Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Arts & Sciences Council

Thursday, January 10, 2019

Call to Order (3:30 pm)

José María Rodríguez García (Chair) welcomed everyone to the first Council meeting of the semester. After summarizing the agenda for the day, he turned to the approval of the December minutes. There being no objections or amendments, the minutes were approved with one abstention.

Rodríguez García then turned to the first item on the agenda. He welcomed the two guests representing the DUSON Curriculum Bridge Proposal and invited them to summarize their presentation from the previous meeting of Council and to entertain any questions.

School of Nursing Bridge Curriculum

Brigit Carter (Nursing Associate Dean for Diversity & Inclusion) said they put together a few slides to help answer any questions from the last meeting.

Alyssa Perz (Trinity Academic Dean and Health Professions Advisor) said the proposal is for a 4+1 program that Duke already has in Global Health, the Nicholas School of the Environment, and maybe the Pratt School of Engineering. In this particular program, Trinity students pursue a BS or BA during their first four years. During that time, they take four pre-requisites for the Nursing School, then in their senior year, they will also take four Nursing classes that will count toward the 34 credits for their Trinity degree. In the +1 year, they will continue on at the Nursing School and complete a second Bachelor of Science degree, which will be an Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN). At the end of that year, they will be qualified to pursue licensure to become a registered nurse. The main difference between this and other 4+1 programs is that students earn a second undergraduate degree, not a master’s degree, in the +1 year.

Chris Walter (Physics) wanted clarity on what Council would be voting.

Perz said they’re asking Council to approve a Bridge Program consisting of four very specific course credits (N389, N392, N388, and N393) that cannot be substituted by any other and only seniors who’re pre-approved to pursue a second undergraduate degree in Nursing may take, but which will count toward
the 34 credits needed to graduate with a Trinity degree. These are electives only, so students would have
to plan their other coursework to meet their major and Trinity requirements. These courses are only
approved for students who are part of DUSON Bridge, and since that program is limited to five students
per year, they don’t expect this to be a large scope. She reminded Council that Trinity undergraduates can
already count up to six course credits from graduate and professional schools toward the 34 credits
needed for graduation, so this isn’t asking for anything exceptional in that regard. She added that
normally students have to go through a permission process with the instructor, the DUS, the academic
dean and someone else. So if Council doesn’t approve this Curriculum Bridge, that’s still a pathway that
students can follow to get the advantages of the program.

Carter said that even with Council approval, students will still have to have go through an approval
process. They will have to be part of the Bridge Program and they will have to have permission to take
the courses.

Walter asked if Trinity students who haven’t been accepted into the DUSON Accelerated B.S. can take
courses that are named in the Curriculum Bridge proposal.

Carter said no.

Perz said that one of the historical limitations for Trinity students taking non-Arts & Sciences courses in
Duke’s professional schools is the question of who gets the tuition revenue. Historically, the Nursing
School hasn’t allowed Trinity students to take any courses. But with this Curriculum Bridge program,
Nursing has agreed to absorb the cost and let Trinity keep all the tuition revenue generated until the
student effectively graduates from the College of Arts & Sciences.

Jonathan Bagg (Music) asked if the program is limited to five students per year who will take four
courses in their senior year at Trinity.

Carter said yes.

Ron Grunwald (Biology) asked if the four pre-requisites are already in the undergraduate catalog.

Carter said yes.

Grunwald said, to Walter’s point, that it’s not the case that this body approves the inclusion of those
courses to be taken by undergraduates. That decision is made by the Courses Committee. So he would
like to make a pitch that the decision be to allow the Courses Committee to decide whether the Nursing
courses should be included in the undergraduate catalog. There’s already a precedent for that, with
multiple School of Medicine courses appearing in the catalog. Once approved as courses that can be
taken by undergraduates, there’s no need for a special approval process. He took issue with the current
policy of allowing six courses to be taken that are not in the undergraduate catalog. They’re exceptional
so they require additional hoops of approval, and at some point someone might say no. With this
program, a student is admitted to a program that requires courses that they don’t have permission to take.
The way to create that permission is to add the courses to the undergraduate catalog.

Perz asked this – if they chose that route, would it imply that any student could take the Nursing courses?
It seems that would make the Nursing School vulnerable.

Grunwald said any student could take course if they meet the pre-requisite and that could be consent
required. In this case, only students who’re accepted in the program would be allowed to take the course.
We already have that mechanism in place and it’s used all the time. He went on to say that his concern is
that these courses be approved as part of our curriculum and the exception here is that we aren’t blanket
approving four courses for students. If they’re approved and added into the catalog, then Nursing is responsible for course permissions.

Rodríguez García asked if Grunwald’s reservations were mainly procedural and administrative, or if there’re any intellectual reservations as well.

Grunwald said yes. Unlike the other 4+1 graduate and professional courses that require decanal approval, these are undergraduate courses in a professional program. He didn’t know whether they should be approved for the undergraduate curriculum or not. He thought it was the job of the Courses Committee to vet and determine whether the courses are appropriate. He would prefer to use the current system in which the courses would be vetted by the Courses Committee and added to the undergraduate catalog with permission-only status.

Rodríguez García said that he’s not certain that the approval of a structured program, rather than individual courses, which is what we have in the proposal, should necessarily have to go through the Courses Committee, or if this committee would look at the Bridge program proposal from as many perspectives as the Council may. As Trinity’s main faculty governance body, we’re considering the full rationale and ecosystem for the Curriculum Bridge Program, one reassuring aspect being that it helps a diminutive cohort of five students financially, another being that it creates an additional, easy-to-travel career path for liberal arts students in the College of Arts & Sciences. No A&S subcommittee is currently concerned with these issues, the closest fit would perhaps be the Curriculum Committee. He reminded everyone that Council is the committee of committees, and therefore always the main deliberative body with not restrictions to its purview and with the Courses Committee being one of the many subcommittees to which we delegate some of our functions and through which we channel some of our day-to-day operations. On occasion we may take on the same role as one of the smaller subcommittees we charge and supervise. Doing this all the time would be redundant and certainly unrealistic because we only meet once a month for ninety minutes. None of this means that we have to proceed one way or the other all the time. So, if there’s a financial and administrative understanding for a proposal between the two schools, discussion of the proposal may hinge for Council more on its intellectual merits and (in this particular case) on its inclusiveness because it creates student opportunities not previously available, which is what we mostly discuss at the higher level of faculty governance in Trinity. He also clarified that ECASC’s first step in this deliberation and approval process was to run the proposal by the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, to find out if his committee would identify procedural or financial complications before we could all discuss the proposal’s merits as well as the financial advantages accrued to Arts & Sciences students.

Grunwald said that if these are great courses for the Trinity curriculum, he wants to be supportive. He said the role of the Courses Committee is to be mindful of defending the academic standards of Trinity College. If they choose not to take into concern other things, like financial concerns, that’s their prerogative. He’s concerned that this may become a vote to circumvent the Courses Committee.

Perz said she talked with Jesse Summers, the academic dean representing the Dean’s Office on this committee. When she asked him to have the Courses Committee vet the courses, his response was that the committee’s purview was largely considering and approving codes, rather than the actual courses per se.

Carol Apollonio (Slavic & Eurasian Studies) said she served on the Courses Committee for three years and agreed with Summers’s statement.
Grunwald said there needs to be some vetting process for courses outside A&S. What happens with military courses?

Apollonio said those types of courses get no codes so it will be unlikely students will be seeking out courses with no codes. Those classes are electives, also.

Carter said that when considering course integrity, it’s helpful to know that the Nursing curriculum is vetted to a high degree. The Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) is one of the only programs in the school to have a curriculum committee that looks at courses each semester. They are also approved by the NC Board of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges in Nursing and they are accredited by the Committee on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). If a portion of a course changes, it has to go back through the whole process just described.

Rodríguez García asked if Council members thought the proposal needed to go to the Courses Committee before coming back here for approval. He encouraged everyone to express their opinion as they also provide feedback on the proposal and made additional questions. These opinions from a cross/section of Council reps should provide clarity on the best way to proceed today. He also reiterated that he forwarded the initial version of the Bridge proposal to the Chair of the Curriculum Committee for vetting. Per our Bylaws, that committee concerns itself with reviewing “new program proposals.”

Randy Matory (Cultural Anthropology) said he was very glad the Nursing representatives were here because dialogue between schools is so important. He shares some reservations regarding what constitutes a valid liberal arts program and the concern about credential creep. More importantly, he would like them to continue with their presentation as that might alleviate some concerns.

Perz said she wanted to highlight the financial advantage to Trinity students. They are able to complete some of the courses while undergraduates and thus have financial assistance through federal aid. Anecdotally, she has seen that students who are first generation and low income are particularly drawn to Nursing because they can move up in the nursing ranks and have a fulfilling medical career without the additional expense that medical school entails. Another bonus to offer a formal program versus just offering individual courses for students to take is that it can be structured as a program and allows for advising opportunities. Duke’s Nursing School is number one in the country and this program will facilitate that up to five Trinity students per year may be able to take advantage of that.

The other thing to keep in mind is that Duke will always have a lot of pre-health students, the majority of which are pre-medical. Those students are looking at 12-16 of their courses committed to medical school pre-requisites. The Nursing program reduced that pre-requisite number greatly, and even with the four Nursing courses, students have more time to explore widely within their liberal arts degree in Trinity. She then referred to a table showing historically the majors of Trinity students who go on to the Duke Nursing School. At the major level, there’s good breadth in majors, including a diversity of humanities and social science programs and departments.

Carter said part of the reason she became interested in creating this program is because Trinity students were requesting a program. These students heard about how phenomenal the Nursing School is and wanted to stay at Duke. She wanted to help them find a pathway that made sense for them, and that would help them with their costs, because our school is expensive. So this program is a way to keep them here and minimize the costs.

Sherryl Broverman (Biology) said there’s an equity in process issue since there’re different ways of handling non-Trinity courses. On the one hand, there’s a Courses Committee that approves courses for
the catalog. On the other hand, Trinity has a policy of allowing any undergraduate to take up to six graduate and professional courses with their dean’s approval but without Course Committee approval. She’s trying to square these two processes and wonders why other students can take up to six classes without the courses going through the Courses Committee but Nursing can’t. What is the best way to move forward, given that the two schools are supportive of the program?

Donna Kostyu (Trinity Associate Dean), who works with health professions advising, sat in on planning meetings for the program and can report that the program was carefully thought out and developed. It was designed to give a great opportunity to a small number of students. Her office just finished writing 350 letters for students applying to medical school. One reason that the acceptance rate is so high (83% of those applying for the first time) is because of all the opportunities at Duke, and those include the graduate and professional courses. Deans get requests to approve these courses frequently. These courses allow select students to build on their undergraduate career and do something special. She doesn’t think that the Bridge Program consisting of four Nursing courses should be put in the catalog when only five students per year can take them and when all four curses need to be taken together and in the same year. The better thing to do is have the Curriculum Committee say they’re okay with the Program proposal, since all four courses have already been approved by Nursing are to be approved in Trinity as an indivisible program.

Christina Williams (Psychology and Neuroscience) said this certainly appeared to be a great program but she was concerned about the titles of the courses and possible overlap with Trinity courses that a student would have already taken. A little overlap is fine, but a lot isn’t advisable. Should perhaps there be additional vetting by Trinity departments? She’s concerned about double counting.

Carter said that students would still have to take these courses regardless of whether they took other, similar courses because it’s a carefully structured program that they’re applying to even if it involves only four courses. The courses are part of a full curriculum that students need on their Nursing transcript in order to receive their degree and their nursing license.

Rodríguez García said these four pre-requisites are only taken by five students, so this affects a small group of students, and the students have to take all four courses in their last year in Trinity. The group is so small and the specifics of their student and pre-professional situation is also so localized that the overlapping issue might perhaps be seen as a lesser concern.

Carter said she isn’t concerned about overlap and actually thinks any overlap provides a great foundation for the students and any Trinity courses with similar topics feed into the Nursing courses.

Perz said they might be able to get the courses vetted and create anti-requisites, such as prohibiting students from taking this Nursing class and an advanced course in human development if the content overlaps too much. However, because students are brought into the program and receive advising so early in their Duke career, there’s no danger of them taking courses that really overlap.

John Supko (Music) said he had just returned from leave and wondered if ECASC had a discussion with the Curriculum Committee about this proposal? If so, what was the outcome?

Rodríguez García said ECASC did request that one its members and chair of the Curriculum Committee, Jeff Forbes, look before anyone else at the original proposal for initial vetting in keeping with the Council Bylaws. After that, ECASC members deliberated among themselves and came up with a sizeable list of clarification requests for submission to the Curriculum Bridge Committee members, who responded promptly. Next, ECASC had a substantial conversation with the Bridge Committee. For the
sake of transparency and due process, the Council Chair wrote a summary of that discussion and of ECASC’s deliberations, making it available on the Council’s Sakai site, as he wrote to the faculty in his monthly letter in preparation for the December meeting of Council. ECASC was persuaded by the fact that each year’s small cohort of five Curriculum Bridge students would enjoy and retain the same opportunities for intellectual exploration as any other Trinity students. They were also interested in the argument for mitigating student debt especially for those who wouldn’t be able to afford medical school. They also liked the fact that this would be a second degree in a school at Duke in addition to the undergraduate degree in Arts & Sciences, which would be indistinctly in the Humanities/Arts, the Social Sciences, or the Natural Sciences. Looking at all those factors, ECASC voted unanimously in favor of the proposal.

Chantal Reid (NSOE) said that all the 500- and 600-level NSOE courses are approved for the 4+1 program are in the undergraduate catalog so it would be easy to have the nursing courses go through the Courses Committee, appear in the Bulletin with the restriction of instructor consent and a description that says the class is specifically for the nursing bridge students.

Carter said she couldn’t speak for her colleagues as to whether that system would work for them. She would have to take the idea back to her school. She remained concerned that this would open those classes up to non-nursing students.

Reid said their bulletin descriptions are very clear that the courses are only for specific students.

Perz said this is the first time this pathway has been suggested, so they could certainly consider this option.

David Malone (Education) wanted to clarify if the Curriculum Bridge Program was for Trinity students only, not Pratt.

Carter confirmed.

Malone said his sense is that most in the room support this program and that the quality seems high. The spirit and intent of the program seem excellent. His only concerns are with the larger issue of pre-professionalism and the sense of setting a precedent. When he was chair of the Curriculum Committee, there was talk about an undergraduate degree in business or a 4+1 with Fuqua, and there was concern about how that would affect our desired student outcomes. He’s not concerned about the five students, but he thinks Council should be concerned about steps that we take that might impact other proposals coming to us and the possible precedents. He knew Pratt has a 4+1, but wondered if Arts & Sciences has any programs.

Perz said Global Health has one, as does Nicholas.

Malone asked if they operate in the same way as Nursing does.

Perz said yes, the courses count toward the undergraduate and master’s degrees.

Rodríguez García explained that this issue was taken up at ECASC. We asked a lot of questions because any proposal that hybridizes a degree like this does should receive lots of scrutiny. So he’s pleased with the depth and care with the proposal is being treated in Council today. ECASC thought this was a robust, cogent proposal and there were intellectual and administrative arguments in favor, plus the twofold financial argument that it will cost Trinity no money while helping a very small cohort of five students alleviate the pressure of college tuition debt.
Rodríguez García next asked if Council was ready for a vote.

Matory wanted to discuss this with his department.

Walter said that in the end, when looking at what it does for students, especially for low income, first generation students, he will vote for this. If everyone else feels this is a good idea, then he’s not sure they have to go to another committee to check boxes. So he’s ready to vote now.

Rodríguez García asked if there were a motion to vote. Malone moved to vote on the proposal, and Broverman seconded the motion.

The Curriculum Bridge was approved 20-3-1.

CSI Report

Rodríguez García then moved to the second item on the agenda, the continuation of discussion on the Committee on Classroom Space and Infrastructure report. Last week he made Council reps aware that a newly formatted report (with no substantive changes) had been posted on Sakai. He asked for any questions or comments since none were voiced at the December meeting. There being none once again, this is clearly a non-controversial report on which Council can vote by general consent according to Robert’s Rules of Order, meaning he will ask if there’re any objections to the report and if there’re none, the report is approved.

The report was approved by unanimous consent.

Program II

Rodríguez García then turned to the last item on the agenda, Program II. When he was elected chair of the A&S Council last spring, he visited and talked with every committee chair. He had a very fruitful conversation with Jonathan Shaw, a professor of biology and chair of this committee. He was struck by how little he had known until then about how Program II worked. He made a note to share this knowledge with faculty who hadn’t been involved with the program. Then at the end of 2018, at the last ECASC meeting, he asked ECASC members to report on their role as liaisons to the various A&S committees. Mike Munger, the ECASC liaison last fall, said it would be great for Program II Committee members to come to Council and explain their work. So, given that he himself had the same idea four months earlier and shared it with ECASC, Rodriguez García thought that today’s meeting provided a good opportunity for a faculty conversation. He explained to Council that our Bylaws don’t really say much about Program II, but that current committee chair, Jonathan Shaw, once defined a typical Program II course of study as a student’s multi-year exploration of an original “intellectual question” straddling various disciplines and that may not be addressed within the structure of a single major or even an interdepartmental major (IDM). He then welcomed our guest presenters on Program II.

Rachael Murphey-Brown (Academic Dean) has directed Program II for three years now. Ron Grunwald was the interim director for a year, and before Grunwald, Norman Keul directed the program for more than 10 years. Program II has been at Duke since 1968, and last year, with the generous financial support from the Provost, a 50-year celebration was held. So in preparation for that event, they evaluated peer institutions to determine how many had similar programs. They found that most did, but at a much smaller scale than what we have at Duke. Stanford has phased their Program II out, but Harvard and Yale still have theirs, albeit with about four students per year. Then, they sent a Qualtrics survey to the 425 program alumni, and received 105 replies. They asked questions about their favorite
thing about Program II and what could the program develop and work on. Those responses were
illustrative, with most of the praise for the advisers and most of the critique for the lack of a sense of
community. Then, they did some institutional research to look at the rate of engagement with Program II
students in other initiatives, such as FOCUS and Study Abroad. They found Program II students are
among the highest achieving at Duke and most participated in FOCUS, where they often identified their
research questions.

To celebrate the anniversary, they held an alumni symposium last March. Seven alumni were invited
back to participate in the event. They also hosted the 10th annual individualized majors program
conference. This was an international conference, with folks working on institutionalizing a Program II-
type program at their institutions.

The Program II students have since developed a majors union and they can now ask for money from Duke
Student Government for speakers and events. The majors union also offers peer-to-peer reviews of
applications before due date. These are also the people representing the program for Blue Devil Days,
information sessions, majors fairs, etc. Program II also now has graduation awards.

Murphey-Brown said that one thing she enjoys most about her job is advising potential Program II
students. These students are very excited about their academic trajectory at Duke. She also gets to learn
about their interests that lie outside of her own disciplinary interests. Her job is to tell all prospective
students that if they can create a pathway through a traditional major, then that is what they will do. Her
job is to say that the project needs to be exceptional and have a multidisciplinary theoretical question.
Only about half of the students who meet with her go on to apply because most students who can meet
with her can do what they want to do in traditional departments.

She also coaches students on how to approach faculty to ask them to be an advisor since it’s a big
commitment in terms of time and relationship for a faculty member.

Murphey-Brown then addressed the role of the DUS and the faculty adviser. The DUS’s role is key at
the beginning of the process, when they are asked to read the application and determine if the work can be
done in the department. We also want to know if the courses offered in the department that are part of the
student’s core course list are offered regularly.

She then asked Malone to speak to the role of the adviser.

Malone said the job is labor intensive and starts early with the student’s original idea. Many students
have a collection of courses but they haven’t connected them in an integrated theoretical way. But you
develop strong relationships with a few students who are some of our most engaged students. Many of
these students go on to apply for scholarships and fellowships such as the Rhodes Scholarships and
Marshall Fellowships. It does take time, though.

Murphey-Brown has a student who wants to construct a Program II around opera because that’s what
she loves and that’s what she wants to do. She had to talk with the student about the difference between a
liberal arts education and a pre-professional education and reiterate that Program II is not a pre-
professional route. Another student wanted to be a wind symphony conductor. That’s very specific and
that’s not what Program II is. So she spends a lot of time helping students develop a theoretical
grounding for their idea. She also has to make sure the work is not available through an interdepartmental
major (IDM).

Malone said the IDM has grown over recent years. How does that interface with Program II now in
terms of numbers and how students are authoring their pathways?
Murphey-Brown said that in the initial advising session, she refers students to the IDM option. She doesn’t try to convince students to do Program II if their idea is something that can be done elsewhere.

Rodríguez García then welcomed the second speaker.

Jon Shaw (Biology) said he has been involved in Program II committee for many years and he likes it a lot. Others have commented that Program II has some of the highest achieving or most driven students, though he thinks of it as Program II having some of the most creative students because they are not satisfied with a given major. There’s no pre-packaged area of study that satisfies them.

When the Program II committee reviews proposals, they look for certain qualities. First of all, the proposal has to be interdisciplinary and can’t be accomplished through another pathway. It has to be interdisciplinary but also more than the sum of its parts and that’s where the creative aspect comes into play. Students can’t just take a piece of several majors and decide they want to study something; they have to create a bigger, more organic pathway.

When looking at a proposal, committee members bring their own perspectives but they work with unity. Again, the first thing they look at is if it can be done some other way. Program II isn’t the default option. This is where the DUS’s letter is very important. The committee also looks for a conceptual development that validates the proposal: again, the projected individual pathway has to be more than the sum of its parts and its specific goals must be laid out clearly. The committee takes pride on setting high standards, and at the students’ request, now provides more feedback so that students are able better to refine their proposals. Now, in the end, the committee approves most proposals after several iterations involving sometimes minor tweaks and some other times major re-works.

Matory said he used to be skeptical about the program because he wondered about the point of scuttling 100 years of disciplinary refinement and not majoring in a major, and instead creating an ad hoc program. But last semester he had a Program II student in his class and was impressed with his self-drive and intellectual thought. So he has rethought his previous views. He then pointed out a small glitch in that sometimes after their three-year plan has been laid out, sometimes a new course comes on the books. This student wasn’t aware of Matory’s course until his senior year, when it wasn’t regularly scheduled. Matory was able to create an Independent Study for this particular student. His third point was that he was glad there was implicit reference to a legitimate Program II major from a liberal arts perspective. His concern is that in the Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines, it’s understood that a class should include a balance of theory, history, method, and cultivating a student’s self-expression as a questioning reader in the field. Other professional programs don’t seem to share that ethic.

Shaw said the comments reminded him about something he meant to say about the role of the adviser. He has learned that it’s difficult for students to find a willing adviser. He was surprised by this since he couldn’t imagine saying no, though he has never been asked to supervise a Program II. Shaw said that the advising is very uneven, with some being very active with proposal preparation from day one and others being rarely involved. He thought that the role of advisor should be strengthened or at the least made more uniform. He thinks many students don’t get feedback from an adviser when writing their proposals, and in his mind, writing the proposal is part of the educational experience and could be a much stronger experience with adviser input. So he encouraged faculty who get approached by students wanting to do a Program II to work with them from day one.

Murphey-Brown said they’re working on the idea of a half credit research methods course for Program II students working on a graduation with distinction project. Every Program II student has to do a senior capstone project, so this might add some structure and foundations for students.
Matory said he didn’t mean to fault advisors. He assumed that there would be the possibility of a computerized search of the course catalog so students can find courses mentioning a particular theme.

Shaw said that many students change their course proposals for various reasons, such as a refined idea, a course not being available and a new course on the books.

Bagg said his experience is that Program II students find Program II on their own. He was under the impression that administrators perhaps didn’t want faculty to advertise the program and asked if that was what we were doing today.

Murphey-Brown said that faculty have regularly been invited to speak to individual students about the program when it could be a good fit for them.

Rodríguez García said he invited today’s speakers to present to Council because ECASC was impressed with the complexity and depth of Program II as well as the dedication of the committee. Perhaps there will be some general takeaways from this conversation for the rest of the faculty as we’re beginning to rethink advising at both the undergraduate and graduate levels of instruction and as a Council we’re also still coming out of a discussion that led to a major tweak of the structure of interdepartmental majors (IDMs) last spring. He was also heartened that A&S faculty may soon become more aware of the exciting work done by this program through the minutes of today’s meeting.

Malone asked if they could share demographics about the students? Also, how is this program perceived by the Duke public? Is it on secure ground?

Murphey-Brown said that two thirds of the degrees are ABs, with a mix of divisional representation. The health of the program is very strong; the anniversary is a testament to that, and the Provost’s willingness to fund the conference spoke to the support for interdisciplinarity.

Mike Munger (Political Science), the final invited speaker, said he asked that Council have this conversation is because he is an advisor for Program II and his department’s DUS, and thought he could help faculty identify both the opportunities and the challenges inherent in giving publicity to the program. While the program is not trying to advertise, there’re some students who could benefit from this program but who aren’t aware of its existence or can’t find an advisor. There’re many who have no idea what Program II is, but think it sounds cool and waste a lot of the committee’s time by making an application. So if we could reduce both errors, that would be great. To that end, he created a slide so that students and faculty may have the basic information they need. He asked that Council members share information on this slide with their departments:

- Program II is NOT a major. It is an entire alternative course of study, more like a curriculum. Consequently the questions asked are much broader. It is both a major AND the distribution requirements, all in one.
- Do not let a student go forward with a proposal unless you (1) have thoroughly discussed the approach and questioned the choices the students wants to make, and (2) really believe that this is better for the student than the traditional framework.
- The reason to do Program II cannot just be that it is more flexible. The proposed course of study has to be impossible in Program I.
- The committee is serious about the evaluation process. There is a (rebuttable) presumption of “no” as the answer to every proposal. The burden of proof is on the student, and to some extent on the adviser. As adviser it is important for you to persuade students not just to write down some
general aspirations, with an eye toward “I’ll figure out later how it fits together.” The good proposals are clear and straightforward, and the suggested courses clearly fit.

The slide will be posted on Sakai for Council members to download.

Rodríguez García then opened the floor for a few final questions.

Walter said he is still not clear what Program II actually is. In looking at the website, some of the projects appear to be honors theses. If a student has a research question, does the student identify classes in the Bulletin or come up with new classes? Are students supposed to find an answer to their research questions?

Murphey-Brown said they don’t require students to find an answer. When we advise students initially, we tell them to find courses in the Bulletin that will help them answer to the best of their ability. Regarding what Program II is, it’s for students who have a burning intellectual question that wouldn’t be answerable entirely in Program I. She referred back to the opera student, whose project she initially rejected because it sounded too pre-professional. She later understood that this student wanted to develop the literary and social sciences aspects of opera in terms of public policy. There're all these components to her question that may not be reflected in the exact title of her proposal.

Walter asked how students find classes. What does the adviser do?

Murphey-Brown said students construct a list of 16-18 core courses that currently exist, hopefully with the help of their advisors.

Shaw emphasized that students are looking for broad questions, such as how social media can be used to impact public policy. Specific questions, such as how social media influenced this election, are more appropriate for a senior thesis.

Grunwald said the thesis is usually part of the Program II proposal, so the initial advisor guides students to a thesis advisor. Regarding the questions about courses, Program II students, perhaps more often than others, take advantage of exceptional opportunities to go outside the standard catalog offerings. They will enroll in inter-institutional courses and graduate and professional courses.

As time had run out, Rodríguez García thanked the committee and adjourned the meeting.