

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2005**

Members Present: Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., Thomas G. Burish, John Affleck-Graves, Jean Ann Linney, Christine Maziar, Dennis Jacobs, Jeffrey Kantor, Rev. Mark Poorman, C.S.C., Panos Antsaklis, Seth Brown, Steven Buechler, Austin Collins, Philippe Collon, Olivia Remie Constable, Tom Cosimano, Katie Crossin, Mary Rose D'Angelo, Kenneth DeBoer, Neil Delaney, Nasir Ghiaseddin, James Grace, Frank Incropera, Manish Kelkar, Joseph Marino, James McAdams, Collin Meissner, McRae Miller, Christian Moevs, Robert Nelson, Carolyn Nordstrom, Patricia O'Hara, Hugh Page, Teresa Phelps, Ava Preacher, Ram Ramanan, Vijay Ramanan, John Robinson, Mark Roche, Valerie Sayers, Richard Taylor, Scott Van Jacob, Jennifer Warlick, Bill Westfall, Jennifer Younger.

Members Absent:

Members Excused: Gilberto Cardenas, Stephen Fredman, Hope Hollocher, Michael Lykoudis, Carolyn Woo

Observers Present: Mary Hendriksen, LTC Kelly Jordan, Harold Pace, Daniel Saracino, Matt Storin, Joy Vann-Hamilton

Observers Absent:

Observers Excused: Harold Pace

The Reverend John Jenkins, C.S.C. opened the meeting at 4:35 p.m. with a prayer.

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of April 20, 2005: The minutes of the Academic Council meeting of April 20, 2005, were approved without change.

2. Meetings of the Academic Council Committees: After short introductions by Fr. Jenkins and Dr. Burish, Notre Dame's new provost, members divided up into the Council's three standing committees to set their agendas for the year. Committee chairs submitted the following reports of their meetings:

(a) Undergraduate Studies Committee (Prof. Preacher, chair): Two issues remain unresolved from last year's committee work: grade validity and Advanced Placement (AP) credit.

(1) Grade validity: Recently, there have been attempts at other schools—most notably, Princeton—to study the issue of grade validity. One facet of the issue the committee intends to explore is the relationship—whether real or perceived—between high grades and high TCE's. Student members of the committee indicated that grade validity is an issue of concern to students.

(2) Advanced Placement credit: Over the years, there has been a large increase both in the number of incoming Notre Dame students receiving AP credit and the number of AP credit hours they amass. Committee members are concerned about this trend and want to explore how the University might best encourage students to take advantage of the opportunities offered on campus. The possibility that students might graduate early is just one facet of this discussion. Another facet is how any restriction of students' use of AP credit will impact the availability of courses and the resources of various departments. One proposal the committee may consider is altering the University's graduation requirement to stipulate that it is 90 collegiate credits, with 60 credit hours on Notre Dame's campus. This would require discussion of how credits earned at international sites are counted, as well as how credits are counted for transfer students.

Consideration of changes in handling AP credit drew members' attention to the *Academic Code*. It has been proposed that the *Academic Code*, and perhaps the *Academic Articles* as well, undergo a thorough review. Because Provost Burish has been at Notre Dame only a few weeks, committee members believe that such a review should wait until a later time. It is possible, however, that some changes to the *Code* or the *Academic Articles* can be handled in the usual way, through the Academic Council.

Another item committee members discussed is how the faculty, the departments, and the colleges can play a role in the University's admissions process. Some faculty members have noted that while Notre Dame students are gifted academically, they do not always have a passion for their work. In conjunction with two initiatives Prof. Jacobs has undertaken on understanding and enhancing student engagement, committee members hope to explore how the faculty might help admissions identify students who are most likely to bring a high level of engagement to their work.

Finally, student members said that an issue of concern to Notre Dame students is the delivery of information on academic programs. Many students feel that while much information is available, it is not always in the form or location best suited for student use. Currently, student government is planning to organize a campus-wide fair for all academic programs. The committee will be kept informed of student progress on this front and revisit the issue if it becomes appropriate.

(b) Faculty Affairs Committee (Prof. Robinson, chair): Members committed themselves to exploring the following topics:

- New threats to academic freedom, particularly in the classroom;
- Possible amendments to the *Academic Articles*, particularly those provisions dealing with University searches for high-level academic officers and periodic reviews of those officers;
- Review of tenure and promotion criteria, with a focus on how current criteria align with 21st-century academic realities. One area the committee might explore is publishing requirements, for internet publishing may affect long-established views of the publishing

standards used during tenure reviews. Another area to explore—particularly in light of the University’s long-term interests in promoting excellence in teaching—is the weight given to a candidate’s teaching record.

Questions on a post-tenure review process—whether such a process should be established and, if so, what form it should take.

(c) Graduate Council Members (Prof. Constable, chair): The committee set an agenda for the year that includes requests for presentations to the Graduate Council by: (1) Notre Dame’s Development office—on the topic of fundraising for graduate education and research, and (2) Notre Dame’s Public Affairs and Communications office—on the topic of how Notre Dame can be presented more effectively as a major research university. On both topics, committee members would like a short presentation by a member of the office followed by a longer discussion.

In addition, committee members discussed:

Formation of a Graduate Council sub-committee to explore ways more expenses—such as student stipends, partial tuition, and academic year salary—can be built into grants; Establishment of opportunities for Graduate Council members to meet with the committee established by the Provost to review the relationship between the Graduate School and the Office of Research;

Promotion of discussion in the Graduate Council on the issuing of departmental score cards. Possible questions are: What data should we track? What are the best mechanisms for evaluating quality? What kinds of structures should we have to support departments with good metrics (or to improve those with bad ones)? What benchmarks should we use? The Graduate Council may wish to form a sub-committee for this item.

Study of the best practices for oral exams and dissertation proposals, with special attention to developing graduate students’ capacities for oral expression and debate.

Two specific action items:

The Graduate School should develop a standardized form for the use of outside chairs at examinations and defenses;

All departmental directors of graduate studies should be on the Graduate Council’s mailing list. They should receive the agenda for each meeting and be invited to attend meetings as non-voting observers.

There being no further business, Fr. Jenkins adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

