Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Arts & Sciences Council

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Call to Order

Anita Layton (A&S Council Chair): Welcome to the first meeting of the Arts & Sciences Council for the year. I am so happy to see you. I am Anita Layton. I’m a professor of Mathematics and Biomedical Engineering and I am your Council chair. But that’s enough about me. I want to start by introducing ECASC instead, our Executive Committee of the Arts & Sciences Council. This is a group of very hard-working people who put a lot of work into producing the meeting agenda and many other things that you don’t see, so let me introduce them. The old guards are: Sherryl Broverman, Biology; Ara Wilson, Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies; John Supko, Music; and Carol Apollonio, Slavics. We have two new members: Reeve Huston, History, and Jeff Forbes, Computer Science. I look forward to working with them this year.

I hope I did not give you the impression that ECASC and I do most of the work of this Council. Oh no we don’t. We have a number of hardworking committees. Here are a few of the active standing committees.

Our Courses committee approves new courses and codes. They work so hard. Seriously, how many of you would agree to serve on a committee that meets 1.5 hour every week? Really. Raise your hand, please. I want to see who these people are so next time I need to fill a committee I know who to ask. Hats off to those who are on this committee, who served on this committee, and to its new chair, Susan Wynn, from Education.

Curriculum committee. They review certificates and approve any new majors or minors. Its new chair Jeff Forbes is simply amazing. He is already in ECASC, but when I asked him to chair Curriculum, you know what he said? He said yes. Didn’t even ask me to buy him a beer. Jeff is awesome, and I thank you and your committee hugely.

Every spring the Faculty Research Committee reviews faculty proposals and gives out funds to support research. This committee is chaired by Rich Kay, now in his third year as chair, after serving as one of the committee members as I recall. Thank you.

The Global Ed committee helps regulate the study abroad program, which as you know many of our students participate in. And I thank its chair Ken Rogerson, Amanda Kelso and its members for making things happen. We have an item concerning this committee so we will return to it later.

Program II gives students flexibility and challenges them to design their own individualized program of study. That is made possible by the Program II committee, its chair Jon Shaw from Biology and its members.
Office Education committee. These folks know exactly what they are doing, they do what they need to do, I never have to worry about a thing. Big thanks to its chair Victor Strandberg.

I would be remiss not to thank the outgoing chairs of the Courses committee and the Curriculum committee: Paul Manos and David Malone. I know David can’t make it here today, but is Paul here? David, Paul, the Council thanks you HUGELY for your service, for all the many, many hours you put in to make sure that things run smoothly for us, for our students, and for A&S.

While we are in the spirit of gratitude. I want to say how thankful I am for the attempts that we have made at a curriculum revision for the past three years. Everyone who spoke up. I am thankful to the committee, I am thankful to all of you who spoke passionately for or against the Blue Print. That is a lot of people to thank, so instead of taking forever here, I will just name those whom I do not want to thank.

As many of you know, I was a Duke undergraduate. When I came here so many years ago, I wanted to do Physics. And I thought Philosophy was cool. Turned out physics was a piece of cake. But do you remember what happened to my Philosophy grade? B. I got a B. If you remember nothing from this year’s Council meetings, you would remember that your Chair got a B on her Duke transcript. So I am not thankful to my Philosophy professor for that B---I don’t know who that was, I am sure that wasn’t one of our current wonderful Philosophy faculty. That is the one person I would not thank. I am thankful to everybody else. I am thankful to all of you who stood up and spoke passionately about your vision for our undergraduate curriculum. And I am thankful to Suzanne and her committee who worked so very hard for us for three whole years. I have learned so much from each and every one of you. And I am very optimistic about moving forward. More about the curriculum later.

Enough with the preamble and let’s get some work done. The March minutes from last spring have not been approved so we will start there. Can someone give me a motion? Second? All those in favor say Aye? All those opposed? Abstentions? Agreement. Wonderful. That is so going to set the tone for this year.

Alright, what’s next? Ah. When half of the Allen Building show up to our Council meeting, we know who they’re here for. I’ll give you a hint: it is not me. We are really excited to have Dean Ashby here to speak to us.

Dean’s Address

Valerie Ashby (Dean): I am delighted to once again open the Arts & Sciences Council with my annual dean’s update. I really love the start of the school year with its energy and anticipation. We have brought on board an impressive array of new faculty. We have a little over 1700 outstanding first year students who were selected from a pool of over 35,000. And, I was happy yesterday to start what I hope will be a new A&S tradition -- the welcome back reception for Trinity College faculty – at which I was able to thank everyone for what they will do in the coming year.

So let me begin by turning to our mission and goals for this year. As you are aware, our mission is to advance knowledge through research and to deliver a world-class liberal arts education in a leading research environment. To achieve those ambitions, we have framed three common goals:

- Advance excellence in research, teaching, and service
- Elevate leadership and mentoring among all faculty tanks
• Foster diversity as a basis for new ideas and creativity

As I have repeatedly emphasized, these three goals are interrelated. Taken together, they provide a framework for advancing Trinity College of Arts & Sciences to the next level of distinction.

To provide a context, let me point out the obvious: Trinity College is nationally and internationally recognized as a vibrant community of scholars engaged in research, teaching, and service. Over the past two decades, we have developed a distinctive identity as a university by leveraging the talents of our faculty, integrating research and education, and fostering connections – connections within and between disciplines, connections between faculty and students, and connections across the university and the globe. But, as we look to the next five years, we must focus clearly and deliberately on how we might strategically and uniquely become even greater. We are committed to keeping our excellent humanities departments and programs strong in the years to come and cultivating Duke’s signature brand of interdisciplinarity in our undergraduate and graduate programs. We have made great strides in increasing the visibility and messaging of the Humanities and thinking about pathways and sequencing for the undergraduate experiences. We are building the Social Sciences as we work to identify common thematic areas that enhance collaborations and build upon areas of deep strength in that division. Perhaps most critically, we must invest in the Sciences which have not been developed in the same way as the other two divisions because of their relatively large start-up costs, laboratories, space, and specialized instrumentation.

To achieve the next level of distinction, we must start with the faculty, the heart of the University. We seek to increase the distinguished profiles of our faculty as well as departments’ national and international reputations. To do so, we are recruiting and retaining distinguished faculty and “game changers” who will advance departmental rankings. We are making strategic hires of high profile faculty in well-defined areas, partnering with departments and schools, and challenging departments to think strategically about where they want to invest. We are also nurturing and supporting our current faculty so that they serve as scholars and leaders of our academic enterprise.

Over the past two years, we brought to Duke faculty whom we believe will be transformative. These faculty were selected because they aligned with our values of research, teaching, and service. When asked why they chose Duke during the interview process, these faculty responded that they wanted to contribute to Duke and to collaborate with world-class colleagues in this research environment.

Not only do we foster excellence in research by recruiting dynamic new faculty but by promoting our current outstanding faculty and making their work more visible and valuable. For example, last year, we co-hosted a Humanities and Interpretative Social Sciences book celebration with the Franklin Humanities Institute, which highlighted the publications of Duke authors. This past week, we celebrated Michael Tomasello, the James F. Bonk Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, for his induction into the 2017 National Academy of Sciences.

We seek to provide a world class education for all our students that is distinctively “Duke” – that is, an education that engages students and faculty in intellectual partnerships, focuses on
important questions, and takes advantage of the university’s rich resources both inside and outside the classroom. We strongly believe that the greatest advantage of a research university is the ability to connect undergraduate education to our outstanding research faculty and to the processes of inquiry and discovery. We urge students to build relationships with faculty from their very first days at Duke; indeed, a relationship with a faculty member is the greatest indicator of success for a college career. We take pride that more than half of our Trinity students work with a faculty member through mentored research and one-quarter pursue graduation with distinction by writing a senior thesis.

To take fullest advantage of these relationships, faculty and students alike must realize that they bring different backgrounds, histories, and previous experiences into the classroom. In recognition of this fact, in 2015 the Office of the Provost and Trinity College launched a Teaching for Equity Fellowship Program, open to faculty of all ranks. This year-long experience provides tools for addressing issues around identity, race and racism in our classrooms. Developed by the Duke Human Rights Center in the Franklin Humanities Institute, the workshops directly address issues raised by students—from all backgrounds—who report feeling at times isolated and marginalized in class. Over the course of the year, faculty fellows become attuned to implicit assumptions about values, standards, and cultural norms attached to racial and other identities. And they gain specific skills and strategies to create a classroom culture that benefits all our students. The program has been so successful that program participants continue to meet, and it has been expanded in each of the subsequent years.

As you know, we have been engaged for the past several years in discussions about Duke’s undergraduate liberal arts curriculum. Those conversations are ongoing and will be continued with faculty, chairs, the ECASC, and the A&S Council in the coming year. It is clear from those discussions, that several key features have been identified as important. One is that we need to pay more attention to our gateway courses and focus more clearly on the first two years. Similarly, we will to look at enhancing excellence in the major and opportunities for students to pursue “signature work.” We also are thinking how best to map curricular and co-curricular pathways into a meaningful and coherent educational experience. We know that teaching is best when it is active and student-centered, and we have partnered with the Center for Instructional Technology to provide support and faculty training opportunities.

Faculty, students, and staff are called to commit themselves to the making the community better and stronger through service. For faculty, that means making a commitment to the entirety of scholarship: teaching, research, and service. For students, that means engaging robustly and respectfully with faculty and fellow students. For staff, that means working collectively and collaboratively as a part of a team for the greater good.

Excellence is integrally related the values of service, and we have striven to set clear expectations for service at each stage of faculty careers. Teaching and service are both part of the fullness of being a faculty member, and we seek to emphasize constantly the privilege of, and the responsibility for, contributing to the greater University.

Cultivating and nurturing talent is one of the best investments we can make for a thriving college. We must mentor faculty from their first days on campus so that they understand the
value of excellence in research, teaching, and service. We must identify faculty and staff who have the potential for leadership, provide appropriate skills and tools needed for success, and nurture those in leadership to be intellectual ground breakers and examples for the next generation of scholars. Such professional development has both short- and long-term consequences for the health and continuing advancement of the school and our departments. In addition, it provides an effective form of preemptive retention to keep our best talent at Duke, particularly for those offered attractive opportunities elsewhere. Leadership and mentoring promulgate a strong culture of service back to the University and emphasize faculty are valued for their contributions to the Duke community.

To advance excellence in leadership, we have placed special emphasis on recruiting and retaining chairs who can effectively develop and manage departments, and we have supported them through an orientation for new chairs, a chairs’ discussions group, and ongoing development opportunities through workshops and divisional meetings. We have also provided opportunities for faculty to develop to their full potential, whether that be through orientation for new faculty, or group meetings with assistant professors, associate professors, or, in the coming year, professors of the practice. We have provided development funds for all faculty, and this upcoming spring, we plan to launch a Trinity leadership program for a group of faculty selected for their leadership potential.

We are emphasizing talent development at all stages of faculty careers, and consistent mentoring is key to faculty – or any other type of – success. Mentorship is all about creating a caring, two-way relationship and setting high expectations. Whether it focuses on disciplinary assumptions, institutional navigation, professional networks, or work-life balance, mentoring facilitates expertise, connections, and success. It gives faculty the tools and insight to achieve to their full potential. It also supports the recruitment and retention of the very best faculty. That, in turn, enables the development of a sense of pride and belonging. I have asked each department to develop a mentoring plan and a mentoring team for each of its junior faculty, and I am looking forward to working with the new Vice President for Faculty Advancement, Abbas Benmamoun, on all aspects of faculty mentoring and development.

Trinity College of Arts & Sciences has clearly articulated and is exemplifying its deep commitment to diversity as a central tenet for new ideas and creativity. To be a truly educated person, one must embrace and practice an appreciation for different disciplines, thought processes, modes of expression, backgrounds, and histories – in other words, engagement with the full range of knowledge and human experiences. Indeed, this is the core of the liberal arts education. Complex issues belie simple solutions, and diversity provides a way of thinking and using different perspectives, not only to more effectively solve today’s problems but to imagine future possibilities in an unscripted world. And finally, we seek to develop not just an inclusive environment for faculty, students, and staff, but a collaborative community that promotes a “culture of belonging,” so that diverse perspectives not only provide value but are publicly recognized for the value they add.

We continually work to diversify Trinity College of Arts & Sciences faculty and to raise the visibility of the scholarship and accomplishments of our diverse faculty. This past year, for example, we launched a Celebration of 50 Years of Black Faculty Scholars in Duke’s Trinity
College of Arts & Sciences (http://trinity.duke.edu/50-years-black-faculty-celebration), featuring a dynamic lecture by Mark Anthony Neal, Professor of African & African American Studies, community events, and a series of videos on our Black faculty members’ experiences here at Duke to be rolled out this fall.

In addition, we continue to benefit from the work of the diversity advisory committees for faculty and staff as well as students as they deepen their strategies for success: “Education, Conversation, and Communication.” And finally, we have increased diversity among the academic deans, as well as our College administration and the Trinity Board of Visitors.

The three themes of excellence, leadership, and diversity may amount to what seems like a tall order. But they are actually all interrelated under the category of advancing Trinity College of Arts & Sciences to that next level of exceptional achievement. We can’t be excellent without distinguished faculty who advance the frontiers of knowledge through research. We can’t be excellent without shaping the next generation of graduate and undergraduate students so that they will have satisfying and productive lives. We can’t be excellent without the strong leadership and mentoring of visionary chairs or without faculty who are successful and satisfied at each stage of their academic careers. And finally, we can’t be excellent without incorporating and celebrating the full range of disciplines, histories, backgrounds, and life experiences. It is, after all, finally about increasing our trajectory of excellence and being the best college we can possibly be. This work is ongoing and never finished.

**Bylaws: Global Education Committee Membership**

**Layton:** Thank you Dean Ashby. Moving on. Our next business concerns the membership of the Global Ed Committee. The proposal is to add the Pratt Dean as an ex officio member. Since the membership of all our standing committees is specified in the Council bylaws, we need a 2/3rds majority vote to make this change. Currently the GE office serves all Duke undergraduates, Trinity and Pratt, and reports to the Provost’s office. So the thought here is to have the committee report to the Vice Provost and the deans of both undergraduate colleges, instead of just the Trinity deans. In fact my understanding is that this is already happening, and we are trying to revise the bylaws to reflect reality. Here is the relevant text with the changes highlighted.

Global Education Committee Charge
Committee on Global Education for Undergraduates: The Committee on Global Education for Undergraduates shall recommend to the Dean of Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, the Dean of Academic Affairs of Trinity College, The Dean of the Pratt School of Engineering, the DVPUE, and to the Council appropriate regulations for study away and foreign academic exchange programs. The Committee shall recommend guidelines for determining transfer credit to Duke for academic work done abroad. It shall approve academic changes (deletions, revisions, and additions) in study away programs that have been previously endorsed by Duke. It shall recommend new Duke-sponsored study away programs to the Dean of Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, the Dean of Academic Affairs of Trinity College, The Dean of the Pratt School of Engineering, and the DVPUE following a careful review of detailed proposals. It shall review periodically all Duke-sponsored and Duke-approved programs overseen by the Global Education Office for study away in terms of changing educational and academic needs at Duke.
Any questions? No? Can someone give me a motion? Second? All those in favor say Aye? All those opposed? Abstentions? Agreement again. We are on a roll. I am very happy!

**Absentee Voting**

**Layton:** Next, let’s discuss absentee voting. Right now, according to our bylaws, only Council members who are physically present at the meeting can vote. If they cannot attend, the alternates will attend and vote. If neither are present, then the department or program that they represent would not be able to vote. The bylaws right now do not allow for either absentee voting or proxy voting.

ECASC would like to propose changes in the bylaws that would allow absentee voting, so that if either the Council member or alternate cannot be here, then they can send their vote to Council staff so they can record the vote, but not the identities, and add it to the total tally.

There are upsides and downsides to this. One downside is that these votes would be cast without the Council member having participated in the discussion that take place at the day of the vote. If the proposal is handled over two meetings, then they may have attended the first meeting and participated in that discussion. If the proposal is voted on during the same meeting that it is introduced, then they definitely missed out on all discussion. So this is not ideal. I would much rather you all vote in person! The issue is whether having these absentee votes is better than having no vote at all.

So this is the proposal, with the relevant text from the bylaws with the proposed changes highlighted:

> **D. Voting Rights**
> Members of the Council shall serve in person and only members *(including duly appointed alternates, in the absence of the member)*, can vote. Each elected member of the Council shall have one vote on issues before the Council in its meetings. Ex-officio members have no voting rights in the Council. *Electronic or absentee votes are permitted: a member may send his or her vote to Council staff via email or letter before the meeting when a vote is scheduled. Council staff will record the votes (but not the identities, if the vote is by secret ballot) of qualified absentee ballots, and include these in the totals of the recorded vote. Proxy votes are not permitted. The Chair shall not vote except in the case of a tie vote.*

Any questions or comments?

**Alex Rosenberg (Philosophy):** Does this motion respond to a failure of attendance by representatives of departments? What is the motivation for this step?

**Layton:** I would say the motivation is to give the department or program the ability to vote if their Council member and alternate cannot attend. I don’t think our attendance is low. But there are programs that want to vote on an issue that’s really, really important to them, but on that particular day, both their Council member and alternate cannot show up and vote. So we can decide here as a Council whether absentee voting is preferable to not having a vote.

**Rosenberg:** So there are two obvious defects. One, that people will vote relatively uninformed about the discussion in A&S Council, and two, there will be less motivation to attend A&S Council because you can register a vote without attending. I think that for those two reasons this is not the way to go.
Mark Chaves (Sociology): I want to add a third defect which is sometimes there’s amendments. So we don’t even know what we’ll be voting on. In the description of the problem, I wonder if there’s another solution, which is, could it be that a program chair or department chair even at the very last minute appoint an alternate to the alternate?

Layton: You’re proposing a proxy vote.

Chaves: No, I’m proposing that if both the regular delegate and the alternate can’t come, that a third person be named as the rep who can come, and that can happen up to 15 minutes before the meeting, as an alternative way to address that problem.

Lee Baker (Cultural Anthropology): Another challenge is there’s a great finality or conclusion – I remember all the certificate programs we’ve done – and once the vote is cast, it’s done and people walk out the door feeling satisfied. If we had to wait until after the ballots came in, then … I think that’s an element of success for the Arts & Sciences Council. I would also propose being much more relaxed on who the alternate is. So the designated alternate is a person on the books, but at the last minute, I can knight you alternate for our program. Go, vote, listen, discern, be part of the process. That also creates more involvement and forces departments to get someone there.

John Supko (Music): I want to respond to Alex’s concerns about the two defects that he mentioned because I had similar concerns when we discussed it in ECASC. What we said was that substantial debate or discussion about matters to be voted upon are not on the same day as the vote. Someone voting with an absentee ballot might not necessarily be absent on the day the motion was being talked about. In other words, the vote would occur subsequent to the discussion.

Ruth Day (Psychology and Neuroscience): For historical purposes, in the past, we have had alternates replaced at the last minute by appointment of the chair or the representative or alternate, and that has taken place. Now perhaps it hasn’t in the last few years, but that has been acceptable for a long time.

Layton: So that was allowed in practice? It’s not allowed in the bylaws.

Day: Yes. It isn’t specified in the bylaws, but it’s not counter specified, either. And furthermore, when there were votes to change the bylaws, generally the materials would be distributed, read, discussed, and never voted on in that meeting. There was an opportunity in the next meeting to have further discussion after people have gone back to their department to get more discussion and then come back and vote.

Layton: We do that for more substantial issues.

Chris Walter (Physics): It seems to me there are a couple of issues. First of all, I just want to understand. You would have to vote before the meeting, right?

Layton: Yes.

Walter: So that would still be the case. My concern there is that, if you think about the votes that were consequential, there were often a lot of amendments and things that happened on the day of those vote, so you need to think about what to do in the case where someone’s already voted and things have changed. I think the other issue is if you want to do something where anonymous voting is allowed, I think with technology being the way it is, there’s no reason not to have some sort of mechanism set up rather than emails or letters so people could vote anonymously. Plus it would be unified that way. I think it could be done. All in all, I think I would also lean toward assigning proxies.
Layton: So since there are a number of questions and comments, how about we think about this and take it your departments and talk about it and ECASC will have further discussion and we’ll revisit in October. Anything else? No? Then we will move on to our last agenda item.

Curriculum Discussion

Now we come to the big question of the day---what is next for our curriculum? In the spring, a decision was made not to vote on the Blueprint. So the question is, where does that leave us because it is fair to say that few are completely happy with Curriculum 2000. So where do we go from here? ECASC had long discussions and we arrived at a relatively simple answer: we will go wherever you want us to go. Simple as that. OK, that’s really vague. Let me answer some specific questions:

Q: Are we gearing up for Curriculum Reform take #2?
The short answer is No, we are not.

The longer version of the answer is: There seems to be little value in waving a banner that says, “Hey, look here, we are doing a curriculum reform!” Because things like that tend to put pressure on us and an expectation of a timeline. So we see little upside in forcing us into a rigid time table that says we need to get this component of the curriculum revamped by the end of 2018. We are not going to do that. Instead, we are going to chill. We will have no pressure and no time table.

Of course that doesn’t mean we will sit on our hands and do nothing. That is not what we are going to do. In fact, I view curriculum revision as a continuous process. Complacency is not part of our nature. We are always thinking about ways to improve things, and I know you all have lots of ideas on how to improve something as important and as critical as our undergraduate education. So the Council welcomes your ideas. Have you ever shared a draft of some sort with your colleagues and made the mistake of saying please comment? Come to the meetings and speak up. I know you are not shy. Or grab your friend on ECASC and talk to them, or better yet, come have lunch with me! I will buy you sushi.

Q: OK, but what are we going to do?
Talk and talk. The Council and ECASC will listen to you. Whatever the Council eventually decides to do will be faculty driven. And we will seek consensus in multiple dimensions, as in anything we do will be supported not only by the majority of the faculty, but it should also by all relevant units, so small programs would not be neglected. To identify consensus and figure out what direction you want to go is, ECASC propose conducting a faculty-wide survey – a survey, not a poll – so we can ask everyone about their thoughts on aspects of the curriculum. What do they think of the first-year program, advising, etc., etc. This will be followed by a careful qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data, with the results made available to you all with full transparency. We recognized that we’ve already had three year’s worth of discussion, so perhaps some things can be learned from the minutes from Council meetings and such. There might be value in having additional town hall discussions. If you all think that’s a good thing to do, I would like your opinion on what format would be most effective and who should host those meetings?

Finally, there is the question of whether we need to better understand the current landscape of our curriculum. For example, do you know which code is satisfied by the largest number of courses? I have no idea and I don’t know how many students take those courses. So maybe there’s an argument on better understanding the system before we try to fix that system.

So, to recap, this is ECASC’s promise to you: we will actively solicit your opinions about the curriculum and we promise to listen to you. We will identify consensus. Whatever we do, we will proceed carefully and deliberately. And I promise not to pressure you or to rush you.
And you can hold me personally responsible for these promises for the next 8 months, but not beyond. Any questions?

**Steffen Bass (Physics):** Anita, you know that there is big uncertainty there because what the consensus of all faculty on campus put together is could very well be not what the majority of department reps here in Arts & Sciences Council would vote for. Right? That’s our biggest weakness or strength, depending on how you see it. One department, one program, one vote and the interests of individual departments may be very different from what the consensus of the majority of faculty on campus looks like.

**Layton:** So are you proposing a referendum?

**Bass:** No, I’m just saying this could happen.

**Sherryl Broverman (Biology):** That came up in the ECASC discussion and that’s why we wanted a qualitative analysis looking at distribution of responses across different units so that a larger department couldn’t sway it. It would give us two kinds of information, both quantitative and qualitative, as well as looking at specific commentary and not just have a numbers game.

**Layton:** And we’ll make the results available to everybody.

**Reeve Huston (History):** I also wanted to point out that, to my surprise last year, it seemed to me the vast majority of representatives talking, many, many supported the revision of the curriculum but their departments did not. Again, there is a misrepresentation here that’s at least mediated by what I think is a culture of right of instruction … of Arts & Sciences Council members feeling obliged to take instructions from their colleagues.

**Walter:** One thing that came up over and over again last year was that the discussion in the early days of the curriculum committee where they tried to identify what the problems were wasn’t really transmitted effectively to the rest of the faculty. So a lot of people didn’t know what the problems they were trying to address were. So I think that would be a nice thing to focus on when you do the surveys, rather than ask what they want to see. Try to identify what they view are problems.

**Layton:** Okay. How about we continue our discussion over food, because I’m very hungry. Thank you and I look forward to seeing you in October.