

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
MEETING of MARCH 23, 2009  
McKenna Auditorium  
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Members present:** Rev. John Jenkins, C.S.C., John Affleck-Graves, Panos Antsaklis, Robert Bernhard, Thomas Burish, Michelle Byrne, James Collins, Sarah de Groot, Neil Delaney, Steve Fallon, Umesh Garg, Nasir Ghiaseddin, Thomas Gresik, Paul Huber, Dennis Jacobs, Lionel Jensen, Michael Jenuwine, John LoSecco, Sean Lyttle, Chris Maziar, John McGreevy, Scott Monroe, William Nichols, Patricia O'Hara, Susan Ohmer, Hugh Page, Don Pope-Davis, Ava Preacher, Bob Reish, Jim Seida, Greg Sterling, Ann Tenbrunsel, Joe Venturini

**Members absent:** Seth Brown, Daniel Lapsley, Kasey Swanke, John Welle, Bill Westfall, Carolyn Woo

**Members excused:** A.J. Bellia, Laura Carlson, Greg Crawford, Nicole Garnett, Peter Kilpatrick, Kristin Lewis, Michael Lykoudis, Rev. Mark Poorman, C.S.C., Joseph Powers, Cheri Smith, Julian Velasco, Jennifer Younger

**Observers present:** Kevin Barry, Kathryn Lam, Brandon Roach

**Observers absent:** Dale Nees, Harold Pace, Daniel Saracino

After calling the meeting to order, Fr. Jenkins asked Prof. LoSecco to say the opening prayer.

**1. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the February 16, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

**2. Graduate School Academic Policy/Code:** In advance of the meeting, a document entitled "Proposed Alteration of the Academic Code, Graduate School Policies" was circulated to all members. Prof. Sterling explained that the proposed alterations resulted because of inconsistencies in the policies published in the *Bulletin of Information of the Graduate School* and in *du Lac: A Guide to Student Life*. Prof. Sterling said the Academic Code (which is published in *du Lac*) currently reflects the Graduate School policy prior to 1993-4.

During that year, a committee reviewed the *Bulletin* and recommended three amendments which were ratified by the Graduate Council. The amendments were published in *ND Report* (#16, April 29, 1994) and the Graduate School began using the new standards in practice. However, the Academic Council did not consider the recommendations at that time. The result is that the Graduate School has been following a policy that is different than the Academic Code. Prof. Sterling outlined the three amendments and requested that the Academic Council adopt the changes recommended by the Graduate Council in March 1994.

**Academic Code Section 22.1: Academic Good Standing**

The first amendment raised the minimally accepted GPA from 2.5 to 3.0.

Current Language: “The minimum cumulative average of 2.500 is established generally for the Graduate School.”

Proposed Language: “The minimum cumulative average of 3.000 is established generally for the Graduate School.”

### **Academic Code Section 23.2 2): Separation from the University**

Prof. Sterling explained that a student may fall below a 2.000 GPA as a result of incompletes in a semester. Since there may be good reasons why a student might have this experience, it would be neither fair nor wise to dismiss someone automatically. The second amendment omitted the following language from the section:

Current Language: “No student with less than a 2.000 semester average will be permitted to continue in the Graduate School in any status.”

The third amendment modified the following sentence:

Current Language: “Any student whose semester average is less than 2.500 for two consecutive semesters is subject to dismissal.”

Proposed Language: “A student may be dismissed from the department or program if the GPA in any one semester is below 2.500 or if the GPA is below 3.000 for consecutive semesters.”

Following Prof. Sterling’s comments, Prof. Preacher noted that a committee was constituted to review the entire Academic Code and propose any amendments it deems appropriate. She suggested that the amendments currently being proposed be considered in conjunction with that review, noting there are other instances where the Academic Code does not reflect practice.

Following a brief discussion about when the changes would go into effect, Prof. Sterling moved that the Academic Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Academic Code, effective immediately. The motion passed by voice vote.

**3. Vision Statement for Undergraduate Education:** Prof. Collins introduced the vision statement and noted that copies were distributed in advance of the meeting.

Prof. Jacobs explained that the Provost’s Office formed and charged two committees with creating a vision statement. A small drafting committee was constituted to help create, as much as possible, a singular voice in the document. A steering committee, with broad representation of 15 members that encompassed all of the “undergraduate parts of the University,” served as a sounding board and worked with the drafting committee to provide feedback and to take the drafts out for consultation. In spring 2008, the steering committee had an open-comment period and posted all of the drafts of the statement (up to that point) on a website and invited students and faculty to comment. The comments were taken and distilled and brought to the drafting committee for another revision of the statement. The draft was then reviewed in consultation with the deans, Provost’s Office, President’s Office, and the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Prof. Collins explained that the current draft of the statement was brought to the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Academic Council and it was their charge to review the document and decide whether it should be put forth to the Executive Committee for a vote by the full Academic Council. Prof. Collins added that the Undergraduate Studies Committee voted unanimously in favor of doing so, which is why the statement is being considered at today's meeting.

Prof. Antsaklis raised a concern with the first sentence of the statement: "Notre Dame is a vibrant academic community dedicated to scholarship and the advancement of knowledge, where students find opportunities on campus and abroad to develop initiative and leadership, and to learn by being fully engaged in our classrooms, libraries, research laboratories, studios, and residence halls." He felt that in its current form, the end of the sentence could be interpreted as an exhaustive list of places where students engage in learning. Prof. Delany suggested adding "among other venues" to the end of the sentence. Prof. Tenbrunsel noted that it is important to include the learning that occurs outside of campus (e.g., service projects, corporate environments, etc.). Through some discussion, members offered additional support for the amendment.

Prof. Ohmer moved that the first sentence be amended to include "among other venues" at the end of the sentence and that the amended vision statement be approved by the full Council. Notre Dame's Vision for Undergraduate Education as amended was approved unanimously by voice vote. See Appendix for final version.

**4. Adjournment and Committee Meetings:** Having no further business to discuss, Fr. Jenkins adjourned the meeting.

The Undergraduate Studies and Advanced Studies Committees met immediately following the Council meeting. The Faculty Affairs Committee had another meeting scheduled for the following week.

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## Appendix: Vision Statement

### NOTRE DAME'S VISION FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Notre Dame is a vibrant academic community dedicated to scholarship and the advancement of knowledge, where students find opportunities on campus and abroad to develop initiative and leadership, and to learn by being fully engaged in our classrooms, libraries, research laboratories, studios, and residence halls, among other venues. Notre Dame seeks to nurture in its students intellectual passion and a keenly developed moral sense, goals attainable only where freedom of thought and expression flourishes in a culture built on respect, responsibility and integrity.

Drawing on our Catholic intellectual tradition, which fosters the integration of faith and reason, Notre Dame offers an undergraduate education rooted in the fundamental belief that all truths participate in the Divine Truth, a belief that motivates the vigorous search for knowledge.

Notre Dame inspires students to pursue learning as a good in itself and to see that pursuit as involving the whole person. We cultivate each student's capacity to think creatively and critically while valuing the rich inheritance that comes from our shared past. We expect our graduates to be conversant with and equipped to contribute to the best thinking across the disciplines. Notre Dame helps students acquire the virtues necessary for living a good human life and prepares them to become leaders in their professions, for their communities, the Church, and the world.

As a community committed to service, we challenge students to grow in their understanding of complex human realities, and we call them to respond to the needs of the world with compassion and committed action. By educating students to be engaged by both their intellectual labors and their faith, we aspire to offer an education that is Catholic in the broadest sense of the word, both in welcoming all persons of good will to our university community and turning outward to embrace the larger world.

Formed by a rich liberal education and possessed of mature faith in service to others, our graduates leave Notre Dame prepared to take their places at the forefront of discovery, innovation, and human achievement.