

A&S COUNCIL ADDRESS

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September 14, 2017

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.

MISSION AND GOALS

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.

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE THROUGH FACULTY

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.

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE THROUGH TEACHING

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 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.

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE THROUGH SERVICE

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.

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING

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.

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE THROUGH DIVERSITY

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.

CONCLUSION

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.