

Address to Arts & Sciences Council

September 8, 2005

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I am delighted to have this opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. Like other new arrivals last year, I feel very fortunate to have completed my freshman year as a “Dukie.” I have learned more than I thought possible, have made many wonderful new friends, and like other freshman, I have gained fifteen pounds!

Most of all, I have learned just how remarkable Duke is. I give one example: University communities nationwide have crafted responses to the ongoing tragedy created by hurricane Katrina. For example, my former institution contracted with a commercial provider to improve communication for students and staff with distant families affected by the storm. This was thoughtful and appropriate. However, Duke has set a higher bar. At Duke, we have opened our classrooms, our centers and labs, and our homes to students and scholars devastated by Katrina. This transcends the merely appropriate. It is, in my opinion, a magnificent expression of the heart of Duke. I am very proud to be part of such a community.

I believe this special spirit permeates our missions, and is a unique asset for our future. Today, I would like to discuss that future. I wish to outline for discussion a key activity for this academic year: crafting a strategic plan for Duke which will guide our differential investments over the next years. I believe such plans work best through faculty driven evolution. Therefore, our planning has begun, and continues, as faculty

driven efforts. Much thoughtful discussion occurred within departments, as you crafted and shared your plans over a five-year time range. You outlined key developing intellectual issues in your fields, how Duke could be a leader in such areas, and critically, how such leadership creates new learning opportunities for our students.

I note that such plans recognize the need to sustain foundational work in all our disciplines. What we asked you to identify is where the most remarkable new learning opportunities exist for Duke. Only then might resources be gathered to seize such opportunities.

Some departments provided thoughtful, even brilliant analyses. Others were, at least, on time. All are appreciated, and were read carefully and discussed at length by the Deans. We were particularly struck by how common themes arose organically across multiple units.

In this meta-analysis, it appears that roughly seven themes capture the dynamism of the collective faculty insights. In alphabetical order, the themes include

- ▶ Arts in Context
- ▶ Brain, Mind, and Behavior
- ▶ Global Health and Human Welfare
- ▶ Individual and Collective Ethical Behavior
- ▶ Integration Across Scale in the Sciences
- ▶ Transcultural Humanities
- ▶ Visual Culture

Many of you will construct thoughtful ways in which you and your departments can contribute to, and gain from, the elaboration of such themes. Given limited time, I will simply provide capsule comments for each.

Arts in Context

This theme simply recognizes that experiential arts at Duke benefit us all. Further, such benefits are amplified as one constructs an intellectual context through which the experience deepens. Obviously, there are many contributors and beneficiaries. Such commitment also reflects Duke's infrastructure investments in, for example, the new Nasher Museum of Art or the Arts Warehouse. Further such investments will follow, as our identified priority in Arts and Sciences is mirrored by a broader institutional commitment to the arts articulated by President Brodhead.

Brain, Mind, and Behavior

Brain, Mind, and Behavior again rose organically from much faculty input. Brain Science was a "no brainer." It has been predicted that the 21st Century will be the "century of the brain," and Duke is well positioned for leadership here. There exist remarkable opportunities across departments, and schools in this area, where we look to you for further guidance.

Global Health and Human Welfare

Global Health and Human Welfare is an area where Duke is already moving rapidly to consolidate a position of leadership. I note remarkable synergies among departments and schools, and the centrality of the humanities and social sciences in translating medical advances in ways that are culturally appropriate.

Individual and Collective Ethical Behavior

In this area, Individual and Collective Ethical Behavior, I was struck by how broadly ethical themes arose in departmental analyses. Duke has leading ethical scholars both within Arts & Sciences departments and across schools. Refinement of our approaches will be informed by the needs of our students in building ethical understanding.

Integration Across Scale in Science

Great progress was made in the 20th Century through reductive approaches. Going forward there is a growing sense that on a next frontier lies a reintegration of this knowledge. Integration Across Scale intensely creates partnering opportunities with the Nicholas School of Environmental and Earth Sciences, the School of Medicine, and the Pratt School of Engineering.

Transcultural Humanities

Transcultural Humanities builds on remarkable Duke strengths in interdisciplinary study, and how such studies are enriched by including diverse cultural traditions across regions and time. This theme is a passion of Dean Davis, and will bring great opportunities for faculty and student development.

Visual Culture

Finally, the “Visual Culture” initiative reflects changing paradigms for how our students (and many faculty) gather, exchange, and interpret information wherein non-textual sources have becoming increasingly important.

One can readily appreciate how such intellectual themes cut across and intersect many departments and programs. They should also cut across schools where such opportunities exist. Over the last academic year, we have begun to develop these ideas in dialog with department chairs, the natural faculty leaders for such initiatives. I hope that the Arts & Sciences Council, as the elected representatives of all our faculty, will provide a forum for this dialog, and continuing guidance as planning moves forward.

The next critical step will be to better define possible outcomes, particularly in how such themes might create new learning opportunities for the students we serve. We will be working with ECASC to create faculty committees on educational initiatives for each theme. Each committee will have one Dean serve ex officio to insure that the process provides maximum communication.

This is obviously designed as an iterative process. We can expect some approaches to succeed better than others, as we find the best path for Duke in the planning process. I am mindful of Samuel Beckett's advice "Go on and fail. Go on. Only next time, try and fail better."

Obviously, given our commitment to sustained excellence in the foundational work of the disciplines, successful new initiatives will require new resources. Let me suggest how such resources might flow.

First, I should note that, for 2005-2006 Arts & Sciences faces a structural deficit. This reflects multiple issues, but none is more pressing than our institutional commitment to need-blind financial aid. We have a

deeply shared value that any Duke student's ability to thrive at Duke should not be curtailed by family finances. To meet our commitments to need-blind admissions, we invested over \$30M of (unrestricted) Arts & Sciences income in financial aid. Thus, our commitment to educational opportunity enriched by economic diversity currently competes with our commitments to educational opportunities associated with new initiatives.

The President, Provost, and I all agree that such competition is problematic, and without new resources, could become unsustainable. Therefore, we have begun a major initiative aimed at improving Duke's position in financial aid. We have set an ambitious but appropriate goal of raising at least \$200M in newly endowed financial aid. We have identified initial donors who share this passion, and we are confident of meeting this goal. This initiative will help insure Duke's moral commitments for the future, enhance the opportunities for future students, and, create new investment opportunities by freeing non-endowed funds currently committed to aid.

Looking further, our planning within Arts & Sciences is part of a broad University-wide planning activity. Duke's approach to planning is unusual. The Provost actually sets aside funds to enable plans to occur! Such funds are always limited, and competitive. Arts & Sciences will flourish in this competition to the extent faculty define our initiatives and provide leadership for them. With dynamic faculty leaders, we should compete well for \$100 M in the broad strategic plan.

Such funds will be amplified by independent Arts & Sciences fundraising, especially for newly endowed chairs, both to identify additional

recruits who will be intellectual leaders, and to recognize more of our existing faculty leaders. I look forward to working closely with many faculty leaders and especially those here today representing your departments as members of the Arts & Sciences Council.

Thank you, and I will be happy to entertain questions.

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