an exciting and innovative program.

### **Global Advising Program**

We have many opportunities and one of the problems is that students do not have the tools to successfully navigate this so they can put together an academic plan for the curricular and co-curricular global program with which they have opportunities. We are in the process this summer of hiring two global advisors whose job will be to meet with students and talk with them and develop an academic plan for them. They will be able to leverage the co-curricular with the curricular and chart a path that will make sense for them to go on study abroad experiences. This could lead to a senior thesis or something like that. Or it could lead to an internship that will expand their job potential. So it is going to be an interesting program

Right now we are doing a comprehensive external review of the advising center. The Global Advising Program will be an aspect of advising at Duke. Perhaps it should be closely aligned with either Duke Engage or service learning or the Office of Undergraduate Global Education. So we are going to actually utilize the external reviewers to help us think through the best way to both position and describe the jobs and the like.

### **Summary of the Quality Enhancement Program**

Those are the three elements of the QEP. The Winter Forum set a high bar. The other components we will

be rolling out in the next year are the Global Semester Abroad and the Global Advising Program. And together, all three of these programs I think will do what the accreditation board wanted: Really enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience.

### **Council Discussion**

**Ron Grunwald:** Is this program being promoted and advertised for the students? And through what venues?

**Lee Baker:** Yes, through the public education office.

**Margaret Riley (Director, Global Education Office):**

There is a facebook website. It was promoted at our study abroad fair in the fall. There is information about it through Public Policy Studies and the Global Health Institute or through our office. We have over 40 members on our facebook page at this time. We would appreciate any assistance all of you can give us in spreading the word.

### **Assessment and Other "A-Words"**

#### **Accreditation and Assessment lead to**

#### **Alignment and Achievement of our Core Values**



George L. McLendon  
Dean, Arts & Sciences

The next few presentations are about subjects where... there are certain words, ideas that are so distasteful, they are only referred to by an initial. At Duke for example, for the first few years that I got here, people would speak in hushed tones about the f-word -- football. But we have gotten past that, and now we actually feel okay about football.

So I want to segue to "A-words" and those include words that I refer to as MEGO (My eyes glaze over) words -- accreditation and assessment. But ... I think about a different set of A-words: Alignment and achievement of our core values. That's what this is really all about. Anybody who is a teacher or scholar in the academy, we tend to all share some deep values around the importance of learning, about the processes of learning and achievements of our students.

We want to help our students acquire a deep love of learning and in the process, deepen their own abilities to acquire new ideas, with an awareness of cultural context, to craft coherent arguments, lucidly

articulating them, use the appropriate approaches whether qualitative or quantitative. I don't think anybody who teaches would argue that these are intellectual achievements that we want for our students. And that a central goal for any of us as Duke Faculty is to guide our students along the pathways that give them these intellectual destinations -- that's what we're all here to do.

Now, the challenge for any of this is: how do we know whether we are choosing the right paths? How do we know whether they start down that path and ever reach the destination that we had in mind for them? That's really the essence of **assessment**. It's really just ensuring that our core values as educators are best communicated to our students -- and in some way inspire and empower them to become passionate learners. That's all we're really trying to do. I think we're really fortunate to be part of a scholarly community that's given a responsibility for preparing succeeding generations to become leaders in their own communities. That's a big responsibility, and it's also a responsibility that is extraordinary to find.

But how do we communicate our success in that responsibility if we have to deal with the dispassionate external observer, who says, "Well how do you know that they actually learned these things?" How do we communicate that both to the communities we serve and the communities who demand us to live up to what's a pretty substantial responsibility?

So in essence, I think what Matt [Serra] is going to tell us, and what Lee [Baker] is going to tell us is that each one of the programs that we serve here as representatives needs some kind of process -- and it won't be a one-size-fits-all process. What's most appropriate in one discipline might not be what's most appropriate in a natural science discipline -- but everybody's going to need a process to communicate our goals for our students, to follow their progress and achievements, and to communicate to ourselves and to others, starting with our students, but not ending with them.

The deep values that form the foundations for our own self evaluation -- is what really this is all about. I'm not worried (perhaps I should be) about some external group saying "You have to do this." I'm much more interested in us saying to ourselves -- we want to do this because we want to do what our most important jobs are -- we want to do them as well as we can.

Part of this we already do. Every one of us is involved in thinking through curriculum and thinking through what are the courses that we want to teach, how do we sequence those courses, why is it this sequence -- why is it this path instead of some other path -- maybe there are many paths. So we are already doing much of that, but some of what we do is incomplete, because there are other things we can add to this where we can learn from our students.

How well are we doing with this? There's a classic old cartoon where a young boy is saying, "I taught my dog this trick." He says fetch, and the dog just falls over. And his friend says "I thought you taught him a trick." He says "I taught him, he just didn't learn."

So, I think sometimes we face that same challenge. So, that's really where I want to leave this. That this is not about responding to some set of faceless bureaucrats somewhere; this is about doing what we care most about, as well as we can possibly do it.

### [Assessment: What, Where, How](#)



**Matt Serra**  
Director, A&S Office of Assessment

**Note:** *Matt Serra's slides are posted on the A&S Council website.*

I am going to talk about the Office of Assessment and, in particular, course evaluations. My Associate Director is Jennifer Hill. The newest member of our staff is Meredith Walton. We have two undergraduate research assistants. This is the mission statement for the office:

*Our mission is to promote on-going analysis and research on Duke's undergraduate curricula, courses, departments and programs in efforts to improve student learning at Duke. In addition, the office serves as a resource for departments and faculty. Areas of investigation include, but are not limited to, university wide course evaluation, curricular requirements, academic performance, academic advising, program and department level assessment, and grant related assessment.*

Basically, we are the research arm of the Arts and Sciences. George and Lee ask me questions and I answer them as best as I can. We do a lot more than that. The thing you are probably most familiar with are the course evaluations.



## **Course Evaluation Process**

Basically, it involves obtaining the course information from the registrar, computing the evaluations returned from the departments, and processing the returns of the materials to generate reports.

We process about 20,000 forms per term. We get it done in about a week. You get your information back pretty fast. This is the report we generate just from the course evaluations [*see slides*].

We also do various ad hoc reports. I am going to go to our web site. This is Trinity College. We do the Pratt School of Engineering, the law school, the Nicholas School of the Environment including marine lab courses, and Public Policy.

[*Dr. Serra did a demonstration of how to get an instructor's course evaluation results.*] You click where it says "course evaluation" and you can find the terms listed where you have evaluations and the courses that you taught that were evaluated.

## **Other Functions**

What else do we do in the office? Mostly we provide data for the college. That is our main charge. There is lots of stuff that is informed by the data we supervise. We also do the same thing for departments and programs. If you have a question that you think we may be able to help you on, particularly on curriculum analysis, let us know. Should you have a certain prerequisite for a course? Does that prerequisite help? We can help you figure that out. Should you increase the number of hours for a certain course? We will try to help you figure that out. That's what we are here for.

We coordinate ongoing assessment issues. There are a lot of them. I will talk about a few of them in a minute. We help out on all program evaluations. Grant proposals and assessment implementation. If you are writing a grant proposal, we can help. I cannot guarantee you will get your grant. But I can guarantee that you will not be rejected because of the assessment.

I have worked with almost all of the programs and departments already. It is an iterative process with lots of give and take. We have a lot of information to share. We can jump in at any moment. This is at all levels of the University.

## **Assessment methods**

Quantitative, qualitative, direct, indirect, any number of ways. We know how to do this. You don't have to

figure it out. We have the resources. Come to us. We can help you. Experimental design. I am a cognitive psychologist. I have done this most of my life. I love numbers. Survey design and construction. This is what we do most of. We are very good at this.

## **Committee work**

This helps us with some things that are coming up. Jennifer and I are members of national committees that focus on assessment. We get together regularly and talk about assessment. This allows us to stay abreast of the best practices in assessment. It allows us to communicate those to others. If we are not staying ahead, we are behind. It also allows us to develop resources for workshops when necessary.

We do administer the portfolio of assessment methodologies at

Duke. There are folks here that are familiar with that. We are now piloting with several programs a new software, Chalk and Wire. Latin American-Caribbean Studies is using it. The program in Ed is going to implement a pilot. We have several folks who are trying out its assessment effectiveness. This is probably one of the best portfolio of assessment methodologies around.

Examples of assessment activities: Baldwin Scholars, FOCUS, Semester Abroad, Global Education, Howard Hughes summer programs, general education Assessment, ongoing activities including Duke reports that are available to the outside world.

## **Council Discussion**

**Steve Nowicki**: Where does an undergraduate go to find evaluation of courses?

**Matt Serra**: When they go to ACES for scheduling, they will pick out a course to get information: what requirements they must fulfill, what is the wait list, and so forth. Right above that will be a little blue link that says course evaluation. They just need to click on that.

**David Malone (Education)**: Can you say something about the time table for perhaps revisiting the course evaluation form to change it to cover some of the things we are trying to assess?

**Matt Serra**: In a discussion that Lee and George and I had about a month ago, I was charged with getting the course evaluation system online. Lee has a great vision. His vision is that we have a form where the

faculty can see the standard set of questions and can add in the specific questions for that course. We will be able to summarize across those for them. This is probably a year and one half or two years away. But it is going to be a much more valuable and a much more specific and useful set of data for the individual faculty member.

**David Malone:** That might allow us to use some of the available text analysis systems to make better use of comments that are entered online.

**Matt Serra:** nVivo is available to us. nVivo is a qualitative analysis software package we are starting to use now. It will do exactly that.

**Susan Rodger (Computer Science):** When applying for an NSF grant, they are asking us to use an outside evaluator. If I use you as an evaluator, I will get dinged for that on my reviews.

**Matt Serra:** Some do and some do not. None of the ones that we have submitted to NSF or NIH have had that issue. You can go either way. I think when they see the completeness of the evaluation plan they will be satisfied. But you may want to go with an outside evaluation to maximize your opportunities. I am happy to look at whatever they say.

**Lee Baker:** The other thing that is important in terms of assessment is that the Office of Assessment has very real time action. One of our most effective reports that you provide is the early alert specifically for our tier one athletes. We really monitor each one and we notify people right away if we see a problem. We close the loop within one semester. We have significantly improved the academic success not only of our athletes but all of our students that have a tough midterm grade. It is a great partnership. There are many of these examples where it is not just a report sitting on a server but we absolutely use it as leverage to enhance the quality of education for our students.

## Assessment: Faculty Role Academic Assessment Committee



Lee Baker  
Dean of Academic Affairs

One of the things I wanted to talk about today, as you have probably gotten the impression, is that assessment is with us.... We are at a point now where

we need to elicit really smart faculty to think through what the best approach for assessment is in the 21st century. I have a hunch that of the 600 plus faculty members that we have, there are some excellent people who could come together to form a committee to help inform us. I also have the understanding that the assessment that is being done today feels a little 20th century to me. I think there is a way of breaking it apart and putting it back together to really enable better teaching, learning, and research.

I think we would need (and it would be incumbent upon us) to have a standing faculty committee associated with the Arts and Sciences Council to provide that function not unlike curriculum or student-faculty interaction or faculty research. These are really important committees that do a lot of work to help inform us about their ideas. This is my humble recommendation to this body. I think we should begin to think it through (not that we like adding one more committee) to have this as an integral part of faculty governance. To have great ideas coming from the faculty to inform our decisions is a real win-win.

And so I will leave this up to Ruth but I am here to help you and I feel we have people who will be willing to serve. But it is incumbent on us as a community to make sure that the faculty have a voice in the shape and the implementation of the assessment plans as we go forward.

### Council Discussion

**Ron Grunwald:** Could you flesh that out a little bit and give us two or three examples of charges or items that would be on the table for this committee?

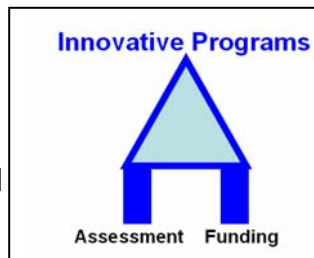
**Lee Baker:** We have talked about course evaluations. Course evaluations are a little bit static right now. We have course proposals; we have content management; we have teaching evaluation and all the important advising reports that students get. There could be a way to put assessment in the middle of that and stitch together an advising report that would show students the need when they are signing up for courses. It would be sort of a real time thing. To have course proposals with learning outcomes feeding into course evaluations that feed into the advising report. You've done learning outcomes and there ought to be a way of making a comprehensive overhaul on all of these important but right now siloed pieces of information. If we could put all of that into an assessment plan that is

comprehensive, it could be really effective. The assessment would be part of course proposals, course evaluation, advising reports, and the like. We need a faculty committee to be able to think through the implementation of that. There is a way of linking all of these I believe.

## Innovative Programs: Today



Ruth Day  
Chair,  
A&S Council



We used to focus primarily on the innovative programs themselves – what they are about, how they use new approaches, what new insights they provide. Today we also have to consider their support structure – what enables them to exist and go forward in the current climate.

In this meeting we have focused on one important part of this support structure – assessment. But without sufficient funding, many new innovative programs cannot be developed and implemented, and some existing ones could collapse.

In order to think about the merits of innovative programs themselves, their funding, and their assessment all at once can be challenging. This matrix shows some of the complexities involved:

Programs	Goals	# Students	Funding			Assessment
			Past	Now	Future	
<b>FOCUS</b>						
Certificates						
--						
--						
<b>Program II</b>						
Winter Forum						
Service Learning						
(etc)						
<b>In development</b>						
Global Semester Abroad						
Online Summer Course						
Duke Immerse						
(etc.)						

We have many innovative programs already in place (such as certificates and FOCUS) and others are in development. Given the budget situation, how do we decide which ones to protect most vigorously? We cannot just consider their goals – however laudable

as they may be.

Today, we must also consider the number of students in these programs and their funding (past, present, and future). It would be easy to calculate the cost per student and use this metric to make whatever “hard decisions” are needed. However we also need a benefit metric – what unmet needs does the program provide, how well does it work, how does it affect students’ specific and general educational experience?

This is where assessment comes in – when done in thoughtful ways, it can provide the components of an overall benefit metric, to be compared to a cost metric. Using both metrics for each program, hopefully the “hard decisions” will also be good ones.

There is a lot to consider in thinking about the future of innovative programs. Faculty can play a vital role in this process. You have heard many ideas about this today, from the A&S Solutions Poll to the Academic Assessment Committee. Please help – participate in these initiatives, inform your faculty colleagues and ask them to participate, and help develop strategies for dealing with innovative programs in tough times.

### Council Discussion

**David Malone:** I like the word innovative but there is something about that word that kind of marginalizes these programs as being exciting sidebars to the main curriculum. Remember when you had that assessment diagram. That little house needs a third leg -- something like institutional commitment. I think that, for these kinds of programs to be successful and sustainable, they have to be viewed as things that are central to the mission of the University. I think they are. I think that in many ways if we refer to them as innovative programs it may be in the minds of students as things that are not integrated. Instead of innovative, they should be more integrated programs.

**Ruth Day:** Any course that you teach can be very innovative. Another name for this is nontraditional. If you call it nontraditional, it makes all those others sound just traditional. So yes, new language would be useful.

**George McLendon:** I think David is also making a good point. It is not explicit but let me try to make it explicit. We have every dollar in the budget implemented doing something, including dollars that we don't even have. So as we imagine creating new programs, regardless of what you call them, if they are not currently in the budget, either you are

going to have to create new revenue sources associated with them or they are going to have to displace something. [*Dean McLendon gave some examples.*]

But it is going to be a much more informed process and a much better decision if there is a faculty voice which is why we want to have the Arts and Sciences Council play a critical role in this. It will also be important that there are student voices which is why we have partnership with DSG making sure we have student representatives on these committees.

**David Malone:** [*Emphasized the point that new innovations should be fully integrated into the curriculum.*]

**Bill Semans (Art, Art History & Visual Studies):**

Can we ask the students to tell how we might best improve the evaluation forms? A long term tracking idea might be to maintain email contact with graduates. That is something MIT does. You can track people and also that can lead to corporate long term giving as well.

**Additional Discussion**

[*The Council discussed the difficulty of making decisions about these issues and the importance of including input from major stakeholders.*]

[Close of Meeting](#)

Chair Ruth Day thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Biermann  
Executive Secretary